

The role of Frankish and papal *missi* in diplomatic exchanges in the eighth century

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The eighth century marked a change in the relationship between the papacy and the Frankish monarchs, allying the two foci of spiritual and temporal power. During the many years of the second half of the century, however, when the two rulers did not meet in person, frequent communication and indirect contact maintained and strengthened their bond. Just as in Byzantium, embassies bore written and oral messages between the two men. In the late eighth century, Charlemagne collected the popes' correspondence into a volume called the *Codex Carolinus*, of which one late ninth century copy from Cologne remains.¹ It is unknown whether or to what extent these letters were edited before their inclusion, and these deletions could have considerable consequences for the interpretation of the volume. The significance of what does remain, however, cannot be contested. The letters reveal how the popes addressed the Carolingian rulers, the tone of their communications, and the wide range of subjects, both personal and political, under discussion. Regrettably Charlemagne did not include his own responses in the volume, but the pope frequently commented on the kings' replies, and their contents can sometimes be surmised. The *Codex Carolinus* suggests that the popes and Carolingians themselves were unsure of the nature and strength of their association. The letters do not reveal a rigid and formalized diplomacy as in Byzantium, but rather a relationship that arose organically out of the papacy's need for aid and the Frankish vacuum of legitimacy, a bond that developed out of pragmatism and matured for the benefit of each party. This article now turns to this collection of letters in order to examine diplomacy between

pope and king by looking at the frequently-mentioned *missi*, the men who carried their correspondence and in doing so represented them abroad.

How did this system operate? As in Byzantium, with which the papacy had previously been allied, diplomacy in Francia was inseparable from the person of the king.ⁱⁱ Unlike the eastern capital, however, there was no formal organization that prepared officials for a 'career' in foreign affairs. Indeed, any talk of a 'system' for the selection and dispatch of the envoys would be misleading. Francia did not have a cadre of officials from whom the ruler could choose his *missi*, and lacking fixed personnel, the king personally appointed the men who would represent him in foreign courts, or in this case, before the pope, and vice versa.ⁱⁱⁱ

Whether papal or Frankish, a diplomatic mission was tripartite, and can only be understood as such. It comprised one or more *missi*, a written letter, and an oral message. In the *Codex Carolinus*, the letters begin with a greeting, and next give an account of an occurrence that is ostensibly the reason for the diplomatic mission. At the end of the letter, before commending himself to the king and saying that he will be remembered in the prayers of Rome, the pope often has a sentence saying that the *missus* will explain and elaborate upon his message more fully in person: 'we have spoken in more detail both about this matter and about all the rights of St. Peter to your aforesaid *missi*, that everything may be expounded to your royal highness'.^{iv} This quotation is not an isolated incident, but rather part of a pattern that occurs over and over,^v and was practised not just by the pope but by the Frankish kings as well: '...but your most faithful *missi* have also themselves related to us in further detail the matters with which your God-protected excellence charged them'.^{vi} All of these letters clearly emphasize the importance of the spoken word in the delivery of a letter, without which the worth of the envoy would be greatly reduced.

Without knowing what these oral instructions were, it is difficult to surmise either their contents or comparative importance. It is tempting to agree with Ganshof and say that ‘the essential party of a diplomatic mission took the form of an oral communication’,^{vii} but this ignores the importance of the written message and its carrier. Gertrud Thoma tempers this statement, reminding us that ‘on the other hand, a message was meaningless without a letter, because the letter itself legitimized the communication...a letter meant authorisation’.^{viii} The three ‘ingredients’ of a diplomatic mission, *missus*, letter and message, cannot be qualitatively separated for ‘importance’ and still understood as a ruler or pope of the eighth century would have understood them. This debate can be fitted within a larger theme of the eighth century, in particular in the court of Charlemagne, as to the increasing importance of the word, both written and spoken. The line between written and spoken messages in diplomatic missions is a blurred one at best, especially because letters were read aloud, strengthening the oral component of the delivery.^{ix} In the early middle ages, orality and literacy were not in opposition, but rather had a complementary relationship where modern arguments about the distinctions and conflict between the two have little relevance or application.^x In this scenario, where an additional oral message supplemented the recitation of the letters, the difference between the two modes of communication became less stark and blended into a form during their delivery that was neither strictly oral nor written but dependent on both.

Leaving a portion of the message unwritten was a pragmatic measure as well. In a letter from 775, Pope Hadrian wrote to Charlemagne with great concern, saying ‘now, we have been greatly distressed to discover the seals on this same letter tampered with. It was read through by Archbishop Leo before being forwarded to us’.^{xi} Long an enemy of Hadrian’s, Archbishop Leo of Ravenna may have read

Charlemagne's letter to the pope, but without the accompanying oral message, he did not receive the whole communication. Leaving things unwritten guaranteed security while the *missi* were on dangerous roads. The letter itself could theoretically mislead an opponent, a mistake that the *missi*'s message would avert.^{xii} The *missus*-letter-instruction trio is inseparable not only from the standpoint of a modern analysis of diplomacy, but also as a pragmatic measure for security.

Who, then, were the *missi* that the king and pope personally selected? Rarely, if ever, would a mission have only one *missus*; more commonly two or three *missi* accompanied by a supporting staff undertook missions. As Ganshof writes, where the sources mention only one foreign representative, he is probably the most highly-ranked *missus* present, or of interest to the author.^{xiii} In the *Codex Carolinus*, *missi* of both the king and the pope are often high-ranking church officials, usually bishops and abbots. Traditional historiography maintains that religious figures were more educated than the laity, even among the aristocracy, and were thus better equipped to bear essential messages between rulers.^{xiv} More recently, Mayke de Jong has exposed the distinction between the secular and religious elites as a modern construction, a development that adds complexity to the argument of *missi* selection. Perhaps, then, selection was guided by pragmatism and logic, two characteristics so often denied to the early middle ages by its detractors. Bishops and abbots were more knowledgeable about the ways of the church, and had a familiarity with the customs of Rome that would encourage trust for the messenger and guarantee a smoother interaction. The rank of the *missus* was also a mark of respect that the pope and king had for each other.^{xv}

Even when it is unclear whether one of the *missi* sent as an envoy held church office, the pope often describes him as *religiosus* in his letters to the king.^{xvi} This is

presumably not an unusual benediction for a pope to use, but repetition stresses this characteristic in the letters. Gertrud Thoma suggests that this may be a conscious word choice ‘in order to remind the Frankish monarch of his responsibilities to St. Peter’,^{xvii} and of the spiritual ties between the Carolingians and Rome. This in turn suggests that asking questions about the diplomatic messengers is inseparable from asking questions about the relationship between the powers that the *missi* represented.

A *missus* was not necessarily a single-mission appointment. Throughout the letters in the *Codex Carolinus*, *missi* for both the pope and the king are frequently repeated. The names of certain *missi* reappear in many letters over the years of correspondence, and, according to the inseparable *missus*-letter-instruction trio, these repetitions denote multiple missions. For example, Archbishop Possessor, a *missus* of Charlemagne’s, is mentioned in no fewer than five letters from the year 775 alone, indicating that Charlemagne repeatedly used the Archbishop as a messenger on separate occasions.^{xviii} This is a common occurrence and happens throughout the rest of the codex. Abbot Maginarius appears in seven letters between 781 and 788, and Abbot Itherius is mentioned in four letters between 781 and 786.^{xix} Motivations for repetition among the *missi* will only ever be hypotheses, but they are plausible and compelling none the less. For example, after years of interacting with Pope Hadrian, Archbishop Possessor would have had a position of trust for both pope and king that a novice would not and could not have. Trusted *missi* would have facilitated negotiations between the two leaders, assisting a long and difficult process. Although no evidence indicates a ‘system’ that groomed men for service and determined who would go on a mission, patterns arose from pragmatism that brought a great deal of order to the interaction between foreigners.

Missi fulfilled a multiplicity of tasks in addition to bearing letters. The word *missus* translated literally means only ‘sent-man’, and the vagueness of this term was interpreted to mean many things other than courier. *Missi* not only delivered messages, but also acted on behalf of their employers in a number of roles both domestically and outside of their rulers’ territory. The modern term ‘ambassador’ does not do justice to the many tasks of these men, and the word ‘agent’ perhaps better suggests their many and varied responsibilities.

Among these jobs was the transfer and at times defence of land that the Carolingians had promised, a recurring theme among the letters of the popes in the *Codex*. The kings did not travel to the popes to negotiate and oversee this exchange of property, instead mandating the *missi* to act on their behalf. Stephen III wrote to Bertrada and Charlemagne in 771

Now, the bearer, Itherius, a religious and most prudent man, truly your sincere *fidelis* and ours, whom you sent with his companions and other *missi* of yours to search out and implement the rights of your patron, St. Peter, set out for the lands of the Beneventan duchy^{xx} immediately after reaching us in order to recover the patrimony of that same protector of yours, the prince of the apostles, situated in those parts.^{xxi}

In this example, Charlemagne enabled one of his *missi* to defend the lands dedicated to St. Peter. Charles, though this may, of course, be a papal oversimplification of his role, gave the *missus* Itherius the authority to act as a king would, fulfilling Charlemagne’s responsibilities, and in this way truly being Charlemagne’s representative, almost embodiment, abroad. This is not a single occurrence: *missi* were often entrusted with negotiations and transfers of property.^{xxii} The *missi* in these cases had the power to hand over land to another party. As letter- and message-bearers *missi* were already representatives of the king and his wishes. These added responsibilities transformed them into the royal will abroad, creating a net of Carolingian authority without the king himself moving. If Evangelos Chrysos described Byzantine diplomacy as ‘a sensitive nervous system operating from a

spectacular cranium' with the emperor as the control centre,^{xxiii} then Carolingian diplomatic manoeuvres resembled a net, creating an illusion of the diffusion of monarchical rights spreading out from a figurative centralized authority.

Among the many tasks of the *missi* was to provide information on their return from a mission, becoming throughout the territory the eyes and ears of the popes and kings when opportunities arose. Pope Hadrian's *missi* informed him of what his enemy Leo was doing, and of Leo's interactions with Charlemagne, so that Hadrian was able to write to the king, 'word has reached us that the insolent and exceedingly arrogant Leo, archbishop of the city of the Ravennans, has sent his *missi* to your most excellent graciousness to oppose us by telling lies'.^{xxiv} It is clear from the phrase 'word has reached us' that *missi* acted as an effective mode of surveillance. When the pope could not himself be present, the *missi* acted according to and in his interests to protect papal priorities, both inside and outside those territories supposedly controlled by the papacy. The pope also used his *missi* to discover information for Charlemagne. When archbishop Leo continued to refuse to surrender Imola and Bologna to papal authority, Hadrian sent a *missus* to investigate the situation: 'wherefore we sent our *missus* there, Gregory the *sacellarius*, charging him to bring the *iudices* of those cities to us and to receive oaths of fidelity to St. Peter, ourself and your excellence from the people as a whole'.^{xxv} This was clearly a measure to protect Hadrian's interests rather than a case of disinterested information-gathering, but this quotation nevertheless reveals the extensive capabilities of the personalized network of *missi*, fulfilling many more roles than mere delivery boy.^{xxvi}

Missi also represented royal and papal justice at a distance from the royal or papal courts. In a letter from 783, Pope Hadrian requested that Charlemagne send two *iudices* to Rome, who had fled to the king when accused of selling the poor into pagan

slavery.^{xxvii} Hadrian wanted the two men to be put on trial in Rome, but he specified in his letter that they would be put on trial before Charlemagne's *missi* and punished by them.^{xxviii} The *missi* represented royal justice and its export. Charlemagne's monarchical will could be felt far from his physical presence, so that a trial in Rome could proceed under his auspices.

This out-sourcing of justice could work both ways. In two letters from the spring and summer of 781, Hadrian wrote to Charlemagne about the fate of an abbot of San Vincenzo, whom the king had removed under accusations of disloyalty. Hadrian protested the abbot's innocence and described the conditions under which the test of loyalty took place, using his own *missi* to provide an alternative to the king's opinion of the trial, and to present his own.^{xxix} The outcome of this is unknown, but it proves that just as Hadrian could request the out-sourcing of the king's judgment, he could likewise try and export his own.

Queller maintains that 'the legal effect of sending a *missus* – assuming that the envoy was that and no more – was equivalent to sending a letter'.^{xxx} This statement, in the light of the high level of trust in which the *missi* were held, and the many responsibilities that they were given, does not reflect reality as evidenced by the letters. In the long stretches during which neither pope nor king would visit the other, *missi* become the physical embodiment of the ruler and his interests abroad, no mere letter-bearers or mouthpieces. A *missus* had the ability to negotiate transactions and effect change in territories and in official relationships with other leaders. A *missus* represented his principal, but how far did this go exactly, and was this symbolism acknowledged by contemporaries?

The popes' letters reveal a preoccupation with the actions and whereabouts of the royal *missi* that bespeak their symbolic and real importance. In 775, Hadrian

reminded Charlemagne that although he had promised to send *missi* to Rome to transfer lands that had been promised, 'we have thus far been waiting to receive those *missi*...through the whole of September and October and now through November'.^{xxx} Hadrian pressed the point, writing that he had sent his own *missi* back to Charlemagne concerning these matters. This insistence is uncharacteristic of papal correspondence. The pope was clearly worried. The language used indeed hints at desperation, an anxiety prompted by the absence of Charlemagne's *missi*, and a concern that this could represent a change in Charlemagne's favour and a withdrawal of his support. In another example, Charlemagne's *missi* did not go to Rome, but rather Spoleto, to visit an enemy of the pope's named Hildebrand, then journeying on to Benevento under royal orders. Hadrian wrote that 'wherefore they have cast this province of ours into mighty confusion'.^{xxxii} Thrown into confusion over the king's symbolic and diplomatic rejection, the pope later in the letter reminded Charlemagne of his promises and responsibilities to St. Peter. These examples indicate that Hadrian saw and treated *missi* as extensions of royal authority, and as a result he used their movements to gauge favour.

If the *missi* represented their leaders, what do the letters that they bore reveal about the relationship between the king and the pope? Their bond certainly did not represent the alliance that had previously existed between Rome and Byzantium. During the eighth-century, Byzantium practiced a traditional model of foreign relations that operated based on a hierarchical model inherited from the Roman Empire. As Peter Classen says, 'no one denies that, in terms of Byzantine law, the pope was subordinate to the Emperor in Constantinople'.^{xxxiii} The tie between Francia and Rome did not resemble this paradigm of subordination, and instead it was an ambiguous relationship for which the *Codex Carolinus* does not have a simple

solution. The pope invariably addressed the Frankish rulers as “son”, but other evidence shows a more complex relationship between the pope and the Frankish king than a simple and traditional role of spiritual father and spiritual son. There were also other deeper, more intimate connections that suggest instead brotherhood and equality, which in turn have critical implications for the significance of the *missi* themselves.

One of these important ties can be precisely traced to the middle of the eighth century. Pope Stephen II crossed the Alps in 754 to meet King Pippin III. This was not the first contact between pope and Frank, but it marked a significant change in their previous relationship. In 754 Pope Stephen II addressed a letter to Pippin, Charles and Carlomann as ‘to the most excellent lords and sons, to Pippin, King and our spiritual *compater* of Charles and Carlomann, likewise kings and defenders of the Romans, *patricii romanorum*’.^{xxxiv} There are two previously unused terms in this greeting, that of *patricius romanorum* and *compater*. The duty of a *patricius romanorum* was to defend the Roman people and church, a title traditionally bestowed by the Byzantine emperors. This is the first example of a diplomatic alliance that shifted power in favour of the Franks and to the detriment of Byzantium, possibly as a direct result of the well-known rift between the papacy and the Byzantine Empire which had been escalating since the beginning of the eighth century.

The bond of conpaternity (*compater*) first mentioned in 754 was a religious one that forged a relationship between the spiritual godparent and the biological parents of a child. The popes previously addressed letters to the Carolingian rulers exclusively as ‘to our most excellent lord and son’,^{xxxv} but conpaternity transformed this metaphorical kinship into a literal and spiritual bond. Conpaternity literally means

co-parenthood, and more specifically, co-parenthood between the biological parents of a child and his or her spiritual sponsor. This was a relationship between only the adults who were involved, not the child to be baptized or confirmed. Joseph Lynch has described conpaternity as a relationship that placed the two sets of parents on equal footing, regardless of any differences in status between them. This kinship, although spiritual, came with very concrete obligations between the two sets of adults. They were expected to be friends with one another, protect the interests of the co-parent, and grant each other's requests.^{xxxvi} According to Arnold Angenendt, this newly formed kinship was not a substanceless token of goodwill. It was an institution with binding duties between the biological and spiritual fathers: 'through conpaternity of the royal children, the ruling parents were locked into the spiritual bond as well', a connection that has strict political and diplomatic consequences.^{xxxvii} The bond of conpaternity created an alliance of brotherhood between Stephen and Pippin, a relationship of equality forged in the guardianship of Pippin's sons. The significance of conpaternity was greater even than the institutional and spiritual obligations that it created. It represented the replacement of Byzantine with Frankish influence over the papacy and in Rome.^{xxxviii}

The spiritual bond of conpaternity has interesting implications for the role and significance of the *missi* themselves as the representations of their respective masters. A Carolingian ruler was a Christian above all else, and the presence of a papal agent would have further reminded him of the sacred bond of conpaternity, the duties for which would have already been on his mind. As the mobile physical embodiment of the men that they served, the *missi* represented not only their absent ruler, but also the bond between him and his spiritual brother, sanctifying in turn the *missi* themselves and the role that they served. Indeed, when the pope could not be present, the *missi*

could even be called upon to facilitate a symbolic ceremony, at a distance, for the baptism of the royal children. In 758, King Pippin's *missus* was entrusted to bring the christening cloth of Gisela, Pippin's infant daughter, to Pope Paul I in Rome. Pope Paul then used this very cloth in the ceremony through which he became Gisela's *compater*, a ceremony for which the service of the royal agent was integral.^{xxxix} Papal-Carolingian *missi* fulfilled many tasks, among which were charges that served to remind each ruler of the special and sacred bonds between them. The *missi* represented not only the physical presence of their masters, but all of their accompanying responsibilities and alliances as well. That most of the *missi* were clerics will only have reinforced the sanctity of these bonds.

In contrast to this spiritual brotherhood and equality between the two rulers, however, are the myriad requests and favours, bordering on harassment, that pepper the popes' letters to the kings. The popes' dependency seems to indicate a position of inferiority and weakness that leaves them reliant on the graces of the kings, sending *missi* to the Carolingians in the position of supplicants rather than equals. Would the Carolingian rulers, however, have seen it as such? For it has to be remembered that every Carolingian had a connection with the church, whether or not it was born of duty, ever since Stephen II named Pippin III and his sons *patricii romanorum*, defenders of the Roman people and church. Rosamond McKitterick writes that 'the Carolingian king was above all a Christian king, acting in the name of a higher, divine, authority, as a Christian monarch was to act thereafter'.^{xl} To be sure, the king had power over the church in that he was responsible for its defence, but this authority does not signify superiority. The importance of military force versus spiritual clout is not a comparison that can be quantified. Both rulers must have been aware of the power that the other held, and in light of this, it is significant that the *Codex* does not

clarify their relationship, leaving room for the possibility that the two men themselves were unsure of the nature of their bond. In comparison with this ambiguity, conpaternity's significance cannot be overstated, reaffirming the equality between the two men and rescuing the papal agents from the position of supplicants, presenting them instead as peers.

Although *missi* from Byzantium, Francia and Rome alike acted at the behest of their employer, Alexander Kazhdan raises the question of whether a 'privatization' of the diplomatic service occurred, where a *missus* manipulated his post and did not carry out the wishes of his employer, in exchange for material gain.^{xli} This does not appear to have been the case in the Frankish empire. As the letters in the *Codex* indicate, both the king and the pope favoured certain *missi*. How did they initially evaluate their legates, not only for competence, but also for loyalty? To a great extent, the mode of communication between monarch and pope was self-correcting: the letters in the *Codex* praise worthy *missi* as 'distinguished' and 'most faithful',^{xlii} but also warn against those who are in some way found wanting. In a letter from 775, Pope Hadrian referred to a communication from Charlemagne, in which the king had expressed his displeasure with Roman *missi* to the point of placing them under house arrest. Hadrian recapitulated Charlemagne's complaint, and added his distress that this could have happened, saying 'as to what you have told us about Anastasius, our *missus*, however – that he addressed you in insufferable and unseemly language, which greatly upset you, and for that reason you are keeping him back with you still: our heart is distressed beyond measure'.^{xliii} Hadrian, who may of course be shifting the blame for a papal *faux pas* from his own shoulders on to those of others, prefaced this with a paragraph describing the esteem in which he held the royal *missi*, and the steadfast love that he had for Charlemagne. Hadrian went on to say that Lombards

poisoned Charlemagne's opinion of Anastasius, and that he was not guilty of disloyalty. This is a long letter dedicated almost entirely to this allegation, suggesting that the situation is grave, both the charge made, and Hadrian's attempts to clear it. The *Codex* does not name Anastasius' fate, but his name is never mentioned again. This indicates that both the Franks and the popes had an internal regulation of the *missi*, a function where both parties informed the other of any deviances.

The charge of disloyalty or rudeness was a serious one, and Hadrian himself did not bandy it about lightly. In a letter to Charlemagne from 787 or 788, Hadrian criticized the behaviour of some of the royal *missi*, but he did not even go so far as to specify who they were, merely saying 'for there are some among your *missi* who contrive to scorn and sully your sacred oblation'.^{xliv} Hadrian's reticence could have many explanations: he could be trying to lessen the severity of the accusation; he could be treading warily around a sensitive charge; or the charge of renegade ambassadors may have been serious enough that he did not even need to do more than mention it. Alternatively, Hadrian could be using criticism of the *missi* as a gentle means of criticising Charlemagne's policy, hoping that the ruler would accept questioning of his activities if presented in the form of blame of his messengers. This accusation was weighty, however, because of the nature of the office of the *missus*. As the representative of his master, an accusation against him could be interpreted as an allegation against the ruler himself and an admission of distrust in his conduct of foreign relations. The spiritual bonds between pope and king further complicated these charges, because to implicate a messenger was on some level to cast doubt on Carolingian dedication to the papal-Frankish spiritual alliance.

The gravity with which the issue of a disloyal *missus* was treated is further illustrated by the aforementioned example of Anastasius. Hadrian used the allegation

as a transition to pursue the punishment of two men who committed atrocities in Rome, and asked ‘however, to speak briefly, if he who hastened to you from St. Peter, your loving friend, has merited such treatment’, then Charlemagne ought to send the two malefactors to Rome so that they may be punished as well.^{xlv} The reminder of one poorly behaved *missus* was enough to invoke a universal appeal for justice, and allowed Hadrian to demand the return of Paschal and Saracinus for punishment.

The charge of a disloyal *missus* had the potential to reflect badly on the principal, but so did a *missus* who was unable to fulfil his job. During the fracas with Archbishop Leo of Ravenna, who held cities that Pope Hadrian claimed for himself, Hadrian complained to Charles often, saying ‘behold, great humiliation is known to have befallen your holy spiritual mother, the Roman church, and we too are seen to stand in extreme disparagement and contempt’.^{xlvi} Italians mocked Pope Hadrian’s powerlessness and dependence upon the military strength of the Franks. In one of the popes’ many pleas to the Carolingians to render their promise to St. Peter, Hadrian wrote to Charles that

We have heard that the *optimates* of the Greeks, residing in Naples, have been guffawing insultingly, saying: ‘Thank God that their promises have come to nothing.’ We set no store whatsoever by their scoffing and derision, however – even though those same Greeks remarked that apostolic *missi* had already twice gone home without success.^{xlvii}

Hadrian’s *missi* were ineffectual because they did not have the military support of Charles and could not affect the pope’s wishes. To the Greeks, the *missi* were a physical signifier of Hadrian’s failure, his ineffectiveness personified. This reinforces the claim that *missi* represented their principal, not just in the eyes of other rulers, but in the opinion of the general public as well, as a reminder not only of the rulers’ presence, but of their successes and failures as well. Hadrian felt this humiliation, because the criticism of his *missi* was a criticism of himself and a judgment on his own scope of power.

Analyses of Frankish-papal diplomacy have not done justice to the many roles and guises of *missi*. In particular, the significance of their representational function as a reminder to each ruler of his responsibilities, as agents to fulfil promises, as spies, and more simply as physical reminders of rule throughout the land, have been ignored. A re-evaluation of papal-Frankish *missi* not only provides a deeper understanding about their role, but about eighth-century diplomacy as well. The selection, functions and protocols of the *missi* in the *Codex Carolinus* allow a closer examination of the relationship between pope and king, a bond that continued and developed in importance throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. The alliance between the papacy and the Carolingian monarchs was an eighth-century anomaly, in that it deviated from the dominant mode of foreign relations, the Byzantine model of unilateralism and subordination. The bond between the popes and Franks initially arose out of practical needs, whether the physical protection of Rome or the spiritual endorsement of the emerging Carolingian dynasty. Their relationship grew to be marked by and based on mutual dependency and benefit, supported by ties of spiritual kinship. The behaviour of and expectations for the *missi* provide a glimpse into this world and the complicated manoeuvres that guided it.

NOTES

ⁱ *Codex epistolaris carolinus*, ed. W. Grundlach, *MGH Epp.* III (Hannover: Weidmann, 1892), pp. 469-75.

ⁱⁱ D. Nerlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften zwischen Ost- und Westkaisern 756-1002* (Bern: Peter Lang AG, 1999), p. 93.

ⁱⁱⁱ F. L. Ganshof, *The middle ages: a history of international relations*, 4th edn, trans. R. I. Hall (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 39.

^{iv} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 559, “tamen et de hoc et de omnibus iustitiis beati Petri praedictis vestris missis subtilius locuti sumus, vestro regali culmini cuncta enarrandum”; English translation P. D. King, *Charlemagne: translated sources* (Kendal, 1987), p. 270.

^v *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 563, 565, 568, 570, to name a few.

^{vi} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 565, “...sed et ipsi vestri fidelissimi missi ea, quae a vestra a Deo protecta excellentia iniuncta habuerunt, nobis subtilius retulerunt”; trans. King, p. 274.

^{vii} F. L. Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish monarchy: studies in Carolingian history*, trans. J. Sondheimer (London: Longman Press, 1971), p. 177.

^{viii} G. Thoma, ‘Papst Hadrian I. und Karl der Große: Beobachtungen zur Kommunikation zwischen Papst und König nach den Briefen des Codex Carolinus’, in R. Pauler and K. Schnith (eds.), *Festschrift für Eduard Hlawitschka zum 65. Geburtstag* (Kallmünz: Verlag Michael Lassleben, 1993), pp. 37-58 at pp. 40-1.

^{ix} Thoma, ‘Papst Hadrian I. und Karl der Große’, p. 40.

^x R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the written word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); M. Mullett, ‘Writing in early medieval Byzantium’, in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The uses of literacy in early medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.156–85; see also chapters 4, 10, 11 and the conclusion in this book for corroboration; M. Innes, ‘Memory, orality and literacy in an early medieval society’, *Past and Present*, 158 (1998), pp. 3-36.

^{xi} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 576, “itaque valde tristes effecti sumus, quoniam sifoniatas bullas eiusdem epistolae reperimus: a Leone archiepiscopo primitus relecta nobis directa est”; trans. King, p. 282.

^{xii} Nerlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften zwischen Ost- und Westkaisern 756-1002*, p. 123.

^{xiii} Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish monarchy: studies in Carolingian history*, pp. 166-7.

^{xiv} *Ibid.*, p. 168.

^{xv} Nerlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften zwischen Ost- und Westkaisern 756-1002*, p. 108.

^{xvi} *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 564, 571, 574, 580, 582, 601, 609, 615, 618, to give a few examples.

^{xvii} Thoma, ‘Papst Hadrian I. und Karl der Große’, p. 46.

^{xviii} *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 571-83.

^{xix} Abbot Maginarius, *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 598-619; Abbot Itherius, *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 598-609.

^{xx} Approximately equivalent to modern Benevento, Italy.

^{xxi} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 564, “itaque praesens Itherius religiosus ac prudentissimus vir et re vera vester nosterque sincerus fidelis, quem cum suis concomitibus et reliquis vestris missi pro exsequendis faciendisque iustitiis fautoris vestri beati Petri direxistis, ad nos coniungens, ilico partes Beneventani profectus est ducatus pro recolligendo illis in partibus situm patrimonium eiusdem protectoris vestri, apostolorum principis. Qui videlicet sollertissimus vir in omnibus secundum vestram nostramque decertavit voluntatem suique laboris constantiam, iuxta ut a vobis illi praeceptum est, in ipsis apostolicis exhibuit utilitatibus”; trans. King, p. 275.

^{xxii} *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 611 and 619-20.

^{xxiii} E. Chrysos, ‘Byzantine diplomacy, A.D. 300-800: means and ends’, in S. Franklin and J. Shepard (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy: papers of the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March, 1990* (Hampshire: Variorum Press, 1992), pp. 25-39 at p. 46.

^{xxiv} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 569, “pervenit ad nos, eo quod protervus et nimis arrogans Leo archiepiscopus Ravennantium civitatis suos ad vestram excellentissimam benignitatem ad contrarietatem nostram, falsa suggerendo, direxit missos”; trans. King, p. 277.

^{xxv} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 579, “unde dirigentes ibidem nostrum misum, id [est] Gregorium saccellarium, qui iudices earundem civitatum ad nos deferre deberet et sacramenta in fide beati Petri et nostra atque excellentiae vestrae a cuncto earum populo susciperet”; trans. King, p. 283. ‘Saccellarius’ is another term for cleric, and ‘iudices’, or lawyers, refers here to men of Imola and Bologna who occupy positions of authority.

^{xxvi} These examples of information-gathering are no accident; for a few further examples see letters 80, 82, 83.

^{xxvii} Although not technically ‘abroad’, interfering in Rome for Charlemagne was akin to sending his *missi* to a foreign territory. The papal lands, the *patrimonium Petri*, were under the control of the Lateran, and there is no indication that before 800 the Carolingians had a direct influence on their governance. These were the very lands at the centre of the dispute that catalysed the alliance between the Franks and the papacy. See T. Noble, *The republic of St. Peter. The birth of the papal state, 680-825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

^{xxviii} *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 606-07.

^{xxix} *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 594-97.

^{xxx} D. Queller, *The office of ambassador in the middle ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 6.

^{xxxi} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 578, “et expectabiles fuimus usque hactenus per totum Septembrium etiam et Octobrium et praesentem Novembrium mensem, ipsos vestros suscipiendum missos et de vestra sospitate per eos agnoscere”; trans. King, p. 283.

^{xxxii} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 581, “unde valde hanc nostram perturbaverunt provinciam”; trans. King, p. 285.

^{xxxiii} P. Classen, *Karl der Große, das Papsttum und Byzanz: die Begründung des karolingischen Kaisertums* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1985), p. 2.

^{xxxiv} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 491, “dominis excellentissimis filiis, Pippino regi et nostro spiritali compatri seu Carolo et Carlomanno, idem regibus et utrisque patriciis Romanorum”.

^{xxxv} *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 476 and 477, “domino excellentissimo filio”.

^{xxxvi} Joseph Lynch, *Godparents and kinship in early medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 192-201.

^{xxxvii} A. Angenendt, ‘Das geistliche Bündnis der Päpste mit den Karolingern (754-796)’, *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 100 (1980), pp. 1-94 at p. 28.

^{xxxviii} J. Herrin, ‘Constantinople, Rome and the Franks in the 7th and 8th centuries’, in S. Franklin and J. Shepard (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy: papers of the twenty-fourth spring symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March, 1990* (Hampshire, 1992), pp. 91-107 at p. 92.

^{xxxix} *Codex Carolinus*, pp. 511-12.

^{xl} R. McKitterick, ‘The illusion of royal power in the Carolingian annals’, *English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), p. 15, revised in R. McKitterick (ed.), *History and memory in the Carolingian world* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 133-55.

^{xli} A. Kazhdan, ‘The notion of Byzantine diplomacy’, in S. Franklin and J. Shepard (eds.), *Byzantine Diplomacy: papers of the Twenty-fourth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Cambridge, March, 1990* (Hampshire: Variorum Press, 1992), pp. 3-21 at p. 10.

^{xlii} For example, *Codex Carolinus*, 47 (‘*inluster*’; ‘*fidelissimus*’), although this does appear frequently.

^{xliiii} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 572, “illud vero, quod de Anastasium missum nostrum nobis indicastis, quod aliqua inportabilia verba, que non expediaebat, vobis locutus fuisset, unde valde tristi effecti fuistis et pro hoc adhuc apud vos eum detinetis, nimis noster fraglat animus”; trans. King, p. 280.

^{xliiv} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 613, “quia sunt alii ex missis vestris, qui contemnere moliuntur et fedare vestram sacram oblacionem”; trans. King, p. 302.

^{xli v} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 573, “Sed ut brevius dicamus, si ille, qui ab amatorem tuum, beatum Petrum, ad vos destinavit, talia suscipere meruerit”; trans. King, p. 281.

^{xli vi} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 568, “et ecce, quod numquam speravimus, in magnam humilitatem sancta spiritalis mater tua, Romana ecclesia, evenisse dinoscitur, et nos etiam in nimiam deminorationem atque despectum esse videmur”; trans. King, p. 278.

^{xli vii} *Codex Carolinus*, p. 620, “qui, ut nostris evenit auribus, optimates Grecorum, in Neapolim sedentes, insultantes fremebant dicentes: ‘Deo gratias, quia eorum promissa ad nihilum sunt redacta’; sed eorum cachinnas subsannationes pro nichilo reputamus, quamvis ipsi Greci referebant, quia missi apostolici iam duas vicis sine effectu reversi sunt”; trans. King, p. 303.