“DISTANCE LEARNING” IN THE NINTH CENTURY?: MICRO-CLUSTER ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTOLARY NETWORK OF ALCUIN AFTER 796

William James Mattingly
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“DISTANCE LEARNING” IN THE NINTH CENTURY?: MICRO-CLUSTER ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTOLARY NETWORK OF ALCUIN AFTER 796

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
William J. Mattingly

Lexington, Kentucky
Director: Dr. Abigail Firey, Professor of History
Lexington, Kentucky
2020

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

“DISTANCE LEARNING” IN THE NINTH CENTURY?: MICRO-CLUSTER ANALYSIS OF THE EPISTOLARY NETWORK OF ALCUIN AFTER 796

Scholars of eighth- and ninth-century education have assumed that intellectuals did not write works of Scriptural interpretation until that intellectual had a firm foundation in the seven liberal arts. This ensured that anyone who embarked on work of Scriptural interpretation would have the required knowledge and methods to read and interpret Scripture correctly. The potential for theological error and the transmission of those errors was too great unless the interpreter had the requisite training. This dissertation employs computistical methods, specifically the techniques of social network mapping and cluster analysis, to study closely the correspondence of Alcuin, a late-eighth- and early-ninth-century scholar renowned for his pedagogy (which was rooted in the liberal arts) and his Scriptural commentaries. These methods allow us to identify and study these two types of knowledge and how Alcuin imparted them to individuals at two different stages of their respective intellectual careers. This investigation focuses particularly on the less-studied period of Alcuin’s life, his final eight years, beginning when he departed either the imperial court or a nearby school and arrived in Tours in 796, and ending with his death in 804.

The increase in Alcuin’s surviving letters after 796, and the ways in which Alcuin imparted knowledge to the recipients, many of whom were his former students, provides the basis for exploring how Alcuin used the only technology available to him, writing, to maintain his relationships and continue to impart knowledge and attempt to influence his former pupils. These letters further demonstrate the different stages and methods for education. While Alcuin used the physical classroom in Tours to teach the seven liberal arts, the study of exegesis took place among the well-trained aristocratic and intellectual elite, who had the ability to closely control the production and dissemination of the “correct” interpretation of Scripture.

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KEYWORDS: Carolingian, Alcuin, education, social networks, data visualization, Python

William Mattingly

05/16/2020

Date
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05/16/2020
For Steph, my wife and best friend, without whom this never would have been possible

_aliiquid tremendum in lingua latina infra_

_quia nihil captat me sicut ea_

_ego sum nihil sine ea_

_quia nemo in mundo sicut ea_

_aliiquid tremendum in lingua latina supra_
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is perhaps a cliché to begin a dissertation’s acknowledgment section with the phrase: “a dissertation cannot exist without the influence and advice of many people”—or something of the ilk. Its extensive use is a testament not to the author’s lack of originality, rather the universal truth of the sentiment. A dissertation is something far beyond the creation of a single author. It is written by the author, yes; but it is influenced, molded, and shaped by many minds and hands, some directly and others indirectly, with neither adverb taking primacy.

Of those who influenced this dissertation, I would first like to thank Professor Abigail Firey who has been my advisor for these past eight years. She first introduced me to Scriptural exegesis and the digital humanities, the key subjects of this dissertation. Like the lighthouse that once stood over the ancient city of Alexandria, she has been a source of guidance. While I, an amateur sailor, pursued the luring rocky cliffs that distract many a graduate student, she, an experienced admiral, was always there to point me back to a proper course and guide me to safe harbor. Without her, this dissertation would surely not be where it is today. I will miss the ventures into her office, her kind delivery of hard truths, and the cups of tea that were always awaiting her graduate students. A paragraph is not enough space for proper thanks.

I would also like to thank the other committee members of this dissertation: Professor Stephen Davis, who encouraged my pursuit of Pythonic methods to explore historical sources; Professor David Hamilton who was one of my earliest points of
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The creation of a dissertation is not simply academic. Its creation affects and is affected by those in the author’s personal life. This dissertation would not have been completed were it not for the constant support and love from my family. I would firstly like to thank my loving wife, Stephanie Mattingly. She has always supported my dream of earning a Ph.D. in history and she always believed in me. She has been a beacon of hope at all stages of graduate school, especially during the final year as I struggled to complete this dissertation. There are no words that can possibly convey how much she has done and how eternally grateful I am to her. The dedication above is a true reflection of her contributions. Without her, I would not have succeeded. I would also like to thank my parents, Bill and Shelia Mattingly. Without them, I would not be who I am today. Their constant support throughout all the stages of my life have made me a better person. They are responsible for giving me the tools and skills needed to succeed.

I would also like to thank John Perry, Edward Mason, and Luke Victor, all of whom either read large portions of this dissertation or contributed significantly to how I thought about and structured this dissertation. Our countless hours in Red River Gorge, spent fishing, foraging berries, encountering bears, building A-frames, surviving
hypothermia and the harshest of storms, provided the necessary reprieves to continue researching and writing. Boon companions, they truly are.

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INTRODUCTION

To Carolingian authors, the Bible was of paramount importance; between the mid-eighth and early tenth centuries, Carolingian scholars wrote approximately 200 Biblical commentaries by one estimate, 130 by another, and 226 when the Burton Van Name Edwards dataset is quantified with 2,335 manuscript witnesses (with some manuscript overlap with texts).\(^2\) Despite this large quantity of texts, we do not know precisely how the individuals who constructed these texts fit within an overarching network, if at all, and what that network would have looked like. This dissertation asks if we can identify overlapping relationships between these individuals the places at which they resided or were educated. I argue that we do see patterns in both the geographical and pedagogical networks of these commentators. When we explore closely one cluster of these commentators, the cluster of Tours (in modern-day France), we can identify underlying institutional, pedagogical, and personal activities that led to the existence of that cluster.

Even though the Carolingians were prolific commentators of the Bible, the vogue of the twentieth century was to belittle them because they often relied on and quoted

patristic sources verbatim.\(^3\) This technique made many modern scholars overlook the Carolingian exegetes and underestimate their innovations and influence. Such a view is evident in Beryl Smalley’s 1940 monograph, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, in which she devoted little attention to the Carolingians.\(^4\)

Scholars have recently revisited the claim that Carolingian exegetes lacked originality.\(^5\) These scholars argue that the method in which the Carolingian exegetes copied and pasted, in fact, produced original and novel texts. Such investigations have demonstrated that Carolingian exegetes consciously excluded certain patristic interpretations while they seamlessly inserted their own views.\(^6\) Even when they did not insert original or new material, they created a new text through omission, and thus created their own interpretation.\(^7\) If Carolingian exegetes did not merely copy-and-paste

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\(^3\) On this tradition, see particularly: Marianne Pollheimer, “Hrabanus Maurus – the Compiler, the Preacher, and His Audience,” in *Sermo Doctorum*, ed. M Dienstenburger, Y. Henn, and M. Pollheimer, 2013, 203, fn. 1.


\(^6\) On this method, see: Pollheimer, “Hrabanus Maurus – the Compiler, the Preacher, and His Audience,” 2013, 203–5.

but rather produced original exegesis, then we must ask how and when they learned to do so. What methods, ideas, interpretations did they learn and from whom? This dissertation provides the context for answering these questions.

The modern study of medieval exegesis generally began in the 1950s, Henri De Lubac contributed to the study of medieval exegesis when he wrote his *magnum opus*, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l’Écriture*, originally published between 1954 and 1964. He brought an encyclopedic knowledge of the subject to the fingertips of every twentieth-century scholar. Since then, interest in medieval exegesis has steadily grown. This, in turn, aided in the production of critical editions of Carolingian exegetical works. Thanks to the scholarship of the last fifty years, we now have critical editions for the entire exegetical corpus of some exegetes, such as Ambrosius Autpertus. For other exegetes, such as Paschasius Radbertus, we have critical editions of several commentaries, i.e. his commentaries on Matthew, Lamentations, and Psalm 44. Unfortunately, for some of the more prolific Carolingian exegetes, such as Hrabanus, Otfrid of Weissenburg, and Haimo of Auxerre, we only have one or two critical editions, i.e. Hrabanus and Otfrid’s respective commentaries on Matthew, Hrabanus’ commentary on Matthew, Lamentations, and Psalm 44.

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on Judith, and Haimo’s notes on the books of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Nevertheless, scholars have devoted attention to once misattributed texts, such as Claudius of Turin’s commentaries on Ephesians and Philippians, both of which now have critical editions. Critical editions are essential for detailed analysis of Scriptural commentaries. They do far more than simply provide a standard text based on a close reading of the manuscript witnesses. They provide a complete list of witnesses, analysis of their transmission, context of the works creation, and, perhaps most importantly, accurate sourcing.

Despite these recent critical editions of Carolingian exegetical works, many problems remain. Some texts are obscured by uncertain authorship, others are shrouded in indeterminate manuscript transmissions, and yet others are problematic because they are only available in the *Patrologia Latina*, which sometimes published misidentified sources, authors, and time of publication. Nevertheless, scholars have made substantial progress in the past two decades, thanks in no small part to Burton Van Name Edwards, whose website provides *The Manuscript Transmission of Carolingian Biblical Commentaries (TMTCBC)*. This catalog of texts and manuscripts allows the historian to find quickly relevant manuscripts and, even more impressively, to locate precisely misattributed texts. Van Name Edwards compiled previous catalogs and built upon the

---


work of Bernhard Bischoff, the editors of the *Clavis Scriptorum Latinorum Aevi: Auctores Galliae*, Dominique Iogna Prat, Colette Jeudy, Bernard Lambert, and Friederich Stegmüller.\(^{14}\) Of these, the works of Stegmüller and Bischoff are cited most predominately.

In addition to this website, scholars today have an excellent historical context in which to work, for the late-twentieth century saw the first monographic treatments of exegetes’ works. This began with Suzanne Wemple’s 1979 work on Atto of Vercelli, a tenth century exegete.\(^{15}\) Wemple’s work was biography and examination of Atto’s works, which included his exegesis. In 1990, Silvia Cantelli followed Wemple’s example and wrote a monograph on the exegesis of Angelomus of Luxeuil and, again, in 2002, she wrote another large work which addressed the exegesis of Hrabanus Maurus in three volumes.\(^{16}\) Her work on Angelomus, as we shall see below, was sharply criticized by Michael Gorman, yet her work on Hrabanus’ exegesis is generally well-received, for she

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As scholars sought to contextualize exegetes, they also asked how contemporary events shaped an exegete’s view of Scripture. This is particularly true of the scholarship of Mayke de Jong, who suggested that Louis the Pious’ deposition may have influenced Hrabanus’ understanding of \textit{Judith}, a deuterocanonical Biblical book in which the heroine beheads an enemy general.\footnote{Mayke de Jong, “Exegesis for an Empress,” in \textit{Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power, and Gifts in Context}, ed. Esther Cohen and Mayke de Jong (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 69–100.} A similar method has been employed by John J. Contreni, who argued that Haimo’s commentary on Ezekiel was meant to express contemporary political discontent.\footnote{John J. Contreni, “Haimo of Auxerre’s Commentary on Ezechiel,” in \textit{L’École carolingienne d’Auxerre de Muretach à Remi: 830-908}, ed. Dominique Iogna-Prat et al. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1991), 229–42.} This dissertation builds upon these works by remaining sensitive to political events that may have shaped exegesis and, more importantly, to the question of how political figures functioned within Carolingian intellectual and pedagogical networks. Political figures played a necessary role within these pedagogical networks. For this reason, I include in my analysis key political figures, notably Charlemagne (d. 814).

The historiography of the late twentieth century and increased interest in Carolingian exegesis allows us more easily to explore the possible presence of Carolingian exegetical schools. The modern study of Carolingian education and schools
was led by Pierre Riché, writing initially in the 1960s.²⁰ He wrote directly against a
historiographic model that periodized Medieval Europe, a tradition that placed “the
Middle Ages” between the “fall” of Rome and the supposed death of Classical culture in
the fifth century and its resurgence in the fourteenth century during the Renaissance. This
tradition particularly viewed the early middle ages as a “Dark Age” until the Carolingian
renaissance of the late eighth and ninth centuries. Riché argued against such a simple
view and, through his vast knowledge of early medieval sources, demonstrated that
education did not die. Charlemagne was not inventive but rather built upon an established
educational tradition. Classical education, as Riché exhaustively demonstrated, survived
the “catastrophic fifth century.” It survived via large pedagogical institutions, such as
monasteries, and via individuals who played a substantial part in preserving and
maintaining Roman culture and education up through the ninth century and beyond.
Riché detailed the developments of these schools, scholars, and their scholarship by both
a broad and close examination of the sources. Riché’s analysis, as detailed as it was, often
ignored the role of exegesis in these institutions, a vacuum left for later scholars to fill, if
even partially.

In 1978, John J. Contreni demonstrated how scholars could begin to address the
gaps left by Riché and by doing so, he altered the way in which scholars studied
Carolingian schools.²¹ Rather than examine the practice of education across the empire,
he produced a micro-history of the school of Laon from 850 to 930 by analyzing over 100

²⁰ Pierre Riché, _Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare VIe–VIIIe siècles_ (Paris, Éditions du Seuil,
1962); Pierre Riché, _Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries_, trans.

²¹ John J Contreni, _The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930: Its Manuscripts and Masters_ (München:
ninth- and tenth-century manuscripts that have a known provenance of Laon, manuscripts which were used, among other places, in the classroom. There is little doubt that Contreni was influenced by Riché’s Education and Culture for which he had provided a translation one year prior to the publication of Contreni’s study of Laon. In many ways, Contreni’s work goes methodologically one step further than Riché’s by investigating not only the texts, but also the manuscripts and, more importantly, their glosses.

In 1990, Silva Cantelli attempted an enterprise similar to that of Contreni when she wrote Angelomo e la scuola esegetica di Luxeuil. This work placed Angelomus of Luxeuil, an exegete who has left few footprints in contemporary sources, within his Carolingian context. What we can glean about Angelomus, we gather from his commentaries on Genesis, Canticles, and 1–4 Kings. Cantelli explored how, when, and why Angelomus wrote exegesis. Like Contreni, she attempted to provide a micro-history on a single school, and to show how a single individual shaped and defined exegesis within this pedagogical network. Cantelli explored neither the larger Carolingian network of exegesis nor even the larger Carolingian pedagogical network beyond Luxeuil, with the two exceptions of Auxerre and Laon.

This leaves important questions that must be answered: did Carolingian pedagogical networks extend beyond a single institution? Both Contreni and Cantelli’s works hint that the answer is, yes. This, in turn, raises further questions. What did these networks look like? Who was part of these networks? Did these individuals influence each other? Do we see common teachers? Do these teachers appear to have influenced their students’ methodologies for framing exegesis? To what extent was exegesis a

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22 Cantelli, Angelomo e la scuola esegetica di Luxeuil.
product of these schools? Can we see patterns across different regions of the Carolingian empire? The only way that these questions can be addressed is if examine Carolingian pedagogical and exegetical networks within their larger, imperial framework.\textsuperscript{23} These monographic micro-histories, however, laid the groundwork and provide the basis for a study of this scale.

In the following decades, these monographs were reinforced by an anthology and several articles on other Carolingian schools. A year after Cantelli’s work on Luxeuil, scholars published an anthology from a conference held in 1989 on the school of Auxerre. This anthology began by contextualizing the Auxerre school within a Carolingian political framework by looking at the interactions of the Carolingian rulers with Auxerre from Charles Martel to Charles the Bald. Charles the Bald (since the evidence permits it) received greater attention. The study then investigates the importance of Auxerre’s \textit{scriptorium}. These sections lay the groundwork for the remainder of the anthology which investigates the school over the course of its known masters of the ninth century, such as Haimo, Remegius, and Heiric.\textsuperscript{24} This conference (and the resulting anthology) raised awareness of Auxerre as an education institution and, more importantly for this dissertation, as a school that trained several prolific exegetes; but yet, again, we are left wondering how Auxerre fits into this larger, Carolingian pedagogical network.

\textsuperscript{23} This dissertation will, therefore, tie into projects on politics and exegesis: \textit{Rulers, History and Exegesis in the Early Middle Ages: The Formation of Carolingian Political Identity}. \url{www.nias.knaw.nl}; \textit{The Bible and the Law in Carolingian Europe: Scriptural Exegesis and Royal Legislation from Charlemagne to Charles the Bald (ca. AD 780–880)}. \url{cordis.europa.eu}.

In 2004 Michael Gorman identified a pedagogical connection between exegesis and the school at Fulda, where Erkanbertus composed his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. This work, according to Gorman, was based entirely on notes taken during the classes of Rudolf of Fulda, who was the former student of Hrabanus Maurus. Gorman argued that the first half of the work was entirely original since he found no evidence of verbatim quotation of their writings.\(^{25}\) This argument, however, has been recently reexamined and criticized by Petrus W. Tax. Tax found substantial summarizations of the homilies of Bede and Gregory the Great, but also verbatim quotations.\(^{26}\) These critiques do not, however, argue against the idea that the pedagogical methods and classroom lessons of Rudolf dramatically shaped Erkanbertus’ exegesis, rather that there was more influence at play than a single pedagogical relationship. These articles demonstrate that Fulda’s school played an active role in the dissemination and training of Scriptural interpretation. This was nothing novel; the articles’ originalities, however, lie in their details. They examine how a lesser-known exegete functioned within a local network and how his training dramatically shaped his exegesis. In other words, this research revealed the extent to which a teacher could influence and shape a student’s exegesis. Since four commentators were trained at Fulda, one must ask if this study has larger implications with regard to students, such as Walafrid Strabo, who would go on to tutor Charles the Bald and teach at Reichenau, and Otfrid, who would return to Weißenburg to write


exegesis. In order for one to address this question, one must study the Carolingian pedagogical and exegetical networks within a larger framework.

A more recent treatment of Carolingian exegetical schools came in 2007, when E. Ann Matter analyzed Haimo of Auxerre’s commentary on the Song of Songs. While she contextualized Haimo’s exegesis within the school of Auxerre, she also suggested the presence of Carolingian exegetical schools in general. Matter stated that the easiest school to identify was “the palace school”, at which Alcuin, a central figure in this dissertation (discussed below), taught and Hrabanus, his student, studied. In many ways, she built upon the work of Michael Fox, who, in 2005, analyzed the ways in which Alcuin was educated and how he taught. For Alcuin, education without teaching was pointless and, therefore, one who studied Scripture had a duty to teach it. Matter’s discussion of the palace school, unfortunately, is brief, for she merely noted the existence of the pedagogical network and did not explore the exegesis that it produced, the common methods, or the common books on which exegetes commented. The exact functions of the palace school, however, have been called into question by Donald A. Bullough, one of the leading experts on Alcuin.

While the aforementioned works have dramatically improved our understanding of Carolingian schools and education, they neither adequately nor extensively address the

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extent to which education shaped one’s view of Scripture nor do they address the question of whether these education centers also served as nodes in exegetical networks. Nevertheless, they allow us to open this question. Riché has taught us the prevalence of education before and after the so-called “Carolingian renaissance.” Contreni, Cantelli, and the scholars involved in the anthology on the school of Auxerre have each demonstrated the importance of studying manuscripts to understand schools. Cantelli’s analysis of the exegetical school at Luxeuil under Angelomus demonstrates how to place a single exegete within his immediate pedagogical and exegetical networks. Finally, despite Gorman and Tax’s interest in exegetical lessons of the classroom of Fulda, their analyses do not identify a larger pedagogical networks. Instead, they reveal a specific instance of how a master influenced a student. This dissertation, therefore, presents a more extensive and deeper investigation into this topic. Nevertheless, this dissertation utilizes the excellent methodologies and approaches that these scholars developed over the past four decades; it then applies them to a larger study of Carolingian pedagogical and exegetical networks. By framing the question in larger terms, we can begin to understand the connections and relationships between these intellectuals and institutions.

To answer the questions posed throughout the dissertation, this dissertation will employ social network theory, social network analysis, cluster analysis, graph theory, and computational methods programmed in Python that facilitate qualitative and quantitative analysis of source material. Each of these requires individual treatment.
I.01: A Brief History of Social Network Theory and Key Terminology

The most recent and exhaustive treatment of the history of social network theory was done by Christina Prell. The following pages on the history of social network theory chiefly rely on her scholarship. Social network theory developed in the early twentieth century. It has its incipience in psychology, beginning in the 1930s with the scholarship of Jacob Moreno. Moreno earned his degrees in Vienna but moved to the United States in 1925. Once in the United States, he developed a field known as “sociometry”. Most social network theorists today accept this as the beginning of the theory and methods for studying social networks.

To develop this new field, Moreno worked alongside a student at Columbia University named Helen Hall Jennings.

“Together, Moreno and Jennings explored how social relations affected psychological well-being, and in the process, they developed a technique they called ‘sociometry’. This technique used quantitative methods for studying the structure of groups and the positions of individuals within groups.”

To represent these relationships visually, Moreno and Jennings used what they called “sociograms”. Within a sociogram were points, known today as nodes, and relationships between those points, lines that are known today as edges. These nodes and edges between them represented relationships, such as the basic sociogram I developed in the image below using Python and the module Pyvis.

31 Prell, Social Network Analysis, 22.
Here, we can see six nodes: A, B, C, D, E, and F. Between these nodes, we see six different relationships, represented by edges. These edges have labels so that the viewer will have an explanation of the force directed graph. This force direction can also be seen in the direction of the arrow. We can see that D, for example, has three edges from it to C, B, and A, respectively. The direction of force is indicated by the arrow. Currently, no complex math is being used to create this “sociogram”, rather, I have established a predetermined structure with a spring length of 200. Notice the odd position of the nodes E and F and their relationship. It is completely detached from the other nodes yet remains in the middle of the graph. Notice also, the equal distance between all nodes, even though D has far more connections than another node. These are the results when we do not use an algorithm to create the graph. This represents the early vision of Monroe with regard to
sociograms, that is, as a basic visual representation of relationships. As we will see, this method would radically change with the introduction of mathematics.

At the time, 1933, sociograms were a novel way to conceptualize relationships. With this increasing interest in sociometry, Moreno started a journal called *Sociometry*. The field, however, began to plateau in the 1940s and by the 1950s, scholars were not speaking about sociometry with the same vigor they once did. Moreno himself published his final article in *Sociometry* in 1955.

At the same time as Moreno was performing his research in sociometry, Kurt Lewin was

> “developing a theoretical framework called ‘field theory’ which describes and explains human behavior and perception from a structural perspective. Lewin saw behavior as embedded within a ‘field’, which he defined as ‘the totality of coexisting facts which are conceived as a mutually independent.’”

He argued three chief things. First, “to truly understand perception and behavior, one needed to understand this larger context of ‘coexisting facts’.” And second, “that individuals and groups could be represented in topological terms, where different spaces, such as one’s family, their work and so forth could be displayed as vectors within space.” Third, he argued “for mathematical techniques to analyze social space with the aim of exploring the system of relations in which a group and its environment were situated.” In other words, while Monroe provided the systematic framework for

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
studying networks, Lewin began making advances for the deeper study of them and the initial justifications of framing that study with mathematics. Today, this is how most social network analysts frame their studies of social networks. The math applied to the graph is carefully chosen (discussed below) by the researcher. With the same data used above, i.e. the relationships between A, B, C, D, E, and F, we can see the impact of mathematics at play in the image below. Here, we see the application of an algorithm that determines the structure of the network graph, specifically the use of vectors in the Barnes-Hut Algorithm.36

36 On the Barnes-Hut Algorithm in layman’s terms, see the article by Tom Ventimiglia and Kevin Wayne in the ArborJs documentation: Tom Ventimiglia and Kevin Wayne, *The Barnes-Hut Algorithm* ([http://arborjs.org/docs/barnes-hut](http://arborjs.org/docs/barnes-hut)). The chief benefit of the Barnes-Hut algorithm is when working with exceptionally large datasets, such as those in Chapter Four, in which time to create the graph and specialization of the data is of chief concern to the user.
Figure I.2: A Basic Sociogram with an Algorithm

Notice now, the substantial changes in the network graph. This is the result of mathematics being used to alter the render of the data through algebra, the mathematical realm through which we create algorithms. What the Barnes-Hut algorithm has done here, is rendered the relationships visually by moving the relationships into different vectors of the graph based on the edges between nodes. In other words, nodes not connected to one another are isolated and moved into a different vector from nodes of
another vector that are connected to one another. Mathematics, therefore, provided a way to fundamentally alter a map based on specific and consistent methods. The impact of algorithms on network graphs, however, required exploration and explanation. This was left to Lewin’s students.

Lewin’s student, Alex Bavelas continued Lewin’s work and continued to test his arguments during the 1940s and 50s. Bavelas lead a group at MIT called The Group Networks Laboratory. This team was particularly interested in how social networks functioned and the efficiency with which they functioned. In the processes, they coined a term still used today—centrality.

“For Bavelas, centrality rested on the notion of distance, i.e. that a central actor was relatively close to other actors in the network, and Bavelas argued that such ‘central’ actors would be optimally positioned for integrating information from the dislocated parts of a network.”37

This idea of centrality was not, however, arbitrary. It was rooted in mathematics, which was developed by a mathematician named R. Duncan Luce. The most significant contribution of Luce was his use of mathematics “to specify cliques as consisting of three or more actors who were all mutually related to each other member in a subset.”38 These cliques were identified and represented with matrices and matrix algebra, a method that is still used today by social network analysts to explore social network data.

Today, matrices are an essential component to network analysis. We can render the same data above as matrices using Python and two different data structures, Pandas and Numpy. Both have their advantages. While Pandas allows you to create matrices as

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37 Prell, Social Network Analysis, 24–25.
38 Ibid., 25.
data structures comparable to Excel that are easy to parse, Numpy has a better benchmark and allows you to create a proper mathematical array which facilitates higher end computing and analysis, specifically for use in developing and employing neural networks. A basic matrix of this data would look like the following images (Pandas on the left and Numpy on the right):

![Figure I.3: Pandas Array](image1.png)  ![Figure I.4: Numpy Array](image2.png)

In these matrices, we see 0s and 1s. In programming and data terminology, these represent Booleans, more colloquially understood as the binary difference between True (1) and False (0). If we look at row “A” and compare it to the above graph, we see that node “A” is only connected to “B” via force direction. This is why we see a 0 in all columns except “B” which has a 1. To produce these matrices, I processed the data through NetworkX via Python. 39 NetworkX is far better suited than Pyvis to convert data

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to and from different data structures, which are, in this case, Pandas and Numpy. I implemented NetworkX via the following code, parts of which come from the standard NetworkX documentation with some modification:

```python
import networkx as nx
import pandas as pd
import numpy

nodes = ['A', 'B', 'C', 'D', 'E', 'F']
edges = [(nodes[0], nodes[1]), (nodes[1], nodes[2]), (nodes[3],
         nodes[2]), (nodes[3], nodes[0]), (nodes[3], nodes[1]), (nodes[4],
         nodes[5])]

G = nx.MultiDiGraph()
G.add_edges_from(edges)
matrix_pandas = nx.to_pandas_adjacency(G, nodelist=nodes, dtype=int)
matrix_numpy = nx.to_numpy_array(G, nodelist=nodes, dtype=int)

print(matrix_pandas)
print(matrix_numpy)
```

*Figure I.5: Example of Code to Produce Arrays*

By the 1950s, Luce loosened the idea that all members of a clique had to be connected to all other members. Instead, he created an “n-clique” which meant that a clique could be identified if all members “held $n$ length to other members of the subset.”[^40] This notion of cliques would eventually lead to what we recognize today as “clusters”, though not precisely (discussed below). In the network graph above, the relationships between D, A, B, and C, would represent an n-clique. They would not, however, represent a clique in Luce’s original terms because there is no relationship

[^40]: Prell, *Social Network Analysis*, 25.
between C and A, yet C and A are connected via intermediaries, known in social network analysis as brokers. Specifically, A can get to C via B. I will speak more about this later in the Introduction when I discuss graph theory.

During the 1950s, scholars began to use the methods developed by Monroe, Jennings, and Bavelas and his team, to test specific theories. The chief three scholars who did this were Festinger, Cartwright, and Harary. They tested Heider’s theory of balance and migrated his theory into the terminology and methods of graph theory.41 Balance theory was rooted in the idea of positive and negative relationships which affected whether two actors agreed or disagreed or the likelihood of either one. Cartwright and Harary in particular developed theorems for explaining and defining these relationships. This work was popularized in the 1970s by a scholar named Freeman.42

Beginning in the 1940s and up to the present, scholars in social psychology, sociology, and anthropology began to use social network theory to explain relationships and explore what data between individuals may mean about those relationships. Sociologists used these methods to analyze how groups cluster, how conflict can be resolved, the relationships between family members and close friends as compared to relationships between colleagues (known as strong and weak ties, respectively), the overlapping data from two different social groups, i.e. the attendance of black men to events overlapped with the attendance of white women to events, among other things. Schools of thought developed as methods became more nuanced and certain practices favored. Despite the divergence of schools, the essential foundations of Monroe and

41 Ibid., 26–28.
42 Ibid., 27–28.
Jennings, Lewin, and Bavelas and his team, remained. What had changed was the application of those foundations, methods for gathering data (and the implications, benefits, and faults with such methods), and the methods for exploring different data sets and what could be gleaned from such explorations.  

As Naoki Masuda and Renaud Lambiotte recently remarked,

“since the 1990s, our understanding of real networks, from large to small ones, has been significantly advanced with the integration of theoretical, computational, and conceptual tools from statistical physics, computer science, engineering, mathematics, and other domains. Many networks have been recognized to be complex but governed by beautiful universal laws. Together with applications, this field of research can be collectively called network science.”

This dissertation employs such computational methods, but before we explain these methods, something should first be said of historical social network analysis.

I.02: Historical Social Network Analysis

Sociologists and anthropologists have applied the social network theory through social network analysis (SNA). In 1998, Charles Wetherell published an article entitled “Historical Social Network Analysis,” in which he considered and explored the application of social network analysis in the discipline of history.  

43 Ibid., 28–36.


into the applications of social network analysis by historians, notable the work of Darrett and Anita Rutman.\textsuperscript{46} Wetherell noted, at the time that

“historians, however, have been slow to adopt the approach for at least three reasons. First, the conceptual orientation of sociologists practicing historical social network analysis (HSNA) remains unfamiliar to the majority of professional historians...Second, those quantitatively-oriented historians who might be predisposed to use SNA’s specialized statistical methods constitute less than a quarter of the profession today, thus the risk of SNA finding its way into mainstream historical scholarship is low to start. Third, SNA’s data requirements are formidable. SNA demands evidence of social interaction among all members of a social system for a variety of behaviors, and thus necessitates a broad range of high-quality records for the place, time and activities being studied. Because historians are plagued by an incomplete historical record and imperfect understandings of past social relations, HSNA remains an inherently problematic enterprise. Yet despite conceptual, methodological and evidentiary obstacles, SNA possesses real potential for historical analysis.”\textsuperscript{47}

In this article, Wetherell directly engaged with the social historian Charles Tilly. He argued that social network analysis offered a way to meet what Tilly saw as the vital elements of social history: “(1) documenting large structural changes, (2) recognizing the experiences of ordinary people in the course of those changes, and (3) connecting the two.”\textsuperscript{48}

As Wetherell argued, by framing studies around social network analysis with the understanding that the methods of social network analysis will not always work due to


\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 125.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 126.
lack of sources, historians can make significant observations, particularly with regard to change over time. In his case study of the landed estate of Pinkenhof in Livland, a Russian province, during the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Wetherell demonstrated that social network analysis revealed change over time (or rather the lack of change).\(^49\) Using quantitative methods, he was able to understand the average household size, the number of their familial relationships, the number of marriages, and the number of connections between farmsteads that belonged to different kin and how many connections a single farmstead had on average to other farmsteads. Social network analysis provided the framework for arguing that while kinship played an important role in the society explored, interactions between farmers of different farmsteads was also significant in forging interfamilial ties. By comparing his findings to a comparable dataset in East York (Toronto, Canada), in which family and friend ties were split equally, Wetherell was able to argue that friendship connections played a stronger role in Pinkenhof, in which the relationships between family and friends was split closer to 1/3 to 2/3. Why? Because there were fewer immediate and extended family members. This allowed Wetherell to make a larger observation, that in the early modern world kinship played a different role than in the contemporary world. Most significant is what Wetherell stated about the application of social network analysis on historical periods. “Conceptualizing community as collections of personal relationships, however, provides historians with a blueprint for evaluating when, how, and why people in the past used kin and non-kin in the course of their lives.”\(^50\) In other words, historians can use the

\(^{49}\) Ibid., 135–142.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 143.
framework of social network analysis to frame questions and provide structure to their analysis of relationships visible in our sources.

As a historian, I am necessarily equally cautious as Wetherell about accepting and implementing the methods of social network analysis wholesale. Datasets for historians, particularly those of early medieval history, are fundamentally different than the datasets analyzed by sociologists and anthropologists who study living humans in their environment. While this was true for Wetherell’s early modern dataset, it is even more true of early medieval datasets where textual loss is far greater.

A point excluded by Wetherell, however, is how historians collate data, for historians gather and collate data differently than sociologists. While sociologists will often structure data collation through interviews and surveys, the early medievalist is not so fortunate, for his or her subjects are long deceased. While the sociologist can mine data from the internet via social media sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, the early medievalist must rely on the limited data that can be gathered via documents. And while the sociologist can fill gaps in datasets by gathering more data, the early medievalist has a very finite quantity of data that is easily exhausted. To study Alcuin’s epistolary network, for example, we have only 284/5 genuine letters. We cannot go out and gather more letters. They do not exist (or least have not yet been found). Like Wetherell, for these reasons, we must be cautious in accepting and implementing the methods of social network analysis, particularly ones that allow for the analyst to draw complex conclusions through large presumptions of humans, presumptions developed and rooted in the fields of psychology, sociology, and anthropology. Because these presumptions come with untestable dangers (because we have large gaps in our sources), I do not
employ many of the methods of social network analysis. Rather, like Wetherell, I use social network analysis to frame areas of targeted research, as demonstrated in Chapters One and later in this Introduction with Alcuin’s letter collections. I do this through two chief methods: graph theory and cluster analysis.

I.03: Data Visualization and Graph Theory

I render the data of my historical social network analysis through data visualization. I represent this data visually using the techniques and methods of graph theory.51 The use of graph theory to render a matrix or array of data on relationships in visual form developed during the twentieth century, as we have seen. But graph theory has a far earlier incipience than network theory. Graph theory developed with the mathematical problem “The Seven Bridges of Königsberg” which was eventually solved by a mathematician named Leonhard Euler in 1736.52 The problem centered around the city of Königsberg (modern-day Kaliningrad, Russia). The city had a north side and a south side bisected by a river. In the middle of the river were two islands. Connecting the islands to each other and to the north and south sides of the city, were seven bridges. The problem asked if one could touch all sides and islands and only cross a bridge once. In


52 On Euler and The Seven Bridges of Königsberg problem, see: Trudeau, *Introduction to Graph Theory*, 97 and 185–187; Barabási, *Network Science*, 42–44.
modern terminology, this problem requires one to find a path. Euler solved the problem by arguing that one can get rid of all unnecessary information, i.e. streets, buildings, water, etc. Instead, he reduced all salient information to what we now recognize today as nodes and edges. Nodes represent places, i.e. north side, south side, island 1, and island 2. What we now know today as edges represented all connections between those nodes; these connections were the seven bridges. Euler argued that it was not possible to touch all nodes and cross edges only once. The reason is a foundational rule of graph theory. All nodes cannot have a negative number of edges and be able to be traversed only once. One edge must be traversed twice. Euler saw his work as being a new way of solving geometrical problems, but today scholars recognize it as the foundation of graph theory, or the way in which we render mathematical problems visually through graphs. Relationships in a network are no different and in order to visually reveal how individuals form cliques and clusters, we must use mathematics. This chapter follows Euler’s premise. In order to analyze Scriptural commentators and their pedagogical and geographic relationships, we must disregard all material that is irrelevant. The information clouded a potential solution because it was not relevant to the problem.

For this reason, graphs today are not images, rather mathematical objects. This is because they represent data through math, specifically algebra. Mathematicians create algorithms in which researchers plug in variables to represent pieces of information that affect an object’s position on a graph. Different algorithms use different pieces of information and different algorithms give different weight to those pieces of information. One of the most common and essential pieces of information is something known as a node’s weight. This can be represented visually in two ways: the node’s position relative
to other nodes on the graph and the node’s size relative to other nodes in the graph. The former is part of most algorithms, but the latter is something usually added by the programmer for aesthetics. The increase in the size of a node does not affect its weight and position on the graph, relative to other nodes. A node’s position is determined by other factors, notably all other nodes’ respective weights in the graph. The most common way to calculate a node’s weight is by frequency of connections. In a force directed graph, these can be either the number of connections from, to, or from and to, that node.

In graph theory, it is important to distinguish between a node’s respective directions, because this affects how mathematicians, network theorists, and graph theorists play the game “Going for a Walk”. In this game, a player must calculate the distance between nodes. In some games, an actor can only travel between nodes via a path, i.e. a walk by which we go from one node to another and not vice versa, unless there is a reciprocal relationship. In other games, a player can use what are called semi-walks, that is, paths which allow the player to go back and forth regardless of direction. While this has significant real-world applications, most notably software that provides cars and people with directions from position x to position y, it does not carry weight in the data presented in this dissertation. The reason for this is because it presents a certain methodological issue. We do not always know the direction of a relationship or if that relationship was reciprocal and, if so, how. While programmers and theorists struggle with unknowns (and have in fact developed solutions for accounting for them), the inconsistency with which we have unknowns prevents us from using this common
method of graph theory. For this reason, all edges receive equal force direction. And for this reason, you will not see graphs in this dissertation with visually rendered force direction. In other words, all graphs used in this dissertation only take into account a node’s particular weight based on frequency.

Within a digital environment, historical social network analysis and the visualization of those networks has been employed by recent projects, such as Stanford’s The Republic of Letters and those hosted at Harvard’s Visualizing Historical Networks. The graph data explored in this dissertation will likewise be migrated to a web-based digital environment so that users can explore the data dynamic ways. While Visualizing Historical Networks relied on Gephi, this project will utilize Python to create static maps using NetworkX and Matplotlib and dynamic maps in HTML and JavaScript via the Pyvis module. The graphs produced by Pyvis allow for users to engage with data in dynamic ways and control the parameters of the graphs to suit their needs.

I.04: Cluster Analysis

When multiple nodes have multiple reciprocal and shared relationships represented in the math and, by default, the graph, the result is known as clustering.

53 For an example of coding with unknowns, see the blog entry: Rebecca Sutton Koeser, “Coding with Unknowns”, 5 December 2019 (https://cdh.princeton.edu/updates/2019/12/05/coding-unknowns/). She provides links to her Princeton GitHub account that hosts the Python functions for solving unknowns in her dataset, the Sylvia Beach Papers.


This is like the clique identified and discussed earlier, but it does not have the same mathematical prerequisites as the formal clique or even an n clique. As John Scott noted:

“The words ‘cluster’ and ‘clique’ are often used interchangeably... Even some recent methodological commentators have not distinguished between the two ideas... the concept of the clique can be given a strict sociometric definition from which a whole family of related concepts can be derived. The concept of the cluster needs also to be clearly defined as a separate and very distinct idea. The intuitive idea of a cluster corresponds to the idea of an area of relatively high density in a graph.”

Cluster analysis is the analysis of groupings of nodes and the exploration of how and why those clusters emerge in the data and, thereby, the graph. Those who engage in cluster analysis can frame questions about clusters that naturally exist when the data is mapped. We can cluster the data in two ways. Firstly, we can cluster the data based on hierarchical clustering in which we simply plot the data on a graph without connections between nodes, or we can cluster the data via network algorithms and generate a multiplex network map, or a multi-layer network map. In this dissertation, I opt for the latter because it allows us to more easily overlap multiple types of networks.

Cluster analysis has far more applications in mathematics and the sciences than it does for the humanities. For this dissertation, however, it provides the terminology and the methods for structuring our data and exploring those structures. Further, by hosting the data in a digital environment, we can explore data more efficiently.

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I.05: Data and Data Structures

I have referenced the term “data” multiple times throughout this introduction, but I have yet to define fully data and data structures. A single piece of information is a datum. The plural, data, is the collection of multiple pieces of data. Data can be anything from a name, i.e. Alcuin, to a type of text, i.e. a letter, to a place, i.e. Tours. Data in and of itself is entirely useless. It does not do anything. It is only when we make data relational that it gains utility. The way in which we make data relational is through data structures. As all of the digital methods in this dissertation are rooted in Python, I shall adhere to Pythonic terminology. This terminology will be particularly relevant when I discuss the output of functions that have quantified results.

Data can be divided into three categories: numbers, strings, and Booleans. Numbers are divided into three different categories: integers, floats, and complex numbers. Integers are whole numbers, i.e. 1, 2, 3, etc. Floats, on the other hand, are numbers that contain decimal points, i.e. 1.2, 2.0, 3.5, etc. There is also a third category of numbers, complex numbers, such as $i$ (the square root of -1). In Pythonic syntax, numbers are created without any signifiers, i.e. quotation marks or brackets. While this distinction may not appear significant on the surface, in processing data for a machine it makes a large difference. Strings are anything that contains text, i.e. “one”, “two”, “three”, etc. In Pythonic syntax, these are delineated with quotation marks. Booleans, as noted above, are True and False. With these three categories of data, we can classify and structure every piece of data in the world.

When it comes to data, nothing is more important to consider than proper data structure. Data handled and manipulated in Excel, for example, can take hours, if not
days to process, even if fully automated. That same data can take seconds or minutes via other, faster data structures, such as JSON. For this reason, in this dissertation, I store my data in JSON files which I make available via UKnowledge under “Additional files”.

I.06: Temporal Networks

In the above-mentioned discussion of Wetherell’s article on historical social network analysis, Wetherell excluded from his assessment temporality. As historians, we naturally study change over time. The incorporation of time in networks is a more recent trend and it brings certain serious methodological considerations for the historian. In Naoki Masuda and Renaud Lambiotte’s work, *A Guide to Temporal Networks*, they revealed the dangers with which we can make false assumptions based on viewing networks collectively without accounting for time. Masuda and Lambiotte used a dataset of connections between individuals in a grade school. The data was rendered in network maps without temporal elements and then with temporal elements. They revealed that if one wished to identify influence within this network, one would make a general observation that certain students were connected to other students. However, when a temporal element was added, we could see that those potentials for interaction were not equal. In fact, some were far fewer and far briefer.

The methods for handling temporal data in modern social networks is fundamentally different from how we handle temporal data with early medieval datasets. The reason again goes back to the number of unknowns we have and, more importantly,

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58 Ibid., 2–3.
the inconsistency of those unknowns. The dataset of Alcuin’s letters, for example, prevents us from assigning firm dates for his letters. If we know the month and year of a letter, that is considered remarkable. A good letter date will have a year or a two-year range. For most of Alcuin’s letters our dates are even less certain. How then, do we account for this in our networks and graphs? I am currently developing methods for handling this methodological problem, but for now, the answer is, unfortunately, that there is no good way to account for this. For this reason, I supply the dating in the prose, when relevant, and not in the output of functions.

This need to consider time justifies the need for the micro-examination of clusters so that false conclusions will not be made about the roles of the clusters in networks. In Chapters Three and Four, therefore, I provide dates as concretely as possible and only make deductions about two individuals having come in contact at a cluster when the evidence explicitly reveals two individuals being in the same place at the same time.

I.07: The Role of Python in this Study

This dissertation utilizes the powerful language of Python. This decision was not arbitrary but rooted in a single idea—Python is the language of data science. It is the language of data science because of the immense community it has and the many modules/libraries available for Python developers, modules such as NetworkX and Pyvis (shown above) that allow us to process and structure network data (NetworkX) and map it (Pyvis). Python is a dynamic or interpreted object-oriented programming language, which means that all data is rendered as an object and a lot of the processes run by Python occur in the runtime, rather than the compiler. Because of this, Python
benchmarks at a rate lower than functional programming languages. Scientists and analysts use Python, however, because the code is easy to read (compared to C) and far quicker to write and test. This means that we can use Python to go from idea, to concept, and to testing, far more quickly. This trade-off was considered in the selection of Python at the early stages of this dissertation.

One of the problems in approaching Python for humanists is the idea that it is a programming language. Python is well-recognized as a language that is easy to learn because of its use of “white space” (forced indents) to delineate blocks of code and simply syntax. Because of this, scholars should consider it as an entry-level programming language. More importantly, scholars should view Python not as a programming language, rather as a tool. If we think of Python as a DH tool, rather than programming language, new possibilities emerge. Although we must interact with this DH tool through code, we can do powerful things very quickly because we can call established and tested functions and classes from other modules/libraries developed by data scientists, academics, and general pythonistas (those who are part of the Python community).

By processing and handling data in Python, we can control the data without a reliance on web-based DH tools. For example, rather than map data with Stanford’s Palladio, which requires CSV (which presents serious problems if a category of data is a list or has multiple values), we can map data with NetworkX, Matplotlib, and Pyvis.\(^{59}\) If we want that data to have a geospatial element, we do not need to look up geocodes to map the data in Palladio. Instead, we can use the module GeoPy’s function Nominatim, which finds and returns all geocodes based on place name, and then pass that data

\(^{59}\) Palladio, (https://hdlab.stanford.edu/palladio/)
through the functions of Folium to map that data geospatially. If one has geodata for 500 places, this can be fully automated and done within a few minutes (including the time to write the 15 lines of code), rather than days (the time it would take to look up all geocodes for places and then store them in Excel or as a CSV). This is best demonstrated with the code below and the resulting map (used in Chapter Four).

```
import folium
from geopy.geocoders import Nominatim
path = "data.xlsx"
geolocator = Nominatim(user_agent="Carolingian")
places = ["Tours, France", "Auxerre, France", "Frankfurt, Germany", "Ferrières, France", "Fulda, Germany"]
color = ["green", "purple", "blue", "purple", "orange"]
m = folium.Map(location=[47.3941, 0.6848], zoom_start=5)
x=0
for i in places:
    place = geolocator.geocode(i)
    print(place.latitude, place.longitude)
    tooltip = f"{i}"
    folium.Marker([place.latitude, place.longitude],
    popup=f"<strong>{i}</strong>", tooltip=tooltip,
    icon=folium.Icon(color=color[x])).add_to(m)
x=x+1
m.save("map.html")
```

![Figure I.6: Example of Code to Find Geospatial Coordinates](image)

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Figure I.7: Example of Output from Folium

While tools like Palladio are useful tools for those who cannot program, that utility comes at a cost, notably the ability to control the data, account for inconsistencies in the data, manipulate it, and produce specific results one may want to see.

In using Python, therefore, we can control our data in ways not possible with existing DH tools. More importantly, we are not constricted by their limitations. With Python modules, we can recreate existing DH tools quickly and implement them effectively with little or no bugs because the functions imported into Python have already been tested. More importantly, we can create functions tailored to the specific needs of
the current dataset. The speed with which we can do this is one of the chief reasons this dissertation utilizes Python.

For all of these reasons, I opted to use Python as a way to analyze data. I rely chiefly on three modules for my analysis—NetworkX (to handle the network data), PyVis (to visualize the network data), and Tkinter (to create the graphic user interface). The functions developed for this dissertation to quantify and analyze Alcuin’s letter collections, the functions for quantifying the TMTCBC dataset, and the source code for the Carolingian Exegetes Network Mapper (which has a GUI for easier use) will be placed in the UKnowledge along with this dissertation under “Additional Files”.

1.08: Identifying a Network of Commentators (780–820)

To identify clusters of Scriptural commentators (780–820) in the Carolingian realm, Chapter One provides a chronological overview of identifiable Carolingian Scriptural commentators, their works, networks, teachers, and places of education. This reveals pedagogical relationships and allows us to identify clusters of commentators within an overarching Carolingian network of commentators. This chapter demonstrates that some Carolingian commentators had relationships to other known Carolingian commentators either directly or indirectly through an intermediary with strong ties (such as “family and friends”) or weak ties (such as “acquaintances”).

For Chapter One, my chief sources are the *Vita Alcuini*, extant letters of the scriptural commentators, and their commentaries, whose prefaces are rich in data for

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framing networks. These sources are collated with existing prosopographical studies on the Carolingians and charters. In presenting these networks, I build upon the prosopographical research of, among others, Philippe Depreux, whose *Prosopographie de l’entourage de Louis le Pieux (781–840)* allows ready identification of the individuals within the social, political, and familial networks of Louis the Pious (d. 840), although it rarely mentions the role of exegetes in their pedagogical networks.

Chapter One utilizes social network analysis, whose goal, as noted above is to present relationships between various nodes, which are, in our case, individuals and places. One tenet of social network theory is that individuals behave differently with different people. In other words, how a student interacts with a teacher is different than how a student interacts with his or her parent or a sibling. Therefore, one cannot group all relationships between nodes as a single network; instead, one must organize relationships

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into various networks based upon the types of relationships. Throughout this dissertation, therefore, I organize networks into the following types: pedagogical, political, ecclesiastical, social, and networks of commentators. At times, as is natural, networks will intersect, and an individual will have various types of relationships with a single person. In these instances, one individual will appear repeatedly in multiple networks of another. When possible, therefore, I represent these complex relationships by discussing multiple networks for each commentator discussed. As a result, we can see how an individual’s political network incorporates other known commentators and, therefore, allow us to understand better how they interacted with their peers and fellow exegetes.

I have limited Chapter One temporally, geographically, and semantically in order to narrow its scope. Temporally, I begin with the first Carolingian commentators of the 780s up 820. In other words, I do not address those writing in the mid-ninth to early-tenth centuries. If a commentator wrote a commentary prior to 820 and wrote others after 820, I provide those later works. This is particularly true of the commentaries of Hrabanus. Geographically, I only consider those who are known to have produced commentaries while residing within the Carolingian kingdom(s) or empire. Semantically, I limit the scope of Chapter One by understanding the term “exegete” narrowly. I look at only those who wrote full or partial Biblical commentaries on a single book, letter, or a collection of either. In other words, I do not investigate exegetes who wrote homilies, nor those who used Scripture to shape acta of councils or to present exegetical arguments in letters. Later in this dissertation, however, I expand these parameters as I investigate Alcuin’s role in exegesis.
In Chapter One, I argue that there were three identifiable clusters of Carolingian Scriptural commentators (780–820): Charlemagne’s Palace, Lyons, and Tours. I argue that in order to understand these clusters and understand how and why they emerge in our data, one must begin to explore them on a micro-level by asking several important questions. Firstly, why were these sites particularly suited to house and train Scriptural commentators? Secondly, in what context did the masters arrive and train exegetes? Thirdly, why were particular masters (Alcuin and Leidrad) suited to train exegetes? It is only after we examine each of these clusters on a micro-level that we can begin to relate them to one another within the larger network of commentators identified in Chapter One.

I.9: The Cluster of Tours and Alcuin’s School

The remainder of the dissertation begins to address these questions by exploring a single site, Tours, on a micro-level and the chief educator there, Alcuin. Alcuin was an Anglo-Saxon who arrived on the Continent in the 780s and shortly after entered Charlemagne’s entourage where he remained intermittently, moving between Anglo-Saxon England and the intellectual institutions of the Continent, before finally settling in Tours in 796.

One of the chief questions in cluster analysis is why clusters exist. Without asking this fundamental question, clusters have no context and the chance for misinterpretation is great. Was one piece of data overrepresented that does not, in fact, have any relevance? A question such as this cannot be answered without closer analysis. For this reason, I structure the remainder of the dissertation around an over-arching question. Why do we
see Tours exist as a cluster in our data? We see that those who wrote Scriptural commentaries were connected to Tours geographically, that is to say, we know that at least two Scriptural commentators resided there for a period of time—Alcuin and Hrabanus. As will become clear in Chapters Three and Four, two other identifiable people in Tours wrote works of Scriptural exegesis (defined broadly), notably Candidus and Fredegis, resided in Tours or communicated with those at Tours. We also see that one of those Scriptural commentators was connected to Tours and Alcuin pedagogically—Hrabanus. Candidus and Fredegis too were connected to Alcuin pedagogically, but their formal education appears to have taken place much earlier than Alcuin’s arrival in Tours in 796. Nevertheless, as will become clear in Chapter Four, Alcuin continued to teach them via letters from Tours; this teaching was moral and exegetical in nature. The question then is, did Tours function as a cluster because of its geographic and institutional significance or because of Alcuin’s pedagogical significance? I argue that it was a combination of both, but Alcuin’s role was the primary reason. Tours’ importance as a city and the importance of the institutions in and around the city were some of the reasons why Alcuin was placed in Tours and, therefore, is a secondary reason for its existence. In other words, Alcuin arrived in Tours because Tours was geographically, politically, religiously, and institutionally significant. Alcuin’s presence in Tours, in turn, meant that individuals came to Tours to study under Alcuin, one of whom was Hrabanus.

To argue this, I explore Tours’ early history (Chapter Two), Alcuin’s role as a teacher and how he would have structured his school at Tours (Chapter Three) and Alcuin’s use of letters as a way to maintain contact with individuals across the realm and
continue to teach his former pupils and engage in the production and dissemination of exegesis (Chapter Four). By structuring the problem in this way, I provide several significant contributions. First, I provide for the first time a clear survey of Tours’ early history in English. Tours was one of the most significant cities in the western portion of the Frankish realm and yet anglophone scholarship has largely ignored its early history with a few exceptions. These exceptions are either temporally, personally, or thematically narrow in focus.63 Second, I can provide a clear understanding of how Alcuin instructed students by studying closely his pedagogy as defined in his letters and didactic treatises. Third, I provide for the first time an assessment of Alcuin’s known students (796–804). Fourth, I demonstrate the degree to which Alcuin prioritized pedagogy and how he used his letters to continue to not only to maintain contact with his network, but exercise influence over those in it and continue to teach those from whom he was separated in Tours. Fifth, I reveal the context of Alcuin’s production of Scriptural commentaries in Tours, those he trained at or from Tours who would later go on to write Scriptural commentaries, and those who assisted in the production and dissemination of Scriptural commentaries. In other words, by examining Tours, Alcuin, and Alcuin’s use of letters, we will not only have a clear understanding of why Tours emerged as a cluster, but a significant understanding of the production and dissemination of Scriptural commentaries produced by those connected to Tours and Alcuin’s training of Scriptural commentators and exegetes in general at or from Tours during his tenure there (796–804). I argue that

Alcuin’s pedagogical sources indicate that Alcuin structured his education around the liberal arts, which he viewed as the steps necessary to access Scripture, but that the training and investigation of Scriptural exegesis, the skill necessary to produce a Scriptural commentary, was reserved for more advanced students with whom he imparted this knowledge via letters.

As will be discussed later, it is difficult to place Alcuin with absolute certainty in any individual place at a specific time with few exceptions until 796 when he arrives in Tours. While Alcuin is certainly one of the more studied Carolingian intellectuals of the late-eighth century, he is also one of the most problematic. The thing that makes Alcuin so fascinating to study is the same thing that makes him such a methodological danger, that is, the dramatic imbalance in the survival of Alcuinian sources, most notably, his letters, compared to the survival of sources from his contemporaries. Alcuin has left us nearly three hundred letters. No contemporary comes close to having left us such quantity of data. The nearest Carolingian comparisons are the corpora of letters left to us from Hincmar of Rheims, recently reedited by Rudolf Scheiffer, and Lupus of Ferrières. But Hincmar and Lupus were both writing in a much different time, a generation after Alcuin’s death in 804. No one from Alcuin’s generation comes close to having left us such a large quantity of source material.

As Carolingian scholar Rachel Stone has indicated on her blog entitled *Magistra et Mater*, with this imbalance in Alcuinian sources comes the necessary caution that such

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an imbalance makes the result of any analysis of Alcuin disproportionate to his contemporaries in ways impossible to know. 65 Stone argued that Alcuin presents a danger to historians who may view him and his network as something unique in a rather dark world. Unfortunately, there is not a clear solution for handling this methodological problem because any attempt to account for this in models or our understanding of Alcuin, necessarily applies an unknown variable to our sources which creates, in turn, a much larger methodological issue. In other words, if we try to create a balance of Alcuinian sources with evidence that does not exist but presumed to have existed, we venture into dangerous methodological territory. We cannot alter our data to reflect something that is not reflected in the sources. Nor can we ignore the evidence available to us, especially for a place and period where sources are so scant. We must, therefore, proceed with the data that we have with the understanding that it may be skewed in ways impossible to know.

It is through this cautious lens that I approach Alcuin and his tenure at Tours. I do not presume that Alcuin and the school that he formed at Tours were unique. Nor do I presume that Alcuin and his school at Tours were not unique. This cognitive dissonance is the necessary bane of any student of Alcuin. The portrait of Alcuin the Educator I present in this chapter is that of an Alcuin reflected in the extant sources. I identify what the pedagogue and his pedagogy looked like against the backdrop of broader Carolingian education to discern what made Alcuin a particularly strong educator during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

I.10: Carolingian Education

Because this dissertation looks closely at Alcuin’s role as an educator in the Carolingian realm, something should be said of Carolingian education generally. Studying education and teachers in the Carolingian period is a challenging quest. John J. Contreni once wrote that “our view of education and learning remains largely static—partly because of the nature of the evidence and also partly because of the historical enterprise itself.” Contreni was speaking generally about Carolingian education.

Approaching Alcuin as an educator is a little different but not without its challenges. Our evidence for his role as a master is substantially more documented than any of his contemporaries in the Carolingian realm, for we have didactic treatises and letters in which the pedagogue is exposed, and his pedagogy revealed. We do not, however, have an explicitly defined pedagogy from Alcuin in the modern sense of the genre, nor do we have concrete evidence of how he conducted his classroom, nor can we say conclusively how his pedagogy developed and changed over time as some of his texts and letters are difficult to date with any certainty. The images we have are, as Contreni said regarding Carolingian schools generally, “static”, merely snippets of information from singular moments. Nevertheless, by understanding Alcuin’s place within the contexts of Carolingian education, these letters and didactic treatises, which form this study, can be

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balanced against our knowledge of Carolingian schools generally to reveal the nuances of Alcuin’s methods and his emphases in the classroom and their respective significance.

In balancing a reading of Alcuin the educator against the backdrop of Carolingian education, I follow the example of Anna A. Grotans who examined the school of St. Gall and stated: “the methods of instruction, composition of student body, the curriculum and set-up of schools could vary greatly from place to place and over time”, yet understanding other schools is vital, for Grotans continues to state that through “general reference points we can gain insight into the possible situation at St. Gall.”67 The same holds true for Alcuin and his pedagogy.

As noted above, scholars of medieval education no longer view the period between the so-called “fall” of the Roman Empire in the fifth century and the rise of the Carolingian schools in the late-eighth century as a “dark age.” This outdated model suggested that when the Roman empire “had fallen,” education ceased across Europe, and it was not until the rise of Charlemagne and his so-called “educational reform” that this was corrected. Pierre Riché challenged this view and demonstrated that education did not cease in 476. It continued to thrive but was gradually relegated to monasteries.68 While Riché saw continuity between these two periods, he suggested that there were two Carolingian “renaissances”, a small one under Charlemagne and a much larger renaissance under Charles the Bald.

67 Anna A Grotans, Reading in Medieval St. Gall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 52.
Though Riché’s thesis has held sway, it has not been without its challengers. This is particularly true of the later Merovingian and early Carolingian periods, that is, the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Giles Brown has shown, for example, that Riché’s desire to show continuity between the Romans and the Carolingians came at the expense of disproportionately underrepresenting the evidence we have for change during the early medieval period. Riché viewed St. Denis, for example, as an example of continuity and center of learning during the period 650–750. As Brown notes, Riché’s view largely rested on three false assumptions:

“firstly that the historical source known as the Liber historiae Francorum was put together here in the late 720s, secondly that the young Pippin III was sent to be educated here by his father Charles Martel, and thirdly that a sacramentary was written and illuminated here during Pippin’s reign.”

Brown then demonstrates how each of these points are now understood to be untrue or that the extant evidence does not sustain Riché’s assertion when tested. Brown’s argument here was not that Riché’s thesis was inaccurate, rather that scholars need to test more rigorously Riché’s argument for continuity. Evidence for continuity in places like Spain and centers of education in Francia, like Corbie, is not indicative of continuity across Francia and certainly not evidence for continuity across Europe. This is particularly true of the period 650–750. Change did exist. To understand the nuances of this continuity and change and the degree to which we see one over the other, scholars

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must investigate a center of education independently of other centers of education in order to test the validity of the Riché thesis.

Building upon Riché’s work, Yitzhak Hen has more recently contributed to the Riché thesis by showing that when Charlemagne enacted his so-called “educational reform” and gathered scholars into his court beginning in the 780s, he was functioning within a well-established tradition of courtly education with the closest chronological example being that of his father-in-law Desiderius and his court of Lombardy in the mid-eighth century, which was based in Pavia.\(^7_0\)

How and why these schools (whether in monasteries or centers of power like royal courts) formed is difficult to determine on a broad scale and is usually done on a case-by-case basis. There is evidence, however, to suggest that the Carolingians, beginning with Charlemagne, were interested in funding the forming (or reforming) of schools across their realm. This can be seen in the *Epistola generalis*, *Admonitio generalis*, and *Epistola de litteris colendis* under Charlemagne’s reign in the 780s and 790s.\(^7_1\) These documents sought to provide a framework for improving and structuring education across the realm by educating young boys, controlling the production of manuscripts, and structuring education generally. Shortly after the temporal limits of this


dissertation, similar sustained efforts can be seen in the sixth chapter of the *Capitulare Olonnense ecclesiasticum primum* of Lothar’s reign in his newly acquired Carolingian sub-kingdom of Italy in 825. In this capitulary, we see the demand for a systematized educational reform in Italy by using centers of power and religious institutions as centers of education by having bishops and respected masters organize schools across the realm and having nearby cities send their students to them. Again, we see another effort in

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the Council of Paris (829) under the reign of Louis the Pious. This council produced a canon that called for public schools.\textsuperscript{74}

One should not, however, view these decrees as examples of educational reform, rather one should view them as simply decrees for intended reform. Scholars such as Contreni and Stofferahn, who view these mandates as having some effect draw comparisons between these decrees and the localized actions that follow these decrees, such as Theodulf of Orléan’s desire to create schools and Archbishop Herardus of Tours’s (855–866) desire to have schools developed to train priests.\textsuperscript{75} But measuring the direct impact of these mandates is difficult, for there is no clear evidentiary line between Theodulf and Herardus’ respective desires to form schools, the creation of new commentaries, and the survival of eighth-century manuscripts to the mandates themselves. Because we do not have direct evidence linking the reforms to the changes we witness afterwards and, thereby cannot establish a causality, such an argument runs the risk of the tempting fallacy \textit{post hoc ergo propter hoc}.

In this study, we will study Alcuin’s school through his letters. Contreni has shown the value letters provide for the study of an educator when he examined John Scottus, even suggesting that Alcuin’s letters can particularly be used to glean the pedagogy of the master.\textsuperscript{76} Michael Fox too has demonstrated that Alcuin’s letters are key

\textsuperscript{74} On the Council of Paris (829) and the further influences detected during the ninth century, see: Stofferahn, 155.


to understanding Alcuin’s views of education and his role as an educator. As such, these shall frame nearly the entire investigation into Alcuin as a teacher.

I.11: Alcuin’s Letters and their Transmission

Because Chapters Three and Four rely chiefly on Alcuin’s letters, something should be said about this significant dataset and how it has come down to us. In what follows, I largely summarize Donald Bullough’s groundbreaking analysis of Alcuin’s letters and their transmission, and his identification of contemporary and near contemporary collections of letters. I include quantitative (number of letters) and qualitative (the letter numbers) data about the collections in the footnotes which are reinforced with network maps in the body. The manuscript data was gathered from the MGH edition of the letters without separation of genuine Alcuinian letters from non-genuine Alcuinian letters. The data, located in the JSON file “collections_data.json”, is hosted on UKnowledge with this dissertation under “Additional Files”. The Python functions used to provide quantitative and qualitative results (rendered in the footnotes) is also located on UKnowledge under the name “Alcuin_Letter_Collections.py”. Descriptions for how to use these functions is located in the readme file entitled “Alcuin_ReadMe.txt”. In the footnotes I detail the function used to render the quantitative and qualitative data. These footnotes have a single number (the number of

di studi sulla spiritualità medievale, nuova serie, 1 (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 1989), 84–86.


78 Bullough, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation, pp. 43–102.
letters for the respective search) and then a list of letters returned from that search. I keep these results in their Python format (a tuple within which is an integer (number of letters returned) and a list (the letters returned)) so that the reader can easily copy-and-paste the results should he or she wish to interact the data further without modification.

Alcuin’s letters survive primarily from the later period of his life when there was an active attempt by Alcuin and his colleagues to preserve his correspondence. Of the 283-285 letters that Bullough securely assigned to being genuine letters of Alcuin,

“no letter is to be dated before the early 780s, only fifteen of the two hundred and eighty-three/five are certainly or almost certainly, and a further seven possibly, earlier than the last months of 793; and a very few years at the turn of the century, say 798–801–are disproportionately well-represented.”

As noted above, such a disproportionate representation of Alcuin’s life has four large methodological implications. First, it means that the extant data cannot be taken as evidence of a complete picture of the man behind the pen. Second, it means that the immense survival of letters compared to Alcuin’s contemporaries and near contemporaries cannot be taken as evidence for his supreme importance within an overarching Carolingian intellectual network. In other words, should we map out the data of Carolingian letters, Alcuin’s node would be necessarily misrepresented as he would have a far larger position within such a network, not because of his supreme importance, rather because of the rare large amount of data we have for a portion of his life. Third, it means that certain geographic regions are overrepresented. Tied to this issue is a fourth issue, that is, certain individuals are overrepresented.

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Alcuin’s letters survive in chiefly five collections, with some overlap and some smaller collections that contain some of the letters from different collections. There are the T/K Collections which are closely associated with Tours. Next, we have the S1 collection associated with Salzburg and compiled at roughly the same time as the T/K collection. In addition to these two, we also have the A collection which is connected to England. Next, we have the H-H2 collection which was possibly a personal collection of Alcuin’s letters. Finally, we have the D collection, Bullough’s “Anomalous Collection”, which primarily deals with letters of theological and exegetical issues. Let us explore each of these more closely.

I.12.01: T and K Collections of Tours

The largest combined-collection of Alcuin’s letters are certainly the T and K collections which represent the combined-collection of Tours. In total, the Tours collection (across T and K manuscripts) contains 116 letters (image below).80 In these images, pink circular nodes are manuscripts and square teal nodes are letters.

Figure I.8: The Network of the Tours Collection

Of these 116 letters, there are a total of 41 letters crossing both the T and K Collections (image below).\(^{81}\)

\(^{81}\) Output from get_common_letters() function when four manuscripts were passed (T, T*, K1, and K2): (41, ['13', '17', '31', '33', '34', '35', '36', '37', '38', '39', '40', '43', '44', '49', '51', '52', '63', '71', '74', '82', '84', '86', '90', '91', '94', '95', '121', '126', '136', '138', '139', '142', '145', '149', '154', '168', '170', '171', '172', '174', '178'])
Figure I.9: Overlap of the T, T*, K1, and K2 Manuscripts
The T and T* manuscripts have 64 overlapping letters (left image). The T* manuscript is the largest collection with ninety-nine letters (center image). The T manuscript is smaller with only seventy-seven letters (right image).


The T manuscripts together have a total of 112 letters (image below), making it nearly
double the size of the K collection (sixty-five letters, see below) and representing over a
third of Alcuin’s letters.85

85 Output from find_collections() function when two manuscripts were passed (T and T*): (112, ['13', '17',
'19', '30', '31', '32', '33', '34', '35', '36', '37', '38', '39', '40', '43', '44', '49', '51', '52', '53', '63', '64', '71', '74', '76',
'77', '79', '82', '84', '85', '86', '90', '91', '94', '95', '110', '121', '126', '136', '138', '139', '142', '143', '145', '148',
'40', '41', '42', '43', '44', '47', '48', '49', '51', '52', '53', '60', '61', '62', '63', '64', '71', '74', '75', '76', '77', '79', '82',
'229', '231', '238', '240', '257', '261', '289', '300', '305', '308', '309'])
Figure I.13: Overlap between $T$ and $T^*$ Manuscripts
The K1 and K2 have sixty-three overlapping letters, the majority of which appear in both collections. K2 has the same sixty-three letters that overlap. The only letters that do not overlap between the two are additional letters in K1 with a total of sixty-five letters.

Using Python, we can compare these two lists in different ways. First, we compare these two lists in Python using the set function. When we do, we can see that two letters that

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are unique to K1 are Epp. 53 and 19. Second, we can compare the data visually with the image below in which we see Epp. 53 and 19 removed from the K1/K2 cluster, mathematically indicating their appearance in a single manuscript because they are each connected to a single manuscript, K2.

![Figure I.17: The K1 and K2 Manuscripts](image)

These Tours collections were put together during and shortly after Alcuin’s lifetime. The T collection is the larger form of the collection, while the K collection is the

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89 The pythonic method for finding the difference between these two lists: `((set(K1).difference(K2)))`
shorter version of T. In Dümmler’s edition, these collections are represented primarily by four manuscripts: T and T* and K1 and K2 (Dümmler’s sigla).

The T manuscript is Troyes, BM 1165 and the letters are found on fols. 1–86v. It was produced by five scribes at Saint-Martin’s, likely during the earlier years of Fredegis’ abbacy, which proceeds Alcuin’s death in 804. Originally, the manuscript held ninety-four Alcuin letters. T* (BAV Reg lat. 272), on the other hand “must be regarded either as an independent copy of the exemplar of the Troyes manuscript or, which seems more likely, as a copy of a collateral (‘twin’) of the latter,” a “third-party collation.” K2 (St. Gallen, Stiftsbibl., cod. 271) is the earlier of the two shorter versions of T, being written in St. Gall in the 820s while K1 (BL Royal 8.E. xv) is the later, being written in northeast France, likely, according to Bullough, St.-Vaast, probably in the third quarter of the ninth century.

“The letters in this particular category seem to reflect an attempt, not long after Alcuin’s arrival at St. Martin’s, to create a ‘formula letter book’, perhaps intended for his pupils rather than for himself and reflecting his own earlier experiences in the York community. The collection (K) of which it subsequently became an integral part is, by contrast, the first Tours attempt at a more comprehensive, but still selective, collection of Alcuin’s recent correspondence.”

As Bullough explains, part of the significance of the Tours collections is not necessarily what they contain, rather what they omit. What these omissions mean, is

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92 Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, pp. 61-62. There was also a now lost “ancestor” which Bullough referred to as K3.

difficult to discern entirely, however. Were they conscious exclusions? Bullough suggests they were, at least in some cases. There were three significant omissions to Bullough. Firstly, the Tours collections do not contain a letter from Alcuin wrote to the monks of Saint Martin; this is surprising as the T and K collections were created at Tours. This is immediately remedied, however, by Bullough’s corrected dating of the letter to a time before Alcuin’s arrival, dating which explains why Alcuin was writing to the monks of a father who was not himself. Secondly, the T collection does not contain the letters to Arn of Salzburg, but again, Bullough explains that this may be the result of awareness of those at Tours that those at Salzburg were already collecting or about to begin collecting Alcuin’s letters to Arn. Most significant to Bullough, was the clear omission of letters related to Adoptionism. Bullough provides fewer concrete explanations here, and cites earlier scholarship proposing that the attempts to collect letters on Adoptionism was an intentional omission from the letters of the Tours collection. 94

I.12.02: The A Collection of England

The A-Collection is connected to England, specifically York. It is chiefly represented by three manuscripts identified by Dümmler: A1* (Bullough’s Vesp.), A1 (Bullough’s Tib.), and A2. Dümmler’s A1 is London BL Cotton Tiberius A. xv. It is dated to the late-tenth or eleventh century, specifically the period 970–1070, but Bullough suspects it is closer to “the beginning of the century” and assembled in multiple

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94 For more information on the omissions from the T collection manuscripts, see: Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, pp. 66-67.
stages.\textsuperscript{95} Dümmel’s A1* (Bullough’s \textit{Vesp.}) is BL Cotton Vespasian A. xic pt. iii.

Debate settles on Worcester as place of origin with a date not later than 1016.\textsuperscript{96} At some point in its history, Bullough believed it ended up at York as a library book.\textsuperscript{97} Dümmel’s A2 is BL Cotton Vespasian A. xiv. It was made specifically for Archbishop Wulfstan (1002–1023), “possibly in York.”\textsuperscript{98}

This collection has a total of 117 letters (image below), making it one letter larger than the Tours Collection, which had 116 letters.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{95} Bullough, \textit{Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation}, p. 81. On these stages, see particularly pp. 81–89.

\textsuperscript{96} Bullough, \textit{Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation}, pp. 97.

\textsuperscript{97} Bullough, \textit{Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation}, pp. 101.

\textsuperscript{98} Rodney M. Thompson, \textit{William of Malmesbury} (New York: Boydell, 2003), p. 154–155. On the seventeen letters of Alcuin found in William of Malmesbury’s history, see particularly pp. 154–167. William likely had access to A1 (p. 155) or a similar manuscript now lost, possibly an even better text or the exemplar of A1 (p. 156).

Unlike the Tours Collection, however, the vast majority of the A-Collection letters do not overlap, numbering only thirteen (image below). This is far less than the forty-one that overlap across all four Tours manuscripts. For this reason, I consider the “collection”
smaller than the Tours collection because of its significant variance across all manuscripts.

Figure I.19: The Overlap of the A Collection of Manuscripts
Of these manuscripts, A1* contains the largest number of Alcuin’s letters at 113 (center image below).\(^\text{102}\) The next largest is A1 at fifty-five letters (left image below).\(^\text{103}\) A2 is the smallest with only twenty-eight letters (right image below).\(^\text{104}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A1</th>
<th>A1*</th>
<th>A2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Figure I.20: The A1 Manuscript" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Figure I.21: The A1* Manuscript" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Figure I.22: The A2 Manuscript" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This lack of overlap between the A collection is partly due to A1’s connection to a now lost copy of the K collection, what Bullough calls “K3”.\(^\text{105}\) We can see A’s connection to

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\(^{104}\) Output from `find_collections()` function when one manuscript was passed (A2): (28, ['7', '8', '10', '16', '17', '18', '19', '20', '30', '43', '45', '46', '65', '66', '67', '96', '103', '114', '116', '127', '128', '209', '235', '256', '273', '274', '292', '293'])

\(^{105}\) Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, 83.
the K and T manuscripts by viewing the data quantitatively. A1 and K1 and K2 have together 103 letters between them all.\textsuperscript{106}

Of these letters, there are 16 overlapping letters between A1, K1, and K2 (image below).\textsuperscript{107}


\textsuperscript{107} Output from \texttt{get\_common\_letters()} function when three manuscripts were passed (A1, K1, K2): (16, ['5', '11', '13', '17', '28', '31', '33', '35', '39', '43', '44', '49', '65', '99', '136', '178'])
When compared to A1’s connections with the T manuscripts, we see 150 letters in total (image below).\textsuperscript{108} There is an overlap of thirteen letters across all three manuscripts and fifteen with T.\textsuperscript{109}


\textsuperscript{109} Overlap of all letters: Output from \texttt{get\_common\_letters()} function when three manuscripts were passed (A1, T, and T\textsuperscript{*}): (13, ['13', '17', '19', '30', '31', '33', '35', '39', '43', '44', '49', '136', '178'])
Overlap of A1 and T: Output from `get_common_letters()` function when two manuscripts were passed (A1 and T): (15, ['5', '11', '13', '17', '19', '30', '31', '33', '35', '39', '43', '44', '49', '136', '178'])

Output from `get_common_letters()` function when two manuscripts were passed (A1 and T*): Overlap with T*: (15, ['13', '17', '19', '30', '31', '33', '35', '39', '43', '44', '49', '128', '136', '178', '209'])
It total, the A1, T, T*, K1, and K2 manuscripts all share eleven letters (image below).\textsuperscript{110}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{overlap.png}
\caption{The Overlap between A1 and the Tours Collection}
\end{figure}

Quantitatively, the degree of overlap between A1 and the T and K manuscripts is only two letters fewer than A1’s overlap with A1* and A2 which, as noted above, share thirteen letters in common. The significant overlap between A1 and the T and K manuscripts occurs in the middle of the A1 collection, as noted by Bullough, and

\footnote{\textsuperscript{110} Output from \texttt{find\_collections()} function when five manuscripts were passed (A1, T, T*, K1, and K2):\texttt{(11, ['13', '17', '31', '33', '35', '39', '43', '44', '49', '136', '178'])}}
demonstrates the development of this collection, in which compilers used material from both England and the Continent.\textsuperscript{111}

I.12.03: The S1 Collection of Salzburg

Another large collection is that of Salzburg, notably S1 and its close copy S1*. Also closely connected to these manuscripts are S1a and S1b. Together, these four manuscripts have sixty-two letters (image below).\textsuperscript{112}

\textsuperscript{111} Bullough, \textit{Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation}, 83–84.
The greatest degree of overlap occurs between $S_1$ and $S_1^*$ which combined represent all sixty-two letters (without strict overlap). Together, they have forty-six letters overlapping (image below).
The S1a-S1b cluster have a combined seven letters between the two of them. They have an overlap of six letters with Ep. 294, being the letter that occurs solely in S1b (image below).

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115 Output from `find_collections()` function when two manuscripts were passed (S1a and S1b): (7, ['11', '13', '34', '156', '165', '167', '294'])

116 Output from `get_common_letters()` function when two manuscripts were passed (S1a and S1b): (6, ['11', '13', '34', '156', '165', '167'])
I.12.04: H and H2 Collections

Bullough hints at the possibility that these were originally a personal collection of letters, but both certainly came from St. Denis in c. 820. These manuscripts were originally intended for “different destinations” and are now London, BL, Harley 208 (Dümmler’s H) and Paris, BnF, n.a. lat. 1096 (Bullough’s H2).\footnote{Bullough, \textit{Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation}, p. 75.} The letters, as noted by Bullough,
represent a disparate collection of recipients, both on the Continent and in England. Dümmler and Sickle both suspected a connection to Adalhard or Corbie, his home monastery, so much so in fact they presumed the manuscript connected to Corbie. Bullough admits the H collections possible connection to Corbie in some capacity but rejects it as a Corbie manuscript.120

I.12.05: The D Collection

The final collection that we will explore briefly here is the D collection. Bullough referred to this as “An Anomalous Collection” which is currently contained in a single witness, Dümmler’s D, or Munich clm. 13581. The fifteen letters that make up this collection are found on f. 226v–42v. Bullough notes that this manuscript is primarily focused on issues of theology and exegesis and texts associated with Alcuin or his students.123

119 Bullough, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation, p. 77.

120 Bullough, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation, p. 76.


122 Output from find_collections() function when one manuscript was passed (D): (15, ['12', '19', '31', '36', '37', '38', '43', '65', '168', '169', '179', '184', '242', '294', '295'])

123 On this collection generally, see: Bullough, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation, pp. 71–74. On contents, see particularly p. 71.
Of the above-mentioned collections, the D collections has significant overlap with the S1 collection.
Figure I.32: The Overlap of the D and S Collections

Quantitatively, D has no overlap with S1a. It has an overlap of one letter, Ep. 294, with S1b, twelve letters with S1, and eleven with S1*. D has nine letters in total that

\[\text{Output from get_common_letters() function when two manuscripts were passed (D and S1): Overlap with S1: (12, ['12', '19', '31', '36', '37', '38', '43', '168', '169', '179', '184', '242'])} \]

\[\text{Output from get_common_letters() function when two manuscripts were passed (D and S1*): Overlap with S1*: (11, ['31', '37', '38', '43', '168', '169', '179', '184', '242', '294', '295'])} \]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{124} Output from get_common_letters() function when two manuscripts were passed (D and S1): Overlap with S1: (12, ['12', '19', '31', '36', '37', '38', '43', '168', '169', '179', '184', '242'])} \]

\[\text{Output from get_common_letters() function when two manuscripts were passed (D and S1*): Overlap with S1*: (11, ['31', '37', '38', '43', '168', '169', '179', '184', '242', '294', '295'])} \]
circulate with S1 and S1*. When viewed next to the Tours collection, we see six letters that have an overlap across all four Tours manuscripts and D (image below).

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![Figure I.33: The Overlap of the D and Tours Collections](image)

These similarities of the D collection in content to both Tours and Salzburg collections has led scholars, as Bullough notes, to suggest both a Salzburg and Tours connection for this collection. Making a case for either of these connections is difficult, if not impossible, however. Bullough cautiously notes:

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125 Output from get_common_letters() function when three manuscripts were passed (D, S1, AND S1*): (9, ['31', '37', '38', '43', '168', '169', '179', '184', '242'])

126 Output from get_common_letters() function when five manuscripts were passed (D, T, T*, K1, and K2): (6, ['31', '36', '37', '38', '43', '168'])

“For the moment, the paleographical, prosopographical and textual evidence cannot be convincingly reconciled, but clm. 13581 [(D)] does confirm the earlier dispatch to Salzburg of copies of letters to other addresses, of which ‘register’ copies had been made at Tours, without adding to our understanding of the early history of the basic letter-collection(s).”

I.12.06: Summary

When we bring these five collections together, we see the vast majority of Alcuin’s letters represented, numbering at 268 (image below). These collections represent the way in which Alcuin’s letters survive via three different major regions: Tours (T and K manuscripts), Salzburg (S1 manuscripts), and England (A manuscripts). They reveal how these manuscripts moved as well, notably the influence of a now lost K3 manuscript being incorporated into the T and K manuscripts (Tours) and A1 manuscript (England). They demonstrate how some individuals, possibly disconnected from these regions, also preserved these letters, most notably the H (possibly connected to Corbie). And they show how Alcuin’s letters survived for thematic purposes (D collection). In all, no collection is a complete representation of Alcuin’s surviving correspondence. In

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128 Ibid., 73–74.
Chapters Three and Four, therefore, we shall rely on all collections of Alcuin’s letters to frame a study of his pedagogy and epistolary network.
Figure I.34: The Complete Network of All Collections
CHAPTER ONE:
THE CAROLINGIAN NETWORK OF SCRIPTURAL COMMENTATORS (c.780–820)

As noted in the opening of the Introduction, between the mid-eighth and early tenth centuries, Carolingian scholars wrote approximately 200 Biblical commentaries by one estimate, 130 by another, and 226 when the Burton Van Name Edwards dataset is quantified with 2,335 witnesses (with some manuscript overlap because some manuscripts have multiple texts). During this period, their methodologies evolved and, as a result, John J. Contreni classified Carolingian commentators into three different generations. The first generation was active in the 780s and 790s and focused on “encyclopedic commentaries based on earlier florilegia of patristic and early medieval authors.” To this group belong scholars such as Wigbod (d. ca. 800), Peter of Pisa (d. 799), and Alcuin (d. 804). The second generation began writing during the 820s up through the 840s and “confronted the patristic and early medieval legacy directly when it composed anthology commentaries based on careful excerpting and juxtaposition of the authorities.” To this generation belonged renowned Carolingian exegetes, such as Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856), Paschasius Radbertus (d. 865), and Claudius of Turin (d. c. 830). During the mid-ninth century, the third generation began to comment on the Bible.

130 Chazelle and Edwards, “Introduction: The Study of the Bible and Carolingian Culture,” 2; Contreni, “«By Lions, Bishops Are Meant; by Wolves, Priests»,” 29. Using the quantify_data function and passing in the argument author="all" in the Carolingian_Network_Mapper.py file, we get the following output: (226, 2335). The first number is the number of works and the second number is the total number of witnesses. The function does not take into account manuscript overlap between texts. As a result, the number of manuscripts does not reflect the total number of manuscripts, rather the total number of witnesses for each text added together. My preliminary research into the manuscript transmission and manuscript overlap suggests that a large of authors’ works have consistent overlap, specifically the works of Hrabanus, Haimo, Walafrid Strabo, and John Scottus. The works of Winitharius, as I note in this chapter, have significant overlap across each other with seven of his eight works of exegesis appearing in a single manuscript.
This generation “blended patristic exegesis with their own grammatical, philosophical, or theological learning to create commentaries in which the imprint of the exegete and the biblical text itself became more apparent.” Angelomus of Luxeuil (d. 895), John Scottus (d. 877), and Haimo of Auxerre (d. ca. 865) belonged to this generation.\textsuperscript{131}

This chapter examines those of the first generation and the early commentators of the second generation. The temporal focus of this chapter allows for us to see the patterns across those belonging to both generations. The early members of the second generation, notably Hrabanus Maurus, Florus of Lyons, and Claudius of Turin were trained while the first generation actively wrote commentaries and in one case, that of Hrabanus, we have a member of the second generation commentator trained by a member of the first generation, Alcuin. Because this chapter is designed with a macro-level approach, I do not examine the scholarship on each institution, person, or cluster exhaustively. Rather, it is my purpose to supply the data relevant for the analysis of institutional and pedagogical networks associated with Scriptural commentators. Detailed analysis of each cluster, person, and institution is reserved for the micro-level examination of the identified clusters. Beginning in Chapter Two, I perform that micro-level analysis of one specific cluster, Tours.

This chapter chiefly asks if we can identify clusters of commentators between the years 780–820 in the Carolingian realm. I argue that we can. By exploring a commentator’s pedagogical and institutional networks, that is where they were educated (and, when possible, by whom) and to what institutions they were chiefly connected, we can identify patterns that might otherwise be missed. I argue that there were three places

\textsuperscript{131} Contreni, “«By Lions, Bishops Are Meant; by Wolves, Priests»,” 29–30.
of strong activity during this period: Charlemagne’s Palace (itinerant), Tours, and Lyons.\textsuperscript{132} By identifying clusters of commentators, we can ask more significant questions. When precisely were these clusters active? Why do these specific clusters emerge? What was the chief factor for Scriptural commentators being educated or located in these specific places? Were there multiple factors? By answering the initial question posed by this chapter, we can begin to ask the later ones as we explore these clusters more closely, beginning with Tours in Chapters Two, Three, and Four.

In addition, I provide for the first-time quantified data on these Scriptural commentators, their works, and the manuscript witnesses for those works. The data quantified is the \textit{TMTCBC} dataset. I quantify the data for each commentator using a series of functions I developed in Python. These functions can be found under “Additional Files” on UKnowledge in the Python file entitled “Carolingian_MSS_Mapper.py”. Included is a “Carolingian_MSS_ReadMe.txt” file that provides instructions for its use. In the footnotes, I provide the outputted quantified data. I explain the function used and the arguments passed. Because I do not have the rights to redistribute the \textit{TMTCBC} data, I cannot provide the data files. Should one wish to utilize these functions, one must create the individual text files, instructions for which are

\textsuperscript{132} Late in this project, I discovered another commentator, a certain Joseph Scottus, who was a student of Alcuin. He wrote a commentary on Isaiah. Because I discovered him late in the project, I was not able to gather extant data on his networks to incorporate him into this chapter. My preliminary research indicates that he would have been possibly connected to Charlemagne’s Palace institutionally, and certainly Alcuin pedagogically. Alcuin appears to have specifically requested for Joseph to write this commentary. The master has a total of four letters that mention him or were written to him. On Joseph and this commentary, see the sole (to my knowledge) scholarship dedicated to this commentary: Joseph Kelly, "The Originality of Josephus Scottus’ Commentary on Isaiah," \textit{Manuscripta} 24 (1980), 176-180. This preliminary research into Joseph suggests that he reinforces the intellectual patterns identified in this chapter related to Charlemagne’s court. It further reinforces the way in which Alcuin’s students engaged in exegesis. Using the \texttt{quantify_data()} function and passing in the argument \texttt{author="Josephus"} in the \texttt{Carolingian_Network_Mapper.py} file, we get the following output: (8, 1, [{‘33.1. [Josephus Scottus] Commentarii in Isaiam.’: 8}]). On these numbers, see below.
provided in the ReadMe file. The data can, as the Python file name suggests, also be mapped through PyVis. As with my quantified data on Alcuin’s letters, I leave the data in its output form so that the reader, should he or she wish, can easily copy-and-paste the data, which is rendered as ([number of witnesses], [number of texts], [{text:[number of manuscripts for text]}]). Because the TMTCBC dataset defines exegesis broadly, the quantified numbers are not strictly commentaries. In the data, however, the reader will be able to identify commentaries by their common Latin titles: *expositio* or a Latin cognate of “commentary” with a few exceptions, notably Alcuin and Peter’s respective *quaestiones*. Finally, the TMTCBC dataset is very much an ongoing project. The data was collected in March 2020. As Burton Van Name Edwards adds to this list in the future, these numbers will change.

01.01: Wigbod

Wigbod (d. c. 810) is one of the earliest known Carolingian commentators.133 Quantified, the TMTCBC has two commentaries attributed to him that survive in a total of nineteen witnesses.134 The little we know about him is gleaned from his corpus of exegetical writings and a few surviving documents that discuss his role in royal


134 Using the quantify_data() function and passing in the argument author="Wigbod" in the Carolingian_Network_Mapper.py file, we get the following output: (19, 2, [{'50.1. [Wigbod] Commentarii in Octateuchum.': 14}, {'50.2 [Wigbod] Quaestiunculae super Euangelia.': 5}]).
diplomacy. Of his origins, we can say remarkably little, though Michael M. Gorman has suggested he may have been an Anglo-Saxon. At some point in the late-eighth century, he entered the court of Charlemagne (d. 814), during which time and at which place he produced exegesis alongside Alcuin sometime in 785–800 while also living at Lorsch, where he would have had access to a large library of patristic sources, particularly Isidore and Jerome. It is, unfortunately, difficult to judge whether he or Alcuin were first to write Scriptural commentaries in the Carolingian period, for their works (particularly those of Wigbod) are notoriously difficult to date. Though they wrote around the same time, Wigbod and Alcuin had markedly different exegetical focuses and methods.

In Gorman’s analysis of Wigbod’s corpus of exegesis, he determined that Wigbod likely intended to write, among other things, a complete commentary on the Octateuch, a commentary that, although commissioned by Charlemagne, remained unfinished and circulated under two titles and has survived in twelve manuscripts (fourteen in the

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While working on this commentary, Wigbod also began to compile an encyclopedic commentary on Genesis. Less studied, yet equally significant, is Wigbod’s other extant commentary, *Quaestiunculae super Evangelia*, which survives in five manuscripts but lacks any edition. It is, therefore, understudied, save for the recent scholarship of Michael Gorman and Lukas J. Dorfbauer.\(^{140}\)

Like Wigbod’s biography, we know little of his network. None of his letters, if they ever existed, have come down to us and he does not appear in any extant charters. The only evidence we have for Wigbod’s religious and political activity can be found in a single papal record that mentions his journey to England in 786 along with papal legates to attend several synods as Charlemagne’s representative. This record documents the synods and those in attendance and was later given to Pope Hadrian (d. 795). Within this report, one finds the phrase “excellentissimus rex carolus…misit… uuigbodum abbatem atque presbyterum” (the most excellent king Charles sent Wigbod, abbot and priest).

This record survives in a single, tenth-century manuscript, Wolfenbüttel Helmst. 454, saec. x. and, in 1883, Rudolf Peiper identified the Wigbod of this record as our

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Wigbod.\textsuperscript{141} In 2004, Michael Gorman confirmed Peiper’s assessment and further noted that Alcuin was also in attendance at the synods.\textsuperscript{142}

This sentence, though brief, provides four basic, yet salient points about Wigbod’s networks. We can say for certain that Wigbod’s networks included Charlemagne and Alcuin. This is significant when one considers the dearth of information we have regarding Wigbod, his biography, and his networks. Other than this record, evidence for his relationship and importance to Charlemagne is circumstantial and found solely in the dedications prefaced to his exegetical works. This record further suggests that Wigbod was not simply a scholar but active within Charlemagne’s political network as a diplomat. It also identifies Wigbod’s roles within several networks. We know, for example, that within a monastic network, he functioned as an abbot, though over which monastery we cannot say; nor do we know when he ascended to such a position. We further know that he functioned within an ecclesiastical network as a priest. That he was an abbot and a priest, is recorded only in this account. Further, his roles as abbot and priest were significant enough to afford him a seat at synods, where he would have met influential bishops, abbots, priests, and, possibly, royalty.

This was the context in which Wigbod produced his exegesis. He was connected to the highest levels of the Carolingian aristocracy and functioned as an important member within these various networks. Though we do not have many specifics regarding

\textsuperscript{141} For more on this, see: \textit{Alcimi Ecdicii}, ed. Rudolf Peiper, MGH Auc. Ant. 6/2 (Berlin, 1883), p. LVIII, fn. 79. On Peiper’s assessment and the historiography on Wigbod as a historical figure, see: Gorman, “Wigbod and Biblical Studies under Charlemagne,” 50–58.

\textsuperscript{142} On the synod, its records, and Wigbod’s place there, see: Gorman, “Charlemagne’s Commentator: The \textit{Qvaestivncvlae Syper Evangelivm},” 6.
Wigbod’s biography and network, he seems to have been a person of significance within Charlemagne’s court.

01.02: Alcuin

Another commentator of the first generation was Alcuin. Our biographical knowledge of his life prior to his arrival in Charlemagne’s court is scant, yet much more complete than Wigbod’s entire biography. The little we know about Alcuin is gathered from his own writings, which includes a large corpus of letters, exegesis, and poems, and from the anonymous author of the *Vita Alcuini*, written at least two decades after his death.143 Beginning in the 780s, the period in which we begin to have extant correspondence from Alcuin, his political activities are relatively better documented than prior to that period.

Of these sources, the *Vita Alcuini* presents certain textual issues that should be discussed before we move forward, especially since it is a vital source throughout Chapter One and Chapter Two. The *Vita Alcuini* was written by an anonymous author at Ferrières, a monastery at which Alcuin served as abbot (c. 796–804).144 We know very little of Alcuin’s time in Ferrières as most records prior to the abbacy of Lupus of 


Ferrières, which began c. 841, are lost. The periods shortly before and during Lupus’ abbacy, however, are slightly better documented due, in large part, to Lupus’ large corpus of letters, a few surviving charters, and the Vita Alcuini. For earlier periods, we are dependent upon scraps of textual evidence and archaeology.

Since the author remains anonymous, dating the Vita Alcuini is problematic; however, internal evidence has allowed historians to narrow the range to the late 820s. The work of dating was initially done by the text’s first modern editor, Wilhelm Arndt, whose conclusions have not been challenged. According to Arndt, Aldric (d. c. 840) was still recognized as abbot of Ferrières, a post he left to become Bishop of Sens in December 829, a date which Arndt identified as the terminus ante quem of the Vita Alcuini. For the terminus post quem, Arndt noted the author’s mention the death of Abbot Benedictus, datable to February 821. The Vita Alcuini was, therefore, likely composed sometime between February 821 and December 829.

Since the text was composed before the period in which Ferrières is relatively well documented, we know little of the work’s historical context; nevertheless, there are several salient points the text reveals that can help partially contextualize the author, despite his anonymity. Firstly, and perhaps most importantly, the author makes it known in the prologue (and throughout the work) that he had access to the oral testimony of

145 For Lupus’ prosopography, see: Depreux, Prosopographie, 322–23.

146 On the earlier history of Ferrières, from its foundation to the abbacy of Aldric of the 820s, see particularly: Eugène Jarossay, Histoire d’une abbaye à travers les siècles: Ferrières en Gâtinais, ordre de Saint-Benoît (508-1790), son influence religieuse, sociale et littéraire (Orléans: H. Herluison, 1901), 1–72.

147 On Aldric, see: Depreux, Prosopographie, 94–95.

148 Anonymous, Vita Alcuini, MGH SS 15/1, p. 182.
Sigwulf (d. c. 835), 149 Alcuin’s “most noble student” nicknamed Vetelus. 150 When Alcuin died, Sigwulf became abbot of Ferrières and, sometime later, resigned, according to Lupus. 151 Secondly, as noted above, the text makes it clear that it was composed during the abbacy of Aldric. 152 We know very little of Aldric’s life save that he trained Lupus of Ferrières, whom he later sent to Fulda to further his education under Hrabanus (d. 856), who was the Abbot of Fulda (822–841) at the time, and that he was connected to the palatial network of Louis the Pious. 153 Hrabanus was roughly the same age as Aldric and was Alcuin’s former pupil who received wide acclaim across the Carolingian empire for his exegesis and poetry. The author of the Vita Alcuini was, therefore, through Aldric and Hrabanus, connected to his subject and in one of the best possible places to write Alcuin’s vita, even though he may never have met Alcuin personally. That is not to say that we should take the Vita Alcuini at its word. The text contains tropes common to the genre, such as fictional dialogues. Nevertheless, much of what we know about Alcuin’s

149 Anonymous, Vita Alcuini, MGH SS, 15/1, Prologue, p. 184.

150 Anonymous, Vita Alcuini, MGH SS, 15/1, c. 11, p. 191. “Discipulis similiter tradebat; quorum nobilissimus Sigulfus erat Vetelus…”

151 Lupus of Ferrières, Epistolae, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. VI, (Berlin, 1925) no. 29, p. 35. “…certe Ferrariensis monasterii, cui indignus deservio, quondam nobilis abbas et presbiter Sigulfus…”

152 Anonymous, Vita Alcuini, MGH SS, 15/1, c.16, p. 193. “Advocans namque suos, quos tune filios nutriebat, Adalbertum et Aldricum…Albinus autem solito eum e more ad se vocans, ait: ‘Unde te habemus, Virgiliane? …Testatur vir Deo dignus adhuc superstes Aldricus abbas, nec se nec Adalbertum cuiquam hoc innotuisse, sed usque tunc, sicut eis praeceptum fuerat, omnimodis illoisse.’”

earlier years and his pedagogical network is derived from this source, which can only be partially related to Alcuin’s writings, most notably, his letters and poems which reference his home of York and his students in England and on the Continent. We are, therefore, largely dependent upon this anonymous author in framing Alcuin’s biography and, more importantly, his networks.


Our knowledge of Alcuin’s Continental network increases after he left York and traveled to the Carolingian realm. Alcuin’s first visit to the Continent came when he accompanied Ælberht to Rome in the 760s. It was on this trip that Alcuin passed through Pavia and heard of Peter of Pisa’s (d. 799) famous public debate with a Jewish scholar. At an unknown date, Alcuin traveled home—but, for reasons unknown to us, he returned
to the Continent in the 770s in order to visit Charlemagne’s court. After his visit, he returned to York. Finally, in the 780s, he again went to Charlemagne’s court; this time as a member in the king’s entourage; he would only return to York for a few years in the early 790s. The exact date of Alcuin’s arrival into Charlemagne’s court and how long he stayed there, however, remains contentious. The traditional narrative states, as recorded in the *Vita Alcuini*, that Alcuin met Charlemagne by chance in March 781 when traveling to Rome and, afterwards, entered Charlemagne’s court. In 1991, Donald A. Bullough criticized this account and suggested that Alcuin may have actually arrived at the court after Peter of Pisa, who only entered in 782. Bullough’s evidence at the time was, however, wanting. In 2003, Joanna Story confirmed Bullough’s suspicions and found evidence that Alcuin was likely at York until at least 786 when papal legates arrived at the cathedral. When we speak of Alcuin’s time in the court, therefore, we must be careful in identifying which specific period. Further, we should not presume that Alcuin met individuals in the court simply because their timelines overlap because we cannot consistently place him in specific places at specific times until he arrives in Tours in 796.

When Alcuin entered Charlemagne’s court, he became, according to Einhard, a royal educator. Einhard, writing decades after Alcuin’s time in the Palace, described Alcuin’s role with some specificity; while Peter of Pisa, who would also produce exegesis during this period, tutored Charlemagne in grammar, Alcuin was responsible for

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157 On Alcuin’s time in Pavia, see: Bullough, *Alcuin Achievement and Reputation*, 244–45.


other areas of education, specifically rhetoric (rhetorica), dialectics (dialectica), and astronomy (astronomia). There is no evidence to suggest, however, that Peter and Alcuin served both roles simultaneously.

Presenting Alcuin’s entire political network would detract from the purpose of this chapter. In Chapter Four, I speak about Alcuin’s political-epistolary network in greater detail. We shall, therefore, limit our discussion here only to those in Alcuin’s exegetical and pedagogical networks. In framing these networks, we benefit not only from Alcuin’s personal writings but also a relatively large corpus of courtly poetry, which is both humorous and informative. Some courtiers wrote poems to praise and insult their peers, sometimes simultaneously. This is particularly true of the poetry of Theodulf of Orléans, which conveys his wit as he lambasts (in some cases, jokingly) his subjects by name (discussed below).

One of Alcuin’s students who can be found within this palatial network was Fredegis, who would eventually replace Alcuin as abbot of Tours upon his death in

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804. Fredegis also served in the royal court, where his exegesis circulated and was widely criticized, requiring Charlemagne to ask for an outside opinion regarding its conclusions because it focused too heavily on literal exegesis in the form of grammatical analysis. Like Alcuin, Osulf also found a position within the court of Charlemagne, for he was the famulus, or personal servant, of Charles the Younger (d. 811), Charlemagne’s second son.

Within this palatial cluster, Alcuin likely met other important figures, such as Adalhard (d. 827) and Wala of Corbie (d. 836), brothers who were cousins of Charlemagne. While both held roles in the palace, they also served as successive abbots of Corbie. Alcuin’s letters reveal a professional and cordial relationship with both brothers. Their presence in Alcuin’s political network is significant, not because they produced commentaries (which to our knowledge they did not), but rather because both men trained one of the more important Scriptural commentators of the second generation,

163 On Adalbert, see the PASE data (http://www.pase.ac.uk/jsp/DisplayPersonBySource.jsp?personKey=-1147&pr12=1#pr12); On Aldric, see: Depreux, Prosopographie, 199–203.


165 Alcuin, Epistolae, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH Epp. IV, (Berlin, 1895) no. 188 p. 315. “Gaudeo, dilectissime fili, in devotione bonae voluntatis vestrae, quam Osulfo famulo vestro narrante audivi, seu de elemosinarum frequentia vel de mandati humilitate. Quae omnia certissime scito Deo a multum placere perpetuumque tibi apud eius misericordiam promereri benedictionem.”

166 On Adalhard, see: Brigitte Kasten, Adalhard von Corbie: die Biographie eines karolingischen Politikers und Klostervorstehers (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1986); Depreux, Prosopographie, 76–79. On Wala, see: Lorenz Weinrich, Wala: Graf, Mönch und Rebell: die Biographie eines Karolingers (Lübeck; Hamburg: Matthiesen, 1963); Depreux, Prosopographie, 390–93.
Paschasius Radbertus (d. 865), whose education began initially under the tutelage of Adalhard and Wala’s sister, Theodora, the abbess of Notre-Dame de Soissons.

Not all of Alcuin’s students had known roles in Charlemagne’s court, which during the period was itinerant, moving between centers of political power, such as Frankfurt and Ingilheim. Some, such as Candidus Wizo (d. ca. 820), would remain more active in the eastern portion of the realm during Charlemagne’s reign, working alongside Archbishop Arn of Salzburg (d. 821), one of Alcuin’s closest friends and epistolary contacts (see Chapter Four).¹⁶⁷ Others, such as Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856), would have stronger political roles later under the reign of Louis the Pious (d. 840).¹⁶⁸ At the same time, Alcuin also educated an older group of students, most notably Sigwulf (d. c. 830), who replaced Alcuin as abbot of Ferrières upon his death in 804. Additionally, Alcuin was connected to two other future abbots of Ferrières, Adalbert, of whom very little is known, and Aldric (d. 836).¹⁶⁹ None of these men produced exegesis that survives but the latter two trained Lupus of Ferrières (d. 862), who would later study under Hrabanus in Fulda and return to Ferrières where he not only taught but also trained Berengaudus,


¹⁶⁹ On Aldric, see: Depreux, Prosopographie, 94–96.
Fredilo, Heiric of Auxerre (d. 876), and Remigius of Auxerre (d. 908), all of whom were exegetes of the third generation (discussed in greater detail below).  

All of Alcuin’s students constituted a network of pupils whom he cherished, and they formed his nest of students (see Chapter Three). When Alcuin died in 804, these students were his legacy. After his death, Alcuin’s students would have positions at the Palace (Fredegis and Osulf), Salzburg (Candidus Wizo), Worms (Samuel of Worms), Fulda (Hrabanus and Hatto), Tours (Fredegis), Ferrières (Sigwulf and Adalbert), and other important institutions. Some, such as Fredegis (d. 833), engaged in entirely original exegesis; others, such as Candidus Wizo, furthered Alcuin’s exegesis posthumously, by adding to his writings and pushing concepts further; and yet others, such as Hrabanus, wrote expansive commentaries on the Bible that went beyond the scope of Alcuin’s. Some of these would go on to train members of the third generation (notably Hrabanus’s training of Walafrid Strabo, Otfrid of Weißenburg, and


Ercenbertus). When Alcuin died, therefore, he left behind a strong pedagogical network that would dramatically shape the next two generations of commentators. (In Chapters Three and Four, I discuss these students in far greater detail).

The complexity of Alcuin’s networks should not be taken as evidence for his superior position within the greater Carolingian network of exegetes. Such detail can be given to Alcuin and his network simply because we know more about his life and, as a result, his networks and relationships. Alcuin is a rare example in Carolingian history, for we have a large corpus of his correspondence. The only other contemporary of Alcuin to have such an expansive corpus, save for popes, was Arn of Salzburg. Lupus of Ferrières and Hincmar of Reims (d. 882), both a generation after Alcuin, also have large corpora of letters. But these are all rare cases. Surviving correspondence is vital for constructing networks because it provides a way to not only place individuals within a person’s network but also identify the types of relationships they had, something that other sources, such as charters, cannot always do. Because so many of Alcuin’s letters survive, we can more fully present his network; this, however, is purely fortuitous.

As an exegete, Alcuin was prolific, and his writings circulated amongst his peers in his political, pedagogical, and ecclesiastical networks. Quantified, the *TMTBC* has sixteen works of exegesis attributed to him that survive in 137 witnesses.\(^\text{173}\) His most

widely circulated and influential commentary was his *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesim*, which has fifty-two extant manuscripts.\(^{174}\) He also wrote commentaries on John, the Apocalypse, Paul’s Letters to Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, and an unedited commentary on Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians, surviving as a fragment.\(^{175}\) Alcuin also wrote three commentaries on the Psalms, one on the Psalms related to penance, another on the Psalms related to hymns, and a final one on the 118th Psalm.\(^{176}\) He also wrote two other exegetical works, one on the Song of Songs and another *In genealogiam Christi*, which survives in nine manuscripts.\(^{177}\) In Chapter Four, we see how Alcuin used his letters to engage in similar exegetical methods as these commentaries.

Thanks to the scholarship of Michael Fox, we are in a better position to assess Alcuin’s exegesis. Alcuin, though dependent on patristic authorities, most notably Augustine, Ambrosiaster, and Bede, provided original insight into Scripture, particularly


in his *Interrogationes et responsiones in Genesim*, which, unlike Wigbod’s commentary on Genesis, was not meant to be a large compendium, but rather an easily referenced and portable handbook. This approach separated his scholarship from that of Wigbod.

Where Alcuin wrote his commentaries is not precisely clear. However, we can date two commentaries at least to the period while he was at Tours (796–804). These are notably his commentaries on Genesis (which he wrote for his student Sigwulf) and his commentary on John (which he completed at the request of his potential students Gisla and Rotruda). I discuss this in far greater detail in Chapter Four as I explore how Alcuin used his sustained network of students to continue to engage in epistolary exegesis and complete Scriptural commentaries.

**01.03: Peter of Pisa**

One of the most important scholars of the first generation of Scriptural commentators belonged to conquered peoples. Charlemagne’s conquest of neighboring kingdoms during the early years of his reign, most notably the kingdom of Lombardy ruled by his father-in-law, Desiderius, allowed for the introduction of foreign scholars into the Frankish court. Of the scholars in Desiderius’ court, Peter of Pisa (d. 799) was one of the more well-known individuals, especially by the time Charlemagne conquered Lombardy in 774. One of the earlier accounts of Peter of Pisa comes not from an Italian source but rather from a letter of Alcuin’s in which Alcuin recalls a chance sighting of Peter in the 760s when he had passed through Pavia, where Peter was a teacher. In this account, Alcuin describes how Peter entered into a debate with a Jewish scholar named

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178 Fox, “Alcuin the Exegete: The Evidence of the *Quaestiones in Genesim*,“ 41.
Julius (or Lullus).\textsuperscript{179} While the debate itself is not preserved (though Alcuin tells us it was written down), the fact that such a debate existed demonstrates, according to Yitzhak Hen, that Desiderius’ court was a place where lively theological discussions could occur as a result of state-sponsored learning.\textsuperscript{180} Unfortunately, we cannot reconstruct Peter’s network prior to his arrival into Charlemagne’s court as little, if any, evidence for him or his network predates 774.

Once Peter entered Charlemagne’s court, he became, as Einhard informs us, Charlemagne’s grammar teacher.\textsuperscript{181} How long he remained in Charlemagne’s court is a mystery but thanks to the survival of a Pisan charter which cites Peter, we know that he returned home by 796.\textsuperscript{182} None of Peter’s letters, if they ever existed, are extant. We can, however, partially reconstruct his network during this period based on his poems, the poetry of other courtiers, particularly other Lombards, such as Fardulfus and Paul the Deacon, and the \textit{Annales regni Francorum}.

Extant courtly poetry of the late eighth century reveals a strong cohort of Lombard scholars within Charlemagne’s court who would have worked alongside Peter. Among these scholars was an intellectual named Fardulfus (d. 806), who traveled to Charlemagne’s court shortly after 774 alongside Peter. In 792, Fardulfus personally


\textsuperscript{180} Hen, \textit{Roman Barbarians}, 157.

\textsuperscript{181} See note 160.

\textsuperscript{182} Michael M. Gorman, “Peter of Pisa and the \textit{Quaestiunculae} Copied for Charlemagne in Brussels II 2572.,” \textit{Revue Bénédictine} 110, no. 3–4 (2000): 239.
helped foil the plot of Charlemagne’s eldest son, Pippin the Hunchback (d. 811), a plot that intended to overthrow Charlemagne. In that same year, Fardulfus was awarded the monastery of Saint-Denis. It is clear from Fardulfus’ own poetry that Charlemagne bestowed many gifts upon the courtier of which the gift of an abbacy merited Fardulfus’ special mention. Some scholars have used Charlemagne’s gift to Fardulfus to suggest that Fardulfus was given the monastery as a sign of loyalty. Bernard S. Bachrach, however, has shown that Fardulfus was actually Charlemagne’s capellanus and was given the monastery of Saint-Denis after the death of Charlemagne’s prior capellanus, Maginardus (d. 792), who served as abbot of Saint-Denis until his death. Bachrach argued that Fardulfus’ succession as abbot of Saint-Denis was not an example of a reward for loyalty but rather coincidental timing, for Charlemagne had previously given the abbacy of Saint-Denis to his capellanus upon the death of the presiding abbot; this tradition continued under Louis the Pious. Bachrach further suggested that Fardulfus may have been head of Charlemagne’s “palace security.” Though Fardulfus did not produce exegesis, his role in Charlemagne’s court demonstrates the type of individuals who

183 Annales regni Francorum, ed. F. Kurze. MGH SS rer. Germ. VI (Hannover: 1895), anno 792, pp. 91–93. “Rege vero ibidem aestatem agente facta est contra illum coniuratio a filio suo maiore, nomine Pippino, et quibusdam Francis, qui se crudelitatem Fastradae reginae ferre non posse adseverabant atque ideo in necem regis conspiraverant, Quae cum per Fardulfum Langobardum i detecta fuisset , ipse ob meritum fidei servatae monasterio sancti Dionysii donatus est, auctores vero coniurationis ut rei maiestatis partim gladio caesi, partim patibulis suspensi ob meditatum scelus tali morte multati sunt.”


185 On Charlemagne’s gift as a sign of loyalty, see: Hen, Roman Barbarians, 158.

entered Charlemagne’s palace alongside Peter; these were not only intelligent scholars, like Peter, but also men fiercely loyal to their new king. Furthermore, Fardulfus’ role as abbot of Saint-Denis is significant, as Paris would become a strong center of exegesis during the third generation of exegetes and was connected to the exegesis produced at Auxerre and Ferrières.

Also, within this Lombard network was Fiducia, whose only surviving writing is a single courtly poem addressed to Bishop Angelramnus of Metz (d. 791). In this poem, it appears that Fiducia was a scribe, for he jokes that Charlemagne poked him with his pen, so hard, in fact, that it jarred his Latin grammar and syntax in the final line of the poem.187 This poem, beyond its wit, connects Peter further to some of the more important intellectuals in the court, for it reveals his friend, Fiducia’s respect for Angilbert of Saint-Riquier (d. 814) and Theodulf of Orléans (d. 821), both of whom he revered as courtly poets while working alongside Peter and both of whom fit into a larger network of exegetes.188 Theodulf would go on to produce exegesis of his own and Angilbert and St. Riquier was connected to an anonymous work of exegesis.189 That Fiducia remained

187 Fiducia, Carminae, ed. Ernst Dümmler MGH Poetae I (Berlin: 1881), no. 1, p. 76. On punishments of scribes for erring and this poem’s place within such a context, see: Paul Edward Dutton, Charlemagne’s Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age, The New Middle Ages (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 88–90.


connected to Peter’s network after his time in Charlemagne’s court is evidenced by the aforementioned Pisan charter of 796 in which Fiducia is mentioned alongside Peter.  

Although we can construct Peter’s network only partially, it reveals that he was a commentator who functioned at the inner circles of Charlemagne’s court. Although he was from Lombardy, he was in good company with fellow Lombards and exegetes. He was also the colleague of the some of the more influential intellectuals in the realm. These relationships likely began before he left Italy in the 770s and certainly continued after he arrived in Charlemagne’s court. Despite Peter’s importance, we know of only one commentary possible written by him, a commentary on Daniel. When we quantify the data in the TMTCBC dataset, we see that this single work survives in a single manuscript.

01.04: Winitharius

During the late eighth and early ninth centuries, Charlemagne’s court, while an important center for exegesis during this period, was not alone in the production of commentaries. In St. Gallen, Winitharius (d. 780/90), a Scriptural commentator of whom we know very little, wrote Biblical commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, all of which survive in one eighth-century manuscript: St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 238. He also wrote another work entitled Liber

\[\text{190 See note 182.}\]

\[\text{191 Using the quantify_data() function and passing in the argument author="Petrus" in the Carolingian_Network_Mapper.py file, we get the following output: (1, 1, [\{39.1. [Petrus Archdiaconus] Quaestiones in Danielem Prophetam a Petro Archidiacono Enodatae.: 1\}]})\]
generationis, which survives in four manuscripts. Quantified, the TMTCBC has a total of eight works of exegesis that survive in eleven witnesses (with one manuscript functioning as a witness seven times). Because we know nearly nothing of his biography, we know nothing of his networks. Winitharius’ limited presence in contemporary sources and his works’ survival in a single manuscript, has led scholars to devote little attention to Winitharius as compared to other known Carolingian exegetes. When he is cited in the secondary literature it is usually to present him and his exegesis as a precursor to the school that would later form at St. Gall.

01.05: Hrabanus Maurus

For the second generation, we have more known exegetes and more surviving Biblical commentaries than we do for the first generation. Chief among this generation’s scholars was Hrabanus Maurus (d. 856), perhaps the most famous and, as a result, most frequently studied Carolingian exegete, for he commented on nearly every book of the Old Testament and several books and letters of the New Testament. Quantified, TMTCBC has thirty works of exegesis attributed to Hrabanus with a combined four-hundred forty-


194 On the school at St. Gall in general, see: Grotans, Reading in Medieval St. Gall, 1–14, 49–110, and 199–248.
five witnesses. He was born into the aristocracy, later offered as an oblate at infancy, and reared as a monk in Fulda during adolescence; he was a student of Alcuin of York, a teacher of many, including Rudolf of Fulda (d. 865), Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), Otfrid of Weißenburg (d. c. 870), and Lupus of Ferrières (d. 860). He was an adversary of


If one is looking at the TMTCBC dataset, one may see that Hrabanus has 31 entries, for that is the highest number listed for entry “Homiliae in Euangelia et Epistolas, ad Lotharium Augustum”. In fact, the TMTCBC dataset entry for 29.1 is Hrabanus’ “Works” generally. This bumps the numbering of the Hrabanus data by one to thirty-one.

Gottschalk of Orbais (d. c. 867); he was elected Abbot of Fulda, later resigned, and died as Archbishop of Mainz.197

As a nobleman and scholar, therefore, Hrabanus was not only influential but well-connected, for he served as abbot of one of the most important monasteries and archbishop of one of the most important episcopal sees in the East Frankish Kingdom. His education under Alcuin, first at the Palace, and, later, at Tours afforded him early entry into the pedagogical, political, and social networks that would define his career. More importantly for our study, it gave. Though Hrabanus was not a member of the first generation, he was trained by and functioned alongside some of the more prominent figures of it, most notably, Alcuin.

With regards to Hrabanus, we are in a particularly good position to reconstruct his networks, for many contemporary sources mention him, most important of which are charters and his own writings and letters. Regarding charters, Fulda’s cartulary, first compiled during Hrabanus’ abbacy, survives and Hrabanus and his immediate family appear in multiple charters both before and during his abbacy (822–841). After the death of Otakar (d. c. 799), a powerful noble of the region around Fulda and Mainz who received multiple benefices from Charlemagne, Hrabanus’ father, Walaram, who appears in forty-one charters from 754 to 802, became the dominant noble in the region. Hrabanus first appears in the charters in c. 788 when he was offered as an oblate to the Monastery of Fulda. After this period, Hrabanus’ father continues to appear and

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Hrabanus’ brother, Guntram, begins to appear regularly in the charters. Beginning in 822, Hrabanus, as abbot of Fulda, is consistently named in most charters; the last charter to mention Hrabanus is c. 841, when (or shortly afterwards) he resigned as abbot.\textsuperscript{198}

These charters can be matched to Hrabanus’ extant letters.\textsuperscript{199} Although many of Hrabanus’ letters are lost, it is clear from his surviving correspondence (and from those of his peers) that he was in regular contact with people across the Carolingian empire. The few extant letters of Hrabanus that we have survive solely because they are dedicatory epistles attached to his works with which they circulated in manuscripts. Although only his dedicatory epistles survive, they are still an invaluable source, for they inform us for whom Hrabanus intended to write or whom he felt merited a special copy of his writing. More importantly, however, the letters allow us to identify those within Hrabanus’ networks and understand better his relationships with those individuals. In our discussion of Hrabanus’ network, therefore, these letters shall form the basis of our discussion.

Hrabanus is rather unusual for non-royals of the period, for we have a specific mention of him at the age of eight, when he was offered as an oblate to Fulda.\textsuperscript{200} As a result, we can construct his social network as early as 788. Shortly afterwards, someone at Fulda, possibly Abbot Baugulf, saw potential in Hrabanus, for he was sent to study

\textsuperscript{198} On Hrabanus’ family and their role in charters, see: Innes, State and Society in the Early Middle Ages the Middle Rhine Valley, 400-1000, 65–68.


\textsuperscript{200} On Hrabanus’ oblation in charter evidence, see: Innes, State and Society in the Early Middle Ages the Middle Rhine Valley, 400-1000, 65–68. On another possible cartulary connected to Hrabanus later in life, see: Hummer, “A Family Cartulary of Hrabanus Maurus?”, 645–662.
under Alcuin at the Palace at some point in the 790s.\[^{201}\] This relationship was one of the more influential in young Hrabanus’ life, for it was Alcuin who gave Hrabanus his honored sobriquet, Maurus, a name that belonged to St. Benedict’s most cherished pupil, and a name that he would use for the remainder of his days.

Hrabanus’ education outside the monastery walls of Fulda was not unique. As we can see, the abbots of Fulda, particularly Ratgar, took an active interest in having their students trained by the most learned men of the empire. It was in his youth, therefore, that Hrabanus entered an expansive pedagogical network that included not only his peers at Fulda but also others from across Europe. The anonymous author of the *Catalogus abbatum Fuldensium* informs us that Abbot Ratgar (d. c. 820) sent Hrabanus, after his return to Fulda, with his fellow monk, Hatto (d. 856), the future Abbot of Fulda (841–856), to continue his studies under Alcuin, but this time at Tours.\[^{202}\] The *Catalogus* is further important because it describes several other students at Fulda, whom Hrabanus would have likely studied alongside. The first was Brunan, who was possibly Candidus Brun of Fulda (d. 845), a future prominent member of the Fulda community and author of the *Vita Eigili*, who, according to the *Catalogus abbatum Fuldensium*, was sent to study under Einhard. The second student mentioned was Modestus, who was sent to study under Clement Scotus (d. c. 825), the grammarian.\[^{203}\] Clement appears to have functioned as a teacher in the Palace simultaneously or shortly after Alcuin left in 796. It is likely


that this was where Modestus was sent to be educated by Clement. It is clear that Clement was in the Palace during the reign of Louis the Pious and was influential in educating young Lothar (d. 855), the eldest son of Louis the Pious and future emperor, to whom he dedicated a poem.\textsuperscript{204} It is clear that Clement remained active in the Palace during the reign of Louis the Pious until 826,\textsuperscript{205} when, according to Ermoldus Nigellus (d. c. 835), he was present for the baptism of King Harold (d. c. 852).\textsuperscript{206}

As noted above, Hrabanus traveled to Tours alongside his fellow monk of Fulda, Hatto. Once they arrived in Tours in the 790s, they entered Alcuin’s “beloved nest,” which held many different birds; within this nest.\textsuperscript{207} At this period in his life, Hrabanus was likely still a teenager. During his time at Tours, Hrabanus would form social and pedagogical networks with other students, most notably Samuel of Worms (d. 857). Samuel was offered as an oblate to Lorsch and was educated within its walls. The two first met when Samuel traveled to Fulda to be educated in his youth. After the death of Abbot Adalungs of Lorsch on 24 August 837, Samuel became the Abbot of Lorsch. Soon after, on 24 February 838, Bishop Folcwich of Worms died and Samuel ascended to the episcopal see, while retaining his abbacy.\textsuperscript{208} Although Samuel never wrote exegesis, he is important in our understanding of the Carolingian network of exegetes because Hrabanus

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{Carmina varia} Carmina varia, ed. Ernst Dümmler, \textit{MGH Poetae II} (Berlin: 1884), XXIV, p. 670.
\bibitem{Depreux} Depreux, \textit{Prosopographie}, 155.
\bibitem{Ermoldus Nigellus} For the account of Harold’s baptism, see: Ermoldus Nigellus, \textit{In honorem hludowici}, ed. Ernst Dümmler, \textit{MGH Poetae II} (Berlin: 1884), p. 69-70.
\bibitem{Coon} On this nest, see: Coon, \textit{Dark Age Bodies Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early Medieval West}, 16–18.
\end{thebibliography}
dedicated his *Commentary on the Pauline Epistles* to him, such a dedication shows that even after Hrabanus left the pedagogical network of Tours, he maintained contact with his former fellow pupils and felt his exegesis merited their attention in particular.\(^{209}\)

Sometime before Alcuin’s death in 804, Hrabanus returned to Fulda to teach. At some point, he became headmaster of the school and in 822, he ascended to the abbacy of Fulda. Hrabanus remained active as a teacher during his abbacy, for many students came to study under him in the 820s and 830s, some of whom would go on to produce exegesis and, therefore, merit our closer attention.\(^{210}\) During his time in Fulda, Hrabanus commented on nearly every book of the Bible.\(^ {211}\) It was in the second decade of the eighth-century that Hrabanus, began to compose Scriptural commentaries, notably his *Commentary on Matthew*, which is his earliest known commentary.

01.06: Florus of Lyons

In addition to Fulda, two commentators trained at Lyons produced exegesis: Florus of Lyons and Claudius of Turin. Before we discuss both men, we must discuss their teacher Leidradus (d. c. 816), the archbishop of Lyons (798–816).\(^ {212}\) Although Leidradus never produced any known commentaries, he was in regular contact with


\(^{210}\) Coon, *Dark Age Bodies*, 16–18.

\(^{211}\) *TMTCBC* 29.

commentators of the first generation, most notably Alcuin. He also worked under
Archbishop Arn in Salzburg (d. 821). During Leidradus’ time in Salzburg, he may have
come into contact with Candidus Wizo, a student of Alcuin who also served under Arn in
the late-eighth century. The two men were roughly the same age. At an unknown date,
but some time before the 790s, Leidradus left Salzburg and entered the Palace of
Charlemagne, where he served as a librarian. During his time in Charlemagne’s court, he
worked alongside Theodulf Orléans (d. 821), with whom he served as *missi dominici* in
the late 790s.\(^{213}\) In 798, Leidradus was invested with the episcopal see of Lyons and
during his earliest years as archbishop, he became actively involved in the Adoptionist
Controversy. As bishop, Leidradus took upon himself the task of restoring Lyons and its
churches, which had been devastated during the early eighth century while the Franks
combated the influence of Islam in southern France and, according to Addo of Vienne, by
the local people who raided the churches.\(^{214}\) Along with this revitalization, Leidradus
informed Charlemagne that he developed a school that trained people in not only reading
the Bible but spiritually interpreting it.\(^{215}\) As Michael Gorman has suggested, this letter


res sacras ecclesiarum ad usus suos retorquerent, videns Vienne nessem suam indecenter humiliari, relict
episcopatu, in monasterium sanctorum martyrum Agaunensium ingressus, vitam venerabilem duxit. Vastata
et dissipata Viennensi et Lugdunensi provincia, aliquot annis sine episcopis utraque Ecclesia fuit, laicis
sacris et barbarres sacras ecclesiarum obtinentibus.”

scolas cantorum, ex quibus plerique ita sunt eruditi, ut etiam g alios erudire possint. Praeter haec vero
habeo scolos lectorum, non solum qui officiorum lectionibus exerceantur, sed etiam quia in divinorum
librorum meditacione spiritualis intelligentiae fructus consequantur. Ex quibus nonnulli de libro
evangeliorum sensum spiritalem iam ex parte proferre possunt, alii adiuncto libro etiam apostolorum,
plerique vero libro prophetarum secundum spiritalem intelligentiam ex parte adepti sunt; similiter libros
Salomonis vel libros psalmorum seu m lob. In libris quoque conscribendis in eadem ecclesia, in quantum
potui laboravi. Similiter vestimenta sacerdotum vel ministeria procuravi.”
indicates that allegorical interpretation was of chief concern for Leidradus and his school.216

The first of Leidradus’ known students was Florus (d. 860), a deacon of Lyons, who has left us a large corpus of Scriptural commentaries.217 He wrote an epigrammata on Psalms 22, 26, 27, and the Song of the Three Boys; a work on the Psalter, a commentary on Isaiah, for which we have no edition; commentaries on the Pauline Epistles.218 In looking at Florus’ views of Jews in the Pauline Epistles, Johannes Heil discovered that

“on the whole, Florus rewrote his sources: Augustine mainly through omissions, Jerome and Gregory by editing them until they corresponded to ‘his’ Augustine. Thus, the deacon of Lyons, who did not identify himself in the work, changed and bent the theological heritage of the Fathers.”219


Overall, therefore, his exegetical style is comparable to that of Hrabanus Maurus. When we quantify the *TMTCBC* data, we see that Florus wrote eight works of exegesis that survive in sixty-three witnesses.\textsuperscript{220}

Although Florus did not train any known commentators, he was in regular contact with other known Scriptural commentators. Not only did he reside in Lyons at the same time as Felix of Urgel, he also was in regular contact with Walafrid Strabo. The two men were connected via Agobard of Lyons (d. 840), who ascended to the episcopal see of Lyons, first as a *chorepiscopus* under the aging Leidradus in the early 800s and, later, as Leidradus’ replacement.\textsuperscript{221}

01.07: Claudius of Turin

Another student of Leidradus’ was Claudius of Turin (d. c. 827).\textsuperscript{222} Of Claudius’ early life, we know little.\textsuperscript{223} He entered Louis the Pious’ entourage at some point before 811 at Chasseneuil and, after the death of Charlemagne, accompanied Louis to his court at Aachen in 814. Michael Gorman has suggested that it was Leidradus who first

\textsuperscript{220} Using the quantify\_data() function and passing in the argument author=“Florus” in the Carolingian\_Network\_Mapper.py file, we get the following output: (63, 8, [{'22.1. [Florus of Lyon] Epigrammata in Ps. 22; 26; 27; Cant. Trium puerorum.': 0}, {'22.2. [Florus of Lyon] De psalterii emendatione.': 2}, {'22.3. [Florus of Lyon] Commentatiorum abbreviatum in Esaiam.': 3}, {'22.4a. [Florus of Lyon] Collectanea in Epistolas Pauli ex Hieronymo.': 4}, {'22.4b. [Florus of Lyon] Collectanea in Epistolae Pauli ex Gregoria papa.': 3}, {'22.4c. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio ex dictis xii patrum.': 2}, {'22.4. [Florus of Lyon] Collectanea in Epistolas Pauli.': 48}, {'22.5. [Florus of Lyon] Notae in Tractatum in Psalmos Hilarii Poitivensis.': 1})


\textsuperscript{222} On the dating of Claudius’ death, see: Gorman, “The Commentary on Genesis of Claudius of Turin and Biblical Studies under Louis the Pious,” 283–84.

introduced Claudius to Louis, who would become an early patron of Claudius. As an
exegete, Claudius is particularly problematic because many of his commentaries lack any
modern edition and those that do were often misattributed to other authors, such as
Claudius of Auxerre, Eucherius, and Atto of Vercelli. As a result, much of Claudius’
exegetical scholarship remains understudied or ignored, although his exegetical works
circulated widely in the ninth century and contemporary manuscripts often attribute the
works to him, seemingly correctly.

Claudius’ most famous, thorough, and largest commentary is his *Commentarium in Genesim*, which survives in two manuscripts. He completed the work in c. 811 when
he was approximately twenty-five or thirty. It is comparable to Wigbod’s commentary
on Genesis of two decades earlier, for both were written at the bequest of emperors,
Charlemagne, in the case of Wigbod and Louis the Pious in the case of Claudius. In
addition to this, Claudius wrote commentaries on Leviticus, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Ruth,

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226 Gorman, 285–86.

1950. Gorman, however, only identified two of these manuscripts: Paris lat. 9575, written in 808–811, and
Vienna 691, saec. xii. Gorman, 288.

228 Gorman, 284. Jean Vezin, “Le commentaire sur la Genèse de Claude de Turin, un cas singulier de
transmission des textes wisigothiques dans la Gaule carolingienne,,” in *L’Europe héritière de l’Espagne
wisigothique: Colloque international du C.N.R.S. tenu à la Fondation Singer-Polignac (Paris, 14-16 mai

229 On Claudius of Turin, see: Claudio Leonardi, “Claudius von Turin,” in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 2
(München: Artemis-Verlag, 1977), 2132–33; Johannes Heil, “Claudius von Turin -- Eine Fallstudie zur
Matthew, and the Pauline Epistles. When the TMTCBC data is quantified, we see that Claudius wrote a total of nine works of exegesis that survive in fifty-three witnesses. Through these works, as with other exegetes, we can frame his network. He dedicated these commentaries to three abbots: Dructerannus of Monastery of Saint-Chafree, to whom he dedicated his commentaries on Genesis and Galatians. He also dedicated his commentaries on Exodus, Leviticus, and 1 and 2 Corinthians to his former student Theodemirus of Psalmody, located south of Arles in modern-day Camargue. Finally, to Iustus of Charroux, he dedicated his commentary on Matthew. As Gorman has noted, these commentaries were possibly started, at least partially, at the request of these abbots. While he wrote these commentaries and communicated with these abbots, he

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231 Using the quantify_data() function and passing in the argument author="Claudius” in the Carolingian_Network_Mapper.py file, we get the following output: (53, 9, [{'15.1. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum super Genesim.': 3}, {'15.2. [Claudius of Turin] Exod. lib. I-IV; finitus 821 deperditus.': 0}, {'15.3. [Claudius of Turin] Librorum Informationum litterae et spiritus super Leuiticum.': 2}, {'15.4. [Claudius of Turin] Expositio in Josue.': 1}, {'15.5. [Claudius of Turin] Expositio in Iudicium.': 1}, {'15.6. [Claudius of Turin] Triginta quaestiones super libros Regum.': 9}, {'15.7. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum in Ruth.: 4}, {'15.8. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum in Matthaeum.': 18}, {'15.9. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum super epistolas S. Pauli.': 15}])

resided primarily in Turin as bishop (817–827). Like Florus, Claudius did not have any known students who produced works of exegesis.

01.08: Analysis of the Carolingian Network of Commentators

The above discussion includes the known Carolingian scriptural commentators who wrote full-length or partial Biblical commentaries while residing within the borders of the Carolingian realm during the period 780–820. It viewed all members of the first generation, Wigbod, Alcuin, Peter of Pisa, and Winitharius, and the early commentators of the second, including Hrabanus Maurus, Florus of Lyons, and Claudius of Turin.

When we compare the quantitative data from the above exegetes, we can see that Hrabanus wrote the greatest number of texts (30), followed by Alcuin (16), Claudius (9), Florus (8), Winitharius (8), Wigbod (2), and finally Peter (1?). Of these authors, Hrabanus’s texts have the largest number of witnesses (455), followed by those of Alcuin (137), Florus (63), Claudius (53), Wigbod (20), Winitharius (11), and Peter (1).²³³

²³³ Wigbod: (19, 2, [‘50.1. [Wigbod] Commentarii in Octateuchum.’: 14], [‘50.2 [Wigbod] Quaestiunculae super Euangeliya.’: 5])


Petrus: (1, 1, [‘39.1. [Petrus Archdiaconus] Quaestiones in Danielem Prophetam a Petro Archdiacono Enodatae.’: 1])

Combined, they wrote 74 works of exegesis (broadly defined in the TMTCBC dataset) that survive in a total of 740 witnesses.

When we analyze the geographic network evidence together, we can identify certain clusters of activity around three particular places: Charlemagne’s Palace, Tours, and Lyons. Connected to the Palace were Wigbod, Alcuin, Peter of Pisa, and Hrabanus.

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Hrabanus: (455, 30, 
{'29.2. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in Genesim.: 29},
{'29.3. [Hrabanus Maurus] Abbreviated Commentary on Genesis.: 13},
{'29.4. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentum in librum Exodum.: 20},
{'29.5. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentorium in librum Leuiticum.: 4},
{'29.6. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentorium in volumen Numerorum libri IV.: 19},
{'29.7. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentorium in volumen Deuteronomium libri IV.: 12},
{'29.8. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentum in Librum Josue.: 10},
{'29.9. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentum in Librum Iudicum.: 13},
{'29.10. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentum in Librum Ruth.: 12},
{'29.11. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarium in libros Regum.: 57},
{'29.13. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in Iudith.: 32},
{'29.15. [Hrabanus Maurus] Expositio in Proverbs Salomonis.: 4},
{'29.16. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentum in Cantica quae ad Matutini Laudes dicuntur.: 1},
{'29.17. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentum in librum Sapientiae.: 14},
{'29.18. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentum in In Ecclesiasticum Commentarii.: 11},
{'29.19. [Hrabanus Maurus] Expositio super Isaiani.: 6},
{'29.20. [Hrabanus Maurus] Expositio super Hieremiam Prophetam.: 31},
{'29.21. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in Ezechiel.: 7},
{'29.22. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in Danielem.: 2},
{'29.23. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in duodecim prophetae minores.: 1},
{'29.24. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in libros Machabaeorum.: 2},
{'29.25. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentariorum In Matthaeum.: 3},
{'29.27. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in Actus Apostolorum.: 2},
{'29.28. [Hrabanus Maurus] Commentarii in libris Machabaeorum.: 2},
{'29.29. [Hrabanus Maurus] De universo (De rerum naturis).: 59},
{'29.30. [Hrabanus Maurus] Homiliae de festis praecipuis, ad Haistulfum archiepiscopum.: 10},
{'29.31. [Hrabanus Maurus] Notae in Tractatum in Psalmos Hilarii Poitivensis.: 1})

Florus: (63, 8, 
{'22.1. [Florus of Lyon] Epigrammata in Ps. 22; 26; 27; Cant. Trium puerorum.: 0},
{'22.2. [Florus of Lyon] De psalterii emendatione.: 2},
{'22.3. [Florus of Lyon] Commentarii abbreviatum in Esaian.: 3},
{'22.4a. [Florus of Lyon] Collectanea in Epistolae Pauli ex Hieronymo.: 4},
{'22.4b. [Florus of Lyon] Collectanea in Epistolae Pauli ex Gregoria papa.: 3},
{'22.4c. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio ex dictis xii patrum.: 2},
{'22.4d. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio ex dictio xii patrum.: 2},
{'22.4e. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio dictio xii patrum.: 2},
{'22.4f. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio ex dictis xii patrum.: 2},
{'22.5. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio in Epistolae Pauli.: 48},
{'22.6. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio in Epistolae Pauli.: 48},
{'22.7. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio in Epistolae Pauli.: 48},
{'22.8. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio in Epistolae Pauli.: 48},
{'22.9. [Florus of Lyon] Collectio in Epistolae Pauli.: 48})

Claudius: (53, 9, 
{'15.1. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum super Genesim.: 3},
{'15.2. [Claudius of Turin] Exod. lib. I-IV; finitus 821 deperditus.: 0},
{'15.3. [Claudius of Turin] Librorum Informationum litterae et spiritus super Leuiticum.: 2},
{'15.4. [Claudius of Turin] Expositio in Josue.: 1},
{'15.5. [Claudius of Turin] Expositio in Iudicum.: 1},
{'15.6. [Claudius of Turin] Triginta quaestiones super libros Regum.: 9},
{'15.7. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum in Ruth.: 4},
{'15.8. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum in Matthaeum.: 18},
{'15.9. [Claudius of Turin] Commentum super epistolas S. Pauli.: 15})
Connected to Tours were Alcuin and Hrabanus. Connected to Lyons were Florus of Lyons and Claudius of Turin.

In the case of the Palace, we see individuals produce Scriptural commentaries not necessarily while residing at the Palace (wherever that may have been). The evidence does not permit us to say this conclusively. Instead, we see individuals connected to the Palace writing Scriptural commentaries. The reason for this cluster’s activity is possibly due to the role of Charlemagne. We see, for example, Wigbod, Alcuin, and Peter all write exegesis specifically for Charlemagne. As noted above, this activity was possibly the result of Charlemagne imitating the court of Desiderius or, at the very least, functioning as a sponsor of intellectual activity. Though we know these men were courtiers or at least served in some official capacity, whether as Charlemagne’s tutor (Peter of Pisa and Alcuin) or ambassador (Wigbod) or even in an unofficial capacity, such as student (Hrabanus), we cannot place them in the same place at the same time successfully. Our evidence does not permit this. Nor can we concretely argue that they wrote these commentaries in Charlemagne’s Palace. Nor can we even identify where the Palace was at a specific time. This cluster is, therefore, difficult to explore deeply. The Palace as a cluster is, therefore, methodologically dangerous because it is filled with so many uncertainties.

Disconnected from all clusters is Saint-Gall which housed a sole Scriptural commentator during this period—Winitharius. By definition, this single node connected to Saint-Gall prevents us from classifying Saint-Gall as a cluster. While we should not ignore Winitharius and his activities, we cannot justify exploring Saint-Gall as a result of cluster analysis.
The clusters of Tours and Lyons appear to function somewhat differently from the Palace and do constitute a cluster, relative to our data, for each institution has two Scriptural commentators connected to it. Here, we possibly see pedagogical networks playing a more significant role. Claudius of Turin and Florus of Lyons were both educated in Lyons under Leidradus. While Florus would remain connected to Lyons, Claudius would not. At Tours, Alcuin was connected to the city as an abbot of the basilica of Saint-Martin and a teacher. Hrabanus was connected to the city as a student, for he studied under Alcuin at some point 796–804. While Alcuin would die in Tours, Hrabanus would return to Fulda at which institution he wrote the majority of his commentaries. These two clusters appear, on the surface, to be more pedagogical in nature, therefore. By this I mean these clusters appear to appear in our data for pedagogical reasons, that is, the training of future Scriptural commentators. To prove this, however, we must delve deeper and explore these clusters on a micro-level.

This dissertation now begins to do just this with the cluster of Tours. I now ask if the Tours cluster existed strictly because of a pedagogical network around Alcuin or if there were larger factors about Tours that contributed to its rise as a cluster. In other words, I ask if Tours exists as a cluster in our evidence solely because of the presence of Alcuin or if it existed on its own merits, independent of Alcuin. Do we see others produce exegesis (broadly defined) from Tours prior to Alcuin’s arrival? Why did Alcuin arrive in Tours? What was the context of the position into which he was stepping, abbot of the basilica of Saint-Martin? How did he perform his role? In what ways did he continue to teach in Tours? In what ways did he sustain an intellectual network? How did he engage in the production and dissemination of exegesis? These are the questions that we must
ask to understand fully the context of the Tours cluster. These are the questions that drive the remainder of the dissertation. In asking these questions about Tours, we can also provide a map for how we can explore the other clusters of the Palace and Lyons.
CHAPTER TWO:
AN INTRODUCTION TO ROMAN AND EARLY MEDIEVAL TOURS (C. 50-796)

In 796, Charlemagne invested Alcuin with the abbacy of Saint-Martin of Tours (796–804). As we saw in Chapter One, Tours was one of several identifiable clusters that produced and was connected to a high concentration of known Biblical commentators and Scriptural exegetes during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. It is one of the earliest known clusters and yet the scholarship on Carolingian exegesis has remained largely quiet on Tours as a cluster. This chapter begins to address this.

In framing this chapter, I ask one over-arching question. Why does Tours emerge as a cluster of commentators? As we saw in Chapter One, Tours emerged as a cluster via a multiplex network graph of geographic and pedagogical networks. I now ask which of these factors, the institutional or the pedagogical, played a stronger role in the emergence of this cluster. To answer this question, I survey the early history of Tours to understand Alcuin’s arrival at the institution. I argue that Tours rose as a cluster in part because Charlemagne wished for Alcuin to form a school at Tours. In order to understand this decision, I ask several other questions. Why was Charlemagne interested in Tours, so much so that he positioned one of his courtiers and his personal tutor in this specific city?

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What did pre-Alcuin Tours look like? What was the nature of the abbacy into which Alcuin was stepping? Answering these questions will properly contextualize Charlemagne’s interest in Tours and his decision to make Alcuin abbot. In other words, by exploring these questions we can understand the context for the rise of Tours as a cluster of exegesis after Alcuin’s arrival in 796. Further, the answers presented in this chapter will lay the necessary foundation for us to then examine Alcuin’s actions after his arrival in 796 and the school he subsequently formed there.

As I explore these questions, I argue that Charlemagne’s interest in Tours fit into a larger tradition and was perfectly aligned with his predecessors. I argue that Charlemagne and his predecessors were interested in Tours and the basilica of Saint-Martin because it was institutionally, politically, economically, and religiously significant. In other words, the cluster of exegesis at Tours emerged not strictly because of the arrival of Alcuin but because of Tours and the basilica of Saint-Martin’s significance that led to the arrival of Alcuin in 796. In other words, while the prime reason Tours emerged as a cluster of Scriptural commentators was personal (and pedagogical), the institutional significance of Tours played a secondary role in its emergence. In proving this, I provide a survey of Late Antique and Early Medieval Tours, its topography, and its salient institutions.

Before one begins investigating a “microcosm,” in Peter Brown’s terms—like Alcuin’s school at Saint-Martin—one must question the importance of such an investigation. Ian Wood once stated that “it is necessary to reconstruct microcosms. Individual microcosms can then be compared synchronically and diachronically with
other microcosms, thus building up a more inclusive picture.”

In this chapter, I begin reconstructing the microcosm of Alcuin’s school at Saint-Martin of Tours by historically contextualizing Alcuin’s arrival. Studying Alcuin’s school at Saint-Martin allows us to understand one important microcosm in the Frankish realm which, in turn, allows us to understand how it relates to studies of other microcosms of Carolingian schools, such as those at Laon, examined by John J. Contreni, and Saint Gall, examined by Anna A. Grotans. This, in turn, allows us to see how Alcuin’s school fits into and relates to larger studies on early medieval education, such as those done by Pierre Riché and Yitzhak Hen.

In this chapter, I follow the examples of notably Pierre Audin, Henri Galinié, Thierry Morin, and Luce Pietri by bringing together two fields of scholarship on Tours, that of history and archaeology. In doing so, I present for the first time in English, a clear picture of Late Antique and Early Medieval Tours before Alcuin’s arrival in 796. By looking at both archaeological and textual evidence, we can have a more complete picture of Tours and, thus, a better understanding of Alcuinian Tours. Further, in analyzing scholarship from both fields, we can view better the social, economic, political, and religious significance of Tours during Late Antiquity and the early middle ages up to 796.

235 This and the above Peter Brown quote were found in: Jones, Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul, 15.

236 Contreni, The Cathedral School of Laon from 850 to 930; Grotans, Reading in Medieval St. Gall.

237 Riché, Education and culture in the barbarian West, sixth through eighth centuries; Hen, Roman Barbarians.

238 Audin, Tours à l’époque gallo-romaine; Galinié, Morin, and Audin, Tours antique et médiéval; Pietri, La ville de Tours du IVe au VIe siècle.
To reinforce the prose and archaeological descriptions in this chapter, I provide maps and 3D images. Maps in this chapter were created using Python and the JavaScript library Leaflet.\textsuperscript{239} Geocodes were obtained using GeoPy, specifically using the Nominatim function.\textsuperscript{240} These geocodes were then passed through Python to the Python module of Folium, which then created the HTML, CSS, and JavaScript maps using the functions of Leaflet.\textsuperscript{241} The 3D images of Tours were created in Unreal Engine and are based on the archaeological evidence cited throughout the chapter. The image is that of Tours around the year 800 when Alcuin would have been abbot there. Represented are the physical structures known to exist in precisely those locations. Structures which we cannot firmly place in a specific spot, such as the watermill that existed on the northern part of the city, are not represented. The chief structures rendered are religious structures, the many monasteries and the cathedral in the city, and the political and military structures, such as the amphitheater and rampart, and some of the domiciles that archaeologists have identified. The actual city likely had many more structures that archaeologists have not identified. I chose Unreal Engine to create these images because it is a more complex game engine, compared to other modeling software used to create 3D images of cities. Because Unreal Engine is a game engine, it allows users to engage with the city in more dynamic ways. They can walk the streets as a character, for example. They can interact with signposts and learn of specific buildings and the

\textsuperscript{239} On Leaflet, see the official documentation: (https://leafletjs.com/)

\textsuperscript{240} On GeoPy, see the official documentation: (https://geopy.readthedocs.io/en/stable/)

\textsuperscript{241} On Folium, see the official documentation: (https://python-visualization.github.io/folium/)
evidence. They can immerse themselves in the 3d environment, rather than just pan through it with a camera.

02.01: Location and Geography

The city of Tours (indicated by the green marker in the map below) is located approximately 225 km southwest of Paris, positioned along the Loire River, a significant waterway that is over 1000 km long, stretching from Aurec-sur-Loire, near Saint Étienne (west of the French Alps), winding northwest through important cities, such as Nevers, before sharply turning southwest at Orléans and continuing to Saint-Nazaire, near Nantes, where it enters the Bay of Biscay and, thereby, connecting to the Atlantic Ocean. To the south of Tours lies another river, Le Cher, which runs into the Loire roughly 26 km to the west of Tours. To the north of the city, in the Loire, are two islands Île Simon and Île Aucard. The region around the city is known by two different classifications, one diocesan and the other geographic. The diocesan region (and provincial region until 1790 when it was divided between Indre-et-Loire, Loire-et-Cher, and Indre) around Tours is known as the Touraine. The geographic region, defined by the Loire River, is known as the Loire Valley (Val de Loire) which follows the Loire from roughly Orléans to the western neighboring region known as Pas de la Loire. I address the Touraine in Section 13 of this chapter of the chapter and the Loire Valley in Section 14.
02.02: Roman Caesardonum

Tours’ importance dates to the first century AD when the Romans erected a city there under the name Caesardonum which later served as a Roman castrum. Roman castra were fortifications that housed their legions across the empire. Caesardonum was the main city in the region of the Turones, the “Celtic” people who inhabited the area around Tours whence we get the name Tours and Touraine, the region around the city of Tours. Recent archaeological studies have shown that the initial city of Tours


243 On Roman castra and how they developed and changed between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, see: Stephen Johnson, Late Roman Fortifications (London: B.T. Batsford, 1983).

occupied a region of around 80 to 100 hectares on southside of the Loire River. Within this city, only 40 to 60 hectares were densely populated along the river.\textsuperscript{245} One of the initial sites was located to the northeast of the modern train station. It was positioned between the current streets of \textit{rue Lavoisier} and \textit{rue Mirabeau} from east-west and the Loire River to roughly the eastern portion of the \textit{rue Fleury} from south-east. The northwestern corners would have been closely located near the Château de Tours, the southwestern corner, the Cathedral Saint-Gatien, the northeastern corner, the Church Béliard Jean-Pierre, and the southeastern corner, the current Parking Indigo. The general position is indicated in the image below with a red circle over a map of modern-day city of Tours. At the turn of the first millennium, this would have been located along the shore of the river, which has since receded to its modern location.

Archaeological studies of the city have identified several surviving Roman structures from this period, which include an amphitheater, a circular temple, public houses, two large roads, bathhouses, and an aqueduct that ran north to south through the center of the city.246

Of these Roman structures, Tours’ amphitheater, one of the largest in the Roman Empire, has received the most attention from archaeologists since the mid-nineteenth

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246 On all these structures, see generally the articles in: Galinié, Morin, and Audin, *Tours antique et médiéval.*
century when it was rediscovered. Jaques Seigne has noted that the amphitheater experienced three phases of construction: 1) the original amphitheater; 2) the enlarged amphitheater; 3) the citadel amphitheater (located in the red circle of the image below).\textsuperscript{247} These three phases reflect the changes experienced during the first few centuries AD. The first phase can be dated to the second half of the first century CE. The enlargement of the amphitheater occurred in the second century. The third and final phase can be dated to the fourth century with the construction of the \textit{castrum} (discussed below). The creation and expansion of the amphitheater during the first few centuries AD has led archaeologist to conclude that Tours was wealthy during the period.\textsuperscript{248} In front of the amphitheater was the temple of Tours located to the east of the current \textit{rue Nationale}. In addition to this, archaeologist have identified another temple to the southwest of the city.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{248} See generally: Seigne, “Les trois temps de l’amphithéâtre antique.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Somewhere in the northern part of the city where the city butted up against the Loire River, there were two important structures dating to the first century. The first was a watermill that raised water from the Loire to an aqueduct that stretched 25km and provided running water to not just Tours but surrounding area. In addition to this water system, Boussard has identified an adjacent bridge that allowed travelers and city dwellers to cross the Loire River. The late antique and early medieval bridge was located roughly where the modern-day bridge, Pont Napoléon is located. The bridge left the southside of the Loire, connected to Île Simon, an island in the middle of the Loire, and crossed to the northside, where it met a crossroads, one path headed north to Le Mans, another followed the Loire east to Orléans, and a third, also following the Loire to west to
Angers. Scholars also agree that there was certainly a port at the city, but Glinié and Randoin have noted that it is impossible to identify precisely where this port was located.

Around the early fourth century, Caesarodonum became the capital city of Lugdunensis Tertia, which was one of four large Roman divisions of Gaul. Lugdunensis Tertia included the regions of Brittany, Maine, Anjou, and Touraine. At this point, Caesarodonum became more frequently known as Civitas Turonorum (or a variant of this new name), the name by which it was known throughout the Middle Ages and up to the present day. At this same time, the “Gallo-Romans” erected a 1,245-meter castrum that surrounded the eastern portion of the city in rectangular form. This rampart was partially new construction and partially built upon the preexisting fortifications incorporating other buildings. For example, on the southside of the rampart, the “Gallo-Romans” used the Tours amphitheater as part of the city’s defenses (as noted above) during the citadel period of the fourth century. Around the castrum, were 25 towers and two primary gates. These towers were positioned along the rampart and amphitheater.

The interior of the castrum was designed in typical Roman fashion with a decumanus maximus, that is, the main road of the city that ran east to west where it entered and exited the city through two gates positioned on either side of the castrum.


252 On the rampart around Tours and the size of the city, see: Wood, “Le castrum de Tours. Etude architecturale du rempart du Bas-Empire,” 11–13; Galinié, Morin, and Audin, Tours antique et médiéval, 247–55.
For Tours, the *decumanus maximus* was part of a larger road the followed the southside of the Loire River with the eastern road taking the traveler to Amboise and the westward road taking one to Chinon.²⁵³ It is clear that the *decumanus maximus* of Tours continued to serve as a roadway during the early middle ages, for the current *rue Albert Thomas* of the modern city follows the precise path of this original *decumanus maximus*. In addition to this, the city had twelve other identifiable roads. There were five other *decumani* and seven *cardines*. Like the *decumanus maximus*, *decumani* ran east-west. A roman *cardo* was a road that ran north-south. Where the *decumanus maximus* met the central *cardo maximus* was the likely location of the forum that would have existed in Tours.

02.03: Gallo-Roman, Frank, or Neither?

In the above section, I referred to the citizens of Tours consciously as “Gallo-Romans” with quotation marks rather than use the more problematic term “Frank,” which is first attested in the third century. “Gallo-Roman” is not without its issues, as noted by E.T. Dailey, but it is far better than the alternative of “Frank”, hence why I adopt the quotation marks.²⁵⁴ Until recently, scholars freely called the people of the region around Tours “Franks” without issue. The scholarship of Helmut Reimitz, Edward James, and Ian Wood, has examined the writings of Gregory of Tours and Fredegar and shown that retroactively applying the term “Frank” to the people who lived in this region in the early centuries CE is ill-advised because it is a term sparingly used even in the sixth century by


Gregory of Tours; and when it is used, as Ian Wood in particular has shown, it is a nuanced word that had different meanings in different circumstances.255

While historians have expressed concern over using “Frank” and even “Gallo-Roman,” archaeologists have not. The reason for this disagreement between historiographic and archaeological literature is due to source material. When archaeologists discuss “Gallo-Romans” or even “Franks,” they are describing an identifiable culture represented by artifacts and architecture; when historians refer to a group of people it is in vogue to use terms represented by contemporary sources and to understand the specific notion(s) of those words. In other words, the disagreement is a semantical one. Because this is a dissertation in history, I follow the example set by historians with one exception. I use “Gallo-Roman” as the archaeologists do when necessary to refer to the archaeologically identifiable people in Tours before we can safely refer to them as “Franks,” a term that becomes more attested in the seventh century and, thereby, acceptable for historians to use when discussing these people after that period of time.

02.04: Early Christian Tours and Saint Martin

Gregory of Tours stated that in 250 CE Christian missionaries departed Rome to seven cities: Tours, Arles, Narbonne, Toulouse, Paris, Clermont, and Limoges. Luce Pietri has shown, however, that this was a myth created much later and that no extant textual or archaeological evidence supports the presence of Christianity in Tours prior to the fourth century. This is now the view held by all scholars I have read.

In the fourth century, archaeological evidence begins to support the presence of Christianity in “Gallo-Roman” Tours. The initial evidence survives from the area around the medieval cathedral located on the southwestern corner of the old city immediately to the west of the amphitheater. This archaeological evidence is consistent with the first bishop of Tours, Lidoire (337–371) who erected the first church in the eastern portion of the city. The original church of Lidoire no longer survives as it was destroyed in a fire that ravaged Tours in 558 (addressed below). I consider Lidoire the first bishop of Tours because I follow the recent trend in scholarship which has begun to disregard a certain Catianus as the first bishop. This view was pioneered by Luce Pietri who conclusively demonstrated that the myth of Catianus being the first bishop of Tours, whose episcopacy

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257 Pietri, La ville de Tours du IVe au Vle siècle, 17–29.

258 Pietri, “La succession des premiers évêques tourangeaux”; Pietri, La ville de Tours du IVe au Vle siècle.
was dated to the reign Emperor Decius (249–251), is not supported by the extant evidence.259

Of Lidoire we know remarkably little.260 Nearly all data points for his life come from Gregory of Tours’s Histories, Book 10.31. From Gregory, we know that he was a wealthy man from Tours.261 As far as we can tell, Lidoire appears to have been an effective administrator, but our knowledge ends there.262

Lidoire was succeeded by Saint Martin (371–397), whose episcopacy is substantially better documented.263 Much of what we know of Saint Martin comes from his contemporary and hagiographer, Sulpicius Severus (355–420), a well-educated Christian ascetic who hailed from a noble Aquitainian family and was a correspondent of Paulinus of Nola (354–431).264 Allan Scott McKinley has shown that Sulpicius created a specific Saint Martin, consciously accenting Martin’s ascetic qualities and deemphasizing his episcopal functions. As a result, the presented image of Martin is somewhat detached from the city of Tours and instead dispersed throughout his diocese, the Touraine.265

259 Pietri, La ville de Tours du IVe au VIe siècle, 30–36. Gregory of Tours, Histories, 10:31.

260 For a prosopography of Lidoire, see: Pietri et al., Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes, 1182.

261 Audin, Tours à l’époque gallo-romaine, 103.

262 On Lidoire, see: Pietri, La ville de Tours du IVe au VIe siècle, 32; Pietri et al., Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes, 1182.

263 On Saint Martin generally, see: Pietri, La ville de Tours du IVe au VIe siècle, 36–88.

264 On these and other parts of Sulpicius’ biography, see: Clare Stancliffe, St. Martin and His Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 16–29.

Sulpicius tells us that Martin was from a distinguished pagan family in Sabaria in Pannonia.266 Upon the demands of his father (who was a Roman officer), Martin joined the military at the age of fifteen against his own wishes.267 He was baptized at age eighteen and then wondered around Gaul, meeting Hillary of Poitiers before arriving in Tours where he became bishop soon after. 268 During the early years of his episcopacy, Martin resided in a cell attached to his church in Tours.269 Eventually crowds gathered around his cell forcing him to take up residence on the northside of the Loire, two miles to the east of the city of Tours.270 There, he created an isolated desert-like hermitage that was only accessible by a single, narrow, and long road. Others followed him to live a similar ascetic life. These followers carved shelters in the loose rocks.271 This was the beginning of Saint Martin’s monastery named Marmoutier, located to the northeast of Tours (addressed in Section 04).

02.05: The Abbey of Marmoutier

In her study of Sulpicius, Clare Stancliffe noted that the excavations of Marmoutier, which were being headed by Charles Lelong, were yielding significant, yet

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266 Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, c. 2.
267 Ibid.
268 Ibid., c. 3–5.
269 Ibid., c. 9.
270 Ibid., c. 10.
271 Ibid.
unpublished results.\textsuperscript{272} The information she supplied was based largely on a letter Lelong had sent her informing her about the initial settlement of Marmoutier. Since the publication of her work, Lelong has published his findings.\textsuperscript{273}

Lelong demonstrated that Martin did not, in fact, find a totally isolated location for his monastery, rather he built upon former, Roman structures located in the region. The site was destroyed, however, in the third century, which he attributed to invasions. By the fourth century, the archaeological evidence aligns well with Suspicius’ descriptions of Martin’s ascetic retreat at Marmoutier, though the location may not have been as “desert” like as the hagiographer described.\textsuperscript{274}

\section*{02.06: The Cult of Saint Martin}

Upon Saint Martin’s death in 397, a cult developed around his memory and pilgrims began to travel to Tours to see his relics to which there were many miracles attributed. The seminal work of Saint Martin’s cult remains Sharon Farmer’s study, \textit{Communities of Martin: Legend and Ritual in Medieval Tours}.\textsuperscript{275} Farmer viewed the cult of Martin as a battle between three religious’ institutions: the bishopric of Tours with which Martin was invested, the monastery of Marmoutier which Martin founded, and the monastery of Saint-Martin that would come to house his relics after the construction of the Basilica of Saint-Martin in the fifth century. Each institution had a unique claim to

\textsuperscript{272} Stancliffe, \textit{St. Martin and His Hagiographer}, 170, fn. 31.

\textsuperscript{273} On the excavations of Marmoutier, see: Charles Lelong, \textit{L’Abbaye de Marmoutier} (Chambray-lès-Tours: C.L.D, 1989).

\textsuperscript{274} On the early history of Marmoutier, see: Lelong, 13–26.

\textsuperscript{275} Farmer, \textit{Communities of Saint Martin}.  

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the memory and cult of Martin after his death. As Farmer notes, it was Saint Martin that particularly made Tours an important city with regard to the “Frankish” kings, so much so that she saw Tours as a “Martinopolis”. Saint Martin became the chief saint for these kings until 680, when Saint Denis superseded him. Nevertheless, Martin, his relics, and his cult remained important to the royalty.  

According to Farmer, Saint Martin’s successor, Brice (397–444), did very little to develop a cult of Saint Martin. The structure for his tomb was meager, merely being a small chapel that was not even dedicated to Martin, rather Saint Peter and Saint Paul. The location of this site was 50 meters north of the site of Saint-Martin between the modern-day streets of rue Briconnet and rue de la Paix. It was not until Brice’s successor, Perpet, that we begin to see the cult of Martin become defined.

02.07: The Construction of the Basilica of Saint-Martin

In the fifth century, we see the rise of one of the more influential early bishops of Tours, Perpet (458–488). Under his episcopacy, the city of Tours witnessed the building of the Basilica of Saint-Martin, which was designed to house the tomb and relics of Saint Martin. Construction of the basilica began in 467 with it being consecrated in

\[\text{\footnotesize 276 On the role of Martin making Tours an important city within the “Frankish” realm, see: Farmer, Communities of Saint Martin, 13–37.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 278 Farmer, Communities of Saint Martin, 22; Pietri et al., Prosopographe chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes, 369–72.}\]
\[\text{\footnotesize 279 For a prosopography of Perpet, see: Pietri et al., Prosopographe chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes, 1464–70.}\]
471 (located on the left of the image below in the circle). The original site for the construction of Saint-Martin was roughly where the modern-day basilica sits, that is, located outside the “Gallo-Roman” rampart in the southwestern portion of the city at the corner of the modern-day roads of *rue des Halles* and *rue Descartes*. The initial basilica no longer survives as it was destroyed in 997 by the Vikings, rebuilt in the eleventh century, destroyed again in 1562 by the Huguenots, rebuilt, and destroyed again in the eighteenth century during the French Revolution. The current basilica is fairly recent, having been built in the period 1887–1924.

*Figure 2.5: 3D Model of Tours with the Basilica of Saint-Martin in Red Circle*

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Archaeological excavations of the area around the basilica have revealed that the site chosen by Perpet in the fifth century was an already developed location, for archaeologists have found evidence of a house on the site dating to the first century, roughly coinciding with the foundation of the city of Tours.283 Around the turn of the second century, the initial building was destroyed and replaced with identifiable larger walls. At some point after 300, we begin to see evidence of it being used for burials.284 From the fifth century archaeologists have found evidence that the site was used to house Saint Martin’s relics, for we have extant fragments of the mosaics that were used to ornament the basilica of the tomb.285 Archaeological evidence also confirms that the site continued to be used as a burial location from the 5th up through the 9th centuries.286

Attached to the basilica were four sanctuaries and an atrium. The atrium is attested from the fifth century during the abbacy of Abbot Lupicinus of Saint-Claude in the Jura mountains (abbot Iurensis) (460–480). According to an account preserved in the *Vita Patrum Iurensium*, a certain monk named Dativus fled Condat and took up residence in the atrium of the Basilica of Saint-Martin in Tours.287 According to Gregory, this atrium became the home of the *abbas martyrarius*, or *abbas basiliciae*. This title is first

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285 Ibid., 97.

286 Ibid., 99.

287 Pietri, Biarne, and Gauthier, *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VIIIe siècle. 55*, 34.
attested by Gregory when he described a certain Leo who served as abbot until 526 when he became bishop of Tours (526–528).\(^{288}\) Such a title is also attested at the Council of Orléans in 533. According to Gregory, the abbot of the basilica had under him clerics.\(^{289}\) This is the position with which Alcuin would be invested over 250 years later in 796.

02.08: The Sixth Century Fire

In c. 558, a fire ravaged the city of Tours. It destroyed the church of Lidoire named Saint-Maurice, another church founded by Eustoche (442–458) named Saint-Gervais-et-Saint-Protais, and it did some minor damage to the area around the cathedral, located within the southwestern corner of the rampart to the west of the amphitheater.\(^{290}\) Under the episcopacy of Eufrone (556–573), the area around the cathedral (located in the left of the circle below) was restored and another church constructed to the north of the cathedral which was dedicated to Saint-Mary and Saint John the Baptist (located in the right of the circle below).\(^{291}\)


\(^{289}\) Pietri, “Les abbés de basilique dans la Gaule du VIe siècle,” 8–12.

\(^{290}\) On Eustoche, see: Pietri et al., *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes*, 712–13.

\(^{291}\) On these details and for a prosopography of Eufrone, see: Pietri et al., 673–79.
The area outside the rampart appears to have not been heavily damaged. This includes the basilica of Saint-Martin. That changed, however, in the following year when a certain Willichar set fire to the basilica after he and his wife took refuge within its walls; the church was, however, later restored.\textsuperscript{292} The church of Lidoire which lay on the eastern side of the city would not see its fire damage repaired until the episcopacy of Eufrone’s successor, Gregory of Tours (573–594) in c. 590.

\textsuperscript{292} On Wallichar, see: Pietri et al., 2030.Gregory of Tours, \textit{Histories}, IV. 13 (20), ed. by Berno Kursch and Wilhelm Levison MGH \textit{SRM I} (Hannover, 1951).

“Tunc sancta basilica peccatis populi ac ludibria, quae in ea fiebant, per Wiliacharium conjugemque eius succenssa est; quod non sine gravi suspirio memoramus. Sed et civitas Toronica ante annum iam igne consumpta fuerat, et totae eclesiae in eadem constructae desertae relicta sunt. Protinus beati Martini basilica, ordinante Chlothario rege, ab stagno cooperta est et in illa ut prius fuerat elegantia reparata.”

“Willichar the priest took refuge in the basilica of Martin. Then the holy basilica, as the result of the sins of the people, and the deeds of mockery there committed, was set on fire by Willichar and his wife, a misfortune which I cannot record without a deep sigh of grief. Already, a year before, the city of Tours had been consumed y fire, and many churches in it had been left desolate. Forthwith, by command of King Lothar, the church of the blessed Martin was roofed with tin, and restored with the same splendor as before.” Trans. by O.M. Dalton (p. 132).
The episcopacy of Gregory is the most well-documented episcopacy of Tours during the early middle ages. This surge in documentation is due primarily to the eleven books of his *Histories* which supply historians with a mine of information about the city of Tours, its institutions, and its citizens in the sixth century. Stefan Esders has commented that “within Gaul, not surprisingly, Gregory regarded Tours as the most important bishopric. His histories begin with the creation of the world and end with a list of the bishops of Tours and their deeds. Thus world history leads to Tours and enhances Gregory’s vision of the role played by Tours in his own time.”

Gregory’s vision of his world provides historians with a methodological issue, for he is a font of information, but the information he provides is tainted, to some degree, by his centrist view of Tours. In trying to reconstruct Gallic politics in the second half of the sixth century, Esders noted that there was a “fundamental methodological problem of separating such a narrative from the assumptions and biases which Gregory had when writing about events.” It should be noted that these concerns are not unique to Esders. This methodological problem is so prevalent because for many events of this period, Gregory is our sole source. Esders addresses this methodological issue as best he can by reading Gregory through a broad lens of recent scholarship, “while being fully aware of the fact that [this methodological issue] cannot actually be solved in a strict sense.”

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294 Esders, 432.

295 Esders, 432.
This severe methodological issue regarding Gregory means that we, like Esders, are forced to depend on a dangerous source for Gregorian Tours (573–594). Unlike Esders, however, I am less interested in Gregory’s thoughts on Gallic politics generally and more interested in the development of Tours as a city. Like Esders, to avoid methodological issues of Gregory, I will approach Gregory by balancing my reading against modern scholarship. In addition to this, I also balance my reading of the historiography against the archaeological evidence. This will, in turn, assist in avoiding some of the methodological issues that Gregory may present as the next few sections study Gregorian Tours.

02.10: The Merovingians Royalty and the Basilica of Saint-Martin

As Farmer has noted, Martin and his basilica were both very important to the Merovingian kings, for she states:

“Until the seventh century Martin remained the most important patron saint of the Merovingian dynasty. The relationship was beneficial to both Tours and the royal family. For Tours, there were material rewards: Clovis showered Martin’s basilica with gifts, King Lothar provided the Church with a new tin roof in 558, several kings exempted the city from taxes, and King Dagobert (629–638) commissioned a sumptuous new reliquary for Martin. The kings, in turn, looked to Martin’s basilica as a major political asylum, and they invoked the saint’s vengeance as a means of enforcing legal documents. Moreover, from 678 on they possessed the saint’s cape, which protected the kings in battle and served as a divine guarantor of their solemn oaths. In fact, Martin’s cape was so important that the names for its custodian and for the place where it was kept became new
words in the western European lexicon: “chaplain” and “chapel” are derived from *capella*, Martin’s little cape.”

According to Gregory, the basilica of Saint-Martin played a role in larger Merovingian politics. As noted above, the basilica was headed by an abbot (*abbas basilicae*), but the basilica was not a monastery in a strict sense until the first half of the seventh century. Those holding the title of abbot of the basilica appear to have become involved in Merovingian politics both by request and by force.

In 556, Gregory cites a case in which the Merovingians directly injected themselves in a debate about who should become the next bishop of Tours after the death of Bishop Guntharius (552–555). Gregory states that an abbot and *martyrarius* of Saint-Martin named Leubastes, presided over a group of clerics, Leubastes was commissioned by the Merovingian king Cloitare to lead his clerics to Clermont to try and convince a certain Cato (501–571) to become the next bishop of Tours. In the end,

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298 Pietri et al., *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes*, 963.

299 On this Leubastes, see: Pietri et al., 1152.


“Gunthar, bishop of Tours, died in that city. At the suggestion, as it was said, of Bishop Cautinus (551–571), the priest Cato was invited to govern the Church of Tours, and a deputation of clergy with Leubast, abbot and *martyrarius*, journeyed with great pomp to Clermont. They declared the king’s pleasure to Cato, who kept them waiting a few days for his reply. They grew impatient to return, and said: ‘Real thy decision, that we may know what course to take; else we shall go back to our homes. For it was not of our
they were unsuccessful, but this anecdote reveals a few different things. First, it
demonstrates the Merovingian royalty’s interest in Tours by wishing to play a role in the
decision of electing the next bishop. In addition to this, it reveals the nuanced functions
played by those in Saint-Martin, specifically the abbot who was asked to carry out this
mission. What’s more, this was not an isolated incident, that is to say, it is not the only
time the basilica got involved in larger Merovingian affairs.

In 585, we again see an abbot of Saint-Martin playing an important role in
Merovingian politics. In Book VI of Gregory’s Histories, Gregory tells the story of a
certain Eberulf.301 Eberulf was an elite in Tours who had become an enemy of Gregory,
for he tells us that he was such a dastardly person, that he would even commit
manslaughter in the atrium of the Basilica of Saint-Martin.302 Under King Guntram,
Eberulf stole from the royal treasury and fled to Tours where he sought asylum in the
Basilica of Saint-Martin. Eberulf had, apparently, been the chamberlain and alleged
assassin of the former king, Chilperic. Once Eberulf arrived in the church, he remained
under constant watch, for he accosted the tomb of Saint Marin, Gregory himself, and
some of the priests. In a dream, Gregory saw King Guntram come to Tours, enter the
basilica of Saint-Martin, and seek to remove forcibly Eberulf. Gregory intervened,
however. In reality, the king did not try to enact these deeds himself but rather through
proxy. Guntram sent a courtier, a man named Claudius, to go down to Tours and bring

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301 On this Eberulfus, see: Pietri et al., Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes, 605–6.
302 Gregory of Tours, Histories, VII, 22. “He often committed manslaughter even in [Saint Martin’s]
    atrium, as it were at his very feet, and was for ever guilty of wanton and drunken acts.” Trans. by. O.M.
    Dalton, in The History of the Franks, 135.
Eberulf back, preferably alive. But Claudius, from Gregory’s point of view, was just as reckless as Eberulf. Claudius gathered 300 soldiers under the pretense to guard the gates of Tours. In reality, however, they were there strictly to kill Eberulf. When they arrived in Tours, Claudius alone entered the Basilica of Saint-Martin to speak with Eberulf. The two men exchanged oaths in the presence of the bishop (Gregory). On the following day, Gregory was at his country estate 30 miles outside the city when Claudius and Eberulf dined together in the church with another citizen. Claudius tricked Eberulf to order his servants away from the church to fetch stronger wine and, in their absence, executed his ploy. Claudius’ servants entered the basilica, grabbed Eberulf, and Claudius stabbed Eberulf with his sword into his breast, while Eberulf countered and stabbed Claudius under the armpit and cut off his thumb. Eberulf fled the church, while Claudius and his men hunkered down inside. They fled to the abbot’s cell, barricaded the door, and sought protection. Eberulf’s men gathered outside the basilica, broke the windows, and began to hurl spears inside. Claudius’ men took cover under the beds, while the abbot and the clergy escaped by opening the door to the abbot’s cell. With the door open, Eberulf’s men entered the church, grabbed Claudius and his men, and executed them, spilling blood on the floors of the atrium of the basilica and leaving their bodies on the cold floor.

But the basilica of Saint-Martin did not strictly play host to violence and Merovingian politics. It also housed genuine ascetics, such as a certain Winnocus, a priest. Gregory tells us that he was a Breton who arrived in Tours on his way to

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303 Gregory of Tours, Histories, VII. 29 (20).
304 Pietri et al., Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire. 4, 2 Volumes, 2031–32.
Jerusalem. While residing in the Basilica of Saint-Martin, he desired drink. He filled a vessel partially with wine and placed a few drops of water inside from the tomb of Saint Martin. When he did this, the vessel filled to the brim.305

02.11: Two Sixth-Century Convents

Gregory also makes it clear that the basilica of Saint-Martin was not strictly a home for male ascetics. In the late-sixth century under the episcopacy of Gregory of Tours, we have two references to women organizing nuns into convents in Tours. What is interesting about each case is that each represents individuals of different socio-economic backgrounds forming respective convents. Further, it appears that both formed these respective institutions for very different reasons. Let us take each in turn.

The first known convent was erected by a noblewoman named Igintrude. When the aforementioned priest Winnocus arrived in Tours, he was provided the drop of water from the tomb of Saint Martin by this very Igintrude.306 According to Gregory, Igintrude was a noble woman who had founded a convent within the atrium of the church of Saint-Martin.307 This convent was known as Notre-Dame de l’Escrignol (Saint Maria de Scrinio), which archaeological evidence confirms being constructed in the sixth century and remaining active until the eleventh century.308 Within it, King Charibert’s daughter,

305 Gregory of Tours, Histories, V. 14 (21).
306 Gregory of Tours, Histories, V. 14 (21)
307 Gregory of Tours, Histories, IX. 33.
308 On Igintrude, see: Martha Gail Jenks, From Queen to Bishop: A Political Biography of Radegund of Poitiers (University of California, Berkeley, 1999); Jones, Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul, 153; Dailey, Queens, Consorts, Concubines; Henri Galinié and Elisabeth Lorans, “La Cité et la basilique Saint-Martin,” in Tours antique et médiéval: lieux de vie, temps de la ville : 40 ans d’archéologie urbaine, ed.
Berthefled resided as a nun, but she cared little for the ascetic life, was gluttonous, and ultimately left the convent for Le Mans, which lay to the north and accessible via the bridge in Tours that followed the old Roman road north. It is clear that Igintrude saw herself as an important player in Tours for she convinced her daughter to leave her husband (with whom she had children) and enter her convent. Her daughter obliged. Gregory ultimately intervened and, out of fear of being excommunicated, her daughter went back to her husband. Three or four years later, she again left him and tried to reenter the convent. Her husband pursued her to Tours and the daughter ultimately fled to Bordeaux.

Gregory informs us that Igintrude’s abbey was not unique in Tours, for a second convent was established by a woman named Monegund of Charters, a woman of lower socio-economic status. Monegund ran away from her husband to establish herself in Tours as an ascetic. Her husband, however, discovering she had left Charters, captured her and brought her back home, whence she escaped again and returned to Tours where she remained. Upon her return, she established a convent in Tours (located in the red circle below).

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310 Gregory of Tours, *Vita patrum*, XIX, 1.
Both of these cases indicate that women of different socio-economic backgrounds established themselves as ascetics in Tours for the purposes of creating convents. In the case of Igintrude, the convent was attached to the Basilica of Saint-Martin in the atrium. These details from Gregory, both about the role of the basilica in larger Merovingian politics and the formation of convents, allow us to see not only the lively (and sometimes violent) history of the abbacy with which Alcuin would be invested, but also provide a rare glimpse at the nuanced roles the basilica played in preserving Saint-Martin’s relics and its injection into larger royal and aristocratic affairs.

02.12: The Dearth of Evidence during Later Merovingian Tours (594–750)

In the seventh century, our extant evidence for Tours declines. The reason for this is because our chief source for the city, Gregory, dies in 594. We do not have substantial
documentation for the city again until the end of the eighth century when Alcuin arrives and begins writing his letters. That is not to say that this period is entirely dark. We can shed light on later Merovingian Tours (594–c.750) with the few extant sources and archaeology, but the image we have is far more partial than that of the centuries prior. For this period, we have two chief textual sources: polyptychs and charters.

Polyptychs are economic documents that record possession of property and the collection of taxes. While the information provided by such documents is minimal, it is often vital for the study of prosopography, for polyptychs identify places and names. As Walter Goffart once wrote: “The great polyptychs of the ninth century, such as the one ordered by Abbot Irmino of St. Germain des Pres, are incomparable sources for the social and economic conditions of the early Middle Ages.”

But polyptychs are not without their issues. Gofart also noted “their background, however, is anything but clear. Did these stately records have Merovingian antecedents? Do they descend from Roman procedures of tax registry, and if so, by what detours?” Through historical analysis, dates can be supplied to render these documents even more useful because they then allow us to understand when and where they were used.

The polyptychs of Tours were initially identified by Pierre Gasnault in 1969 and published in 1975. In 1989, two additional fragments were auctioned and Gasnault

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312 Ibid., 57.

subsequently identified them and published them as well.\textsuperscript{314} In total, we have twenty-eight leaves of these documents which record collectively over 1000 individuals, 137 places (only 1/3 have been identified), and a substantial number of crop yields. Historical contextualizing of these documents began with Waltar Goffart in 1981 whose views were expanded by the more recent research of Shoichi Sato in 2000.\textsuperscript{315}

The first historian to discuss Gasnault’s findings was Walter Goffart. Goffart was less interested in what individual documents said and the regional significance of the findings, rather the larger implication of the documents. He suggested that these documents demonstrate some potential Roman practices being continued in a post-Roman world. He showed the example of these financial records from Tours were not unique, but rare and that they were comparable to other, later Carolingian records.

After Goffart’s article, the polyptychs did not receive individual treatment again until Scoichi Sato addressed them in 2000. Sato demonstrated that these surviving fragments were practically used, possibly even on the spot, during the course of business. He believed that the fragments “cannot have been part of a polyptych or a similar many-leaved document. They derived from it for the purposes of collecting dues in kind, but they were not themselves part of a polyptychs. Thus, it is quite possible to believe in the existence of a matrix book which we may call a polyptych…from which the working documents were extracted for the itinerant delegation of Saint-Martin as a list to present

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
to the tenants in order to ask for payment.” 

By examining all extant textual evidence, Sato was able to place four documents (Docs. I [679/680], VI and VII [680/1], and XI [682/3] in Gasnault’s edition) to the abbacy of Agryicus of Saint-Martin (c. 659–c. 681). By providing such historical context and successfully dating these documents, Sato was able to demonstrate that the Merovingian administrators of Saint-Martin were not only capable of administering a complex system of accounting, but effective at it, comparable to their later Carolingian inheritors at other sites, such as Saint-Denis and the one ordered in the ninth century by Abbot Irmino of St. Germain des Pres.

In addition to these polyptychs, we also have a second source-type: charters. Charters, unlike polyptychs, record, among other things, the transfer and granting of property and royal exemptions. The charters of Saint-Martin have been studied since the 1950s by Pierre Gasnault, Mersiowsky, and Hélène Noizet. The charters were initially edited by Gasnault in 1974. In 1985, they were republished in the Chartae Latiniae antiquiores (hereafter, CLa). The CLa remains the chief collection of Late Antique

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316 Satō, “The Merovingian Accounting Documents from Tours,” 151.

317 Ibid., 160.


319 On this edition, see: Gasnault, “Documents financiers de Saint-Martin de Tours de l’époque mérovingienne.”

and ninth-century charters. The collection was edited in two series. The first series includes parts 1–49 which collects charters before the ninth century. The seconds series includes parts 50–113 (as of 2019) and remains incomplete with the most recent editions being published in 2018. This second series includes charters of the ninth century. The Tours charters of the ninth century have yet to appear in the series. As a result, those working with ninth century charters for Tours must turn to the cartularies themselves as they appear in the manuscripts.

The textual sources can and should be balanced against the archaeological record. When we turn to this evidence, we see a similar picture, that is, a Tours with a sustained economic position within the Merovingian realm, particularly in the area immediately surrounding the Basilica of Saint-Martin. This area in the western portion of the city of Tours was certainly on the rise during the later Merovingian period, for we see the construction of several new churches. It would not be, however, until the middle Carolingian period (804–860) that we see large scale new construction in this area of Tours and the Loire Valley generally. But these later constructions were less an attempt to build, rather to rebuild the buildings the Vikings had destroyed during the early ninth century when they invaded the region and sacked multiple easily accessible towns. The new construction we see during this later period is nearly entirely defensive, for we see the rampart of the *castrum* of Tours reinforced and new walls erected around the area of the Basilica of Saint-Martin. The construction of new churches during the

later Merovingian period is, therefore, significant as it showed continued expansion within the western region of Tours specifically around the basilica. Further, these constructions were not defensive, rather religious.

When we bring this evidence together, that is, the polyptychs, charters, and the archaeological evidence, we see two chief things. First, we see that Tours generally continued to expand. This means that the dearth of evidence we have for this period does not suggest some decrease in Tours’ importance, rather the death of a very informative source, Gregory. Second, we see that the Basilica of Saint-Martin had a sustained role in the administration of its lands and expansion on the eve of the Carolingian family’s coup d’état in the 750s.

02.13: Early Carolingian Tours (750–796)

During the early eighth century, the Carolingian family was on the rise. Ultimately, they would overthrow their Merovingian predecessors in the 750s and come to power under their first king, Pippin the Short. Like Merovingian Tours, early Carolingian Tours (750–796) appears to have remained economically and politically significant. We can see this in both the textual and archaeological evidence of the eighth century.

From the Carolingian period (c. 750–900), we begin to have greater textual evidence for Tours. Chief among these records are charters. Before 750, for example, we have only eight extant charters. From 750–774, we have two charters and from 775–799 we have 8 and from 800–824 we have 11. This number (per twenty-five years) remains consistent throughout the ninth century somewhat (825–849: 14 | 850–874: 15)
until the 875–899 period in which we see a surge to 37 charters. With regard to prosopography, charters are of immense value, for they provide several pieces of data for a specific location, most importantly names, dates, positions in society, and locations, for example, we can identify some figures involved in the creation of these charters, such as Botlenus (785), Berincharius (846), and Rotbertus (878).

In addition to charters, we also have *formulae* from the Basilica of Saint-Martin that date to this period of early Carolingian rule. The initial editing of these *formulae* was done by Karl Zeumer and they were published in 1886. Philippe Depreux demonstrated that the Basilica of Saint-Martin played a particularly significant role both within Tours and across the Touraine, for surviving formularies indicate that the local scribes drafted charters for the region to suit a wide range of situations.

This continued textual culture at the Basilica of Saint-Martin was not locally or regionally isolated. The recent scholarship of Mersiowsky has shown that this textual culture was connected to the Carolingian royal and imperial chancelleries. Despite the fragmentary nature of the evidence, Mersiowsky demonstrated that during the early

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322 On the distribution of these charters, see: Noizet, “L’église Au Territoire,” 10.


years of Carolingian rule, the diplomas of both Pippin the Short and Charlemagne were connected to Saint-Martin, for they are different than the years prior and after. The evidence shows that those serving in the chancellery were also those serving as abbot of Saint-Martin. The first case of this is a certain Hitherius who served in the chancellery of Pippin the Short and Charlemagne until 776. At the same time Hitherius is attested as the abbot of Saint-Martin in 775. The fragmentary nature of our evidence does not provide a window into this relationship again until the early ninth century. Again we see Fredegis, Alcuin’s student and one of the subjects of this dissertation, serve as abbot of Saint-Martin (presumably after the death of Alcuin in 804, but attested beginning in 808) and then going on to serve as archchancellor of Louis the Pious in 816, where he remained until 832. Fredegis’ successor as chancellor, a certain Théoton also served as abbot of Marmoutier and possibly even Saint-Martin. Théoton left the chancellery in 834 and was replaced by Hugh, who was not abbot of Saint-Martin, rather Saint-Bertin, another monastery with which Fredegis was invested.327 In addition to this, under the tenure of Fredegis (a period for which there are more diplomas to study), Mersiowsky cross-referenced the names between Fredegis’ confraternity of Saint-Martin dated to between 818 and 820, with the names of notaries connected to the chancellery. He discovered that multiple notaries served in both institutions, i.e. Adalulf in 828, Ermenmaurus and Hirminmaris.328

Though our evidence for this period is very fragmentary, we see that Tours and especially the Basilica of Saint-Martin remained important. Further, the research of

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Mersiwowsky has shown that it was not only significant but connected to the Carolingian royal courts of Charlemagne and, later Louis the Pious. It is methodologically problematic to view this as some increased importance of the basilica, for, as we have seen, the Merovingians regarded Tours as a significant city and the basilica itself as an important institution. We should, however, see this as a sustained importance during the early years of Carolingian rule up to and after Alcuin’s time as abbot of Saint-Martin (796–804).

02.14: The Diocese of the Touraine during the Early Carolingians

We should not, however, view the Carolingian interest in Tours in isolation. Tours, as a bishopric, headed the diocese of the Touraine, which was on the rise during eighth century. Tours’ importance is attested in both textual and archaeological evidence, but other cities in the Touraine did not leave the same textual evidence behind. As a result, our knowledge of the Touraine is nearly entirely dependent archaeological excavations until 796, when Alcuin begins writing his letters.

One of the rare exceptions of textual evidence describing the Touraine before the arrival of Alcuin in 796 is the recorded construction of the Abbey of Cormery in 791, evidence for which is preserved in a charter from the cartulary of Cormery. This is by far the most significant evidence we have for Carolingian interest in the Touraine, for it is the first recorded construction in the diocese since the time of Gregory the Great. To put this rarity in perspective, we do not have textual evidence for a construction again until the construction of Villeloin in 850. In a 250-year period, therefore, Cormery is the sole
example. Cormery lay roughly 20km to the southeast of Tours. It was situated along the Indre River, whose path parallels the Cher River and enters the Loire as a tributary between Angers and Tours.

Though textual sources reveal a single example of construction (Cormery), should not indicate to us that the Touraine’s increase during the two centuries after Gregory’s death plateaued. On the contrary, the archaeological evidence confirms that the region saw unrecorded constructions of multiple churches throughout the region during the seventh and eighth centuries.

The rare textual evidence of Cormery and the archaeological excavations across the Touraine reveal that the region continued to grow and spread during the Merovingian and Early Carolingian periods, just like Tours. What makes Tours unique in this region is its size, its relationship to the Merovingians, its explicit connections to the Carolingian chancellery, and its role as a bishopric. The current state of our evidence, both textual and archaeological, suggests that no other city in the Touraine compares to Tours in these regards and that is not surprising given its long history as the capital of the region during the Gallo-Roman period beginning in the fourth century, its continued importance to the Merovingians and Carolingians, its placement along four major roads and the Loire River with a bridge that crossed the river, its position as a bishopric, and its importance as a pilgrimage stop with the relics of Saint Martin. Within the Touraine, therefore, Tours


330 On the construction projects in the Touraine generally, see: Galinié, Lorans, and Zadora-Rio, Tours et La Touraine Au Temps d’Alcuin: État Des Questions,” 42.
was the chief city for a myriad of reasons, but largely due to its political, economic, and religious significance.

02.15: The Carolingian Aristocracy of Tours

Before moving into a discussion of Charlemagne’s interest in Tours in 796, something should be said of the Carolingian aristocracy of Tours. We know very little of the local aristocracy in Tours. We only catch glimpses of the salient secular figures in the historical record. A lot of information about the local elites is supplied by Gregory of Tours, but his death at the end of the sixth century leaves a large gap between c. 600 up through the Carolingian period (c. 750–900).

The earliest clearly identifiable count of Tours during the Carolingian period is a certain Hugh. Unfortunately for this study, Hugh does not enter the written record until 811 when he goes on a mission to Constantinople with Haito of Basel. Because of the dearth of evidence, we know of no other member of the Carolingian aristocracy in Tours before 811. This dearth of evidence parallels with what we know of later Merovingian Tours from the period of Clothar II (613) to Charles Martel (741), according to Ebling who found no extant references to an aristocratic figure in Tours during the period of his study.331

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331 See the complete prosopography and the absence of entries for Tours: Ebling, Prosopographie Der Amtstrager Des Merowingerreiches von Chlothar II. (613) Bis Karl Martell (741).
All this history brings us to the moment Charlemagne chose Alcuin as abbot of Saint-Martin in 796. At this juncture, we must ask one vital question. Why was Charlemagne so interested in Tours generally and the Basilica of Saint-Martin specifically? Why did he wish to see one of his more significant courtiers specifically in the abbacy of Saint-Martin? As we have seen, Charlemagne’s possible interest in Tours must be viewed within the larger context supplied throughout this chapter.

First, Tours was economically well-located on the Loire River. As we have seen, Tours and the surrounding cities in the Loire Valley had ports. In addition to this, Tours sat at a major crossroad of roads that ran east to west on each side of the Loire, both of which intersected with a road running north to south that crossed via a bridge in Tours. All these features would have made Tours particularly vital for the movement of goods and people, both for combat and commerce.

Second, Tours was politically significant. Gallo-Roman, Merovingian, and Carolingian rulers all appear to have been connected to the city in some significant way. We see an immense injection of wealth into Tours from an early period with the construction, maintaining, and expansion of the amphitheater during its first few centuries. We also see the city become the capitol in the Tertia Lugedensis and a castrum erected to protect the city. Under the Merovingians, we see kings regularly come to Tours to interact with the bishops and abbots in what Farmer saw as a mutually beneficial relationship.

Tours’ importance, however, was not isolated to its geography and role in politics, but its broader religious significance and this leads to a third point. Saint Martin (the
person) had become one of the most important saints for the Frankish kings and the monastery of Saint-Martin housed his relics.

There was also a fourth reason Charlemagne may have been interested in Saint-Martin at Tours. As we have seen, extant evidence reveals that the basilica of Saint-Martin actively protected the relics and tomb of Saint Martin (as evidenced by Gregory), actively tended to and administered its lands (as evidenced by polyptychs and charters), was connected to the Carolingian chancellery, and continued to expand during the fifth to early eighth centuries (as evidenced by the archaeological research).

In addition, Charlemagne, at least from Alcuin’s point of view, was interested in specifically Alcuin moving to Tours and taking up the abbacy of the basilica of Saint-Martin, to form a school. In a letter to Charlemagne (addressed in greater detail below), dated c. 796–797, Alcuin explicitly states that it was Charlemagne himself who wanted Alcuin to form a school at Saint-Martin:

“I, your Flaccus, am busy carrying out your wishes and instructions at St. Martin’s, giving some the honey of holy scriptures, making others drunk on the old wine of ancient learning, beginning to feed others on the fruits of grammar, while to some I propose to reveal the order of the stars, like the painted roof of a great man’s house.”  

It is to this school and Alcuin’s role as an educator that we shall turn in the next chapter.

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332 Alcuin, Ep. 121. MGH Epistolae IV, pp. 176–177. Translated by Stephen Allott in Alcuin of York, pp. 12. “Ego vero Flaccus vester secundum exhortationem et bonam voluntatem vestram aliis per tecta sancti Martini sanctarum mella scripturarum ministrare satago; alios vetere antiquarum disciplinarum mero inaebriare studeo; alios grammaticae subtilitatis enuntiare pomis incipiam; quosdam stellarum ordine ceu picto cuiuslibet magni domus culmine inluminare gestio.”
In sum, Tours was economically, politically, and religiously important to the Frankish kings long before Charlemagne came to the throne in the 760s. The basilica of Saint-Martin was one of the most important religious institutions in this important city that had long functioned in some administrative capacity not only over the relics and tomb of Saint Martin, one of the most cherished Frankish saints, but also the surrounding lands. Charlemagne’s possible interest in Tours, therefore, was entirely fitting with a general Frankish interest in the city and the Basilica Saint-Martin specifically. That he wanted to bring order and structure to this important religious house located in one of the most important cities in the western portion of the Frankish realm, was merely one of many reasons this city and the basilica within interested him. This interest fits perfectly with what we know of the city’s early history.

Interestingly, we do not see Scriptural commentators connected to eighth-century Tours prior to Alcuin’s arrival. Tours only emerged as a cluster of Scriptural commentators, therefore, after Alcuin’s arrival. Nevertheless, Alcuin’s arrival was part of a larger interest in Tours because of the city’s significance. Based on this evidence, therefore, it appears that Alcuin’s presence was the chief factor in the Tours emerging as a cluster of Scriptural commentators, but Tours’ early importance also likely played a role in this emergence. Because we do not have Scriptural commentators in Tours after Alcuin’s death in 804, we need to understand how Alcuin taught and engaged in the production and dissemination of exegesis during the period 796–804 in order to understand fully how one Scriptural commentator (Alcuin) wrote commentaries while in
Tours and another commentator (Hrabanus) was educated there. This is the task of the next two chapters.
As we saw in the previous chapter, Charlemagne, from Alcuin’s point of view, wished for Alcuin to form a school at the basilica of Saint-Martin. Such a task required an educator. It is, therefore, appropriate to ask why Charlemagne selected Alcuin to head such a task. I argue that Alcuin was a gifted educator in the Carolingian realm and that his education centered around the liberal arts for the purpose of training teachers. Each of these arts functioned as a steppingstone to climb a metaphorical mountain upon whose summit was Wisdom accessed and obtained in Scripture. In other words, Alcuin viewed the liberal arts as the components necessary to read and interpret Scripture. As we will see in Chapter Four, however, Alcuin’s explicit instruction in exegesis was reserved for students of particular talent who had moved beyond the basic instruction of the liberal arts and, in particular, those students who remained in contact with the master.

03.01: The Liberal Arts

Although scholars have had to approach Carolingian education on a school-by-school basis, historians have identified commonalities within these schools across time and space. Firstly, Carolingian schools collectively experienced the same challenges. Contreni has noted:

“Schools in the Carolingian age functioned within a context of political fragmentation, geographic isolation, institutional insecurity, limited communication, limited and unequal distribution of resources, and frequent political and social violence. Thus, the history of the Carolingian period was discontinuous.”

333 Contreni, “Learning for God,” 89.
Secondly, though discontinuous, in Contreni’s terms, we know that the system of education employed in Carolingian schools was generally based on an old model, that of the liberal arts. The liberal arts were divided between the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy).  

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classification had its origins in classical and Christian authorities, such as Marcus Terentius Varro (d. 27 BC), Martianus Capella (d. c. 420), Augustine (d. 430), Cassiodorus (d. 585), Boethius (d. 524), and Isidore of Seville (d. 636).

The ways in which late antique and early medieval writers and teachers viewed these liberal arts, incorporated them into their curriculum, and employed them varied markedly. For example, Wesley M. Stevens has shown that while the *quadrivium* formed the basis for the mathematical arts, a far more utilitarian mathematical subject was also taught by, among others, Hrabanus; that subject was *computus*. The evidence for it being a core part of the Fulda curriculum under Hrabanus comes from Hrabanus’ general interest in and writings on the subject, Walafrid Strabo’s hand-written notes from Hrabanus’ classroom, and extant computistic problems (and solutions) from the Fulda school. The reason for this was because a Christian educational system that needed to train individuals who could correctly calculate the date for Easter. The development of these arts, which would become the cornerstone of medieval education, developed slowly during the first millennium AD and were, therefore, somewhat in flux with regard to the degree to which they were taught and the malleable nature by which other subjects were added to them in the classroom.

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The early medieval understanding of the seven liberal arts owed its origins to the early fifth-century author Martianus Capella and his work entitled *De nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*. This work is roughly dated to 439–475. In *De nuptiis*, Martianus allegorically laid out the seven liberal arts; but his ideas were nothing novel, for he was building from a long tradition of classical didactic works, dating to Marcus Terentius Varro (d. 27 BC) and his now lost work *Discplinarum libri*, or as it is more commonly known in English “*The Nine Books of the Disciplines*”. Its English title is owed to Varro’s view that there were nine disciplines (liberal arts), not seven, and he organized the work into nine books addressing each discipline, which had the typical seven liberal arts with the addition of medicine and architecture. Martianus’ use of seven was a conscious choice that deliberately diverted from Varro’s work and the popular tradition of organizing the disciplines into nine categories. Martianus’ shift away from nine to *seven* liberal arts was destined to outlive Varro’s nine by sheer numerical importance alone, for early Christian authors, such as Augustine, Cassiodorus, Boethius, and Carolingian authors, such as Alcuin, John Scottus, and Remigius all could find comfort in the Biblical importance of the number seven.

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337 On the dating of *De nuptiis*, see: Barnish, 103.


339 Schanzer, 93.
A contemporary of Martianus was Augustine of Hippo. These two authors wrote in different circles and, as such, organized their views of education independently of and markedly differently from each other. While Martianus was more interested in allegorically presenting the liberal arts in a traditional classical (or pagan, by Augustine’s view) manner, Augustine focused on a theologically pragmatic approach to the liberal arts and their application(s) to education within the Church and the implications of incorporating a pagan education system to a Christian classroom. A summation of Augustine’s views on the liberal arts can be found in *De doctrina christiana*, or “On Christian Teaching,” a work he began to write in 396–398 but did not complete until 426. Here, Augustine identifies the pagan past of the liberal arts and argues that education in pagan society occurs in two forms, either through things created by man or through things created by God. The liberal arts belonged to this latter category, for they were gifts from God that were merely utilized by a pagan society. But Augustine cautions that one should not venture too far into these liberal arts. Instead, he argues that one must pursue education within the Church and within a Christian context. Augustine emphasizes that logic and arithmetic are of importance to the student within this Christian world but stressed that the other disciplines may lead one astray. Augustine, unlike

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Martianus, never presents the seven liberal arts as a succinct entity. In fact, he only cites three of the arts by name, logic, arithmetic, and music, and argues that each should only be used to understand Scripture. Augustine’s views on the seven liberal arts were, therefore, not as fully defined when compared to the writings of Martianus. His mandates for his readers to pursue the liberal arts only within a Christian setting, however, gave a Christian audience a way to justify and pursue education and obtain divine gifts through a pagan system. Despite the differences between the works of Martianus and Augustine, early medieval authors found it appropriate to appropriate the views of both authors by melding Martianus’ structure of seven liberal arts with Augustine’s Christianization of education to present a more harmonized pedagogical structure of pagan education in a Christian world.

This melding of these two traditions began most notably with Cassiodorus in the sixth century. Cassiodorus’ views on the liberal arts are detailed in his *Institutiones*, which was possibly influenced by Martianus indirectly and certainly influenced by the Latin translation of *Introductio Arithmetica* of Nichomachus of Gresa (d. 120), translated by Apuleius of Madaura (d. 170). Cassiodorus built upon Augustine’s idea of structuring the liberal arts within a Christian system. In this work, Cassiodorus frames Scripture and the exegesis of it within the context of the “Secular letters” (*saeculares*

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342 For a summary of Augustine’s views (as presented here), see: Bücker, “Christianizing the Arts. From Augustine’s De Ordine to Carolingian Thought,” 177–79.

litterae). He, like Augustine, argued that in order to have a deeper understanding of Scripture, one must utilize these secular arts, but they should only be used for the purposes of Scriptural exegesis. What sets *Institutiones* apart from *De doctrina christiana* is Cassiodorus’ explicit mention of the seven liberal arts. In other words, Cassiodorus makes a clear combination of Martianus’ structure with Augustine’s view of these pagan forms of education.

We see a similar melding of traditions with Cassiodorus’ contemporary, Boethius and, the late sixth- early-seventh century author, Isidore of Seville. Boethius pushed Cassiodorus’ classification further by delineating arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy as a cohesive unit, coining the term *Quadrivium* or, at the very least, being the first attested author to use such a term. A century later, Isidore reaffirmed the number seven as the number of the liberal arts in Book II of his *Etymologiae*, or *Etymologies*, even though one of his chief sources was Varro’s aforementioned work that details nine liberal arts. Bede, too, contributed to this model and was particularly influential on early Carolingian authors beginning in the 770s via two chief works on the subject: *De arte metrica* and *De schematibus et tropis*.

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345 Alison White, “Boethius in the Medieval Quadrivium,” 162.


This was the tradition that the Carolingians inherited, a defined seven liberal arts of Martianus, a sharply Christianized view of some of those liberal arts by Augustine, and a varied melding of these two views by Cassiodorus, Boethius, and Isidore during the following centuries. And this was the tradition to which Alcuin contributed.

03.02: A Caring Master

Further, Alcuin was not just an average educator. The evidence presented in this chapter argues that Alcuin was a teacher who placed his students above all else. Alcuin’s devotion to education can be seen in four areas: in the cognomens he used for his students, the love he expressed for his so-called “nest” of students, the care that he expressed for those students after they left his nest, and the degree to which he developed and refined his pedagogy as he committed it to writing.

03.02.01: Alcuin’s Cognomens

Through the liberal arts, Alcuin educated several generations of Carolingian scholars. His letters betray a man deeply invested in his pedagogical network, filled with bonds familial. One of the best ways to gauge these bonds and Alcuin’s love of his students is by the affectionate nicknames one finds throughout his letters, names such as “Calf.”348 On the continent, this practice of using cognomens was peculiar to Alcuin, for it was an insular tradition that began only after Alcuin’s arrival in the 780s, possibly even

initiated by him. Unlike Anglo-Saxon and Irish nicknames, Alcuin’s by-names for his students were not governed by pragmatism—as was the case for insular names which were occasionally difficult to pronounce in Latin and, therefore, required a Latin replacement rather than a Latinized adaptation of the name—but rather Alcuin’s cognomens were governed by love and *familiaritas*. Those closest to him merited these nicknames and they included: Sparrow (Alcuin), David (Charlemagne), Lucia (Gisla), Nathaniel (Fredegis), Maurus (Hrabanus), Cock (Adalhard), Vetelus (Sigwulf) and Eagle (Arn of Salzburg). These cognomens became badges of honor that demonstrated one’s pedagogical or social relationship to the Anglo-Saxon master. Hrabanus, for example, would continue to use the letter M, the first letter of his nickname, Maurus, to denote his own additions in the manuscripts of his commentaries.

03.02.02: Alcuin’s *Nidus Amatus* (“Beloved Nest”)

Within this system of cognomens, we see the frequent use of bird names. Alcuin used aviary imagery to define his cohort of scholars in the Carolingian realm, i.e. Arn as the eagle and Adalhard as the cock. These names are not only used in Alcuin’s letters, 

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350 Garrison, 64.

351 Garrison, 66–67.

but also fleshed out in his poems (discussed below). These specific types of mature birds were strictly his scholarly peers. But Alcuin did not view these aviary images generally as belonging to merely his equals.

This aviary allegory also applied to his students, for he saw his school at Tours as a *nidus amatus*, or a “beloved nest.” In a letter dated to September 799 and addressed to Adalhard, Alcuin writes:

> “Now it is September, [the sparrow] is flying off to visit his beloved nest, to feed titbits to his chicks that grape with greedy beaks, hoping that sometime he may hear the cock crying his Farewell on the banks of the fish-filled river and, walking to his morning song, come to encourage the sparrow among his chicks.”\(^{353}\)

While in his beloved nest, Alcuin’s chicks were not specific types of birds, for they were not yet defined as scholars. They were simply “chicks”. Even after they left his nest, this aviary imagery continued, for Alcuin once wrote to Fredegis, Candidus, and Onias—all his former pupils—and stated:

> “Since you flew away from your father’s nest upon the open breezes of worldly affairs, my anxious thoughts have attended your doings at almost every hour, wishing you to please God by the virtues of perfect love through His grace and to live decently before men and show by your noble manners what you learnt under the wing of your teacher.”\(^{354}\)


This is an image that Alcuin employs in other letters to Candidus and Fredegis.\textsuperscript{355}

This aviary imagery is not peculiar to Alcuin. It was an allegory rooted in Scripture. Psalm 83 (84), for example, describes the sparrow and its home and the turtledove and its nest as places close to the altar of God, where they reared their young:

\begin{quote}
“indeed a sparrow has found for itself a home and the turtle dove a nest for itself where it places its chicks: your altars, O Lord of virtue, my King and my God”\textsuperscript{356}
\end{quote}

Augustine’s exegesis of Psalm 84 suggests that the sparrow represents the heart and the turtledove the flesh, which he connects to the holy figures of the Church. The nest represents the faith in which the young are reared, the hungry fed, and the vulnerable protected.

In these same senses, Alcuin viewed his nest. We can see some of these Augustinian views expressed in one of Alcuin’s fables known as “The Cock and the Wolf.” Alcuin describes a cock, whose job it is to protect his chicks. The cock leaves the security of his nest in pursuit of food by himself. His vulnerability leads to his capture at the hands of a wolf. But the cock is no fool. Before the wolf can devour him, the cock praises the beast’s voice and asks for a demonstration of his famed abilities. The wolf, being vain, obliges and releases the bird in order to perform. The cock seizes the moment

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{355 See, for example, ALC.45.245. Alcuin, \textit{Epistolae}, \textit{MGH Epp. IV}, no.254, p. 393. “Sed nuper, de nido paternae edocationis educti, ad publicas evolastis auras. Intellegatur in vobis quod audistis a nobis.”}

\end{footnotes}
and immediately flies onto a tree branch, where he is safe. From this vantage point, the
bird does not gloat in victory, but takes the opportunity to teach the wolf a moral
lesson. Thus, without a nest, the cock is vulnerable. In a poem to an individual named
Dodo, we see Alcuin flesh out the protection of the nest for a young cuckoo further. In
addition, the cock functions as a teacher from the safety of a branch. To Alcuin,

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There is a bird called by the special surname "cock." This bird announces daybreak, dispels shadows from the earth, marks the times of the day, and is girded in his loins. The flock of chickens is ruled subject to his authority. [5] God praises the cock by saying that he has understanding: to be sure, he brings the times of the day from beneath an obscure cloak.

Oh what a sorrow! A barrier of roads once constrained him as he was hastening a long way off, testing for food with his beak. Therefore, as he seeks food by himself and ranges over the crossroads, [10] alas! boasting, too bold, and very proud, he is snatched by the lurking wolf.

Oppressed by this burden, the cock at once finds for himself this scheme for escaping: "Often your fame, O wolf of exceeding strength, has come to my ears and has told in a strange rumor that your great voice can produce a deep [15] sound with bright harmonies. I do not grieve so much to be devoured by a hated mouth as to be cheated of being allowed to learn from you what was possible to believe about your voice."

The beast put credence in what was said, and the wolf, swollen with love of the praise that had been offered, [20] opens his hellish throat, spreads wide his gluttonous jaws, and unlocks the innermost chamber of the vast cavern.

But swiftly the bird, harbinger of daybreak, is rescued, and in a bound flies and quickly clings to a tree branch. As soon as he has gained sudden freedom, [25] the bird sitting on high brings forth songs with these words: "Whoever grows proud without reason is deservedly deceived, and whoever is taken in by false praise will go without food, so long as he tries to spread about empty words before eating."

This fable applies to those people, whoever they are, who have obtained salvation rightly, but are then deprived of it by black deceits, in paying heed to false breezes with their empty rumors.


“Menalcas: Plangamus cuculum, Dafnin dulcisimse, nostrum, Quem subito rapuit saeva noverca suis.
Dafnis: Plangamus pariter querulosis vocibus ilium, Incipe tu senior, queso, Menalca prior.
Menalcas: Heu, cuculus nobis fuerat cantare suetus, Quae te nunc rapuit hora nefanda tuis? . . .
Dafnis: Quis scit, si veniat; timeo, est summersus in undis, Vorticibus raptus atque necatus aquis.
Menalcas: Heu mihi, si cuculum Bachus dimersit in undis, Qui rapiet iuuenes vortice pestifero.
Dafnis: Si vivat, redeat, nidosque recurrat ad almos, Nec corvus cuculum dissecet ungue fero.”

“Menalcas: Weep for our cuckoo, O beloved Daphnis Whom the cruel stepdame seized from his own.
Daphnis: With querulous voice, let us weep for him together; As old man, Menalcas, pray begin.
Menalcas: Cuckoo, alas, once wont to sing to us, What hour has now snatched you from your own? . . .
Daphnis: He may not come, I fear he is plunged in a maelstrom, Snatched by its vortex and now dead by drowning.
Menalcas: Woe to me, if Bacchus has drowned my cuckoo, Who loves to snatch young men in his poisonous gyre.
Daphnis: If he lives, let him return, run back to the fostering nest, let not the raven slash him with savage claw.”

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therefore, the nest was a place where one could protect his young and it was the role of the mature bird to educate the foolish and tame the beasts. As we will see below, Alcuin very much viewed the role of a teacher, not just as an educator, but a shaper of young minds in a moral sense as well as pedagogical.

Alcuin did not, however, simply have Augustine as a source, for there was a more immediate predecessor who also studied and used this aviary imagery. In Anglo-Saxon England, Bede analyzed the sparrow, the cognomen Alcuin took for himself, in his *Ecclesiastical History*.\(^{359}\) The recent work of Michael J. Warren has shown the particular prevalence of aviary imagery in Anglo-Saxon England before, during, and after Alcuin’s lifetime.\(^{360}\) But Bede and the Anglo-Saxons were not alone in this interest in birds. Orthography captivated medieval minds generally.\(^{361}\) Alcuin was, therefore, working within a well-established tradition that was both rooted in Scripture and fleshed out by established authorities of exegesis and culturally prevalent in Alcuin’s homeland.

Within the Carolingian court, Alcuin’s fascination with birds was not unique. Theodulf of Orléans has several fables involving birds, including “The Battle of the Birds,” “The Fox and the Hen,” and “What do the Swans Do?”. Walafrid Strabo too has

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“Man and Eagle” and “To Erluin.”362 This interest in birds went beyond Scripture and exegesis, for in the Carolingian world, birds played a particularly significant role in aristocratic circles as part of gardens.363

What makes Alcuin stand out in this tradition is the degree to and consistency with which he uses aviary imagery to define his school. He seemed to have viewed his school at Tours through a lens aviary imagery rooted in Scripture, notably Psalm 83 (84), based on his exegetical understanding of that nest as a place where the mature bird (the master) protects the young chicks (the students) and feeds them knowledge in order to shape and mold their young minds.

03.02.03: Alcuin’s Care for his Former Pupils

Alcuin’s care did not cease when his little birds left his nest. His letters betray the pen of a master deeply vested in his chicks’ success in life as they flew from his protective wings and into the world wrought with political uncertainty and moral distractions. We can see this in, for example, Alcuin’s continued relationship with Hrabanus after the student left Tours and resided in Fulda. Hrabanus had, apparently, promised to write a book for Alcuin, but the student had yet to fulfill that promise, for Alcuin writes:

“May I have the book which you promised to write for me, so keeping your promise and fulfilling my joy? The spring of living water does not run dry, though many drink deeply

362 On these poems and the varied methods of using aviary (and beast) imagery throughout medieval poetry, see generally: Ziolkowski, Talking Animals.

from it; so your wisdom is not diminished by our need drawing upon it. Do not spurn my request or deny your promise, but keep your word and satisfy me.

Return my love and give to him who asks, that you may please him who possess all and lays this upon you. Live with your boys in happiness and love. Give my greetings to the brothers who pray for me.”

Alcuin’s interest in his former students did not merely extend to those who showed promise, like Hrabanus. Alcuin remained vigilant even with the more challenging of students. In a letter dated 801 and addressed to Count Chrodgar, Alcuin wrote about a pupil who had left his nest too soon:

“You sent us a good little lad to teach, and a very creditable brother too. His ways suit us well, being religious and devout. That is important for a child. I would like you to send him back to us soon.”

We see a similar sentiment expressed to another student who had left his nest and now ignored the master. This letter was written to Osulf, whom Alcuin names the Prodigal Son, Alcuin asked his former pupil:

“Why do you dismiss your father, who taught you from infancy, who introduced you to the liberal arts, who

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instructed you in morals, and who fortified you in the precepts of eternal life?" \(^{366}\)

In this excerpt we can see, therefore, Alcuin did not abandon the students who left his nest and presented him with issue. He genuinely wanted to help them later in life, whether they (or their fathers) wanted him to lend a helping hand or not.

To Alcuin, a teacher’s duty was not just to educate but to also ensure the moral well-being of the pupils, even after they left the classroom. We can see this expressed, for example, in a letter to Fredegis, addressed under his cognomen, Nathaniel, dated to 801–802. In this letter, Alcuin implores Fredegis to live a moral life while residing in Charlemagne’s palace (unknown location), for he writes:

“Take no interest in dancing bears, but in psalm-singing clergy. Let your words be ruled by truth, your voice controlled, your silence weighed, and think carefully to whom you speak. Do not become involved in the quarrels of others, nor miss the psalms at the appointed hours or the great blessing of the mass in the body of Christ, and do not lack love. Let holy scripture be read before you, through which words of preaching may come to your fellow-diners. Let your yea and nay be set in the fortress of your mind, that you be not compelled to regret any action.” \(^{367}\)

Fredegis, as far as we can tell, was a good student who did not venture into such wicked acts. Alcuin’s warnings are not concrete commands for a lapsed student, rather orders of

\(^{366}\) ALC.45.295. Alcuin, *Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no. 295*, p. 452. “Quare dimisisti patrem, qui te ab infantia erudivit, qui te disciplinis liberalibus inbuit, moribus instruxit, perpetuae vitae praeceptis munivit?”

\(^{367}\) ALC.45.244. Alcuin, *Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no. 244*, pp. 392–393. Trans. by Allott in *Alcuin of York*, p. 132. “…nec tibi sit ursorum saltantium cura, sed clericorum spallentium. Sint verba in veritate modesta, et vox temperata, et silentia considerata; et cui dicas, diligenter examinatum. Nec te alienis inimisce dissensionibus, nec te praetereat horarum spalmodia sanctarum; nec missarum maxima virtus in corpore Christi; nec caritas desit. Legatur ante te lectio sancta, per quam fieri possint ad convivas verba praedicationis. Sit tuum velle et nolle ad mentis arcem constitutum, ne penitere cogaris de quolibet facto.”
caution to discourage the student from lapsing. Not all of Alcuin’s students were as seemingly morally pure as Fredegis. Alcuin once wrote to another student:

“Fatherly affection compels me to speak; for winged rumor has reported that you are doing things that are improper for your position and displeasing to me, for I would not wish the fame of your brilliance to be besmirched, or someone else may take the place due to you and the first will be and the last first.

What is this that I hear about you, my son, not from one person whispering in a corner but from crowds of people laughing at the story that you are still addicted to the filthy practices of boys and have never been willing to give up what you should never have done. Where is your fine education? Your brilliant work on the Scriptures?”

Again, we see the same thing articulated to Osulf in the same letter cited above:

“Why did you dismiss the father who taught you from your infancy, initiated you in the liberal arts, trained your character, fortified you with the commandments of eternal life, and join yourself to troops of harlots, parties of drunkards, the vanities of the arrogant?”

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Alcuin recognized, therefore, the dangers of the world and the temptations that were particularly attractive to students who had more recently left his classroom. It was his duty, as their teacher, to protect them from these worldly temptations. The reason for this appears to have been two-fold. Firstly, he wanted to ensure their moral well-being. Secondly, he wanted to maintain his reputation, for Alcuin’s students were a reflection on him. We can see this in a letter to Fredegis:

“I beg you, my son, my very dear son, that your life and conduct be honorable and religious and free of all fault before God and men, as far as possible, that it may be seen how well you have been taught.”

We can also see the same concept expressed in another letter to Candidus and Fredegis, when Alcuin writes that “A father lives in his sons, a father who, in an anxious manner, awaits the day of his death.”

03.02.04: Summary of the Evidence

Thus, for Alcuin education was not something that merely took place in the classroom nor was it something abandoned at signs of trouble. It was a lifelong commitment, for a teacher’s job, in Alcuin’s eyes, was never truly done. It was a teacher’s duty to ensure the physical and moral well-being of his students, as well as encourage them to continue to engage in scholarly activities (such as the case with Hrabanus). Alcuin was not, however, simply a former teacher who constantly sent letters

370 Alcuin, Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no. 244, pp. 392. Trans. by Allott in Alcuin of York, p. 131. “Obsecro te, fili mi, fili carissime, ut vita tua fiat et conversatio honesta et relegiosa atque a sine omni reprehensione, in quantum fieri possit, coram Deo et coram hominibus; ut intellegatur, quanta eruditione edoctus fuisti.”

to his former students simply for the sake of issuing them commands. Alcuin was not just a master who constantly encouraged his students to speak with him, but he was a master who genuinely loved his students. He wanted them to succeed in his nest and in the life beyond that nest. He wanted them to engage in scholarly work, live a morally and physically good life, and, perhaps most importantly, not forget him, their master. These students were a reflection of him and his qualities as a teacher. They were in many ways, therefore, his legacy.

03.03: Alcuin’s Pedagogy

Although we can see from the above sources that Alcuin cared deeply for his role as an educator and for those within his pedagogical network, a few salient questions remain. What did Alcuin’s pedagogy look like? In other words, how would Alcuin have taught the students in his classroom at Tours? Alcuin never wrote a single pedagogical treatise in the modern sense of the genre. To form an idea of what Alcuin’s pedagogy may have looked like, we must use his letters and didactic treatises. These sources provide us a rough outline of how Alcuin would have taught and what he would have specifically valued while educating students. When examined collectively, Alcuin’s letters and didactic treatises will demonstrate that he used the liberal arts which were fundamental to understanding Scripture.

Let us begin this investigation into Alcuin’s pedagogy with a question. According to Alcuin’s pedagogy, what was the purpose of education? To Alcuin, education was not a path one pursued unless one intended to teach, for Alcuin once wrote that “boys learn the Holy Scriptures so that they can teach others as they grow older. He
who did not learn in boyhood, cannot teach in old age.”³⁷² The whole purpose of
learning, something to which Alcuin invested a lifetime, was, therefore, for the purpose
of passing that knowledge to the next generation. This single statement frames how we
should view Alcuin’s pedagogy moving forward.

03.03.01: Alcuin and Education through Interrogation

When one turns to Alcuin’s didactic treatises, one can see the high regard he held
grammar and rhetoric, for Alcuin wrote four treatises on the subjects. The didactic
treatises do more than merely demonstrate Alcuin’s interest in the disciplines of grammar
and rhetoric; they inform us of his methods for teaching, for they reveal that Alcuin
favored education through interrogation.

Alcuin’s didactic treatises are each framed as question-and-answer texts.³⁷³ As
dialogues, these texts followed a long tradition of dialectic treatises on grammar dating to
the Ars minor of Donatus, the tutor of St. Jerome (d. 420), a work used by Bede,
Boniface, and Alcuin alike.³⁷⁴ While this is entirely fitting with the genre, scholars have

³⁷² Alcuin, Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no. 19, p. 55. “Discant pueri scripturas sanctas; ut aetate perfecta
veniente alios docere possint. Qui non discit in pueritia, non docet in senectute.”

³⁷³ On Alcuin’s didactic treatises, see particularly: H.W. Fortgens, “De paedagoog Alcuin in zijn ‘Ars
Louis Holtz, “L’œuvre Grammaticale d’Alcuin Dans Le Contexte de Son Temps,” in Alkuin von York und
St. Gallen, ed. Ernst Tremp and Karl Schmuki, Monasterium Sancti Galli, 5 (St. Gallen: Verlag am
Klosterhof; 2010), 129–49; Sluiter, “Persuasion, Pedagogy, Polemics”; Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter,
“Alcuin, Ars Grammatica and Disputatio de Rhetorica et de Virtutibus, CA. 790–800.” On the tradition of
grammatica, see: Martin Irvine, The Making of Textual Culture: “Grammatica” and Literary Theory 350–
1100 (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³⁷⁴ On the use of Donatus in early medieval school curriculums, see: Nicholas Orme, Medieval Schools:
noted that such a method likely indicates how Alcuin would have viewed education, that is, by using questions to drive learning. In Alcuin’s didactic treatises, this method of education through interrogation occurs in three ways.

The first example occurs in Alcuin’s *Disputatio de vera philosophia* (which functioned as a preliminary text for his *Ars grammatica*). In this text, Alcuin has students jointly ask questions to the master who then provides them with replies. In this treatise, the students default to the master’s knowledge and neither student contributes to the replies, rather their sole role is to continue the conversation by probing the master. In this system, the students are entirely defaulting to the master’s supreme knowledge.

In *Ars grammatica*, Alcuin does something a little bit different. In this work, he has two specific students play a far more active role. The first is Franco, a fourteen-year-old Frank. The other is Saxo, a fifteen-year-old Saxon. Their names make it clear that these are non-native speakers of Latin. Their ages indicate two things. First, they are beyond the basics of education and are ready to begin entering more advanced studies. The difference between the two is equally significant and is reflected in the dialogue. Saxo, being the older of the two (and more educated), plays a more dominant role. In this dialogue, Franco asks questions and, when Saxo has the answer, he supplies it. When the questions become too complex and venture beyond Saxo’s knowledge, the master will provide the answers or contribute to move the conversation to a deeper area beyond Saxo’s knowledge. When this occurs, again the students (as in the *Disputatio de vera* uses of Donatus by Anglo-Saxon authors, see: Robert Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2002), 147.

philosophia), ask the master in unison. In this method of education through interrogation, therefore, we see a bit more complexity to the process, that is, with students driving the dialogue together with the assistance of the master when necessary. In this system, the master plays the role of facilitator of a classroom discussion.

In another treatise, Disputatio de rhetorica et virtutibus, Alcuin provides a different structure to the dialogue. In this work, the dialogue occurs between Charlemagne (the student) and Alcuin (the master). Because the student is a king, Alcuin must exercise himself as a master a bit differently. He cannot treat the king as he would other subservient students. (I address this larger detail below as I examine Charlemagne and Alcuin’s pedagogical relationship.) In this work, both the student and the master use education through interrogation to try to find answers together. The student clearly has a mastery of the subject and is asking questions from a position of that knowledge. But the dialogue is not strictly driven by the student, rather the master challenges the student by asking questions. In this dialogue, therefore, we see a classroom dialogue functioning more as a joint discussion between master and student to access knowledge.

Each of these examples represent the different ways in which interrogation could be effective at driving education: 1) students driving a conversation by asking the master questions; 2) a younger student asking an older student questions who then replies with the master functioning as a facilitator of discussion and providing answers when necessary; and 3) the student and the master conversing together to access knowledge.

The last of these texts, Disputatio de rhetorica et virtutibus, suggests that education through interrogation was not just something useful for framing didactic
treatises, but was a method applicable and useful in the classroom. While discussing the parts of speech, Alcuin abruptly stops the dialogue with the following exchange:

“Alcuin: ‘It is permitted for me to ask you [something]?’

Charles: ‘Why not? For to ask wisely is to teach; and if there should be one person who asks [the question] and another person who teaches, nevertheless, the understanding of each person proceeds from the same font of Wisdom.”

While it is Charlemagne giving such a wise response, it is certainly the construction of Alcuin, the author of the treatise. Charlemagne’s response is important for our investigation because he establishes the utility of dialogue in the classroom. For Alcuin, a good teacher did not simply lecture to his students, he challenged them by asking “wise questions.” But regardless of who asks the question, either the teacher or the student, its pursuit comes from wisdom. Ann E. Matter has analyzed this specific quote and suggested that

“the explanation of this practice put into Charlemagne’s mouth by Alcuin the author reveals how deeply Alcuin the teacher relied on the dialogical mode, especially as a tool for revealing the divine reality that should be the focus of all learning.”

In other words, Alcuin demonstrates the importance of dialogue as a method of teaching to progress to truth found not only in the world but also in Scripture. Matter’s analysis is also important because it demonstrates the way Alcuin would have approached education.

376 Alcuin, Disputatio de rhetorica et virtutibus, PL 101: 939.
“ALB. Licet mihi interrogare te?
CAR. Cur non? Nam interrogare sapienter est docere: et si alter sit qui interrogat, alter qui docet, ex uno tamen, [hoc est] sapientiae fonte utriusque sensus procedit.”

These didactic works, structured as dialogues, were not merely conforming to a literary genre but rather establishing a model for employing the liberal arts through dialogue. Such a structure was not only a good way to teach lessons but a fundamental method to learn to interpret Scripture in the classroom. That Alcuin found dialogue as a useful way to perform exegesis is affirmed by the methods used in the *magnum opus* of his exegetical works, his commentary on Genesis, a work Alcuin structured as a question-and-answer commentary. Alcuin’s choice in choosing to structure his exegesis of Genesis as a dialogue, within this context, is likely not arbitrary but rather a conscientious choice of applying classroom methods of exegesis to a work of exegesis. The connection of classroom dialogue and exegesis is not unique to Alcuin. Alcuin’s student Hrabanus informs us that he wrote his commentary on the Pauline Epistles at the request of his student Lupus of Ferrières nearly three decades after Alcuin’s death.378

### 03.03.02: Alcuin and the Utility of the Liberal Arts

All of this, that is to say, education through interrogation as one progressed through the liberal arts was for the sole purpose of accessing Scripture and unlocking its mysteries. Alcuin believed that it was through Holy Scripture that one gained wisdom, for he states:

> “These are the things, which your most noble thought does not ignore—how through all the pages of Holy Scripture we are encouraged that there is nothing more lofty to obtain the good life, nothing more pleasant to practice, nothing stronger against vices, nothing more praiseworthy in all esteem than to learn wisdom. Even according to the teachings of the

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philosophers, nothing is more necessary to rule the people, nothing better to build a life in the best customs, than the glory of wisdom, and the praise of teaching and the desire for learning.”

Thus, to Alcuin Holy Scripture was the font of wisdom, which was one of the greatest gifts. He believed that wisdom and its obtainment should not be viewed in isolation. Instead, as he informs us in his other writings, this wisdom was a house supported by seven pillars. One sees Alcuin develop this view in two of his other writings.

The first is a letter, dated to 795, in which he praises the study of letters. Here, Alcuin states:

“This remains the greatest joy to me, that I should see sons flourish in pure conversation and work with diligence. This is the ornate thing which I desired in them. These are the luxurious garments (deliciae), in which I desired for them to be clothed. This is the cleanliness which greatly wished in them. These are the feasts, in which I loved for them to take delight. In these things, the soul, hungering and thirsting for justice, is rebuilt. This is the wine, which wisdom mixes inviting [you] to her table, in her house which she constructed with seven supporting pillars.”

In the final line, Alcuin is drawing from Proverbs 9: 1–2, which states: “Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum excidit columnas se septem immolavit victimas suas miscuit vinum

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et proposuit mensam suam.” In this letter, unfortunately, Alcuin does not explicitly tell us how he viewed these figurative seven pillars. To understand this better, we need turn to his other writings.

We must turn to *Ars grammatica*, the same didactic treatise noted above. In the opening of *Ars grammatica*, which is framed as a dialogue, Alcuin’s students state:

Students: ‘However one should put it, we beg you to show us the first steps to wisdom, so that we may be able, if God so gives and you teach us, to reach the higher levels from the lower ones.’

Teacher: ‘We read the words of Solomon, through whom wisdom sings about itself [Proverbs 9:1]: “Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars.” Although this sentence refers to divine wisdom, which built itself a home, that is, a body, in a virginal womb, this wisdom is also made firmer by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. And wisdom has illuminated the Church, that is, the house of God, by these same gifts. Wisdom is held up by seven columns of the liberal arts. And there is no other road to perfect science unless one is elevated by these seven columns or steps.’

“Students: ‘Lead us, lead us and settle us finally away from the nest of ignorance on the branches of wisdom that God gave to you. And may we be able to see some light of truth from there. Show us what you have so many times promised us, the seven stages of theoretical learning.’

Teacher: ‘All right then, the steps you are asking for are the following— and may you always be so eager to learn as you are now curious to see—grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astrology. For on these steps philosophers have spent their free time and their work time. Under their consulate they have become more famous, under their monarchy more widely known, through them they have become praiseworthy in eternal memory. Through them the saints and doctors and defenders of our catholic faith have always proven themselves superior to all leaders of heresies in public debate. May your youth also run its daily course along these paths, dearest boys, until a more mature age and a firmer state of mind arrives at the summits of holy Scripture. In the meantime arm yourselves with these
so that you may turn into absolutely invincible defenders of the true faith and upholders of truth.”

Here, I would like to note a few salient points. In this introductory material to *Ars grammatica*, Alcuin tells us that seven liberal arts are the building blocks necessary to obtain wisdom, which, as we know from the sources above, Alcuin saw as being obtained through Holy Scripture. According to John Marenbon, Alcuin was the first author of the Middle Ages to make this explicit connection between the liberal arts and their use for accessing Scripture. Marenbon also states:

“Although the link with Solomon’s temple may have been suggested by Cassiodorus, it is Alcuin who expands the allusion and recalls the traditional exegesis of ‘the house of wisdom.’ As a result, he is able both to insist on the radical need for knowledge of the arts and yet also place the secular wisdom they represent within a scheme of Christian wisdom deriving from Christ, who is himself Wisdom. Alcuin has not merely, as often noted, transformed the *Philosophia* of Boethius’ *De consultation* into the Christian figure of Wisdom (*Sapientia*). He has also Christianized Augustine’s argument in *De ordine*. As in Augustine, the liberal arts reflect the underlying structure of true knowledge. However, this is now seen to be grasped, not by the workings of reason itself, but through the interpretation of scripture. The liberal arts, then, are not—as Augustine himself would suggest in

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MAG. Legimus, Salomone dicente, per quem ipsa se cecinit [Sapientia]: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem (Prov. IX, 1). Quae sententia licet ad divinam pertineat sapientiam, quae sibi in utero virginali domum, id est corpus, aedificavit, hanc et septem donis sancti Spiritus confirmavit: vel Ecclesiam, quae est domus Dei, eisdem donis illuminavit; tamen sapientia 268 liberalium litterarum septem columnis confirmatur; nec alter ad perfectam quemlibet deductum scientiam, nisi his septem columnis vel etiam gradibus exaltetur.
DIS. Tandem aliquando pande quod promisisti, et propter fragilitatem nostrae aetatis nos mollioribus incipe lactare, ut ad solidiora, crescente aetate, facilius perveniamus.
MAG. Divina praevinientia etiam et pericienete gratia faciam quod rogastis, vobisque ad videndum ostendam [Ms., ostendo] septem philosophiae gradus, per eosdemque Deo donante et vita comite pro nostrarum portione virium penes temporis et aetatis opportunitatem ad sublimiora speculativae scientiae deduxero.”
later works, such as De doctrina christiana bare techniques which happen, as a matter of fact, to be valuable for the faithful. Rather, they reflect reality as it is made accessible to Christians through revelation.”

Through these liberal arts, Alcuin viewed, moreover, his task as educator as more than merely providing knowledge to his students; rather he saw it as a way to mold them into good people who, in their “mature age,” would have a “firmer state of mind” when they reached the summit of the mount, where Scripture sat. It was for this reason that Alcuin’s pedagogical bonds were more than teacher-student relationships; they were familiar, in its purest sense, and strong, as we saw reflected in the epistolary evidence cited above. These bonds helped Alcuin shape his students into not only into good students for the purposes of becoming educators later in life, but he also shaped them (or tried to) into good men.

03.03.03: The Examples of Astronomy and Arithmetic for the Purposes of Religion and Exegesis

When we turn to Alcuin’s letters, we can gain a clearer sense of Alcuin’s interest in specific arts. By examining two arts, we can see how Alcuin used a specific discipline for the purposes of reinforcing religion and revealing its potential for exploring exegesis on Scripture. Let us begin with Alcuin’s views of astronomy. Alcuin’s Ep. 148, for example, is a letter addressed to Charlemagne and dated to before July 798. In this letter, Alcuin says to Charlemagne: “Fredegis, your servant, brought to me most delightful gifts

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of your piety.”383 Fredegis, a former pupil of Alcuin’s, appears to have spread these four gifts out over the course of four days to symbolize the four days of creation. The first gift was something that created light. The most logical idea here is that this was a candle or something of the sort. The second gift was priestly vestments. Alcuin took this to symbolize the firmament. The third was an unknown item of gold which symbolized the adornment of the earth on the third day of creation. The fourth and final gift is particularly intriguing. It was something designed to sit on Alcuin’s table and was spherical. It had twenty-seven semi-circles and when that number was doubled mirrored the course of the moon through each sign. Apparently, Charlemagne expressed interest in this item and asked Fredegis to relay his interest in subject of astronomy, for Alcuin wrote:

“The aforementioned boy told me you were asking about this course, as to how there are an additional ten and a half hours each month.”384

Alcuin then moves into a lengthy discussion of astronomy for the bulk of the letter. This interest in astronomy is not a unique occurrence here. Alcuin also express a similar interest in the appearance of Mars in a letter sent to Charlemagne in July 798.385 We also see a sustained interest on the part of Alcuin’s student, Charlemagne, after the teacher’s


death in 804 when the emperor wrote to a certain Dungal to seek answers about solar
eclipses in 811.386 This interest in astronomy is not peculiar to Alcuin nor the
Carolingians, rather it was part of a continued interest in the subject during the early
middle ages, an interest the Carolingians inherited indirectly from the Greeks (namely
Hipparchus and Ptolemy) and directly from Romans as they explored classical authors
(and their texts), such as Pliny (Natural History), Marcobius (Commentary on the Dream
of Scipio), Martianus Capella (Marriage of Philology and Mercury), and Calcidus
(Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus), and commented upon them to understand better the
stars and their movements.387 This interest can be seen in royal documents as early as the
780s with the Admonitio generalis and the De litteris colendis, which, as noted in this
dissertation’s Introduction, Alcuin was particularly influential in shaping.388 While
astronomy was certainly a discipline necessary for the study of computistics, the current
state of the evidence, as noted by Bruce Eastwood, suggests that the Carolingians’ (and

386 Bruce S. Eastwood, “The Astronomy of Macrobius in Carolingian Europe: Dungal’s Letters of 811 to

387 On this inheritance, see: Bruce S. Eastwood, “Plinian Astronomical Diagrams in the Early Middle
Ages,” in Mathematics and Its Applications to: Science and Natural Philosophy in the Middle Ages.
Essays in Honour of Marshall Clagett, ed. Edward Grant and John E. Murdoch (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1987), 141–72; Bruce S. Eastwood, “The Astronomies of Pliny, Martianus Capella and
Isidore of Seville in the Carolingian World,” in Science in Western and Eastern Civilization in Carolingian
Times, ed. Paul Leo Butze and Dietrich Lohrmann (Basel: Birkhäuser, 1993, 161–80; Bruce S. Eastwood,
“Calcidius’s Commentary on Plato’s Timaeus in Latin Astronomy of the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries,” in
Between Demonstration and Imagination: Essays in the History of Science and Philosophy Presented to
John D. North, ed. Lodi Nauta and Arjo Vanderjagt (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 171–209; Bruce S. Eastwood,
Astronomy and Cosmology,” in Carolingian Scholarship and Martianus Capella: Ninth-Century
Commentary Traditions on De Nuptiis in Context, ed. Mariken Teeuwen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 193–
220; Bruce S. Eastwood, “Early-Medieval Cosmology, Astronomy, and Mathematics,” in The Cambridge
History of Science, 2: Medieval Science, ed. David C. Lindberg and Michael H. Shank (Cambridge:

388 On these documents, see: Eastwood and Grasshoff, “Planetary Diagrams for Roman Astronomy in
Medieval Europe, ca. 800-1500,” 1–3.
Alcuin’s) interest in the subject was far more reaching than simply calculating Easter.\textsuperscript{389} It was part of a larger interest in measuring time and a broader interest in the discipline of astronomy generally. Thus, while we do not have explicit mention from Alcuin on the utility of astronomy for the purposes of exegesis, it remained useful for broader purposes.

With other liberal arts, we have a much clearer correlation between the discipline and exegesis. Let us examine arithmetic, for example. That Alcuin found arithmetic to be an essential skill can be found throughout his letters. Alcuin once told Charlemagne in 798:

> “You know well how sweet arithmetic is in the arts \textit{(rationibus)}, how necessary it is to understand divine Scriptures, how pleasant the examination of the stars of the heavens and their movements is.”\textsuperscript{390}

Arithmetic was, therefore, essential for a proper reading of Scripture. Such utility is confirmed in another letter to Charlemagne, in which Alcuin states:

> “From this examination, you can demonstrate to your servants how pleasant and useful it is to become acquainted with the discipline of arithmetic, which we also believe is well noted through your diligence and we believe that it would come to be learned by others through you.” \textsuperscript{391}

\textsuperscript{389} Eastwood and Grasshoff, “Planetary Diagrams for Roman Astronomy in Medieval Europe, ca. 800-1500,” 2.


That Alcuin used some sort of arithmetic textbook, can be confirmed by Ep. 172, in which Alcuin speaks about a “libell[us] arithmeticae disciplinae,” or a “book of teaching arithmetic.”\(^{392}\) We may even have this very textbook, known today as the Propositiones ad acuedos juevenes, or Problems to Sharpen the Young,\(^ {393}\) though scholars are divided on it being a genuine work of Alcuin.\(^ {394}\) Regardless, in other letters, we can see Alcuin teaching arithmetic. In Alcuin’s Ep. 133, for example, a lettered dated to c. 798, Alcuin wrote to a former student named Daphnus. In this letter, Alcuin used arithmetic to teach Daphnus about the importance of the number of queens and concubines of King Salomon as found in Scripture.\(^ {395}\) To Alcuin, therefore, arithmetic had particular importance as it pertained to Scripture and exegesis, for it was through arithmetic that one learned Scripture’s hidden meanings with regard to numbers. It was, therefore, a useful discipline for performing exegesis and training exegetes.

03.03.04: Hrabanus’ Poem

To contribute to this view of Alcuin’s pedagogy, we have one non-Alcuinian source. I include it here to provide a more inclusive picture of Alcuin’s pedagogy as it is the sole non-Alcuinian source regarding his school at Tours. This is a poem from

\(^{392}\) Alcuin, Ep. 172, ed. E. Dummler, MGH, Epp. IV, pp. 285

\(^{393}\) For the critical edition, see: Folkerts, Die älteste mathematische Aufgabensammlung in lateinischer Sprache.


\(^{395}\) Alcuin, Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no. 133, p. 200–201.
Hrabanus. In this work, Hrabanus presents Alcuin as a narrator speaking to Saint Martin while describing Hrabanus as a student:

“As everyone knows, when I was a guardian and lowly minister
Reading the holy dogma of our own church,
I taught that boy [Hrabanus with hunger for the divine word,
By means of advice for ethics and instruction for wisdom.
Indeed, he himself is a Frank by birth,
And also an inhabitant of the forest of Buchonia
Sent to this place to learn the words of God.
For his own abbot, the rector of the flock at Fulda,
Directed him to this place to your dwellings, O Father [Martin],
So that he as a student might read with me the art of meter,
And so that he—triumphing—might be prepared, with suitable ceremony, for Holy Scripture.”

Hrabanus tells us, therefore, that his abbot sent him to study under Alcuin where he studied ethics and poetry. All of this was not to read or interpret Scripture at that moment, rather it was for the purposes of future investigation of Scripture. As we saw above, this was because to Alcuin Scripture was the peak of the mountain and these skills were the fundamental steps necessary to take in order to access Scripture and obtain its wisdom. As we saw in Chapter One, Hrabanus would, indeed, go on to comment on most of Scripture and be remembered as one of the greatest Scriptural exegetes of the Middle

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Nempe ego cum fueram custos humilisque minister
Istius Ecclesiae, dogmata sacra legens
Hunc puerum docui divini famine verbi
Ethicae monitis et sophiae studiis.
Ipse quidem Francus genere est, atque incola sylvae
Bochoniae, huc missus discere verba Dei.
Abbas numque suus, Fuldensis rector ovilis,
Illum huc direxit ad tua tecta, pater,
Quod mecum legeret metri scolasticus artem,
Scripturam et sacram rite pararet ovans.
Ages, but as a student in his early teens, he was still learning the fundamental skills of the liberal arts.

**03.03.05: Summary of the Evidence**

When we bring together these various sources on Alcuin’s pedagogy, therefore, we can discern a few salient elements. First, he was a teacher who taught, not for the sake of teaching, but to train the next generation of teachers who could then train another generation. Second, he believed that education occurred through the liberal arts in an interrogative manner and that each liberal art was a step necessary to access Scripture and, thereby, gain wisdom. Third, Alcuin’s pedagogy trained students not only to read Scripture, but also to become “good” people. Fourth, within this system Alcuin appears to have valued the role of grammar and rhetoric (as evident by his didactic treatises), arithmetic and astronomy (as evident from his letters), and meter (as evident from his own poems, his lament for the lack of poetry being taught in Charlemagne’s court after his departure, and Hrabanus’ own poem written from the point of view of Alcuin).

**03.04: Alcuin’s Pedagogical Relationship with Charlemagne prior to 796**

The evidence presented above is that of Alcuin the educator and his pedagogy. One question yet remains, would Charlemagne have viewed Alcuin as educator capable of serving in the abbacy of Basilica of Saint-Martin in 796 where he wished to form a school? To answer this question, we should examine Alcuin’s pedagogical relationship with Charlemagne.
The evidence we have suggests Alcuin functioned as an educator after he arrived in Charlemagne’s court (however infrequently he remained there) in c. 782 and continued to educate individuals during the 780s and 790s. While there, Charlemagne would have known first-hand that Alcuin was a capable teacher as he was one of Alcuin’s students, according to Einhard, for he states in his *Vita Karoli*:

“[Charlemagne] avidly pursued the liberal arts and greatly honored those teachers whom he deeply respected. To learn grammar, he followed [the teachings of] Peter of Pisa, an aged deacon. For the other disciplines, he took as his teacher Alcuin of Britain, also known as Albinus, who was a deacon as well, but from the Saxon people. He was the most learned man in the entire world. Charles invested a great deal of time and effort studying rhetoric, dialectic, and particularly astronomy with him. He learned the art of calculation [arithmetic] and with deep purpose and great curiosity investigated the movement of the stars.”

As a source, Einhard is rather problematic. There is a long historiography on Einhard and his various claims about the king and emperor. The historiography on Einhard as a source is quite large and nuanced, for each individual claim by Einhard has its own particular historiography that seeks to either prove or disprove the author (or both). Nevertheless, it should be noted that Einhard’s points about Charlemagne are regularly and rightly challenged because he sought to frame his biography of

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Charlemagne to portray the king and emperor as a worldly (he received distant emissaries from the Middle-East), educated (he was trained by the best teachers), religious (he inspired an educational and religious reform), imperial (he was coronated emperor by Pope Leo III), humble (he did not want to receive the imperial crown but grudgingly accepted the role), fatherly (he had his children educated), militaristic (he succeeded on the battlefield), and good Frankish king (he used his power to reward those closest to him). This scholarship has revealed that Einhard melded fact and fiction. In discussing particularly Einhard’s discussion of Charlemagne’s relationship with emissaries from the Middle East, Anne A. Latowsky has suggested that previous scholars who believed Einhard was confused in his facts, misunderstand Einhard and his purpose in constructing this biography. According to Latowsky,

“Far from throwing together mixed-up facts of questionable value, Einhard presented a series of events that he had deliberately assembled. His depiction of the emperor’s diplomatic exchanges with rulers from the four corners of the world offers a careful refashioning of Frankish historiographical materials to conform to a classical and late antique encomiastic topos that symbolized the achievement of Roman universal dominion.”

In other words, Einhard consciously framed the Charlemagne we see in his biography.

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400 Latowsky, Emperor of the World, 22–23.
These arguments on the veracity of Einhard are, however, moot, for even if one reads Einhard’s views with skepticism or flatly refutes his narrative, arguing that Einhard embellished Charlemagne’s educational pedigree to present his subject with greater erudition, one still finds that Einhard, who knew Alcuin personally, chose him as the font of Charlemagne’s learning. Einhard’s emphasis on Alcuin, therefore, even if fictional (and we have no evidence against Einhard’s veracity here) reveals Alcuin’s courtly reputation as an educator, even at the highest levels of the palace and the royal family. In addition to this, I show later in Chapter Four that Alcuin continued to educate Charlemagne after the former left the Palace in 796. Much of these examples of education were initiated by Charlemagne posing questions to his teacher. If we accept Einhard’s narrative as true, then Charlemagne would have had personal experience with Alcuin’s teaching abilities. Further, Alcuin continued to educate Charlemagne after he arrived in Tours in 796 (see Chapter Four).

Charlemagne would have been, therefore, well aware of Alcuin’s role as an educator prior to Alcuin’s arrival to Tours in 796. He educated Charlemagne personally, as evidenced by Einhard and reinforced by Alcuin and Charlemagne’s pedagogical relationship after 796, discussed partially in this chapter and more extensively in the next chapter. Since Charlemagne wished to form a school at Tours, Alcuin would have, therefore, naturally been an easily recognizable and perhaps even ideal choice for such a role. After Alcuin arrived in Tours, it appears that he continued to function in this educational capacity until his death in 804.

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The evidence we have suggests that Alcuin did not waste time once he arrived in Tours in 796. He appears to have executed Charlemagne’s desires immediately upon his arrival, for he formed a school in the city and began to teach. The chief evidence for this comes from a letter to Charlemagne, dated c. 796 or early 797:

“I, your Flaccus, am busy carrying out your wishes and instructions at St. Martin’s, giving some the honey of holy scriptures, making others drunk on the old wine of ancient learning, beginning to feed others on the fruits of grammar, while to some I propose to reveal the order of the stars, like the painted roof of a great man’s house.”

Here, Alcuin is describing a school not focused in the interpretation of Scripture, rather a school centered around the liberal arts. He describes “beginning to feed [students] on the fruits of grammar.” These are students new to the liberal arts and just beginning to take their first steps to access Scripture. Other students learned “the order of the stars”, or astronomy, a chief interest of Charlemagne’s, as we saw above. For other students, Alcuin got them “drunk on the old wine of ancient learning.” It is not entirely clear what this reference, but it seems possible that it could be referencing either Roman or Patristic authors (or both). Finally, other students had been introduced to the “honey of Holy Scripture.” In other words, some students had begun to read Scripture. What is


“Ego vero Flaccus vester secundum exhortationem et bonam voluntatem vestram alis per tecta sancti Martini sanctarum mella scripturarum ministrare satago; alios vetere antiquarum disciplinarum mero inaeбриare studeo; alios grammaticae subtilitatis enutrire pomis incipiam; quosdam stellarum ordine ceu picto cuiuslibet magni domus culmine inluminare gestio.”
interesting here is that Alcuin has provided no explicit mention of training students in Scriptural exegesis. This list of subjects aligns perfectly with a regular training in the liberal arts. It seems, therefore, that Alcuin’s school at Tours was centered around the seven liberal arts. How did Alcuin’s students learn to write exegesis, though? How did they develop an interest in it? When did they partake in the production and dissemination of exegesis? As we shall see in Chapter Four, this was a task reserved for those who had a firm foundation in the liberal arts. In other words, this was a task for those who were more advanced than the Tours classroom.

03.06: Conclusion

When we bring the evidence presented in this chapter and Chapter Two, we see that Charlemagne’s possible interest in Tours would have been part of a larger trend dating back centuries. It was part of the Frankish royalty’s longstanding general interest in Tours. Because the basilica of Saint-Martin was an important institution, especially since it was so closely connected to the Frankish court, and because Charlemagne wanted to build a school there, he would have likely had no better candidate than Alcuin. We know that Alcuin arrived in Tours in 796 and shortly after established a school there.

We can see that Charlemagne viewed Alcuin as a good educator, as evident by Einhard and his own personal correspondence with the master. As Charlemagne wanted to form a school at Tours, there would have been few candidates better suited for such a task in his mind. To Alcuin, education was of the utmost importance. We can see it in the cognomens he gave his cherished students. We can see it expressed by the way he viewed his “beloved nest” of students and the aviary imagery (which was influenced by
Scripture and patristic exegesis), the lens through which he viewed his school. We can also see it in the love and concern he expressed for his pupils once he left that nest. Through his letters and didactic treatises, we see that Alcuin was a man whose writings bear the hallmarks of an individual deeply invested in thinking about and developing his pedagogy.

Through the liberal arts, Alcuin also provided students with the skills necessary to read Scripture and interpret it correctly. Each of the liberal arts acted as the individual respective steps necessary to access Scripture and obtain wisdom. In other words, the liberal arts were vital in order to train students who would go on to engage in exegesis. As evidenced by Alcuin’s didactic treatises, he likely taught these liberal arts in a dialogue format. Such a school would have been perfectly suited to train students to do two things. First, it would have trained a group of students who could go on to train a new generation of students. In fact, we see this with Hrabanus who would go on to teach at Fulda after he left Alcuin’s school in the early ninth century. Second, it would have trained individuals in the skills necessary to begin studying the more advanced task of interpreting Scripture. We see three students go on to write surviving works of exegesis: Fredegis, Candidus, and Hrabanus.403

The picture presented in this chapter is, however, that of Alcuin an educator. An important question remains. How did Alcuin train students in exegesis? How did he interact with those in intellectual and pedagogical network after he left the court or a nearby school in 796 for the abbacy of Saint-Martin of Tours? In other words, how did he impart knowledge to those students of advanced age, who had moved through the liberal

403 We can likely add to this list is Joseph Scottus, whom I mentioned in Chapter One, fn. 132
arts, and were ready for the more delicate art of exegesis? These are the tasks for the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR: A FRIEND, TEACHER, AND EXEGETE REMOVED

When Alcuin entered the abbacy of Saint-Martin of Tours (green in the image below) in 796, he did not just inherit a significant institution in a significant city (as detailed in Chapter Two), he also inherited a position in the Carolingian realm far removed from its center(s) of power, notably the palatial court at Frankfurt (blue), which by 796 was gradually becoming more centered at Aachen (purple), and the intellectual network(s) that encompassed two significant monasteries, Fulda (orange) and Lorsch (gray), all of which were located in the eastern regions of the realm.404

Figure 4.1: Locations of Positions of Power relative to Tours

In these final eight years of Alcuin’s life (796-804), the scholar would receive visits from his former students, such as Candidus and Fredegis, friends, such as Arn, and even King Charlemagne himself. During this period, however, Alcuin’s life was far more isolated than it had been in the years prior when he enjoyed positions in the intellectual networks associated with Charlemagne’s Palace, possibly including Frankfurt and Lorsch. With the isolation of Tours, beginning in 796, came a dramatic increase in letters. Most of Alcuin’s letters, date from this period, not necessarily because this was the period in which he most actively wrote, but because this is the period from which his letters survive.

Through these letters, Alcuin continued to try to impart knowledge to his former pupils; he continued to try to mold them morally and spiritually; he continued to try to maintain their spiritual and physical purity; and he continued, at all costs, to try to maintain influence over them. These letters represent the pen of a master who longed for his former pupils, a master who could not speak with his loved ones in person, and a master who was forced to write to his former pupils to gain any updates on their respective lives.

Through these letters, we also see a man trying to continue to influence the production and dissemination of exegesis. It was during these final years that Alcuin wrote (or perhaps finished) his commentary on Genesis, which he dedicated to a former pupil, Sigwulf; it was during these final years that Alcuin was encouraged by a possible former pupil, Gisla, to finish writing his commentary on John; and it was in these final years that Alcuin wrote more focused treatises of epistolary exegesis, such as Epp. 81, 133, 135, and 136.
It is to this epistolary network that we shall now turn. By studying Alcuin’s epistolary network at Tours, we can provide a map of Alcuin’s intellectual influence during the lesser-studied final eight years of his life. This map is vital to understanding the influence of Alcuin upon the production and dissemination of exegesis during the late-eighth and early-ninth centuries, for many of the intellectual and political elites in this network were connected to the production or dissemination of exegesis.

When we examine Alcuin’s letters after 796, a few things become clear about the master. Firstly, he continued to try to maintain connections with former pupils and colleagues. Secondly, by maintaining contact with those individuals, he continued to try and exert influence over those nodes in his intellectual network. Thirdly, within this system, he tried to impart knowledge to former students. Fourthly, this method of teaching through letters was markedly different from his classroom instruction; within this system, Alcuin engaged in epistolary exegesis in which he structured firm arguments designed as focused treatises. Fifthly, he used his letters to edit and disseminate large works of exegesis. Each of these merits individual exploration.

04:01: Maintaining Connections

One of the stronger nodes in Alcuin’s epistolary network was his old friend, Arn, the archbishop of Salzburg. As we saw in the Introduction, these letters are most frequently preserved in the collections associated with Salzburg, particularly S1. As archbishop of one of the most important institutions in the southeastern region of the Carolingian realm, Arn was a not only a friend, but an important node in Alcuin’s
political and intellectual networks. The extant evidence indicates that Alcuin and Arn had
an active epistolary relationship prior to the former’s arrival in Tours in 796. In c. 790,
for example, Alcuin wrote to Arn:

“I treasure the memory of your loving friendship, holy
father, longing that some day the desired time will come
when I may put my longing arms around your neck. If only
I could fly like Habbakuk, how quickly I would rush to
embrace you and how eagerly I would kiss not only your
eyes, ears and mouth, but also each finger and toe not once
but many times. But as I am not good enough to come to you
like that, I shall often write to you in my unsophisticated
manner, my letters speaking for me and saying:
Good health be yours, good prelate, evermore;
May all your friends fare well, I pray.405

After Alcuin arrived in Tours, this relationship continued, but the tone of the
letters after 796 are noticeably different. During Alcuin’s tenure in Tours, Alcuin was far
removed from the political activities of the court. Arn, positioned in a significant
institution in the east, appears to have been far better connected to the court, or, at the
very least, Alcuin seems to believe him to have better access to the court. We can see
Alcuin’s lack of knowledge and his attempt to glean what he can from Arn, for example,
in a letter he sent to Arn at some point between the Summer and Autumn of 798.

“When you read this letter, quickly send another back, that I
may know what the Eagle is going to do with his chicks, and
how the conversion of the Huns is going, and what the
Roman nobility are up to, and what you have heard about the

“Satis suavi comineinoratione a vestram recolo, sanctissime pater, dilectionem et familiaritatem; optans, ut
quandoque eveniat mihi tempus amabile, quo collum caritatis vestrae desideriorum meorum digitulis
amplecte. O, si mihi translatio Abacuc e esset subito concessa, quam citatis labris non solum oculos aures et os, sed etiam manuum vel pedum
singulos digitorum articulos, non semel, sed multoties oscularer. Verum quia meriti mei non est ita venire
ad te, mittam saepius rusticitatis meae litterulas ad te;” Bullough, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation, p.
43 n. 96, 54 n. 123, 56 n. 132, 87 n. 212, 90 n. 221, 100, 113 n. 284, 264, 265 n. 38, 367 n. 114, 398 n. 209,
454 n. 70.
leaders of Greece, and whether you have brought any relics of the saints with you to console your Albinus.⁴⁰⁶

We see a similar sentiment expressed in a letter dated to September 799 and addressed to another colleague of Alcuin’s, Charlemagne’s cousin Adalhard, the abbot of Corbie. Corbie was roughly 300 km to the north-northeast of Tours and was positioned roughly between Tours and Aachen.⁴⁰⁷ In the letter to Adalhard dated to September 799, Alcuin wrote:

“Why did the brother come empty-handed? His tongue brought a ‘Hail’ to my ears, but his hands nothing for my eyes. Why did you, who sit at the meeting of ways, give no sure news to him who lives in Mareshah? The crows caw as they flew about the roof tops, but the dove reared on the pavements of the church is silent. I would have believed him had he said anything of the eagle…”⁴⁰⁸

It appears, therefore, that Alcuin’s position in Tours made him feel removed from the centers of power and the places that were “the meeting of the ways”, such as Corbie. It seems that he did not have the same immediate connections to geographical nodes and institutions that would have afforded him the knowledge of key events to which he would

⁴⁰⁶ ALC 45.146. Alcuin, Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no. 146, p.236. Trans. by Allott in Alcuin of York, p. 143. “Et dum hanc perlegas cartulam, cito remitte alteram, ut sciam, quid acturus sit Aquila cum aviculis suis; vel quid Avaria faciat vel eredat; vel quid Romanorum nobilitas novi habeat adinventum; vel quid de Graeciae sublimitatibus audieras; et an aliquas sanctorum reliquias tecum adtulisses, quibus posses consolari Albinuin tuum.” Bullough, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation, p. 50 n. 113, 74 n.176, 155 n. 80.

⁴⁰⁷ On Corbie as an intellectual institution, see generally, David Ganz, Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1990). On Alcuin’s relationship and letters with Adalhard, see particularly p. 24.

have more freely had access in the past. While in Tours, therefore, he did not have access to immediate news. This is not particularly surprising as Tours, noted above, despite being intellectually, religiously, economically, and politically significant was far removed from the key institutions at Frankfurt and the increasingly centralized position of Aachen in the Carolingian realm. Alcuin’s knowledge was, therefore, dependent upon his maintaining of these palatial and intellectual contacts in the more central parts of the realm. The only way to continue to receive information was to maintain his political and intellectual connections via the only technology available to him, correspondence. As we can see in the letter to Adalhard, this dependence also relied on messengers to transport and facilitate his epistolary network.

Of these two epistolary contacts, Arn and Adalhard, it appears from extant evidence that Arn was the stronger of the two nodes, for we have far more letters addressed to Arn, but this could be entirely coincidental and based less on a contemporary relationship and more on the survival of letters, particularly due to the intention to collect Alcuin’s letters at Salzburg, known today as the S1 collection. Nevertheless, we see Arn play a significant role not just in maintaining Alcuin’s connections to political news. We see him also play a significant role as a broker in the maintaining Alcuin’s connections to former students. We know on at least one occasion, Alcuin’s letters to his former pupil Candidus had gone ignored. Candidus was a member of Arn’s intellectual and ecclesiastical network, which is confirmed by multiple Alcuinian letters (see below). When Candidus ignored Alcuin’s letters, the master reached out to Arn to act as an intermediary. In a letter to Arn, dated to September 798, Alcuin wrote:
“Please send this other sheet to Candidus, if he is alive and is with you. I don’t know why he has been silent, when you wrote to me, unless Albinus has left his lips—though his love has never left my heart.”  

The implication here is clear. What is particularly intriguing, though, is that we hear the real voice of Alcuin. In some cases, this is a voice often removed from our sources, particularly letters which were written with a public audience in mind. Here, however, we see a far more personally emotive sentiment from Alcuin. Alcuin is clearly irritated about his former pupil ignoring his letters, so irritated, in fact, that he is using Arn to mediate and, hopefully, remedy the issue. The idea that Alcuin truly believed Candidus dead seems unlikely and rather a classic trope that tries to force guilt on the party doing the ignoring. Nevertheless, Alcuin’s actions clearly demonstrate an attempt to maintain connections through his letters, not just by directly writing to the recipient (which he had done and which had subsequently failed), but by relying on others within his epistolary network to reach out to a third party. Again, this further demonstrates Alcuin’s isolation in Tours, for he was not able to contact Candidus in person and any attempts to contact him via letters had failed.

Alcuin did not just use intermediaries to reach out to his students. We know that Alcuin communicated directly with his students and expressed similar sentiments directly without a third-party. In the only surviving letter from Alcuin to Hrabanus, dated to some point between 798 and 804, the master wrote:

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“May I have the book which you promised to write for me, so keeping your promise and fulfilling my joy? The spring of living water does not run dry, though many drink deeply from it; so your wisdom is not diminished by our need drawing upon it. Do not spurn my request or deny your promise, but keep your word and satisfy me.

Return my love and give to him who asks, that you may please him who possess all and lays this upon you. Live with your boys in happiness and love. Give my greetings to the brothers who pray for me.”

Here we see the same frustrated master whose student has irritated him. While with Candidus, this frustration stemmed from the pupil ignoring the master, with Hrabanus it stemmed from a failed or delayed promise.

Alcuin did not always contact his students to leverage guilt to force them to do something they had promised. Sometimes, he reached out to them simply, it would seem, to try and maintain connections with them. In a letter to Candidus, Fredegis, and Onias, all former pupils, Alcuin wrote:

“Since you flew away from your father’s nest upon the open breezes of worldly affairs, my anxious thoughts have attended your doings at almost every hour, wishing you to please God by the virtues of perfect love through His grace and to live decently before men and show by your noble manners what you learnt under the wing of your teacher.”

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In this letter, we do not gain any sense that Alcuin was responding to a letter sent from his former pupils. Instead, the evidence suggests that the master genuinely missed the company of those he had a strong part in molding. He used letters to continue to reinforce that pedagogical relationship with the pupils who had long left his nest and from whom he was removed while in Tours.

That Alcuin’s former pupils consistently tried to maintain contact with their master is not supported by the evidence, except for a few circumstantial pieces of evidence from Sigwulf and Fredegis, and the clear exception of Charlemagne (all addressed in 04.03: Teaching and the Imparting of Knowledge). In fact, the conversation appears mostly one-sided with Alcuin trying to maintain connections to his former pupils and chastising them when they dismiss him. We can see this, for example, in Ep. 295, address to Osulf:

> “Why did you dismiss the father who taught you from your infancy, initiated you in the liberal arts, trained your character, fortified you with the commandments of eternal life, and join yourself to troops of harlots, parties of drunkards, the vanities of the arrogant?”

Even those with whom Alcuin communicated more frequently appear to have not communicated as much as Alcuin would have liked. In a letter dated to 801 and addressed to Gisla and Rotruda, Alcuin wrote:

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“Why has your love so long been silent? Have you no words of greeting? Have there been no occasions which a letter could report to us?”

Thus, Alcuin used his letters to maintain connections to former pupils and others in his intellectual and political networks. He did this both directly and through intermediaries, such as Arn. To Alcuin, the maintaining of connections was not just to stay informed about courtly matters, but to continue to have a connection to his former pupils, to keep tabs on them, and to hold them to their moral and intellectual responsibilities.

04.02: Maintaining Influence

Alcuin did not just try to maintain connections through his letters; he also used letters to actively maintain influence (or try to maintain influence) over individuals and institutions to whom and to which he was once strongly connected. We see this occur with those in England and those on the Continent. Let us first examine a letter dated, to 796 or early 797 and addressed to the newly elected archbishop of York, Eanbald II. Eanbald had replaced Eanbald I (bishop: 780–796). More significantly, in 796, Eanbald II stepped into the position once held Aelberht, bishop of York (766–780), who was Alcuin’s teacher. The position bishop of York was, therefore, significantly connected

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413 ALC 45.228. Alcuin, Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no.228, p. 371. Translated by Allott in Alcuin of York, pp. 104. “Quid est, quod vestra tanto tempore tacuit caritas? Numquid verba defecerunt salutationis, seu causae non supervenerunt, quorum notionem carta nec deferret ad aures nostras?”

414 On this context generally, see: Bullough, Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation, p. 340. On Alcuin’s training at York and relationship with Aelberht, see p. 30. As Bullough notes here, this particular concern for York may have come from an order expressed by Aelberht. On Eanbald II (Eanbald 2), see PASE data: (http://www.pase.ac.uk/jsp/DisplayPerson.jsp?personKey=3513)
to Alcuin. Alcuin offered his advice to the new bishop on a range of topics. On schooling, Alcuin wrote:

“Your grace should provide teachers for the boys. There should be classes for reading, singing and writing separate from the clergy, and separate teachers for each class, so that the boys are not idle and do not run about playing silly games and forming frivolous habits. All this, dear son, you will consider in your wisdom, that the principal see of our nation should be a fountain of goodness and learning, where the thirsty traveler who loves the teaching of the church may drink to his heart’s content. Though I live abroad, I am your devoted helper in this.”

Alcuin’s advice in this letter goes beyond simply trying to influence Eanbald’s school at York. He speaks of the clergy’s general discipline, their dress, sobriety, the maintaining of proper hours, and conduct themselves properly. In other words, Alcuin tried to influence the internal systems and structures of the institution at York. Whether this advice was solicited is not entirely clear. Whether it was followed (either independently or by Alcuin’s design), is equally unclear. What is clear is Alcuin’s intent—to try and maintain some degree of influence over Eanbald and York.

Alcuin’s attempts to influence those in England extended beyond the members of the Church and its institutions. He also tried to influence the English royalty. In a letter dated to 796 and Alcuin wrote to King Eardwulf of Northumbria (king 796?–806 or

Eardwulf was king during a particularly violent period when many of his recent predecessors, as Alcuin notes below, were vying for the Northumbrian crown. Eardwulf himself would be deposed and put into exile in 806 or 808 and entered Charlemagne’s court. Alcuin wrote to him:

“Reflect urgently on the sins for which your predecessors lost their thrones and lives. Take great care that you do not act in the same way, lest you receive the same judgment. God has condemned some for perjury, others for adultery, others for avarice and dishonesty, others for injustice. He is no respecter of persons; and they who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. First instruct yourself in all goodness and soberness, and then the people you rule in moderation in living and dressing, in truth of belief and judgment, in keeping God’s commandments and living rightly. Thus you will make your kingdom secure and save your people from the wrath of God which sure signs show to have long been threatening it.”

At the end of the letter, Alcuin makes clear that he wants these ideas to resonate, for he tells Eardwulf, “I beg you to keep this letter and read it frequently as a reminder of your

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416 For a prosopography of Eardwulf (Eardwulf 4), see the PASE data: [link](http://www.pase.ac.uk/jsp/DisplayPerson.jsp?personKey=7277&startOpen=yes)


good and our love…”\textsuperscript{419} It is clear, therefore, that Alcuin tried to maintain some level of influence over the English royalty, despite being far removed from his kin.

In some cases, Alcuin was forced to use third parties as intermediaries to maintain influence over someone. In a letter dated to 801 and addressed to Calvinus and Cuckoo (whom Bullough believed was the same individual as Dodo), Alcuin stated:

“I have heard of the troubles of my dear son Simeon (Eanbald II of York). Urge him to be faithful in his trials and not feeble-hearted. His predecessors suffered similarly, and not only they but all the saints. We read that John the Baptist was killed for witnessing to the truth. He must see to it that there is no reason for his trials except his preaching of the truth. I fear he may be suffering in part for taking land or supporting the king’s enemies. Let him be content with what he has, and not grasp at the property of others, which is often dangerous proceeding. He thinks he is helping a few, but is hindering many for whom he should daily pray, and may harm the flock whom he should guide.”\textsuperscript{420}

Alcuin’s injection of himself into the affairs of Eanbald were clearly an attempt to maintain some level of influence over the archbishop of York. He offered clear advice to guide the archbishop’s actions in troubled state. But again, we do not know if this advice was unsolicited. What is different here, though, is Alcuin’s use of intermediaries.

\textsuperscript{419} Ibid.

(Calvinus and Cuckoo), a tactic Alcuin employed with Arn to reach out to Candidus, as we saw above.

These attempts to maintain influence through letters over those from whom he was removed did not apply strictly to those in England, for we see similar attempts in Alcuin’s letters to those on the Continent. Alcuin specifically tried to exert influence over the Carolingian royalty after his arrival in Tours. In a letter dated to the end of 796 and addressed to Charlemagne’s son, Pippin, the king of Italy (781–810), Alcuin wrote:

“Be strong against your enemies, loyal to your friends, humble to Christians, feared by pagans, approachable to the poor, foresighted in counsel. Use the advice of the old and the service of the young. Let justice prevail in your kingdom. And let the praise of God be heard everywhere at the proper hours, and especially in your presence, for such devotion to the offices of the church will make you dear to God and respected by men. Have sober thoughts in your heart, true words on your lips and set a good example in your conduct, that God’s mercy may everywhere uplift and keep you.

I pray you, take this letter with you as a reminder of my love. It may not be fit to hang from your belt, but its counsel is fit to be stored in your heart.”

As we can see, therefore, Alcuin used similar language to impart his influence via “counsel” to Carolingian royalty, as he did for the English royalty.

Similarly, around Christmas in 801–803, Alcuin tried to use Fredegis as an intermediary to influence the political elite, for in a letter to Fredegis, Alcuin wrote:

“Greet Lucia, our sister, and our daughter, Columba. Entreat them to remember my old age in their prayers and their own salvation in their good works. Do not hide your learning from them, but water the flowers of goodwill in them. What is better than the flowers of wisdom that never fade or richer than the wealth of knowledge which is never exhausted? Encourage them in this. Let them live on in the meditation of God’s law day and night, that they may find him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. They should hold fast to him till they are led into the treasuries of the king’s glory, there to rest in love on flowers of eternal joy, with the Bridegroom from his bedchamber putting his left arm of present good beneath their heads and embrace them with the right arm of eternal joy.”422

Here, Alcuin attempted to try and use Fredegis as an intermediary to influence Gisla, Lucia, and those “around them”. This influence was multifaceted: it was pedagogical, religious, and moral all at once.

Fredegis played this role of intermediary multiple times and in multiple ways. The clearest example of this comes from the so-called “Escaped Prisoner Case” in which a convict took up residence in the Basilica of Saint-Martin to avoid punishment. Here, Alcuin evoked his close relationship to Fredeigs and Candidus to try and influence Charlemagne’s political decisions to spare him and those under him at Saint-Martin from

punishment. More importantly, he tried to use their influence to persuade the king that he was right.

Of Alcuin’s letters, perhaps none have attracted the attention as the five letters on the Escaped Prisoner Case. These letters provide insights into the innerworkings of law in real time, the inconsistency with which Carolingians understood and viewed sacred spaces, and the way in which disputes were actually, not theoretically, settled. As Dana M. Polanichka has noted, this case has drawn particular attention from scholars who have approached it from particular angles, notably Luitpold Wallach and Hélène Noizet (law), Janet L. Nelson (inter-magnate violence), Michael Driscoll (penance), Rob Means (conflict management), and Samuel W. Collins (a larger debate over sacred space). Polanichka approached the case differently, as “an exploration of eighth- and ninth-century Frankish understandings and experiences of churches as holy spaces” while arguing that “Carolingian legislation worked to define, recognize, and maintain the sacred space of churches by insisting upon specific, respectful behaviors within them.”

I am strictly interested in how Alcuin used connections to try and influence their actions.

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In *Ep. 245*, dated to the end of 801 or sometime in 802, Alcuin wrote to his pupils, Candidus and Fredegis. He informed them that he had entered a dispute with Theodulf of Orléans regarding a prisoner who had escaped from Orléans and traveled to Tours. Tours was located to the southwest of Orléans and easily accessed via Roman roads on the north side of the Loire River and downstream via the Loire River (see Chapter Two). Alcuin stated that the prisoner took up refuge in Saint-Martin and the monks there afforded him sanctuary as it was a holy space. Theodulf wanted, however, for the prisoner to be extracted and returned to Orléans to face punishment. Alcuin carefully constructed his case against Theodulf, stating:

“I know the above named prelate will bring many accusations against our brothers, exaggerating what happened and adding much that did not happen, as his letters say. So I urgently lay it upon you, my dear sons, to prostrate yourselves before the feet of my lord David, the most just and serene Emperor, begging that when the bishop comes you may make our defense and dispute with him…”

In structuring his case thusly, Alcuin tried to exercise influence over his former pupils and use the pedagogical bonds he had with them to gain personal representation in Charlemagne’s court. Alcuin’s attempts here are once again the result of his isolation in Tours, far removed from court. Letters again were Alcuin’s chief way to stay connected to royal affairs; this time, however, not for simply learning about the happenings of the Palace, as we saw with his letters to Arn and Adalhard above, but to actively control a situation to which he and his flock at Saint-Martin were party. In isolation, Alcuin used

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425 ALC 45.245. Alcuin, *Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV*, no. 245, p. 394. Trans. by Allott in *Alcuin of York*, p. 121. “Sed scio ante nominatum pontificem 4 multas dicturum esse accusationes contra fratres nostros; et quae gesta sunt exaggerare; et plurima addere quae gesta non erant; sicut in eius legebatur litteris. Quapropter, filii carissimi, praecipiendo praecipio vobis, ut prostrati veniatis ante pedes domini mei David, imperatoris aequissimi et serenissimi; postulantes, episcopo veniente, locum defensandi et disputandi cum eo...”
these letters to try to maintain influence over his former pupils for personal and institutional (Saint-Martin) benefit. Alcuin’s influence was not, however, successful, an indication that the pedagogical bonds that Alcuin envisioned as firm did, in fact, have their limits.

Finally, as Alcuin had done with his epistolary contacts in York, Alcuin used his letters as a way to pedagogically influence those with whom he had established relationships on the Continent. This can be seen, for example, in his exchanges with Gisla, Charlemagne’s daughter who was the abbess of Chelles. Though he was removed from her physically during his time in Tours, he continued to try and encourage her to study, for he once wrote: “But your progress in God, is the great pleasure of my soul. Therefore, you shall study most diligently that which you seize in the helpful mercy of God.”\(^{426}\) As we shall see bellow, this relationship contributed to his completion of his Commentary on John.

The above examples demonstrate, therefore, that Alcuin used the connections he actively maintained to not only stay updated on key people and events across the realm. He maintained these connections to try to maintain influence over those whom he once had known in person. Whether he acted in such a manner during his younger years when he was likely more directly connected to the palatial court is unclear. It is clear in his letters, that he tried to exert influence during the years 796–804 while removed and isolated in Tours. These actions were not, however, purely self-interested (even if

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“Vester vero profectus in Deo mei animi est magna voluptas. Ideo quod cepisti perficere Dei adiuvante misericordia diligentissime studeas.”
partially so). When we consider the evidence presented in this and the prior chapter, Alcuin seems to be interested in influencing those around him from a place of Christian love, to ensure that they maintain a pure soul and continue down a morally and spiritually correct path. All of these examples, more importantly, establish a clear pattern that appears to represent a character trait of Alcuin—that of a man who consistently injected himself into the affairs of others.

04.03: Teaching and the Imparting Knowledge through Letters

By maintaining connections to former intellectual colleagues and pupils and maintaining influence over them (or at least trying to maintain influence over them), Alcuin was able to preserve a fundamental component of his intellectual identity, that of pedagogue. It is here that we should draw a clear semantical distinction between two terms: education and teaching. Throughout the remainder of the chapter, I will refer to Alcuin’s education as something that belonged strictly to the classroom, the physical space where formal instruction took place. As we saw in the previous chapter, this is where Alcuin trained students in the liberal arts. I use the term “teaching” to refer to the imparting of knowledge outside of the classroom. In other words, “teaching” refers to the informal or continued education outside of the classroom. The reason for this distinction, as slight as it may seem, is to avoid confusion. Education, as a term, brings with it certain concepts and ideas that cannot be easily removed from the mind of the modern scholar. Education brings with it a weighty historiography, explored in the previous chapter and the introduction. It implies a system of training, from young age, through *pueritia*, and into young adulthood. It implies the conformity to something expected. While Alcuin certainly functioned within this system of education both at and outside of Tours, he used
his letters to engage in something different from that system. He used these letters and the connections reinforced by them to continue to teach former students and others.

“Teaching” is very likely how Alcuin envisioned the letters discussed below. As we have seen and will continue to see throughout the remainder of this chapter, Alcuin did not view a teacher’s role as ceasing after his students left his classroom. He viewed it as a sustained effort. We saw above that he viewed the role of his own teacher, Aelbehrt, in similar regards. He took his teacher’s advice, long after Aelbehrt’s death in 780 and continued to write to those in York to make sure that the episcopacy remained untainted. The conversations, as we shall see, that occur in the remaining letters of this section are very much pedagogical in nature. In some cases, as we shall see, Alcuin replies directly to questions posed to him by Daphnus, Charlemagne, and Sigwulf. In other cases, he plays the role of teacher and tries to encourage students to continue their studies, in the cases of Hrabanus and Gisla. These letters are pedagogical in nature and “teaching” is, therefore, the best way to view them.

The methods of epistolary teaching did not contain the formal methods of the classroom, rather the methods were defined by two things: the age and skill of the recipient and the limitations of the technology itself, the letter. Those who received letters from Alcuin in which he attempts to teach the recipient were of an advanced age, meaning they were those who had already succeeded in their primary training in the liberal arts under Alcuin (and, or others), and were now situated within their own political and intellectual networks. Further, the technology of writing limited the way in which Alcuin could teach. Alcuin, as we shall see, used his letters to either structure advanced learning, answer direct and targeted questions, or convey the desire for someone else to
teach the recipient (or another individual) in person. As we shall see in this section and the following one, these targeted lessons often fulfilled a specific, exegetical need. In other words, they were designed to reinforce the liberal arts and their application to exegesis or address a very specific exegetical question, or questions.

How Alcuin taught through letters differed from person to person. The extant evidence suggests that this occurred most frequently with Charlemagne. We know that Alcuin continued to teach Charlemagne after the master arrived in Tours. In Chapter Three, we saw that Alcuin trained Charlemagne in astronomy particularly. Alcuin and Charlemagne sustained this pedagogical relationship during the final years of the abbot’s life. We can see this particularly in their correspondence. In five letters, Alcuin continues to answer questions posed by Charlemagne regarding astronomy: Epp. 126 (dated to 797), 148 (dated to 798), 149 (dated to 798), 155 (dated to 798), and 170 (dated to 799). Likewise, Alcuin continued to impart knowledge to Charlemagne with regard to arithmetic in Ep. 143 (dated to 798). These seven letters represent a sustained teaching in at least two of the liberal arts with Charlemagne.

In most of these cases, Charlemagne initiated the conversations, posing questions to the master. In Ep. 155, for example, Alcuin wrote: “A traveler came at speed with a sheet of questions from your Majesty.” Alcuin then goes on to provide answers to astronomical questions as best he can, but with the caveat that he does not have the requisite literature, specifically Bede and Pliny the Younger, to answer them concretely.


Charlemagne did not, however, always specifically ask for Alcuin to teach. In some instances, Alcuin imparted knowledge to Charlemagne without the latter requesting it. In *Ep. 149*, for example, Alcuin had previously answered questions (on primarily arithmetic) which his pupils in Tours had posed to him, questions which he now relayed to Charlemagne with their answers.430

This epistolary-pedagogical relationship between Charlemagne and Alcuin is unique among Alcuin’s other epistolary-pedagogical relationships in two ways. Firstly, we do not see Alcuin engage in the same specific teaching in the liberal arts with other students. Instead, as I shall show below, when Alcuin evoked the liberal arts in his letters it is less to provide answers about them generally or their general significance, rather how a specific liberal art can be specifically applied to exegesis. This is particularly revealed in Alcuin’s *Ep. 133*, discussed below. Secondly, Alcuin’s letters to Charlemagne regarding teaching are unique because the extant evidence does not indicate that Alcuin’s students frequently wrote to the master. In fact, as we saw above, the evidence indicates the opposite. It reveals a master detached from his pedagogical network and his continued effort to use letters as a way to sustain that relationship, despite being geographically removed from the birds who once belonged to his beloved nest. The correspondence with Charlemagne, on the other hand, suggests that the relationship was reciprocal. Again, *Ep. 133* represents the exception to this, for Daphnus, recipient of the letter, had specifically asked Alcuin to answer a few particular questions (again, see below). (Other possible

430 ALC 45.143. Alcuin, *Epistolae*, MGH Epp. IV, no. 143, p. 224–227. Trans. by Allott in *Alcuin of York*, p. 96. “I thought it right to send you the questions with which the students of Tours ply Flaccus’ ears and seek the comfort of an answer from the spring of your wisdom. I admit these may seem unscholarly questions to one of your learning, but I wanted to avoid making rash answer in my ignorance, and so I thought it safe to consult one of your great talent and brilliant scholarship. For questions beset my ears like insects flying in at summer windows.”
exceptions include *Epp. 81* and *135*). Alcuin did not try to impart knowledge entirely unsolicited. Instead, Charlemagne clearly continued to pose questions to Alcuin to which the master appears pleased to answer.

As may be expected in an epistolary network, Alcuin was dependent upon intermediaries to perform a myriad of tasks. As we saw above, Alcuin used intermediaries in his epistolary network work to maintain connections and influence. This was not just in the form of messengers, but the recipient who was asked to convey knowledge to a third party. Likewise, Alcuin used his connections to impart knowledge to Charlemagne. It is clear, for example, that two specific nodes functions as brokers in this relationship: notably Candidus and Fredegis. In *Ep. 163*, addressed to Charlemagne and dated to 799, Alcuin states that Candidus carried some questions from the king.\(^{431}\) In a letter to Charlemagne, dated to c. 798, Alcuin states that Fredegis was transporting a message to Charlemagne regarding the three types of visions.\(^{432}\) In another letter, Alcuin states that Fredegis carried questions from Charlemagne to Alcuin.\(^{433}\) In these cases, the intermediaries were not just messengers, but brokers who tried to impart knowledge from Alcuin to Charlemagne or carry questions from Charlemagne to Alcuin.

Fredegis and Candidus did not just act as carriers of messages and imparters of knowledge to Charlemagne. Alcuin seems to have tried to employ these two former

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\(^{433}\) ALC 45.147. Alcuin, *Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV*, no. 147, p. 238.
students to function as extensions of his own knowledge and teach what they knew to others with whom he could not meet in person. In Ep. 262, addressed to Fredegis and dated to Christmas 801–803, Alcuin asked for his pupil, Fredegis, to share his assist Gisla (and Rotruda, Charlemagne’s daughter and a nun at Challes). Scholars have often seen Fredegis’ role during this period of life (796–804) as a pedagogue. As with other errs regarding Fredegis’ life, this view has its incipience in modern historiography with Ahner who suggested that Fredegis educated Charlemagne’s sister, Gisla, and his daughter, Rotruda. Ahner’s presentation of the evidence has held sway. His evidence for arguing that Fredegis was the tutor of Gisla and Rotruda came primarily from two of Alcuin’s letters. The first chronological letter is Ep. 154 which is dated to 798 and addressed to Gisla. Because Gisla was the recipient and, thereby, primary subject of this letter, scholars have most frequently viewed the significance of this letter for Gisla’s biography and her relationship to Alcuin. This letter is equally significant for the biography of Fredegis.

“I truly confess that I desired greatly to come to you because of some needs, which I wished to discuss with you. But the anguish of a fever which fatigues me thus far per vices, hindered me.

I am very pleased in your work in the elevation of the Church of the Holy Mother of God and in your examination of books. And that is why in these labors, so much as we are able, we are pleased to help your skill. And the boy Fredegis, according to the convenience of time, shall help you. But


your progress in God, is the great pleasure of my soul. Therefore, you shall study most diligently that which you seize in the helpful mercy of God.”  

Ahner also cited a second letter from Alcuin, *Ep. 262*. The letter is dated to Christmas in 801–803 and it was directed to Fredegis. It is far longer than the first and not worth presenting in full here. The area of importance is the following:

“Greet Lucia, our sister, and our daughter, Columba. Entreat them to remember my old age in their prayers and their own salvation in their good works. Do not hide your learning from them, but water the flowers of goodwill in them.”

In the context of these letters, Ahner stated:

“Already in the year 798, Fredegis delivered gifts from Charlemagne to Tours. Perhaps he first accompanied Alcuin to his new residence (Tours), but then returned to the Palace to work alongside Wizo (Candidus Wizo) in the palace school. We read that he taught Gisla, the sister, and Rotruda, the daughter of Charlemagne. From the letter which Alcuin replied to his questions about the Trinity, we see that others turned to Fredegis for information about Christian teaching. Though he also seems to have been used for other business. Alcuin names him as Charlemagne’s *servulus* and *famulus* and writes to Gisla: *Secundum temporis opporunitatem vobis ferat auxilium.*”  

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440 Ahner, *Fredegis von Tours*, 4–5. “Schon im Jahre 798 überbringt Fr. (Fredegis), Geschenke von Karl nach Tours. Vielleicht hat er Alcuin zunächst in seine neue Heimath begleitet, ist dan aber bald an den Hof
While these letters do make it very clear that Fredegis played a role in the Palace, the precise nature of that role is far from certain. While these two letters demonstrate that Fredegis was, at least on one occasion, in the company of Gisla and Rotruda, we do not know in what capacity or for how long. While Ep. 154 demonstrates that Alcuin believed that Fredegis provide some sort of assistance to Gisla, it is not clear what that assistance was or the degree to which Fredegis assisted Gisla; in fact, it appears from the context that Fredegis was occupied with other affairs and would merely assist when it was convenient. While Ep. 262 suggests that Fredegis shared his knowledge with Gisla and Rotruda, it does not provide evidence that he was in any way their primary educator. This is hardly the pedagogical relationship that Ahner suggested when he stated that Fredegis taught Gisla and Rotruda. Thus, the evidence presented would indicate that Alcuin tried to use Fredegis as an intermediary with regard to assisting Gisla, but understood that his time was occupied with other matters.

That Alcuin, in fact, tried to use former students to train those who were no longer in his beloved nest is reinforced with Alcuin’s correspondence to Arn. Alcuin appears to have tried to employ Candidus in a similar effort within the network of Salzburg. At some point between 796 and 798, Alcuin received the nephew of Arn, a certain Hildegar,
into Saint-Martin. This is confirmed in a letter addressed to Arn and dated to 798, in which Alcuin wrote:

“The boy whom we have in our house: we shall teach him as a son, that we may make a perfect man of him, God willing. We shall help him as time and opportunity allow.”

It is not entirely clear why, but sometime later that same year, Alcuin grew irritated with Hildegar who appears to have become depressed at Saint-Martin. Alcuin wrote:

“As to your harsh remark about our brother and my son, your nephew, consider in your love and goodness whether our labour may not be in vain and a soul be lost for whom Christ did not hesitate to die. I have sent him back to you for you to do with him as you consider wise, for he and the good that is in him are under your authority. Act accordingly to what you see for yourself of his merits, not according to what spiteful people say. He can make no progress with me in his depressed state. I think the alternatives are either to commend him to my lord the king on my behalf or to keep him with you till you learn from his behavior what may be useful for him, and until we can talk to each other again, God willing. It is perhaps better that he should have some encouragement, as he promises to be humble and obedient, lest he be swallowed up in continuous gloom. If Witto (Candidus) comes to you, he can study with him.”


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Here, we see that Alcuin explicitly try to employ the aid of one of his former pupils to impart knowledge to another former pupil with whom he could not teach in person. As with his methods regarding Fredegis and Gisla, Alcuin did not make this request explicit, but conditional upon Candidus’ presence in Salzburg.

These letters indicate, therefore, two items of importance. First, Alcuin understood well that his former students were preoccupied with other matters. This idea is reinforced by another letter to Arn, dated to 802, in which Alcuin speaks of a book he is sending to Arn via Fredegis. He states:

“I have sent you by Fredegis, my son, a devotional book containing much on different subjects…This book I gave to Fredegis, my son. Ask him for it, lest he forget to give it to you because of his other preoccupations.”443

Alcuin was clearly aware of the multifaceted role of his former pupils and that their travels were dependent not just on his needs and wants, but those of their other duties. We see this same understanding at work in Alcuin’s desire for Fredegis and Candidus to assist Gisla and Hildegar, respectively. Second, these letters demonstrate a continued attempt to use former students as brokers in his quest to impart knowledge to third parties with whom Alcuin did not have direct contact (or perhaps very limited contact) once he was in Tours (Gisla) or once a former student left his nest (Hildegar).

Alcuin also used his epistolary network to convey the more delicate and advanced subject of exegesis. Unlike his commentaries, which sought to either provide a systematic examination of an entire book of Scripture or explore specific questions for a specific Biblical book, Alcuin’s letters provided a focused examination of Scripture to address specific problems. Here we shall examine two letters briefly, Ep. 133 and Ep. 136 and consider them within the context of other similar letters, notably Epp. 81 and 135.

In Ep. 133, which was addressed to a certain student named Daphnus. Daphnus had posed a question to Alcuin regarding the significance of the numbering of queens and concubines of Salmon, as found in Song of Solomon 6: 6–7:

“Sexaginta sunt reginae et octoginta concubinae et adulescentularum non est numerus. Una est columba mea perfecta mea una est matris suae electa genetrici suae viderunt illam. Filiae et beatissimam praedicaverunt reginae et concubinae et laudaverunt eam.”

“There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and young maidens without number. One is my dove, my perfect one is but one, she is the only one of her mother, the chosen of her that bore her. The daughters saw her, and declared her most blessed: the queens and concubines, and they praised her.”

In order to respond, Alcuin first needed to present evidence regarding the significance of numbers. To do this, Alcuin wrote:

“Legimus enim in numerorum subtilissima ratione alios numeros esse pares, alios inpares, et item parium”

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444 Song of Solomon: 6: 6–7. Translated by Douay-Rheims. (Corrected citation forthcoming)

numerorum alios esse perfectos, alios esse imperfectos; \[446\]
item et imperfectorum alios esse superfluos, alios exiguos.

Pares autem numeri sunt, qui in duo aequalia dividipossunt; \[447\] ut octo in bis quattuor, et quattuor in bis duo.

Impares sunt, qui in duo aequalia divid non possunt, ut se septem vel novem, quos si divides, duas aequales in eis partes invenire non potes. \[448\] Item ipsorum parium numerorum alii sunt perfecti, alii imperfecti. Perfectus numerus est, qui partibus suis impletur, \[449\] nec diminutione frangitur, nec multiplicatione partium superabundat, ut senarius numerus. Habet enim senarius dimidiam sui partem tres, et tertiam duo, et sextam unam. \[450\]

“We read in the most subtle reasoning of numbers that some numbers are pares (equal) while others are impares (odd); and also, some of the pares numbers are perfect, while others are imperfect; and further some of the imperfect numbers are superfluos while others are exiguos. Moreover, pares numbers are those which can be divided equally into two, such as eight can be divided by two to four, and four to two. Impares numbers are those which cannot be divided equally in two, such as seven or nine which if you divide, you cannot find two equal parts in them. Some of the pares numbers are perfect, others are imperfect. A perfect number is one which is the sum of its parts, not broken by division, nor a larger by the multiplication of its parts, such as the sixth number. For the sixth number has as its half part, three, and three twos, and one six…”

As Ernst Dümmler, the editor of Alcuin’s letters, made clear, Alcuin drew this information from Isidore’s Etymologies 3, 5. I render Dümmler’s sourcing in the

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446 Isidore, Etymologies 3: 5.9.

447 Isidore, Etymologies 3: 5.2.

448 Isidore, Etymologies 3: 5.2.

449 Isidore, Etymologies 3: 5.11.

footnotes. In the excerpt of Isidore below, I represent in bold font sections that Alcuin utilized.

“De prima divisione parium et inparium. Numerus dividitur in his paribus et inparibus…2 Par numerus est, qui in duabus aequis partibus dividit, ut II, IV et VIII. Inpar vero numerus est, qui dividit aequis partibus nequit, uno medio vel deficienite vel superante, ut III, V, VII, IX et reliqui… 9 Item parium numerorum alii sunt superflui, alii diminutivi, alii perfecti. … 11 Perfectus numerus est, qui suis partibus adinpletur, ut senarius; habet enim tres partes, sextam, tertiam, et dimidia: sexta eius unum est, tertia duo, dimidia tres. Haec partes in summam ductae, id est unum et duo et tria simul eundem consummunt perficientique senarium. Sunt autem perfecti numeri intra denarium VI, intra centenarium XXVIII, intra millenarium CCCCXCVI.”

451 Isidore, Etymologies, Book 3, 5. Edited by W.M. Lindsay in Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911). Translated by Stephen A. Barney, W.J. Lewis, J.A. Beach, and Oliver Berghof in The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 90–91. “The first division, of even and odd numbers (De prima divisione parium et imperium) 1. Numbers are divided into even (pars) and odd (impares) numbers. Even numbers are subdivided into these categories: evenly even, evenly odd, and oddly even. Odd numbers are subdivided into these categories: the primary and simple; the secondary and compound; and the tertiary and mean, which in a certain way is primary and non-compound.

2. An even number is one that can be divided into two equal parts, like 2, 4, and 8. On the other hand, an odd number is one that cannot be divided into equal parts, since there is one in the middle (i.e. of the two equal parts) that is either lacking or superfluous, like 3, 5, 7, 9, and so on.

3. An evenly (partier) even number is one that is divided equally into even numbers until it reaches the indivisible unity, as, for example, 64 has 32 at its midpoint; 32 has 16, 16 has 8, 8 has 4, 4 has 2, 2 has 1, which is an indivisible singularity.

4. An evenly odd number is one that can undergo a division into equal parts, but then its parts cannot immediately be evenly dissected, like 6, 10, 38, 50. As soon as you divide this kind of number, you run into a number that you cannot cut evenly.

5. An oddly (impariter) even number is one whose parts can be divided equally, but the division does not go to the point of one (unitas), like 24. This number can be divided in half, making 12, and 12 can be divided in half, making 6, and then 6 can be divided in half making 3. This last section cannot undergo further division, but rather there is a termination that you cannot cut before reaching number one.

6. An oddly odd number is one which is divided by an odd number an odd number of times, like 25 and 49. While these numbers are odd, they are divided into an odd number of parts, so that 49 is seven sevens, and 25 is five fives. Some odd numbers are simple, some are compound, and some are mean (mediocris).

7. Simple odd numbers (i.e. prime numbers) are those that hold no other part except the number one alone, as for example the number 3, which holds only 3, and the number 5, which holds only 5, and the number 7, which holds only 7. These numbers have only a single part (i.e. factor). Compound numbers are those that are divided not only by the number one, but are also generated from another number —such numbers as 9, 15, and 21. So we speak of 3 times 3, or 7 times 3, or 3 times 5, or 5 times 5.

8. Mean numbers are those that seem to be simple and non-compound numbers in one way, but compound
As we can see, Alcuin drew from four sections of Isidore’s *Etymologies*. We can see that Alcuin in this letter did not wish to provide Isidore’s analysis of numbers in its entirety. Instead, he relied on Isidore for one reason—to supply the salient information regarding the division of numbers as briefly as possible. This information provided a rudimentary introduction to arithmetic, a base necessary for Alcuin’s larger purpose in this letter, that is to elucidate the significance of the numbers of Solomon’s queens and concubines, which occupy the remainder of the letter. We can see, therefore, Alcuin using the building blocks of the liberal arts to lay a foundation in a letter to then elucidate a deeper meaning of Scripture. In other words, we are seeing a method of epistolary exegesis directed at someone within Alcuin’s intellectual and epistolary network.

As Bullough notes, *Ep. 133* is also closely tied to two other letters in the manuscript transmission: *Epp. 81* and *135*. The former is addressed to a certain Gallicellulus and is dated to c. 793–796. It is particularly comparable to *Ep. 133* as it

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numbers in another. For example, when 9 is compared to 25, it is primary and not compound, because there is no number that divides into both 9 and 25 except the number one only. But if 9 is compared to 15, it is secondary and compound, since there is present in 15 a shared number besides the number one, that is, the number three, for 9 is 3 times 3 and 15 is 3 times 5.

9. Furthermore, some of the even numbers are superfluous, some are diminutive, and some are perfect. Superfluous numbers are those whose parts exceed their own total when added together, as for example, 12. 12 has 5 parts: 1, which occurs 12 times; 2, which occurs 6 times; 3, which occurs 4 times, 4 which occurs 3 times; and 6 which occurs twice. Now, 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 added together make 16, which by far surpasses 12. Thus it is for 12 and most other numbers similar to it, like 18, and many others.

10. Diminutive numbers are those which, when computation is made, of their parts, render a sum less than the total number, such as 10, which has 3 parts: 1, which occurs 10 times; 2, which occurs 5 times; and 5, which occurs twice. 1 and 2 and 5 added together make 8, well less than 10. Similar to 10 is the number, or many other numbers which, when their parts are added together, stop short of the number itself.

11. A perfect number is one that is completely filled up by its own parts, as, for example, 6, for it has 3 parts: 6, 3, and 2. The part that occurs 6 times is 1; the part which occurs 3 times is 2, and the part that occurs 2 times is 3. When these parts are added together, that is, when 1, 2, and 3 are summed up together, they make (*perficere*) the number 6. Perfect numbers that occur within 10 include 6; within 100, 28, and within 1000, 496.

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discusses primarily arithmetic in the Old and New Testaments. The latter is addressed to
Fredegis and dated to c. 798.\footnote{ALC 45.135. Alcuin, \textit{Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV}, no. 135, p. 203–204.} This letter uses exegesis to explore the three types of
visions. Bullough argued that these were not letters in a “strict sense”, rather treatises in
everalory form.\footnote{Bullough, \textit{Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation}, pp. 46, fn. 104.} All three, however, have one thing in common—they were addressed
to identifiable or likely former pupils of Alcuin. In these cases, Alcuin appears to be
answering explicit questions that they posed to him. The historical context of these
questions is impossible to ascertain. When did these individuals pose these questions?
From where? Did they pose the questions in person or via letters? We cannot answer any
of these questions because the evidence for answering them does not exist. Nevertheless,
the epistolary nature of these treatises represents Alcuin’s delivery of exegesis in
everalory form and his use of letters to compose exegesis. Thus, we can see exegesis-
specific questions being possibly posed to the master and the master answering these
questions in epistolary form. These were questions that came from students who had
departed Alcuin’s nest and were beyond the rudimentary education of the liberal arts.
These were students who now had advanced to more haughty studies, specifically
exegesis. Alcuin used this epistolary network, therefore, to construct treatises and
reinforce these exegetical principals in epistolary form. This demonstrates the degree to
which Alcuin engaged in exegesis with his more advanced students through letters.

\textit{Ep. 133} and the letters associated with it in the manuscript transmission are not,
however, the only letters dedicated to Scriptural exegesis in treatise form. Another
comparable letter is *Ep. 136*, addressed to Charlemagne and dated to 798. *Ep. 136*, as noted by Bullough, is one of the longest Alcuin letters to survive.\(^{456}\) It has a distinctly different manuscript transmission from the aforementioned letters.\(^{457}\) Despite this, *Ep. 136* has two similar characteristics to *Ep. 133*: its form, notably its style as a treatise, and its subject, exegesis.

In this letter, Alcuin was responding to a serious matter that had arisen in Charlemagne’s court. An unidentified layman had read the Gospels and noted the contradiction apparent in Luke (22: 36–38) and Matthew (26: 51–52) regarding Jesus’ description of a sword and its significance. In Luke, Jesus commands his apostles to buy a sword, even if it means selling their tunics. In Matthew, however, Jesus admonishes Peter who tries to save Jesus while his teacher is being arrested and cuts off the ear of a certain Malchus. Jesus tells Peter that he who lives by the sword shall die by it. These two pieces of Scripture appear to be in stark contrast. In one case (Matthew), Jesus appears to wish for his disciples to take up the sword, while in the other (Luke), Jesus appears to encourage his disciples to not take up the sword. Early exegetes dating to Ambrose tried to rectify these issues, but no early authorities appeared to satisfy those in Charlemagne’s court. It fell, therefore, to Alcuin to resolve this issue in his own words. Alcuin’s exegesis of the two swords has already been explored in depth by Mary Alberi.\(^{458}\)

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\(^{456}\) Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation*, pp. 40, fn. 87.


In Alcuin’s response (Ep. 136), he argued (as others had before him) that a sword can represent two different things both in the real world and in Scripture. In the real world, for example, Alcuin argued that a sword in a single martial engagement can be used for both attack and defense. In Scripture too, words have dual meanings depending upon the context. In order to prove to his audience that certain words held different meanings in different places of Scripture, Alcuin relied on distinctiones (often translated as its English cognate “distinctions”). Distinctiones were wordlists that allowed a reader to easily find the subtle shift in meanings of different words throughout Scripture. In other words, they reveal the nuances that may not be apparent to a reader were one to read through Scripture without analyzing each word. Alcuin used these distinctiones to reinforce the idea that a sword could have multiple meanings. To do this, he relied on the multiple meanings of sword and two others, “lion” and “abyss”.459

Here, Alcuin is structuring a clear argument: the meaning of words in Scripture change depending upon context. In constructing his argument, Alcuin explicitly stated that he was drawing from different parts of Scripture to reveal the nuances of each word and how their meanings changed depending upon context. In his analysis of the lion (leo), Alcuin quoted the pertinent sections of Scripture. We can see this in two cases: “Ecce vicit leo de tribu Iuda” and “Circuit quasi leo, quaren quem devoret.” Both were direct quotes from Scripture, the former coming from Rev. 5: 5 and the latter coming from 1 Peter 5:8. In presenting these two quotations, Alcuin was emphasizing the dual meaning of the lion found in two different parts of Scripture, the former where the lion clearly represents Christ and the latter in which the lion represents the devil. In choosing these

examples, Alcuin was highlighting the extremes of a term’s meaning changing in context, for there is, perhaps, few examples more extreme than Christ and the devil.

Thus, Alcuin used the technology of letters to address targeted issues that required exegesis. In some cases, such as Ep. 133, Alcuin provided a rudimentary basis in the liberal arts to explore exegesis more deeply. In other cases, such as Ep. 136, Alcuin provided concrete exegesis with a structured argument without deeper elucidation of the liberal arts. We see Alcuin use his letters to analyze and discuss exegesis in several other letters. In in Ep. 132, for example, Alcuin addresses questions which appear exegetical in nature.\textsuperscript{460} Likewise, Alcuin uses his letters and exegesis to address his views against Adoptionism in Ep. 145, Epp. 171–173, and Ep. 202.\textsuperscript{461}

04.05: The Early Drafts of Commentaries

What is particularly intriguing about Alcuin’s correspondence is that we not only see practical methods of exegesis employed in epistolary form, we also gain a brief look behind the curtain at the production and editing of large, commentaries of exegesis. This is particularly true of Alcuin’s correspondence with Gisla, Charlemagne’s sister. The two intellectuals have a series of letters involving the production of Alcuin’s Commentary on John. In a letter to Gisla, dated to 800, Alcuin wrote:

“\textit{I have sent you this book, which is written in a concise style, for devotional reading and comfort during these days. For it is best to spend this most holy time in such study, particularly on the gospel of St. John which contains the}

\textsuperscript{460} Alcuin, \textit{Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV}, no. 132, p. 198–199.

deeper mysteries of the spirit and also the sacred words of our Lord Jesus Christ which he spoke in the night when he willed to be given for the salvation of the world. Perhaps I might have sent you a commentary on the whole gospel, if I had not been busy with the command of our lord the king for the revision of the old and new testaments. However when I have the time to complete the work I have started with the help of God, I shall, if I live, dedicate the finished work to you."\(^{462}\)

Alcuin’s bleak outlook on his health is characteristic of the letters of the final years of his life, particularly those addressed to Gisla. Nevertheless, Alcuin presents for us a moment in time. This letter records an early partial draft of his commentary on John and its transmission to Gisla for her early reading of it. In fact, we know that he holds true to his word, completes the work and, in fact, dedicates it to his Columba (Gisla).

In a letter dated to 801, Alcuin wrote back to Gisla:

“I have reproduced what I read as faithfully as memory allows, and prefaced the work with your letter of request…and my letter complying with your request…I confess I had a desire to write this work about thirty years ago (his commentary on John), but my pen did not stir, as there was no one to rouse it.”\(^{463}\)


It appears from the extant evidence, therefore, that Gisla was instrumental in encouraging Alcuin to complete his commentary on John. More importantly, she read an early version of the commentary that was not yet complete. It was this technology, letters, and the transmission of them that allowed for Alcuin to continue to work on his exegesis with colleagues and share his early ideas, thoughts, and drafts.

04.06: The Production and Dissemination of Exegesis

Of Alcuin’s fifteen identifiable students (broadly defined as either in students in Tours or individuals to whom he imparted knowledge via letters who had previously been his students) during this period, the majority were involved in the production and dissemination of exegesis. This took place in several forms. First, they were the recipients of exegesis. Alcuin wrote works of exegesis specifically at the request of and dedicated to students. As noted above, Sigwulf’s curiosity and questions led to Alcuin writing his commentary on Genesis.464 In c. 801, Alcuin completed his work on John and dedicated it to Gisla.465 In addition to these students, Alcuin in letter to Candidus and Fredegis of Tours, dated to 801–802, dedicated his commentary on Ecclesiastes to them.466 In a letter to Fredegis, dated to 793–804, Alcuin dedicated his work Questiones de sancta Trinitate.467 Dodo too received replies from Alcuin regarding the number of concubines

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464 ALC 45.80. Alcuin, Epistolae, MGH Epp. IV, no. 80, p. 122–123.
and wives of Solomon, to which he received a reply from Alcuin preserved as *Ep. 133*, as noted above.468

Second, students went on to write exegesis. Hrabanus, as noted in Chapter One, would go on to write thirty works of Scriptural exegesis, according to the *TMTCBC* dataset.469 In addition to Hrabanus’ work in exegesis, Alcuin had two other known students go on to write works of exegesis—Candidus and Fredegis. Candidus’ corpus is still being debated (see footnotes below), but a few works are safely attributed to him. He wrote four sermons which survive in three manuscripts: Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14510 (c. 826/7 produced at St. Emmeram, Regensburg), London, BL, Harley 3034, (first half of the ninth century produced in the Rhine area), and


Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 6389 (2nd quarter of ninth century produced at Freising). He also wrote the so-called Dicta Candidi. He wrote a treatise that addresses the issue of if Jesus could see God with his mortal eyes. Finally, he wrote a brief work on the Passion of Christ, known as the Opusculum de passione domini.

Fredegis has a single surviving work of exegesis, De substantia nihili et tenebrarum, written sometime in or after 800 and sent to Charlemagne’s Palace (unknown location) from Tours.

Third, students went on to lead houses that had a considerable number of exegetes. Hrabanus’ abbacy was marked by the training of Walfrid Strabo, Otfrid of Weissenburg, and Lupus of Ferrières, who would, in turn, go on to train commentators at Ferrières. Hrabanus’ successor, friend, and fellow-pupil at Tours, Hatto, held an abbacy at Fulda (841/2–856) that witnessed the writings of Ercenbertus, a Scriptural commentator who was a student of Hrabanus and Hrabanus’ student, Rudolf of Fulda.

Fourth, Alcuin’s students assisted other identifiable exegetes. Hrabnaus’ letters indicate that he and Hatto continued to not only study together but work alongside each

470 On these sermons and the manuscripts, see: Jones, “The Sermons Attributed to Candidus Wizo.”


473 Ibid.

other as well. In a letter dated c. 814, Hrabanus dedicated a copy of his newly finished
*Liber de laudibus sanctae crucis*, a work that brings an artistic tinge to exegesis in the
form of acrostics. In the salutation, Hrabanus refers to himself as a deacon but Hatto as a
monk. Hrabanus continues, in the opening lines, to thank Hatto for his cooperation in
helping him complete the work. Such appreciation was not peculiar, for Hrabanus, years
later, would thank his student Lupus of Ferrières for inspiring him to write his
commentary on the Pauline Epistles.\(^475\) Hrabanus’ appreciation in his letter to Hatto is,
however, rather different. The letter suggests that Hatto did more than simply proofread
the work but rather was an active participant in its creation. Such a task would have
required a talented poet and, as we know from Hrabanus’ aforementioned poem of his
time in Tours (discussed in Chapter Three) he traveled to Tours to improve specifically
his ability in meter.\(^476\) In addition to this example, Gisla read an early version of Alcuin’s
commentary on John, according to Alcuin’s *Ep. 195*, addressed to Gisla and dated to c.
800.\(^477\)

Fifth, Alcuin’s students sought to acquire exegesis. Alcuin’s letters record
specifically one example, that of Gisla. Gisla sought a copy of Bede’s treatise on the
epistles.\(^478\)

\(^{475}\) Hrabanus, Ep, 25, *MGH Epistolae 5*, p. 431.

\(^{476}\) Hrabanus, *In honorem sanctae crucis*, CCCM 100, p. 5.
“Quod mecum legeret metri scolastici artem,
Scripturam et sacram rite pararet ovens.”


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Alcuin’s students were, therefore, instrumental in the production and dissemination of exegesis. They wrote it. They collected it. They read it. They assisted others in writing it. And they received it from the master himself. Alcuin’s legacy to exegesis is, therefore, not strictly his own writings, but the writings and activities of those he educated.

04.07: Conclusion

When we bring the above pages and the evidence presented throughout them together, certain points of salience emerge. First, Alcuin’s network was sustained after his students left his “nest.” The network was sustained not just by Alcuin’s continued contact with those students, but also via the relationships forged within the pedagogical network (and other intersecting networks, such as the palatial network of Charlemagne). Second, the evidence suggest that Alcuin engaged in an early medieval form of distance learning by using the available technology (letters) to further his students’ respective education after they left his school and especially after he arrived in Tours in 796. This teaching was both in the liberal arts and in Scriptural exegesis, depending upon the needs of the recipient. Third, and most significantly, most of Alcuin used these letters to engage in exegesis, produce and edit exegesis, and disseminate both his exegesis and that of others. Recipients of these letters were those of the intellectual and political elite and those who had moved beyond the base instruction in the liberal arts. Let us sum each of these points more fully.

“We have sent the treatises you asked for, and ask you to have them copied and sent back as soon as possible. We have great need of them for our scholars. Our teacher, master Bede, wrote them in a simple style but their meaning is subtle. I had his books sent to you, as I knew you particularly wanted them.”
The evidence above suggests that Alcuin actively sustained his pedagogical network after he moved to Tours in 796. It was a direct result of Alcuin’s continued interest in his students after they left his school. Alcuin continued to write to his students out of love and care for them later in life. He wished for them to lead morally and physically pure lives. In the case of the former, we have the examples of Fredegis, Candidus and Onias all of whom Alcuin wished to not be tempted by the lures of palatial life—in the case of the latter, we see Alcuin scold Dodo for drunkenness—as noted in Chapter Three. Alcuin also sustained this network by asking his former pupils to continue writing, as was the case with Hrabanus. Finally, he also continued to write to those students to encourage them to further their education, such was the case with Gisla and Fredegis.

The second thing the evidence reveals is the way in which Alcuin engaged in a form of early medieval distance learning. As we saw in Chapter Three and throughout this chapter, Alcuin maintained contact with many of his identifiable former pupils via letters. He was concerned about their moral and physical well-being, as well as their continued education. Alcuin was not just a teacher, he was also an accomplished exegete. During his time at Tours, he wrote two of his more significant works of exegesis, his commentaries on Genesis and John, both of which were written at the encouragement of and dedicated to former pupils. This chapter shows how these two aspects of Alcuin’s person, that of an exegete and that of a teacher, meld throughout the corpus of Alcuin’s letters. By this I mean, Alcuin continued to write to his students and continued to teach them, specifically in Scriptural exegesis and generally in the liberal arts.
While Alcuin’s letters are often the basis for determining the relationship to his students, for he often specifically refers to them as such, it is intriguing to see that Alcuin continued to teach them through these letters and how. Throughout Alcuin’s letters to his former pupils, we see the master engage in a form of early medieval distance learning. While Alcuin’s technology (letters) for distance learning was far different and slower than the modern-day technology (internet), he used it as a solution to a similar problem. A student was not able to be in Alcuin’s physical presence in Tours and, therefore, Alcuin remedied the situation through technology.

This specific method of teaching occurs in Alcuin’s letters to Candidus, Fredegis, Onias, Charlemagne, Gisla, and Hrabanus, but it occurs a little differently for each of them. Of these students, the far greatest amount of data we have on this method of teaching comes from Alcuin’s correspondence with Charlemagne. The surviving evidence suggests that one explanation for this was the king’s specific desire to continue his pedagogical relationship with Alcuin. We do not have any surviving letters from another pupil to Alcuin. We do, however, have contextual clues that Gisla and Rotruda wrote to Alcuin after 796, for we have Alcuin’s replies. This is not the case for Fredegis, Candidus, Onias, or Hrabanus. Such is the fragmentary nature of the evidence.

The third significant result of this chapter is the degree to which Alcuin’s students involved in the production and dissemination of exegesis later in life. As noted in the Introduction to this dissertation, most of the individuals cited and discussed in this chapter have not left a large footprint in the historical sources. By studying them collectively we can glean certain important shared characteristics of these students. For example, of Alcuin’s students, Candidus, Charlemagne, Fredegis, Gisla, Hatto, Hrabanus,
and Sigwulf were all connected to the production and dissemination of exegesis in some way.

Hrabanus is the most studied of these students and for good reason. He was one of the more prolific authors of his generation, a corpus that consists of commentaries that cover most of Scripture, some of which (Judith and Lamentations) provide significantly novel views of a specific book. For this reason, I discussed Hrabanus and his corpus in detail in Chapter One. There is, therefore, little need to discuss him and his contributions to exegesis at length here.

In order to understand fully the development and changes of exegesis and exegetical methods over time and space, we must approach exegesis more broadly than simply Scriptural commentaries. When we expand our definition of exegesis to its broadest parameters, we notice that Hrabanus was not the only student of Alcuin’s to write exegesis. Candidus wrote multiple exegetical treatises and Fredegis wrote at least two works of exegesis (one of which survives intact). In other words, by expanding our parameters of exegesis, we can see that Tours produced three exegetes. This provides avenues for future research on the methods of Alcuin’s students beyond simply Hrabanus.

The evidence suggests that we should consider viewing exegesis beyond merely those who wrote it. The production and dissemination of exegesis required far more than a single individual. Alcuin’s student Sigwulf has not left us a surviving work of exegesis, yet we know that he was instrumental in Alcuin’s Commentary on Genesis, having asked his master to write it. Such a request even shaped the manner in which Alcuin structured
the commentary, that is, as a brief literal rendering of the book in question-and-answer form. This is because Sigwulf posed specific questions to the master.

In some cases, we see that Alcuin’s students engaged in viewing exegesis before it was put into circulation. We can see this specifically with three individuals—Gisla, Rotruda, and Hatto. Gisla and Rotruda were both instrumental in reading Alcuin’s Commentary on John before it was completed. Hatto did not examine any of Alcuin’s commentaries, but we know that he actively read some of Hrabanus’ earlier works. Although Gisla, Rotruda, and Hatto did not write any surviving work of exegesis, their contributions to viewing works of exegesis before they were put into circulation was likely helpful (to some degree) in the production of exegesis.

While certain individuals read early copies of exegesis, others received it after it was completed. Although only three of Alcuin’s students are known to have written works of exegesis, others were significantly involved in exegesis. Charlemagne personally sponsored the production of exegesis, asked Alcuin directly questions of an exegetical nature, received works of exegesis as dedications, and even promoted the study of controversial exegetical issues, such as Fredegis’ views on the substance nothingness and shadows as found in Scripture.

Other students were so influential in an exegete’s life that the exegete dedicated a work to him or her. We see this with Gisla, who was one of the individuals to whom Alcuin dedicated this work. Similarly, Sigwulf received a copy of Alcuin’s Commentary on Genesis and inspired its creation. Alcuin also dedicated his commentary on Ezekiel to Candidus and Fredegis. In addition to these individuals, Samuel of Worms received a
copy of Hrabanus’ *Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*, having met Hrabanus while studying under Alcuin at Tours.

Thus, while only three of Alcuin’s students wrote works of exegesis, many of them were connected in a significant way to the production and dissemination of exegesis.

**CONCLUSION**

This dissertation has provided for the first time digital methods for quantifying Alcuin’s letters and the manuscript data associated with Carolingian commentaries through functions developed in Python. Further, it has provided a complete user interface and functions for analyzing the network data associated with Carolingian intellectuals. Through these methods and through traditional historical analysis, this dissertation has provided several items of importance.

First, in Chapter One, I revealed the institutional and pedagogical networks of the earliest Scriptural commentators in the Carolingian realm (780–820). These commentators belonged to the first and early second generation of exegetes. In detailing this network, I was able to identify three clusters of strong activity: Charlemagne’s Palace (itinerant), Tours, and Lyons. This established the need to explore these clusters on a micro-level to understand why they existed as clusters of activity. The remainder of the dissertation took this focus on the cluster of Tours.

In Chapter Two, I provided for the first time in English, a survey of the early history of Tours up to Alcuin’s arrival in 796. This allowed me to historically and institutionally contextualize the city. It argued that Tours was geographically, economically, institutionally, religiously, and political significant to the Romans, Gallo-
Romans, and Franks (both the Merovingians and Carolingians). I argued that Charlemagne’s possible interest in Tours would have been well-rooted in this history. From Alcuin’s point of view, Charlemagne wished for Alcuin to form specifically a school in Tours. By structuring the chapter in this manner, I was able to argue that Tours emerged as a cluster because of Alcuin’s arrival.

In Chapter Three, I explored how Alcuin would have structured his school by studying specifically his letters and reinforcing them with his didactic treatises. This method allowed for us to construct a picture of Alcuin the pedagogue and his pedagogy. In doing so, I was able to argue that Alcuin structured his education around the seven liberal arts. These served as the steps necessary for his students to access Scripture and, should they move into advanced studies, interpret it correctly. Noticeably absent from Alcuin’s curriculum, however, was the training in the writing of exegesis. This was perhaps reserved for more advanced students.

In Chapter Four, I examined Alcuin’s letters further and showed how he engaged in the training of exegesis through his letters in a form of early medieval “distance learning”. In order to facilitate this, Alcuin needed to maintain contact with his intellectual and pedagogical network. Letters were the natural technology to perform this function. By maintaining contact with this network, he was able to try to exercise influence over his former pupils and colleagues. He was also able to continue to teach, or impart knowledge, to those from whom he was now detached. Through these letters, we see a master specifically interested in the production and dissemination of exegesis. And through these letters, we see a pedagogical network actively involved in the production and dissemination of exegesis. While only one student, Hrabanus, would write...
commentaries, two others, Candidus and Fredegis, would write works of narrow exegesis.\textsuperscript{479} In addition to this many of Alcuin’s students would receive works of exegesis (Sigwulf, Gisla, Rotruda, Fredegis, and Candidus). Others would help read and possibly edit works of exegesis (Gisla, Rotruda, and Hatto). And others would specifically ask the master to write works of exegesis (Sigwulf, Charlemagne, and Dodo).

In sum, Alcuin’s pedagogical network was his legacy. It was a network to which he contributed by teaching exegesis and dedicating works of exegesis. It was a network that went on to continue his legacy by engaging in the production and dissemination of exegesis. Thus, when Alcuin left this world in 804, he left behind a nest of skilled birds, birds that he had molded, birds that he had trained, birds that would continue to fly and engage in the lofty enterprise of exegesis.

\textsuperscript{479} Included in this list is possibly Joseph Scottus, who, as noted in the Introduction, wrote a commentary on Isaiah.
Appendix: Calendar of Alcuin’s Letters to or about Students

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