

A Chronology of Early Medieval Western Europe 450–1066

TIMOTHY VENNING



ROUTLEDGE

A Chronology of Early Medieval Western Europe

A Chronology of Early Medieval Western Europe uses a wide range of both primary and secondary sources to chart the history of Britain and Western Europe, with reference to the Celtic world, Scandinavia, the Mediterranean and North America. Extending from the middle of the fifth century to the Norman Conquest in 1066, the book is divided into five chronologies that present the day-to-day developments of events such as the fall of Rome, the Viking invasion and the military campaigns of King Alfred, as well as charting the cult of the mysterious 'King Arthur'. Timothy Venning's accompanying introduction also provides a discussion of the different types of sources used and the development of sources and records throughout these centuries.

Tying together the political, cultural and social elements of early medieval Western Europe, this chronology is both detailed and highly accessible, allowing students to trace this complex period and providing them with the perfect reference work for their studies.

Timothy Venning is an independent scholar. His previous publications include *A Chronology of the Crusades* (2015), *A Chronology of the Byzantine Empire* (2006) and *A Chronology of the Roman Empire* (2010).



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Introduction

The nature and background to the sources available for the early medieval period in Britain and Western Europe from 450 to 1066 present problems that are not so acute for the sources for Roman-ruled lands in the classical period. For one thing, there are fewer sources available for these centuries, particularly for the seventh and eighth centuries, in an era of a retreat of secular literacy and a reliance on oral memory for many regions. After the initial availability for the early-mid fifth century of secular or religious 'Late Roman' sources in the Roman world looking back to classical writers, the amount of coverage fades – except in the Eastern Empire up to c. 600, where Procopius and Agathias are recognisably in the tradition of Tacitus. A mixture of annals and occasional more detailed but Church-orientated historians then emerges for the sixth to early eighth centuries, with some supposedly 'contemporary' annals in fact written or copied (how accurately?) later. A comparable paucity of detailed sources occurs for the mid-later eighth century, followed by greater coverage for the self-consciously 'Roman-influenced' Carolingian world and a further period of comparable scarcity of detail for parts of the tenth century. Coverage of events is thus sketchy, and even the existence of a detailed source is no guarantee of its usefulness.

The extent of what could loosely be called 'Western Christian civilization' – in the form of coherent 'states' or proto-states which either remained Christian from the later Roman period or were later converted – continued to expand even when the Roman Empire was at its lowest ebb. The nature of written sources became different to that of the classical era when secular, reasonably 'objective' (though the extent of this has been questioned) writers such as Livy, Tacitus, and later Ammianus Marcellinus were writing detailed histories of political and military events based on chronological annals. The use of writing was almost entirely restricted outside the surviving Eastern Roman Empire to religious personnel, writing with a 'determinist' purpose in presenting a 'providential' account of the inevitable triumph of Catholic Christianity and thus downplaying, distorting or even omitting data concerning 'pagans' and 'heretics'. In the tradition of the first Catholic Christian historian who was their main exemplar, the fourth-century bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, 'history' was presented as a story of 'good' and rightfully successful Catholic heroes, and this duly affected the works of even the best-resourced and most analytical of early medieval historians such as the Northumbrian Bede (d. 735) and the Gallic bishop Gregory of Tours (d. 594). As analysed by modern scholars, even these writers cannot be called totally

2 Introduction

'objective' in the manner of modern historians and were writing with specific purposes in mind, with figures and events which did not fit the narrative (e.g. pagan rulers and the surviving Roman/Welsh Christian Church in Bede's early England) marginalised. In other cases, some crucial sources for periods and states of which we know little – e.g. Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries – such as the contemporary Gildas and the ninth-century 'Nennius' – can now be seen to be writing 'providential' history affected by the example of Old Testament narrative and with political agendas in mind too, and as such are frustratingly far less reliable than was once thought.¹

In a similar vein, the – non-contemporary – sagas compiled of the deeds of the early Scandinavian kings and their peoples' expansion into Britain, Ireland, Iceland and Greenland in the ninth to eleventh centuries can be identified as heroic myth rather than accurate stories recorded carefully from oral memory. The 'history' of the kings of Norway, the '*Heimskringla*', was composed by the Icelandic Snorri Sturlason as a series of sagas in the thirteenth century; dates are decidedly vague compared to the surviving Irish religious annals of the post-Roman period (also later in their surviving form but presumed to be based more carefully on other annals, extant at the time but now lost, in a more literate society). The Irish annals for the earlier post-Roman period mainly deal with religious not secular matters, as do the sketchy data – often much later in its current form and so open to distortion – for Wales and Scotland, along with princely genealogies that were created with political agendas in mind. The 'national' epics of the Gothic peoples written by Jordanes in the sixth century and of the Lombards by Paul the Deacon in the eighth century were also 'determinist' in presenting a purposeful 'narrative' with its heroes and villains like Church historians did, and the same applies to our main source for early England, the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'. Written up in its current form in the 890s at the court of king Alfred of Wessex at a time of pagan Scandinavian invasions, it has been analysed as presenting a determinist narrative of the origins and success of the Christian West Saxon kingdom to rally its embattled people behind its dynasty – and pagans, post-Roman Britons, and Anglo-Saxon kingdoms at odds with Wessex were marginalised. The same aggressively Christian narrative purpose affects the detailed annals and biographical portraits of the expanding Frankish kingdoms in the early medieval period, especially the Empire of Charlemagne, with a mixture of (pagan and Christian) Roman and post-Roman Church writers clearly influencing the way that the current imperial Frankish politico-cultural world was portrayed. Indeed, in the minds of early medieval 'historians' using the methods of and operating within the narrative perimeters of past generations of authors was desirable and added respectability to their stories, besides showing the workings of divine providence to an audience who would expect this.

The notion of 'objective' history in the world of early post-Roman Christian Europe thus has to be treated with appropriate caution and the sources checked constantly for ulterior motives and deliberate or accidental omissions in association with mindfulness of the authors' world-view. How accurate were their sources (which are often not mentioned), were these written or oral, and what were the purposes of the narratives? For that matter, how much was actually written down centuries after the events described, and was this distorted for

contemporary purposes? The extent of the (increasingly and eventually totally Catholic) Christian world did continue to expand in the collapsing – or ‘transforming’ – Western Roman world in the fifth and sixth centuries, which does provide a wider geographical area of data than in the Mediterranean-centred Roman world. The conversions of Ireland and Scotland, reconversion of Anglo-Saxon areas of mainland Britain, and later conversion of the ‘pagan’ societies of Germany and Scandinavia extended – religious rather than secular – literacy, and provides ‘histories’ of whatever value for these regions. The importance and availability of precedents for historical writing meant a mixed background of secular, Greek and Roman ‘annalistic’ traditions and the providential, determinist narratives of the Old Testament and early Christian (late Roman) historians. In this vein, in a culturally Christian world where many newly converted societies’ notions of written and dated ‘history’ were centred on the Bible, it was also normal to create ‘timelines’ dated back to the Creation of the world and to slot the relevant early history of the society in question into Old Testament dates, as with Gregory of Tours and Bede, instead of dating from the foundation of Rome around 753 BC (*‘ad urbe condita’*) as in pagan Roman histories. In addition, the more well-read or culturally pretentious authors who were seeking to link up their subjects to the world of classical antiquity would at times establish shaky and unreliable ‘links’ to the world of the classical Roman ‘foundation myth’, the ‘Aeneid’, and both Franks and Britons were presented by bold early medieval chroniclers as connected to the Romans’ Trojan ancestors – a fiction then as widely accepted as source-based ‘real’ events. In the case of Ireland, medieval chroniclers tried to fit in vague oral ancestor-traditions about the Continental origins of the Irish people – and previous races of Otherworldly origin for pagan myth – to Old Testament Egypt and Israel. Across the early medieval world scribes would add on details of supposed past events to the data available in then-extant manuscripts as they made new copies, without what we would regard as adequate analysis of whether it was ‘reliable’ – providing a nightmare for modern scholars seeking to identify original sources’ accuracy. Of course, much of this extra material could be perfectly reliable – but checking its origin is often impossible. Similarly, seemingly detailed and well-resourced coverage of a fairly well-known era of history by multiple sources – as for ninth-century Francia – may be prejudiced as viewed by a modern analyst, due to the writer seeking to present a ‘desirable’ rather than objective picture of events, in this case glorifying the proponents of Carolingian unity against ‘rebels’ or conversely the originators of the emerging West Frankish (French) and East Frankish (German) states. All this does not mean that a reasonably accurate chronology or analysis of events is impossible, even for the poorly-covered mid and late fifth,(in most regions) sixth and seventh, and eighth centuries – but it does provide multiple notes of caution and a need to be aware of the problems.

The changes in the fifth and sixth centuries from the established parameters of writing chronological history in the classical period extended from the ‘start date’ of history to the basis of calculating when the year started. As the first year of a comprehensive annalistic record was now usually the Old Testament ‘Creation’ in Genesis, so the opening day of the year was Christianised too. The establishment of dating from the presumed year of the birth of Christ, ‘AD 1’, is

traditionally credited to the early sixth century Italian monk Dionysius ‘Exiguus’ (‘the Little’), who used it in 525 for his continuation of the Easter (Paschal) table formulated over fifty years earlier by Patriarch Cyril of Alexandria. It is now thought that the original use of the date – demonstrably inaccurate as the New Testament accounts of the Nativity have Christ born late in the reign of Herod ‘the Great’ who died in 4 BC – came from Eusebius of Caesarea, who drew up the date in his Paschal table of c. 309 and later used it in his ‘History of the Church’. He also drew up the ‘official’ calculation of the length of time from the Creation to the birth of Christ, and his role as principal adviser to the first Christian Emperor, Constantine – creator of an Empire-wide structure of Church government – spread it. It was then used later in the century by St Jerome and Patriarch/St Athanasius of Alexandria, but it was Dionysius who tied in this calculation to the ‘official’ chronology of dates established by the Roman Church via their own Paschal tables². Its use spread gradually across the West, and was principally popularised by the prestigious and learned Bede in the early eighth century, especially in his ‘Chronica Majora’ (which also set a fashion for fitting Biblical, pagan/Christian Roman and post-Roman Christian history into one time-frame).³ The move to commence each account of a year with the Kalends of (i.e. 1st) January rather than the old ‘New Year’ on 25 March began with Church Paschal tables in the third century. Its adoption was more slow and haphazard, though reasonably general in the Western Church from the time of the late fourth century historian Rufinus of Aquileia who set the template for ecclesiastical annals. In the ‘Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’ some muddle was caused by occasionally commencing the annual record in March not January (e.g. for 944).

Notes

1. M Lapidge and David Dumville, *Gildas: New Approaches*, Boydell and Brewer 1984; Dumville, ‘“Nennius” and the “Historia Brittonum”’, in *Studia Celtica* vol 10, 1995–6, pp. 78–95; Dumville, *Histories and Pseudo-Histories of the Insular Middle Ages*, Variorum Press 1990; Robert Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain from Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth*, Columbia UP, New York 1998.
2. G Jaritz and G Moreno-Raino, eds, *Time and Eternity – the Medieval Discourse*, Turnhout 2003, pp. 31–53; Georges Declerc, *Anno Domini: The Origin of the Christian Era*, Turnhout 2010.
3. Faith Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, Liverpool UP 2004; Diarmuid Sully, ‘Bede’s Chronica Majora: Early Insular History in a Universal Context’ in James Graham-Campbell and Michael Ryan, eds, *Anglo-Saxon and Irish Relations Before the Vikings*, British Academy 2009.

See also for general discussion, *New Cambridge Medieval History*: vol 1, ed. Paul Fouracre, chapter 3, pp 56–92, Cambridge UP 2000; vol 2, ed. Rosamund Mackitterick, chapter 1, pp. 3–37, Cambridge UP 1995; vol 3, ed. Timothy Reuter, chapter 1, pp. 1–26, Cambridge UP 1999.

1 Chronology: AD 449/50–610

449/50 BRITAIN

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: 'High King' Vortigern of Britain invites the Jutish captain Hengest and the Angles to bring three shiploads of mercenary warriors to aid him (i.e. against the Picts and possibly the Irish). They land at 'Ebba's Creek' on Thanet, and probably settle the latter location. In fact, there are earlier fifth-century archaeological remains of a 'Germanic' cultural type in Kent – from troops settled at the 'Saxon Shore' fortresses, including Rutupiae/Richborough adjoining Thanet, or from traders? The Welsh version ('Nennius', written c. 829) dated this at 428.

451 WEST

Attila invades and ravages Gaul with huge coalition of Germanic vassals; they cross the Rhine with Burgundian reinforcements and 7 April, *eve of Easter* sack Metz; they plunder South-Westwards, heading for the Loire valley; Orleans is besieged.

Aetius summons the peoples of Gaul to join his army against Attila, and Theodoric the Visigoth of Aquitaine originally attempts to remain neutral. Aetius reaches Orleans and the invaders retreat; ?June Attila is defeated at 'Campus Mauriacus' on plains near Troyes by Aetius' Romans and Theodoric's Visigoths with other German allies; Theodoric is killed but Aetius refuses son Theodemir's proposal to assault the Hunnic fortified camp; Attila retires to Pannonia.

452 WEST

Plague in Italy; Attila invades, razes Aquileia, and devastates Northern Italy but Marcian sends troops to Ravenna and Pope Leo leads embassy to Attila's camp at River Mincio near Mantua to call on him to retire; probably due to fear of plague and Eastern troops not Church displeasure, Attila retires to Pannonia.

?Refugees from Aquileia found the first settlements on the Venetian lagoon.

453 WEST

Death of Attila during night after riotous wedding-feast to celebrate his marriage to Ildico; succeeded by son Ellac but subject tribes plot revolt.

Thorismund the Visigoth is assassinated by his brother Theodoric II, who seizes the throne.

IRELAND

(or 455) Approximate date of the death of Conall ‘Corc’ of the Eoganachta dynasty, founding ruler of the kingdom of Munster and based at the ‘Rock of Cashel’; succeeded by his son Oengus/Angus.

454 WEST/EAST

Hunnic power destroyed in rebellion of subject tribes, led by Ardaric’s Gepids, at battle of the Nedao; Eliac killed and brother Gerdich leads Huns in retreat from Pannonia to steppes North of Black Sea.

21 September. Instigated by eunuch Heraclius and Praefect of Rome, ambitious Petronius Maximus, jealous Valentinian III suspects that Aetius is aiming at the throne for his son Gaudentius (now engaged to the Emperor’s young daughter Placidia) and arranges for the murder of Aetius in Palace by his agents. Heraclius goes back on his promise to assist Petronius to become chief minister.

455 WEST

16 March. Petronius Maximus persuades two retainers of Aetius to kill Valentinian III, aged thirty-six, while riding on the Campus Martius; *17 March* he secures throne, forces Eudoxia to marry him, and betroths his son Palladius to her elder daughter Eudocia; the Empress secretly appeals to Gaiseric who sets sail for Italy bent on revenge with the claim that his son Hunneric has been cheated of his promised marriage to the princess.

31 May. Petronius Maximus lynched by mob as he tries to flee Rome, aged probably sixty; Pope Leo goes out to meet Gaiseric and request no massacre; *3–15 June.* Vandals methodically pillage Rome and carry off most of treasures and many captives to Carthage, including Empress Eudoxia and daughters of whom Eudocia is married to Hunneric.

9/10 July. Marcus Flavius Eparchus Avitus, elderly noble appointed ‘Master of Both Services’ i.e. infantry and cavalry commander in Gaul by Maximus and Aetius’ envoy to the Visigoths in 451, is proclaimed Emperor by Gothic king Theodoric II at Tolosa/Toulouse; he is escorted to Italy via recognition by an assembly of Gallic notables at Beaucaire and *August* Imperial Investiture at Arles.

BRITAIN

Traditional date of the battle of ‘Aegelesprep’ or ‘Agelesford’, possibly Aylesford in Kent, between the rebel Germanic mercenaries under Hengest and the British; the ASC has Hengest’s ‘brother’ Horsa killed and Hengest’s son Aesc succeeds him as co-ruler of Kent. In fact, ‘Horsa’ means ‘Horse’ and is probably unhistorical. The C9th Welsh version calls the battle where Horsa, and Vortigern’s son Categirn, were killed ‘Rithergabhaill’, ‘Horseford’: this may derive from a Kentish story as it gives Saxon as well as Welsh place-names.

The 820s Welsh version by ‘Nennius’ has the British, led by the disgraced and eclipsed Vortigern’s semi-historical son Vortimer (‘High King?’), defeating the Anglo-Saxons at several battles, including one at the ‘Inscribed Stone by the Gallic Sea’ i.e. probably a Roman monument on the shores of the Channel (?Richborough or Reculver). The Britons besiege the invaders on Thanet, possibly driving Hengest out of Britain altogether. Then Vortimer dies and his father resumes full power as ‘High King’ to invite Hengest back, by now having married Hengest’s daughter Rowena who acts as mediator, but Hengest later revolts again (late 450s?).

Very approximate date of the accession of king Nechtan ‘Morbet’ (‘of the speckled sea’), brother of the late king Drust, as ruler of the Picts; he is recalled from exile in Ireland, hence his nickname as a voyager. Traditionally he was converted to Christianity in Ireland. His people remain pagans.

456

WEST

Avitus assumes consulship at Rome, hailed by his poet son-in-law Sidonius Apollinaris; his new general, count Ricimer, a Suevic mercenary, defeats a Vandal attack on Sicily.

Theodoric II (Goth) orders the Suevic king of Northern Spain, Rechiarius, to stop raiding Roman-held Tarraconensis and when he refuses marches over the Pyrenees to attack him; 5 *October*. Theodoric and his Burgundian allies defeat the Suevi on the River Urbicus/Orbigo at ‘Campus Paramus’, near Astorga. The Visigoths secure the province of ‘Taraconensis’, and march on to 28 *October* sack the Suevic capital, Portus/Oporto. Rechiarius is either killed in battle or dies later at Oporto of his injuries; when the Visigoths leave Lusitania the Suevic kingdom recovers, but is divided in two in a civil war.

Avitus is unpopular in Rome due to famine and extortions; Ricimer leads revolt and pursues Avitus from Rome, capturing him at Placentia and 17/18 *October* forcing him to abdicate and become bishop of city; Ricimer rules Italy as commander-in-chief of the Roman army; Avitus is soon murdered on Ricimer’s orders.

BRITAIN

Date in the ASC for the battle of ‘Crecganford’, probably Crayford in Kent, between Hengest and Aesc’s Germans and the British; the Germans win and the British flee to London. If there is any congruity with the 820s Welsh version (see above) this would link in with Hengest’s successful second revolt following his recall by Vortigern, but it is unclear how historical the Welsh story is.

457 EAST

27 January. Death of Emperor Marcian; commander Aspar has decisive role in election but does not put himself forward as he is a German and an Arian, and successfully promotes his personal/military steward Leo the Thracian; Senate elects Leo. Aspar chief minister.

WEST

1 April. Sanctioned by Leo, Ricimer makes new ‘Magister Peditum’ Julius Valerianus Majorian(us), a former senior officer of Aetius who is probably in his early forties, Emperor.

458 WEST

Majorian enters Gaul; his general, Aegidius, probably already commander of the Roman forces in central Gaul, relieves Arles from attack by Theodoric II the Visigoth; Majorian makes peace with Theodoric and confirms his status as ‘foederatus’, then goes on to Spain.

The province of Lugdunensis refuses to recognise Majorian and is assisted by the Burgundians; Majorian besieges and recovers Lugdunum from the Burgundians, and increases its taxes for defying his authority until Sidonius Apollinaris persuades him to remit them.

(or 455/7?) Approximate date of the death of Merovech, king of the ‘Merovingian’ branch of the Franks in Belgica (based on Tournai) and son of Chlodio; succeeded by his son Childeric.

Around this time Aegidius secures temporary leadership of the ‘Merovingian’ branch of the Franks in Belgica after they drive out their king Childeric for stealing his nobles’ wives.

IRELAND

Traditional date of the battle of Ath Darra, where king Crimthann mac Enna of Leinster, head of the dominant ‘Ui Cennsalaig’ sub-division of the ruling dynasty, defeated an invasion by the tribute-demanding ‘High King’ Loeghaire and captured him. He was forced to end the traditional cattle-tribute from Leinster to the ‘High King’ in return for his freedom.

459 EAST

Theodemir, Ostrogothic, chieftain of Eastern ‘federates’ in Thrace, sends his young son Theodoric (future king of Italy) to Constantinople for education as hostage at court for his loyalty.

IRELAND/BITAIN

St Patrick writes a letter to the British king of Strathclyde/‘Alt Claith’, Ceretic (principal fortress Dumbarton Rock), complaining at his men having raided NE Ireland and carried off some Christian converts as slaves.

461 WEST

Majorian’s fleet destroyed by Gaiseric at Alicante; he recognises Gaiseric’s conquests in treaty which is unpopular at Rome and amongst the disappointed troops.

Majorian returns via games at Arles to Italy, discredited and powerless, and despite popularity is unable to resist Ricimer who 2 *August* seizes him at Tortona and beheads him. Aegidius, commander of the Roman army in Gaul, refuses to accept Ricimer or any nominee of his; he becomes effectively an independent ruler of ‘kingdom’ in central Gaul where he fights the Visigoths.

10 *November*. Death of Pope Leo.

19 *November*. Ricimer makes obscure Lucanian aristocrat, Libius Severus, Emperor; only recognised in Italy.

19 *November*. Hilarius becomes Pope.

462 WEST

Aegidius defeats Theodoric II’s brother Frederic in battle near Orleans, and forms alliance with Gaiseric against the Visigoths.

Count Marcellinus withdraws to Dalmatia from Sicily after Ricimer instigates mutiny of troops; rules the province in alliance with Leo and is assisted by nephew Julius ‘Nepos’ (later Emperor).

BRITAIN

The 820s Welsh version of the British/German war has an undated peace-conference between Vortigern and Hengest, presuming that a stalemate had been reached in military matters. Hengest duly has his delegates hide knives up their long sleeves at the ‘unarmed’ meeting, and they pull them out to kill all the British delegates except Vortigern who is held hostage for the surrender of more territory. The story of the ‘Massacre of the Long Knives’ is in fact a staple of contemporary legends, and may be invented

– and the nearby burial of the victims by the new British ruler Ambrosius is variously placed at the unidentified ‘Monument of the Heroes’ near the ‘Cloister (monastery) of Ambrius’ in Welsh legends, possibly Amesbury, Wilts; at the ‘Giants Dance’ i.e. Stonehenge by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Some time after this, Vortigern is deposed by a British revolt, led by Ambrosius Aurelianus – of ‘noble Roman blood’ with his parents having been killed in the recent conflict according to Gildas (540s) and the son of the late ‘High King’ Constantine according to the C9th Welsh version. He possibly returns from exile in Brittany. More certainly he drives Vortigern out of the lowlands back into Wales; later Vortigern is besieged and killed in a fire at a Welsh hillfort, possibly at ‘Nant Gwerthyrn’ in the Lleyn peninsula or at Doward near Monmouth – though one version has him escaping to Brittany. Ambrosius becomes ruler of (Southern?) Britain and resumes the war against the Germanic invaders, presumably in the early-mid 460s.

Traditionally Vortigern’s son Pascent is allowed to keep part of Powys, the lands of ‘Gwerthyrnion’ on the middle Wye around Builth Wells – or at least their dynasty later traced their ancestry back to him.

EAST

Treaty between Leo and Gaiseric re-establishes (temporary) peace and allows for return of Valentinian III’s wife Eudoxia and younger daughter Placidia to Constantinople, but elder daughter Eudocia remains married to Gaiseric’s son Hunneric.

463 BRITAIN/IRELAND

(or 461) Traditional date for the death of ‘High King’ Loeghaire, possibly hit by lightning in a storm, and accession of Aillel ‘Molt’, son of the late ‘High King’ Nath-I, his successor as king of Connacht (since c. 445?), and ruler of the ‘Ui Fiachrach’ branch of the C4th ‘High Kings’ dynasty in Connacht.

First date suggested from Irish annals for the death of St Patrick; an alternative date is 493, but the latter is less likely if he was kidnapped as a youth from Western Britain by Irish pirates as early as c. 410/15.

464 WEST

Aegidius dies; succeeded in rule of central Gaul by his son Syagrius, who probably rules the Franks too, briefly. ?Saxons on the Loire overrun Angers again, and are driven out by the exiled Childeric the Frank, now a mercenary commander employed by the Roman government.

465 WEST

Death of Libius Severus; Ricimer rules as chief minister and recognises authority of Emperor Leo but no new Western Emperor is chosen by either of them.

BRITAIN

ASC: victory by Hengest and Aesc over the British at 'Wipped's Creek', with 'Wipped' and other British commanders killed; this is the first occasion that the Chronicle calls the British the 'Welsh', meaning 'Foreigners'.

Approximate date of the return to power in his homeland of Childeric the Frank, after an eight-year exile; envoys sent by his friends recall him from Thuringia, whose queen Basina allegedly leaves her husband to join him as his new wife.

467 EAST/WEST

Leo decides to send Anthemius, potential rival, to West to fight Vandals and secures Ricimer's agreement; Anthemius' daughter to marry Ricimer.

Count Marcellinus and army accompanies Anthemius to Italy; *12 April*. He is proclaimed Emperor near Rome and later takes up office with Ricimer as commander-in-chief.

Late. Sidonius Apollinaris leads a Gallic delegation to Rome to ask Anthemius and Ricimer for more effective military assistance there against Visigoths and for reform of abuses in the civil administration which is based at Arles.

?Leo marries elder daughter Ariadne to Isaurian chieftain Tarasius who is renamed 'Zeno' and takes charge of a new corps of Isaurian guards, the 'Excubitors'; Aspar later murdered.

468 EAST/WEST

January. Sidonius Apollinaris delivers a panegyric to Anthemius as consul; he is made Praefect of Rome.

?100,000 soldiers and ?1,000 vessels in giant expedition sails against Vandal Africa, commanded by Empress Verina's incompetent and vain brother Basiliscus; Western troops under Marcellinus join in to attack Sardinia but after Vandal fleet defeated Basiliscus delays landing and attack on Carthage; Gaiseric sends fire-ships which decimate the Roman fleet and Basiliscus flees to Sicily; expedition abandoned.

WEST

29 February. Death of Pope Hilarius; *3 March* Simplicius elected.

?An army of Goths under Euric invades the middle Loire valley and takes Bourges (Roman 'Bituricum') from the combined forces of Syagrius' Romans and their British allies. The latter have apparently been invited to send an expedition by co-ordination with the new Western Emperor, Anthemius, and have legendarily 80,000 men; most of these are possibly from the new settlements in Armorica and so are fighting to keep the Germans out of the nearby Loire valley. They are led by the obscure king 'Riothamus' (meaning 'High King'), who Geoffrey Ashe has suggested contributed to the creation of the 'King Arthur invades Gaul' story (Geoffrey of Monmouth 1130s) in this campaign. More probably 'Riothamus' is the Armorican king 'Iann Reath'.

Euric the Visigoth invades Northern Aquitaine and defeats an army of Armoricans and their British allies fighting on behalf of Rome; the British commander, 'Riothamus', is killed in battle or disappears at 'Avallon' in Burgundy.

Euric reaches the Loire to be halted by count Paulus, presumably Syagrius' general.

BRITAIN

Working backwards using the regnal lengths of the named kings of the Picts before the accession of Bridei c. 557, this is the approximate date of the accession of their long-reigning king Drust (II?), who ruled for around thirty years to c. 498. It is unclear if he was co-ruler with their king Nechtan, whose dates working forward from c. 435 would imply that he did not die until c. 480.

470 WEST

Ecdicius, son of late Emperor Avitus, leads Roman resistance to Euric's Visigothic attack on Auvergne; he is assisted by Sidonius Apollinaris, recently elected as bishop of Clermont in succession to Eparchius; Clermont defies several Visigothic sieges in 470–3.

471 WEST

?Ricimer retires to army base at Milan after dispute with Anthemius.

472 EAST/WEST

Leo sends the possibly disloyal aristocrat Olybrius, married to Valentinian III's daughter Placidia and a threat to him, to Rome to mediate and tells Anthemius to kill him, but Ricimer intercepts letter and *April* marches on Rome, proclaiming Olybrius Emperor; Rome is besieged and *11 July* as the city surrenders Anthemius is found hiding in church of St Chrysogonus disguised as a beggar by Ricimer's nephew Gundobad the Burgundian and killed; Olybrius rules Italy as Ricimer's puppet.

Late August. Death of Ricimer; his nephew Gundobad rules Italy; *2 November.* Olybrius dies of dropsy, aged around fifty, and Gundobad keeps throne vacant.

473 WEST

5 March. Gundobad makes his ‘Count of Domestics’ Glycerius Emperor; he diverts Ostrogothic attack under king Widemir to Gaul.

Death of Gundobad’s uncle, king Gundioc of the Burgundians; he is succeeded by his younger brother and co-king, Chilperic (I), along with his four sons, Gundobad (in absentia), Godegisil of Vienne/Geneva, Chilperic of Valence, and Gundomar.

BRITAIN

ASC: another victory by Hengest and Aesc over the ‘Welsh’ (British) who ‘flee like fire’ (Winchester version of the manuscript).

474 EAST

18 January. Leo I dies, aged around sixty-five; his daughter’s son Leo II succeeds under his father Zeno’s regency; *9 February.* Zeno crowned co-Emperor.

WEST

Leo I’s choice for Western Emperor, his wife Verina’s niece’s husband Julius Nepos, commander in Dalmatia, invades Italy; Glycerius is abandoned or defeated, Gundobad retires to Burgundy to take over the senior role in that kingdom as ruler of Lyons/Lugdunum, and *24 June* Julius proclaimed Emperor in Rome as Glycerius surrenders at Portus and is ordained bishop of Salona.

Fall of Clermont to the Visigoths; bishop Sidonius is imprisoned by king Euric for defying his authority as the local resistance leader but is later released and allowed to continue in office.

EAST

17 November. Death of Leo II, aged around five; Zeno succeeds as Emperor and concludes final peace with Gaiseric. Verina plots against Zeno on behalf of her lover Patricius, backed by Illus.

475 WEST

Revolt of count Orestes, Attila’s former secretary, against Julius Nepos who flees Rome to Ravenna and *28 August* as Orestes advances sails to Salona, Dalmatia; he maintains rule there as Emperor, but is deposed

in Italy as *31 October*. Orestes raises his teenage son Romulus to imperial rank (nicknamed ‘Augustulus’, the ‘little Augustus’) as his puppet – the last Western Emperor.

Approximate date of a letter by the Southern Gallo-Roman poet and aristocrat Sidonius Apollinaris referring to a visit to him in the Auvergne by his friend the British bishop Riocatus, related to their mutual friend the British or Breton bishop Faustus of Riez – who has been suggested as the man referred to by ‘Nennius’ (820s) as the youngest son of the late king ‘Vortigern’.

EAST

9 January. Verina instigates riots in Constantinople and persuades Zeno to flee danger of attack then instigates coup; Zeno flees to Isauria with small force, but Senate chooses Basiliscus not her candidate Patricius as Emperor. Basiliscus makes son Marcus ‘Caesar’/heir; nephew Armatus, an extravagant fop, made ‘Magister Peditum’ which alienates the Thracian Goth leader Theodoric ‘Strabo’.

Zeno holds out at Salmon, Isauria.

476

WEST

German ‘federates’ revolt against Orestes’ land-settlement, wanting full division of Italian lands as in Gothic territories, and elect Odovacer, son of Edeco the Scirian, as king; Orestes flees army to Ticinum which is stormed, and *23 August* he is executed at Placentia; Romulus Augustulus captured at Ravenna, deposed, and sent to Campania.

EAST

Illus and Trocandrus are sent against Zeno but defect to him; they defeat Basiliscus and retake Constantinople. Zeno restored to power; Basiliscus exiled and killed.

477

NORTH AFRICA

25 January. Death of Gaiseric, aged probably over seventy as he was adult by 428; succeeded by son Hunneric as Vandal king, and Catholics persecuted.

EASTERN EMPIRE/ITALY

Roman senatorial embassy arrives at Constantinople with the Imperial Insignia, saying that Odovacer can rule Italy sufficiently as representing Zeno as the only Emperor and requesting rank of ‘patrician’ that previous

'barbarian' real rulers such as Ricimer held; Zeno grants requests and ignores rival Julius Nepos.

BRITAIN

ASC: traditional date of the landing in Britain of the founding king of the kingdom of the 'South Saxons', i.e. Sussex, Aelle, with his three 'sons' Cissa, Cymen and Wlencing. This is at 'Cymensora', 'Cymen's Shore', possibly the Selsey peninsula as this appears to be the first Saxon settlement in the region – though any early archaeological sites have been lost to the sea. The British are defeated and flee into the 'Andredesweald', i.e. the 'Forest of Anderida' (the Roman fortress of Pevensey) which is now the Weald. Later tradition has it that the nearby capital of the British tribal region of the 'Regni', Noviomagus (Chichester), was renamed after and presumably taken by Aelle's son Cissa – logically as the new kingdom's main stronghold. But there is no archaeological evidence of this, and the only discovered Saxon remains of this period are at Highdown near Worthing to the East; the Saxons may have settled either West or East of the River Adur. It is possible that Cissa (of Chichester), Cymen (of Cymensora), and Wlencing (of Lancing) were all imaginary rulers named after early Saxon settlements as their supposed founders.

479 EMPIRE

Illus visits exiled would-be assassin Epinicus, who confesses Verina put him up to it; Verina is arrested and sent to Isaurian fortress as nun; *25 September*. After earthquake in Constantinople causes panic, Leo I's son-in-law Marcian, claiming that his wife Leontia should be Empress, and his brother Procopius lead anti-Isaurian riots and try to march on the Palace in coup; Illus brings Isaurian troops from Chalcedon and revolt suppressed.

480 ITALY

Ex-Emperor Glycerius, now a monk in Illyria, assassinates his supplanter Julius Nepos; Odovacer takes over Illyria.

GAUL

Approximate date of the death of co-ruler Chilperic (I) of the Burgundians; his lands go to his eldest and most forceful nephew, king Gundobad.

BRITAIN

Possible approximate date of a seaborne Germanic (?Saxon) invasion of the Wye valley, in which the local ex-king Tewdric/Theodoric of the Silures, former ruler of the lands of SE Wales, emerges from his hermitage

to lead his people to victory at ?Tintern. He is mortally wounded, and his son Mouric/Meurig buries him at Mathern near Chepstow. (This is alternatively dated to the 580s; the c. 480 dating is C18th and on unclear evidence.)

482 IRELAND

‘High King’ Aillel, king of Connacht, faces rebellion led by the head of the Northern branch of the Ui Niall (Western Midhe), Muirchertach mac Erca (trad. son of Muiredach, son of Eogan, son of Niall ‘of the Nine Hostages’), and joined by his neighbours the ‘Ulaid’ rulers of Ulster and by the king of Leinster. Aillel is defeated and killed at the battle of Ocha/Faughan Hill in Western Midhe, and Lugaid son of the late ‘High King’ Loeghaire is made ‘High King’ but most power now resides with the branches of the Ui Niall – who now hold the ‘High Kingship’ in rotation among them for the next 500 years. This is probably the era of the conquest of parts of Northern Leinster and Western/Northern Midhe by the Ui Niall princes, among whom Coipre mac Niall is the most famous in extant records; they may have more military power than their nominal king.

Succession to Aillel’s ancestral kingdom, Connacht, of his cousin Dauí Tenga Uma mac Brion, traditionally son of Brion mac Eochaid the elder half-brother of ‘High King’ Niall ‘of the Nine Hostages’ (d. c. 405) who ruled Connacht in the early C5th and founded the ‘Ui Briuin’ branch of the Connacht dynasty. Aillel’s branch, who dispute and more or less alternate the Connacht kingship with them, are the ‘Ui Fiachrach’.

483 ITALY

10 March. Death of Pope Simplicius.

13 March. Felix elected Pope under supervision of ‘Praetorian Praefect’ Basilius; he denounces the ‘*Henoticon*’ and receives ex-Patriarch John Talaia of Alexandria, whose removal is declared illegal; Acacius summoned to Rome but wins over Felix’s legates.

IRELAND

?Death in battle of Crimthann mac Enna, first of the ‘Ui Cennsalaig’ division of the ruling dynasty of Leinster to hold the province’s over-kingship, after a reign of up to thirty-seven years; he was traditionally great-grandson of the king who was a common ancestor for his branch and their ‘Ui Dunlainge’ rivals, Bressal Brelach (ruled in the 430s?). His death is purportedly at the hands of a rebellious minor dynasty in South Leinster, the Ui Berrche. He is succeeded by Fincath mac Garrchu, head of the ‘Ui Garrchon’ ruling dynasty of the ‘Dal Messin Corb’ (a former ruling dynasty in the Liffey valley region now being driven out into the Co. Wicklow hills by the Ui Niall) who reigns for two years.

484

EMPIRE

January. Illus revolts and proclaims Leo I's son-in-law Marcian as Emperor, he rescues Verina from her Isaurian prison and at Tarsus she proclaims that she is rightful ruler and her choice is 'Patrician' Leontius to whom Illus transfers allegiance; they enter Antioch; Zeno sends army under 'Master of Soldiers', John 'the Scythian', and (temporarily) Theodoric the Goth, warlord in Thrace; rebels defeated and besieged in Cherris, where Verina soon dies.

SPAIN/GAUL

Death of Euric the king of the Visigoths; succeeded by his less warlike son Alaric II.

NORTH AFRICA

23 December. Death of Hunneric the Vandal; succeeded by nephew Gunthamund.

ITALY

Pope Felix denounces his legates' laxity over not attacking Zeno's non-Catholic new compromise religious doctrine, the '*Henoticon*', and *28 July* excommunicates both them and Patriarch Acacius of Constantinople, withdrawing recognition of the latter as Patriarch; a monk pins his excommunication on Acacius' vestments as he is celebrating Mass, and he excommunicates Felix in return – the 'Acacian Schism'.

IRELAND

Approximate date of the foundation of the first monastery at Killeany on the Aran Islands (Aran Mor) by the pioneering ascetic St Enda, legendarily a prince of the Airghalla dynasty in Ulster who briefly ruled as king before abdicating and following his sister into the monastic life. His extreme asceticisms and withdrawal from the world onto an offshore island is presumably inspired by the C4th Egyptian desert monasteries and possibly by the early C5th Southern Gallic island monastery at Lerins; he is supposedly trained in Britain and may have come under anti-wealth 'Pelagian' influence.

485

IRELAND

Traditional date of the battle of Grainert/Granard, one of the main victories of Coipre mac Niall over his midlands (N Leinster) foes. Fincath mac Garrchu/Garrchon, king of Leinster, is killed, and is succeeded by his son, Fraech mac Finchad. The victory serves to strengthen the hold of the dynasty of Niall on the central/Western plains of Midhe.

486 | EMPIRE

Theodoric quarrels with Zeno and devastates Thrace.

GAUL

King Clovis the Frank, aided by his junior ally Ragnachar, invades the realm of Syagrius and besieges his capital, Soissons; Syagrius emerges to fight and is defeated, and as he flees to the Visigoths Clovis takes over his kingdom. Clovis orders Alaric II to hand over Syagrius or face invasion, and he submits; Syagrius is handed over and executed.

BRITAIN

ASC: Aelle fights against the British at ‘Mearcred’s Burn’, possibly the ‘Boundary River’ – unidentified but possibly the River Arun or Adur in Sussex, the South Saxons being settled around Worthing and less certainly Selsey.

487 | ITALY

Consulship (West) of Manlius Boethius, father of the later philosopher (Manlius) Boethius.

NORTH AFRICA

Gunthamund halts persecution of Catholics and recalls exiled priests.

488 | EMPIRE

Zeno captures Illus and Leontius at fortress of Cherris in Isauria; their execution ends rebellion.

Zeno commissions Theodoric to invade Italy and take over from Odovacer as his nominee, thus restoring imperial ‘authority’ but ridding the Balkans of the Ostrogoths; Theodoric agrees.

BRITAIN

ASC: traditional date of the death of Hengest, founding ruler of Kent; succeeded by his son Aesc, who reigns for either twenty-four (Winchester version) or thirty-four (Peterborough version) years. In fact, it is not even certain that Hengest is historical, and the Kentish dynasty is called the ‘Aescings’ after Aesc, not named after its supposed founder as would be normal. It is unlikely that if the 820s Welsh legend/history of the conquest is accurate a man active c. 428 would be alive in 488; Geoffrey of Monmouth’s C12th sources have Hengest killed in or after a battle with the British ruler Ambrosius Aurelianus, possibly in the 470s and at ‘Caer Cynan’ (Conisborough, Yorkshire?).

489 GAUL

21 August. Death of bishop Sidonius Apollinaris of Clermont, leading C5th writer and poet and son-in-law of the late Western Emperor Avitus, aged around sixty.

ITALY

August. Theodoric and the Goths cross the River Sontius (Isonzo) into Italy and (28 August) storm Odovacer's fortified camp, commencing invasion.

?29/30 September. Second victory of Theodoric over Odovacer, outside Verona; Odovacer abandons the lower Po valley and withdraws to Ravenna.

IRELAND

(or 491) Probable date of the battle of Cenn Losnada, in Munster: the kingdom's long-serving ruler, Oengus/Angus mac Nad Froich is killed after a thirty-six-year reign by a coalition of his rivals from the Ui Dunlainge branch of the ruling dynasty of Leinster plus possibly the Ui Niall ruler Muirchertach mac Erca of Ailech. He has succeeded his father Conall 'Corc', and was remembered in tradition as the first Christian king of Munster and baptised by St Patrick. His son Fedlimid 'Dubh' ('the Dark-Haired') probably succeeds him though one version has the latter's brother Eochaid as king instead until 500 and Fedlimid then succeeding.

490 ITALY

Odovacer returns to the fray with reinforcements and retakes Cremona and Milan; he blockades Theodoric in Ticinum, but the Visigoths send an army into Italy to help the latter.

11 August. Theodoric and his combined Gothic army defeat Odovacer at the battle of the River Adda; Theodoric besieges Odovacer in Ravenna. ?The Senate in Rome send to recognise Theodoric as their new sovereign, handing him control of Southern Italy and Sicily.

The Burgundians invade Liguria while Italy is in chaos, and carry off thousands of prisoners.

Approximate date (post-487, probably pre-495) of the death of the father of the later Roman senatorial philosopher (Anicius Manlius) Boethius, who was born c. 480 and is still a boy; he is adopted by the leading senatorial noble Aurelius Symmachus (consul 485) whose daughter Rusticania he will later marry. He is also related to the greatest senatorial dynasty of the C4th and C5th, the Anicii.

491 | **EMPIRE**

9 *April*. Death of Zeno, aged around sixty; despite the claims of his brother Longinus the Senate supports widow Ariadne who 10 *April* appears to crowds in imperial box ('Cathisma') at Hippodrome to announce that she will choose a new husband and Emperor; Ariadne chooses the 'Silentiary' (Palace official) Anastasius of Dyrrachium, around Zeno's age, who is brought to Palace and acclaimed, but as he is rumoured to be a 'Monophysite', Patriarch Euphemius makes him sign statement of orthodoxy, 20 *April* Anastasius marries Ariadne and crowned.

Longinus stirs up riots by racing-factions, and is arrested and exiled; Isaurian soldiers in army are dismissed in case of revolt and join revolt in Isauria; rebels set out for capital but defeated at Cotyaeum by 'Master of Soldiers' John the Scythian.

BRITAIN

ASC: Aelle, king of the South Saxons, and his son Cissa storm the fortified Roman stronghold of 'Anderitum', i.e. Anderida – the extant 'Saxon Shore' fortress of Pevensey, constructed in the later C3rd as a base to tackle Channel pirates. Allegedly everyone inside is killed. This is the only written evidence of the Germanic invaders storming a town in Britain; it presumably marks the conquest of all the Sussex coastal strip by the South Saxons and the completion of their kingdom. Aelle is later listed by Bede (730s) as the first of the Anglo-Saxon 'Bretwaldas', possibly 'Brtanwaldas' i.e. 'wide rulers' or 'Britain rulers', which presumes that he was remembered as possessing authority or prestige beyond his own kingdom and having subordinate allies. He is thus a more obvious multi-kingdom 'leader' and thus capable commander than his contemporary, Aesc of Kent. Sussex now drops out of the ASC records for a century, presumably as nothing further there occurred of memorable note to its West Saxon neighbours.

IRELAND

Muirchertach mac Erca of Midhe defeats the king of Casthel, i.e. Munster, at the battle of Cell Losnaidh (Annals of Ulster).

492 | **ITALY**

1 *March*. Death of Pope Felix III; Gelasius consecrated as Pope, and receives Patriarch Euphemius' overtures but insists that Acacius' name cannot be accepted in official 'diptychs' and that he as Pope can rule on the issue; he subsequently informs Anastasius in a letter that of the two powers in the world, spiritual (church) and temporal (Emperor), the Pope as head of Church is superior as responsible for salvation.

August. Having built a fleet which is based at nearby ‘Portus Leonis’, Theodoric starts a naval blockade of Ravenna.

493 ITALY

Theodoric persuades Odovocar to surrender on easy terms (25 February), enters Ravenna, then *15 March* kills him at a banquet; undisputed ruler of Italy.

GAUL

Co-king Chilperic (II) of Valence is murdered and his lands are annexed by his elder brother, Gundobad of Lyons.

Approximate date of Theodoric sending bishop Epiphanius of Pavia as his ambassador to the Burgundians, to ransom and retrieve a large number of prisoners carried off in their 490/1 attack on Liguria; the mission is successful and an alliance is agreed.

IRELAND

The second possible date given for the death of St Patrick, apostle of Ireland – this version is in the ‘Annals of Ulster’ and has him serving for sixty years in his mission to convert Ireland and dying aged 120 (like Moses). Some modern scholars argue that this, not 463, is the correct date, or that there were two Patricks who became conflated in the popular imagination, with the Patrick who died in 493 being the one who founded the monastery/see of Armagh.

494 IRELAND

Traditonal date (or 496, as both recorded in different sources) for the battle of Tailtu, a major victory of the Ui Niall princes over their foes in Leinster; by now Coipre mac Niall is probably dead and his sons lead the successful army.

495 GAUL

Approximate date of the marriage of Clovis the Frank (who already has one illegitimate son, Theodoric) to Clotilda, niece of his neighbour king Gundobad of the Burgundians and daughter of the murdered king Chilperic, Gundobad’s victim; Gregory of Tours says that Gundobad killed (drowned) her mother too and that Clovis’ envoys had earlier seen and admired Clotilda on a mission to the Burgundians and this inspired him to ask for her. Possibly from other evidence the alliance is at Gundobad’s suggestion as much as Clovis’. Clotilda is a Christian and tries to influence him towards her co-religionists. They subsequently have

four sons, of whom the first dies after baptism; the second but first surviving son is Chlodomir.

BRITAIN

ASC: the landing of the founding dynastic ruler of the kingdom of the West Saxons, Cerdic, and his 'son' Cynric with five ships at 'Cerdicesora', 'Cerdic's Shore' – given his location as a Hampshire ruler, possibly 'Ower' near Calshot on Southampton Water or else the later 'Owers' sandbanks near Selsey (then dry land??). Notably, other West Saxon genealogies make Cynric Cerdic's grandson not son, and the archaeological record has no Germanic settlements in coastal Hampshire from around c. 500; the New Forest area inland from Calshot was settled by ethnic/cultural 'Jutes' (kin to those in Kent) not Saxons. 'Cerdic', the son of 'Elesa son of Esla' and descendant of the god Woden according to West Saxon genealogies, has a British not Saxon name; he may have been a renegade British adventurer.

IRELAND

Illann mac Dunlainge, head of the 'Ui Dunlainge' division of the ruling kindred and rival of the 'Ui Cennsalaig' division, becomes over-king of Leinster after the death in battle of current Leinster king Fraech mac Finchad of the 'Ui Garrchon' at the second battle of Gruinert/Granard. Illann is traditionally great-grandson of the two families' common ancestor, king Bressal Brelach (ruled 430s?) and rules for thirty-two years.

496

GAUL/FRANCIA

First suggested but disputed date for Clovis' successful campaign against the Alemanni East of the Rhine, and hence the king's conversion of Clovis to Catholic Christianity and his baptism at Rheims by its bishop, Remigius. Gregory of Tours links the campaign, a battle at Tolbiac/Zulpich, and the baptism.

NORTH AFRICA

Thrasamund succeeds brother Gunthamund as king of Vandals; starts to close Catholic churches and persecute the orthodox.

ITALY

21 November. Death of Pope Gelasius.

24 November. Anastasius II elected and sends conciliatory letter to Anastasius promoting reunion.

497 **EMPIRE/ITALY**

Papal embassy to Constantinople, simultaneous with one from Theodoric requesting recognition, Pope Anastasius agrees to recognise Acacius' appointees but not him, and Roman/Alexandrian church representatives work out a declaration of faith close to '*Henoticon*'; Emperor Anastasius agrees to recognise Theodoric in return for acceptance of '*Henoticon*' and sends him the Western Imperial Insignia; opposition in Rome to compromise heightened after Pope receives pro-Acacian deacon Photinus from Thessalonica.

IRELAND

(Alternative date) Traditional date of the battle of Slainert/Grainert, a major Ui Niall victory by the sons of Coipre mac Niall, led by Eochu, over their Leinster foes led by king Fraech mac Finnchad as they round off their domination of the midlands.

?Death of Cormac, second bishop of Armagh and successor of St Patrick.

498 **IRELAND**

Traditional date of the defeat of the 'Laigin' (the kingdom of Leinster) at Inne Mor by the Ui Niall warrior-king Muirchertach mac Erca, dominant warlord of Midhe.

ITALY

19 November. Death of Pope Anastasius II.

22 November. Majority of clergy elect Symmachus at Lateran but senators and others elect rival Laurentius at Sta Maria Maggiore; serious faction-fighting; Theodoric summons rivals and rules for Symmachus.

c. 498 **BRITAIN**

Traditional date of the death of king Drust of the Picts, after a reign of around thirty years; succeeded by Galan who reigns for fifteen years.

499 **IRELAND**

Traditional date of the battle of Cend Ailbe, the final one of a series of victories by the midlands branch of the Ui Niall (led by the sons of Coipre mac Niall, the 'Cenel Coipre') over their Leinster foes.

500 **ITALY**

Theodoric visits Rome, and received by Symmachus and the Senate.

?Symmachus' current or future son-in-law Boethius, the later philosopher, studies at either Athens or Alexandria for several years before returning to Italy to join the Senate before he is twenty-five in the early 500s (approximate dates).

Symmachus' enemies complain of his actions to Theodoric, and he is summoned to Ravenna but loses heart and retreats to St Peter's; Theodoric listens to enemies and appoints 'administrator' of see, pending enquiry.

GAUL/FRANCIA

Approximate date of Clovis deciding to attack the principal Burgundian ruler Gundobad after an invitation to do so and offer of help by the latter's estranged brother and co-king Godegisel of Vienne. He invades Gundobad's lands (centred on Lyons), and the latter appeals to Godegisel for aid. The three armies meet near Dijon, and in the battle Godegisel deserts to Clovis and Gundobad is heavily defeated and flees to Avignon; Clovis annexes the Dijon area and Lyons and attacks the Rhone valley; he besieges Avignon, but Gundobad sends envoy Aridius who persuades Clovis that taking a fortified and well-provisioned town might be difficult and costly; Clovis so agrees to spare his target and accept peace in return for tribute.

BRITAIN

One version of events has it that Cerdic now 'took the kingdom' five years after landing in Wessex; in fact, the archaeological record for early-mid C6th Hampshire has only a few scattered Germanic settlements, mainly around the British tribal capital of 'Venta Belgarum'/Winchester (e.g. Twyford), and thus a mainly British not a Germanic 'state'. Some historians thus reckon the entire 'West Saxon foundation story' to be myth; or did Cerdic rule an ethnically mixed realm? Its early name was that of the 'Gewissae' ('confederates'?) to the 680s, not of the 'West Saxons'.

Approximate date of the founding of the prestigious monastic school at Llanilltud Fawr (modern Llantwit, Glamorgan) in S Wales by the princely educator St Illtud, related to the royal house of the local Silures. This was in the territory of the local sub-king, Paul, of the 'cantref' of Penychen, and supposedly educated the local elite. Gildas refers c. 545 to his foe, king 'Mailcunus'/Maelgwyn of Gwynedd, as educated at a famous school – possibly this one as in legend. Another contemporary monastery and school foundation is that of St Piro on Caldey Island near Tenby, where St Paul Aurelian (born c. 486), converter of parts of Brittany, was taught c. 500–10 (extant stories c. 1100, but earliest hagiography C7th).

This is also the approximate date of the late C11th story, possibly of authentic origin, of how the parents of the pioneering S Wales monastic

leader St Cadoc, founder of the monastery of Llanccarfan W of Cardiff, Gwynllw ap Glywys the ruler of 'Gwynllwc' (Wentloog) near Cardiff and his girlfriend, the daughter of king Brychan of Brycheiniog, eloped and escaped the pursuit of her father – according to this story, aided by local warlord 'Arthur'.

Traditional date for the establishment of the new kingdom of NE Irish settlers in Argyll ('Coast of the Gael') in Western Scotland – the new name of 'Scots' indeed being that given to these incoming Irish, not to the probably ethnically Brittonic tribes who had lived in the region previously. The various tribal peoples of what is now Scotland were then probably loosely affiliated to the kingdom of the 'Picts' in the central region of the country, divided between two regions in Fife/Angus and Moray/Buchan/Ross. The Irish annals and medieval Scots pseudo-histories name the founder of the new Scots/Irish kingdom of 'Dalriada' in Argyll as Fergus 'Mor' ('the Great'), son of Erc, lord of the peoples of 'Dal Riata' in Eastern Ulster and descended from the Crd AD founder of that kingdom, Cairbre Riata from Munster. Fergus allegedly came to Argyll with his two younger brothers and lieutenants, Loarn of Lorne and Angus of Islay – but this may be medieval rationalisation of the early dynasts as junior parts of the ruling family.

Fergus was supposed to have brought the coronation-stone of Dalriada/Argyll, the 'Lia Fail', with him from Ulster, and it was installed at his dynasty's main base at Dunadd – and was the 'Stone of Scone'. It was supposedly the former Irish 'High Kingly' coronation-stone from Tara, aka 'Jacob's pillow', an heirloom traditionally brought from Israel by émigré ancestors of the Irish royal family.

IRELAND

Probable date of Eochaid, son of the late king Oengus of Munster, succeeding his brother Fedlimid – unless he succeeded their father immediately in 489. He is the founder of the predominant 'Eoganacht Caisil' branch of their 'Eoganacht' dynasty, based at the Rock of Cashel. He reigns for twenty-two years.

501

BRITAIN

ASC: landing of a second Germanic expedition in the later lands of the West Saxons, at ?Portsmouth, led by 'Port' (a suspiciously appropriate name and thus possibly myth) and his sons Bieda and Maglos. They defeat and kill a 'very noble' young British commander, which some Welsh commentators have linked to the defeat and killing around this time of the British/Welsh king Geraint of the 'Dumnonii' (the kingdom of Devon, Cornwall and possibly Dorset) in a battle at the 'Port of Ships' commemorated in a later poem. There was a Roman 'Saxon Shore' fortress at the head of Portsmouth Harbour (now Portchester Castle) so a battle there and its capture is possible, but the story could come from legend.

Approximate, traditional date of the death of Fergus mac Erc, founding ruler of Dalriada in Argyll; succeeded by his son Domangert. For the fledgling realm to have survived under him and with several sons of his alive by c. 507, it would seem likely that Domangert was already adult by c. 501 so Fergus was probably at least in his forties.

502 ITALY

Spring. Theodoric calls synod to sort out Symmachus/Laurentius dispute.

23 October. Theodoric's synod decides that Symmachus is innocent and Pope can only be judged by God; triumphalist Symmachus' attack on alienating Church property leads to Goths restoring Laurentius to Lateran, and schism continues.

IRELAND

Traditional date of the battle of Segais, where Muirchertach mac Erca of the Ui Niall of Midhe kills king Duach Tenga Umais of Connacht.

503 GAUL

Probable date of king Gundobad attacking his treacherous brother and co-ruler Godegisel in his capital, Vienne; the walls are breached and the town stormed, and Godegisel is killed in a church with his Arian bishop; the leadership of the kingdom are executed and Gundobad annexes it, while the Arian bishops are sent to the Visigothic kingdom.

504 ITALY

?(St) Benedict flees dissolute Roman society to live as a hermit in cave at Subiaco.

505 GAUL

Possible date of an abortive peace-conference between Clovis and Alaric II the Visigoth on an island near Amboise in the River Loire, on their frontier.

506 GAUL

Clovis defeats the Alemanni East of the Rhine; this is the second date suggested for the timing of his conversion to Catholicism and baptism by bishop Remigius of Rheims. The campaign might imply that Clovis was inspired by a belief in divine help in his victory to convert afterwards, like Emperor Constantine 'the Great' in 312 – but contemporary bishop Avitus of Vienne does not refer to a war having any part in his choice to convert.

Catholic Church Council for Southern Gaul at Agde, arranged by bishop Caesarius of Arles – backed by the Visigothic king Alaric II so there is no evidence of contemporary Catholic hostility that would thus welcome or even encourage the 507 invasion by Clovis.

507

GAUL

Clovis crosses the Loire and invades Visigothic territory, with aid from the inhabitants of the Auvergne (presumably due to his alliance with the Catholic Church of Gaul against the Arians who include the Visigoths), led by Apollinaris the son of the late bishop/poet Sidonius, and a force of 'Ripuarian' Franks from the Rhine under their king Sigebert's son; ten miles from Poitiers at Vouille he meets and defeats Alaric II in battle; he kills Alaric and has a narrow escape from some Gothic warriors' attack; Alaric's second but only legitimate son Amalaric, under-age, escapes to Spain while the older but illegitimate son, Gesalec, succeeds in Toulouse but is soon being driven South by the Franks who occupy Toulouse.

Theodoric sends an army under his sword-bearer, Theudis, to Southern Gaul to save the Mediterranean coast from the Franks in the name of Amalaric who is his choice as king and effectively his vassal; the Gothic troops secure Arles and Narbonne and drive Gesalec out; they may briefly hold Toulouse too but the Franks regain it.

Amalaric continues to rule the Visigoths in Spain, nominally as he is only a boy (and under Theodoric's tutelage to 526), dominated by his ally's troops, but is not acclaimed as king until 522 which may mark his coming of age; Clovis annexes all of Southern Gaul to the Pyrenees mountains except for Septimania/the lower Rhone.

BRITAIN

Traditional date of the death of Domangert mac Fergus, second king of the Irish settlers of Dalriada in Argyll and 'king of Cenn Tire/Kintyre' (Annals of Innisfallen). Succeeded by his elder son, Comgall.

IRELAND

Traditional date of the death of Irish 'High King' Lugaid mac Loeghaire, according to late records killed by lightning; probably succeeded by the shadowy figure of Muirchertach mac Erca, a ruler of the Southern branch of the Ui Niall in Western Midhe and the pre-eminent military figure of his era.

508

EMPIRE/ITALY/GAUL

Clovis' son Theuderic completes the conquest of Aquitaine.

Anastasius sends fleet to raid Apulia in retaliation for Theodoric attacking his ally Clovis the Frank, who receives imperial consular Insignia after defeating the Visigoths and expelling them from Aquitaine. Clovis assumes the 'consulship; and the rank of 'patrician' as an imperial ally in Tours, and then sets up his main residence in Paris.

BRITAIN

ASC: Cerdic and Cynric, leaders of the West Saxons/'Gewissae' in Hampshire, defeat and kill a British king called 'Natanleod' and 8,000 of his men; they annex all of the district known as 'Natanleaga' to 'Cerdicesford', i.e. central Western Hampshire to Charford on the River Avon. Assuming this to be more than part of a patriotic legend of conquest using place-names, this battle has been assumed to be connected to either Netley, East of Southampton on South Water, or Netley Marsh, West of the head of South Water near Totton. 'Natan' may be a Pictish name as it is similar to kings of theirs bearing that name, or may be a 'back-formation' from the place-name of the battle.

IRELAND

Battle of Ard Corann; one of the dates (or 507) given for the death of 'High King' Lugaíd, son of Loeghaire, after a reign of around twenty-four years. The succession of Muirchertach mac Erca of the 'Ui Niall' to the throne is not dated until later, implying a probable conflict over this.

508/
9?

GAUL/FRANCIA

Approximate date of Clovis' invasion and annexation of the lands of the 'Ripuarian' Franks on the Rhine; according to Gregory of Tours he incites his 507 campaign ally prince Chlodéric to murder his father, king Sigebert, in a forest outside Cologne and then sends 'friendly' envoys to assassinate him as he is showing them his father's seized treasure. He later attacks the neighbouring 'Salian' Franks too, and arrests their king Chararic and his son who are forcibly tonsured as priests to make them ineligible to rule (by cutting their long hair which is a 'magic' talisman of royalty). They later try to grow their hair and plot a revolt but are killed. Another minor Frankish king, Ragnachar, and his brother Ricco are also defeated, captured and executed.

510

ITALY

Boethius the philosopher is the Western consul.

GERMANY/FRANCIA

Approximate date of the death of king Bisinus of the Thuringians, former host in exile of Childeric the Merovingian and former husband of

Childeric's wife and Clovis' mother; succeeded by his sons Hermanefrid, Baderic and Berthar. The latter is subsequently overthrown and killed by Hermanefrid.

511 GAUL/FRANCIA

Clovis holds a Church Council for the ex-Visigothic lands at Orleans.

Death of Clovis at Paris, after a thirty-year reign over the Merovingian Franks, aged around forty-five; he is buried at the church of St Genevieve and his widow Clotilde takes the veil as a nun at the monastery of St Martin at Tours.

Clovis' lands are divided among his four surviving sons, but remain as one 'allod' or kingdom; the eldest but illegitimate son, Theodoric, probably in his mid-twenties as he already has a growing son (Theodebert), rules the Eastern lands from Rheims; the second but eldest son by Clotilde, Chlodomir, aged around sixteen, rules from Orleans, Chilbert rules from Paris, and Chlotar the youngest rules from Soissons. The new king's sister Chrotilda is married off to Amalaric, king of the Visigoths, at the latter's or his patron Theodoric's request to cement peace.

512 BRITAIN

Possible date of the death of king Aesc of the kingdom of Kent, alleged son and successor of Hengest (if the latter was historical). Succeeded by his son Otha. Alternate date for this is 522, depending on whether Aesc reigned for twenty-four or thirty-four years from 488.

513 BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of king Galan of the Picts, after a fifteen-year reign; succeeded by dual kingship of Drest mac Drust (presumably his predecessor's son) and Drust mac Drust/Uudrust, which is possibly a compromise to avoid civil war between two equally-balanced contenders.

514 ITALY

19 July. Death of Pope Symmachus, *20 July* Hormisdas (?Persian descent) consecrated as successor.

BRITAIN

ASC: a second force of West Saxons, led by Cerdic's 'nephews' Stuf and Wihtgar, apparently land in Hampshire at 'Cerdicesora' (with three ships), defeat a force of Britons, and presumably join his kingdom. Given that the details are a near-repeat of the 495 entry nearly twenty years later, it has been suggested that the C9th chroniclers faced two different records

of West Saxon forces arriving around 500 – possibly each in a separate body of records beginning twenty years apart, such as a collection of ‘Easter tables’, and put both in their ‘official’ record but one may repeat the other.

515 GAUL/FRANCIA

Approximate date of the accession of Budic as ruler of the main expatriate kingdom of the Britons in Armorica/Brittany, ‘Dumnonie’ (called after Dumnonia in SW Britain); traditionally he is the son of Daniel, a late C5th king and son of the elusive 460s ruler ‘Riothamus’, and has been expelled from his share of his father’s kingdom by his brother; he returns with a fleet from Britain, possibly from Demetia in South-West Wales backed by its king Agricola/Aircol, and reigns for around forty years.

516 GAUL/FRANCIA/ITALY

Death of king Gundobad of the Burgundians, after a forty-three-year reign; succeeded by his elder son, Sigismund. The latter is married to Theodoric’s daughter, but prefers to ally to the Empire and at some subsequent date sends an embassy to Constantinople addressing the Emperor in fulsome terms in the hope of alliance; the alarmed Theodoric refuses them permission to cross Italy.

IRELAND

Traditional date for the battle of Druim Derg (or Druim Dergaid), where Fiacha/Fiachu the son of Niall ‘of the Nine Hostages’ defeats the Laigin of Leinster and confiscates the ‘midlands’ plain of Midhe from Leinster for his Ui Niall dynasty of Midhe.

518 EMPIRE

9 July. Death of Anastasius, aged around eighty-eight; Celer the commander of ‘Scholae’ and Justin the Illyrian, commander of ‘Excubitors’ (guards-regiments), are informed and *10 July* at daybreak convene Senate meeting in Palace while people assemble in Hippodrome; various candidates are debated, and eventually Justin is selected as crowds grow restive; he accepts the nomination and is raised on a shield and then presented to crowds from imperial box (‘Cathisma’), later crowned by Patriarch; Justin’s effective chief minister is his nephew Justinian, born ‘Petrus Sabbatius’, now aged thirty-five, who becomes ‘Count’ of ‘Domestics’ (guard-regiment).

September. Justin writes to Pope Hormisdas, inviting new mission to Constantinople to restore Church unity after ‘Acacian Schism’; Justinian

and Patriarch John also write, and envoy Gratus takes the letters; 18 December Gratus arrives in Rome.

BRITAIN

(or 516) Date assigned in the ‘*Annales Cambriae*’, written in its present form in the 950s, to the crucial ‘Battle of Badon Hill’ between the Britons and the invading Saxons. Alternate date 516. Gildas (540s) refers to this as the ‘siege of Mount Badon’, implying a siege of a hillfort, but does not date it – though his oblique language may mean that it was either forty-four years before his date of writing, putting it in the 500s, or forty-four years after the start of the British counter-offensive against the Saxons (presumably commencing in the 460s). The site is unknown; it may be Little Solsbury Hill, near Bath (the town called Baddon’ by the Welsh), or Badbury of Liddington hillforts in North Wiltshire; Geoffrey of Monmouth (1130s) says it was Bath. The British win the battle decisively and crush the Saxons’ offensive capacity for a generation; Gildas implies that there was a peace-treaty dividing the island. The Saxon commander may have been the first ‘Bretwalda’, Aelle of the South Saxons, or Aesc of Kent if the latter was still alive.

Gildas does not name the British commander, but the 820s writer ‘Nennius’ (Gwynedd) and subsequent myth names him as ‘Arthur’ – a name connected to the Brittonic word for ‘Bear’ and possibly a nickname (‘Bear Man’, ‘Artu-wiros?’). There are a few ‘Arthurs’ (‘Arthwys’) in early Welsh genealogies, most probably one ruling in Siluria (Glamorgan), but it is not clear that they are of the correct date; ‘Nennius’ implies that Arthur was not of noble birth as the other kings in his coalition were ‘more noble than him’, which may imply illegitimacy as in the Arthurian legends. Alternately, ‘Arthur’ was a nickname for the long-serving leader of the British ‘fight-back’, Ambrosius Aurelianus. Also of dubious origin is the notion in ‘Nennius’ book that the campaign was the climax of a series of ‘twelve battles’ by Arthur, as named by him.

519

ITALY

Eutharic, Theodoric’s son-in-law, is Western consul by permission of Justin.

EMPIRE

Pope Hormisdas sends legates under bishop Germanus of Capua and bishop John to Constantinople; the mission to restore good relations with the East on the basis of mutual support for Catholicism against ‘Monophysitism’ is also backed by the leading Christian senators, such as Boethius, in winning Theodric’s support. 25 March, Palm Sunday. The embassy are welcomed to the Eastern capital by Justin’s nephew Justinian, the ultra-Catholic general Vitalian, and Anastasius’ nephew

Pompeius; 26 *March* Papal letter presented to Justin and read out; Patriarch John refuses approval over accusations against late Patriarch Acacius, 27 *March* legates meet synod at Hagia Sophia, demand that accusations be listed, and ‘Deacon’ Dioscurus does so; 28 *March* Justin signs ‘Formula of Hormisdas’, recognizing Chalcedonian orthodoxy and requires synod to do so; Church unity restored.

BRITAIN

ASC: Cerdic and his ‘son’ Cynric ‘take the kingdom’ of the West Saxons; this is six years after the second landing of West Saxons, as the alternative date for the creation of the kingdom, 500, is five years after the first. Is one a repeat of the other and only one is correct? They also defeat the British – presumably of Dorset, where there is archaeological evidence of settlement in Cranborne Chase – at the battle of ‘Cerdicesford’, i.e. probably Charford on the Hampshire Avon. This presumably rounds off the creation of a defensible kingdom in Hampshire, but archaeologically this is ‘British’ as much as ‘Saxon’, and Jutish in the New Forest region too.

520

FRANCIA/SCANDINAVIA

Approximate date of a naval raid on the Northern Gallic coast by a Scandinavian fleet, led by king ‘Chlociliachus’ according to Gregory of Tours – he calls him a ‘Dane’ but this is clearly Hygelac, the king referred to as reigning over the ‘Geats’ in Southern Sweden and uncle of the eponymous hero in the Germanic epic of ‘Beowulf’. He is killed by king Theodoric’s son Theodebert as a Frankish force arrives to take his raiders by surprise inland, and his men re-embark on their ships and return home. If the epic is based on real history, he is succeeded by his son ‘Heardred’.

Assuming there to be some genuine history behind the myth of ‘Beowulf’, the hero becomes king of the ‘Geats’ in modern Scania a few years after this; at this time Hrothgar, the great-grandson of the legendary founder of his dynasty Scyld (fl. mid-C5th?), king of the Danes in Zeeland/Eastern Jutland.

BRITAIN

At around this time, Maelgwyn ap Cadwallon/Catwallaun, great-grandson of Cunedda according to the later Welsh genealogies, succeeds his uncle Owain ‘Dantgwyn’ (‘White Tooth’) as king of Gwynedd. The 540s British monk author Gildas implies that he killed his uncle, and later killed his nephew too and married his nephew’s wife; Gildas accuses Maelgwyn of committing the sins of Sodom which may mean homosexuality. Apparently he was educated with the early C6th Glamorgan/Dyfed elite at the school founded by St Illtud, later known as cousin to ‘King Arthur’, at Llanilltud Fawr (modern Llantwit).

Other contemporary rulers in Wales at this time, from the much later genealogies and so open to some doubt as to precise dates:

Powys – Cyngen ‘the Renowned’, son of Cadell.

Dyfed – Aircol/Agricola ap Tryffin (the Roman military rank ‘Tribune’?).

Silures of later Glamorgan – probably Mouric/Meurig ap Tewdric, though some would date him to c. 600 instead.

Brycheiniog (Brecon) – the founding dynast Brychan, nephew of Mouric/Meurig as above and son of the Irish-descended prince Amlach and the S Welsh princess Marchell/Marcella.

Gwynllwc (Wentloog), E of Cardiff – founding king Gwynllwc, father of St Cadoc who is allegedly born c. 500, and then his son Meurig as nominated by Cadoc around 530/40.

Gwent/Ergyng (SW Herefordshire) – Pebiau ap Erb.

W Gwent – Gwynllw ap Glywys of ‘Glywyswng’/Glevisseg.

FRANCIA/GAUL

Approximate date (or early-mid 520s) of war between the rival brothers and kings of the Thuringians, Hermanefrid and Baderic; the former is the aggressor and calls in his neighbour Theuderic of the Franks to aid him with a promise of half the kingdom; after they have won he refuses to carry out his promise.

521 IRELAND

(or 520) Presumed date of the birth of the Northern Ui Niall princely dynast Columba/Columbcille, later saint, founder of Derry monastery, and evangeliser of Dalriada.

522 ITALY

Boethius’ two sons by Symmachus’ daughter Rusticania hold both consulships in Italy, as appointed by Theodoric, and no Eastern consul by agreement with Justin. Boethius also becomes the head of administration (‘Magister Officiorum’, ‘Master of Offices’) to Theodoric.

IRELAND

Probable date of Crimthann ‘Srem’ succeeding his father Eochaid mac Oengus, founder of the ‘Eoganacht Caisil’ branch of the dynasty, as king of Munster at Cashel. He reigns for twenty years to 542 and is the founder of the ‘Glendamna’ branch, based at Glanworth in Co. Cork.

523 | NORTH AFRICA

28 *May*. Death of Thrasamund king of the Vandals; succeeded by pro-Byzantine Hilderic who halts Arian persecution of Catholics and re-opens their churches.

ITALY

Theodoric arrests Boethius and other senators for correspondence with Constantinople discussing possibility of reconquest of Italy.

6 *August*. Death of Pope Hormisdas.

23 *August*. John I elected Pope.

FRANCIA

King Chlodomir attacks the Burgundian kingdom, following the recent remarriage of its senior king Sigismund and his resulting execution of his son by his first marriage, Sigestrrix in 522 – which probably caused the latter’s adherants to appeal for Frankish help.

(Traditionally 524, but more likely 523 according to modern historians.) King Theuderic and his half-brothers Chlodomir, Childbert and Chlotar invade Burgundy, according to Gregory of Tours egged on by the younger brother’s mother Clotilde on account of king Sigismund’s father having killed her father. Possibly Chlodomir also calls on his brothers for help after his limited success in 523. Sigismund and his brother Godomar are defeated in battle, and as Godomar flees Sigismund is captured with his wife and children by Chlodomir. The latter imprisons them near Orleans, and when his departure home after the campaign leads to Godomar returning to rally the Burgundians and start expelling the Franks from Burgundy, Chlodomir executes his royal prisoners, throwing them down a well, despite a plea by local abbot St Avitus.

524 | ITALY

Theodoric executes Boethius.

GAUL/FRANCIA

Theuderic and Chlodomir invade the Burgundian lands again, and defeat Godomar at Vezeronce near Vienne; however, Chlodomir is killed in the battle, probably aged in his mid-late twenties. His lands go to his brothers Chlotar and Childebert; the former marries Chlodomir’s widow, Guntheuc, and her children are taken over by their grandmother Clotilde at Tours.

IRELAND

Traditional date given (Annals of Ulster) for the death of St Brigid, founding abbess of Kildare and leader of monasticism in the ‘midlands’ of Midhe; alternative date is 526. But many modern historians argue that Brigid, subject of many legends, was the personification in Christian guise of a former pagan goddess and not historical.

525

ITALY

In response to closure of Arian churches in the Empire and forced conversions (especially of Germanic troops) to orthodoxy, Theodoric calls Pope John to Ravenna and instructs him to head embassy to Constantinople to halt it.

EMPIRE

Justin makes Justinian ‘Caesar’.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of St Piro, the founding abbot of the monastery of ‘Ynys Piro’, Caldey Island in Dyfed – allegedly of shock after falling down the monastery’s well in the dark. He is succeeded by his pupil St Samson.

526

EMPIRE

Arrival of Pope John in Constantinople to grand reception at 12th. Milestone, where Justin prostrates himself before St Peter’s successor; *Easter, 19 April* he celebrates Mass at Hagia Sophia with Latin rite.

ITALY

Theodoric is furious with returned Pope John for not obtaining reciprocal orthodox/Arian toleration, but probably does not imprison him.

18 May. John dies at Ravenna.

12 July. Felix IV elected Pope.

30 August. Theodoric dies, and his widowed daughter Amalasuntha becomes regent for her son Athalaric.

IRELAND

Death of Aillel, bishop of Armagh.

527 | EMPIRE

4 April. Justinian proclaimed ‘Caesar’ at the Palace; effective co-ruler.

1 August. Death of Justin, aged seventy-seven; Justinian becomes Emperor and his ex-actress wife Theodora (daughter of a Hippodrome bear-keeper) a particularly forceful Empress.

BRITAIN

ASC: Cerdic and Cynric of the West Saxons fight against the British at ‘Cerdices leag’, i.e. ‘Cerdic’s Wood’, possibly near the Hampshire River Avon.

IRELAND

Death of the long-reigning king of Leinster, Ilan mac Dunlainge, first of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’ branch of the ruling dynasty to hold power, after a thirty-two-year reign; succeeded by Cormac mac Aillel.

528 | FRANCIA

(or 526/7?) Approximate date of the murders of the two elder sons of the late king Chlodomir, who died in 524 (they are aged ten and seven), by their uncles Chilbert and Chlotar. Chilbert decides to kill them at their refuge with their grandmother queen Chlotild in Paris and invites Chlotar to help, which he does; they pretend that they have come to crown the boys to lull the queen into handing them over, then seize them and announce that they can either be killed or have their ‘sacred’ long hair cut short and be invalidated for the throne. According to Gregory, Chlotild would rather see them dead than shaven and agrees to the execution; their younger brother Chlodovald is, however, smuggled to safety and later becomes a famous holy monk as St Cloud.

BRITAIN

?Gartnait mac Girom succeeds the dual kingship of Drest mac Girom (probably his elder brother) and Drest mac Drust/Uudrust as sole king of the Picts; reigns for around seven years.

529 | EMPIRE

7 April. First version of Justinian’s law-code (‘Codex Vetus’) issued, updating ‘Theodosian Code’ and weeding out outdated laws.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

King Theuderic persuades his brother Chlotar to join him in attacking the Thuringians, allegedly after assorted border attacks; they defeat king

Hermanefrid in a bloody battle by the river Unstrucht, which is piled high with the losers' bodies so Gregory of Tours says the Franks can cross dryshod. The Franks annex Hermanefrid's kingdom, and Chlotar acquires the king's late brother Berthar's daughter Radegund as his wife; Theuderic is said to have tried to assassinate Chlotar with an ambush by hidden troops at a meeting during the aftermath of the campaign to seize his lands too, but his intended victim avoided the ambush. Hermanefrid is later lured to a meeting under safe-conduct and promised safety but is pushed off a wall by Theuderic's men at Zulpich.

Hearing a rumour that Theuderic has been killed in Thuringia, Childebert heads for Clermont ready to invade his lands if it is true but has to return home as it is not.

530

NORTH AFRICA

Pro-Empire Vandal king Hilderic deposed and imprisoned by Gelimer.

ITALY

22 September. Death of Pope Felix IV; his nominated successor Boniface II, German, defied by popular choice Dioscurus who however *14 October* dies.

BRITAIN

ASC: Cerdic and Cynric are recorded as campaigning on the Isle of Wight, across the Solent channel from Hampshire, and defeating the British at 'Wihtgar's Burg', i.e. 'Wihtgar's Fortress', probably the island's main Roman fortification at what is now Carisbrooke Castle. This presumably marks the traditional date of the conquest of Wight, though this was a Jutish not a Saxon kingdom ethnically; and the battle and fortress would be named after a possibly eponymous (legendary?) king 'Wihtgar'. He was supposedly Cerdic's nephew, and thus his junior ally – but historians have speculated that this was C8th–C9th propaganda to stress the subordinate rank of Wight and its kings to the West Saxons after they conquered the island in 685–6. Cerdic may have had nothing to do with the conquest in reality.

IRELAND

Approximate, traditional date of the death of St Ciaran 'the Elder' (as opposed to St Ciaran of Clonmacnoise), founder of the midlands monastery of Seir Kieran/Saighir near the Slieve Bloom mountains; apparently one of the first generation of early C6th holy monastic founders who succeeded the era of St Patrick, and allegedly an austere ascetic who wore skins like St John the Baptist.

Approximate, traditional date of the death of the founding abbot of the monastic community on the Aran islands, St Enda.

531 EMPIRE

?*Autumn*. Tribonian's commission of lawyers starts to collect all civil laws issued in Roman imperial history.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

After Amalaric the Visigoth starts to persecute his Catholic wife Chrotilda in an attempt to make her convert to Arianism, she sends for help to her brother Childebert in Paris and allegedly sends him a towel stained with her blood after she is beaten up; he invades Septimania and Amalaric flees South, to Barcelona. Chrotilda is rescued but dies of an illness en route home and is buried in Paris with her father Clovis.

Later (late autumn) Amalaric is assassinated at Barcelona after his humiliating flight by his own men, and is succeeded by his (ex-Ostrogoth general) officer Theudis, who is elected by the leading nobles in the city (5 December).

532 ITALY

17 *October*. Death of Pope Boniface II; factional dispute over successor, following recent forced departure to Constantinople as 'apocrisarius' of his choice, Vigilius.

FRANCIA

(or 533) Chlotar and Childebert decide to attack and dismember Burgundy, but Theuderic refuses their request to help them as he wants to attack the Auvergne instead to punish a local conspiracy – according to Gregory of Tours. In fact, the Auvergne campaign is in the lifetime of bishop Quintianus of Clermont who dies around 524/5, so this occasion may be soon after the death of Chlodimir in 524.

IRELAND

Supposed date of the death of semi-legendary Irish 'High King' Muirchertach mac Erca; alternately dated at 528 or 534. Succeeded by Tuathal mac Cormac, head of the Northern (Western Midhe) branch of the Ui Niall and recorded in annals for a major victory over the local 'Ciannachta' dynasty of Brega c. 535 which secured that province for the Ui Niall. Tuathal is sometimes referred to as the grandson of Coirpe, a son of 'High King' Niall 'of the Nine Hostages' – but the legends of St Patrick say that the saint foretold that none of Coirpe's family would gain the throne. According to later stories, Tuathal exiles his potential

rival Diarmait mac Cearbhall, nephew and heir to Ardgall, head of the Southern branch of the Ui Niall, who ends up sheltered in Church sanctuary at Clommacnois by its founding abbot St Ciaran.

533

ITALY

2 *January*. John II consecrated Pope.

EMPIRE

Justinian prepares expedition to retake Vandal North Africa, and about 18,000 men assembled under Belisarius; opposed by John ‘the Cappadocian’.

21 *June*. Imperial fleet sails from Harbour of Julian with Patriarchal blessing; *August*. It arrives at Syracuse and Belisarius hears that Vandals are not expecting him.

FRANCIA

(Dated as 534 by Gregory of Tours and other sources, but most probably 533 as Theuderic seems to have died then, not in 534.)

Chlotar and Childebert attack Burgundy and take Autun/Augustodunum, driving Godomar into flight; Theuderic belatedly joins the expedition after his loot-hungry warriors threaten to go off and join his brothers sooner than miss their share if he continues to stay at home. He takes Clermont and its region, and deals with the pretender Munderic who claims to have royal blood and tries to stir up a mutiny but is swiftly besieged in Vitre-le-Brule, lured out by a false safe-conduct, and killed at a signal from his escort. (Alternately, this may be as early as c. 524/5; see entry on Theuderic’s Auvergne campaign then.)

Treaty of alliance between Theuderic and Childebert, which is sworn to with hostages sent by either side; these men are then enslaved when the peace breaks down.

Theuderic and Chlotar ally to retake lands lost to the Visigoths in the South; Theuderic’s son Theudebert marches as far as Beziers, but Chlotar’s son Gunthar turns back from Rodez. Theuderic kills his relative Sigivald, governor of Clermont, but the man’s eponymous son is spared by his friend, prince Theudebert, who evades his father’s orders to kill him and sends him to safety in Italy.

Death of Theuderic, shortly after this incident, aged probably in his mid-late forties; Theudebert succeeds to the throne of Metz, aged probably in his mid-late twenties if he was old enough to fight the invading Danes/‘Geats’ c. 520, and fights off an attack by Childebert and Chlotar; he marries his mistress, the noble lady Deuteria of Cabrières who invited him into the town and her husband’s bed during the recent Visigothic

campaign, and thus abandons his long-time fiancée, Wisigard, daughter of the Lombard king Wacho, and threatens the diplomatic alliance which that link created. This probably adds to pressure from his nobles which eventually leads him to abandon Deuteria and their son Theudebald (late 530s??) and marry Wisigard (who soon dies).

EMPIRE

2 September. Fleet lands in Africa.

13 September. Advance guard destroys a Vandal advance force, killing Gelimer's brother Ammatius, and then main Vandal army routed at 'Ad Decimum' ('Tenth Milestone'); *15 September* Belisarius enters Carthage and occupies Gelimer's palace as Arian clergy flee; Gelimer rallies at Bulla as Tata returns.

16 December. Tribonian's commission's great collection of all Roman jurists' law issued as 'The Digests'; accompanied by new official law textbook for legal schools, 'The Institutes'.

534

EMPIRE/AFRICA

Gelimer is starved out on Mount Papas by Belisarius' Herul lieutenant Pharas and *March* surrenders; he is brought to Belisarius at Carthage and Belisarius hands over command to new arrival Soloman and accompanies Vandal prisoners to Constantinople as Justinian has been told he wants to revolt.

IRELAND

Traditonal date (Annals of Ulster) for the death of the shadowy 'High King' Muirchertach mac Erca of the Ui Niall, allegedly drowned in a vat of wine near the river Boyne; he probably reigned for a little over twenty years (trad. twenty-two). Alternate date is 536. His successor is his cousin Tuathal, son of Cormac 'Caech' ('One-Eyed') son of Cairpre son of Niall 'of the Nine Hostages', who reigns to c. 548.

ITALY/EMPIRE

2 October. Death of Athalaric; his mother Amalasuntha marries kinsman Theodahad, and sends envoys to reassure Justinian that she is still real ruler.

16 November. 'Codex Iustinianus' issued by Tribonian and assistants.

BRITAIN

ASC: traditional date of the death of Cerdic, king of the West Saxons or 'Gewissae'; he is succeeded by his? son, Cynric, though other genealogies

refer to a 'Creoda' as his son and call Cynric his grandson. If Cerdic was buried at the eponymous 'Cerdic's Barrow' this is in Northern Hampshire and so reflects his rule of all the county. The date may be dubious, given that the Chronicle gives his Kentish equivalent Hengest a forty-year reign too. Notably Cynric's name, like Cerdic's, is linguistically British – 'Cunorix' – so he may have had a British mother.

Supposedly the Isle of Wight becomes independent of the land of the 'Gewissae', and is ruled by Stuf and Wihtgar, Cynric's cousins – but this may be later myth.

535

EMPIRE/ITALY

Theodahad rallies anti-Byzantine Gothic leaders and imprisons Amalasuntha; Justinian sends envoy Peter to demand her release but *5 April* she is murdered in her bath at Lake Bolsena with boiling water; Peter is recalled and invasion prepared.

Theodahad sends envoys to Justinian for peace, and induces Roman Senate to do likewise; no effect.

8 May. Death of Pope John II.

13 May. Deacon Agapitus elected.

Summer. Belisarius lands at Catania, overruns Sicily with only Panormus (Palermo) resisting, and *31 December* enters Syracuse to conclude his consulship.

Late. Belisarius prepares Italian expedition in Sicily and discovers that adopted son Theodosius is having affair with his wife Antonina; Theodosius flees.

Theodahad sends Pope Agapitus to Justinian to plead for peace.

FRANCIA

?Childebert abandons his attempt to depose Theudebert and agrees to peace; they ally against Chlotar.

After Amalasuntha's death, the kings Childebert, Chlotar and Theudebert send a protest mission to Theodahad at the shameful manner of her death and threaten war if he does not pay a heavy bribe to them; he hands over 50,000 gold pieces but en route to Francia it is all hijacked by Childebert who shares it with Theudebert but cuts out his current enemy Chlotar.

BRITAIN

?Cailtrom succeeds his brother Gartnait as king of the Picts, and reigns for around six years.

Approximate date (within a decade or so) of the emigration of the SW Wales monastic leader and missionary St Samson, born c. 490/95 and educated under St Piro at the Caldey Island monastic school, to Brittany to convert the populace. He has been abbot of Caldey for some years (late 520s??) before allegedly visiting Rome and an inspirational stay at St Benedict's monastery at Monte Cassino – possibly inserted unhistorically into his hagiography to add to his prestige? His emigration follows him spending several years in the Eastern Cornwall kingdom of 'Cunomorus'/Cynfor (??'King Mark' of legend), probably at Castle Dore near Fowey where a chapel is dedicated to him, after his abandonment of the chance to hold a bishopric in central/Western Britain to do missionary work. He settles in the kingdom of 'Dumnonee' (called after SW Britain's 'Dumnonia' and probably settled by its emigrants) and becomes bishop to its king Jonas.

IRELAND

Death of king Comac mac Aillel of Leinster after an eight-year reign; succeeded by his son Coipre.

536

EMPIRE

February. Pope Agapitus arrives in Constantinople and offers Theodahad's peace-terms to no success; he discovers that Patriarch Anthemius is a 'Monophysite' and refuses communion on grounds of uncanonical translation from Trebizond; he refuses bribes and threats and after disputation with Anthemius Justinian agrees latter is heretic and sacks him; Menas made Patriarch but Anthemius' patron Theodora is furious.

22 April. Death of Pope Agapitus at Constantinople.

NORTH AFRICA

April. Belisarius arrives with reinforcements to save Carthage, and defeats mutineers at Membrasa; he has to return to Sicily as his troops there are discontented, and as Numidian troops mutiny too, Justinian sends cousin Germanus to command; he defeats Stotzas at Cellas Vaturi and executes conspirators in Carthage.

EMPIRE/ITALY

May–June. Pro-'Chalcedonian' orthodox synod in Constantinople, supported by Agapitus' legates, to confirm Eastern church's orthodox theology under Menas.

8 June. On news of Agapitus' death, Silverius elected Pope in Rome as Theodahad's candidate; however, in Constantinople Theodora has

promised the see to 'Aprocrisarius' Vigilius in return for him then restoring ex-Patriarch Anthemius, and Vigilius returns to Rome too late for election.

June. Belisarius lands at Reggium and Gothic commander deserts to him; he marches to Neapolis/Naples, which is besieged for twenty days till soldiers creep in along aqueduct and the city is sacked.

November. Goths meet at Regata without Theodahad, who is in Rome, and elect non-royal Witigis as king; Theodahad tries to flee to Ravenna but is caught and killed on the road.

Witigis abandons Rome as Franks raid across the Alps and marches into Apennines, 9 *December* Belisarius enters Rome, and surrendered Gothic commander Leuderis and keys of city sent to Justinian. With Rome in imperial control, Theodora plans to remove Silverius.

537

EMPIRE/ITALY

Witigis makes peace with Franks, marries Amalasuntha's daughter Matasuntha, and advances on Rome.

February. Witigis besieges Rome; Belisarius sends away non-combatants. Aqueducts cut; major assault on Vatican driven off as statues on Mausoleum of Hadrian thrown onto attackers' heads, but at Theodora's arranging Belisarius' wife Antonina produces forged letters from Silverius offering to surrender city to Goths; he is summoned to Pincian Palace before Belisarius and Antonina and 11 *March* deposed and deported to Patara in Lycia; 29 *March* Theodora's candidate, deacon Vigilius, imposed as Pope.

1,600 cavalry, mostly Bulgars and Slavs, reaches Rome; Belisarius risks battle outside walls but is defeated, the port at Portus taken, and Rome starved with minimal supplies.

Bishop of Patara visits Constantinople to intercede with Justinian on behalf of Silverius; Justinian sends Silverius back to Rome, ordering trial then restoration if innocent, but Vigilius' agents deport him to island in Gulf of Gaeta. Belisarius sends John (nephew of Vitalian) to winter in Picenum with part of army as free from Goths and then to return with reinforcements.

September. Belisarius sends his secretary Procopius, the historian, to Naples for assistance but promised reinforcements do not arrive; after his wife Antonina goes to urge help a convoy arrives at Ostia with 3,000 troops and Goths abandon Portus.

?*December.* Truce arranged at Rome for three months. 2 *December* death of Silverius.

FRANCIA

Approximate date of joint attack by Childebert and Theuderic on Chlotar, who is outnumbered and retreats into the ‘forest of Arelanum’ (Fredegar), i.e. probably the ‘Foret de Brotonne’ on the S bank of the Seine near Caudebec; queen Chlotilde is said by Gregory of Tours to have prayed to St Martin to save her son Chlotar from destruction after her attempts to mediate failed, and a subsequent storm wrecks the two attackers’ camp before they can attack Chlotar, demoralising their troops. Battered by hail, they agree that God is on Chlotar’s side, accept peace, and go home.

IRELAND

Battle of Claenloch: defeat and killing of the Ui Niall prince Maine mac Cearbhall, brother of the later ‘High King’ Diarmait (ruled c. 548–64/5), by the emerging ‘Ui Fiachrach Aidne’ sub-dynasty of the royal house of Connacht, led by its first dynast Goibenn mac Conaill (great-grandson of ‘High King’ Nath’I), the Ui Niall were attempting to secure hostages from and so dominate the ‘Ui Maine’ on the Midhe/Connacht borders, pushing the latter Westwards; this battle divides the latter between one branch subject to Midhe and one subject to Connacht.

538

EMPIRE/ITALY

Belisarius tells general John to advance from Romagna and he sweeps through Picenum to Ariminum; *March* Goths abandon siege of Rome and retreat across Apennines, harassed by Belisarius; Martin and Ildiger capture crucial pass of ‘Tunnelled Rock’ while Mundilas sails to Genoa, invades Liguria, and takes Milan; John besieged in Ariminum but relieved by Belisarius; *June* Narses brings reinforcements via Ancona, but quarrels with Belisarius.

FRANCIA/ITALY

King Theodebert of Rheims’ Franks, alarmed at imperial troops’ proximity to their territory, prepare for war to aid Goths; 10,000 Burgundians invade Liguria and others cross Alps to aid Witigis’ nephew Uraias in advance on Milan.

BRITAIN

Traditional date of the death of king Comgall of Dalriada, succeeded by his younger brother, Gabhran.

539

EMPIRE/ITALY

?*March*. Goths, and a Frankish army under king Theudebert who is busy pillaging the upper and middle Po valley during the wartime chaos, resist

in Northern Italy but advancing Franks kill civilians at Pavia and then attack Witigis' nephew Uraias at Tortona; meanwhile Goths bribe two Ligurian clerics to take appeal for aid to 'Great King' Chosroes and it is favourably received.

Goths retake Milan, slaughter menfolk, and sell women and children to Burgundians as slaves; however, the Goths do not trust the Franks and are relieved when an outbreak of dysentery leads to them retreating home with their loot.

Belisarius advances on Ravenna, the former imperial residence in C5th; population starving as public granaries burnt, and John (nephew of Vitalian) and Martin prevent Uraias from relieving it.

BRITAIN

Date in the (950s) 'Annales Cambriae' assigned to the death in battle of 'Arthur (i.e. the 'national' British coalition-leader against the Saxons since c. 500) and Medraut' at the conflict of 'Camlann'. Presumably, as in much later Arthurian myth, they were on opposite sides and Medraut – not necessarily Arthur's nephew and very unlikely to be his illegitimate son by his sister – was a British rebel leader. The date is assigned at twenty-one years after Arthur's victory at Mount Badon; the site is unclear but may be the Roman fortress of 'Camboglanna' ('Crooked Glen') on the Antonine Wall in Scotland or the pass of Camlann near Dolgellau in North Wales, or Cadgamlan on the Llyn peninsula. Traditionally this marked the end of British unity and in due course – possibly only after the plague of 547–9 – a resumption of Saxon expansion.

540 EMPIRE/ITALY/PERSIA

Justinian receives envoys from Witigis requesting that Goths keep Northern Italy; *Winter* he agrees to let them have all land North of Po and half royal treasure, but Belisarius objects and Goths insist on his signature to treaty; he pretends to agree and *May* Ravenna surrenders to find that Belisarius has tricked them; Witigis, leading Goths, and treasury sent to Constantinople where Witigis receives pension; in Northern Italy the Gothic survivors propose Witigis' nephew Uraias who declines in favour of Ildebad, commander at Verona; quarrel between Uraias and Ildebad's wives leads to Uraias' murder.

Spring. Kutrigur Bulgar horde invades Balkans; one section raids Greece as far as Thermopylae and the other raids around Thessalonica, sacks Cassandrela in Chalcidice, marches East to Chersonese, and then raids Thrace and forces the 'Long Wall' of Anastasius before retiring.

June. Chosroes invades Syria, with most of usual troops absent in Italy and North Africa; Belisarius' arrival delayed so Burtzes in command at Hierapolis but avoids battle; Justinian sends cousin Germanus and 300 'bucellarii' to Antioch, but they flee as Chosroes burns Berroea and approaches; citizens and racing-factions defend walls but Antioch sacked and burned and 30,000 citizens deported to Ctesiphon; Chosroes bathes in Mediterranean, burns cathedral at Daphne, and raids Apamea to hold races; Justinian promises 5,000 lb. of gold and Chosroes agrees and retreats, but attacks Dara so full amount not paid.

IRELAND

Approximate date of the foundation of the Midhe/Leinster border monastery of Clonard (NW of the later Dublin, and near the 'High Kingly' centre at Tara) by St Finnian, pre-eminent missionary leader of SE Ireland, who has recently completed a successful tour of Leinster. Finnian is the patron of and inspiration for the founders of the other great 'Midlands' monasteries at Birr, Clonfert, Clonmacnois and Durrow. Apparently the pupil of the late C5th Midhe holy man 'Foirtchern' and educated in Britain c. 500, Finnian acts as a co-ordinator for the establishment of this region as the centre of monastic power – it is a significantly large distance away from the main residences of the kings of all the main sub-kingdoms.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the emigration of the SW Wales monastic leader and missionary St Paul Aurelian, born c. 486 and traditionally nephew to king Mouric/Meurig of the Silures (Glamorgan) and a former pupil of St Illtud at Llanilltud Fawr, to Brittany to win converts. He leaves Cornwall, where he has been offered the kingdom's bishopric by 'Cunomorus'/Cynfor, and in Brittany settles at St Pol-de-Leon in the kingdom of 'Lionnais' where he founds a monastery.

541 EMPIRE/ITALY

Ildebad, new Gothic leader in Northern Italy, rallies troops to invade Venetia; he is killed in blood-feud by Urais' men and succeeded by Eraric the Rugian who sends ambassadors to Justinian.

?*October.* Ildebad's warlike nephew Totila seizes Gothic throne.

Winter. Belisarius returns to capital.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

Approximate date of Childebert's invasion of the Visigothic kingdom across the Pyrenees and unsuccessful siege of Saragossa; the inhabitants

rally by parading the tunic of St Vincent round the walls, and Childebert is impressed and acquires it to take it back to Paris as a holy relic and install it in the church of St Germain-des-Pres.

BRITAIN

?Talorc mac Mordeleg succeeds Cailtrom mac Girom as king of the Picts; reigns for eleven years according to tradition.

542

EMPIRE

Totila invades Tuscany and besieges Florence; general John makes him retreat but is routed at battle of Mucelium; Totila overruns central Italy, razes Beneventum, and besieges Conon in Naples; Maximin appointed 'Praetorian Praefect' of Italy but while he delays in Epirus Demetrius unsuccessfully attempts naval relief of Naples.

Plague strikes Constantinople and the Eastern provinces devastating population.

BRITAIN

Date of the death in battle at 'Camlann' of 'King Arthur' according to the sources used by the 1130s writer Geoffrey of Monmouth, though earlier Welsh sources (none contemporary with the events) put the battle at twenty-one years after the battle of 'Mount Badon' c. 516 or 518. If 'Arthur' was some sort of 'over-king' as opposed to a non-ruling leader of a multi-state army, or even a minor commander from one region 'hyped' by subsequent propagandists as a national hero for defeating the Saxons, any 'state' or peaceful multi-state authority that he had created after defeating the invaders seems to have lapsed into misrule and civil war by the time that Gildas wrote later in the 540s.

IRELAND

Probable date of the death of king Crimthann 'Srem' of Munster after a twenty-year reign. His successor is apparently his son Coipre 'Cromm', who dies in 577, but the latter is given a seventeen-year reign in some sources so possibly the kingship was usurped or disputed at some point by his rival Cormac who is also called king of Munster mid-century.

Probable date of the battle of Slicech/Sligo: king Eogan Bel of Connacht is defeated and killed by a coalition of the Ui Niall, led by Domnhall and Fergus the sons of the late 'High King' Muirchertach mac Erca. This establishes their branch of the Ui Niall is predominant in the Midhe/Connacht borderlands of the North West. Aillel 'Inbanda' of the 'Ui Fiachrach' becomes king of Connacht and rules for seven years to 549.

543 **EMPIRE/ITALY**

Maximin arrives at Syracuse to meet Demetrius' survivors, but fails in attempt to relieve Naples as storm drives ships ashore.

April. Conon surrenders Naples to Goths; Totila gives people food and allows garrison to depart unmolested.

Plague spreads on into the Western part of the Empire.

544 **EMPIRE**

May. Justinian decides to send Belisarius back to Italy, ends his disgrace, and sends him West to raise troops; he has major difficulties in collecting army; meanwhile Totila invades central Italy and his forces take Tarentum.

Late. Belisarius arrives back in Italy with 4,000 soldiers and Illyrian 'Master of Soldiers' Vitalius; he retakes Tarentum and marches successfully to Rome.

FRANCIA

Death of queen Clotilda, widow of Clovis, at Tours, probably aged in her late fifties; she is buried with her late husband at the church of St Genevieve in Paris.

BRITAIN

ASC: traditional date of the death of Wihtgar, founding king of the dynasty of the Isle of Wight and alleged nephew of Cerdic of the West Saxons/ 'Gewissae'.

Some time in this period, before the plague of 547–9, the British monk historian and polemicist Gildas (writing in Britain or at Rhys in Brittany) compiles his attack on the sins of the disunited, immoral British kings and 'leadership class', the 'De Excidio Britanniae' ('On the Ruin of Britain'). In the tradition of Jeremiah assailing the sinful Israelites before the Babylonians conquered them, he accuses the British kings of misrule, faction, internal warfare, and tyranny, plus personal debauchery and murders; it is not clear how historical this is. His main targets are the five principal rulers of Western Britain, who can thus be approximately dated:

'Mailcunus, dragon of the island', greatest in talent and greatest in evil: clearly the man listed in later genealogies as Maelgwyn ap Cadwallon/ Catwallaun, king of Gwynedd (North Wales).

'Cuneglasus, the tawny butcher', 'charioteer of the Bear's Fortress': clearly Maelgwyn's cousin Cynglas ap Owain, ruler of Clywd (NE Wales),

and possibly the lord of Dinarth ('Bear's Fortress') on the coast or else ex-aide to the 'Bear' (i.e. Arthur).

Constantine, king of Dumnonia (Devon and Cornwall): the man known to Welsh genealogies as Constantine/Custennin ap Cador.

'Vortipor, spotted with evil', i.e. the man known to genealogies and recorded in an extant memorial stone (at Castell Dwyran) as Vortipor ap Aircol/Agricola, king of Dyfed (SW Wales) and holder of the late Roman military rank of 'Protector'.

'Aurelius the Dog/Caninus', probably the man known to Welsh legend as Aurelius Conan, of uncertain identity and location but possibly ruler of Gloucester. Given his name, possibly a relative of the late Ambrosius Aurelianus and so connected to the lordship of the Cotswolds and the Severn valley.

Approximate date assigned for the semi-legendary South Wales religious council known from its (Dyfed) site as the 'Synod of Llandewi Brefi'; this is supposed to be held to combat the resurgence of the austere 'Pelagian' heresy and to be presided over by the bishop of the kingdom of Dyfed, St David/Dewi, who is an extreme, grass-eating ascetic himself but doctrinally orthodox. Allegedly his holiness leads the current 'Archbishop of Wales', St Dyfrig/Dubricius, the (arch) bishop of Caerleon and bishop of the kingdom of the Silures/Gwent in SE Wales, to abdicate the primacy in David's favour, thus establishing the bishopric of Dyfed as leading see in Wales – but all this owes more to the late C11th hagiography of David by Rhigyfarch and the then bishops of St David's attempt to claim the primacy over the bishopric of Llandaff than to history.

IRELAND

Foundation of the principal NW Ulster monastery of Derry ('The Oaks') by the forceful Ui Niall prince/monk Columba/Columbcille, born ?521, ex-pupil of Finnian of Clonard.

545 EMPIRE/ITALY

Belisarius, short of soldiers, can only fight inconclusive campaign in central Italy; Goths take Tibur and massacre citizens.

22 November. Justinian has Pope Vigilius arrested at Mass and deported from Rome, en route to Constantinople to be forced to agree to imperial religious policy; taken to Sicily.

546 EMPIRE/ITALY

Early. Totila besieges Belisarius in Rome.

Belisarius sends John, son of Vitalian, commander of Rome, to Constantinople to get reinforcements; he delays there while marrying the daughter

of Justinian's cousin Germanus, a move that antagonises Theodora; Justinian sends Narses to Belgrade to recruit more troops and he defeats the first major Slav raid on Illyria.

Leaving Bessas to command in ?Rome, *Summer* Belisarius sails to Dyrrachium to link up with John (son of Vitalian) and reinforcements but they quarrel over campaign plans. Belisarius takes reinforcements to Portus and Rome; John retakes Southern Italy but halted by Gothic garrison at Capua.

Totila starves Rome out and blocks the Tiber with ships; Belisarius tries to break the boom but is driven off as Bessas fails to sortie from Rome while Belisarius' lieutenant Isaac disobeys orders to raid Gothic camp and is captured and executed; Belisarius abandons attack and returns to Portus where he falls seriously ill.

17 December. Four Isaurian soldiers open Porta Asinaria to Totila; Rome is thoroughly sacked and Belisarius' troops flee to Portus; Totila expels the remnants of Senate, and with population mostly abandoning city, considers razing the city to make it indefensible; Belisarius persuades him to desist.

IRELAND

Death of king Coipre of Leinster after an eleven-year reign; succeeded by his son Colman 'Mor' ('the Great') who reigns for thirty years.

547 EMPIRE/ITALY

January. Vigilius arrives in Constantinople and indulges in furious controversy with Menas; they excommunicate each other.

April. Belisarius eludes Goths and takes Rome in surprise attack; Totila attacks before he can fortify ruined gates but is driven off.

June. Vigilius succumbs to imperial pressure to restore communion with Patriarch Menas, and takes part in intensive theological arguments over doctrine.

BRITAIN

(or 549) Serious plague in Britain and Ireland, as recorded by Irish and later Welsh sources: the 'Yellow Plague'. Death of the most prominent king of Western Britain, Maelgwyn of Gwynedd, who is succeeded by his cousin Cynglas ap Owain of Clywd. The loss of British manpower is probably substantial, and due to the existence of trade-networks connecting Western Britain to the Mediterranean; the Saxons do not have these links and so suffer less. This probably 'tips the balance' in terms of manpower against the British and enables the piecemeal Saxon advance in Southern Britain to resume.

548 | **EMPIRE**

Inconclusive fighting between Belisarius and Totila, but Goths make no progress.

28 *June*. Death of Theodora, aged around fifty; Justinian's isolation and suspicious nature get worse.

?*Autumn*. Belisarius sends Antonina to Constantinople in failed effort to get reinforcements; without influence now, Antonina gives up and advises his recall.

SPAIN

June. Assassination of the Visigothic king Theudis at Seville, after a seventeen-year reign; he is succeeded by Theudegisel.

FRANCIA

Death of king Theudebert at ?Metz after a long illness, aged probably in his late thirties; succeeded by his son Theudebald. The late king's oppressive tax-collector Parthenius, an alleged wife-killer, flees the vengeance of the people to Trier with two bishops as his escort, but when word spreads where he is he has to hide in a chest in a church from an angry mob; he is dragged out and killed.

IRELAND

(or 544) Traditional date of the assassination of 'High King' Tuathal, apparently organised by his exiled foe Diarmait mac Cearbhall of the Southern Ui Niall and carried out by his foster-brother Mael Morda; Diarmait is elected to succeed Tuathal, backed by St Ciaran of Clonmacnois.

549 | **EMPIRE/ITALY**

Early. Belisarius recalled from Italy.

Summer. Totila besieges Belisarius' successor Diogenes in Rome, but the few imperial troops manage to hold the entire circuit of walls.

BRITAIN

ASC: traditional date of the landing of and foundation of the kingdom of 'Bernicia' in Northumberland by its first ruler, Ida, son of Eoppa. (The name came from its British predecessor, 'Bryniach'.) Ida then or later conquers the coastal rock fortress of Bamburgh, which becomes his headquarters; its name comes from his grand-daughter-in-law later in the

century. According to the ASC his family have already been resident in Britain for some generations, probably in the Anglian settlements on the lower Humber; and the amount of Bernician information preserved in the records of distant Wessex implies that they were allies whereas the ASC ignores C6th events in its kingdom's foe Mercia.

IRELAND

The great plague is at its height. Approximate date of the death of the great monastic leader St Finnian, founder of the monastery of Clonard, probably in his late seventies; traditionally Finnian was a former trainee around the 490s–500s at St Martin's monastery at Tours, Gaul and at St Cadoc's monastery at Llancarfan in S Wales.

(or 548) Foundation of the great midlands monastery of Clonmacnois by St Ciaran, pupil of Finnian of Clonard, who has been living on an island in Lough Ree but now emerges to take a more geographically and politically central role in monasticism.

King Aillel mac Eogan of Connacht (head of the 'Ui Fiachrach' sub-dynasty) is killed in battle at Cul Conaire in Co. Mayo, along with his brother Aedan 'the Strong', either by Domnhall and Fergus mac Erca or by some of his own cousins who are also sons of a 'Mac Erca'; succeeded by Echu Tirmcharna mac Fergus, head of the 'Ui Briuin' sub-dynasty, who rules for seven years.

SPAIN

November. Assassination by a mystery swordsman of the Visigothic king Theudegisel at a night-time banquet in Seville after someone blows out the candles, after a reign of one year; his leading officer Agila is made king by the nobles.

550

EMPIRE/ITALY

16 January. Isaurian soldiers open Ostian Gate to Totila, and Rome falls as commander Diogenes flees to Centumcellae and other imperial troops besieged in Mausoleum of Hadrian until surrender.

Justinian's cousin Germanus is appointed to take command of Italian campaign, and is married to Amalasuntha's sister Matasuntha so he can appeal to partisans of Gothic royal house; *Autumn.* He arrives at Sardica en route to Italy and falls ill and dies; the expedition is postponed, while Totila reaches Reggio and crosses to Sicily.

SPAIN

Approximate date of the accession of king Chararic of the Suevi in W Spain/Portugal, acclaimed by Gregory of Tours as the first Catholic ruler

of his people since the reign of Rechiarius in the C5th and the man who arranged the nation's conversion (see under 552). Other sources date the conversion decades later.

FRANCIA

Approximate date of the death of Conon/Canao, expatriate British king of the Southern kingdom of Vannes; he is succeeded by his exiled brother Maclivus, who according to Gregory of Tours fled to king Cunomorus of Carhaix earlier in fear of his life (mid-540s?) and was hidden in a tomb to save him from Conon's murderous pursuers. Cunomorus installs him as king of Vannes, thus extending his own power in Brittany.

IRELAND

St Ciaran of Clomnacnois (in his late thirties?) dies in the Irish great plague.

Traditional date (Annals of Ulster) of the battle of Cuil Conaire, where king Aillel Inbanda of Connacht and his brother Aed are killed by Domnhall and Fergus the sons of the late 'High King' Muirchertach mac Erca.

551

EMPIRE/ITALY

Totila besieges Ancona; Valerian, commander at Ravenna, sends plea for aid to general John at Salona.

April. The elderly eunuch general Narses is sent from Constantinople to Illyria to prepare Italian campaign.

John's imperial fleet from Salona destroys Gothic fleet at 'Sena Gallica'; Goths abandon Ancona. Totila offers Justinian to divide rule of Italy, but it is rejected; Gothic ships take Sardinia and Corsica.

Narses reaches Salona/Spalata in Dalmatia and raises troops including Lombard 'federates' from Pannonia and Heruls from steppe.

GAUL

Death of St Gallus/Gall, bishop of Clermont (from 525) and uncle and guardian of the historian Gregory of Tours; Gregory stays on with his other uncle Avitus, later (572?) bishop in his turn. The priest Cato is initially chosen as the next bishop of Clermont but his arrogance is such that a party of objectors quickly goes to king Theudebald's court at Metz to have it vetoed and have the archdeacon Cautinus chosen instead. Cautinus is ordained by the Metz clergy and sent to Clermont where he is mostly accepted, but Cato refuses to submit despite being banned from all the churches and he and a few followers hold out for a time.

552 | **EMPIRE/ITALY**

Narses marches around head of Adriatic with 30,000 men, evading Totila's general Teias at Verona, and 6 *June* joins John and 'Patrician' Valerian at Ravenna while another force reaches Croton and Tarentum surrenders.

Mid-late June. Narses puts Goths in Ariminum under siege and marches along Flaminian Way towards Apennines; at battle of 'Busta Gallorum' near Sentinum the imperial infantry forms 'pike' defence against Gothic cavalry and archers shower them until they flee in evening; Totila killed and survivors retreat.

Goths at Portus (Ostia) surrender, but surviving nobles rally at Pavia and choose Teias as king, he appeals to king Theudebald of the Franks for aid, though only two Frankish nobles called Buccelin and Leutharis are interested and start to collect Franks and Alemanni.

Narses sends unruly Lombard allies home, takes Perugia and Narni, and marches on Rome which surrenders; Teias marches South to stop Narses besieging Gothic base (and treasury) at Cumae but after a two-month standoff is defeated and killed at 'Mount Lactantius' near Mount Vesuvius; Gothic army virtually wiped out.

SPAIN

Revolt against the oppressive Visigothic king Agila by the noble Athanagild; facing defeat, Athanagild appeals to Empire and Justinian sends Liberius 'the Patrician' with naval expedition; Cartagena and other ports secured to form new Byzantine province, and Liberius aids Athanagild in civil war.

Approximate date (early-mid 550s?) of an outbreak of plague in the Suevic kingdom, which Gregory of Tours says leads the Arian king Chararic to send to the Francian shrine of St Martin of Tours for some holy relics to end it. Allegedly these arrive on the same day as the landing of the Catholic missionary and future archbishop of Braga, the Pannonian Martin, who has come from Rome to convert the nation. The plague abates and conversion follows, led by the king under Martin's guidance. In fact, this story may place the conversion too early although Martin does appear to have commenced his mission and episcopate around this time.

FRANCIA

Approximate date of king Theudebald marrying Vuldetrada, daughter of king Wacho of the Langobards/Lombards on the middle Danube and younger sister of his late stepmother Wisigard.

BRITAIN

ASC: Cynric of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’ defeats the British at ‘Searobyrg’, i.e. the town/fortress of Old Sarum (Roman ‘Sorviodunum’) outside the late site of Salisbury. This presumably marks the West Saxon occupation of the Southern part of Wiltshire, arising from British manpower losses in the recent plague – but there is little archaeological evidence of any mid-C6th Saxon settlement in Wiltshire so the kingdom may be more multi-ethnic than supposed in the C9th record.

Approximate date of the death of Cynglas ap Owain, king of Gwynedd; succeeded by his late cousin Maelgwyn’s son Rhun, who probably rules to the 580s.

Approximate date of Drest mac Munait succeeding Talorc mac Mordeleg as king of the Picts.

553

EMPIRE/ITALY

5 May. Justinian’s ‘Fifth General Council’ opens at Constantinople; Vigilius boycotts it and 14 May issues a compromise ‘First Constitution’, condemning eighty propositions; Justinian refuses to respond and 26 May reveals Vigilius’ secret letters, contrary to his current opinions, to Council; Vigilius’ name struck from diptychs but personally not as Pope.

Narses leaves subordinates to besiege Cumae and invades Tuscany via Civitavecchia to round up Gothic survivors; Lucca breaks promise to surrender after rumours that Alemanni en route so Narses pretends to execute hostages; surrender. Narses returns to Ravenna; Teias’ brother Aligern, commander in Cumae, surrenders and delivers the keys to Narses.

Buccelin and Leutharis lead Frankish-Alemannic horde across the Alps to aid Gothic remnants and overrun the Po valley and Northern Umbria; they defeat a detachment of Heruls in imperial service at Parma.

BRITAIN

(Approximate date.) Accession of Galam as king of the Picts, succeeding Drest mac Munait; he is probably of dubious competence or lineage, or has bad luck on campaign, as he is forced to accept a co-ruler around four years later.

554

EMPIRE

Early spring. Buccelin and his troops march down West coast of Italy to Reggio, while Leutharis raids down East coast then retires through Apulia and Umbria, is defeated in ambush by Artabanes of Pesaro at Fanum, and reaches Venetia to die of plague; Narses attacks returning

Buccelin on River Volturno in Campania and kills him and routs army; survivors besieged in Compsa and surrender.

13 August. Justinian issues ‘Pragmatic Sanction’ to confirm restoration of imperial civilian rule in Italy: all privileges granted to Romans by Visigoths until 538 confirmed but Totila’s grants annulled, confiscated estates and freed slaves restored, and increased powers to Roman Church in orderly civil government.

SPAIN

?Liberius’ conquest of new imperial province completed; ‘Spania’ includes coast around capital Cartagena and Malaga, ?Cordoba, and Balearic Islands.

555

SPAIN

March. After a reign of five years and around three months, king Agila is succeeded by his son Athanagild who has been his co-ruler since 551.

EMPIRE/ITALY

Vigilius sets out for Italy but 7 *June* dies of gallstones en route at Syracuse; Justinian imposes Pelagius, ‘apocrisarius’ in Constantinople in early 540s, as successor; Narses’ troops secure him in Rome but resentment is so great there that three bishops cannot be found who will consecrate him.

FRANCIA

Death of Theudebald, king of Metz, after a seven-year reign, following paralysis by a stroke; his lands are divided up by Chlotar and Childebert, and the already much-married Chlotar takes over his widow Vuldegrada; his bishops object and he sends her off to marry duke Garivald of Bavaria.

Chlotar faces a Saxon revolt as he arrives in the ex-‘Riparian’ Frank lands on the Rhine, his share of Theudebald’s kingdom, and ravages Thuringia to punish the locals for aiding the rebels.

Death of bishop Gunthar of Tours; king Chlotar agrees to the proposal (by bishop Cautinus of Clermont?) that the nuisancesome episcopal claimant Cato at Clermont be appointed and thus sent away from the town, but Cato has allied himself to Chlotar’s son prince Chramn, governor of the Auvergne at Clermont, and been promised that when Chlotar dies Chramn will give him that bishopric. He refuses to move.

Chlotar refuses to tackle a probably larger Saxon army and listens to the rebels’ envoys as they offer peace and rich gifts plus half their land, to the anger of his warlike soldiers who force him to fight; he is defeated.

On his return to Western Francia he agrees to make Eufronius bishop of Tours despite the claims now made to it by Cato.

BRITAIN

Approximate date (within a decade or so) of the eclipse of the kingdom of Strathclyde (aka 'Alt Clud' or 'Alt Claith' in Brittonic, after its principal fortress Dumbarton/Alt Clud) as the major power in the lands between Forth and Solway in Southern Scotland, involving a revival by its Eastern foes in Lothian and 'Bryniach' (Northumberland). This is remembered in later tradition as occurring at the end of the reign of Dynfwl/Dumnugual 'Hen' ('the Old'), descendant of the 460s ruler Ceretic, possibly on his death or involving his being killed. His son Rhydderch, later king of Strathclyde, is temporarily driven into exile by Morcant, king of Bryniach, and other rulers, and Strathclyde is overrun.

556

BRITAIN

ASC: Cynric of the West Saxons/'Gewissae' and his son Ceawlin defeat the British at the battle of 'Beran bryg', i.e. 'Bera's stronghold' in Northern Wiltshire – probably Barbury Castle hillfort near Swindon. This presumably marks their conquest of Northern Wiltshire, or a defeat of an attempt by the neighbouring British to reconquer it from them; possibly from this approximate date the 'Gewissae' are strong enough to start asserting control over the long-established Saxon settlements in the adjacent middle Thames valley. The archaeological evidence suggests far more Saxon settlements there than in largely 'British' Hampshire and Wiltshire, but no rulers for the area are recorded; some have suggested that in fact the 'West Saxon' kingdom emerged in this region of the upper Thames and the 'Hampshire origin' story is a myth or the memory of the exploits of one particular warband who seized a larger Saxon kingdom in the 550s.

Very approximate date of the accession of Cyngar in succession to his father Vortipor as king of Dyfed/Demetia in SW Wales; he is succeeded by his son Pedr at an unknown but probably late C6th date.

IRELAND

(or 557) Death of king Echu Tirmchanra of Connacht, head of the 'Ui Briuin' sub-dynasty, who is succeeded by his son Aed mac Each; he reigns until 575.

FRANCIA

King Chlotar's clerics object to his plan to marry his mistress Waldrada the Lombard, daughter of their late 'duke' Wacha; he marries her off to his ally on the Franks' Eastern borders, duke Garibald/Garivald of Bavaria

(born 540), a Frankish sub-ruler of a formerly independent tribal people, who has been ruling that duchy since 551.

(or 557) Chramn decides to overthrow his father Chlotar, and enters into secret talks with his untrustworthy uncle Childebert of Paris to obtain his help; he then moves into the Limousin to take it over in defiance of Chlotar, who sends two of his other sons, Charibert and Guntramn (Chramn's half-brothers, the sons of Ingund), to fight the rebel. They confront him but a storm prevents a battle and then Chramn says falsely that he has heard that their father has been killed in the Saxon war; they head East to find out and he follows to seize Chalons-sur-Saone but is refused entry to Dijon. He goes to Paris to meet his uncle Childebert, who attacks Chlotar's territory around Rheims in the belief that Chlotar has been killed in Saxony so he can take over the entire Eastern kingdom. On Chlotar's return from defeating the Saxons, Childebert and Chramn retire to Paris.

Approximate date of the death of one of the two principal Brittonic kings of Armorica, Budic, after a reign of around forty years; his heir is expelled by his rival Macliavus, king of Vannes, despite their supposed alliance and the two kingdoms are forcibly united; plots to unseat Macliavus with Frankish help follow.

557 FRANCIA

Church Council of Paris: this imposes a strict canon law ban on marriages within various degrees of consanguinity, which will cause problems for the Merovingian royal family and other elite dynasties.

557/8 BRITAIN

King Galam of the Picts has to accept a co-king, the genealogically obscure Bridei/Brude mac Maelchon, probably due to doubts over his military capacity in fighting the neighbouring Dalriadans given the outcome. The new king may be the son of Maelgwyn, king of Gwynedd in N Wales, by a Pictish princess and so chosen to bring in Gwynedd troops and military expertise – or so John Morris has suggested, controversially. In any event, military success against Dalriada follows.

IRELAND

Date (in the Annals of Ulster) of the foundation of the midlands monastery of Clonfert/Cluan Fert by St Brendan 'the Voyager' (born c. 484), a renowned traveller alleged in later hagiography and 'Imrama' (books of voyages), by the C10th, to have voyaged to the mysterious 'Isle of St Brendan' in the far West across the Atlantic. This may reflect real-life voyages of Irish West coast monks seeking solitude to the Faroes in the

sixth century; the ‘papar’ (‘Fathers’) were remembered by the Scandinavian settlers of Iceland as reaching there too but this may be much later.

FRANCIA

Death of king Childebert at Paris, aged around his late fifties; his nephew and ally Chramn submits to Chlotar who advances to the city to take over the kingdom, but realises he is not trusted and flees to Brittany; Chlotar also exiles his late brother’s wife Ultrogotha and their daughters.

Death of Riwal ‘Mawr’ (‘the Great’), main expatriate British king of Northern Armorica. Having annexed the neighbouring small kingdom of Eastern ‘Dumnonee’ on the death of its king while its heir Iudual fled to king Childebert of Paris earlier (557/8?), the surviving principal king of Armorica, Cunomorus of Carhaix, uses Riwal’s death to overrun his kingdom too; the alarmed elites of the remaining (Northern) independent Armoricans send their main holy men, bishops Samson and Paul Aurelian (both from South Wales), to king Chlotar for aid; Cunomorus forestalls an attack by offering to become Chlotar’s local viceroy (‘Prefect’).

558

BRITAIN

Traditional date of the death of king Gabhran of Dalriada; succeeded by his late elder brother Comgall’s son Conall, not his own son Aedan. This probably reflects an agreed alternation of holding the throne between the families of the two sons of Domangert (d. 507?), to avoid civil war.

IRELAND

Traditional date (alternately 560) of the epochal quarrel between the centralising and autocratic ‘High King’ Diarmait Ui Cearbhall and the monastic leader St Ruadan of Lorrha. The latter has given sanctuary to a minor ruler of the Ui Maine in Connacht, Aed Guaire, who found that a visiting royal official had broken down his fortress’ gate for violating the new legal width and killed the man but faced execution; Diarmait eventually gets his hands on the offender by breaching sanctuary and threatens to execute him, but faces a deputation of outraged clerics led by Ruadan and eventually releases him. This is seen as the first ‘test of strength’ between High King and Church.

FRANCIA

Chramn is taken in by king Cunomorus of Armorica (Carhaix) but this only leads to the alarmed Chlotar allying with Cunomorus’ enemies.

SPAIN

(Between May 558 and May 559) Chararic, king of the Suevi, is succeeded by Ariamir, who is alternatively named as the first C6th Catholic king of his people. He succeeds between two and three years before the May 561 Church Council of Braga.

559

BRITAIN

(Or 560) Death of the founding king of Bernicia, Ida, lord of Bamburgh, timed by a twelve-year rule from 547; succeeded by a presumed kinsman, Glappa, not his eldest son Adda, though he had left a multiplicity of sons. Were these all under-age and supplanted by a more experienced adult commander?

(or 560) The new king Bridei of the Picts defeats the Dalriadans; this probably strengthens his hand against his co-ruler Galam, who is deposed around the same time and flees abroad but lives for several more decades.

IRELAND

Founding of the great Ulster monastery of Bangor by St Comgall, a former pupil of Ciaran of Clonmacnois.

560

BRITAIN

ASC: death of the ruler of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’, Cynric, after a reign of around thirty-four years. (It is possible but unlikely that Cynric was active as early as 495 as suggested in the ASC; the 510s are a more likely time for the commencement of his career.) Succession of his son Ceawlin, who is soon rapidly expanding the kingdom and apparently takes over command of the Thames valley Saxons in alliance with a mysterious ‘Cutha’ (supposedly his brother), commander in the Chilterns region. The archaeological record shows strong Saxon settlement in the middle Thames valley around Benson and Wallingford – Cutha’s kingdom or the Northern section of Ceawlin’s kingdom?

ASC: accession of Aelle, ‘king of the Northumbrians’; in fact he was only king of the Southern part of Northumbria, the kingdom of ‘Deira’ on the lower Humber, and this was not unified with Northern Northumbria (Bernicia) until the early 600s, Aelle apparently reigned for thirty years like Ceawlin (the latter actually reigned for thirty-one or thirty-two), but one source has him still ruling when St Augustine lands in Kent in 597.

Approximate date of the defeat of a seaborne attack on Gwynedd from the NW British kingdom of ‘Rheged’ (Cumbria and Lancashire), the attacker being its leading dynast Elidyr/Eleutherius. He is later either killed or driven out of his lands in a land-based expedition into Rheged by his

victim, Rhun ap Maelgwyn of Gwynedd; this war breaks up the existing power-structure within Rheged, which Rhun dominates for a few years, and in due course rival dynasts Gwendolieu of Carlisle and Urien/Urbgen ap Llew (probably ruling in the N Pennines into Northumberland) emerge.

Approximate date of the death of the South Wales monastic pioneer, St Cadoc of Llancarfan (near Cowbridge), son of king Gwynllw ap Glywys of 'Gwynllwc' (Wentloog near Cardiff) and a princess of Brycheiniog (Brecon), ?founder of that monastery and bishop of the small kingdom of Gwent; he is also linked to foundations in Scotland but this may be later legend or confusion with another man. (Extant hagiography is late C11th, by Llifris of Llancarfan.)

Approximate date of the accession of the most prominent and successful king of early Strathclyde, Rhydderch 'Hael' ('the Generous'), who ruled from the fortress on Dumbarton Rock; he is probably king to the 580s or early 590s.

IRELAND

(or 559?) 'High King' Diarmait summons his sub-rulers for a ritual feast at Tara; the most forceful of the attendant clerics is Columba of Derry, who quarrels with the pro-Diarmait cleric Finnian of Moville over his borrowing a book from the latter's monastery and copying it without permission. Diarmait backs Finnian and says the copy must belong to and go with its 'parent' book, i.e. upholding the owner's right of copy-right. Then Curnan mac Aed, the (royal hostage) son of the king of Connacht, kills a royal steward in a private dispute, breaching the non-violence rules at court, and flees to Columba for help but is arrested by royal officers and executed in defiance of Columba's promise of protection. Columba returns home in a fury to stir up his Northern Ui Niall kin and their neighbours against Diarmait and plan revolt, joined by the executed boy's father king Aed and the other kings in Connacht.

(The 'Annals of Tigernach' date these events a year or two before the 'Annals of Ulster' do; ditto the events of 561).

FRANCIA

December. Rebel Frankish prince Chramn and his patron, king Cunomorus of Armorica (Carhaix), attack the advancing Franks, but are defeated in battle by the Frankish king Chlotar. Cunomorus is killed after failing to persuade Chramn to launch a night-time attack, and Chramn is captured and strangled with his wife and daughters. The Armorican bishops Samson and Paul Aurelian join assorted local rivals of Cunomorus in supporting Chlotar's invasion. Collapse of Cunomorus' cross-Channel realm, as his Breton rivals such as Iudual regain their kingdoms.

561 ITALY

3 March. Death of Pope Pelagius.

17 July. John III consecrated Pope.

SPAIN

1 May. First Church Council of Braga in the kingdom of the Suevi (Portugal region); eight bishops attend and disciplinary measures and the enforcement of Catholic religious doctrine are arranged; 'Priscillianism', a Spanish heresy of the 380s which has re-emerged, is condemned and prosecutions arranged. It is not clear if the pre-eminent missionary bishop of the kingdom, Martin, has yet become archbishop of Braga as he is not mentioned in the decrees, but he is in office before the next Council in 572.

King Ariamir of the Suevi, an Arian like his predecessors, dies and is succeeded by Theodemir some time between the council and 564; the latter is sometimes called the first Catholic king of the Suevi, who converted his Arian elite to the same doctrine as the mostly Catholic ex-Roman populace, but Gregory of Tours and other sources date this conversion a couple of decades after the mid-560s.

IRELAND

(Traditional date, but possibly 559/60) The rebel Northern Ui Niall/Ulster/Connacht coalition, led by Ui Niall ruler Ainmere and Domnhall 'the Deceitful' and his brothers, the sons of the late 'High King' Muirchertach mac Erca (d. 532), and egged on by Columba, defeat 'High King' Diarmait and his allies at the battle of Cuil Dreghni in Co. Sligo. Around 3,000 people are killed. This is subsequently seen as the crucial moment when a centralising 'High Kingship' was permanently blocked by its sub-rulers, aided by the Church. Columba faces criticism for his praying for the rebels' victory and abandoning traditional clerical neutrality. Possibly Diarmait has to recognise Domnhall and his brothers as his heirs to the 'High Kingship' in order to secure his position for his lifetime; this gives their Northern, Ailech branch of the 'Ui Niall' a long-term access to the office for centuries to come.

FRANCIA

December. Death of king Chlotar at Compiègne following a pilgrimage to Tours to pray for forgiveness for all his crimes, aged around sixty; his son Chilperic takes over his treasury and marches on Paris, claiming the entire kingdom, but is driven out by his brothers Sigebert, Charibert and Guntramn.

Charibert takes the kingdom of Paris; Guntramn takes Orleans plus the kingdom of Burgundy; Sigebert takes the kingdom of Theuderic and

his family, based at Rheims; and Chilperic is left with his father's old kingdom, based at Soissons.

561/2 BRITAIN

Approximate date of the revival of the kingdom of Strathclyde in a revolt against its Eastern neighbours in Lothian and 'Bryniach', led by its returning prince Rhydderch who now becomes the region's leading warlord. From the account in the later 'Life of St Kentigern', founding bishop of Glasgow, it would seem that the saint's maternal grandfather 'Leodonus' was the king of Lothian now or possibly in the 530s–40s.

Approximate date of the accession to the kingship of Bernicia of Adda, eldest son of the late founding king Ida; traditionally after a reign of one year or so by his ?kinsman Glappa. He rules for around six or seven years.

562 FRANCIA

The Huns/Bulgars invade Sigebert's Eastern lands and he marches to drive them out; he defeats them and secures a treaty of friendship from their king; in his absence Chilperic attacks and takes his 'capital', Rheims, and on his return he marches to Chilperic's 'capital', Soissons, and takes it with Chilperic's son Theudebert. He holds the latter hostage as he defeats Chilperic and regains the lost territory, and holds Theudebert for a year as guarantor of Chilperic's keeping the peace; before Sigebert releases the prince he extorts an oath from him not to fight him again but this is later breached.

IRELAND

(or 560/1 if the battle of Cuil Dreimni, above, is earlier, or 563) A year or two after Cuil Dreimni, the sons of Muirchertach mac Erca, led by Domnall, round off their establishment of the power of the Northern Ui Niall in central/Southern Ulster with a major defeat (at Moin dair Lothaire) of the indigenous 'Cruithne' peoples, who from their name would seem to be the kin of the Pictish kings of Northern Britain who (later) trace their ancestry back to the kings of pre-Ui Niall Ulster. The victorious 'Cenel nEoghan' and 'Cenel Conaill' branches of the Ui Niall are remembered as taking their distinctive territories in NW Ulster from the 'Cruithne' after this victory. The 'Cenel Conaill' are led by king Baetan mac Ninnid.

563 BRITAIN

St Columba/Columbcille faces a Church Council on account of the bloodshed he caused in the recent civil war and his open praying for the destruction of his enemies at the battle of Cuill Dreimni, which goes against his

supposed Christian pacifism. An initial plan to excommunicate him is blocked by the mediating St Brendan, founding abbot of Birr in Northern Munster (Co. Offaly). According to the tradition of his monastery at Derry, it is agreed that he will do a penance to be determined by St Lasrian of Devenish, a senior figure respected by both his friends and his foes; he is exiled from Ireland but the Council at Teltown avoids excommunicating him so as not to antagonise his own monastic foundations or his royal Ui Niall kin.

Columba promises to win many new souls for the Church to make up for the killing, and leads a party of volunteer missionaries from his monasteries across the sea to Dalriada to set up a monastery on the island of Iona. He receives the backing of the leadership of Dalriada, and starts to convert the Dalriadans to Christianity.

GAUL

Gregory of Tours, the later historian, is ordained as a deacon.

564 IRELAND

(or 565) Death of the neutralised 'High King' Diarmait mac Cearbhall; succeeded by his foes in the recent civil war of 561, Domnhall 'the Deceitful' and Fergus/Forgus the sons of Muirchertach mac Erca.

565 EMPIRE

14 November. Death of Justinian, aged probably eighty-three, takes his relatives by surprise and is only witnessed by a few courtiers and attendants; according to his chamberlain Callinicus he nominated his nephew Justin, married to Theodora's niece Sophia, as his successor, not the more popular (and competent?) son of Germanus, another Justin.

15 November. Justin takes possession of the Palace and issues donative to guards-regiments.

16 November. Justin crowned in Hagia Sophia by Patriarch, is elevated on shield, and distributes largesse; due to Justin's unstable character, Sophia is principal influence on government policy, but the Emperor's mental faculties probably not much impaired for some years.

BRITAIN

ASC: accession of Aethelbert as king of Kent, to allegedly reign for fifty-three years – if true the longest reign in Anglo-Saxon history, though most sources date his death at 616/17 not 618. (He was apparently baptised in 597 in his thirtieth year as king, which complicates matters.) According to the ASC Aethelbert was born in 553; his father and presumed

predecessor was Eormenric, named after the great C4th Gothic steppe ruler Ermaneric which argues for great pretensions in his dynasty. If the reference by Gregory of Tours to Aethelbert receiving his Frankish wife Bertha from her parents is accurate this was before her father Charibert of Paris died in 567, but elsewhere Gregory calls him 'a man of Kent' or 'son of the king of Kent' not 'the king' when he married.

Traditional date for the first missionary journey by St Columba up the Great Glen to the principal residence of king Bridei of the Picts in a rock fortress near Inverness, probably Craig Pdraig. The king is unwelcoming, and allegedly Columba confounds his pagan (Druid?) advisers by performing miracles, stages mass-baptisms in the River Ness, and puts the 'Monster' (on its first recorded appearance) to flight. If Bridei is baptised, his people do not follow him en masse.

BRITAIN/IRELAND

Traditional date for the successful invitation from the Irish Church to the British monastic historian Gildas to come to Ireland and advise the Church on a new disciplinary code and other details of monastic reform. He apparently advises the recruitment of more humbly-born monks and fewer nobles, thus decreasing the risk of the latter embroiling the Church in their own families' elite feuds, and goes to Bangor in Ulster to visit St Comgall for advice and send to Columba on Iona for his opinions too.

Victory by 'High Kings' Fergus and Domnhall at the battle of Gabair Liphi (Annals of Ulster); this is presumably over the 'Laigin' of Leinster.

566

FRANCIA/SPAIN

(or 567?) King Sigebert sends to Athanagild of the Visigoths to arrange to marry his younger daughter Brunhilde, as a propaganda blow to his brother Charibert for divorcing his wife Ingeborg (mother of the later queen Bertha of Kent) and marrying a servant; Brunhilde is an Arian but is converted to Catholicism on her arrival.

Chilperic decides to counter Sigebert, and arranges to marry Athanagild's elder daughter, Galswintha; she also converts, but he resumes a relationship with his divorced wife Fredegund so their marriage is unhappy.

Sigebert is defeated and captured by the Huns/Bulgars on their second invasion of his Eastern lands, but bribes their king to release him; on his return home he attacks his brother Guntramn's lower Rhone valley lands, and his general Audovarius captures Arles; Guntramn sends count Celsus to recapture it, and as Sigebert's men march out of the town to break the siege bishop Sabaudas, their supposed ally, shuts the gates on them; they are trapped and lose heavily as they cross the river to flee, but Guntramn allows Sigebert to keep Avignon.

IRELAND

Deaths of ‘High Kings’ Domnall and Fergus mac Muirchertach in a recurrence of the plague; succeeded by their Northern Irish ally, Ainmere mac Sleat of the Northern branch of the Ui Niall, kings of Ailech – cousin and ally of St Columba, and so backed by his chain of monasteries in Ulster led by Derry. Possibly Ainmere rules with his distant cousin, Baetan mac Ninned of the ‘Cenel Conaill’ branch of the Northern Ui Niall, but this may be medieval rationalisation of the appearance of an unidentified Baetan of Ulster (probably the non-Ui Niall Baetan mac Cairell of the ‘Dal Fiatach’) as ‘High King’ in assuming this must be an Ui Niall prince.

567

EMPIRE

The Avars make a pact with imperial allies, the Lombards under king Alboin, to attack the Gepids; Justin accepts Gepids’ offer of Sirmium and reoccupies the city, but does not intervene as their kingdom is destroyed by the Lombards and king Cunimund is killed in battle by Alboin, who marries his widow Rosamund; the Avars are the principal victors of the collapse of the Gepid kingdom and move in on its Eastern lands around the middle Danube, and the alarmed Lombards decide to emigrate to Italy.

SPAIN

Athanagild’s Visigoths attack Roman-held cities, Seville and Corboda.

March or June. Death of Athanagild after a twelve-year reign; succeeded by his brother, Liuva, who is proclaimed king at Narbonne in the first recorded royal presence there since 531 – possibly a move by Liuva to keep back a threatened advance by his neighbour Guntramn of Burgundy.

FRANCIA

The death of Athanagild is possibly the decisive event that enables his son-in-law, king Chilperic, to abandon, divorce and banish his estranged wife Galswintha and make her predecessor, his past and now restored mistress Fredegund, queen.

Death of king Charibert of Paris; Chilperic, Guntramn and Sigebert divide up his lands. Sigebert is supposed to get Tours and Poitiers, but Chilperic overruns them; Guntramn’s general, count Mummolus, recovers them for Sigebert and drives out Chilperic’s son Clovis, who flees to Bordeaux and in 568 returns to his father via the Auvergne.

Tours is transferred to the kingdom of Sigebert; its governor/count, the oppressive Leudst who his opponent Gregory (the historian) says was the

son of a slave from an island vineyard off the Poitou coast, had backed Chilperic to gain the town so Sigebert sacks him.

ITALY

?*Autumn*. Justin dismisses Narses from command; he retires to Rome.

568

ITALY

Lombards under 'King' Alboin invade North-East Italy *Spring* in mass migration; most of the countryside is overrun and Verona is captured; refugees flee to the Venetian lagoon where? settlement on Rialto Islands founded. Lombard siege of Ticinum follows, along with other isolated towns.

SPAIN

Visigothic king Liuva divides his realm with his brother Leovigild, giving him the Eastern part of Spain – the old Roman province 'Hispania Citerior'. Leovigild is by now married and has two sons, Hermenegild and Recared, and some time after his accession his wife dies and he marries his brother Athaangild's widow Goiswinth, mother of the Frankish queens Brunhilde and Galswintha.

FRANCIA

(Or late 567?) Death of ex-queen Galswintha, abandoned ex-wife of king Chilperic, apparently sudden and violent; traditionally she is supposed to have been strangled by assassins sent by her enemy and successor Fredegund. Certainly her sister Brunhilde subsequently maintains a bloody feud with Fredegund and her family.

BRITAIN

ASC: Ceawlin of the West Saxons/'Gewissae' and his brother or ally Cutha defeat king Aethelbert of Kent at 'Wibba's dun', i.e. 'Wibba's Mount' – probably but not certainly Wimbledon in Surrey – and kill two 'ealdormen' (senior royal officials governing districts). They drive Aethelbert back into Kent – this may mark the emergence of Ceawlin as the pre-eminent ruler in Southern England, as he is referred to by Bede (early 730s) as 'Bretwalda' i.e. some sort of trans-state leader of a coalition.

Approximate date of the death of king Glappa of Bernicia (Northumberland) and accession of his brother Theodric, possibly called after the great Ostrogothic king. He rules for around seven years. An alternative version has his brother Aethelric as the king after Adda, with Theodric not succeeding until the early 570s.

569 ITALY

Lombards under Alboin overrun most of the middle and upper Po valley, followed by Liguria; fall of Milan, the former imperial capital; fall of Genoa.

IRELAND

Death of 'High King' Ainmere of the Northern Ui Niall; succeeded by Baetan.

570 SPAIN

Co-king Leovigild overruns the Roman-held region of Bastetania in the far South and takes Malaga on the coast.

Death of king Theodemir of the Suevi in W Spain; succeeded by Miro, the last powerful king of this kingdom, who is soon allying with the Franks against the threat posed by Leovigild.

ITALY

?Fall of Ticinum to the Lombards; it is governed by their king's formidable henchman Cleph.

FRANCIA

Probable date of the birth of the later king Childebert (II), son of Sigibert of Metz and Brunhilde.

BRITAIN/BRITTANY

(or 572) Traditional date for the death of Gildas, historian/polemicist and monastic leader, probably at his Breton monastery of Rhuys though much later hagiography also links him to Glastonbury in Britain.

571 ITALY

Lombards move South over the Apennines to invade Umbria and Tuscany, and take Spoleto in central Italy; Faroald becomes first 'Duke'.

?Lombards overrun Campania and take Benevento.

SPAIN

Leovigild takes Medina Sidonia; either this year or in 572 he succeeds his brother Liuva as sole king of the Visigoths.

BRITAIN

ASC: Cutha, ally to and possible co-ruler with Ceawlin of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’, defeats the (Chilterns and SE Midlands?) British at the battle of ‘Bedcanford’, possibly Bedford. He takes four British towns – Limbury, Aylesbury, Benson, and Eynsham – which marks the completion of the Saxon conquest of the region of the middle and upper Thames valley. He dies later that year, with Ceawlin presumably taking over his territory and ruling the upper Thames valley – local Dorchester-on-Thames is the main West Saxon royal residence in the early C7th.

572

ITALY

28 *June*. King Alboin of the Lombards, widower of Frankish king Chlotar I’s daughter Chlothsind, is poisoned at his headquarters in Verona, by his senior officer, arms-bearer, and foster-brother Helmichis, assisted by his second wife, Rosamund, whose father king Cunimund of the Gepids he had earlier killed. The imperial authorities in Ravenna are probably behind it, and after Helmichis fails to win over the leading Lombard nobles to accept him as king despite marrying Rosamund, the pair flee to Ravenna; their host, ‘Exarch’ Longinus, later poisons Helmichis and is supposed to have married Rosamund herself but the dying Helmichis poisoned her too.

SPAIN

Visigoths under Leovigild take Cordoba from the Romans.

Second (Catholic) Church Council of Braga in the kingdom of the Suevi; ten bishops attend and archbishop Martin of Braga presides, backed up by the Catholic king Miro.

FRANCIA

Raid on Southern Gaul by some of the Saxons who have entered Northern Italy with the Lombards; they reach Riez, but are confronted and defeated in a surprise attack by the Frankish count Mummolus; they agree to collect their people from Italy and enter the Franks’ service, but en route up the Rhone valley to enter king Sigebert’s lands they are confronted by Mummolus’ army and forced to pay reparations for their en route looting in his lord king Guntramn’s territory.

ITALY

?*Autumn*. The Lombard ‘dukes’ elect their most formidable warrior, ‘duke’ Cleph of Ticinum, as their new king.

BRITAIN

(or 573) Possible date for Theodric, a younger son of the founding king Ida, succeeding his brother Aethelric, who has reigned for four years after the reign of their eldest brother Adda (ruled c. 560/1–8?). But if these early kings ‘overlapped’ as rulers this date may be out by several years. Theodric reigns for around seven years, probably under pressure from the Britons of Rheged under Urien/Urbgen.

IRELAND

Baetan mac Cairell, the new head of the ‘Ulaid’ dynastic coalition of Ulster that aided St Columba in bringing down ‘High King’ Diarmait and centralisation in 561, succeeds his elder brother Demmain, and also becomes ‘High King’ (to 581).

Baetan mac Muirchertach (son of ‘High King’ Muirchertach mac Eraca, who d. 534) king of Ailech and head of the Northern branch of the Ui Niall since 566, and his nephew and co-ruler Eochaid mac Domnhall (acceded 569), are killed in battle by Cronan mac Tigernaig, the head of the ‘Ciannachta’ dynasty of Glenn Gemhain/Glengiven (Co. Londonderry) in Ulster.

Approximate date of the battle of Feimin between the men of Munster, led by king Coipre ‘Cromm’, and the encroaching Ui Niall of Midhe – specifically the ‘Clann Colman’ branch led by Colman ‘Bec’ (‘the Younger’), probable second son of the late ‘High King’ Diarmait Ua Cearbhall. Munster is victorious and halts Southwards Ui Niall expansion.

Approximate date of the death of St Brendan, founding abbot of Birr (Co. Offaly) and older contemporary of St Columba.

573

SPAIN

Leovigild turns his attention to extending his power over inland Western Spain; he overruns the autonomous region of Sabaria (probably around Salamanca) and defeats the ‘Sappi’ people.

FRANCIA

?Guntramn and Sigibert quarrel again and a council called by the bishops at Paris fails to end their disputes; Chilperic joins in to attack Sigibert and regain his lost earlier seizures of Tours and Poitiers, and they are

retaken for him by his son Theudebert despite the latter's earlier oath not to attack Sigibert. Count Gundovald is defeated and Theudebert ravages the Limousin.

BRITAIN

Date in the 'Annales Cambriae' (950s) for the great battle of 'Arderydd', probably Arthuret near Carlisle, the 'conflict over a lark's nest' (i.e. Caerlaverock, 'Fortress of the Lark'). This is between two rival coalitions of the princes of Rheged (Cumbria and Lancashire), led by Gwendolleu of Carlisle and Urien/Urbgen ap Llew; both are supposed to be descendants of the fifth-century over-king of the North recorded in medieval Welsh genealogies, Coel 'Hen' ('the Old'). Urien wins and becomes the most prominent war-leader in Northern Britain, celebrated by his bard Llywarch 'Hen' ('the Old'), son of the late ruler Elidyr/Eleutherius of ?Lancashire. In early Welsh poetry, one witness and a possible cause of the battle is the mystic bard and 'shaman'/poet Myrddin, aka 'Merlin' (a name invented for him by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 1130s), whose sister was allegedly mistress of Gwendolleu.

Myrddin traditionally went mad as a result of the carnage which he believed his intrigues (?stirring up Gwendolleu to attack his neighbours) had caused, and fled into the forests of Southern Scotland to live as a hermit with his pet pig; he was also conflated with a pagan 'shaman' hermit, Llalogen ('Twin'), referred to in the hagiography of the contemporary founding bishop of Glasgow, St Kentigern.

FRANCIA

Death of bishop Eufronius of Tours; his first cousin's son Gregory of Tours, the historian, succeeds him as bishop, being elected then approved by king Sigibert; 20 August Gregory is ordained bishop.

574

ITALY/FRANCIA

Cleph the Lombard king is assassinated after an eighteen-month reign by a slave he has been abusing, and is remembered by Roman sources as a warlike tyrant fond of atrocities; his son Authari is denied the kingship in a probable reaction to his centralisation, as up to thirty rival Lombard commanders ('Dukes'), led by a group ruling the Po valley and Ligurian towns, divide his lands and rule jointly. This period lasts for ten years according to the C8th history of Paul 'the Deacon', twelve years according to others.

13 July. Death of Pope John III; Benedict elected successor but long wait for imperial confirmation.

Amo, Zaban and Rodan lead a Lombard invasion of Southern Gaul, and count Mummolus defeats the latter at Grenoble; Rodan and the survivors of his force flee to join Zaban at Valence, who retreats on news of the disaster, and they are all driven back into Italy.

Sigibert prepares for war on Chilperic, but the latter secures help from their brother Guntramn; Sigibert attacks Chilperic's lands but cannot cross the Seine so he sends a message to Guntramn to let him across his lands or face attack; Guntramn gives in and Sigibert marches on to confront Chilperic near Chartres. Facing defeat, the latter opens talks and returns the disputed area to Sigibert.

SPAIN

Leovigild recovers Cantabria in N Spain for the Visigoths; this precedes an embassy by his alarmed local neighbour Miro of the Suevi to king Guntramn for help, but en route at Paris they are reported to and arrested by Leovigild's stepson-in-law and ally, king Chilperic; he lets them go a year later.

EMPIRE/ITALY

(Or 575) Fall of the N Italian Adriatic port of Classis, dominating the mouth of the Po, to the Lombard commander 'duke' Faroald of Spoleto; its Suevic or Alemannic commander for the Empire, Droctulf, is imprisoned but later released and returns to imperial service to defend the imperial territories around Ravenna.

7 December. After an attack of apparent insanity, Justin is persuaded to make guard-commander Tiberius 'Caesar' and thus formal deputy by his wife Sophia; his authority confirmed but he does not move into Palace as Sophia will not tolerate his wife Ino.

BRITAIN

Death of king Conall mac Comgall of Dalriada, after a sixteen-year reign (Annals of Ulster); succeeded by his cousin Aedan mac Gabhran, whose selection is said to have been masterminded by St Columba with angelic guidance according to the latter's biographer Adomnan. Columba anoints Aedan as king to demonstrate divine and Church support, in the manner of the Old Testament Prophet Samuel's anointing of king Saul.

575

ITALY

2 June. Benedict I consecrated Pope after imperial approval.

Justin's son-in-law Baduarius sent to Ravenna with new army to attack Lombards.

FRANCIA

Chilperic forgives Guntramn for his betrayal, and with him secured he then attacks Sigibert's realm and ravages around Rheims; Sigibert collects his Eastern troops and advances to Paris, and then sends his officers to the upper Loire to intimidate the locals into joining them in attacking Chilperic's son Theudebert; the latter is defeated and killed, and with Guntramn abandoning him again Chilperic takes refuge with his family at Tournai. Chilperic's nobles in the kingdom of Paris offer to recognise Sigibert as their king if he will come to be acclaimed by them, and he prepares to attack his brother in Tournai, ignoring a plea to be merciful by bishop Germanus.

Sigibert goes to the royal 'vill' at Vitry and is acclaimed as king of the Paris realm. But before he can march on Tournai he is assassinated by dagger-wielding attackers sent by Chilperic's queen, Fredegund, aged forty. Chilperic is able to survive as king, and emerges from Tournai to take charge of Sigibert's funeral.

Tours returns to Chilperic's kingdom; he restores his unpopular partisan, count Leudast, as its governor.

SPAIN

Leovigild recovers Galicia in NW Spain for the Visigoths and defeats its ruler, Aspidius, possibly a local Hispano-Roman landowner, who is captured with his wife and treasure.

BRITAIN/IRELAND

King Aedan mac Gabhran of Dalriada visits Ireland, possibly at the instigation of his adviser St Columba, to meet the latter's cousin Aed mac Ainmere, king of the Northern (Ailech) branch of the Ui Niall, at the 'Convention of Druim Ceatt' and arrange an alliance against their mutual foe, king Baetan mac Cairell of the 'Dal Fiatach' in Ulster. It is also agreed that the princes of Dal Riata in Eastern coastal Ulster, over whom Aedan has secured overlordship, can stay as his vassals but still owe military service to Aed – who may be 'High King' by this point. This conference may follow a naval conflict between Baetan and Aedan over control of the Isle of Man or the Southern Irish Sea in general, and one version has it that Aedan has had to accept Baetan as his overlord when he first became king to ward off attack. (Alternative dating for the conference is 587, but by then Baetan was probably dead.)

Death of king Aed mac Each of Connacht, after an eighteen or nineteen-year reign; succeeded by his son Uatu, at least as head of the 'Ui Briuin' sub-dynasty and probably as king of Connacht though not all sources use the latter term for him. He reigns for twenty-five years to 600.

FRANCIA

25 *December*. Sigibert's son, the boy Childebert aged five, is acclaimed as king by the magnates of his father's kingdom at Paris, assembled by duke Gundovald; Chilperic persists in trying to seize the realm and soon arrives at Paris to seize Sigibert's widow Brunhilde, who he banishes to Rouen, and the royal treasure.

576

FRANCIA

Chilperic's general Roccolen takes Tours, and then (Easter) the king's son (by Audofleda) Merovech is sent to Poitou but dallies en route to loot. He then proceeds to Rouen to rescue and have an affair with queen Brunhilde, who is his aunt-by-marriage but the chief foe of his stepmother Fredegund who has been trying to eliminate him to gain the throne for her own sons. Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen agrees to marry them though this is against canon law; Chilperic quickly arrives with an army to capture Brunhilde and arrests but pardons his son. Praetextatus is put on trial before a synod of bishops on Chilperic's orders, and the historian bishop Gregory of Tours speaks up for him; he is acquitted.

The loyalists of the young Childebert attack Chilperic's capital of Soissons where his wife Fredegund and son Clovis are, but he drives them off; he forces his errant son Merovech to take religious orders to ban him from the succession as Fredegund wants, and exiles him to a monastery in Le Mans, but the young man escapes with the aid of the noble Guntramn Boso and takes sanctuary at St Martin's church at Tours; Gregory refuses to hand him over to Chilperic as ordered.

Guntramn's commander Mummolus defeats Chilperic's commander Desiderius in a war over the NW Auvergne region.

ITALY

Baduarius succeeds in bringing Lombards to battle but is defeated and killed.

SPAIN

Leovigild marches to the frontier with the Suevic kingdom, the lower Douro valley, and founds the new fortress town of 'Villa Gothorum' (Toro); the alarmed king Miro sends envoys to sue for peace, which is granted – possibly on the terms of vassalage.

IRELAND

Death of king Colman 'Mor' mac Coipre of Leinster after a thirty-year reign; succeeded by his son Aed 'Dubh'.

577

FRANCIA

Brunhilde assumes the regency of Austrasia for her son Childebert II.

The war between Childebert's partisans, Guntramn and Chilperic continues; Chilperic ravages the territory of Tours in punishment for the giving of sanctuary to Merovech, who moves on to Eastern Francia but fails to interest the local elite in backing him against his father.

Guntramn's sons Chlotar and Chlodomir die of dysentery, leaving him without heirs; he agrees to meet his nephew Childebert and they do so at the 'Stone Bridge' at Neufchatel in the Vosges to arrange a peace-treaty. Guntramn recognises Childebert as his heir, probably as arranged by Brunhilde in a move aimed at their kingdoms confronting her foes, Fredegund and Chilperic.

BRITAIN

ASC: Ceawlin and his allied commander Cuthwine (possibly his son from the ASC genealogies) defeat the Cotswolds region British in a major battle at 'Deorham', probably Dyrham at the Western edge of the Cotswold escarpment near Bristol. Three British kings – Condidan, Coinmail and Farinmail – are killed and the towns of Bath (Roman 'Aquae Sulis'), Cirencester ('Corinium'), and Gloucester ('Glevum') are conquered and annexed to the kingdom. It is not certain that these kings are the rulers of these towns as opposed to neighbours who had come to help them, but in any case it appears that the West Saxon kingdom from this point includes the Cotswolds and the lower Severn valley. Saxon settlement remains limited, and possibly Ceawlin rules an ethnically mixed realm.

IRELAND

Probable date of the death of king Coipre 'Cromm' of Munster, after a reign of either thirty or seventeen years (i.e. in the latter case interrupted by a rival?) from c. 542; succeeded by his son, Fedlimid mac Coipre. Other versions of the annals include another man, Fergus 'Scandal' mac Crimthann (founder of the 'Eoganacht Airthir Cliach', i.e. the eastern branch of the Eoganacht based at Cliu in East Leinster), as king so they may be rivals.

Approximate date of the death of St Brendan 'the Voyager', founder of the monastery of Clonfert, while staying with his sister in Annaghdown, Co. Galway; allegedly aged around ninety.

578

EMPIRE/ITALY

4/5 October. Death of the deranged Emperor Justin II, aged ?fifty-eight. Tiberius succeeds and remits a quarter of taxes for each of next four years but over-stretches imperial expenditure. Rome sends Pamphronius as envoy to Tiberius' coronation appealing for aid and is advised to use their

taxes to bribe Lombards to fight each other; Sophia fails to persuade Tiberius to divorce Ino and marry her and is expelled from palace for plot; retires to own palace near Harbour of Sophia.

‘Duke’ Faroald of Spoleto attacks Ravenna and takes its port, Classis.

?St Benedict’s monks at Monte Cassino driven out by Lombards.

FRANCIA

Chilperic sends troops from his Western dominions around the Loire valley to attack the Breton king Waroch, son of Macliavus, who has occupied Vannes; the Bretons rout the Franks’ Saxon troops by a surprise attack on their camp and three days later Waroch comes to terms with the invading commanders; he hands over his son as hostage, pays tribute and surrenders Vannes in return for a promise of being made its governor.

579 EMPIRE

Avars cross Danube to encircle Sirmium and demand its surrender; Tiberius refuses so it is starved out.

ITALY

Summer. ‘Duke’ Faroald of Spoleto besieges Rome; Byzantines send grainships from Egypt, but famine soon spreads and *30 July* Pope Benedict dies; Pelagius, of Gothic family, elected Pope and ordained before *November* arrival of imperial ratification; Pelagius sends his trusted deacon Gregory as ‘Aprocrisarius’ to Constantinople; he is advised to bribe Lombards and no troops.

SPAIN

(St) Leander, son of the ?Romano-Hispanic official Severianus of Cartagena, becomes bishop of Seville; he takes a lead in attempting to convert the Visigothic royal family from Arianism to Christianity, concentrating on king Leovigild’s eldest son Hermenegild, who around this date becomes governor of the South and is based at Seville, with the help of the latter’s new and Catholic wife Ingund the Frank. His brothers are (St) Isidore, the leading scholar, lexicographer, and educator, and bishop Fulgentius of Cartagena.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the conquest of ?Skye and Orkney by the expanding power of Dalriada under king Aedan mac Gabhran; logically a new or expanded Dalriada fleet is involved, with the backing of ‘High King’ Aed mac Ainmere in Northern Ireland, and the campaign involves the defeat of the Northern Picts.

IRELAND

(or 580: alternative date) Death of Coipre mac Crimthann, king of Munster and grandson of the early C6th ruler Eochaid; succeeded by his cousin Fergus mac Crimthann.

580

SPAIN

Visigothic king Leovigild persecutes the Catholics at the behest of his wife Goiswinth, widow of the late king Athanagild; Gregory of Tours had it that she also abuses and beats up her new step daughter-in-law Ingund, daughter of king Sigibert the Frank and wife of her stepson Hermenegild, for refusing to convert to Arianism. Leovigild allows Hermenegild and his wife to assume power as sub-rulers in the South, and Ingund persuades her husband to turn Catholic. A general rebellion of Southern Catholics follows against the Arian persecutions, and is joined by Hermenegild at Ingund's suggestion; they send to the Romans to assist them and ask Emperor Tiberius for troops, possibly inspired by the local Catholic leader bishop Leander of Seville who has Eastern religious connections.

Hermenegild obtains imperial troops from the Roman 'enclave' to aid him and the revolt secures the South of Spain to the Guadalquivir river.

ITALY

Lombard 'Duke' Zotto of Benevento besieges Naples and sacks Monte Cassino.

FRANCIA

Floods in the Auvergne and an epidemic of dysentery follows; Chilperic's two younger sons die in the epidemic, the elder (Chlodobert) at the shrine of St Medard at Soissons where he is carried to get the Saint to intercede for him, despite their mother Fredegund burning all the unpaid tax-demands made by her officials in her 'morning-gift' lands and persuading her husband to do the same for his tax-demands to show his repentance; Guntramn's homicidal wife Austrechild also dies.

Chilperic sacks count Leudast of Tours for misrule and replaces him with Ansovald; Luedast tells the king that his foe bishop Gregory (the historian) is planning to hand Tours over to Guntramn, and Gregory is summoned to the royal 'vill' at Berny-Riviere to be tried but is acquitted.

Chilperic's bereaved mistress/wife Fredegund persuades him to arrest and exile his surviving son Clovis, her adult stepson so a threat to any more children she will have, accusing him of plotting against her at the behest of his lover whose 'witch' mother caused the deaths of her boys; he is murdered while interned at Noisy-le-Grand, which Fredegund pretends is suicide, and his mother Audivera, Chilperic's ex-mistress, is killed too.

SPAIN

Death of St Martin, archbishop of Braga, after what Gregory of Tours calls a thirty-year episcopate in the Suevic kingdom (i.e. from c. 550).

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of king Rhun ap Iaelgwyn of Gwynedd and accession of his son Beli.

Around this date king Brochwael 'of the Tusks' (?a boar's tusk helmet) is king of Powys, having succeeded his father Cyngen 'the Renowned'; his exact dates are unknown but his renown implies that he probably outranked the little-known Beli of Gwynedd as a military leader and extended the 'reach' of Powys to the Cheshire region. By the time of the battle of Chester c. 615 it is Powys, not Gwynedd, which is the local military power.

IRELAND

Revolt against 'High King' Aed mac Ainmere, of the Northern (Ailech) branch of the Ui Niall, by his cousin Colcu mac Domnhall, son of the late 'High King' Domnhall (d. 566?) and grandson of Muirchertach mac Erca; he is currently king of Ailech, probably since 572. He is defeated and killed at the battle of Druim mac Erce/Drumhirk (Co. Tyrone).

581

FRANCIA

Childebert forms an alliance with Chilperic against Guntramn; death of his effective regent, Gogo, who is succeeded by Wandrenen. Count Mummolus flees from his employer Guntramn to Avignon; duke Lupus of Champagne in Childebert's kingdom, an ally of queen Brunhilde (Childebert's mother) and opponent of the aristocratic faction wanting to limit royal power in that kingdom, is threatened with attack and destruction by the aristocratic faction leaders Ursio and Berthefried but Brunhilde stops an armed conflict between them. Lupus flees to Guntramn's realm to 'sit out' the regency.

Childebert threatens Guntramn if he does not hand over that half of Marseilles which he received on the death of Childebert's father Sigibert; he sends Gundovald to secure the city after Guntramn refuses to co-operate, and Gundovald evades Guntramn's attempts to block him from crossing his lands and reaches Marseilles; he and bishop Theodore succeed in outwitting Guntramn's governor Dynamius. Dynamius recognises Childebert as his lord, but after Gundovald goes home he tries to ruin Theodore in retaliation and lays charges against him resulting in a trial at Guntramn's court; Theodore is acquitted and Guntramn blames Childebert for the episode so they are soon at war again.

BRITAIN

Second possible date, following Gregory of Tours, for the marriage of king Aethelbert of Kent to the Frankish princess, Bertha, daughter of the late king Charibert of Paris (d. 567). It is unclear in Gregory's account if Aethelbert was yet king of Kent or if he was reigning with his father, but the Saxon versions claim that he had ruled since c. 565. A Christian chaplain, Liudhard, accompanies Bertha to Kent and is granted a church (?St Martin's at Canterbury), so the Catholic presence there in fact commenced before the Papal mission of 597, unlike what Bede says. Bede seems to 'whitewash' Liudhard's mission from his history, as not directed by Rome but also as unsuccessful in mass-conversions.

Bede refers to a king 'Frithuwulf', not in the dynastic genealogies, as king of Bernicia when a Christian mission landed in Kent – he says this is the mission of St Augustine in 597, but by then Aethelfrith was definitely reigning so this may be a mistake for the mission of Liudhard. In that case, Frithuwulf may have succeeded Theodric, Aethelfrith's uncle, c. 580, or else been a local co-ruler with him or his successor at this date.

IRELAND

Probable date of the death of Baetan mac Cairell, greatest king of the 'Dal Fiatach' of Ulster, current king of the Ulster over-kingship of the 'Ulaid', and rival for local predominance in N Ireland of the Ui Niall ruler Aed mac Ainmere of Allech; he may also have been 'High King' of Ireland for a time, logically the 570s, but this is unclear and is disputed by later, pro-Ui Niall historians. The eclipse of the Dal Fiatach at the hands of the Ui Niall follows; the kingship of the Dal F goes to his late brother Demmain's son Fiachna who holds it until 627.

582

SPAIN

War between Leovigild and Hermenegild, the latter backed by the Empire, continues in the South; fall of Merida to Leovigild which turns the tide in his favour.

EMPIRE

Fall of Sirmium.

Gundobald the Frankish pretender sent to Provence to try to take kingdom.

Tiberius falls seriously ill *Summer*; Tiberius betroths general Maurice to his daughter Constantina and makes him 'Caesar', and considers re-creating Western Empire for Germanus 'Postumus'.

6 *August*. Maurice marries Constantina.

13 *August*. Tiberius crowns Maurice.

14 *August*. Tiberius dies aged ?fifty-five.

BRITAIN

King Aedan of Dalriada overruns the ?Isle of Man; his eldest son and heir Artuir (a candidate to be part of the inspiration for the legend of, or called after, 'King Arthur') is killed in battle against the Maetae tribe on the Antonine Wall near the Firth of Forth.

IRELAND

King Fergus 'Scandal' of Munster is killed in battle by the Leinstermen, probably reflecting the encroachment of his 'Eoganacht Airthir Cliach' branch of the ruling dynasty into Southern Leinster. Traditionally this leads to Munster forcing Leinster to hand over the border district of Osraige/Ossory as the 'blood-price', but this may be later myth. Fergus is succeeded as king by Fedlimid mac Tigernach, head of the obscure 'Raithlind' branch of the 'Eoganacht' who are named after their base near Bandon, Co. Cork and are descended from Echu, son of early C5th king Conall 'Corc's predeceasing son Mac Cass. Possibly Fedlimid mac Coipre of the more prominent 'Glendamna' branch is also ruling as co-king or a rival, to 596; traditionally Fedlimid marries Coipre's widow Cumann to add to his legitimacy.

583 EMPIRE

Avar war after failed demand for increase in subsidy from 80,000 to 100,000 'nomismata' per annum.

SPAIN

Leovigild sends a bribe to the Roman commander of Hermenegild's army's allies from the Roman enclave in S Spain to go home, and then attacks his son's reduced armies.

Leovigild besieges rebel Seville, and Miro the Suevic king arrives with an army either to help or to attack him – the latter is more probable given their bad relations and Miro's search for Francian allies against Leovigild. The two kings hold a peace-conference, and according to Gregory of Tours Miro agrees to go home but dies when he arrives there, probably after contracting dysentery from the bad water in Baetica. Isidore of Seville alleges that Miro died in camp outside Seville before leaving. Leovigild takes Seville and exiles bishop Leander (possibly to Constantinople or Rome) as an ally of Hermenegild; Miro is succeeded by his teenage son by Sisegutia, Eboric.

FRANCIA

Childebert comes of age, aged probably thirteen; end of Brunhilde's regency. He sends bishop Egidius to Chilperic to arrange an alliance against Guntramn, which is agreed; Chilperic tells the embassy that Guntramn was involved in Childebert's father Sigibert's killing.

Chilperics general Bladast attacks Guntramn's city of Bourges from the NW with the Loire valley troops, while Desiderius attacks from the S; the Bourges citizens' army is defeated in a bloody battle and the city is besieged, and the region is ravaged; Guntramn marches to confront the invaders but neither side is confident of victory and a truce is patched up; the two kings march home again. Meanwhile Childebert and his army are inactive, and the fact that his subjects' lands are being pillaged by his rivals while he does nothing leads to a mutiny when he abandons the campaign; his minister, bishop Egidius, has to flee the camp on horseback to avoid being lynched.

IRELAND

Death of king Fergus of Munster; succeeded by his late first cousin and predecessor Coipre's son Fedelmid (rules for under a decade?).

584

SPAIN

Hermenegild abandons his outnumbered army and takes sanctuary in a nearby church, and Leovigild sends his brother Reccared to him to lure him out with a promise of safety. He is received 'warmly' by his father in public but is later seized and sent off in chains to the capital, Toledo, and then exiled.

Visigothic rebellion ends, but Frankish wife Ingund takes refuge in Roman territory. Leovigild reportedly bans all Catholic worship, or so later Catholic writers claim.

King Endeco of the Suevi is deposed and put in a monastery by his mother Sisegutia's new husband, the noble Andeca.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

King Chilperic agrees to marry his daughter Rigunth to Leovigild's second son and now heir, Reccared, but changes his mind after his surviving, infant son Theuderic dies. At Easter, Leovigild's envoy Oppila visits Chilperic to give him rich gifts and ward off any Frankish attack on him over the ruin of Hermenegild (who Gregory of Tours implies is still alive, in exile in Valencia, at this point) and exile of Ingund. Some time after this, according to Gregory, Hermenegild is killed by his father's agents.

Guntramn returns his half of Marseilles to his nephew Childebert to end their dispute over it. This alarms Chilperic into taking measures to prepare for an attack by either or both of them.

Birth of Chilperic and Fredegund's youngest son Chlotar (II), soon to succeed his father.

ITALY

Paid 50,000 'nomismata' by Maurice's envoys, Frankish king Childebert invades Northern Italy and defeats Lombards; their divided leadership, a collection of regional 'dukes', elect the late king Cleph's son Authari as king to lead resistance and pay the Franks to leave. The 'dukes' grant Authari half of the lands and revenues of each of their dukedoms/towns to maintain his rule. Smaragdus is made 'Exarch'; he ransoms captive Lombard dukes for territory and grants the crucial town of Brescello to his German commander Droctulf who subsequently fights Authari.

FRANCIA

(or 583) Unsuccessful imposture of a pretender, Gundovald, who claims to be the son of king Chlotar I (d. 561) who in fact has disowned him decades earlier when his first imposture led to king Childebert I (d. 558) taking him up and sending him to Chlotar. Exiled to Cologne and shorn of his 'Merovingian' long hair, he now returns from Constantinople with possible Roman support and is apparently backed by a faction of local nobles opposed to king Guntramn, including count Guntramn Boso; Gundovald is received firstly at Avignon by Mummolus and then at Arles by bishop Theodore, and Guntramn Boso arrests the latter on the king's orders but Theodore is able to argue that he only followed orders from leading nobles. Gundovald retires to the nearby islands, and the count seizes his treasure for himself. Later the count is arrested by king Guntramn for being the pretender's secret backer, and accuses Mummolus of being the mastermind and goes to arrest him at Avignon instead; Childebert intervenes and takes Mummolus into custody but releases him later.

IRELAND

5 or 15 *April*. Death of (St) Ruadhan of Lorrha, Tipperary; a native of Leinster and either the founding abbot of that monastery or its second abbot after its founder St Brendan ('the Navigator') moved to Clonfert.

BRITAIN

ASC: Ceawlin and 'Cutha' (probably a mistake for 'Cuthwine', his son) fight against the British at 'Fethan leag' ('Battle Wood'), identified by

modern experts as probably Stoke Lyne. Cutha is killed, and Ceawlin ravages enemy territory and takes ‘countless towns and war-loot’; but then ‘turns in anger back to his own country’. This suggests some form of defeat, and probably checks his expansion Northwards. John Morris has linked this campaign to an equally obscure war in South Wales around this time when an invading force of Saxons was defeated near Tintern in the Wye valley but the British commander, ex-king Theodoric/Tewdrig of the Silures (Glamorgan), was killed – but the date of this is unclear.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

1 September. Arrival of a Visigothic embassy to collect Chilperic’s daughter Rigunth for her postponed marriage to prince Reccared; Chilperic is accused of robbing the citizens of the lands he has taken from his brother Guntramn as well as his own long-term subjects to make up the amount of treasure and other gifts promised as the dowry, leading to plots against him by some of those affected. After his daughter’s entourage leaves for Spain, Chilperic goes hunting at his estate at Chelles and is suddenly assassinated by a lone attacker in the woods, aged probably in his mid-forties. He is buried at the church of St Vincent in Paris.

Disorder breaks out across Chilperic’s realm, with only an infant (Chlotar II) to succeed him; the king’s widow, Fredegund, takes refuge with part of his treasure in Paris on the cathedral island with bishop Ragnemod, while many of the senior officials desert to Childebert at Meaux; Fredegund invites Guntramn to help her as Chlotar’s guardian, and he arrives in Paris before Childebert can do so; Childebert follows and proposes an alliance, but Guntramn accuses him of plotting with Chilperic to depose him and produces written evidence; Guntramn also refuses to hand over Fredegund, and the great men of the kingdom accept him as regent; he returns assorted property which Chilperic had stolen to the owners.

Hearing of Chilperic’s death, the royal minister/general Desiderius abandons his mission escorting princess Rigunth to Spain, steals most of her treasure, and hurries off to join his ally Mummolus and collect the pretender Gundovald, supposed son of Chlotar I; *?December* they proclaim him as king near Limoges.

Guntramn drives out Childebert’s partisans and officials from those towns and cities that used to be part of Charibert of Paris’ realm (to 567) but were then taken over by Sigebert and have passed to Childebert. These then form part of the reason why a peace-conference between Guntramn and envoys from Childebert breaks up amidst insults, along with Childebert’s attempts to get Fredegund handed over for her past crimes and accusations of Childebert’s ministers encouraging Gundovald’s plots.

The unpopular Fredegund is sent away from Paris to exile at the estate of Rueil near Rouen by Guntramn to placate popular anger, and allegedly

tries to have her triumphant rival Brunhilde (Childebert's mother) assassinated.

585

FRANCIA/ITALY

Frankish king Childebert of Austrasia raids Lombardy ?again Roman/Lombard truce.

Chilperic's ex-treasurer, Eberic, accused by his enemy Fredegund of being behind Chilperic's assassination, has taken refuge from Guntramn's officers in the sanctuary of St Martin at Tours; he is murdered there by an agent sent by Guntramn after failure to persuade him to leave.

Guntramn attacks and takes Poitiers; Gundovald the pretender sends around demanding oaths of allegiance to Childebert from all the cities and towns that Sigibert used to rule (i.e. the Eastern Francian realm/ 'Austrasia') and from all other places, in Guntramn's and Chlotar's realms, to himself; he marches via Angoulême on Toulouse and then Bordeaux, but is attacked by Guntramn's army, now in Poitiers; Gundovald sends envoys to Guntramn challenging him to a battle to see who is backed by God as the legitimate king and to try to subvert his followers, but they are indiscreet about the latter and are seized; Guntramn promises to Childebert that the latter will be his heir in order to win over his backers for a joint stand.

Lent/March. Desiderius abandons Gundovald's cause, but Mummolus and other great nobles are still with him as he retires South and makes a stand at St Bertrand-de-Commignes on the upper Garonne; he is besieged by Guntramn's army under Leudegisel, and after sixteen days the pretender's officers are forced to surrender to avoid attack, supposedly being promised their lives. Badulf has escaped, but Mummolus and his ally bishop Sagittarius trick Gundovald into surrendering; he is promptly killed, and their execution follows. The treasure his partisans stole from princess Riginth is recovered and given to Guntramn by Leudegisel.

Church Council at Valence, summoned by Guntramn.

Arrival in Brittany (at St Malo) of a new Irish Catholic mission of twelve monks to convert pagans on the Continent, led by St Columbanus (born 543) who has been educated under St Comgall at the Ulster monastery of Bangor; they later move on to Burgundy to be welcomed by king Guntramn and settle in the forested Vosges mountains as a 'retreat' from the sinful lay world.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

King Leovigild invades the Suevic kingdom, where the new king Andeca is regarded as a usurper and is probably short of support; he ravages the kingdom, captures and kills Andeca, and annexes it to the Visigothic kingdom. This marks the effective reunion of the peninsular under one

authority for the first time since the Germans arrived there in 411, except for the Basque region which holds out.

?*Autumn*. Attack on Septimania and ravaging around Nîmes and Carcassonne by Guntramn's troops from Francia.

586

FRANCIA/SPAIN

24 February. Assassination of bishop Praetextatus of Rouen in his own cathedral, arranged by his foe queen Fredegund who has probably targeted him ever since he married her stepson and foe Merovech to her enemy Brunhilde in an attempt to counter her power over Chilperic; she has also been trying to send murderers to kill her rival Brunhilde and the latter's son king Childebert (now resident at Coblenz) but could not breach their security.

Visigothic peace-mission to Guntramn.

Guntramn hands over Albi to his nephew Childebert; its governor duke Desiderius fears the latter king's vengeance for his betraying his father king Sigebert, so he leaves and heads for Carcassonne to take it from the Visigoths for himself; he is defeated and killed.

?Foundation of the monastery of Annegray in an abandoned Roman fortress in the Vosges mountains by St Columbanus' Irish mission.

21 April. Death of king Leovigild; succeeded by his surviving son, Reccared. The latter son recalls bishop Leander of Seville and ends the persecution of the Catholics to unify the country.

EMPIRE/ITALY

(or 585) Probable date of Authari the Lombard capturing the imperial commander Droctulf and his headquarters at Brescello, given that Droctulf reappears as an imperial commander at Thessalonica later that year; now or in 587 Authari sweeps South through Apulia to Southern Italy, the first Lombard penetration there, with boasts that he will take Calabria which are not fulfilled.

Future Pope Gregory returns to Rome from East and becomes Pope Pelagius' secretary and effective lieutenant.

IRELAND

Baetan mac Ninneda, king of the 'Cenel Conaill' branch of the Northern Uí Níall of Ailech (i.e. the alleged family of Conall son of Níall, ruling in 'Tír Conaill'/Tyrconnel), possibly 'High King' in the late 560s, is killed at Leim at the instigation of his Southern Uí Níall rival of Midhe, Colman 'Bec'.

587 | FRANCIA/SPAIN

January. In Spain, king Reccared announces the toleration of the state for Catholicism and converts himself; he subsequently calls an informal assembly of the country's Arian and Catholic bishops for debates, and now or in 588/9 proposes that the kingdom will be converted, which sparks off Arian resistance especially in Septimania where archbishop Athaloc of Narbonne promotes rebellion; preparations begin for a Church Council to formalise the conversion of the kingdom.

Reccared and his stepmother Goiswinth agree to send peace-envoys to the Frankish kings, but Guntramn, who has already raided Septimania earlier in the 580s, refuses to receive them; Childebert does agree to peace.

Sunna, the Arian bishop of Merida in Southern Spain, plots to kill the Catholic bishop Masona and 'duke' Claudius, loyalist governor of the local ex-Roman province of 'Lusitania', and out the Arian noble Segga on Reccared's throne; the plot is betrayed by one of the conspirators, Witteric, and Segga has his hands cut off (punishment for usurpers) and is banished to Galicia. Most of the conspirators have their property confiscated but are spared; plotter Vagrila takes refuge in the church of Merida, and Claudius agrees to hand him, his family, and his possessions over to the local Catholic church under bishop Masona rather than violate sanctuary. Masona releases Vagrila and returns his family and possessions.

13 August. Death of St/queen Radegund, widow of Chlotar I, as nun at her own nunnery at Poitiers; the historian Gregory of Tours, as its bishop, attends her funeral.

September. Guntramn is nearly assassinated at Mass in a church in Chalons-sur-Saone on the feast of St Marcellus.

Birth of the later king Theuderic, second son of king Childebert and queen Faileuba.

The Visigoths raid the lower Rhone valley and sack Beaucaire in retaliation for Guntramn's attack on Septimania.

Duke Rauching plans to murder king Childebert so he and his cronies can seize the king's infant sons Theudebert and Theuderic and rule as regents; this follows Guntramn declaring Childebert 'of age' and may involve hostility to the danger of a return to influence by Brunhilde, and Rauching's supporters include partisans of Chlotar II, son of Brunhilde's enemy Fredegund. Guntramn finds out and alerts Childebert; he summons Rauching on a pretext and when he arrives (25 October, feast of Saints Crispin and Crispinian) has him killed on the spot at an interview. The suspected senior minister duke Guntramn Boso hears he is to be arrested and takes refuge in Verdun cathedral, and its bishop Ageric, the godfather of king Childebert, intercedes for him so a decision on his fate is postponed. Guntramn Boso's past insults to Brunhilde are a factor in her son Childebert's hostility.

28 November. Treaty of Andrelot between Guntramn and Childebert, at the former's prompting, with Brunhilde also present; this restores Brunhilde's town of Cahors to her to cancel out Chilperic's alienation of it to Galswintha. The rest of Chilperic's 'morning gift' towns given to Galswintha which used to belong to Brunhilde, e.g. Bordeaux, will be held by Guntramn for his lifetime then returned. Dukes Ursio and Berthefried, Rauching's co-conspirators, rally what army they can muster but are pursued and surrounded on a hill near Verdun; Childebert's commander Godegisl storms the hill, but Berthefried escapes and takes sanctuary in a church where he is hunted down and pelted to death with tiles from the roof so the sanctuary is not technically violated.

Childebert executes the unreliable official duke Guntramn Boso, who has already narrowly avoided execution for alleged involvement in assorted plots, after king Guntramn advises this course.

The Bretons under kings Waroch and Vidimael raid into Francia around Nantes, but face a threat of retaliatory invasion by Guntramn who sends envoys led by bishop Namatius of Orleans to their kings demanding compensation; the kings pay up; Namatius falls sick and dies en route home at Angers after his embassy, and Waroch subsequently illegally loots the grapes from Guntramn's vineyards in Francian territory near Nantes but is not punished.

588

FRANCIA/ITALY

King Childebert's presumed future fiancée Theodelinda, daughter of duke Garivald of Bavaria and the Lombard princess Waldrada (d. 575), is engaged by her father to king Authari of the Lombards instead. Her descent adds to the embattled Authari's legitimacy, but Childebert sees it as aimed at him in a potential Bavarian-Lombard alliance to attack him and decides to strike first. He attacks Bavaria, and Theodelinda and her brother Gundovald flee to the Lombards.

Childebert of Austrasia invades Lombardy unsuccessfully, in alliance with the imperial authorities in Ravenna.

BRITAIN

ASC: disputed date for the death of king Aelle of Deira (Southern Yorkshire) and accession of his son Aethelric, elsewhere this is put at post-590, even post-597.

IRELAND

Accession of Fiachnae Lurcan, head of the local kingdom of Dal n'Araide and most powerful king of the 'Ulaid' peoples, as over-king of all Ulster.

Death of Fedlimid mac Tigernaig, sole or joint king (with Fedlimid mac Coipre ‘Cromm’ of Munster; succeeded by Fedlimid mac Cromm.

(Approximate) Death of Aed ‘Dubh’ (‘the Black’), the probably ex-king of the ‘Ulaid’, i.e. the Ulster over-kingship, and head of the ‘Dal n’Araide’ peoples and kingdom. His death may follow his abdication to become a monk by some years, and thus his great-nephew Fiachna mac Baetan is already king. Aed is traditionally fatally wounded by a spear on board ship and then falls overboard to be drowned during his return to Ulster, apparently an attempt on the throne and as foretold by his enemy St Columba who accused him of a sham monastic ‘profession’.

589

ITALY

Smaragdus recalled as ‘Exarch’ after mental illness; replaced by Romanus.

SPAIN/FRANCIA/ITALY

King Reccared summons a second informal synod of his Arian and Catholic bishops to debate whether it is better for the kingdom to be Arian or Catholic. This precedes the formal ‘Third Council of Toledo’, which meets at the principal royal residence; the king is allegedly (according to Gregory of Tours) swayed by the far greater number of Spanish Catholic miracles and certainly masterminded by the king’s close adviser, bishop Leander of Seville.

4 May. The Council opens, with three days of fasting; then the King’s formal declaration of adherence to Catholicism is read out by a notary in which he declares that he is leading the kingdom, and that of the Suevi, back to the true faith after it was side-tracked by false doctrines; disciplinary canons are formalised, in which the Catholic decrees of doctrine of the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (452) are accepted; also the Jews are banned from having Christian wives, concubines or slaves or holding any office where they can punish Christians, which leads to mass-conversions and the first effective persecution of Jews in Spain. Bishop Leander reads out the closing triumphant Catholic homily, which is then written up by his literary brother (St) Isidore. Reccared lends his support to the Catholic bishops and backs the Church mission to convert his kingdom’s Arians; the kingdom’s sees are filled by Catholics and the new church’s organization is formalised.

Counts Granista and Wildeloc lead the Septimanian rebellion, egged on by archbishop Athaloc of Narbonne; Reccared sends ‘duke’ Claudius of Septimania’s loyalists against them.

Spring. Childebert celebrates Easter in Mainz where his son Theudebert is ill, and receives Lombard envoys from Gundovald offering tribute in return for peace; his initial impulse is to accept. Meanwhile Guntramn

has sent his army to attack Septimania again, and duke Austrovald's embassy has secured the surrender of Carcassonne without any troops; the army commander duke Boson is furiously jealous and advances rashly to secure a great victory over the Goths for himself, but is ambushed by Reccared's commander 'duke' Claudius on the River Aude near Carcassonne and loses most of his men; Guntramn is humiliated and blames Childebert for his Visigothic alliance which undermined him. The Arian revolt in Septimania is suppressed by the Visigoths.

Death of queen Ingeborg, widow of king Charibert of Paris (d. 567) and mother of queen Bertha of Kent.

15 May. Garibald's daughter Theodelinda marries king Authari of the Lombards; her brother Gundovald becomes 'duke' of Asti in N Italy as one of Authari's leading military/political deputies. As Theodelinda is a Catholic, this will strengthen the position of Catholics in the Arian Lombard kingdom, appeal to the local Catholic clergy, and presage conversion.

Childebert turns down a Lombard embassy's request that he carry out an earlier promise to marry his sister Chlodisind to their king, Authari; he promises her to the Catholic Visigothic king Reccared instead, and sends to the Emperor Maurice to arrange an attack on the Lombards in alliance with the Empire.

BRITAIN

Tuesday 1 March. Traditional date for the death of St David ('Dewi Sant'), born c. 500, the founding bishop of the kingdom of Dyfed and first bishop of 'Menevia' (St Davids) where he is buried. This may be as early as 579 or as late as c. 600. In any case, the establishment of a major shrine to St David at Menevia follows.

King Urien of Rheged leads a coalition of Northern British princes (including Rhydderch 'Hael' of Strathclyde and Gwallauc of Lothian) to invade Bernicia and besieges its king (name unclear) on Lindisfarne island; his chances of expelling the Bernicians from their kingdom are frustrated as he is assassinated by a jealous sub-king, the local ruler Morcant of Bryniach who is one of his coalition. His coalition breaks up, but his son Owain succeeds to Rheged and goes on to further successes against Bernicia in the next few years, heralded by the poet Llywarch 'Hen' ('the Old'). Owain's foe in Bernicia is nicknamed by the British 'Fflamdwyn', 'the Flame-Bearer', but his real name is unknown.

Around this time, ?Aethelric succeeds either his brother Theodric or the non-dynastic Hussa as king of Bernicia.

Traditional but approximate date of the foundation of the central England kingdom of the Angles, 'Mercia' i.e. the 'Mark' ('frontier'). The first king is Creoda, son of Cynewald, son of Cnebba, son of the dynastic founder

Icel after whom the family was named. In fact, there had been extensive Anglian settlement in the Eastern and central Midlands for decades, mainly in the Trent valley and Northamptonshire/Leicestershire; the ‘foundation’ may only mark the creation of a permanent alliance of small formerly independent chieftainships as one ‘state’.

FRANCIA

August. The people of Soissons ask for and receive Childebert’s elder son Theudebert as their governor; Guntramn thinks he is being sent there ready to attack his Paris now his army is in trouble in Septimania, but the danger of war passes.

IRELAND

Traditional date of the death of the founding abbot St Finnian of Moville on Strangford Lough, foe of St Columba from the confrontation of 560/1.

590

ITALY

7 February. Death of Pope Pelagius in plague in Rome following a flood of the River Tiber; the aristocratic deacon Gregory (from a former senatorial family with estates in Sicily which he has turned into monasteries along with his own mansion in Rome), former ‘apocrisarius’ in Constantinople, is elected and tries to decline honour but organises plague-relief. The election is witnessed by Gregory of Tours’ visiting deacon Agilulf, who informs him.

King Childebert’s 589 embassy to Emperor Maurice, led by Grippio, returns home and the invasion of Lombard Italy follows as promised.

‘Exarch’ Romanus retakes Mantua and Modena while a large army of Franks under Childebert and his ‘dukes’ cross the Alps; an attack on Pavia falls with king Authari staying safe inside, and one half of the Frankish army under Audovald with six other ‘dukes’ fails to engage with a Lombard army on the river-bank near Lake Maggiore as the Lombards swiftly abandon their camp before the Franks can cross the river. The other half of the army under Cedinus secures the surrender of some fortresses but then falls victim to dysentery; the Franks wander about the Po valley for three months with no major gains and Childebert decides to go home.

5 September. Death of Lombard king Authari in his capital of Pavia (? of poison), shortly after sending a peace-embassy to Guntramn in Francia which Guntramn sends on to Childebert with recommendation to agree; Authari’s widow Theodelinda is asked to choose a new husband and the new king, and selects her late husband’s cousin Agilulf, duke of Turin.

3 September. Gregory consecrated as Pope.

FRANCIA

Guntramn sends dukes Beppolen and Ebrachar to punish the Bretons for raiding around Nantes and Rennes; Ebrachar advances on Breton-held Rennes where bishop Regalis arranges the surrender and an oath of keeping the peace, and after Waroch's ships founder as he is evacuating his treasure to Belle Isle he arrives at Vannes to surrender and swear to peace too. En route home the Frankish army is ambushed as it is crossing the river Vilaine by Waroch's son Canao and many men are killed, for which commander count Willachar is accused of being bribed to lead the Franks into a trap and has to flee.

Foundation of the leading monastery of Luxeuil in the Vosges by St Columbanus.

Plague and famine in Francia; however, Chlotar II survives a serious illness.

IRELAND

(or c. 588?) Approximate date of accession of king Fedelmí of Munster, alleged descendant of a junior line of founder Conall 'Corc's dynasty and first of this line to rule; he succeeds Fedelmí and rules to c. 593.

Defeat of an invading army of the Uí Níall of eastern Míthe by the 'Uí Cennsálaig' sub-dynasty of N Leinster, led by the emerging warlord Brandub mac Echach, at the battle of Mag Ochtiar (Cloncaerry); according to later legend his father Echa had taken him into exile in Dalriada as a baby and he was brought up with and was foster-brother to its king Aedan mac Gabhran (acceded 574), possibly implying or explaining Dalriadan backing for his wars.

591

ITALY

'Duke' of Spoleto cuts road-link from Rome to Ravenna; 'Exarch' Romanus retakes some of the forts and resists Pope's mediation-efforts.

BRITAIN

ASC: Ceol, nephew of Ceawlin, commences his six years as king of the 'Gewissae'/West Saxons. Given that Ceawlin was still reigning, it is unclear if this was by agreement with him as Ceawlin's son Cuthwine was dead (?584) and he became co-ruler of one particular province, or if he seized power in a rebellion as his uncle's realm started to fall apart.

592 FRANCIA

28 March. Death of king Guntramn, probably aged around his late fifties, after a thirty-one-year reign; his kingdom goes to his ally and former ward, king Childebert II of Eastern Francia ('Austrasia').

BRITAIN

ASC: Ceawlin, king of the 'Gewissae'/West Saxons, is defeated by rebels with 'great carnage' in the battle of 'Woden's Beorg' i.e. 'Woden's Barrow'; identified as 'Adam's Grave' at Alton Priors in Wiltshire. He is driven out of his kingdom and his nephew Ceol seizes power; presumably his 'over-stretched' kingdom collapses and his role as 'Bretwalda' passes not to Ceol but to Aethelbert of Kent, probably now the overlord of the lower Thames valley after Ceawlin.

IRELAND

Abdication of king Aed 'Dubh' mac Colman of Leinster to become the abbot of Kildare in the North of the kingdom; he later becomes its bishop and died in 639. He is succeeded by Aed Dibchine mac Sanaig, head of the minor 'Ui Mail' sub-dynasty, but the latter is outshone in the defence of the kingdom from the Ui Niall of Midhe by Brandub of the 'Ui Cennselaig'.

593 ITALY

Agilulf defeats 'Exarch' Romanus and advances on Rome; the city is besieged but Pope Gregory mediates and persuades Agilulf to withdraw in return for promise of yearly tribute.

FRANCIA

Invasion of Neustria (Western Francia, the kingdom of Chilperic to 584, now of Chlotar II) by the army of Childebert II of 'Austrasia' (Eastern Francia) led by duke Wintrio; they are fought off, and the nine-year-old king Chlotar is in titular command of his successful troops as their talisman.

BRITAIN

ASC: Ceawlin and his companions Cwichelm and Creoda die, probably violently at the hands of their West Saxon foes.

Accession of Aethelfrith, later the unifier of Northumbria, as king of Bernicia in succession to his father Aethelric; he is said to have reigned for twenty-four years to 617.

ASC: death of Creoda, founding king of Mercia; probably succeeded by his son Pybba, whose name may be connected to 'Pebworth' in Warwickshire.

594 BRITAIN

Approximate date of the great battle of 'Catraeth', probably at the Roman base of Catterick in Yorkshire, where king Aethelfrith of Bernicia decisively defeats an attack by a coalition of British kings led by Mynyddog 'the Golden', ruler of Din Eidyn (Edinburgh). The C7th Welsh poem 'The Gododdin' describes how an army of heroes was assembled from all over Britain by Mynyddog at his court and was launched against the Angles but almost totally destroyed; this is a staple of myth (e.g. the heroes assembled by 'King Arthur' who were nearly wiped out at the battle of Camlann c. 539) but may be based on reality. This may also be the campaign in which Owain ap Urien, king of Rheged, was killed and his army badly defeated, ending the military power of Rheged. In either case, Aethelfrith of Bernicia now became the leading ruler of NE Britain.

Around this date, but only approximately, king Iago succeeds his father, Beli ap Rhun, in Gwynedd.

IRELAND

?Amalgaid, descendant of a younger brother of king Oengus (d. 490/2?), succeeds Fedelmid in Munster; rules for an unknown but fairly short period then succeeded by his brother Garban to c. 600.

FRANCIA

War between the Franks of Childebert's kingdom and the Bretons.

17 November. Death of the historian bishop Gregory of Tours, aged fifty-five, after twenty-one years as bishop.

595 IRELAND

Brandub mac Echach, head of the 'Ui Cennsalaig', succeeds Aed Dibchine of the 'Ui Mail' as king of Leinster; permanent eclipse of the 'Ui Mail' from the kingship according to the later annals, but these were written by their successful enemies' supporters.

596 ITALY

?Death of 'Exarch' Romanus.

FRANCIA

Death of king Childebert II of 'Austrasia' and of Guntramn's former realm, i.e. 'Burgundy', aged probably twenty-six; his elder son Theudebert inherits Austrasia and his younger son Theuderic inherits Burgundy.

IRELAND

First possible date when Aed Slaine, a younger son of the late 'High King' Diarmait Ua Cearbhall and brother of the late dynast Colman 'Bec' ('the Younger') of the Ui Niall of Western Midhe who died c. 588, becomes 'High King'; founder of the local dynasty of the 'Sil n'Aedo Slaine' of Brega district in Midhe. (See also 598.)

595/6 ITALY/BRITAIN

Pope Gregory sends the abbot Augustine at the head of a missionary venture to Southern Britain to convert the pagan Angles – traditionally after seeing some Anglian (Deira) slave-boys in the Rome slave-market and quipping that they are 'not Angles but Angels'. The mission is to commence with king Aethelbert of Kent, who has married a Frankish princess (Bertha) and so is presumably approached via her Frankish kin. The intention is to revive the Roman archbishopric of London, with Augustine in charge, and then move on to restore that of York, now 'capital' of Deira; Gregory writes to Frankish kings Theudebert and Theuderic to inform them of the mission and get them to offer help. But Augustine and his group of around forty monks are slow to cross Gaul and are apparently dubious of the warmth of their reception.

IRELAND

Apparent date of the death of king Fedlimid macCoipre of Munster; in 596 the annals name the brothers Amalgaid and Garban mac Enda, of the 'Eoganacht Aine' branch of the dynasty based at the Hill of Aine near Knockaine, Co. Cork, as kings; Amalgaid is not named by all annals as king.

597 FRANCIA

Death of queen Fredegund, widow of king Chilperic and mother of king Chlotar II.

BRITAIN

?*Spring*. Augustine and his missionaries arrive in Kent and are welcomed to Canterbury by king Aethelbert and his Christian queen Bertha, and Bede says that the cautious Aethelbert receives him out of doors to make any 'magic' less potent. The missionaries are granted the old Roman church

of St Martin in the ex-Roman town to hold services, with Bede implying that there is currently no Christian community in the kingdom though it is possible a small congregation (descended from Christian Romano-Britons?) already exists; nor does Bede mention Bertha's Frankish chaplain, bishop Liudhard, though he may have died by this point. Later Aethelbert is converted and baptised as the first Christian Anglo-Saxon king, probably within the same year from Bede's chronology, though a letter of the Pope in June 598 does not refer to him as a convert yet, so this may be later.

Christmas: mass-baptisms of converts carried out at Canterbury.

ASC: death of king Ceol of the West Saxons/'Gewissae' after a six-year rule and accession of Ceolwulf son of 'Cutha', either his younger brother or his cousin, who reigns to 611. But another West Saxon regnal list gives Ceolwulf a seventeen-year reign not one of fourteen years, so he may have been co-ruler since 594. The ASC says he fights against the Angles, Welsh, Picts and Scots, which suggests that he not only fought the Britons of Dumnonia (to his West) and the Angles of the Midlands or East Anglia but sent troops to aid Deira, Bernicia or their united kingdom of Northumbria.

June. Death of St Columba at his monastery of Iona, aged seventy-five (born December 521); it subsequently becomes his shrine.

IRELAND

Killing in battle of Cumascach, son of 'High King' Aed mac Ainmere, by king Brandub of Leinster; this precipitates war between the two kings.

(or 601) Battle of 'Cuil Cael' in Ulster sees a decisive victory for the emerging 'strongman' of the kingdom of Dal n'Araide, Fiachna mac Baetan, lord of the peoples known as the 'Cruithne' (i.e. connected to the 'Picts'), over his local rival the king of the 'Dal Fiatach', Fiachna mac Demmain; Fiachna mac B, who succeeded his great-uncle Aed as ruler of the main kingdom of the Dal n'Araide c. 588, now becomes or else is secured in the rank of the over-king of the 'Ulaid' of Ulster, which he holds for over two decades, but his exact date of accession is vague and disputed. The Dal n'Araide dominate Ulster.

598

IRELAND

Aed mac Ainmere, 'High King', is killed in battle at Dunbolg by Brandub, king of Leinster, traditionally aided by St Aedan (or Aed/Maeldub) of Ferns (d. 632), a former monastic protégé of St David in SW Wales, who either attempts an unsuccessful mediation or else suggests that the Leinstermen smuggle themselves into the 'High King's camp in food-hampers to launch a surprise attack. Brandub then grants the land on which Aedan will found the monastery of Ferns to him as a reward.

?Accession of Aed ‘Slaine’ (i.e. of the hillfort of Slaine), son of the late ‘High King’ Diarmait Ui Cerbhall (d. 564/5), of the Southern branch of the Ui Niall, as ‘High King’. He possibly rules jointly with Colman ‘Rimid’ (‘the Counter’) mac Baetan, head of the Northern branch and king of Allech since 578. (See also 595.)

599 FRANCIA

Chlotar II invades Theuderic’s realm of Burgundy, but the latter is given help by his elder brother Theudebert and Chlotar suffers a serious defeat at Dormelles near Montereau, South of Paris; the victors strip him of all his lands South of Artois/Picardy, most of which go to Theuderic.

(or 601/2) Theudebert of Austrasia is persuaded by his nobles to exile his grandmother Brunhilde, who is thus replaced by her aristocratic enemies as the main influence on the king; she moves to Burgundy to assume power as chief adviser to her younger grandson Theuderic. The earlier date is preferred by historian Fredegar, but the Pope is apparently writing to Brunhilde in Austrasia as late as 601/2.

BRITAIN

Approximate date (within a decade) of the establishment of Raedwald, son of Tytila, as the first aggressive and militarily adventurous king of the East Angles, uniting the ‘North Folk’ of Norfolk and the ‘South Folk’ of Suffolk. His dynasty is the ‘Wuffingas’, allegedly established by his grandfather Wuffa in the early-mid C6th and possibly based at Rendlesham in Suffolk; the Gothic naming of his father after the Ostrogothic hero-king Totila of Italy would suggest that the latter was born in Totila’s reign (post-541) at the earliest and so Raedwald was born in the 560s at the earliest. The absence of a strong kingship in the South-East Midlands would make it probable that the East Angles duly assume leadership of the region, either in or just after the reign of Aethelbert of Kent (to 616/17).

IRELAND

Suibne mac Colman, king of the Southern Ui Niall of Uisnech, is killed in battle by his uncle ‘High King’ Aed Slaine, commencing a feud between their families.

Death of king Uatu mac Aed of Connacht (‘Ui Briuin’ sub-dynasty) after a twenty-five-year reign; succeeded by Colman mac Cobthaig, first king from the ‘Ui Fiachrach Aidhne’ sub-dynasty, a branch of the ‘Ui Fiachrach’. He is the grandson either of the dynasty’s first great warlord, Goibenn (530s), or of Gabrgan, and his branch is descended from king Aillel (d. 481)’s brother Eochu. He reigns for either twenty-one or twenty-five years, definitely to 622, so his date of accession is disputed.

600

SPAIN

(or 601) *13 March*. Death of bishop (St) Leander of Seville, leading cleric and organiser of the Visigothic kingdom's conversion to Catholicism; succeeded by his younger brother, the scholar, lexicographer and educator (St) Isidore, who also succeeds to his role as chief Catholic influence at court.

601

ITALY

Callinicus 'Exarch' and two-year truce with Lombards.

SPAIN

Death of the first Catholic king of the Visigoths, Reccared, after a fifteen-year reign; succeeded by his eighteen-year-old son, Liuva II.

ITALY/BRITAIN

Pope Gregory sends the 'pallium' of an archbishop to Augustine in Kent, making him first archbishop of that kingdom, based in Canterbury. Bede has it that the consecration as bishop is carried out by Etherius, archbishop of Arles, at that city on a visit by Augustine. A second group of missionary monks joins him, including the later first bishop of York, Paulinus.

Approximate date of the reign of Arthwyr ('Arthur?') ap Pedr ap Cyngar, great-grandson of king Vortipor, of Dyfed in SW Wales; he may be one of the 'originals' behind, or named after, the elusive commander 'King Arthur'. Later hagiography has a king of this name and location as the predatory foe of St Padarn, founding abbot of Llanbadarn in Dyfed, who is probably dateable to this period.

IRELAND

Deaths of brothers and co-kings Amalgaid and Garban mac Enda of Munster, heads of the 'Eoganacht Aine' sub-dynasty; succeeded by Fingan mac Aed 'Dubh', from the senior 'Eoganacht Caisil' branch from Cashel, who rules to 618. Other annals name a second man, Aed Bennan mac Crimthann of the 'Eoganacht Locha Lein' branch from 'Iarmuman' i.e. West Munster and descended from Coipre the son of founding king Conall 'Corc', as king – do they divide the kingdom?

602

EMPIRE

2 February, Candlemas. Maurice insulted by mob as he processes with his family, and his eldest son and heir Theodosius' fiancée's father 'Patrician' Germanus, to Blachernae.

Maurice's brother Peter takes over Avar war and *Autumn* crosses Danube and on withdrawal is ordered to winter in Avar territory to save provisioning troops from hard-pressed Balkans; ?5 *November* the soldiers mutiny, and Peter appeals to Maurice but is told to stand firm and refuses the demands of a delegation not to cross the river; the soldiers revolt and proclaim one of junior officers, Phocas, as Emperor. Peter and senior officers flee ahead of rebel march across Balkans.

21 *November*. The rebels arrive outside capital; Maurice receives delegation from 'Greens' and 'Blues' complaining about his Praetorian Praefect and orders factions' militia to man the walls; rebels order Maurice to abdicate in favour of Theodosius.

22 *November*. Theodosius' father-in-law Germanus is accused of encouraging rebels so he flees to sanctuary; Germanus' guards prevent his arrest and Germanus moves to Hagia Sophia where crowds join him and fight imperial troops; Maurice flees with family across Bosphorus.

23 *November*. Germanus tries to secure throne, but as he supports 'Blues' the 'Greens' send envoy to Phocas offering him throne; Phocas arrives at Hebdoman, seven miles from city, to popular acclaim and sends envoy to summon the Senate and Patriarch; they obey and Phocas is crowned.

25 *November*. Phocas enters Constantinople;

27 *November*. Maurice, his ship delayed by contrary winds, and his younger sons are arrested, taken back to Chalcedon, and killed by Phocas' officers, but uncertainty if eldest, Theodosius, is with them and over whether he is killed or not.

SPAIN

Liuva II allows the Arian noble general Witteric, former leader of the 589 Septimianian revolt against his father, to take command of an army that prepares to attack the Roman province in the South.

FRANCIA

Dispute between St Columbanus, head of the Irish mission in Burgundy (based in the Vosges where he has set up a chain of monasteries), and the local Frankish bishops over his use of the alternative, so-called 'Celtic Church' rules for computing the date of Easter; he refuses orders to conform to the Frankish practices, which are based on that used in Rome, and subsequently writes to the Pope explaining his reasoning and requesting support.

IRELAND

Battle of Cul Sleamna in Raphoe barony, in internal civil war among the Northern Ui Niall: king Colman 'Rimid' of Ailech defeats and expels his rival Conall Cu, son of late 'High King' Aed mac Ainmere (d. 598).

603

EMPIRE

Civil war breaks out; Persia backs a pretender to missing Theodosius' identity.

ITALY

Smaragdus replaces Callinicus as 'Exarch' of Italy.

SPAIN

Spring. The treacherous general Witteric leads his army on Toledo and arrests, deposes, and mutilates Liuva II whose hand is cut off to disqualify him from the throne; this presumably marks a noble 'backlash' against the centralising and now Catholic dynasty of king Leovigild (d. 586); later the ex-king is murdered.

BRITAIN

(ASC) Approximate date of the invasion of Bemicia by the leading warlord of central Scotland, Aedan mac Gabran, king of Dalriada (the Irish-settled kingdom of Argyll). He is presumably called in by the local British to help them against the Angles after the defeat of Rheged and Din Eidyn at Catraeth in the mid-590s, or else takes advantage of their eclipse to attack the region. He is joined by the Irish 'High King' Colman 'Rimid's brother Mael Umai of the Northern Ui Niall, implying allied Irish mercenaries from the kingdom of Ailech too. Aedan is defeated by Aethelfrith at 'Degsastan', probably Dawston in Liddesdale, or else the battle is drawn; in either case Aethelfrith has the advantage and emerges as overlord of the region around Carlisle and the Solway Firth. The ASC gives the name of the commander of Aethelfrith's army as Hering, son of Hussa – the latter being one of Aethelfrith's non-dynastic predecessors in Bernicia and so presumably one of his great nobles.

This battle probably, but not definitely, precedes Aethelfrith's conquest of his Anglian rival kingdom to the South, Deira in Yorkshire – unless it was this that precipitated Aedan's attack. Aethelfrith kills king Aethelric, son of the late king Aelle, some time after 600 (603/4??) and expels Aethelric's brother Edwin, who flees to Gwynedd in N Wales; Bernicia and Deira are now united as the kingdom of Northumbria.

604

ITALY

12 March. Death of Pope Gregory 'the Great'.

FRANCIA

Brunhilde plans to do away with her rival as chief influence at her grandson Theuderic's court in Burgundy, the 'Mayor of the Palace'

Berthoald, who the chronicler Fredegar calls brave and honest; she persuades the king to send him off to survey the royal ‘vills’ (estates) in the Seine valley with a small escort of 300 men, and probably leaks news of his whereabouts to Theuderic’s rival Chlotar II who has had these lands taken from him by Theuderic in 599 and is out for revenge. Chlotar and his army arrive at the royal estate at Arreze to attack Berthoald, who escapes the trap and flees to Orleans; there Chlotar’s ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Landric comes to besiege him with an army titularly led by the king’s small son Merovech (aged four?), although the town is held by Theuderic and this breaks the kings’ peace-treaty of 599.

Theuderic raises an army and (Christmas) confronts Chlotar’s army under Landric and Merovech at Etampes; Berthoald, as his commander, defeats the enemy and Merovech is captured and later executed by Berthoald, apparently at Brunhilde’s orders given the accusations made against her in 613. Later Berthoald is killed as he charges ahead of his men at a subsequent clash with the Neustrians and is cut off, with suggestions that he threw his life away knowing that Brunhilde intended to have him killed anyway. His enemy at court, Brunhilde’s co-plotter and lover Protadius, replaces him as ‘Mayor of the Palace’; Theuderic takes Paris to punish Chlotar; Chlotar replaces Landric.

ITALY

13 September. Sabinian consecrated as Pope.

BRITAIN

Augustine consecrates Mellitus and Justus as his sub-bishops within his archiepiscopal ‘province’ (of Southern Britain). He sends Mellitus to the kingdom of the East Saxons, North of the Thames, to commence its conversion as bishop of its principal town, London – its king by this date is Aethelbert’s nephew and presumed junior ally, Saeberth, son of king Sledda and Aethelbert’s sister Rricula. Justus becomes first bishop of Rochester, the principal town in Western Kent (Roman ‘Durovernum’) which is a distinct region within the kingdom.

Traditional date when Augustine crosses Southern Britain to the Severn valley for a meeting with the bishops of Wales in a failed attempt to co-ordinate the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons; the Welsh bishops are not interested. The meeting is at Aust near Bristol – ‘Augustine’s Oak’ – according to Bede. Apparently the power and reputation of his patron Aethelbert of Kent guarantees his security on the journey, showing the latter’s influence beyond his borders. The Welsh tradition has it that Augustine rudely refuses to stand up as the Welsh bishops arrive and so antagonises them.

IRELAND

Battle of Faithche mic Menchain on Loch Sewdy: 'High King' Aed Slaine is killed in battle by his rebellious great-nephew Conall mac Suibne, whose father he had killed in 600. Aedh 'of the Ague', head of the Northern Ui Niall branch and king of Ailech, becomes 'High King' after Aed Slaine.

Assassination of Colman 'Rimid', ruler of the Northern Ui Niall and king of Ailech, who is sometimes reckoned as being 'High King' also, in co-rule with Aed 'Slaine'. The survivor of these two is succeeded as 'High King' by the new king of Ailech, Aed 'Uardinach' or Allan, son of Domnhall ('High King' c. 564–5 or 565–6) son of Muirchertach mac Erca.

605

ITALY

22 February. Death of Pope Sabinian.

SPAIN

Approximate date of a campaign by king Witteric against the Roman province, which involves a victory near Saguntum; this is dismissed in importance by Witteric's Catholic bishop Isidore of Seville but the Catholics' hostility to Witteric may downplay his success.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of king Pybba of Mercia and accession of Ceorl, not listed in the royal genealogy of the 'Icelingas' dynasty so possibly a usurper or a successful adult war-leader appointed as interim ruler until Pybba's son Penda is adult.

IRELAND

King Brandub mac Echach of Leinster, the most militarily successful of their leaders against the Ui Niall for decades, is defeated by the new 'High King' Aed Allan of the Northern Ui Niall at the battle of Slecha; he is assassinated by his enemies afterwards as his military power is crippled, and is succeeded in Leinster by Ronan mac Colman/Cormac, either the son of former king Colman 'Mor' (d. 576) and head of the 'Ui Dunlainge' or else son of Cormac and head of the 'Ui Cormaic' division of the 'Ui Cennsalaig'. It is not clear which man is the king of Leinster, as both ruled in this decade and are called its king by some records; Ronan mac Colman dies in 613 and Ronan mac Cormac in 624.

606

SPAIN/FRANCIA

Theuderic II sends bishop Aridius and count Ebronin to Witteric the Visigothic king to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage; possibly aimed

at an alliance against his brother, king Theudebert of Austrasia. Witteric agrees and sends his daughter to Theuderic; she is received by him at Chalons-sur-Saone and the marriage proceeds, but it soon breaks down under the influence on the king of his grandmother queen Brunhilde and sister Teudila who persuade him not to consummate it. The new queen is later divorced and sent home (607?), and the angry Witteric allies with his ex-son-in-law's estranged brother Theudebert and cousin king Chlotar of Neustria, plus the Lombards, to plot an invasion.

Brunhilde and her ally 'Mayor of the Palace' Protadius persuade Theuderic to declare war on and attack his elder brother Theudebert of Austrasia; the nobles do not want a costly war to satisfy the ambitions of these two, and at the assembly of the royal army at Quiezy 'duke' Ucculen of Alemannia tells the men that the king has decided against a campaign and wants the troublemaker Protadius killed; they oblige and lynch the 'Mayor'.

BRITAIN

26 *May* (year approximate, unspecified by Bede but pre-610). Death of Augustine, first archbishop of Canterbury; buried outside the uncompleted church of St Peter and Paul in that city, and reburied inside after its completion. He is succeeded by Laurentius, who he has already consecrated as his successor.

607

ITALY

19 *February*. Consecration of Pope Boniface III; imperial recognition coupled with recognition of Rome as head of all Church, and statue of Phocas erected.

12 *November*. Death of Boniface III; delay until imperial confirmation of successor.

SPAIN

?Marriage of king Theuderic II of Burgundy to Bilichild, a former slave of his grandmother Brunhilde.

BRITAIN

(ASC) Ceolwulf of the West Saxons fights the South Saxons of Sussex.

608

EMPIRE

Revolt of Heraclius, 'Exarch' of Africa, and his son the younger Heraclius, brother Gregory, and nephew Nicetas.

BRITAIN

April. Death of king Aedan mac Gabhran of Dalriada, after a thirty-four-year reign; his eldest two sons have been killed in battle so his third son Eochaid unexpectedly succeeds him, as allegedly foretold by St Columba when the boy was an infant.

ITALY

15 September. Boniface IV consecrated Pope after receiving imperial permission.

610

BRITAIN/ITALY

February. Bishop Mellitus of London is in Rome for a synod of bishops, on behalf of archbishop Laurentius – thus the latter has taken over at Canterbury by this date. The Pope receives Mellitus' request for directions on discipline and doctrine and sends letters to Kent on these matters.

FRANCIA

Approximate date of king Theuderic's grandmother Brunhilde persuading him to arrest her enemy St Columbanus, leading Irish missionary bishop in the kingdom, after the latter visits court and refuses to recognise Theuderic and Bilichild's children as legitimate. Columbanus is accused of following illegal rules in his monastic regulations and is removed from his monastery and deported to Besancon, but escapes his captors and returns; Brunhilde has him deported from the kingdom and escorted to Nantes en route back to Ireland, but he manages to evade leaving the kingdom – traditionally due to the wind miraculously bowing his ship back to port. He moves to Austrasia to seek the support of Theuderic's brother Theudebert, and evangelises in the upper Rhineland and on into Switzerland; the date of his exile is approximately fixed by his letter to Theuderic prophesying that the unjust king will be dead in three years (i.e. in 613).

War between Theodebert and Theuderic follows, with the former having the best of it due to the greater military resources and frontier war-readiness of the troops in his Austrasia.

SPAIN

April. Assassination at a banquet of king Witteric the Visigoth, by a faction of Catholic nobles who may be backed by the Church in case this

former Arian plotter (589) turns on the latter; his body is dragged through the streets with contempt; he is succeeded by Gundemar, duke of Narbonne in Septimania, who continues his predecessor's alliance with Chlotar II and Theudebert of Austrasia against Theuderic II of Burgundy.

EMPIRE

Heraclians conquer Egypt, Cyprus and the port of Alexandretta (Syria). *?June*. The younger Heraclius sails from Carthage to the East and lands at Thessalonica; *Saturday 3 October* Heraclius' fleet arrives off Constantinople; *4 October* 'Greens' in charge of Harbour of Sophia (on the Propontis so easy access for rebel fleet) revolt and kill the returned Bonosus; 'Greens' chariot-racing faction attack pro-Phocas 'Blues' and proclaim Heraclius Emperor; *5 October* the rebels secure the city. Phocas is seized and dragged from Palace to Heraclius' flagship; Heraclius reputedly asks him if this is how he has misgoverned Empire and Phocas retorts 'Will you do any better?'; Phocas is beheaded, aged c. 58, and mutilated before being dragged through streets.

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2 Chronology: AD 611–751

611 ITALY

John Lemigius replaces Smaragdus as ‘Exarch’ in Italy.

FRANCIA

Exiled from Burgundy by queen Brunhilde, St Columbanus and his missionaries convert pagans in the Swiss region, founding a monastery at Mehrerau on Lake Constance; one of their small hermitages will later be refounded as the abbey of St Gall after its first leader, his follower Gall(us).

(or 611) King Theuderic of Burgundy, under pressure from his elder brother Theudebert of Austrasia in their war, successfully promises the Northern part of his kingdom to Chlotar II in return for military aid.

SPAIN

(or 610) Basque expedition by the new king Gundemar, followed by an attack on the Byzantine province in Southern Spain.

BRITAIN

(ASC) Death of king Ceolwulf of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’; accession of his son Cynegils.

612 SPAIN

February or March? Death of king Gundemar after a reign of one year, ten months and fourteen days, at Toledo; succeeded by his senior noble Sisebut, a firm Catholic and friend of bishop Isidore of Seville, who at some point marries, secondly, the last legitimate king Reccared (d. 600/01)’s illegitimate daughter by Floresinda, to improve his legitimacy.

ITALY

St Columbanus arrives in Milan to preach to the ‘Arian’ leadership of the Lombard kingdom under king Agilulf; the latter’s queen, Theodelinda of Bavaria, is a Catholic and helps persuade her husband to convert. The conversion of most of the kingdom follows.

FRANCIA

King Theuderic II of Burgundy, now backed by king Chlotar II and Neustrian troops, invades the territory of his elder brother Theudebert of Austrasia (Eastern Francia) and wins the battles of Toul and Tolbiac; Theudebert is killed, aged probably in his late twenties, and Brunhilde allegedly has his son killed too. Theuderic reunites the two realms but this alarms the elite of neighbouring Western Francia (Neustria) under Chlotar II, as son of Brunhilde’s enemy queen Fredegund. Chlotar does not want Brunhilde in charge of the kingdom, and future events imply that a substantial faction of nobles do not either – including Theuderic’s former regent as a boy, ‘duke’ Warnechar who now becomes ‘Mayor of the Palace’ (chief minister) in Austrasia.

BRITAIN

Probable date of the death of the long-reigning king Rhydderch ‘Hael’ (‘the Generous’) of Strathclyde, son of Dumnugual and ruler since the 570s; his contemporary and protégé, who dies around the same time, is St Kentigern the founding bishop of Glasgow. Rhydderch has no sons and is succeeded by the dynastically obscure Nechtan mac Gwyddno, allegedly his distant cousin and from his name at least partly Pictish. He may be the same person as a contemporary Pictish king of that name and so represent a new Pictish alliance against Dalriada.

One version of Welsh Church chronology has the death of bishop Oudoceus/Docco of Gwent, later called ‘bishop of Llandaff’ though this may be unhistorical, dying in this year. Alternatively, he was active a century earlier and may be the ‘St Docco’ who was active in Cornwall in the later C5th and founded a monastery at Cadbury-Congresbury in Somerset.

IRELAND

Mael Cobo, son of Aed mac Ainmere (‘High King’, d. 598) succeeds Aed ‘of the Ague’ as ‘High King’.

FRANCIA

Brunhilde allegedly incites Theuderic to invade Neustria and dispose of her late enemy Fredegund’s son king Chlotar II – though our surviving

sources are all written by her enemies. This is prevented by Theuderic's sudden death from dysentery at Metz (September), aged probably around twenty-six.

Brunhilde proclaims his infant son Sigebert (II) as king with herself as regent, and sends the senior nobles Sigebert and Warnechar, the latter the 'Mayor of the Palace' in Austrasian, off to take over Austrasia in the new king's name. Allegedly she privately asks Sigebert to kill her potential foe Warnechar, but the latter finds out and leads his army in revolt aided by the future minister and senior Austrasian noble Pepin of Landen (Belgium) and his friend Arnulf, later bishop of Metz. The latter two are described by the chronicler Fredegar as the leaders of Austrasia; they meet Chlotar at Andernach to synchronise their plans. Rado, the new 'Mayor of the Palace' of Burgundy, joins in leading the Burgundian troops to defect to Chlotar.

Chlotar and his army are called in to help the rebels who promise assistance, and attack Brunhilde's and Sigebert's army; Austrasian 'patrician' Aretheus and 'dukes' Rocco and Sigisvald lead an Austrasian army mutiny as the latter faces Chlotar's army on the River Aisne, and the Austrasian forces disintegrate as Chlotar attacks; Brunhilde and her client-king Sigebert II flee but are captured by Lake Neuchatel. Brunhilde, aged probably in her mid-seventies, is 'tried' by Chlotar on charges of killing ten members of the royal family, and is executed by being dragged to her death behind a wild horse, and Sigebert and his brother are executed too along with other Merovingian princes in a purge by Chlotar, excepting Merovech who Chlotar trusts; Chlotar assumes the throne of a reunited Merovingian kingdom.

Chlotar invites St Columbanus back from Italy; he politely refuses and continues to convert the Lombards from Arianism, but sends Chlotar his good wishes.

Warnechar continues as 'Mayor of the Palace' and effective chief minister of Austrasia until Rado, his counterpart in Burgundy, dies (617), and then succeeds him in that role. Pepin and Arnulf are his main backers; subsequently Pepin's daughter Begga will marry Arnulf's son Ansegisl, with them being the ancestors of the Carolingians.

EMPIRE

Shahin invades South-East Anatolia and takes Melitene; Philippicus, commander-in-chief of East, draws him off by invading Armenia and forcing Shahin to follow him. Heraclius marches into Syria and approaches Antioch, but Persian reinforcements arrive and he cannot link up with Nicetas' attack North from Palestine; he fights a drawn battle but has to retire into Anatolia. Shahbaraz enters Syria and takes Damascus.

614 | EMPIRE

Persians take Jerusalem; the ‘True Cross’ removed to Ctesiphon as trophy, and city handed over to Jews.

ITALY

St Columbanus founds his new monastic centre for the conversion of the Lombard kingdom, on an estate given to him by king Agilulf, at Bobbio in the Northern Appenines (N of Genoa).

FRANCIA

Chlotar issues the ‘Edict of Paris’ for the governance of all three of his kingdoms; it establishes the rules for the control of secular offices by the aristocracy (including that regional offices must go to ‘locals’) and of education by the clergy, and imposes restrictions on the Jews holding office; in effect it confirms the emergence of the established nobility as the real powers in each region instead of any ‘outsiders’ nominated by the king whose control of the local administration is diminished.

BRITAIN

(ASC) Cyneigils of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’ and his presumed son and lieutenant Cwichelm defeat the British/Welsh of Dumnonia at ‘Beandun’ (‘Bea’s Mount’), either Bindon Hill near Wareham in Eastern Dorset or Bindon near Axmouth in Eastern Devon. Allegedly 2,065 Britons are killed. If the battle is at the Dorset site this would mark the probable annexation of Dorset with its principal town, Dorchester/‘Durnovaria’; if it is in Devon the battle probably marks the annexation of the area East of the river Axe.

615 | SPAIN

?Byzantine commander Caesarius makes peace with Visigothic king Sisebut.

ITALY

25 May. Death of Pope Boniface IV; *19 October* Adeodatus/Deusdedit consecrated after imperial approval sent.

21 November. Death of St Columbanus at Bobbio in N Italy, aged seventy-two.

BRITAIN

(or 616 – one version of the ASC even puts it at 605) Approximate date of the victory of king Aethelfrith of Northumbria over the Britons

of North and central Wales at the battle of Chester; king Selyf ap Cynan of Powys is probably killed, and Bede and the ASC recount that a large group of monks from the Bangor-on-Dee monastery attend the battle to pray for a British victory so Aethelfrith says they are combatants and kills them too. Traditionally the battle marks the extension of Northumbria power across Cheshire to the Dee estuary and the cutting off of the British of Wales from those of Cumbria; but there is no archaeological record of any early C7th Anglian settlements in Cheshire. More probably this marks the establishment of Northumbrian control over Rheged (Cumbria and Lancashire) as a vassal-state, and the military eclipse of both Gwynedd and Powys due to losses in battle; within a few years Powys is divided into two separate dynastic states, North and South, the latter led by Cyndrwyn and the former possibly by the Gwynedd sub-dynasty of the ‘Glaestings’.

The extension of Aethelfrith’s power as a result of this victory is probably the occasion of him requiring his neighbour to the South, king Ceorl of Mercia, to send his protégé and son-in-law, Edwin the exiled prince of Deira, packing – Edwin, who has married princess Cwenburh, is a potential pretender to his crown. Ceorl agrees, and Edwin moves on to East Anglia to seek the help of the less easily intimidated king Raedwald.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Mael Cobo killed in battle in Tir Eoghain/Tyrone by Suibne ‘the Little’ (‘Demm’), head of the junior branch of the Northern Ui Niall of Western Midhe/Ailech (that is, the descendants of his great-grandfather Feradach, younger brother of ‘High King’ Muirchertach mac Erca who d. 532). Alternately, he may merely be the ‘kingmaker’ who kills Mael Cobo and installs his ally Oengus/Angus mac Colman, also of the Southern Ui Niall, as ‘High King’, as the latter is referred to in this rank in the notice of his death in 621, and Suibne only succeeds him then.

616

BRITAIN

24 February. First possible date for the death of king Aethelbert of Kent, first Anglo-Saxon Christian king, mainstay of Augustine’s mission, and ‘Bretwalda’ i.e. principal king of Southern England. He has reigned (East) since c. 581, and possibly since 560 or 565; his reign or else his life is variously said to have lasted fifty-six years so if he reigned this long it is probably the longest Anglo-Saxon reign in any kingdom. He is succeeded by his son Eadbald, who initially returns to paganism and also marries his own stepmother, Aethelbert’s second wife.

Death of the other Christian king in Anglo-Saxon lands, Aethelbert’s nephew Saebert of the East Saxons; succeeded jointly by his three sons Saebald, Saeward, and Saexred, who all return to paganism after nominally

converting in their father's reign. Bede says that they were infuriated by the bishop's refusal to let them take part in communion without being baptised.

Bishop Mellitus and the Christian mission are expelled from Essex; Mellitus returns to Kent.

Laurentius, now archbishop of Canterbury, despairs of the success of the mission in Britain and prepares to leave for Rome; Justus and Mellitus do so. According to Bede is persuaded to stay on by a furious angel in a dream, and recalls his colleagues who return a year after leaving.

?Aethelfrith of Northumbria tries to bribe Raedwald of the East Angles to expel Edwin, but fails so he resorts to threats of invasion.

SPAIN

Harsh new legislation against the Jews by king Sisebut.

ITALY

'Exarch' John assassinated in mutiny at Ravenna by unpaid soldiers; John of Conza leads revolt at Naples.

?Death of the Lombard king Agilulf, first to convert to Catholicism, after a reign of around twenty-five years; his fourteen-year-old son Adaloald succeeds under the regency of his mother Theodelinda.

617 EMPIRE

Persians enter Egypt.

ITALY

?New 'Exarch', eunuch Eleutherius, restores order; John of Conza executed.

FRANCIA/ITALY

Chlotar II renews the Francian-Lombard alliance, now based on both powers being Catholic.

BRITAIN

(or 618) Eadbald is converted to Christianity and the mission is able to continue in Kent, but not in Essex. Bishop Mellitus of London, refused entry to Essex as Eadbald lacks Aethelbert's power or inclination to enforce compliance, stays in Kent.

Aethelfrith of Northumbria orders king Raedwald of the East Angles to expel his client Edwin, exiled prince of Deira, or face invasion; Raedwald refuses and invades Northumbria, presumably crossing the river Trent; he defeats and kills Aethelfrith at a battle on the river Idle near Doncaster. Raedwald installs Edwin (aged around thirty-two from his age at the time of death in 633/4) as king of Northumbria, and takes over the role of ‘Bretwalda’ from what is implied in the list of these ‘overlords’ or ‘trans-national leaders’.

Raedwald probably asserts military leadership of the Eastern Midlands and the Thames valley, replacing the pre-eminence of the late ‘Bretwalda’ Aethelbert of Kent. Aethelfrith’s eldest son Eanfrith flees to the royal court of the Picts, probably his maternal kin, and Aethelfrith’s two younger sons (by Edwin’s sister), Oswald and Oswy, probably in their teens, flee to Dalriada; they end up at the monastery of Iona and so are converted to (‘Celtic’ not Rome-directed) Christianity.

Second possible date for the death of king Aethelbert of Kent (24 February), accession of his pagan son Eadbald, and the near-collapse of the Christian mission in Kent. It is unclear which year the events took place in, but Bede says that Aethelbert died twenty-one years (or in the twenty-first year) after his conversion in 597. This might also suggest that 618 is a possibility, but this is unlikely as it would invalidate the apparent length of Eadbald’s reign as twenty-four years (or the twenty-fourth year) to 640.

618 FRANCIA

Approximate date of the death of Chlotar II’s second wife, queen Bertrada/Bertrude – probably mother of his successor Dagobert, and apparently aunt of the later ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Erchinoald (640s) so presumed sister of his mother St Gerberga and daughter of Ricimer, ‘duke’ of Burgundy. Chlotar subsequently marries or is already married bigamously to Sichild, already mother of his youngest son Charibert.

BRITAIN

2 *February*. Death of archbishop Laurentius of Canterbury; succeeded by Mellitus, former bishop of London.

IRELAND

Fergus mac Colman ‘Mar’, grandson of ‘High King’ Diarmait Ua Cerbhall (d. 564/5) and king of the Southern branch of the Ui Niall – Clan Colman – of Uisnech in Midhe, is killed in battle by Anfartach Ua Mescaín; succeeded by his cousin Oengus mac Colman.

EMPIRE

Persians besiege ‘Praefect’ Nicetas in Alexandria.

ITALY

8 November. Death of Pope Adeodatus/Deusdedit; Boniface elected successor but delay in imperial confirmation.

619 EMPIRE

Byzantines evacuate Alexandria as a force of Persians in fishing-boats sneak undetected into harbour and land; ‘Praefect’ Nicetas and Patriarch John flee to Cyprus.

SPAIN

13 November. (Second) Church Council of Toledo meets under the presidency of bishop Isidore; it reaffirms the Spanish Church’s backing for the Catholic doctrine.

ITALY

‘Exarch’ Eleutherius revolts at Ravenna; murdered by soldiers as he marches on Rome.

23 December. Pope Boniface V finally consecrated after delay in Heraclius’ confirmation.

620 BRITAIN

Approximate date of Edwin of Northumbria securing control over Rheged (Cumbria and Lancashire) and building a fleet, presumably in the Dee estuary, to invade and subdue the Isle of Man.

621 SPAIN

Death of king Sisebut after a nine-year reign; succeeded by his under-age son, Reccared II – named after the latter’s mother’s father, the last legitimate king. He is soon deposed by a leading noble, his mother’s half-brother Suintila, a son of Reccared, who is probably in his thirties and who soon launches a campaign to retake the surviving Roman/Byzantine lands on the South coast while they are preoccupied with the Persians.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of king Nechtan mac Gwyddno of Strathclyde after a reign of around eight years; succeeded by his son Beli.

Approximate date of the death of king Nechtan (II) of the Picts, the first definitively Christian king of the Picts and possibly the same as above; he is succeeded by his sister's son by the obscure Lutrin/Luchtren, Cinioch, who reigns for a decade.

IRELAND

Oengus/Angus mac Colman, king of the Southern Ui Niall of Western Midhe – 'Clan Colman' – and possibly 'High King' of all Ireland, is killed in battle; his ally or co-king Suibne 'the Little' ('Menn') of the Cenel n'Eoghain succeeds as 'High King' if he is not already in that role.

622

ARABIA

Mohammed and followers flee Mecca for more tolerant Medina: the '*Hejirah*', start of Moslem calendar. Medina's inhabitants rally to Mohammed.

IRELAND

Death of the king of Connacht, Colman mac Cobthaig, in battle at Cennbag (Cambo, Co. Roscommon) against his kinsman Rogallach mac Uautach, head of the 'Ui Briuin' sub-dynasty and son of king Uaut (d. 600) who was also possibly king of Connacht. Rogallach takes the throne, and is regarded by some scholars as the first of his kin definitely to rule all Connacht. He reigns for twenty-seven years.

623

EMPIRE

Avars renew the war at Persian instigation and besiege Thessalonica. Slav raiders take to sea and raid Crete; *March* Heraclius returns to capital by sea leaving army in Pontus; he arranges a truce-meeting with the Avar 'Khagan' at Perinthus/Heraclea but 5 *June* hears of an ambush as he approaches site and gallops back to capital carrying his crown under his arm; 6 *June* Avars reach suburbs of Constantinople and loot, but retire to Thrace; *Autumn* peace arranged in return for 200,000 'nomismata' per annum.

FRANCIA

King Chlotar II makes his elder surviving son Dagobert (his son by his second wife Bertrude), now aged around twenty, his junior colleague, as the new king of Austrasia (Eastern Francia), while he keeps the kingdoms of Chilperic, Guntramn and Charibert); he transfers the original centre of the Eastern kingdom, Rheims, plus the Vosges region to his own Neustria (reversed in 626 at Dagobert's request after local resistance to Neustria). Pepin of Landen now becomes 'Mayor of the Palace' of Austrasia (to 629).

End of the final unchallenged period of Merovingian sole rule, and seemingly induced by the great nobles of ‘autonomist’ Austrasia in order to have a more controllable and lucrative source of patronage resident in their own kingdom rather than having to defer to a king based in his own ancestral Neustria in the West. By now Pepin of Landen and the devout ex-royal steward bishop Arnulf of Metz (in office from c. 614) are emerging as the leaders of the Austrasian nobility.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of Edwin of Northumbria securing control of the surviving Southern Pennine British kingdom of Elmet (SW Yorkshire), expelling its ruler Ceretic and ending its royal dynasty. This is possibly connected to the earlier suspicious death of his nephew Hereric, a Deiran prince, of apparent poison while in exile there under Aethelfrith’s rule pre-617, for which Edwin sought vengeance; Hereric was father to the later abbess (St) Hild, who was born in Elmet. Some sources place the conquest implausibly earlier, in 616/17, but the date may be a little earlier.

624

BRITAIN

24 *April*. Death of archbishop Mellitus, having suffered from gout for some years; succeeded by bishop Justus of Rochester, who obtains Papal permission to consecrate bishops and chooses Romanus to succeed him in Rochester.

(or 622/3?) Approximate date of the death of the pacific king Cadfan ap Iago, hailed as the ‘best and wisest of kings’ on his memorial stone at Llangadfan. Probably his lack of military interests or success has enfeebled his kingdom, making it prey to the ambitions of his aggressive neighbour and former protégé Edwin of Northumbria. He is succeeded by his warlike son Cadwallon.

EMPIRE

Heraclius leaves Constantinople and heads for Pontus to prepare invasion of Persia from less-defended Northern mountain frontier; he invades Media before retreating into Azerbaijan.

625

BRITAIN

(or 624?) Approximate date of king Edwin of Northumbria invading Gwynedd, his former refuge from Aethelfrith of Bernicia after the fall of Deira in the mid-600s, and defeating the new king Cadwallon. Both Welsh tradition and Bede say that he subdued the island of Mon/Anglesey and added it to his ‘empire’, and he besieged Cadwallon on the adjacent island of Priestholm – presumably with his new Irish Sea fleet. Bede has him as

being already lord of Anglesey and Man and pre-eminent king in Britain before his marriage (below).

Edwin seeks to marry Aethelburh, sister of king Eadbald of Kent, and according to Bede is told that as she is a Christian she cannot marry a pagan king; he agrees to let her be accompanied by a group of missionaries, and presumably hints at his conversion too. The alliance of Northumbria and Kent presumably confirms Edwin's new role as leading king in Britain by extending his influence to the South.

21 July. Archbishop Justus consecrates Paulinus as bishop of the kingdom of Northumbria; he leads the mission to that kingdom, escorting Aethelburh who marries Edwin. The king however holds out against immediate conversion. (Notably, the later Welsh traditions held that Edwin had been baptised by ex-king turned bishop Rhun of Rheged, presumably earlier and possibly in exile pre-617, so he may have 'lapsed' on his accession to reassure his pagan subjects).

The emergence of Edwin as 'Bretwalda', i.e. leading ruler in Britain and head of a coalition of kings, presumably marks or follows the death of his ex-patron, king Raedwald of the East Angles, but this event is undatable except that it is some years pre-630; Raedwald has according to Bede converted to Christianity on a visit to his ally Eadbald of Kent but later gone back on this and worshipped both Christ and the pagan gods at his court. He has also exiled his Christian younger son Sigebert, probably because of his faith. (Raedwald may be the king buried in the pagan-style 'ship-burial' at Sutton Hoo, near his royal residence of Rendelsham in Suffolk; this has a royal standard as attested to by Bede, plus Eastern Roman goods.) He is succeeded by his elder son Eorpwald and possibly the former East Anglian control of Lindsey and the lower Trent valley transfers to Northumbria.

ITALY

25 October. Death of Pope Boniface V; *27 October* Honorius I elected. Revolt of Adaloald the Lombard's brother-in-law Arioald, count of Turin.

BRITAIN

Easter Day. In his hall by the river Derwent, Edwin survives a murderous assault by an assassin, Eomer, sent by Cwichelm the junior co-king of the West Saxons (presumably to forestall Edwin turning on Wessex). His 'thegn' Lilla throws himself in front of the unarmed king as the assassin lunges and is killed, and Edwin is injured but not too seriously; Lilla is later commemorated by an extant memorial cross on the NE Yorkshire moors. That night, queen Aethelburh gives birth successfully to a daughter, Eanfled (baptised at Pentecost), and bishop Paulinus tells the king that her safe delivery is God's work.

Edwin promises to baptise his daughter ?and consider converting if he returns safely from his imminent expedition to punish the West Saxons.

?*Early summer*. Edwin invades the kingdom of the West Saxons/ 'Gewissae', crossing Mercia presumably with the submission of its ruler (Ceorl or Penda?). He ravages his target, kills five West Saxon kings, and presumably secures the submission or flight of the assassin's patron Cwichelm and his father Cynegils – the number of kings involved suggests that 'Wessex' is at this date ruled by a group of provincial rulers led by over-king Cynegils. Edwin's return home may precede or follow his daughter's baptism.

EMPIRE

Persian general Shahbaraz is ordered to head for Constantinople and invades Anatolia; Shahin is sent against Heraclius in the Caucasus.

May. Avars besiege Thessalonica unsuccessfully; *June* Shahbaraz reaches Chalcedon. Avars march on Constantinople and 29 *June* start siege, with construction of siege-engines and demands for surrender; 'Patrician' Bonus leads defence; 31 *July*–1 *August* attacks on walls are driven off, and Patriarch Sergius parades icon of Virgin around walls; Avars refuse offer of money for departure, but request negotiations. Avar/Slav fleet of canoes is sent to Chrysopolis 3–4 *August* to collect Persians to join the siege but 7 *August* is defeated and sunk by Byzantine navy in Bosphorus as land-attack driven back; 8 *August* Avars abandon siege and retreat; Shahbaraz gives up and marches back to Cappadocia.

ITALY

The Lombard king Adaloald, aged twenty-four, is deposed in a coup by his leading nobles, apparently after fits of insanity, and is succeeded by his sister Gundeberga's husband, 'duke' Arioald of Turin; he later dies, probably suspiciously, in exile at Ravenna. Arioald, an Arian, subsequently returns the kingdom to Arianism and puts his wife in a nunnery in a presumed pre-emptive move against her Catholic family.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the accession of Penda as king of Mercia, in succession to Ceorl; this assumes that the later statement that he reigned for thirty years or was in his thirtieth year as king when he was killed in late 655 is correct, not one that has him ruling for fifty years – Ceorl was definitely king as of 617. Possibly he rules as head of a number of sub-kings, with his brother Eowa as his colleague – or else Eowa is only appointed later.

Approximate date (within five years or so) of the death of the last survivor of the three sons of Saeberth ruling the East Saxons, Saeward, Seaxred and Seaxbald. Succeeded by the obscure king Sigebert ‘the Little’ (presumably called from his height), son of one of these brothers, who is also pagan.

IRELAND

Battle of ‘Leithit Midind’ in County Antrim between the rival kingdoms of the ‘Dal Fiatach’ and the Dal n’Araide over the kingship of the ‘Ulaid’, the over-kingship of Ulster; Fiachna mac Baetan, king of the Dal n’Araide and current king of the ‘Ulaid’ whose dynasty has had the upper hand for the past two decades, is defeated and killed by his rival Fiachna mac Demmain of the ‘Dal Fiatach’; the latter takes the kingship.

ITALY

Adaloard defeated and poisoned; Arioald rules Lombardy from Pavia.

627

BRITAIN

Easter, 12 April. Conversion and baptism of Edwin of Northumbria, at a new church built to St Peter close to his principal residence in York. According to Bede this follows his careful and successful attempt to secure the backing of his council at a debate where the ‘pros and cons’ of conversion are put to and by the kingdom’s leading men; the pagan chief priest Coifi expresses his willingness to convert if the arguments are persuasive and later destroys his own idols, at nearby Goodmanham. The argument is used by one noble that the life of man is like a sparrow flying briefly into a lit hall from the winter dark and then returning outside again so any illuminating doctrine is welcome.

Baptism of not only Edwin but many of his kin and subjects, including Osfrith and Eadfrith, his sons by his first wife Cwenburh of Mercia.

EMPIRE/ARMENIA/PERSIA

Collapse of the Avar Empire as subject Slavs revolt.

Heraclius marches into Caucasus and is joined by most princes and a Khazar horde from the Don steppe under Yabghu who swears allegiance to him; 40,000 Khazars join Heraclius’ march over mountains South into Persia.

September. Heraclius outmanoeuvres Chosroes’ Armenian general Roch Vehan (‘Rhezates’); he descends into Mesopotamia without resistance and *4 December* enters Nineveh; *12 December* Persian army is routed and as Chosroes flees Heraclius marches unopposed into Persian heartland.

BRITAIN

10 November. (or 628?) Death of archbishop Justus of Canterbury; Honorius is elected to succeed him and is consecrated by Paulinus of York at Lincoln.

Conadd ‘Cerr’ (‘the left-handed’), either a younger son/foster-son of king Eochaid ‘Buide’ (‘the Fair’) of Dalriada or a cousin of his as son of king Conall (d. 574), defeats and kills king Fiachna mac Demmain of the ‘Ulaid’ of Ulster, head of the ‘Dal Fiatach’ dynastic kingdom, at the battle of Ard Corann. This implies he is an ally of its recently eclipsed rivals, the Dal n’Araide. Probably as a result of this which shows his military potential, he becomes co-ruler and presumably heir to Eochaid in Dalriada.

Probable date of the assumption of the high kingship of all the ‘Ulaid’ by Congal of Dal n’Araide (accession to Dal na 626) on the death of Fiachna mac Demmain as above.

628

EMPIRE/PERSIA

Heraclius enters ‘Great King’ Chosroes’ abandoned chief palace at Dastagerd *5 January* to liberate prisoners and sack palace; *late February* Heraclius avoids the defendable canals around Ctesiphon and retires into Atropatene. The Persian nobles, tired of war, conspire in favour of Kavadh, Chosroes’ arrested eldest son, against Chosroes’ own preferred heir, his son by Christian wife Shirin; *24 February* Chosroes arrested hiding in palace gardens and subsequently murdered. *3 April* Kavadh’s envoys meet Heraclius and agree to peace with all prisoners released and all Byzantine territory evacuated; ‘True Cross’ to be restored.

Antioch is returned to the Empire as Shahbaraz heads back to Persia.

BRITAIN

?Resumed war between Edwin of Northumbria and his foe Cadwallon of Gwynedd, with a second Anglian invasion of Gwynedd; now or later Cadwallon is driven in flight to Ireland to acquire help there.

King Cyneigils of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’ and his son and co-ruler Cwichelm fight an apparently indecisive battle against the new king of Mercia, Penda, at Cirencester – presumably on their borders. At around this time Mercia takes over control of the Cotswolds from the West Saxons, implying that their military power is now greater, and this probably either causes or follows this campaign.

IRELAND/BRITAIN

Domnhall, brother of the late Mael Cobo and head of the Cenel Conaill in Western Ulster, attacks ‘High King’ Suibne ‘the Little’ but is defeated

at the battle of Both. He flees, but later that year Suibne is unexpectedly killed in battle at Traig Breni on Lough Swilly by Congal, the king of the Ulaid of Dal Fiatach, probably in a surprise attack. The latter assumes the ‘High Kingship,’ and this threat to Ui Niall predominance leads the feuding dynasts to back Domnhall in the resultant war against the Ulaid.

(or 629) King Eochaid ‘Buidhe’ of Dalriada dies and is succeeded by his co-ruler and heir Conadd ‘the left-handed’; the latter is also active in Ulster, presumably to sustain the control his predecessors exercised over their kin in Dal Riata. Apparently Conadd is too busy fighting in Ulster to return home and claim his kingdom.

629

FRANCIA

18 October. Death of the senior king, Chlotar II of Neustria, after a reign of over forty-four years there, aged forty-five; buried at the church of St Vincent in Paris, later incorporated into the church of St Germain-des-Pres. Succeeded by his son Dagobert, who already rules Austrasia and probably has a Burgundian mother. But the great nobles of central and Southern Neustria – Aquitaine, the lands South of the Loire – prefer Dagobert’s younger half-brother Charibert (born c. 605/10?), son of Sichild, and the boy’s maternal uncle Brodulf tries to persuade Dagobert to accept this; the new king resists it and assassinates Brodulf, but this does not intimidate the opposition; Charibert is elected to rule Aquitaine and the nobles force Dagobert to accept this to avoid war, thus dividing the Francian realm again.

Retirement (voluntary or not) of Pepin of Landen, ‘Mayor of the Palace’ of Austrasia, as Dagobert moves to Neustria.

SPAIN

Fall of last imperial possessions, coastal towns around Malaga, to Visigoths.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the conversion to Christianity under Edwin’s influence of his ally, Eorpwald of the East Angles, son and successor of his ex-patron Raedwald; Eorpwald accepts Northumbrian or Kentish missionaries but is soon murdered by a pagan called Ricgbert; Ricgbert probably but not definitely succeeds as king.

Approximate date of bishop Paulinus’ missionary expedition to the kingdom of Lindsey (Lincolnshire), subordinate ally of Northumbria; Blaecca the ‘reeve’ (royal official/steward) of Lincoln (Roman ‘Lindum’), the main town, is among the leading converts. The kingdom at this time is ruled by Caedbad (a British name, implying probably an ethnically mixed elite),

whose genealogy links his line to ‘Creoda’, possibly the founding 590s dynast of Mercia.

ARABIA/BYZANTIUM

Mohammed enters and governs Mecca; union of Arabia under Islam.

BRITAIN/IRELAND

King Conadd ‘the left-handed’ of Dalriada, allied to the Northern Ui Niall of Ailech, is defeated and killed by the forces of Dal n’Araide at the battle of Fid Eion. This is apparently three months after his succession to full rule of Dalriada on the death of king Eochaid. He is succeeded in Dalriada by the son of Eochaid, Domnhall ‘Brecc’ (‘the Freckled’), who subsequently judges Dal n’Araide a more useful ally than the Ui Niall and abandons the Dalriadan alliance with the latter for them.

King Congal of the ‘Ulaid’, ruler of Dal n’Araide and of the Dal Fiatach, is defeated in battle at Dun Caithirn (Duncairn, near Coleraine) by (?his foster-father and earlier ally) Domnhall of the Ui Niall (Cenel n’Eoghain branch), but he apparently is able later (early 630s?) to assume the ‘High Kingship’. It is unclear if Congal actually held the ‘High Kingship’, which some annalists deny, but in terms of political power he appears to have formed a useful alliance with the Southern, ‘Clan Colman’ branch of the Ui Niall against the Northern branch which Domnhall led.

Battle of Carn Feradaig/Cahernarry, Co. Limerick, between Munster under king Failbe ‘Flann’ and the encroaching ‘Ui Fiachrach’ sub-kingdom of Southern Connacht, headed by Guaire Aidne (ruled 622–63); this probably reflects the latter trying to take over Thomond, the NW district of Munster, which the Munster victory prevents.

630

BYZANTIUM

Heraclius enters Jerusalem in triumph *21 March* to restore the ‘True Cross’ to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; he allows massacres of Jewish ‘collaborators’ and commences plans to enforce reunion of all Eastern Christian churches.

PERSIA

April. Shahbaraz seizes throne; *9 June* he is assassinated and replaced by Chosroes’ nephew Chosroes III; more turmoil follows.

FRANCIA

?Dagobert divorces his childless first wife Gormetrude, a sister of his stepmother Sichilde and possibly provided for him by his late father; he

then marries Nantchild(is) but ends up accused of adultery by the Church due to his numerous affairs.

?Successful campaign by the new king Charibert of Aquitaine, now based at the old Visigothic capital of Toulouse, against the Basques of the SW of Aquitaine. He is already married to or now marries the daughter of a chief of these ‘Vascones’.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the successful return home from Ireland of Cadwallon of Gwynedd, who leads a campaign to expel the Northumbrians, remembered by the Welsh poem ‘Moliant Cadwallon’ as ‘fourteen great battles for Britain’; the principal battle in Gwynedd is ‘Caer Digoll’ on ‘Mount Digoll’, probably the ‘Long Mountain’ near Welshpool and probably pre-632/3.

631

SPAIN

Overthrow of the Visigothic king, Sisenand, by a faction of nobles who have obtained the backing of the Francian king Dagobert by sending him a valuable gold platter which the Western Roman commander-in-chief Aetius presented to their king Thorismund in 451. He is apparently a weak ruler dominated by the Church and his nobles, whose denunciation of his predecessor for alleged extortion and tyrant may imply a backlash against royal centralism in the 600s-early 620s.

FRANCIA

Baptism of Dagobert’s eldest son Sigibert III (by his mistress Ragnechild, apparently a servant-girl, not his wife Nantchild), who was thus presumably born recently; the baby’s uncle Charibert of Aquitaine is godfather.

Dagobert invades the territory of the Slavs East of Austrasia with three separate armies – one Austrasian led by him, one of the ‘Alemanni’ (i.e. the upper Rhineland) and one of the Lombards (i.e. his Italian allies). The latter two are successful, but he is defeated by king Samo of the Slavs at the unidentified ‘Wogastisburg’.

BRITAIN

(or a year or two earlier) Arrival of the first, Frankish missionary bishop in East Anglia – Felix, sent by archbishop Honorius of Canterbury at the request of the new Christian king Sigebert (younger son of Raedwald). He sets up a see at ‘Dumnoc’, either inland Dunmow or Dunwich on the coast (later lost to the sea); he is bishop for seventeen years, and commences his time in office at least twenty-two years before 653.

?Death of king Ciniach of the Picts after a ten-year reign; succeeded by Gartnait mac Gwid, probably his first cousin and son of a sister of his mother and of the late king Nechtan (d. 621). Gwid may be the warrior of that name who fought at Catraeth against the Angles c. 595.

632 ARABIA

Mohammed dies at Medina 7 *June* while planning expedition against Byzantium, aged probably sixty-two; his leading followers elect father-in-law Abu Bakr as ‘Caliph’ (‘Deputy’).

FRANCIA

Sudden and possibly violent death of the junior king, Charibert of Aquitaine, probably in his early twenties, at Blaye in Gascony where he is buried; Dagobert may have had him assassinated, and certainly kills his infant son Chilperic. Dagobert resumes the rule of all of Neustria (Western Francia) but soon faces an armed ‘stand’ by mutinous nobles in Austrasia, probably led by Adalgisl and Pepin of Landen, demanding a new division of the kingdom and a separate king for themselves – presumably his son Sigibert (III).

BRITAIN

(or 630/1) Approximate date of the return home to East Anglia, accession, and formal adoption of Christianity by Sigebert, the Frankish-named younger son of the late king Raedwald; he probably comes from Francia and is presumably aided by his ally Edwin of Northumbria and/or Kent.

633 BRITAIN

Traditional date of the death of king Beli of Strathclyde and accession of his son Owain.

(or 634: Bede prefers 633) After a reign of seventeen years (Bede), Edwin of Northumbria faces invasion by his restored foe Cadwallon of Gwynedd, a Christian, aided now by the pagan king Penda of Mercia – who Bede presents as a ‘committed’ and bloodthirsty pagan and foe of Christ.

10 October. Edwin is killed in battle at Hatfield Chase near Doncaster; his army is destroyed and his eldest son Osfrith is killed, and his second son Eadfrith ends up in Penda’s hands. Bishop Paulinus and queen Aethelburh lead the flight from York, with Edwin’s children by Aethelburh, Eanfled and (son) Uscfrea, and Osfrith’s son Yffi, plus a quantity of treasure; Deira is ravaged by Cadwallon in what Bede implies is anti-Christian and anti-Anglian genocide, and is probably leaderless.

Apparently, from a Welsh poem, Cadwallon carries off Edwin's head as a trophy to his court at Aberffraw on Mon/Anglesey.

Winter. Aethelfrith's eldest son Eanfrith returns to Bernicia from the kingdom of the Picts when he hears of the battle of Hatfield Chase, and becomes king as a Pictish ally; he is a Christian but soon returns to paganism. The same occurs in Deira, where Edwin's late uncle Aelfric's son Osric becomes king, presumably as a client of Cadwallon.

SPAIN

5 December. Opening of the 'Fourth (Church) Council of Toledo', in Spain; presided over by bishop Isidore of Seville. This establishes new disciplinary canons, regularises the liturgy, establishes new schools in the principal city of each bishopric, and enacts legislation against Jews who have converted to Christianity but recanted; the elective nature of the monarchy and the independence of the Church under the authority of Rome are reasserted.

634

PERSIA

Persian nobles make Chosroes' twelve-year-old grandson Yazdagerd 'Great King'.

ARABIA

Death of Abu Bakr; a devout 'companion' of Prophet, Omar, elected Caliph and plans attacks on Byzantium and Persia.

Yazid, Amr and Shurahbil lead three-pronged Arab invasion of Palestine.

ITALY

Patriarch Sergius writes to Pope Honorius that Christ has 'two natures but one operation' and his doctrine's promotion will help ease Orthodox/Monophysite religious conflict; Pope rejects it.

FRANCIA

(or late 633) The autonomist nobles of Austrasia, led by the military commander Adalgisl, bishop Cunibert of Cologne, bishop Arnulf of Metz, and count Pepin of Lamden, insist that they have a separate king from Neustria and probably threaten a renewal of the 632 revolt; Dagobert gives them his elder son Sigibert (III), who is only a baby so this entails a regency by them and other leading nobles. Adalgisl is made 'Mayor of the Palace' to lead the regency, assisted by Cunibert and Arnulf.

?Birth of Dagobert's only legitimate son, by queen Nantchild, Clovis II.

BRITAIN

(or early 635 if Edwin was killed in 634 not 633) Aethelburh sends her son Uscfrea and her late stepson's son Yffi from Kent to Francia, afraid that her brother Eadbald will surrender them to their foe Penda of Mercia for execution.

?Paulinus succeeds to the bishopric of Rochester, after its incumbent Romanus is drowned on a voyage to Francia.

June. A letter from Pope Honorius in reply to the requests sent from England (implicitly recently) by archbishop Honorius in Canterbury and by bishop Paulinus in York, sending the object in question; the date is definite and so may imply that Paulinus is still in York and thus Edwin's overthrow is autumn 634 not 633.

Summer (if Edwin was killed in 633). Cadwallon apparently ravages parts of Deira, and when king Osric attacks him and succeeds in besieging him in an unknown town he breaks out and kills him in battle. (Or 635) He then ravages into Bernicia too, and when Eanfrith arranges a truce-meeting and comes to negotiate he seizes and executes him; Northumbria is leaderless and is at Cadwallon's mercy, which Bede makes the most of in denouncing his atrocities. Probably the advance of Cadwallon across Northern Bernicia alarms the Dalriadans enough for them to lend support to their refugee pretenders to the throne, Eanfrith's younger brothers Oswald and Oswy, and/or the alarmed Picts (into whose royal family Eanfrith has married) back them too.

635

BYZANTIUM

13 March. Siege of Damascus; Heraclius, based at Antioch, orders relief-army in but they are defeated and chased as far as Emesa. *September.* Surrender of Damascus.

PERSIA

Arabs invade Mesopotamia and win battle of Buwaib near River Euphrates.

BRITAIN

(or 634) Aethelfrith's elder son by his second marriage, to a Deiran princess, Oswald, returns to Northumbria from Iona and probably brings an army from Dalriada into Bernicia while Cadwallon is a way to the South; he reaches the Tyne valley and sets up a Christian standard at his position at 'Heavenfield', near Hexham and located in the 1530s by John Leland at Hallington, as a sign of his Christian mission to drive out the invaders and re-establish the Faith after the kingdom's lapse into paganism. (Bede – in fact Cadwallon was Christian too.) The Iona

tradition says that St Columba appeared to him in a dream before the battle to promise divine help, and the episode has echoes, probably intended by Oswald and his backers, of Emperor Constantine fighting successfully for the Cross against the pagans after a vision in 312.

Battle of ‘Heavenfield’/‘Denisesburn’: Oswald prays for victory in front of his cross, before his army, and attacks at dawn, according to Bede. He destroys the larger army of Gwynedd and kills Cadwallon. He takes over Northumbria and renews the conversion, this time seeking aid from Iona – the ‘Celtic’ Church not Rome – and receiving a mission led by Aedan who cannot speak Anglian at first so Oswald translates for him. Aedan establishes his see and monastery on the tidal island of Lindisfarne, near the royal fortress of Bamburgh. But Oswald has to accept Oswine, son of the late king Osric, as his junior king in Deira although he and Oswy had a Deiran mother (Acha, sister of Edwin and second wife of Aethelfrith) so they do have a local claim to loyalty.

Oswald’s younger brother Oswy (born c. 612) is either with him in his invasion or soon returns from Ireland, where he has gone some time in the 630s to campaign; Oswy has either married or has a relationship with the Ui Niall princess Fina, alleged daughter of ‘High King’ Colman Ridi (d. 604), by whom he has his eldest son, Aldfrith – who is left in Ireland. Oswy subsequently marries Riemmelth, princess and possibly queen of Rheged (British Cumbria), grand-daughter of ex-king/bishop Rhun, in a move to bind her people closer to Northumbria. This is probably early in Oswald’s reign, as their son Alchfrith is of marriageable age by c. 650/2.

Accession of the non-dynastic and allegedly low-born Cadfael (‘Battle Prince’) ap Cyffedw as king of Gwynedd, presumably as Cadwallon’s son Cadwaldar is under-age. Logically, the losses of manpower in Cadwallon’s wars cripple Gwynedd’s military strength and aid the rise of its hereditary foe, Powys, which is now led by Cyndylan ap Cyndrwyn, ruler of Southern Powys and the upper Severn valley.

(or 634: same year as Oswald’s accession, probably a few months later) Bishop Birinus, a missionary sent by Pope Honorius from Rome to extend the conversion of the Southern Anglo-Saxons, is consecrated by bishop Asterius of Genoa and sails to Britain. He lands in the kingdom of the ‘Gewissae’/West Saxons and starts their conversion; this is followed by the conversion and baptism of king Cynegils, which takes place at Dorchester-on-Thames during a state visit by king Oswald from Northumbria. Logically, Oswald has come South to seek aid against his and Cynegils’ mutual foe, the pagan king Penda of Mercia, and Oswald backs the missionaries and attends the king’s baptism; he marries Cynegils’ daughter, Cyneburh. The two kings then arrange for Birinus, as bishop of the West Saxons, to set up his see at Dorchester-upon-Thames (as the main royal residence?). This state visit may also be linked to the connection of Oswald to ‘St Oswald’s Bay’ in Dorset – where he landed or set sail?

Notably, Cynegils' elder son Cwichelm is converted and baptised too, but his younger son Cenwalh is not converted.

?Death of king Gartnait mac Gwid of the Picts; succeeded by his brother Bridei/Brude (III).

636 BRITAIN

(or 634/5??) Abdication of the Christian king Sigebert of the East Angles, who enters a monastery after five years on the throne.

Succeeded by his kinsman, Ecgric.

IRELAND

Assassination of Ernain mac Fiachnae, king of the Northern Ui Niall of Ailech and brother of the late 'High King' Suibne 'Menn' (d. 628), an ally of Congal of the Ulaid against the family of Aed Slaine under Domnhall.

Possible failed attempt by Domnhall's allies, the descendants of Muirchertach Mac Erca, to take over Ailech, which brings the conflict between Domnhall and Congal over control of Northern Ireland to a head and leads to Congal seeking the help of Dalriada.

SPAIN

4 April. Death of bishop (St) Isidore of Seville, head of the Catholic Church in Spain and also its leading cultural/literary figure; aged probably in his late seventies.

A coup deposes king Sisenand; his successor Chintila is elected by an assembly of nobles and clerics, and the elective nature of the monarchy is asserted in formal documentation approving a decision of the Fourth (Church) Council of Toledo in that vein. The nobles of Narbonensis/Septimania are initially against the choice of and threaten not to recognise Chintila.

Death of the capital's archbishop, Justus of Toledo; succeeded by the learned astronomer Eugenius (I), who presides at the Fifth Church Council of Toledo (opens 30 June). The rebel nobles' allied bishops of Narbonensis boycott this. This confirms that only the greater nobles can participate in the elections of the king, restricting its 'voters' to the elite, grants immunity to the kings' families from confiscation of any property they may have been granted by their grantors' successors (which will cause problems in 687–8, *qv*), and excommunicates all plotters against or consultants of astrological prophecies about the future of individual kings.

ITALY

Death of the Lombard king, Arioald, after a ten-year reign; succeeded by his fellow-Arian, ‘duke’ Rothari of Brescia.

BYZANTIUM

20 July. Major battle between Byzantine army in Syria and Arabs (‘Battle of the Yarmuk’) sees demoralised Byzantines virtually wiped out as sandstorm blows in the Byzantines’ faces.

Byzantines flee to Antioch; Heraclius, in city, retires to Edessa and thence Anatolia, and orders ‘True Cross’ taken from Jerusalem to Constantinople and creation of a ‘scorched-earth’ zone in Cilicia.

BRITAIN

(or pre-642) Approximate date of the death of king Cynegils of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’s elder son and co-ruler, Cwichelm, who does not outlive his father. He is probably buried at ‘Cuckhamsley Knob’ in N Wiltshire, implying that he rules the surrounding region as sub-king.

637

BYZANTIUM

?Spring. Heraclius returns to Constantinople, but due to nervous disease cannot stand the sea and has ‘bridge of boats’ constructed across Bosphorus, lined with foliage, to enable him to cross.

PERSIA

Three-day battle with Arabs led by Sa’d at Qadisiya; Persian general Rustem routed and Ctesiphon besieged; rest of Mesopotamia overrun.

SPAIN

Chintila is recognised as king across the kingdom.

IRELAND/BRITAIN

Domnhall ‘Brecc’ of Dalriada joins his allies of Dal n’Araide in Ulster under Congal (known as ‘Caoch’, ‘the Squinting’), to fight the Northern Ui Niall of ‘Cenel Conaill’; they are defeated in battle at Mag Rath (Moira) by the Northern Ui Niall of ‘Cenel Conaill’ under Domnhall mac Aed, head of the dynasty of the late ‘High King’ Aed mac Ainmere, and Congal is killed. End of the pretensions of Dalriada to any military power in Ulster. The losses suffered there probably incite Dalriada’s mainland foes in Strathclyde and the Pictish kingdom too. Legendarily St Columba

had prophesied that the Dalriadans would only continue to thrive in Ulster if they allied to the Ui Niall, which cause Domnhall abandoned.

Probably Domnhall mac Aed secures the ‘High Kingship’ of Ireland after the battle. Dunchad mac Fiachna of the ‘Dal Fiatach’ in W Ulster recovers the over-kingship of the ‘Ulaid’ in Ulster, which his dynasty held until 627, due to the losses their ‘Dal n’Araide’ rivals suffered in the battle.

638

SPAIN

January. Another Church Council (the Seventh) meets at Toledo, now including the bishops who boycotted the last one – fifty-three bishops attend. The decrees of the 636 council are backed and the immunity of kings’ families’ property from confiscation and the excommunication of all rebels, plotters and astrology-consultors are upheld to decrease the chances of future plots and throw the Church’s weight against plotters; new kings are required to punish any regicides of their predecessors to discourage such plots. Under Papal pressure, the first measures against the Jews are introduced; all are to convert to Catholicism or be banished.

BYZANTIUM

Surrender of Jerusalem to Arabs; *February* Omar enters dressed humbly and riding a camel, escorted by Patriarch Sophonius, and citizens unharmed.

FRANCIA

?Retirement to a monastery in the Vosges of the leading Austrasian minister bishop Arnulf of Metz (d. 640), aged in his late fifties, ancestor of the Carolingians and allegedly grandson of an obscure daughter of Chlotar I (possibly a later invention).

BRITAIN

Short of manpower after his recent losses in battle in Ulster, king Domnhall ‘Brecc’ of Dalriada is defeated in battle in Glenn Mureson by king Bridei/Brude of the Picts; this probably represents a reassertion of Pictish power in central-Western Scotland against the ‘over-stretched’ Dalriada.

PERSIA

?Arabs cross Zagros mountains and overrun the plateau as far as heart-lands of Persia; Yazdagerd flees to Bactria.

ITALY

12 *October*. Death of Pope Honorius; Severinus elected successor but Heraclius delays approving consecration until 'Exarch' Isaac has induced him to support new Byzantine theological policy.

BYZANTIUM

October. Heraclius approves and issues the '*Ecthesis*': a religious compromise to unite Orthodox and Monophysites by banning all discussion of Christ's operations and insisting that he had two natures but operated with one 'will' ('Monothelism'); 8/9 *December* Death of Patriarch Sergius, chief supporter of Heraclius' new doctrinal plans; 20 *December* Pyrrhus, abbot of Chrysopolis, made Patriarch.

639

FRANCIA

19 *January*. Death of 'Good King' Dagobert of Neustria, the senior Merovingian ruler, at St Denis near his principal residence of Paris – the last secure strong ruler of his dynasty. He is probably aged in his late thirties; he is buried at the cathedral of St Denis which he has rebuilt as a royal cultic centre linking his dynasty to the 'national' saint Denis, the first of the royal family to be buried there. His elder son Sigibert III, aged around nine, continues to rule Austrasia under the tutelage of his ministers led by count Pepin of Landen while his younger and only legitimate son Clovis (II), aged around five, succeeds to Neustria. Queen Nantchild is regent of Neustria, aided by 'Mayor of the Palace' Aega.

King Sigibert is the nominal leader of an Austrasian expedition, led by 'Mayor of the Palace' Adalgisl, to deal with the autonomist threat from 'duke' Radulf of Thuringia, who has restored the kingdom's Eastern frontier against the Slavs since the defeat of 631 but is under suspicion of revolt with his ally Fara, a Bavarian lord on the River Main who is descended from the former Agilulfing dynasty of Bavaria; the royal army defeats and overthrows Fara, but meets with disaster against Radulf's Thuringians as part of it melts away in the battle. Sigibert's life is reputedly saved by one of the commanders, count Pepin of Landen's son Grimoald, who subsequently becomes his most trusted aide; Adalgisl is sacked and replaced by Grimoald's father, Pepin of Landen.

Pepin and his ally bishop Cunibert of Cologne supervise the redistribution of the royal treasury in Austrasia to send a portion West to queen Nantchild and 'Mayor of the Palace' Aega in Neustria.

BRITAIN

Approximate date (three years after his accession) when king Ecgric of the East Angles faces an invasion by the ferocious, pagan king Penda of Mercia. The alarmed populace demands that he recalls his 'holy'

predecessor Sigebert from his monastery to join the campaign as a talisman to secure divine support; Sigebert refuses to carry a sword in battle and uses a staff instead. Both men are killed as Penda routs the East Anglian army; Ecgric is succeeded by the devoutly Christian Anna, son of Eni the younger brother of king Raedwald. The latter proves a great founder of monasteries, and is aided in due course by his four devout daughters, the eldest of whom is St Aethelthryth/Aetheldreda (Audrey).

SPAIN

December. (or early 640) Death of king Chintila of the Visigoths; succeeded by his son Tulga.

640

BYZANTIUM/EGYPT

January. Fall of Pelusium; Amr crosses the desert to River Nile; *May* surrender of Heliopolis.

BRITAIN

20 January. Death of king Eadbald of Kent, after a reign of twenty-three or twenty-four years; aged probably in his fifties if he is the son of Aethelbert by Bertha of Francia. Succeeded by Earconbert, his second but eldest surviving son by his second, Francian wife (Emma/Ymme), who is probably around twenty. Earconbert's late elder brother Eormenred's infant sons are superseded. The new king is fervently Christian, and soon orders the destruction of all remaining pagan idols; he marries the equally devout Seaxburga, daughter of the evangelising king Anna of the East Angles.

FRANCIA

27 February. Death of Pepin of Landen, 'Mayor of the Palace' of Austrasia (623–9 and 639–40) and leading figure of the kingdom; succeeded in his influence over king Sigibert by his son Grimoald.

ITALY

28 May. Pope Severinus finally ordained after he agrees to ratify the 'Ecthesis' amidst intimidation by 'Exarch' Isaac.

August. Death of Pope Severinus; John IV elected successor.

BYZANTIUM/EGYPT

Autumn. Praefect Cyrus makes agreement with Arabs to evacuate Egypt, and returns to Constantinople to get confirmation; Heraclius refuses it

and dismisses him. *December* Arabs storm the Byzantine administrative/military headquarters in Egypt, Babylon, and besiege garrison in citadel.

ITALY

24 December. John IV consecrated Pope after Heraclius' confirmation arrives in Rome.

641

ITALY

January. Pope John holds synod to denounce 'Ecthesis'.

BYZANTIUM

Heraclius writes to Pope John abandoning support for 'Ecthesis' and blaming it on Sergius; *11 February* he dies aged ?sixty-six and his sons Constantine III and Heracleonas co-Emperors under Martina's effective rule; Pyrrhus is left funds to transmit to Martina if Constantine evicts her from Palace Cyrus recalled from exile; *May* Damietta besieged.

?*24 May.* Death of consumptive Constantine III, aged twenty-nine, amid rumours of poison by his stepmother Martina who becomes regent for her son by Heraclius, Heracleonas (aged fifteen), and claims to be co-ruler.

FRANCIA

Death of 'Mayor of the Palace' Aega of Neustria (?and Burgundy), at Clichy; he is replaced by queen Nantchild with Erchinoald, probably a maternal cousin of the late king Dagobert (d. 639), in Neustria. Flaochad (like him a resented non-local) is already 'Mayor of the Palace' in Burgundy as Nantchild's choice, possibly from 639.

In Austrasia, the rebel duke Radulf of Thuringia defeats an attack by the royal army, led in person by king Sigibert III who is humiliated and reportedly left weeping after the 'disgrace' of the battle, and survives as duke; this is said in retrospect to mark the decline of royal power in Austrasia and the triumph of assertive nobles.

BRITAIN

?Death of king Bridei mac Gwid of the Picts, probably following or in the course of an unsuccessful campaign against the rising power of Strathclyde under Owain map Beli. Succeeded by his brother Talorc.

ITALY

Fall of Oderzo, near Venice, to the Lombards.

Death of 'duke' Arechis of Benevento, son of one of the Lombard rulers of the duchy of Friuli in N Italy and ruler of Benevento for fifty years; succeeded by his mentally unstable son Aiulf, but due to the latter's incapacity Arechis' two adoptive (younger) 'sons' Radoald and Grimoald, sons of a duke of Friuli related to Arechis, act as regents.

BYZANTIUM

July. Arab siege of Alexandria.

?September. General Valentinus, leading force to Cilicia, marches to Chalcedon demanding that Constantine III's son Constans become co-Emperor amidst popular support; Heracleonas agrees and *?late September* crowns Constans himself. Patriarch Pyrrhus is sacked.

Valentinus rewarded and made 'Caesar'; resumes campaign.

SPAIN

18 November. Seventh Church Council of Toledo: new measures to punish plotting and rebellion by the nobility, and the requirement that any clerics or monks who travel abroad to incite revolt against the king be punished in the disgraced role of 'penitents' for life.

BYZANTIUM

28 November. Cyrus signs one-year truce with Arabs in Egypt, promising tribute and Byzantine evacuation of Alexandria at expiry of truce.

642

BYZANTIUM/EGYPT

?January. Renewed rioting in Constantinople against Martina; Senate leads coup to arrest and depose Martina and Heracleonas; Martina has nose and tongue slit; Heracleonas and brothers David and Martinus have noses slit to incapacitate them for throne, and all are exiled to Rhodes. Constans II sole Emperor at age of *?twelve*; Valentinus chief minister and commander-in-chief.

FRANCIA

'Mayor of the Palace' of Burgundy Flaochad quarrels with his former friend the 'patrician' Willibad, unlike him from a long-established Burgundian family and ruling lands around Vienne and Valence on the lower Rhone; he gets king Clovis to summon him to a royal council at Chalons and plans but fails to murder him, and then challenges him to a duel which his brother prevents; Flaochad persuades king Clovis to summon Willibad to a council at Autun for trial and as he refuses to come attacks him with an army; the battle ends with Willibad dead, but

Flaochad dies of his wounds eleven days later; Erchinoald, ‘Mayor of the Palace’ of Neustria, becomes ‘Mayor’ of Burgundy in centralisation by the royal court.

IRELAND

January. Death of ‘High King’ Domnhall mac Aed, head of the Ui Niall branch of ‘Cenel Conaill’ in NW Ulster; succeeded in both roles by his nephews, Cellach and Congal the sons of the late prince Mael Cobo, who reign from 642/3 to 656. Some sources make their allies Diarmaid and Blathmac of the ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ (‘Seed of Aed Slaine’), sons of Aed Slaine the late ‘High King’, also kings at this time and all four dividing authority.

SPAIN

Revolt against king Tulga of the Visigoths, led by the aged commander Chindaswinth who is in charge of the army on the Basque frontier; he may be aged seventy-nine, and is apparently a veteran of the campaigns of Leovigild’s reign in the 580s. He is elected (6 April) and anointed by a rebel assembly of nobles at Pamplona (30 April) and marches on Toledo, where Tulga is abandoned, deposed and sent to a monastery. Chindaswinth restores royal power with a round of executions and imposes control of his nobles.

BYZANTIUM/EGYPT

March. Death of Cyrus in Alexandria; 17 *September* under agreement, Byzantines evacuate Alexandria in 100 ships; 29 *September* Amr enters the city, but the supposed mass-burning of the manuscripts of the Great Library in bath-furnaces is probably just later legend.

BRITAIN

Oswald of Northumbria, reckoned as ‘Bretwalda’ by Bede in the early 730s, invades Northern Mercia to tackle his main and pagan foe, king Penda; the site of the resulting battle implies that he heads for the Welsh border to tackle Penda’s (Christian) ally Cyndylan of Powys too, or else Penda lures him there.

5 *August.* Battle of ‘Maserfelth’/Oswestry (‘Oswald’s Tree’) (Anglian name) or ‘Maes Cogwy’ (Welsh name), in N Shropshire. Oswald is defeated and killed by the alliance of Penda of Mercia and Cyndylan of Powys – the latter is claimed by later Welsh stories to be the brother of Penda’s wife, Heledd. Oswald’s body is dismembered and strung up in a tree in a pagan ritual by Penda; the remains are later recovered by his brother Oswy, who succeeds to the throne of Northumbria. The main Mercian casualty in the battle is Penda’s brother and co-ruler Eowa, who

may have been installed as king by Oswald earlier to limit Penda's power; the C9th 'Historia Brittonum' reckons Penda's ten-year sole rule began in 642.

(Bede says that Oswald reigned for eight years, dying nine years after Edwin's fall: this puts his estimate of the latter as 633 not 634, and Oswald's accession at 634.)

Bede reckons Oswy as 'Bretwalda' in succession to Oswald; in reality, Penda is probably more powerful in Southern Britain. Oswy, aged around thirty (Bede), has to accept the devout and well-loved Oswine, son of Osric, continuing as sub-king in Deira due to local particularism.

King Domnhall 'Brecc' of Dalriada falls in battle against the Strathclyde British, led by king Owain/Eugenius mac Beli, in Strathcarron; eclipse of the power of Dalriada in central Scotland, to the joint benefit of Strathclyde and later the expanding power of Northumbria in Lothian. In NW Scotland, it appears that the Picts rally to try to retake Skye and the Northern Inner Hebrides.

Ferchar, son of Domnhall's cousin and predecessor Conadd 'Cerr', succeeds him; medieval records of the Picts give him a sixteen-year reign to 650 so he is probably already co-ruler and heir.

ITALY

12 *October*. Death of Pope John IV; 24 *October* Theodore elected and writes to Constans demanding abandonment of 'Monotheletism' and refusing to recognise Patriarch Paul until he has been elected in Papal legates' presence and confirmed orthodoxy.

643

NORTH AFRICA

Amr of Egypt invades and conquers the 'Pentapolis' and Tripolitania but is unable to reach 'Exarchate' around Carthage.

ITALY

'Exarch' Isaac killed by Lombards who conquer Liguria.

?King Rothari promulgates the first comprehensive Lombard law-code, updating some laws issued earlier by Authari.

SPAIN

(After ?April, either in 643 or early 644) In the second year of king Recceswinth's reign, promulgation of a new Visigothic law-code, the 'Liber Iudiciorum'; previous codes are updated, probably as a propaganda/idealistic move by the insecure new king to stress his role as guarantor of justice.

FRANCIA

King Sigibert III's close and trusted friend Grimoald, son of Pepin of Landen, becomes 'Mayor of the Palace' of Austrasia; presumably intended as an assertion of royal centralism over the restive nobles and leading to a personal ascendancy by Grimoald over the king. From what later transpired it appears that at some point the then childless king adopted Grimoald's son Childebert as his heir.

Approximate date of the death of Dagobert's widow queen Nantchildis, regent of Neustria for their son Clovis II.

BRITAIN

Probable date of the death of king Cynegils of the West Saxons/'Gewissae', after a reign of thirty-two years. Succeeded by his son Cenwalh, still pagan at this date, who reigns for thirty-one years. He has either already or else now marries the sister of his powerful, pagan neighbour, Penda of Mercia.

Probable date of the marriage of king Oswy to Eanfled, daughter of his forebear Edwin and living in exile in Kent since her father's killing, in a combined alliance with her kin in Kent (against Penda of Mercia) and appeal to Deiran loyalty on account of Edwin's Deiran blood. Oswy puts aside his existing (first or second) wife, Riemmelth the heiress or queen of Rheged (British Cumbria), unless she is already dead; their son Alchfrith remains his heir.

SPAIN

(or 644) Issuing of updated code of Visigothic law by king Chindaswinth, the 'Liber Iudiciorum'.

644? BYZANTIUM

OR
645?

Arrogant 'Caesar' Valentinus, Constans' father-in-law, leads troops into capital to stage coup and seize throne but is defeated, arrested and lynched by mob.

644 CALIPHATE

6 November. Omar is assassinated in Mecca and a group of six senior associates of the Prophet choose the latter's secretary Othman, distant cousin from Umayyad family, rather than son-in-law Ali; Amr replaced as governor of Egypt by less dynamic Abdullah.

BRITAIN

Approximate date when the new king Cenwalh of the West Saxons/'Gewissae' rejects his wife, sister of king Penda of Mercia, and is driven

out of his kingdom by his furious brother-in-law. He flees to the court of the Christian king Anna of the East Angles, Penda's principal Southern British foe; Penda probably rules Wessex through the extant sub-kings such as Cuthred.

Approximate date of a major invasion of Northumbria by Penda of Mercia, intent on humiliating his enemy king Oswy. He ravages North as far as Bernicia, implying that he had a larger army and Oswy dared not meet him in battle, and storms and sets fire to the Northumbrian kings' main stronghold at Bamburgh; according to legend a miraculous storm puts the flames out.

10 October. Death of Paulinus, ex-bishop of York, as bishop of Rochester; succeeded by Ithamar who archbishop Honorius consecrates.

645 BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Ex-Patriarch Sergius joins in synod debate in North Africa on 'Monotheletism', is won over by eloquent Constantinopolitan orthodox monk Maximus 'the Confessor', and recants; on arrival at Rome Pope Theodore recognises him as rightful Patriarch but abandons him when he returns to 'Monotheletism'.

The new 'Exarch', the 'Monothelete' Plato, is defeated by the Lombard king Rothari in battle on the banks of the River Scultenna near Modena, with the loss of 7,000 men; however, a Byzantine offensive in Istria into the Veneto recaptures Oderzo.

646 EGYPT/NORTH AFRICA

Maximus 'the Confessor' goes to North Africa and wins over province and 'Exarch' Gregory (son of Heraclius' cousin Nicetas) against 'Monotheletism'.

ITALY

'Duke' Aiulf of Benevento, who is mentally unstable, tackles an invading force of Slavs from the Balkans who have crossed the Adriatic to land at Siponto and plunder his lands; he is thrown off his horse as it blunders into a pit in the attack on the Slav camp and is killed. His adoptive brother and co-regent Radoald succeeds him.

SPAIN

October. Seventh (Church) Council of Toledo.

?*Late.* Death of the learned archbishop Eugenius (I) of Toledo.

CALIPHATE

Othman's foster-brother Abdullah Ibn Abi Sarh sent to Egypt to prepare invasion of North Africa via Tripolitania.

647

NORTH AFRICA

'Exarch' Gregory revolts against Constans; Arabs invade and he is killed and capital, Sufetala, sacked; self-appointed successor Gennadius loyal and evicts Arabs.

SPAIN

(Alternative date) Death of archbishop Eugenius (I) of Toledo, leader of the Spanish Church; succeeded by the obscure and holy Eugenius (II), a monastic protégé of the charismatic bishop Braulio of Saragossa, who is supposed to have been revealed as the best choice to the devout king Chindaswinth in a dream; he allegedly is so unwilling to take on administrative duties that he soon heads back to Saragossa to resume monastic life but is ordered back by the king.

BRITAIN

(or 648?) After a three-year exile, Cenwalh of the West Saxons/'Gewissae' is able to return home to resume his throne. He has been converted to Christianity and baptised in exile at the court of the devout king Anna of the East Angles.

648

BYZANTIUM

Constans and Patriarch Paul promulgate the '*Typos*' (Edict) on doctrine: all discussion of whether Christ had one or two natures banned, and no doctrine to be taught that the five 'General Councils' have not emoralized; it fails to secure support or end fierce doctrinal disputes.

BRITAIN

Thomas succeeds Felix as bishop of the East Angles, based at 'Dunmoe'.

649

SPAIN

20 January. Backed by the leading cleric archbishop Braulio of Saragossa, king Chindaswinth asserts the hereditary over the (recently triumphant) elective nature of Visigothic kingship by crowning his son and heir Recceswinth; this shows the Church's backing for a strong monarchy against the nobles.

ITALY

14 May. Death of Pope Theodore; 5 July election of successor Martin I, formerly a Papal ‘apocrisiarius’ in Constantinople; he leads opposition to ‘*Typos*’ and 5–31 October holds Lateran Synod to denounce it and ‘Monothelism’; decrees of Synod are sent round Empire to be signed, and archbishop Paul of Thessalonica excommunicated for refusing; Martin writes to Constans requiring him to abandon heresy but blaming his beliefs on errant Patriarchs; Church in North Africa especially strong for orthodoxy.

BRITAIN

¿Penda attacks and ravages East Anglia, sacking a major monastery, as punishment for king Anna restoring his foe Cenwalh to Wessex; Anna has to flee but returns when Penda goes home.

IRELAND

King Guaire Aidne of the ‘Ui Fiachrach Aidne’ (Ulster) is defeated at the battle of near Gort by ‘High King’ Diarmait mac Aed Slaine, traditionally after a failed attempt to get his ally Abbot (St) Cummian of Clonfert to secure a truce from the latter; several kings of Munster of uncertain identity are killed in the battle, which possibly reflects a move by the ‘High King’s U Niall branch in Brega to halt the ‘Ui Fiachrach Aidne’s success in extending their influence South from Connacht into Thomond. This may be followed by Guaire’s temporary abdication to become a monk.

c. 649

?

FRANCIA

Approximate date when ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Erchinoald of Neustria and Burgundy, the effective ruler for the teenage king Clovis II since his mother Nantchild died in the early 640s, persuades him to marry his own protégé – Balthild(is), a devout Anglo-Saxon slave-girl in his household who may be connected to the nobility or royal family of Kent or East Anglia.

c. 650

?

BRITAIN

Approximate date when Sigebert ‘the Good’, son of a brother of the late king Saeberht (d. 616), succeeds his cousin Sigebert ‘the Little’ as king of the East Saxons. He either converts to Christianity now or has done so earlier, on a visit to Northumbria, at the instigation of king Oswy, and now calls in Northumbrian missionaries to convert his people. Their leader is St Cedd, who was trained at Lindisfarne.

650 ITALY

New 'Exarch' Olympius is ordered to arrest Pope Martin; visits Rome, does nothing due to strength of feeling for Pope, and back at Ravenna starts rebellion.

BRITAIN

Death of Birinus, first bishop of the kingdom of the West Saxons/ 'Gewissae', based at Dorchester-on-Thames. King Cenwalh secures a Frank, Agilbert, as his successor.

Death of king Ferchar of Dalriada; succeeded by two kings, Conall II 'Crandomna', younger brother of the late king Domnhall (k. 642), and Dunchad mac Coniang (of uncertain lineage).

651 ITALY

Olympius dies of plague while marching on Sicily, rebellion collapses.

Death of 'duke' Radoald of Benevento, leader of the Lombards in Southern Italy; succeeded by his younger brother Grimoald, the most able and ambitious of his line, who is soon pressing the Byzantines back in central-Southern Italy.

SPAIN

Death of the leading cleric and learned Catholic cultural leader bishop Braulio of Saragossa, patron/encourager of the clerical scholar Isidore of Seville.

BRITAIN

August. Oswy of Northumbria invades his junior sub-king Oswine of Deidra's kingdom unprovoked, and the latter disbands his army at Catterick sooner than face inevitable defeat and massacre. He takes refuge with a local landowner, Hund, but is betrayed to Oswy and arrested.

20 August. Oswy executes Oswine at Gilling; the act is regarded by the locals as murder and a cult of Oswine as a saint emerges in protest. The news of the execution hastens the death shortly afterwards of Oswine's friend, bishop Aedan of Lindisfarne. Oswy installs his nephew Aethelwulf, son of the late king Oswald, as sub-king of Deira.

Finn succeeds Aedan as bishop of Northumbria, resident at Lindisfarne.

652 ITALY

Death of Lombard king Rothari after a sixteen-year reign; succeeded by his son Rodoald, who is also Arian and may already be co-ruler.

BRITAIN

Battle at Britford-on-Avon between king Cenwalh of the West Saxons/ 'Gewissae' and an unknown foe, either the British (of Dumnonia, trying to keep him out of NE Somerset?), the SE Welsh of Morgannwg, or the Mercians (fighting him over the SW Cotswolds?).

?The future bishop (St) Wilfrid of York, a young Deiran nobleman of around nineteen educated at Lindisfarne abbey, journeys to Kent with letters of introduction to the royal family from their relative, king Oswy of Northumbria's wife Eanfled; he is trained by Kentish cleric and makes friends with another expatriate Northumbrian, the older Benedict Biscop (future founding abbot of Jarrow/Monkwearmouth) and becomes a protégé of the future king Hlothere/Lothar, brother of king Earconbert.

653

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

After a six-month reign king Rodoald of the Lombards is assassinated, apparently due to his lechery by the affronted husband of one of his mistresses; a Catholic is elected to replace him in a presumed Catholic reaction to his Arian dynasty, namely 'duke' Aripert of Asti whose father Gundwald/Gundovald was a noble Bavarian exile (see entry for 588) and whose aunt queen Theodelinda was the mainstay of the kingdom's first conversion to Catholicism.

New 'Exarch' Theodore Calliopas enters Rome and arrests bedridden Pope Martin at Lateran; clergy are handed order that he is not Pope as election fraudulent, and Martin smuggled out to Byzantine ship at Naples and sent to capital, stopping at Naxos while he is ill; *17 September* he arrives at Constantinople to be put in solitary confinement and *19 December* tried for treason in assisting rebellion of Olympius but as an imperial official not legitimate Pope; he is flogged and sentenced to death but reprieved and exiled on appeal of dying Patriarch Paul; *27 December* Paul dies.

BRITAIN

Treaty between Oswy of Northumbria and Penda of Mercia agrees that Penda's eldest son and heir, Peada the new king of the 'Middle Angles' (SE Mercia), will marry Oswy's daughter Aelfflaed/Elfreda, and Oswy's son and heir Alchfrith will marry Penda's daughter Cyneburgh. The peace does not last, though it is unclear if Penda is furious that Peada is converted to Christianity by his new wife and her visiting brother Alchfrith. Peada is baptised at a Mercian royal 'vill' (estate) by bishop Finn and the conversion of the Middle Angles commences; it is led by a party of four Lindisfarne missionaries including Cedd, Adda the brother of abbot Utta of Gateshead, and Diuma the Irishman.

Probable date of the death of Pictish king Talorc mac Gwid, third of three brothers to hold the kingship. The Picts are probably in military trouble against Strathclyde, though its victorious king Owain is probably dead by this time, and against the Dalriadans; the election of the half-Angle Talorcan mac Eanfrith, son of the late king Eanfrith of Bernicia (ruled 633–4?) by Talorc's sister and nephew of the current king Oswy, suggests an appeal to Oswy for help which is successful. By this date the Picts have had to abandon Lothian to Northumbria, and possibly the new alliance also involves Pictish aid to Oswy against Mercia.

Approximate date of the assassination of the Christian king of the East Saxons, Sigebert 'the Good' – apparently by a kinsman of his who he had had excommunicated for a marriage that broke canon law. Either the killer or another man who takes advantage of the regicide, the lapsed Christian/pagan Swithhelm, takes the throne but soon returns to Christianity.

September. Death of archbishop Honorius of Canterbury, after a twenty-six-year period in office.

Approximate date of the third crippling invasion of East Anglia by Penda of Mercia; king Anna is killed and his brother and heir Aethelhere is forced to become a Mercian vassal-king.

SPAIN

Death of the aged centralising Visigothic king Chindaswinth, aged in his late eighties or ninety; succeeded by his already crowned heir or co-ruler (from 649), Recceswinth.

December. The holy archbishop Eugenius (II) of Toledo calls a provincial synod at Toledo.

654

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

26 March. Pope Martin deported to Cherson in Crimea; Maximus 'the Confessor' is brought to Constantinople, condemned for treason in supporting rebellion, and exiled.

Pyrhus restored as Patriarch but dies *1 June*; succeeded by Peter.

10 August. Roman clergy accept that Papal throne is vacant and elect Eugenius as new Pope.

BRITAIN

Probable date of the resumption of war between Mercia and Northumbria and a new attack on the latter by Penda; Oswy unsuccessfully offers him much gold to desist.

Co-king Dunchad of Dalriada is killed in battle in Strath Ethairt by Talorcan, king of the Picts.

SPAIN

The new king Recceswinth updates the Visigothic law-code.

655

BRITAIN

March. Deusdedit ('God's Gift') becomes archbishop of Canterbury – the first ethnic Anglo-Saxon, born in Britain, to hold the post.

Approximate date of the foundation of the Deira monastery of Gilling by Oswy, in expiation for the killing of the Deiran king Oswine in 651, at the instigation of his queen Eanfleda (related to Oswine); the late king's kinsman Trumhere becomes abbot.

Approximate date of the future Northumbrian clerical leaders Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop, currently studying in Kent, deciding to go to Rome on pilgrimage – the first attested Anglo-Saxon pilgrims there. They halt at Lyons, where Wilfrid becomes a protégé of the bishop and is reputedly considered by him for marriage to his niece but takes clerical orders.

He stays in Lyons for three years and acquires knowledge of and 'converts to' the Rome-derived Continental regulations for religious practice, e.g. computing the date of Easter and the monastic tonsure, which he will later impose wherever he can in England. Benedict Biscop goes on to Rome to study.

Death of sub-king Tondberht of the South Gyrwe of the SE Midlands, a sub-ruler for Mercia and husband to the late king Anna of East Anglia's eldest daughter, the devout (St) Aetheldreda/Audrey. She takes a vow of virginity and retires to the remote Fens to found the abbey of Ely on its main island, becoming its abbess.

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Pentecost. Patriarch Peter meets Eugenius' legates and persuades them to accept compromise that Christ's human and divine natures may each have a different will but he only has one will as a 'person' ('hypostasis'); they recognise his appointment and take communion with him, but back in Italy Synod at Rome forced to reject it by popular demonstrations.

Maximus 'the Confessor' brought to Constantinople for trial, rejects Patriarch's mediation, and is exiled to Bizye (Thrace).

BRITAIN

Penda invades Northumbria again with a huge army, including thirty 'duces' (subordinate governors) or sub-kings who probably include rulers

from kingdoms outside Mercia – certainly Aethelhere of East Anglia and possibly the kings of ‘Hwicce’ (NE Gloucestershire) are among them. Aethelwald of Deira, nephew of Oswy, joins Penda – as his candidate to take over Northumbria? Oswy is outnumbered and withdraws North across Deira, but eventually agrees to a treaty; apparently his elder son Ecgrith is handed over as a hostage and sent to Penda’s court. As Penda is returning South, Oswy decides to attack him – probably due to heavy rain demoralising the invaders.

15 November. Battle of the ‘River Winwaed’, probably near Leeds. Oswy attacks and destroys the Mercian army, which is driven into the river; Penda is killed, probably aged fifty after a thirty-year reign (one source (‘A’ version of the ASC) says aged eighty after a fifty-year reign but this is unlikely), and among the other casualties is Aethelhere of East Anglia; Aethelwald of Deira is possibly killed too.

(Bede says that the battle of Winwaed was twenty-two years after the fall of Edwin, so if the latter was really in 634 not 633 the Winwaed campaign may have occurred in 656; this is however unlikely due to all the resultant chronological problems.)

Oswy becomes the principal warlord of Britain and according to Bede is ‘Bretwalda’ – though arguably Penda has had a better claim to that title from 642 until this point, and Bede may ‘downplay’ Penda’s power due to his religion. Penda, Oswy’s son-in-law, is allowed to stay as king of the ‘Middle Angles’, presumably Southern Mercia, but apparently Oswy annexes Northern Mercia. Oswy’s treacherous nephew Aethelwald is deposed as sub-king of Deira if he is still alive; he is succeeded by Oswy’s eldest son, Alchfrith.

King Cadfael of Gwynedd participates in Penda’s campaign in Northumbria as his ally, and either is killed at the battle of the Winwaed or loses so many men and so much reputation that he is expelled by his people afterwards. Accession of his predecessor Cadwallon’s son Cadwaladr (reigns to 682), who subsequent Welsh legend remembers as the ‘last king of Britain’. Geoffrey of Monmouth’s account of him ruling in England is unhistorical, but he may have ruled parts of later English territory in Shropshire for a time.

Another possible British victim of the Winwaed campaign is Penda’s other ally, his ?brother-in-law, king Cyndylan of Powys; he dies around this time but we cannot be certain when or if it is in battle. A poem attributed to the princely Rheged poet Llywarch ‘Hen’ refers to his court at ‘Pengwern’ (either Shrewsbury or the Wrekin hillfort) as abandoned after his death, and probably the Mercians take over the British areas of the Shropshire lowlands c. 655–60. One British prince, Morfael of Lichfield, temporarily survives.

Aethelwold succeeds his brother Aethelhere as king of the East Angles.

656 | BYZANTIUM/ITALY

April. Pope Martin dies of starvation at Cherson; *September* Maximus refuses to recant, so beaten and exiled further.

FRANCIA

Probable (but not certain) date of the death of king Sigibert III of Austrasia, elder but illegitimate son of Dagobert, aged probably around twenty-five; his infant son by queen Chrimnechild, Dagobert (II), is set aside by his ‘Mayor of the Palace’ and closest aide Grimoald in favour of the latter’s own son Childebert III ‘the Adopted’ who Sigibert had adopted earlier before he had a son. It is not known if Sigibert backed this plan, with Childebert being older, but the coup is controversial as it excludes the legitimate royal family and leads to affronted Austrasian magnates calling in king Clovis II of Neustria and his ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Erchinoald to overthrow the usurper. Dagobert is tonsured as a monk to make him ineligible for the throne, and is sent either to the cathedral school at Poitiers and thence to a monastery in Ireland or else direct to the latter.

BRITAIN

Easter. Assassination in obscure circumstances of king Peada of the ‘Middle Angles’ (Southern Mercia), probably with the involvement of his wife Enfleda, the daughter of his overlord king Oswy of Northumbria; the latter may be behind the killing in order to destroy the chances of a Mercian revival. Peada is probably still in his twenties. Oswy annexes all Mercia or else becomes overlord of its remaining sub-kings and leaves its kingship vacant; he seeks out Peada’s younger brothers Wulfhere and Aethelred to kill them too but they are hidden by loyal retainers.

?Oswy dedicates his infant daughter Elffleda to God as a nun in thanks for his victory at the Winwaed, and she is educated at the monastery/nunnery (double rule) of Hartlepool under the abbess, the royal kinswoman Hild(a).

IRELAND

Deaths of ‘High Kings’ Cellach and Congal mac Mael Cobo of the ‘Cenel Conaill’ (NW Ulster) branch of the Ui Niall, which first is unclear; succeeded in the high kingship by their allies and colleagues (possibly already recognised as ‘High Kings’), Diarmait and Blathmac the sons of Aed Slaine, who head the ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ sub-dynasty of the Ui Niall.

CALIPHATE

The Prophet's widow Ayesha's brother leads revolt in Arabia against Othman and his Omayyad relatives; Othman besieged in Medina and when city surrenders is blockaded in palace for six weeks and *17 June* murdered as rebels enter; Ali, as husband of Prophet's daughter Fatima and the first convert to Islam, is proclaimed Caliph at Medina, but Prophet's distant cousin Muawiya, as new head of Umayyad clan, revolts in Syria; civil war in Caliphate, and Ayesha leads revolt with 'companions' Telha and Zubayr in Mesopotamia; Ali defeats them at battle 'of the Camel' *9 December*.

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CALIPHATE

Muawiya invades Mesopotamia, and is facing defeat at battle of Siffin when his supporter, Amr of Egypt, has copy of Koran raised on a lance to propose a truce and persuades both sides to accept 'judgement of Koran' on rightful Caliph and set up theological commission on it; truce, but rigidly orthodox Moslem revolt in Mesopotamia against Ali.

ITALY

2 June. Death of Pope Eugenius; *30 July* Vitalian elected Pope and recognised by Patriarch of Constantinople.

FRANCIA

The C8th (Neustrian) 'Liber Historiae Francorum' version of events dates the overthrow of Childebert III of Austrasia and his father and 'kingmaker' Grimoald by the Neustrian elite to this year; other sources prefer the date 661. The LHF version has it that Clovis II of Neustria, who died in December 657 or December 658, led the campaign; if so, he is the commander who arrests and executes Grimoald, his son, and the usurper Childebert III. But the late king Sigibert III's son Dagobert (II) is not recalled; Clovis' second son Childeric, still an infant, is made the puppet-king and Wulfoald assumes power as 'Mayor of the Palace' of Austrasia at the head of the anti-Grimoald faction. The son of bishop Arnulf of Metz and husband of Grimoald's devout sister (St) Begga, Ansegisl, is politically eclipsed but survives, and dies some time before 679 in a private killing by his enemy Gundewin.

BRITAIN

Death of Pictish king Talorcan mac Eanfrith, nephew and client of king Oswy of Northumbria; the alliance probably continues under his successor, Gartnait mac Donuel, who is probably his nephew (sister's son). 'Donuel' is unknown but has been suggested as the late king Domnhall 'Brecc' of Dalriada.

SPAIN

13 November. Death of the holy archbishop Eugenius (II) of Toledo.

FRANCIA

27 November. (or 658) Death of the weak king Clovis II of Neustria and Burgundy, ruler since January 639 but under the influence of his devout Anglo-Saxon wife Balthild and politically dominated by ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Erchinoald; succeeded by his eldest son Chlotar III, who is probably five or six, as nominal ruler.

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FRANCIA

(or 657 as above) Overthrow of the usurper Childebert III of Austrasia by the Neustrians under Clovis II and installation of his second son Childeric II as king of Austrasia; this is before Clovis’ death (either December 657 or December 658) when his eldest son Chlotar III succeeds to Neustria as a child-king with his mother Balthild as regent. The latter is noted for her humanity and, as an ex-child slave, trying to ban slavery and to buy children out of captivity.

Death of ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Erchinoald of Neustria; succeeded in election by the ambitious and ruthless Ebroin, who rules as effective chief minister for the ‘faineant’ king Chlotar III, son of Clovis II, from 658 until 673.

BRITAIN

King Cenwalh of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’ defeats the British of Dumnonia (Devon and Cornwall) at ‘Peonna’, identified as Penselwood NE of Sherborne. He pursues the British Westwards, and seems to secure control of all of Somerset – later charters, possibly based on originals, profess that he took over the extant and ancient British monastery of Glastonbury nearby and confirmed its estates to abbot (St) Worgret, a holy man commemorated by a place near Wareham, Dorset. Given the fact that ethnically Saxon St Boniface was born to ‘settler’ parents near Exeter in the early 660s, it would appear that Cenwalh probably took over Exeter (Roman ‘Isca Dumnoniorum’) too along with all of Eastern and central Devon.

?*Autumn.* Three years after the battle of Winwaed broke up Mercia, a revolt is successfully staged against its conqueror Oswy of Northumbria. Penda’s second son Wulfhere, probably in his late teens, emerges from hiding to lead the revolt; the Northumbrians are expelled and Wulfhere restores the full kingdom but as Bede does not count him as ‘Bretwalda’ he may not secure overlordship of the Southern English kingdoms from Oswy (yet). The subsequent events show that he is keen to show his military power against Northumbria’s main Southern ally, Wessex.

?Foundation of the double monastery/nunnery of Whitby, aka ‘Streone-shalh’, in Yorkshire; (St) Hild moves there as abbess with her kinswoman and protégé, princess Elffleda.

Irish annals date the death of king Gwriad or Guret of Strathclyde, evidently the successor of king Owain ap Beli and not in the genealogies so presumably a usurper; succession of Elphin/Alpin mac Necthan, from his name at least partly Pictish and possibly son of Owain’s sister or daughter.

659

FRANCIA

?Queen/regent Balthid’s protégé at court, Leodegar (St Leger) of Poitiers the nephew of its bishop Desiderius, recently made abbot of the monastery of St Maxentius at Poitiers; is made bishop of Autun.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the emergence of two new sub-kingdoms of Mercia in the West Midlands, of unknown dynastic origin – (a) ‘Magonsaetan’ (probably the ‘people of Magnis’, i.e. the Roman town of Kenchester in Herefordshire), by the archaeological record more British than Anglian, under the Welsh-linked ‘Merewalh’ (‘noble Welshman’ in Anglian), a connection of Penda and possibly his son (b) ‘Hwicce’ in NE Gloucestershire and S Worcestershire/Warwickshire, based on Winchcombe, whose senior king is the Bernician-named ‘Eanfrith’. The latter and his brother ‘Eanhere’ may be Bernician exiles or adventurers, enemies of Oswald and Oswy in the 640s or 650s, acting as governors for their new patron Wulfhere of Mercia and they reign in the 660s. They appear to be Christian.

660

CALIPHATE

July. Muawiya assumes the title of Caliph at Jerusalem and receives homage of Western governors.

BRITAIN

King Cenwalh of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’, irritated by the failure of his bishop Agilbert to learn adequate English to officiate and teach, sets up a second, Saxon bishop in his kingdom – Wine, first bishop of Winchester. Subsequently the affronted Agilbert resigns and leaves the kingdom, possibly after the annexation of his seat at Dorchester-on-Thames by Mercia in 661.

?King Oswy prevails upon his East Anglian allies’ princess Aetheldreda, eldest daughter of its late king Anna and niece of its current king Aethelwald, to abjure her vow of virginity and leave her abbey of Ely in

the Fens to become wife to his second son Ecgrith; in the event she refuses marital relations.

Death of king Conall ‘Crandomna’ of Dalriada; succeeded by his late brother Domnhall ‘Brecc’s son, Domangert.

661

CALIPHATE

24 *January*. Ali murdered in mosque at Kufa in plot to kill both rival Caliphs, but Muawiya escapes (with injury) and so does ‘targeted’ governor Amr of Egypt; Ali’s elder son Hassan hailed as Caliph but ?*July* surrenders as Muawiya advances from Syria and allowed to live in retirement.

FRANCIA

Third possible date for the overthrow and killing of the usurper Chilbert III and his father Grimoald of Austrasia by the Neustrians – but in this case by ‘Mayor’ Ebroin not by king Clovis II as the latter was already dead. Clovis’ eldest son Chlotar III, king of Neustria, becomes titular king of Austrasia with Wulfoald as ‘Mayor of the Palace’ and apparently with Sigibert’s widow Chrimnechild as regent.

BRITAIN

Wulfhere of Mercia invades Wessex, either from or to ‘Ashdown’ – that is, the Berkshire Downs South of Oxford. This campaign probably involves the completion of Mercian conquest of the Thames valley and possibly the death in battle or fatal wounding of the West Saxon sub-king Cuthred, who dies in this year.

Either later in this campaign or in a subsequent one later in 661, Wulfhere marches across Hampshire to the Solent, and detaches the territory of the ‘Meonware’ of the Meon valley in Eastern Hampshire from Wessex to hand it to his ally, king Aethelwath of the South Saxons. He also transfers the overlordship of the kingdom of the Isle of Wight from Wessex to Sussex – both these measures are clearly intended to weaken Wessex and build up his own allies, but Cenwalh survives as king. This invasion and the creation of the bishopric of Winchester probably mark the relocation of the main residence of the kings of Wessex to Winchester from the Thames valley.

Probable date of Wulfhere marrying off his sub-king Eanhere of Hwicce’s daughter Eata to his new ally, Aethelwath of Sussex, which entails the latter’s conversion but no major success in converting Sussex yet.

ITALY

Death of the Lombard king Aripert, a strong Catholic and church-builder; at his request his nobles elect his two sons to succeed him, and in a careful

balance of the rival political and religious factions the elder, Godepert, rules at the traditional royal residence, Pavia, while the younger, Perctarit, rules to the West at the old Roman (and Catholic) government headquarters of Milan.

662 ITALY

?The jealous Godepert calls in the most powerful of his ‘dukes’, Grimoald of Benevento the main ruler of the Southern Lombards (who is married to his sister Theodata), to assist him against Perctarit; he treacherously attacks Godepert’s capital at Pavia, kills Godepert, and then attacks and exiles Perctarit of Milan to secure control of all Lombard kingdom. Perctarit flees to the Avars in Pannonia to try to incite an invasion; his wife Rodelind and son Cunicpert are captured and deported to Benevento.

?Approximate date of Grimoald defeating a Frankish raid on Northern Italy, logically carried out during the chaos of the civil war, by abandoning his camp to be looted by the larger Frankish army but as they relax thinking he has fled attacking them at night and killing many of them.

FRANCIA

King Chlotar III of Neustria, presumably as advised by his mother and regent queen Balthild, hands the throne of Austrasia to his younger brother Childeric III, aged around eight to ten; the latter is controlled by his nobles.

663 BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Constans arrives at Taranto, and marches into Southern Italy to attack Benevento, where prince Grimoald is besieged until he offers submission and surrenders hostages; Constans goes on via Naples to Rome *5 July*, the last imperial visit to old capital; he is honoured by Pope Vitalian and resides on Palatine but strips bronze roof-tiles off Pantheon amidst other confiscations ?to pay for supplies; he returns South to Reggium and crosses to Sicily leaving Italy quiescent.

BRITAIN

Death of king Swithelm of the East Saxons after a reign of around nine years; succeeded by two co-rulers, the cousins Sigehere (son of Sigebert ‘the Little’) and Saebbi (the son of king Seaxred, son of king Saebert). Saebbi is a devout and virtuous Christian who abhors war, in contrast to his co-king, and is probably older.

(or 664?) Death of king Aethelwold of the East Angles; succeeded by his cousin, Ealdwulf, the son of Aethelric the younger brother of king Anna

by Hereswith the great-niece of Edwin of Northumbria. He is to reign for forty-nine years, the longest or second-longest Anglo-Saxon reign, so is probably young.

(Approximate date) Bishop Wine of Winchester quarrels with king Cenwall, resigns, and leaves Wessex; succeeded after some years by Leutherius (670).

Death of the Pictish king, Gartnait mac Donuel, after a reign of six years; succeeded by his brother, Drust mac Donuel.

IRELAND

Death of king Guaire Aidne of Connacht, pre-eminent warlord of Western Ireland in his era and head of the 'Ui Fiachrach Aidne' sub-dynasty, after an eight-year reign; succeeded in Connacht by Cenn Faelad mac Colgan of the 'Ui Briuin' sub-dynasty, who rules for nineteen years to 682.

664

BYZANTIUM/ITALY/AFRICA

Constans settles at Syracuse, but is not trusted by his courtiers and ministers in Constantinople who fears he will establish capital there and refuse orders to send his wife and sons there.

Mutinous soldiers depose 'Exarch' Gennadius, who flees to Syria to seek Caliph's aid in rebellion.

FRANCIA

Approximate date of the retirement to her own nunnery at Chelles of the saintly queen Balthild, regent of Neustria for her son Chlotar III since 657/8 and co-ruler with 'Mayor' Ebroin; this probably coincides with the king's coming of age and may be linked to political feuding at court. Around this date her protégé bishop Sigovard of Paris is assassinated.

BRITAIN

Rising problems within the Christian community in Northumbria over differences in practices taught by the groups of missionaries from Ioan (who follow the 'Celtic' Church rites, from Ireland, which have diverged from Roman practices) and those from Rome and areas under Roman doctrinal/disciplinary control, e.g. Francia. The divergence in calculating Easter is particularly problematic, as Oswy has been taught by his Iona priests to celebrate it on one date and his Kentish/Deiran queen Eanfleda has been taught in Kent to follow the different, Roman practice. The latter is also followed by the ex-Kentish missionaries in Deira at Oswy's son Alchfrith's court. The form of monastic tonsure used by the two groups also differs. Oswy calls a religious council to debate the issue and decide on one or other form of practices.

(In the 22nd year of Oswy, thirty years after the arrival of St Aedan in Northumbria, according to Bede. Also the year of a solar eclipse, which must be 664, and of the plague which Irish annals say was 664/5.) Synod of Whitby (Northumbria), presided over by abbess Hild as hostess but with Oswy present too; bishop Colman, taught on Iona, leads the 'Celtic'/Irish party, which Hild initially favours, and the pro-Roman party, led by Agilbert, includes the later bishop (St) Wilfrid, at this point a priest in Deira, with priests James, Romanus and Agatho. Bishop Cedd supports the 'Celtic' side. Colman argues that his group are following the centuries-old practices of ancient saints which nobody has objected to before, and the 'Roman' party says that their version is that followed by the Papacy, supreme religious authority of the West, and all the Continental Churches.

The 'Roman' arguments win the day, with Bede alleging that Oswy accepted these as he said that St Peter held the keys to Heaven so he would not quarrel with him; the 'Roman' practices are to be adopted across Northumbria, and bishop Colman and his allies refuse to accept them and leave. Tuda, from Southern Ireland but who has adopted 'Roman' practices, becomes bishop of the kingdom; the vacant abbacy of Lindisfarne is given to Eata, abbot of Melrose.

Plague across Britain; *14 July*, Deaths of king Earconbert of Kent and archbishop Deusdedit of Canterbury in the epidemic. Earconbert is succeeded by his adult elder son by Seaxburga of East Anglia, Egbert. Egbert, probably in his late teens or early twenties, subsequently murders his cousins Aethelred and Aethelbert, the sons of his father's late brother Eormenred, who have a more legitimate claim than him to the throne; their sister Eafa leads protests and forces him to agree to pay her 'weregild' (blood-money) for the princes, with which she buys land on the Isle of Thanet to found a nunnery about a decade later.

After the plague hits Essex, co-king Sigehere returns to paganism in an attempt to win back the gods' favour; this leads to the kingdom's ally and probable overlord, Wulfhere of Mercia, sending in bishop Jaruman to re-convert Sigehere in which he succeeds.

Death of the new bishop Tuda of Northumbria, successor of the departed Colman; *26 October*. Death of the missionary bishop (St) Cedd, who acted as interpreter at the Synod of Whitby, in the plague.

Alchfrith of Deira chooses Wilfrid, a young Northumbrian monk who has made a notable impression speaking for the 'Roman' cause at Whitby and has the recommendation of his earlier patron king Cenwalh of the West Saxons/'Gewissae', as his new bishop of Deira (probably but not certainly with the see of York) and sends him to bishop Agilbert in Paris to be consecrated as he refuses to be consecrated by any bishop who backs the 'Celtic Church' cause as they are 'illegal'. While Wilfrid is abroad, Alchfrith's father and overlord Oswy decides to appoint Cedd's brother

Chad, abbot of Lastingham in Bernicia in succession to Cedd and trained in Ireland (c. 658–661?) so a ‘Celtic rite’ trainee, to Deira instead and sends him to Canterbury for consecration. But archbishop Deusdedit has recently died, so he has to go on to Winchester to be consecrated by Wine.

(or spring 665?) Wilfrid returns after a longer than expected absence to find himself without a bishopric. Alchfrith reluctantly accepts Chad as bishop but is not pleased and may insist that Wilfrid assume a bishopric in Deira too – at Ripon, where with the king’s support Wilfrid certainly takes over the earlier monastery that uses ‘Celtic’ practices, expels the monks who use those, and as abbot installs new ‘Roman rite’ monks. (It is unclear if Wilfrid is yet ‘bishop of Ripon’.) One of those expelled is the later bishop Eata, Wilfrid’s rival.

665

BRITAIN

(or possibly end of 664) Death of sub-king Alchfrith of Deira, heir of Oswy of Northumbria and currently in dispute with his father over who should nominate the holders of his kingdom’s bishoprics. This may be in or as a result of the 664 plague. He is succeeded by his half-brother Ecgfrith, who now becomes the heir to Oswy.

Second battle of ‘Badon’ (possibly Bath?) according to the ‘*Annales Cambriae*’, but not recorded in Saxon sources: possibly between the SE Welsh of Morgannwg and either the West Saxons or the Cotswold kingdom of the Hwicce.

Death of Morgan/Morcant, king of Morgannwg (possibly the eponymous king after whom the kingdom is named); may or may not be connected to the above battle, or else to the plague. The sources differ over whether he is the son of king Meurig/Mouric (if that man lived in the late rather than the early C6th) or of Rhyhawl, son of a first Morgan, son of Meurig. He is apparently succeeded by his son Ithael ap Morgan, whose late C7th dates are only approximately known.

Benedict Biscop is in Francia on a second pilgrimage to Rome, and probably now starts a two-year period at the renowned early C5th island monastery of Lerins near Marseilles before going to Rome again in 667 or 668.

IRELAND

Plague; death of ‘High Kings’ Blathmac and Diarmait mac Mael Cobo, of the ‘*Sil nAedo Slaine*’ branch of the Ui Niall (or late 664). They are succeeded in both roles by Blathmac’s elder son, Sechnassach, who rules for four years.

666 ITALY

Constans makes Ravenna archbishopric independent of Rome's control.
 ?Approximate date of ex-king Perctarit returning to Italy to attempt to overthrow his supplanter, Grimoald of Benevento; he is forced to flee to Francia.

667 ITALY/BRITAIN

?Oswy (Northumbria) and Egbert (Kent)'s choice of archbishop of Canterbury to succeed Deusdedit, Wigheard, is sent to Rome to be consecrated so he can from now on consecrate bishops in Britain himself. He dies in Rome, and the Pope writes to Oswy announcing that he will nominate the next archbishop.

668 ITALY/BRITAIN

Pope Vitalian chooses the learned Campanian abbot Hadrian, of African origin, to be the next archbishop of Canterbury; he is unwilling to go and recommends a neighbouring cleric called Andrew whose health is however uncertain; eventually Hadrian's recommendation of the expatriate Greek monk Theodore of Tarsus (Cilicia), aged sixty-six and from St Paul's home town, is accepted and the Pope asks Hadrian to go with him as he has travelled to Gaul before.

Sunday 26 March. Consecration of Theodore as archbishop of Canterbury in Rome. *May.* He and Hadrian set out for Britain; they sail to Marseilles and go to archbishop John at Arles, who secures permission from the Neustria (W Francia) chief minister, 'Mayor' Ebrouin, for them to proceed. They then join Agilbert, ex-bishop of Wessex, in his see of Paris for the winter.

FRANCIA

(Approximate date) King Childeric III of Austrasia marries his first cousin, Bilichild the daughter of the late king Sigibert III – sister of the exiled Dagobert (II) and thus a conduit to improving his local legitimacy.

Possibly her mother queen Chrimnechild arranges this to preserve her own influence. This is opposed by bishop Leodegar (Leger) of Autun and other strict clerics as breaking the law on banning consanguinity in marriage.

BYZANTIUM

Sapor, 'strategus' of Armeniakon province, revolts against Constans.

15 July/15 September. Palace servants at Syracuse murder Constans in his bath, aged thirty-seven, and proclaim count of 'Opsikion' Mezezius Emperor; at Constantinople Constans' eldest son Constantine IV proclaimed, aged ?sixteen, and prepares expedition to Sicily.

Armies of Southern Italy and Sicily close in on Syracuse; Mezezius arrested before *November/December* Constantine, having met Severus and ‘Carabisiani’ fleet fleeing from rebels en route so they can join his forces, arrives in Sicily.

Sapor killed in fall from horse at Hadrianopolis, Bithynia; Muawiya’s army, led by Fadalāh, arrives too late as rebellion collapses.

669 BYZANTIUM

Spring. Constantine returns to Constantinople with fleet and armies; Constantine nicknamed ‘Pogonatus’ on return due to his new beard; birth of his son by Anastasia, Justinian.

BRITAIN

King Egbert of Kent sends an official to N Francia to collect the new archbishop Theodore and his friend Abbot Hadrian and bring them to England via the port of Quentovic; there is a delay as the suspicious ‘Mayor’ Ebroin thinks Hadrian may be on an anti-Francian mission from the Pope to Kent aimed at his overthrow. Eventually they proceed; *27 May*. They arrive in Canterbury and Theodore commences his archbishopric *27 May*.

IRELAND

Death of ‘High King’ Sechnassach; succeeded by his younger brother, Cenn Sellach, who also rules for four years (or possibly for five).

670 CALIPHATE/BYZANTIUM

Army led by Uqba invades modern Tunisia and founds new capital, Qairouan.

BRITAIN

15 February. Death of king Oswy, according to Bede aged fifty-eight. He is succeeded by his elder son Ecgrith (born 644/5), currently sub-king of Deira which position he now passes on to his younger brother Aelfwine. Oswy’s widow Eanfleda retires to the monastery of Whitby. Ecgrith is probably ‘Bretwalda’ if this title is currently used, as the most powerful king in Britain, though Bede does not use this title of him. (Ecgrith is said by Bede and regnal lists to be in his fifteenth year as king when he was killed in February 685, so there is a slight possibility that Oswy died in February 671.)

Archbishop Theodore makes a visitation to the see of Northumbria and sacks its senior bishop, Chad, who is replaced by his neighbour and

junior, bishop Wilfrid of Ripon (who is more safely ‘pro-Rome’ as well as having been consecrated by a bishop following Roman rites i.e. properly ordained. Chad however has his ‘dubious’ ‘Celtic rite’ ordination corrected and impresses Theodore with his holiness and humility as he resumes his role as abbot of Lastingham. When king Wulfhere of Mercia asks Theodore for a new bishop, Chad is made the new bishop of Mercia (with his see at Lichfield) which means that Theodore does not have to break his decision not to ordain any new bishops.

Theodore consecrates the former bishop Agilbert’s nephew Leutherius as bishop of Winchester, i.e. of the kingdom of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’; he also creates a new see for the kingdom of the East Angles at Dunwich around this date.

671 ITALY

Death of Grimoald, ‘duke’ of Benevento and since 662, Lombard king; he is succeeded by his weak son Garibald, whose mother Theodata was daughter of king Aripert so he has some dynastic legitimacy. Probably his Arianism is a factor in his overthrow within three months (671/2) by partisans of his uncle Perctarit, the exiled Catholic king who had ruled in 661–2 and who has recently had to flee from Francia to England as Grimoald tried to have him extradited. Perctarit resumes the throne and returns the kingdom to Catholicism.

672 ITALY

Perctarit seizes Lombard kingship from Grimoald’s nephew.

27 January. Death of Pope Vitalian; *11 April* Adeodatus II consecrated.

BRITAIN

2 March. Death of (St) Chad, as bishop of the Mercians and Lindsey and founder of the monastery/cathedral at Lichfield, his residence (where he is buried), and the monastery of Barrow on the Humber; probably aged in his early forties.

Revolt by the Picts against their Northumbrian-allied king Drust mac Donuel, probably as a reaction to Oswy’s death and to perceived Northumbrian overlordship by Ecgrith; Drust is overthrown and expelled, and the new ruler is Nechtan mac Beli, son of the late Strathclyde ruler Beli and so possibly implying Strathclyde aid for the rebels. His mother was Pictish king Talorcan mac Eanfrith’s sister, Ecgrith’s cousin. Possibly this revolt leads to a war between him and Ecgrith, and certainly Northumbrian expansion resumes within a few years.

26 September. First formal synod of the English Church is held at Hertford in SE Mercia by archbishop Theodore; however, neither Wine

of London (possibly under threat for holding a second successive see in defiance of Papal rules) nor Wilfrid of York/Ripon attend. A code of disciplinary canons, in line with Roman Church law, is issued and the mechanism for governance of the archiepiscopal ‘province’ of England is established, with a regular annual synod to meet at ‘Clofesho’. Incest, the cancellation of marriages except for adultery, and remarriage while there is a divorced partner alive are banned.

SPAIN

Death of king Recceswinth, apparently without a preferred heir; election of his successor, Wamba. The latter is evidently of obscure birth, and no obvious connections; later local legends claim he was either an illegitimate son of a Visigothic king who had been raised in a remote village by his unmarried peasant mother and sought out by the nobles when his predecessor died, or a virtuous peasant identified by a vision as the rightful heir and found ploughing on his farm; he is supposed to have said he would accept the crown if his staff burst into shoots when he planted it in the ground which it did.

Some weeks later, ‘duke’ Hilderic of Nimes revolts against him and, backed by the bishop of Montpelier, secures Septimania to the Pyrenees; he also has backing from the Franks, which involves Aquitaine. This occurs during Wamba’s inaugural campaign against the Basques; the king sends ‘duke’ Paul to deal with the rebels, but once Paul has crossed the Pyrenees and taken Narbonne he proclaims himself king as ‘Flavius Paulus’. Hilderic joins him, as does ‘duke’ Ragosindus of ‘Tarraconensis’ (Catalonia), to secure lands South of the mountains and threaten Wamba’s heartland.

673 FRANCIA

Early? Death of king Chlotar III of Neustria, aged around twenty; his youngest brother Theuderic (III) is made king by ‘Mayor’ Ebroin, apparently without the usual agreement of the great nobles according to the ‘Passion’ of his foe Leudegar (Leger) of Autun. A faction of nobles in Burgundy invite their brother Childeric III of Austrasia to invade. These include the prominent clergyman and former protégé of the kings’ mother Balthild, bishop Leudegar (St Leger) of Autun, and his ally and current or immanent marital connection Adalrich, a nobleman who is probably from Alsace where he becomes its ‘duke’ as Childeric’s nominee in March 675.

Childeric overthrows Theuderic, who is made a monk at St Denis’ monastery near Paris, and becomes king of Neustria/Burgundy to unite all the kingdoms. He also sacks ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Ebroin, but does not execute him after the intercession of Leodegar and others and sends him as a monk to remote Luxeuil in the Vosges; he brings in his Austrasian

‘Mayor’ Wulfoald instead in evident intent of centralism. As a result, discontent within the Western nobility at their marginalisation is soon rising, while Leudegar criticises the new king for breaching his promises to his new elite and for his illegal marriage.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

Childeric’s new ‘duke’ of Aquitaine, Felix, assists Paul in his revolt in Western Septimania, as do the Basques who Wamba has been attacking; (after Childeric’s accession) Wamba moves East from his current base in Cantabria, and invades and reconquers ‘Tarraconensis’. He crosses the Pyrenees with three separate forces, himself going via Collioure and Livia where he takes the towns and a rebel treasury; Paul places his general Witteric in command in Narbonne and retires to Nîmes, but Wamba besieges Narbonne which quickly falls and pursues the rebel.

Siege of Nîmes; *3 September*. The town surrenders and Paul and his leading accomplices are tried, tonsured and imprisoned for life.

BRITAIN

4 July. (or 674) Death of king Egbert of Kent, aged around thirty. He leaves two young sons, Eadric and Wihtred; their grandmother Seaxburh, mother of Egbert and daughter of king Anna of the East Angles, is their guardian. The regency is disputed between Egbert’s sister Eormenhild and her husband, Kent’s ally and possible overlord Wulfhere of Mercia, and Egbert’s brother Hlothere/Lothar (a Frankish name), with an ‘anti-Mercian, autonomist’ party of nobles backing Hlothere.

Approximate date of the collapse of Ecgrith of Northumbria’s first marriage, to the devout princess Aethelthryth/Aetheldreda (Audrey) of East Anglia, eldest daughter of the late king Anna. She has been refusing marital relations and preserving her holy chastity after her earlier vow of 655, preventing the king from having a son, so he angrily agrees to her returning home as she wishes; she returns to her monastery at Ely where she resumes her role as abbess. Ecgrith blames bishop Wilfrid for encouraging her to refuse sexual relations.

Death in battle of king Domangert of Dalriada after a thirteen-year reign; succeeded by his cousin Maelduin, son of Conadd ‘Cerr’, who rules to 688.

674

BYZANTIUM

Spring. Arab fleet sails up Hellespont to land in Thrace and launch first siege of Constantinople; six-month blockade by land, but Christian Syrian engineer Callinicus of Hierapolis has invented naphtha-like ‘Greek Fire’ (inflammable oil to burn ships) and defects to Empire and Byzantine ships are adapted to use it.

BRITAIN

(or possibly 673) Death of king Cenwalh of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’, after a thirty-two-year reign from probably 643. He has no son, and one regnal list has his wife Seaxburgha succeeding him for a year; another version has his cousin Aescwine, son of the obscure North Wessex sub-king Cenfus (d. c. 661) and grandson of Cuthgils brother of king Cynegils, succeeding immediately. Bede claims that the kingship lapsed for a decade after Cenwalh’s death, but the West Saxon records do not – possibly the centralised ‘over-kingship’ was weakened by an absence of strong leadership and there was little or no unified military command.

Wulfhere of Mercia attacks Northumbria, but is defeated by king Ecgrith; this may be an attempt to make sure Ecgrith does not interfere in his ambitions in Kent. Ecgrith then conquers the disputed territory of Lindsey (Lincolnshire), formerly held by his grandfather Edwin of Northumbria in the 620s–30s.

Foundation of the monastery of Monkwearmouth at the mouth of the River Tyne by Benedict Biscop, on land granted to him by king Ecgrith. The building is delayed until he can collect suitable ‘up-to-date’ craftsmen from the latest modern monasteries in Francia; he installs a library full of books which he has collected on his visits to Rome.

(or 674/5) Foundation-charter of Chertsey Abbey, Surrey, overseen and the land granted by the elusive king ‘Frithuwold’ of Surrey who is only recorded in charters from this half-decade. There is no indication when he succeeded or died and if he was the latest of a sub-dynasty or a newly-created sub-king of the county’s overlord, king Wulfhere of Mercia, whose sister Wilburh is his wife; Wulfhere, resident at Thame in Oxfordshire, confirms the charter as overlord of Surrey. Possibly his family is based in Southern Oxfordshire or the Chilterns; his daughter (St) Osyth is married around this date to king Sigehere of the East Saxons, as presumably arranged or approved by Mercia.

(or early 675) Hlothere and the anti-Mercian faction secure control of Kent, and Hlothere becomes co-ruler and effectively senior king; his nephew Eadric is at most titular ruler until his mid- or late teens around 680/3. This is a setback for Wulfhere of Mercia, the boy’s aunt’s husband, and he may be dead by this point; if not he plans invasion, which his death forestalls.

IRELAND

(Or 675) ‘High King’ Cenn Selach is overthrown and killed in battle by his nephew Finnsnechta ‘Faelach’ (‘the Bountiful’) mac Dunnchad, who assumes leadership of the ‘Siol nAedo Slaine’, kingship of the Southern Ui Niall in Brega, and ‘High Kingship’. He reigns for twenty years.

FRANCIA

At the Easter council at Autun, trouble breaks out over the accusation made against Praeiectus, the bishop of Clermont, for allegedly seizing the lands of a deceased noblewoman called Claudia (?promised to the Church by her) instead of letting her daughter have them; the bishop refuses to plead as it is a sacred vigil when lawsuits are not supposed to be heard, and he secures support from Childeric's mother-in-law queen Chrimnechild; the daughter and her lover Hector, 'patrician' of Marseilles, are backed by Leodegar; the king, queen Bilichild and Chrimnechild flee to a nearby monastery accusing Leodegar and his allies of a plot, and he and his ally Hector then flee in fear of arrest; Hector is seized by royal officials and executed and Leodegar is exiled to Luxeuil; later Praeiectus is murdered too.

The perceived arrogance and 'tyranny' of Childeric leads to 'separatist' plots; the noble Bodilo, who the king has had illegally flogged in an insult to his noble status, joins his colleagues Amalbert and Ingobert to attack and murder the king at his upper Seine valley forest estate of Livry, along with his wife and cousin Bilichild (who legalist clerics have been denouncing for breaking the laws on marrying cousins). The plotters are implied by some sources to be anti-Austrasian, implying resentment at the latter taking over patronage at the united royal court.

Wulfoald flees for his life back to Austrasia, and possibly Chrimnechild does so too as her influence ends; Childeric's son 'Daniel' (aka later king Chilperic III) is probably made a monk; Theuderic is brought out of his monastery to resume the throne of Neustria by a faction headed or joined by Leodegar, who returns from Luxeuil; Leudesius, son of the late 'Mayor' Erchinoald, is made 'Mayor' of Neustria. However, Ebroin heads for Austrasia and leads a local nobles' coup to install Clovis (III), an alleged son of Chlotar III but possibly really of one of his brothers, as their puppet-king. Ebroin becomes his 'Mayor', but is opposed by a faction linked to his local rival Wulfoald who want Dagobert (II), son of Sigibert III, restored from exile in Ireland.

SPAIN

Eleventh Church Council of Toledo, presided over by archbishop Quiricus.

BRITAIN

(or late 674??) Presumed accession of Aescwine (see 674) as king of the West Saxons/'Gewissae', a year or so after the death of Cenwalh; he may have been military commander as queen regnant Sexburgha could not command an army and assumed the kingship for a military campaign or after a victory. The C9th 'Chronicon ex Chronicis' has his father Cenfus

as king after Sexburgha for two years, followed by Aescwine as king for three to 677/8, but Cenfus was probably dead already.

Aescwine, either as king of the West Saxons or as their military commander, fights and defeats king Wulfhere of Mercia at the battle of ‘Beda’s Head’; this may be an attempt by Wessex to assist the autonomist forces in Kent under Hlothere or else Wulfhere attempting unsuccessfully to defeat Wessex before tackling Kent.

After the battle, either in late 674 or in early 675, Wulfhere dies, aged at most in his early thirties. His son Coenred is under-age, so his adult younger brother Aethelred succeeds as king of Mercia. Some time early in the reign (more probably 675), Aethelred is defeated by Ecgfrith of Northumbria and in the subsequent peace-treaty marries his devout sister Osthryth.

Approximate date of the death of the obscure king Eanhere of ‘Hwicce’ (NE Gloucestershire and S Worcestershire/Warwickshire), sub-ruler under Mercia; succeeded jointly by his three sons Oshere, Osric and Oswald.

1 April. Charter of king Hlothere/Lothar of Kent, referring to him as being in his first year as king; thus he acceded after 1 April 674.

BYZANTIUM.

Summer blockade of Constantinople by Arabs.

SPAIN

Third Church Council of Braga.

7 November. Opening of the Eleventh Church Council of Toledo; attended by seventeen bishops and five abbots. Disciplinary measures are enacted, Church canons tightened up, simony outlawed by episcopal oaths not to commit it, and regular synods of bishops are instituted to check up on behaviour.

676

BYZANTIUM

Spring–Autumn. Constantinople blockaded by Arabs from Cyzicus.

ITALY

17 June. Death of Pope Adeodatus; *2 November* Donus consecrated after imperial acceptance.

SPAIN

(Possibly 675–6, or a year or two later) Campaigns in mountainous Northern Spain are resumed by Wamba after the halt caused by the 673

rebellion; he subdues the ‘Astures’ of Asturias and the obscure ‘Ruccones’/ ‘Ruggones’, bringing both into the Visigothic kingdom. Thirty years later this will assume importance as the survivors of the Arab invasions take refuge in a new kingdom in this region.

FRANCIA

Death of the controversial king and possibly impostor, Clovis II, in Austrasia; this leads to the anti-Ebroin faction recalling his rival Dagobert II, son of Sigibert III and possibly but not certainly of Chrimnechild, from his monastery in Ireland (?Slane); traditionally bishop Wilfrid of York acts as ‘go-between’ in approaching Dagobert and helping his voyage home. Now aged in his early-mid twenties, Dagobert arrives in the Rhineland and secures East part of Austrasia, with Wulfoald as his ‘Mayor of the Palace’; war with the partisans of Theuderic III, based in Neustria, continues.

Subsequently Ebroin flees to Neustria to defect to Theuderic, who he had supported in 673–5. He seizes control of the Neustrian government and embarks on a reign of terror (or so his triumphant enemies, including the pro-Leodegar faction of the Church, will claim later), and among those who are killed is the extant ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Leudesius who Ebroin replaces. Lupus, ‘duke’ of Aquitaine after Ebroin’s 660s ally Felix (c. 673) and the local strongman of king Childeric there in 673–5, now claims to be ‘king of Aquitaine’ and gives sanctuary to refugees from Ebroin.

Waimer ‘duke’ of Champagne, bishop Dido of Chalons-sur-Saone, and Bobo ex-bishop of Valence lead a pro-Ebroin army on Leodegar’s city of Autun to force the inhabitants to pay a huge ransom; Leodegar is seized and on Ebroin’s orders is blinded and has his tongue cut out. Dido and Bobo then join ‘duke’ Adalric of Alsace to attack Lyons in an attempt to capture and probably kill bishop Genesisius, but are driven off by the populace. Adalric then tries to conquer Provence for himself as nominee of Theuderic, but is defeated and defects to Dagobert II.

BRITAIN

King Aethelred of Mercia invades Kent to punish the anti-Mercian forces under Hlothere that have seized control; he sacks Rochester and burns its cathedral down but cannot overrun the kingdom and has to withdraw, accepting Hlothere as co-king and effectively sole ruler. He also regrets the destruction of Rochester, and its ex-bishop Puttoc leaves his ruined see for Western Mercia to become the first bishop of the new see of Hereford at Aethelred’s invitation. The king later gains a reputation as a devout son of the Church, as assisted by his wife (St) Osthryth, daughter of Oswy of Northumbria and sister to Aelfleda the ex-queen of the ‘Middle Angles’.

Approximate date of the death of king Aescwine of the West Saxons/ ‘Gewissae’ and accession of his cousin Centwine, supposedly the younger brother of king Cenwalh (but in that case surprisingly overlooked for the throne when Cenwalh died). Given the claim by Bede that the (central?) kingship had lapsed, an absence of firm rule or a united military leadership is possible. Alternative versions have it that Aescwine reigned for three years, putting this accession by Centwine at 677/8.

Haeddi succeeds bishop Leutherius at Winchester.

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BYZANTIUM

Spring–Autumn. Constantinople blockaded by Arabs from Cyzicus.

FRANCIA

Stalemate between the armies of Theuderic III of Neustria and Dagobert II of Austrasia leads to a truce.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the second marriage of Ecgrith of Northumbria, to Eormenhild the cousin of the late king Egbert of Kent. This suggests a potential Northumbrian alliance with Kent aimed against Mercia, or at least that Aethelred of Mercia fears this given the subsequent breakdown of relations between the two kings.

678

ITALY

11 April. Death of Pope Donus, succeeded by Agatho.

BYZANTIUM/CALIPHATE

Spring. Constantinople is blockaded again; eventually the Byzantines attack Arab fleet with ‘Greek fire’ and drive it back with severe losses, and the army re-embarks to sail for home; en route many more are sunk off Pamphylia by freak storm; land-army routed by Byzantines on march.

ITALY

27 June. Agatho consecrated Pope; receives letter from Constantine proposing theological conference.

FRANCIA

The tyrannical chief minister ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Ebroin persuades king Theuderic III that the mutilated bishop Leodegar of Autun was behind the murder of his late brother, Childeric III; Leodegar is seized, tried and

exiled to the later region of Normandy, and (2 October) is attacked and murdered near Fecamp by killers sent by Ebroin; he is later sanctified as a martyr.

BRITAIN

(or possibly 677) Ecgrith of Northumbria deposes and arrests bishop Wilfrid, who is interned at the fortress of Dunbar and is eventually released but exiled after appeals from abbess Aebbe of ‘urbs Culodi’ (Kirk Hill, near Coldingham), Oswy’s half-sister and Ecgrith’s aunt; he leaves for Rome to complain and have his restoration ordered by the Pope; Bosa, trained at Whitby by abbess Hild, is installed as the senior bishop of Northumbria, at York, by archbishop Theodore in arrangement with Ecgrith but Hexham is given to Eata and Lindsey to Eadhaed, a former missionary under Chad (both former supporters of the ‘Celtic’ practices at Whitby in 664 so when he hears Wilfrid maintains that they cannot be given sees. Wilfrid may be blown off course in a North Sea storm as he sets sail for Italy to complain to the Pope, and ends up spending some months with Aldfrith the king of the Frisians.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Finnsnechta and his Ui Niall kinsmen defeat the king of Leinster, Fiannamail, at the battle of Lough Gabor.

678/9 BYZANTIUM/CALIPHATE

Peace restored: Arabs to pay 216,000 ‘nomismata’, fifty horses and fifty slaves per annum to Byzantium.

679 BYZANTIUM

Preparations for a ‘General Council of Church’ rather than original plan for mere theological conference.

BRITAIN

Clash between Northumbria and Mercia over the control of the kingdom of Lindsey (Lincolnshire); in battle between the royal brothers-in-law on the River Trent, Aethelred of Mercia surprisingly defeats Ecgrith and kills his younger brother (his own wife’s brother), Aelfwine the sub-king of Deira. This raises the prospect of a blood-feud and a long and bitter war, so archbishop Theodore of Canterbury mediates and persuades Aethelred to pay ‘weregild’ (blood-money). Peace is restored, but Ecgrith annexes Deira and abolishes the sub-kingship there.

The victory of Aethelred over Northumbria secures the overlordship of Lindsey for Mercia, which holds it thereafter; the Northumbrian bishop

of Lindsey, Eadhaed, is expelled and succeeds to the bishopric of Ripon back in Northumbria. By endorsing this action by the new bishop Bosa of York, archbishop Theodore accepts Wilfrid's removal from York by Ecgfrith.

Fifth and final pilgrimage of Benedict Biscop, founding abbot of Monkwearmouth, to Rome to collect books for his library and to obtain a charter of Papal privileges in person. He is accompanied by his friend and ally Ceolfrith, a former monk in the 650s at Gilling in Deira (which he left as too lax) and with Wilfrid at Ripon in the early 660s who may also have served as a monk at Iken near Aldeburgh in coastal Suffolk.

Eadric starts to witness royal charters in Kent as co-king with his uncle Hlothere, implying that he is now 'of age' and/or his partisans have forced Hlothere to give him more power.

23 June. Death of the holy abbess (St) Aetheldreda/Aethelthryth/Audrey of Ely, founder of that monastery and ex-queen to Ecgfrith of Northumbria, probably in her mid-forties; she is succeeded by her sister (St) Seaxburga, widow of king Earconbert of Kent, as abbess.

ITALY/BRITAIN

Autumn. A Papal synod meets to consider Wilfrid's request to be restored as legitimate bishop of York, and agrees to this; Ecgfrith is ordered to accept him back and the bishop who replaced him (Bosa) and others appointed in Northumbria without Wilfrid's authority are to be removed; he can nominate their successors but their sees are to be kept in existence with him getting his own monasteries (Ripon and Hexham) back.

Adomnan, an Irish relative and later biographer of St Columba from Co. Donegal, a highly educated monk probably trained at one of the Columban foundations in Ulster (and more recently a monk at Durrow?), is appointed as the new abbot of Iona.

FRANCIA

23 December. Assassination of king Dagobert II of Austrasia in a mystery incident during a hunt at Stenay-sur-Meuse in the Ardennes; unnamed nobles and bishops are accused of being behind it, and it is possibly linked to his foe 'Mayor of the Palace' Ebroin of Neustria, whose ambitions are served by reuniting the two kingdoms under his own leadership. The kingdom is left leaderless and it is unlikely despite modern myth that Dagobert leaves a son (or that the latter hides at Rennes-le-Chateau in SW France with his mother's relations).

SPAIN

January. Death of archbishop Quiricus of Toledo, head of the Spanish Church and possibly also earlier archbishop of Barcelona.

FRANCIA

30 January. Death of queen Balthild, widow of Clovis II and mother of kings Chlotar III, Childeric III and Theuderic III, at her nunnery of Chelles, probably aged in her mid-fifties; later canonised.

Approximate date of the accession of duke Theodo (V) of Bavaria, probably son and successor of Theodo IV; the first notably strong and pro-Catholic ruler of the semi-autonomous principality who is largely left to his own devices by the declining Merovingians; by c. 690/700 he is a patron of the first notable Catholic missionary in his territory, first bishop Rupert of Salzburg. He reigns for around thirty-five years to 715/16, and has a Frankish wife.

ITALY

(Early, or else late 679?) A synod in Rome agrees to Wilfrid's claims that he was deposed illegally, and Pope Agatho orders his restoration; Wilfrid takes his letters to that effect back to Northumbria, but on his arrival Ecgrith takes no notice and expels him again.

27 March. Pope Agatho holds synod in Rome preparatory to sending legates to General Council; orthodoxy confirmed and Monotheletism condemned. Wilfrid attends as 'bishop of York'.

FRANCIA

Dagobert's old patron Wilfrid of York arrives in his leaderless kingdom, and Wilfrid apparently leaves hastily in fear of Ebroin; the 'dukes' Pepin of Heristal, nephew (sister's son) of the late 'Mayor' Grimoald and now 'Mayor of the Palace' as Wulfoald dies about the same time as Dagobert, and Martin lead the resistance to Ebroin.

Ebroin's Neustrian army invades leaderless Austrasia and wins the battle of Lucofao (Bois-de-Fays) over his opponents; the Frankish kingdom is reunited, titularly under his puppet-king Theuderic III, and he lures Martin from his refuge at Laon in Artois to nearby Ecry where he is murdered.

CALIPHATE

18 July. Death of Muawiya, aged around sixty; son Yazid succeeds, but theocrats at Medina elect Abdullah Ibn Zubayr (nephew of Prophet's wife

Ayesha) and Ali's son Hussain, encouraged by disaffection at Kufa, sets out to start rebellion there but *10 October* is caught and killed at Karbala by Yazid's troops; his 'martyrdom' on the '10th Muharram' regarded as seminal by 'Shi'ites'.

BRITAIN

?*Summer*. Wilfrid arrives back in Northumbria and presents his Papal letters of restoration to a synod; the latter however ignores him and confirms the deprivation in 678, and he is arrested and later expelled from the kingdom.

17 September. Opening of the Church Council of Hatfield in SE Mercia: dated as the seventh year of king Hlothere of Kent (so this must be 680 not 679 as alternatively suggested) and the sixth of king Aethelred of Mercia (who thus must have acceded between late September 674 and late September 675); also the tenth year of king Ecgrith of Northumbria so he acceded after mid-September 670 by the same reckoning. Archbishop Theodore presides at the council, and the requirement of the Papacy for a formal declaration of orthodox Catholic faith against the 'Monotheletes' is met; the number of bishoprics in England is set at twelve as desired by the Papacy.

SPAIN

King Wamba falls seriously ill, possibly poisoned; he assumes monastic vows of penitence, expecting to die, but recovers whereupon a faction of his nobles led by Erwig argue that he has really abdicated and joined the religious life by doing so and force him into a monastery. This amounts to a coup, and one story has it that Erwig administered a sleeping-potion to the king then gave him the monastic tonsure while he was asleep and pretended the king had done this to himself voluntarily. According to some sources backed by the court cleric Julian who persuades Wamba to give up in league with Erwig; Erwig is elected as king and is anointed (October), and he appoints Julian to the vacancy as archbishop of Toledo. He is apparently of expatriate Eastern Romano-Gothic descent with his German-named father Ardobast having emigrated to Spain earlier in the century, and his mother is the late king Chindaswinth's niece; he is married to the possibly acquisitive Liuvigota, who will be in trouble later for her 'illegally acquired' property.

BYZANTIUM

7 November. Opening of 'Sixth General Council' in Trullan Hall of Palace, Constantine presiding with representatives from Rome and Eastern patriarchates; the orthodox position that Christ has two wills is upheld.

BRITAIN

17 *November*. Death of abbess Hild(a) of Whitby/Streoneshalh, aged sixty-six.

Bosel assumes office as the first bishop of Worcester (Western Mercia).

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SPAIN

9 *January*. The Twelfth Church Council of Toledo meets: it recognises and requires all subjects to take allegiance to the controversial new king Erwig, confirms the legitimacy of his predecessor's enforced abdication, and imposes new laws on the conversion and banning from relapsing of Jews. The archbishopric of Toledo is declared as the 'metropolitan' of Spain and all bishops are to be consecrated by and thus nominated/accepted by him, a move to centralism led by the new incumbent archbishop Julian who is being resisted by some of his juniors (possibly as a Jew or as part of the new king's coup in 680).

ITALY

10 *January*. Death of Pope Agatho; Leo II elected and request for ratification sent to Constantinople.

FRANCIA

?*Early*. A few months after his Austrasian victory and reuniting of the Frankish kingdom, Ebroin, back in Neustria where the court of Theuderic III remains, is assassinated by a noble called Ermenfrid who thinks he is about to be arrested and plundered by him. The assassins then go to Pepin of Herstal to gain his support, and Pepin assumes full power over Austrasia. Waratto or Waratton assumes power as 'Mayor' in Neustria and subsequently agrees peace with Pepin, who keeps Austrasia kingless.

BYZANTIUM

Council of Church continues, and at thirteenth session Monothelete leaders are anathematised; 10 *March* news of new Pope arrives, but Constantine delays his approval of election until legates have signed condemnation of Monotheletes with the rest; 16 *September* Council concludes.

BRITAIN

Approximate date when Wilfrid has to settle temporarily in Western Sussex, where he sets up his base at Selsey and undertakes the conversion of the kingdom; he also seems to become acquainted with the (pagan) local brigand warlord Caedwalla, an exiled West Saxon prince and later king.

Tunbeorht, brother of abbot Ceolfrith of Jarrow, becomes bishop of Hexham; Eata becomes bishop of Lindisfarne.

(or 679) Ecgrith creates a new, Anglian bishopric of Abercorn in Fife, symbolising his local power extending into lands North of the Firth of Forth; it is held by Trumwine.

682 ITALY

June. Papal legates return to Rome with Constantine's permission to consecrate Leo II, which is carried out *10 August*; taxes on Papal lands in Southern Italy and Sicily reduced in return for promotion of orthodox against Monotheletes.

FRANCIA

?Waratto, 'Mayor of the Palace' for Theuderic III in Neustria, is overthrown by his son Gistemar; he later regains power within a year or two.

BRITAIN

King Centwine of the West Saxons/'Gewissae' restores the military power of Wessex after a vacuum of some years, defeating the British of Dumnonia (Cornwall/Western Devon) and chasing them 'as far as the sea'. Given the West Saxon occupation of the Exeter area by c. 660, this may imply a victory around Dartmoor and a successful pursuit down the Tamar valley or else the conquest of the Exmoor/Barnstaple area. Probable completion of the conquest of Devon. Bede writes that the 'kingship of the West Saxons' was restored ten years after the death of Cenwalh in 673/4, which may imply that Centwine now re-centralised the kingdom and overawed his vassal kings after his victory.

Death of Cadwaller ap Cadwallon, king of Gwynedd, after a twenty-seven-year reign from late 655; he is remembered in subsequent legend as the last Welsh king to exercise any authority in England (unhistorically?). He is succeeded by his long-reigning son Idwal 'the Roebuck', presumably so-called from his appearance.

Completion of the building of the abbey of St Peter at Monkwearmouth at the mouth of the Tyne; Benedict Biscop appoints his young and talented cousin Eosterwine as its abbot and his coadjutor. Benedict Biscop is granted land by Ecgrith to found a second monastery at the mouth of the Tyne, at Jarrow on the opposite side of the river from his one at Monkwearmouth; among the monks and other staff from the latter who join the new foundation is his boy protégé, the future historian Bede (aged nine?) who is now a trainee 'oblate'. Benedict Biscop's abbot at Jarrow is to be his friend Ceolfrith.

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ITALY

3 *July*. Pope Leo dies and long delay until election of Benedict II ratified in Constantinople.

CALIPHATE/BYZANTIUM

28 *August*. Death of Yazid, succeeded by sickly son Muawiya II; *October* Ummayyad forces besiege rebels in Mecca, but Yazid's cousin Marwan revolts in Syria.

BRITAIN

Probable date of the reconquest of Caithness and the Orkneys in a Northern expedition by Nechtan mac Beli, king of the Picts.

Approximate date of accession, working back from his death in 696, of Domnhall 'Donn' ('the Brown-Haired'), son of the late king Domangert, of Dalriada; reigns for thirteen years. It is unclear if his predecessor Maelduin was still on the throne, as he may have died as late as 688, and if they co-ruled peacefully or the kingdom was in dispute at a time of rising Pictish power under king Nechtan.

SPAIN

4 *November*. The Thirteenth Church Council of Toledo opens: it repeats the earlier legislation protecting the royal family and confirming the 680 coup, and on king Erwig's initiative pardons some of the leaders of the 673 revolt against his predecessor Wamba and recalls those exiled for that action.

684

BRITAIN/IRELAND

Ecgfrith of Northumbria's fleet under 'ealdorman' Berht sails to Ulster and lands to ravage Brega (the heartland of the hereditary realm of the current 'High King' Finnsnechta) in central Ireland; it commits atrocities according to Bede, sacking monasteries, and carries off slaves and loot; this may represent a reassertion of his ancestor Edwin's Irish Sea naval power, or a warning by him to the Irish 'Ui Niall' confederation not to assist his Pictish and Dalriadan foes.

CALIPHATE

Marwan's army invades Syria and *July* wins battle of Marj-ar-Rabit; Damascus falls and Muawiya II deposed; Marwan conquers Egypt.

ITALY

26 *June*. Benedict II consecrated Pope after long delay awaiting imperial approval, and secures Constantine's agreement that in future 'Exarch' in Ravenna should make ratification instead; Constantine sends locks of his sons' hair to Rome as the Pope's 'spiritual sons'.

BRITAIN

(or early 685) The exiled 'atheling' ('throne-worthy' prince) Caedwalla of the West Saxons, son of an obscure sub-king Coenbert and apparently having lost his lands and been driven to brigandage in the Weald, leads his warband into Sussex on a plundering expedition and defeats and kills its king, Aethelwath (ruler since at least c. 660). He is driven out by the 'ealdormen' Berthun and Andhun, who assume the kingdom's leadership, but has acquired enough reputation and probably loot to attract support in fighting for the West Saxon kingship. According to the official genealogies, created under the patronage of his branch of the dynasty, he is descended from Cuthwine, the probably predeceasing son of king Ceawlin who d. 593. (Caedwalla's name is in fact British – 'Cadwallon'.)

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BRITAIN

Early. Eadric of Kent, backed by a force of mercenaries from Sussex, attacks and defeats his uncle and co-ruler Hlothere in battle, then deposes him; Hlothere soon dies (6 February) if he survives the battle. This may imply an anti-Mercian move, or Eadric copying his neighbour Caedwalla's successful predation of Sussex.

Early. (or late 684) 'Early winter' according to Bede. A synod of the Northumbrian Church sees Ecgrith elevate the holy hermit Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, former abbot of Melrose and now living in contemplation in a cell on the Farne islands, as the new bishop of Hexham/Bernicia in place of Tunberht who is sacked. Cuthbert is very reluctant to accept the honour and leave his hermitage, and Bede has the king and bishop Trumwine of Abercorn lead a delegation to him to persuade him to accept. He finally does so, and joins the synod but insists that he have his see at his usual residence, Lindisfarne, not Hexham; the following Easter he is consecrated as bishop at York by archbishop Theodore, with Eata taking the bishopric of Hexham so there are two sees in Bernicia.

Ecgrith of Northumbria launches a surprise attack on the Picts, which may be intended to catch them unawares if this is in February not after Cuthbert's consecration at Easter; he invades Angus in the furthest recorded Northern campaign of a Southern ruler since Roman times.

20 *February*, or (Bede) 20 *May*. Battle of 'Nechtansmere' in Angus. Ecgrith is defeated and killed (aged forty) by the Picts, led by king Nechtan mac Beli. His army is destroyed and the Picts reconquer Angus

and Fife as far as the Firth of Forth; the see of Abercorn is abandoned. End of Northumbrian pretensions to a domain North of Lothian.

The Picts bury Ecgfrith at their Christian royal necropolis at Iona out of respect; he has no son so the Northumbrians recall his ageing half-brother Aldfrith, son of Oswy and the Irish princess Fina and probably born in the early 630s, as the new king. Trained in monasteries and a renowned poet, he has no experience of statecraft or war and abandons his predecessor's campaigns; he is also unmarried.

Approximate date of the death of co-king Osric of 'Hwicce' in SW Mercia, founder of monastery at Bath and probably ruler of S Gloucestershire and the lower Wiltshire Avon valley.

ITALY

8 *May*. Death of Pope Benedict II; 23 *July* archdeacon John (V), former Papal legate to 'Sixth General Council', elected Pope.

BYZANTIUM

July. Death of Constantine IV from dysentery, aged ?thirty-three; sixteen-year-old son Justinian II succeeds, vigorous but unstable, and launches major building-programme in Palace.

CALIPHATE/BYZANTIUM

Death of Caliph Marwan at Damascus, succeeded by son Abd-al-Malik; Abdullah holds out in Arabia; Abd-al-Malik signs peace with Byzantium.

BRITAIN

Caedwalla overthrows king Centwine of the West Saxons/'Gewissae', who is either killed or forced to retire into a monastery. He creates a capable and aggressive new army, and puts down various rivals before resuming his attack on Sussex.

Death of king Merewalh of 'Magonsaetan' (N Herefordshire and S Shropshire), sub-king to the Mercians; succeeded by his elder son, Mercheml ('Helmet of the Mark/Mercians'), possibly with his younger son Mildfrith as co-ruler.

BRITAIN/IRELAND

(or late 685?) Abbot Adomnan of Iona is asked by 'High King' Finnsnechta to go to Northumbria to negotiate for the return of assorted Northern Irishmen carried off as prisoners/slaves by the late king Ecgfrith in 684. He may already know the new king Aldfrith who has lived in Ireland, and goes to his court successfully; his mission also leads to his

visit to the learned abbot Ceolfrith at Jarrow who persuades him to consider that the ‘Roman’ not ‘Celtic’ dates for celebrating Easter etc. are correct.

7 March. Death of abbot/coadjutor Eosterwine of Monkwearmouth, cousin and deputy of Benedict Biscop, aged thirty-six, in an outbreak of plague; his cousin is away in Francia so the monks elect Siegfried as abbot without waiting for his choice.

Wilfrid and archbishop Theodore attend and are reconciled at a synod of the Southern English bishops at London; Theodore accepts Wilfrid’s restoration to York and writes to Aldfrith and to Aethelred of Mercia asking them to accept Wilfrid. Aldfrith then agrees to restore Wilfrid to the bishopric of York, but apparently insists on keeping episcopal rank for Bosa too; Wilfrid returns home and both men hold the same rank.

Possibly Bosa still resides at York, and Wilfrid does so at Ripon. Caedwalla of the West Saxons/‘Gewissae’ invades and conquers the Isle of Wight, killing its Jutish king Arwald and annexing it to the kingdom of Wessex; he hunts down its surviving, young princes who have fled to the mainland and executes them but agrees to a Church request to baptise them first so they will go to Heaven.

Caedwalla invades Sussex again, kills ‘ealdorman’ Berthun, and expels his colleague Andhun; Sussex is annexed to Wessex.

August. (or possibly 687) Caedwalla invades Kent, and defeats and possibly kills king Eadric in battle; he overruns Kent and imposes his brother Mul as its client-king. First creation of the expanded kingdom of Wessex controlling all England South of the Thames, as it turns out briefly.

FRANCIA

Death of ‘Mayor of the Palace’ Waratto of Neustria, real ruler for king Theuderic III; succeeded by Berthar.

ITALY

2 August. Death of Pope John V; archpriest Theodore and militia’s choice, Theodore, both elected by rival meetings, and Sicilian priest Conon (son of Byzantine ‘Thracesion’ general) elected *21 October* as compromise; Justinian writes to him to confirm that all civil and ecclesiastical leaders of Empire agreed to ‘Sixth General Council’ verdict on orthodoxy but he not Pope is guardian of faith; taxes on Papal estates in Southern Italy reduced.

?Lombard king Perctarit defeats the rebellion of ‘duke’ Alahis of Trent, but subsequently pardons him at the request of his son Cunicpert and gives him the duchy of Brescia.

687

BRITAIN

20 March. Death of St Cuthbert on Lindisfarne, where he is buried though his relics are later removed to Durham; the see of Lindisfarne is held by Wilfrid of York until the consecration of Eadbert as bishop in 688.

FRANCIA

‘Mayor of the Palace’ Berthar of Neustria and his puppet-ruler, king Theuderic, attack Austrasia to overthrow its ‘Mayor’, Pepin of Herstal; Pepin defeats them at the climactic battle of Tertry on the Somme, and they flee to Paris and have to surrender; Berthar is deposed and the two kingdoms are reunited under the authority of Pepin, who assumes the title of ‘Duke and Prince of the Franks’. Norbert or Nordebert is made titular ‘Mayor’ of Neustria and Burgundy to his death c. 695/7, but real authority resides with Pepin; this is the commencement of control of all Francia by his dynasty, the Carolingians.

ITALY

21 September. Death of Pope Conon; presbyter Theodore and deacon Pascal (latter has bribed ‘Exarch’ John Platyn) elected rival Popes, but popular majority in Rome meet on Palatine *15 December* to elect compromise, Sergius, and rivals deposed.

BRITAIN

Revolt against Caedwalla of Wessex in Kent; his brother and sub-king Mul is attacked in a sudden rebellion in Canterbury and flees for sanctuary to a Church building, but the rebels burn it down and kill him. Caedwalla prepares to retaliate.

SPAIN

Death of the ex-king Wamba, probably in his seventies or older if the stories of his advanced age at his accession in 672 are accurate.

14 November. The dying Visigothic king Erwig nominates as his heir his daughter Coxila’s husband, Egica the son of the late king Wamba’s sister Ariberga; he has made Egica swear an oath to protect his family when the latter married, presumably in anticipation of the older Egica being chosen as king rather than his own, under-age children. He makes Egica also swear to rule justly before sending him to Toledo to be inaugurated.

24 November. Inauguration of Egica as king at Toledo.

688 | BRITAIN

(Either late 687 or spring 688) Caedwalla invades and ravages Kent; he is either badly wounded in a battle or else an earlier injury hampers his campaign, as he is unable to secure victory and has to withdraw.

Kent remains in revolt; Wessex's supposed ally Essex, led by co-king Sigehere, intervenes to secure West Kent for itself. Sigehere appears to be recognised as king briefly, but dies later in 688; his co-king of Essex's (younger?) son Swaefred succeeds to the rule of West Kent as an East Saxon nominee. Saebbi, co-king of Essex, is probably ailing by this time so the 'strongman' of Essex is his other (elder?) son Sigheard, who now or soon becomes co-ruler.

SPAIN

11 May. Opening of the Seventeenth Church Council of Toledo, called to implement the anti-'Monothelite' decrees of the 580 Oecumenical Council in Constantinople as required by the Papacy. The Spanish Church has raised objections to the latter's terminology earlier, causing a delay while clarification is sought from Rome. The new king Egica seeks Church absolution from his earlier oath to protect the family of his father-in-law king Erwig, as he says this contradicts his other oath to do justice to his people – presumably meaning that the late king has oppressed his people (illegal taxes or unjust confiscations of property) and the royal family have possession of the proceeds. The bishops insist he keep his oath but tell him this does not invalidate legal adjustments of past injustice, so this is done.

BRITAIN

(end of 688) Abdication of Caedwalla, aged probably in his late twenties but crippled by his war-wound; he is succeeded by his kinsman Ine and sets out on pilgrimage to Rome.

Death of bishop Puttoc of Hereford (or possibly a year or two earlier); election of his successor, Tyrthel.

IRELAND

Probable abdication of 'High King' Finnsnechta, also ruler of the Southern Ui Niall of Brega, to become a monk; this traditionally follows a dispute with St Adomnan, abbot of Iona and head of the monastic community of monasteries founded by St Columba, over the king's 'weakness' in allowing himself to abandon or be tricked into remitting the 'Boruma' cattle-tribute traditionally imposed on Leinster by the 'High Kings'. Anecdotally Adomnan is said to have cursed Finnsnechta for his failure. It is not clear who if anyone secures the 'High Kingship'; most likely the two branches of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' fight over it, as below.

Later (688/9) Niall mac Cernlaig Sotal, ruler of the Southern branch of the ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ (called the ‘Ui Chernaig’ after its founder, his late father), defeats his rival king Congalag mac Conaing of the Northern ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ (the ‘Ui Chonaing’ of Knowth) at the battle of Imlech Pich, and Aed mac Dluthaig (son of the late Dluthaig founder of the ‘Ui Dluthaig’ branch of the Sil nAedo Slaine) kills his hereditary rival Diarmait ‘Dian’ mac Armetaig, king of Uisnech, whose grandfather killed his grandfather Aillel, son of ‘High King’ Aed Slaine, in 634). Aed is a rival of the ‘Ui Cernlaig’ branch for dominance in Southern Brega, and ally of Congalag, so this is to the latter’s coalition’s benefit. This leads to Finnsechta resuming the ‘High Kingship’ to reassert order and hold the balance among the feuding ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ rulers.

ITALY

Death of Lombard king Perctarit after a seventeen-year second reign; he is succeeded by his son and co-ruler (since 678) Cunicpert, but the latter is soon overthrown and imprisoned in a fortress on an island on Lake Como by the former rebel, ‘duke’ Alahis of Brescia. The latter is supposed by later sources to be hostile to the Catholic Church.

688/9 BRITAIN

(By January 689) Oswine, of unknown origins, takes over as king in East Kent with the backing of the archbishopric of Canterbury and the minsters of Thanet; this is probably in the chaos after Caedwalla’s withdrawal and in an anti-Essex backlash that deprives the East Saxon-backed king, Swaefred, of this region; Swaefred holds out in Western Kent backed by his brother Sigheard, co-ruler of Essex.

689 BRITAIN/ITALY

Easter. Ex-king Caedwalla of Wessex is present at the religious ceremonies in Rome and is baptised (as ‘Peter’) by Pope Sergius. He dies a few days later, aged thirty, possibly of a sudden infection though it is often assumed that he was already dying when he set out for Rome; he is buried in Rome.

Ex-king Cunicpert escapes from confinement on an island on Lake Como and leads a revolt in Western Lombardy against the oppressive and unpopular new king Alahis; he regains the capital, Pavia, and Alahis flees; he then defeats the latter in the battle of Coronate on the River Adda and ends the usurpation.

SPAIN

?The late ruler Erwig’s unpopular widow queen Liudigota is sent to a nunnery and has her property seized by Egica, now the Church has granted him the right to break his oath to Erwig by doing this.

BYZANTIUM

Peace with Caliphate resumed.

689/ 90 BRITAIN

Approximate date of the marriage of the childless new king of Northumbria, Aldfrith, probably aged in his mid-late fifties, to Cwenburh, sister of the new king Ine of Wessex. They subsequently have at least one son, Osred.

690 BRITAIN

12 January. Death of the founding abbot Benedict Biscop of Jarrow/ Monkwearmouth in Northumbria, patron and superior of the later historian Bede, aged probably in his mid-sixties; he has been bedridden for several years. He is succeeded by his friend Ceolfrith, already abbot of Jarrow, as abbot of both institutions.

January. King Oswine of East Kent grants land in a charter to his kinswoman, abbess Aebbe of Minster, at the start of his second regnal year – which dates his accession and which suggests that as the late prince Eormenred (brother of king Earconbert, d. 664)’s kin ran Minster he was connected to this family. Later in the year he is apparently expelled, as is his rival Swaefred of Western Kent, as the late king Eadric’s younger brother Wihtred returns from exile as the legitimate claimant.

September. Death of archbishop Theodore of York, aged eighty-eight.

SPAIN

Death of archbishop Julian of Toledo, the great centraliser of the Spanish Church under his see and assiduous cultural leader, but possibly also the main inspiration for current rising royal anti-Semitism despite his own Jewish descent.

691 BYZANTIUM

Justinian calls Council of Church to meet in Trullan Hall of Palace and complete canon-law revision of 5th and 6th Councils (‘Quinisext Council’).

BRITAIN

(or 692?) Approximate date of peace-agreement between the new kings Ine of Wessex and Wihtred of Kent, ending their realms’ struggle of the mid-late 680s; Kentish independence is recognised and the border is fixed at the current Sussex-Kent county boundary. Kent pays ‘weregild’ (blood-money) to Ine for the slaying of his kinsman Mul in 687. The agreement

abandons Essex and its control of Western Kent to Wihtred, but Swaefred keeps his rank of king there as late as April 692.

At around this date the elusive king Nunna/Nothelm emerges as ruler of Sussex; he is apparently a client and probably a nominee of king Ine of Wessex and is only semi-independent. He rules into the 710s, supplying troops for Ine's wars against Dumnonia/Cornwall.

Possible date of the commencement of Wihtred's updating of the Kent law-code issued by Aethelbert c. 600, which duly influences Ine into issuing his own, first West Saxon code.

The quarrelsome bishop Wilfrid of York is dismissed for the second time, this time by Aldfrith; his predecessor Bosa replaces him and he moves to Mercia to aid its missionaries.

BRITAIN/FRANCIA

Commencement of the evangelization of the Frisians, by Anglo-Saxon missionaries brought in by request of the restless and separatist pagans' overlord 'Mayor' Pepin of Heristal; it is led by the Northumbrian Willibrod from Yorkshire (born c. 660, educated under Wilfrid at Ripon), who has been recruited to the task by the travelling Saxon evangelist Ecgbert (based at Willibrod's current monastery at 'Rathmelsigi' in Ireland). At around this time, probably in the early 690s, Willibrod travels to Rome to gain Papal backing from Pope Sergius.

FRANCIA

Death of king Theuderic III, puppet-king of the Franks and ruler of a reunited realm since 687, aged around thirty-eight to forty; succeeded by his son by 'Mayor of the Palace' Pepin of Heristal's sister Clotilde, Clovis III, who is aged nine.

692

CALIPHATE

Abd-al-Malik's general Hajjaj captures Mecca and kills Abdullah; Islam reunited.

BYZANTIUM

Conclusion of 'Quinisext' Council; Justinian refuses Abd-al-Malik's tribute as his coinage has stopped using imperial head, and prepares campaign with 30,000 Slavs led by Nebulus; the Byzantines invade Arab territories and meet in battle at Sebastopolis.

ITALY

Pope Sergius refuses to sign decrees of 'Quinisext' Council.

BRITAIN

April. Election of the new archbishop of Canterbury, Beorhtwald, former abbot of Reculver; according to Bede attended by the two kings of Kent, Wihtred (East) and Swaefred (West). Some time after this Swaefred is expelled or returns home to Essex, possibly in 692–3 as his father king Saebbi's health declines.

?Wilfrid is appointed as bishop of the 'Middle Angles' (S Mercia) by king Aethelred of Mercia.

693

ITALY

Justinian sends 'protospatharius' Zacharias to Rome to arrest Pope Sergius for defying him; however 'Exarchate' troops from Ravenna rally to Sergius and join popular mutiny, and Zacharius has to hide under Pope's bed then flee.

BRITAIN

Death of the holy king Saebbi of Kent after a long illness, probably in London which is his main residence; he is buried at his favourite church, St Paul's. His son Sigheard, already co-king, rules to an unknown date in or before 707, in association with a 'Swaefherd' who may be the same man as his brother Swaefred, ex-king of Kent. The survivor of these two rules to 707.

Death of the half-Pictish king Elphin or Alpin mac Nechtan of Strathclyde (acceded 658); succeeded by king Dumnugual mac Owain, presumably son of the 640s king Owain mac Beli and possibly already co-ruler.

FRANCIA

17 December. Death of the devout mother of 'Mayor of the Palace' Pepin, (St) Begga, sister of the executed 'rebel' Grimoald, in her nunnery to which she has retired as abbess since her husband Ansegisl was assassinated pre-679 and she visited Rome for holy inspiration.

694

BRITAIN

Death of king Dumnugual mac Owain of Strathclyde after only one year as (sole?) ruler; succeeded by Beli mac Elphin, presumably his predecessor's son.

SPAIN

7 November. Seventeenth Church Council of Toledo opens: as well as the usual canonical rules concerning the clergy, liturgy, and religious life, the anti-Jewish king Egica insists on the dramatic banning of all Jews from

owning any property and its transfer to their Christian slaves, who are to be released; the Jews are to be enslaved instead on the apparent excuse of rumours that they are planning to overthrow the king and state and convert the kingdom to Judaism. This does not apply to Septimania, which has a large and potentially rebellious Jewish population who the Franks could aid, and possibly it is only sporadically enforced; anywhere; the paranoid king may connect the Jews to early raids on the Southern coast by the Moslems in North Africa, but the evidence for these raids is non-contemporary and difficult to date.

November. Commencement of the seventh year of king Egica's reign, by which date his eldest son Wittiza was titular co-king as seen by the Visigothic coinage – though one chronicle does not have him made king until 698. By this point his parents have separated.

695

BYZANTIUM

Justinian releases imprisoned general Leontius to become 'strategus' of the new 'theme' province of central Greece, 'Hellas'; encouraged by a monkish prophecy that he will be Emperor, Leontius mounts coup and takes his troops to 'Praetorium' prison to release inmates and pretend that Emperor is planning massacre of citizens; crowds gather and next day Patriarch Callinicus crowns Leontius in Hagia Sophia while Justinian and ministers are arrested in Palace.

Justinian taken before Leontius in Hippodrome, has nose slit and is exiled to Cherson; in exile he has a golden replacement nose made (hence nickname 'Rhinotmetus').

IRELAND

Death by violence of 'High King' Finnsnechta at the hands of his Ui Niall rivals, kings Aed of the 'Ui Chernaig' branch and Congalach mac Conaing of the 'Ui Conaing'; he and his son Bresai are either killed in open battle or assassinated in their tent by Congalach during a campaign. Congalach secures the rule of Brega in Western Midhe; Loingseach mac Oengus of the Northern Ui Niall kingdom of the 'Cenel Conaill' eventually becomes 'High King', but is not reckoned as such until 696 so possibly his rival Congalach disputes this until his death in 696.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Death of puppet-king Clovis IV, aged thirteen, after a four-year rule; his mother's brother and the real ruler, 'Mayor' Pepin of Herstal, raises his younger brother Childebert III to the throne as nominal ruler.

Pepin makes his elder legitimate son by Plectrudis (daughter of Hugobert, chamberlain to Clovis IV), Drogo, who is now around twenty-five and already count of Champagne, 'Mayor of the Palace' of Burgundy – the

lands of the former kingdom of Guntramn in the later C6th. Drogo is married to the widow of the late ‘Mayor’ Berthar, in a presumed plan by Pepin to win over the adherents of this late rival of his from the 680s.

Pepin’s second son by Plectrudis, Grimoald, becomes ‘Mayor of the Palace’ of Neustria.

21 November. Pope Sergius consecrates the visiting Anglo-Saxon missionary Willibrod, the current evangeliser of the pagan Frisians, as the first bishop of Utrecht/Frisia; the latter subsequently resumes work there under Frankish patronage.

696 CALIPHATE

Caliph sends Hassan Ibn al-Numan to North Africa to defeat Berbers and take Carthage.

BRITAIN

(or 695) Death of king Domnhall ‘Donn’ of Dalriada; apparently succeeded by the first king not to be of the direct line of the founder Fergus since 500, Ferchar the ruler of ‘Loarn’ i.e. Lorne (mainland NW Argyll). Ferchar ruled for twenty-one years until his death in 697 so this was presumably as king of Loarn; he was clearly the predominant dynast of the kingdom at this point, fighting against his rival Eochaid ‘Crooked Nose’, son of Domangert (d. 673), of the main royal line.

697 BYZANTIUM

Hassan and Arab troops seize Carthage in surprise attack *Spring* but a few Byzantine towns hold out. Leontius sends John ‘the patrician’ with fleet to North Africa; *Autumn* they retake city while Hassan away fighting Berbers inland.

FRANCIA

Death of duke Nordebert of Burgundy; succeeded by the region/kingdom’s ‘Mayor of the Palace’, Pepin of Heristal’s elder son Drogo, in another centralisation of power in the Pippinid dynasty.

Council of Compiègne (royal estate), presided over by king Childebert; this is called to deal with the inheritance of the lands of Tussonval, which is claimed by Pepin’s elder son duke/‘Mayor’ Drogo via his wife, the widow of the late ‘Mayor’ Berthar. Surprisingly, Drogo’s claim is disallowed with the supposedly supine ‘puppet-king’ in favour of the rejection – a sign of the limits of Pippinid power and probably of autonomist magnates (and the soon-to-be-autonomous bishop Savaric of Auxerre?) acting as a bloc against them.

BRITAIN

Queen Osthryth of Mercia, who has left her husband Aethelred and his court to become abbess of the Fenland monastery of Bardney where she has installed (hijacked) relics of her late uncle king/St Oswald, is assassinated in a ‘blood-feud’ by Mercian nobles. Apparently they blame her in some way for her late sister Elfreda’s involvement in the murder of her husband, their lord, king Peada of the ‘Middle Angles’, in 656.

Death of Ferchar of Loarn, king of Dalriada and Loarn; succeeded by his son Ainbcellach, who drives out their rival Eochaid ‘Crooke Nose’ the son of late ruler Domangert.

IRELAND

Synod of Birr, a prominent monastery near the Midhe/Munster border and so accessible to dynasts and clerics from the Ui Niall and Southern non-Ui Niall territories; it is apparently thought up and summoned by abbot Adomnan of Iona, the monastic heir and biographer of St Columba, and rulers and clerics from all over Ireland turn up along with a delegation from Dalriada and others from the Pictish kingdom. This ‘pan-Gaelic’ assembly probably reflects a ‘centenary meeting’ by the secular and spiritual heirs of St Columba (d. 597). Adomnan successfully promotes revisions to the Irish and Dalriadan legal codes to bind the authorities of this region, notably the ‘Law of Adomnan’ which bans violence against civilian and women non-combatants as well as clerics and so acts to civilise the endemic warfare of the era.

698

BYZANTIUM

Early. Hassan receives reinforcements from Asia and retakes Carthage; ‘patrician’ John retreats with fleet to meet reinforcements on Crete, but mutiny leads to proclamation of ‘drungarius’ Apsimar as Emperor; rebels sail to capital and blockade city till *Summer* officers open gates; Apsimar rules as ‘Tiberius III’ and Leontius sent to monastery with nose slit.

BRITAIN

King Ainbcellach of Dalriada, hereditary sub-king of Loarn, is removed from both positions by his brother Selbach and flees to Ireland; apparently he and a rival contender, Fiannamail Ua Dunchado the king of ‘Dal n’Araide’ in Ulster, fight over Dalriada as both are referred to by different sources as the king at this point.

c. 699

FRANCIA

Approximate date of start of a war between Pepin of Heristal’s Franks and the pagan Frisians under duke Radbod, who are resisting both being Frankish vassals and conversion to Christianity.

699 BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of (St) Seaxburga, second abbess of Ely and daughter of king Anna of East Anglia; succeeded in office by her niece.

700 ITALY

Death of Lombard king Cunicpert; his son Liutpert succeeds as minor under the tutelage of the duke of Asti, Ansprand, and faces revolt of count Raginpert of Milan. After eight months on the throne (700/01?) Liutpert is captured and deposed by Ansprand.

BRITAIN/IRELAND

Approximate dates of the deaths of the Mercian sub-kings Oshere of 'Hwicce' (last of three brothers and founder of monasteries at Ripley, Withington and Inkberrow) and of Merchelm of 'Magonsaetan'; both are succeeded by their heirs, Merchelm by his brother Mildfrith, but their kingdoms only survive for another decade or two before being swallowed up by Mercia as provinces under 'ealdormen' not kings.

Approximate date of Wilfrid making an appeal to the Papacy to be restored to his bishopric of York; as a result a Papal order is sent to archbishop Beorthwald to hold a synod in Northumbria to consider this.

Fiannamail Ua Dunchado of Dal n'Araide and Dalriada is killed in battle by his Dalriada rival Selbach of Loarn, who takes over that kingdom.

SPAIN

15 or 24 November. Anointing of king Egica's eldest son and co-ruler Wittiza, aged probably fourteen to sixteen, as co-king.

701 ITALY

Aripert, son of the former rebel Raginpert, overthrows Ansprand's regency for young king Liutpert the Lombard, winning a battle over his army at the capital at Pavia; he occupies the city, capturing Liutpert who is strangled in his bath; he becomes king and Ansprand and his son Liutprand take refuge with duke Theudo (V) and his son and later co-ruler Theudebert in Bavaria.

9 September. Death of Pope Sergius; *30 October* John VI, Greek, elected.

SPAIN

Plague, apparently spreading from the Byzantine provinces via Italy; king Egica and his eldest son and co-ruler Wittiza are said to have fled their

capital, Toledo. Wittiza probably moves to Galicia in a formal division of the kingdom, assuming rule of the former Suevic lands.

BRITAIN

In Dalriada, the new king Selbach of Loarn takes the fortress of Dun Olaih/Dunolly, presumably to defeat challengers to his insecure rule.

IRELAND

Fogartach succeeds his assassinated father, Niall mac Cernaig, grandson of the 'High King' Diarmait mac Aed Slaine and head of the 'Ui Chernaig' branch of the feuding 'Sil nAedo Slaine' family, as king of Brega in Western Midhe. The killer is their branch's rival, Irgaliag of the 'Ui Chonaing' branch.

702

ITALY

The usurping Lombard king Raginpert of Milan dies (or late 710) after a reign of around a year, on which Liutpert is restored to the throne; Raginpert's son Aricpert subsequently captures Liutpert and seizes the throne.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of archbishop Beorhtwald holding a synod at ?Austerfield (probably the site of this name near Bawtry in Yorkshire) on the case of Wilfrid's claim to the see of ;York; king Aldfrith of Northumbria attends and opposes Wilfrid's return. King Aethelred of Mercia, who has been employing Wilfrid as bishop of the 'Middle Angles', backs Wilfrid; the latter is offered his Northumbrian monasteries but not the bishopric back by Beorhtwald, but refuses to submit to Beorhtwald's authority and later goes to Rome again in search of a Papal order for his restoration.

703

BYZANTIUM

?Justinian flees attempt by Chersonites to extradite him to Constantinople and takes refuge with Khazars; marries sister of 'Khan'.

ITALY

Faroald succeeds his father Thrasimund as the Lombard duke of Spoleto, and attacks and takes Classis, the port of the eparchal capital at Ravenna; his sovereign king Aripert, who is at peace with the Empire, refuses to back his war and orders him to return it.

SPAIN

(or late 702: some time after the commencement of king Egica's fifteenth year as king, which is referred to in legal documents) Death of Egica after a reign of fifteen years; succeeded by his eldest son and co-ruler Wittiza, who was born around the time of his accession.

?Eighteenth and last Church Council of Toledo, probably presided over by the new archbishop Gunderic of Toledo but possibly by his predecessor Sigered. The record of the laws passed there have been lost, and may have been suppressed – some scholars think they included a contentious late Visigothic law legalising married clergy which was repealed later in the century and would have been to ratify a decision of Emperor Justinian II's 'Quinisext' Council in 691.

IRELAND

July. 'High King' Loingsaech mac Oengus, head of the U Niall of 'Cenel Conaill' of NW Ulster, invades Connacht at the head of a large army and attacks the elderly king Cellach mac Rogallach; he is defeated and killed, along with at least two of his sons and many of his kin and vassals, in Co. Sligo. He is succeeded by his paternal first cousin Congal mac Cennmagair, who is already called 'king of Tir Connail' at his appearance at the synod of Birr in 697 so he may have held this rank since then (or else this is a post-dated mistake).

704

BYZANTIUM

Khazar 'Khan' bribed by Tiberius to assassinate Justinian; his wife reveals plan and he sails to Danube to appeal to Bulgars.

Autumn? Justinian is welcomed by 'Khan' Tervel and Bulgars who agree to help him; among his recruits is a Thracian shepherd called Leo from Germanicea (Arab-occupied) in Taurus, later Emperor Leo III.

BRITAIN

King Selbach of Dalriada is defeated by unknown challengers in 'Glen Lemnae'.

Abdication of the devout king Aethelred of Mercia, a leading monastic patron, after a reign of twenty-nine years (Bede); he retires to the family monastic foundation of Bardney, Lincs, as its new abbot and is probably in his early to mid-sixties. He is succeeded not by his own son Ceolred but by his late elder brother Wulfhere (d. 674/5)'s son Coenred, who is aged somewhere in his thirties.

14 December. Death at Driffeld, near Leeds in Yorkshire, of the ageing king Aldfrith of Northumbria after a nineteen-year reign, aged probably in his late sixties to early seventies. His much younger wife, Cuthburh

the sister of Ine of Wessex, has already left him after providing a son (or sons) and moved to Essex to found a nunnery at Barking and rule as its abbess; around this time she returns to Wessex to found and lead the new monastery at Wimborne Minster.

Aldfrith's (elder?) son Osred is probably aged ten to twelve, and is superseded in a coup by the senior 'thegn' Eadwulf.

705

ITALY

11 January. Death of Pope John VI; *1 March* John VII elected.

FRANCIA

4 March. Death of archbishop (St) Bastinus of Trier, leading churchman of the Rhineland; succeeded by his sister's son Liutwin/Leodwinus, former count of Trier, son of count Warinus of Poitiers, and founder of Mettlach abbey where he has gone as a monk after his wife died; he is the leading churchman of the region for the next seventeen years through the 715–19 civil war.

BRITAIN

February. After two months, the legitimate dynasty is restored in the person of the under-age king Osred, son of the late king Aldfrith; Eadwulf is deposed by the senior provincial governor Beortferth, lord of Lothian, who is backed by St Wilfrid, and by Aldfrith's half-sister abbess Enfleda of Whitby. If Wilfrid has not already returned to Northumbria, he now does so.

Beorhtferth (d. 710), Wilfrid, and bishop (St) John of Beverley lead the regency; Bosa of York dies around this time and it is John who succeeds him as bishop of York, but Wilfrid also holds episcopal rank and authority (at his old monastery of Ripon).

CALIPHATE

Death of Caliph Abd-al-Malik; succeeded by son Walid.

SPAIN

Approximate date of the fall of Ceuta to the advancing Moslems in Morocco.

BYZANTIUM

Justinian and Bulgar Khan Tervel march on Constantinople *Summer*, and elude Tiberius' army in Thrace; capital besieged for three days, then

Justinian gets in through deserted tunnel under the walls; his partisans join him to seize Blachernae, and panic in city and Tiberius flees; Justinian II restored. Tiberius surrenders as army starts to desert; Justinian arrests him and other enemies to await his vengeance.

706 BYZANTIUM

15 February. Leontius and Tiberius serve as footstools for Justinian in the Hippodrome during triumphal acclamation by ‘demes’; they are then executed and a massacre of their partisans follows.

Justinian’s son is proclaimed co-Emperor ‘Tiberius IV’.

BRITAIN

Nechtan mac Derile succeeds his brother Bridei mac Derile as king of the Picts, an unusual example of the throne staying in one family not rotating among rival branches.

707 BRITAIN

Either Swaefherd/Swaefred or Sigehard, the survivor of these two as kings of Essex from 693, died; they are succeeded by the saintly youth Offa, teenage son of king Sigehere (d. 688) by (St) Osyth, princess of Surrey, who Bede hails in his writings as a Christian paragon.

IRELAND

Death of king Indretach mac Dunnchad of Connacht, after a two-year reign, in battle against an invasion of N Connacht by the Ui Niall of ‘Tir Conaill’ led by Fingal, son of the late ‘High King’ Loingsech; succeeded by Indretach mac Muiredach, head of the ‘Ui Briuin’ and son of the late king Muiredach (d. 702), who reigns for sixteen years to 723.

ITALY

18 October. Death of Pope John VII; Sisinnius, Syrian, elected.

708 ITALY

15 January. Consecration of Sisinnius, delayed for months until ‘Exarch’s ratification; aged and crippled with gout, he soon dies and *25 March* Constantine, another Syrian, elected.

Archbishop Felix of Ravenna, another new appointment, tries to claim autonomy from Pope’s authority.

FRANCIA

Death of the elder son and presumed political heir of 'Mayor of the Palace' Pepin of Herstal, Drogo the 'Mayor'/duke of Burgundy, aged probably thirty-eight; his younger brother 'Mayor' Grimoald of Neustria becomes heir instead. This may be the occasion for, or seen as another 'Pippinid dynastic rule' threat to, the increasingly autonomous duke Antenor of Provence in the SE, who around this time (or a little earlier?) starts acting as an independent ruler and defying royal authority.

Foundation of the abbey of Mont-St-Michel, by bishop Aubert.

709

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Justinian enters the controversy between Pope and archbishop Felix, and sends a fleet under 'patrician' Theodore to Ravenna; Theodore lands in Italy, summons Felix and other notables to a banquet at his camp and arrests and deports them to Constantinople; Felix is blinded and exiled to Black Sea.

BRITAIN

The youthful and devout king Offa of Essex, aged around twenty, abdicates to journey to Rome and becomes a monk, and persuades his friend, kinsman and older contemporary king Coenred of Mercia, to do so with him; the cousins Saelred (d. 746) and Swaebert (d. 738) succeed to Essex and Coenred is succeeded to Mercia by his young, aggressive, and allegedly vicious cousin Coelred, son of the holy ex-king Aethelbert and from his subsequent reputation loathed by the monastic order. At some point after this, Coelred's purge of potentially troublesome relatives leads to his cousin and eventual successor Aethelbald having to flee to the Fens to avoid murder; he takes refuge with St Guthlac, abbot of Crowland.

(or 710) Death of (St) Wilfrid at the monastery of Oundle, aged probably in his mid-late seventies.

710

FRANCIA

?*Easter Sunday, 27 March*. Traditional date of the death of the founding (arch)bishop of Salzburg, the expatriate Frankish missionary (St) Rupert, who has been in the duchy of Bavaria since being sacked as bishop of Worms c. 685; he was the main leader of the conversion of what later becomes Austria, then part of Bavaria, and traditionally baptised its duke Theudo V (date unknown) and inspired him to go on pilgrimage to Rome in Pope Gregory II's time.

ITALY

October. Pope Constantine accepts Justinian's invitation to Constantinople and sets out, meeting new 'Exarch' John Rizocopus en route at

Naples; Rizocopus goes to Rome to execute assorted Papal officials, and later dies at Ravenna.

SPAIN

Probable date of the natural death or murder of king Wittiza, in unknown circumstances and probably at Toledo. His successor Roderic, recorded by a royal chronicle of Leon in the early C10th but not by contemporaries as son of a son of king Chindeswinth, is said to have ‘invaded’ the kingdom. This may refer to a violent usurpation rather than an actual invasion, or else to a rebel advance on Toledo from Roderic’s own province (possibly ‘Baetica’, the extreme SW, according to later legend). Whether Witteric dies before or during the revolt, and how, is unclear.

The ‘Chronicle of 754’ gives Roderic a reign of one year, ending in the Arab invasions, so this implies a usurpation in 710; the less reliable ‘*Chronicum Regum Visigothicorum*’ gives him a three-year reign but Wittiza was still ruling c. 709. It appears from the coinage that Roderic was accepted as king in the South, but no coins of him exist in ‘*Tarraconensis*’ (Catalonia/NE) or in Septimania; instead they have coins of a king ‘Agila’ unknown to the chronicles. The kingdom was probably divided, but no civil war is recorded; if Agila was a ‘legitimist’ relative of Witteric opposing the coup he could be an under-age son, Witteric being only in his twenties at death.

BRITAIN

Battle of Langport in Somerset between Wessex and Dumnonia; given the site probably a Dumnonian attack across Devon into Somerset by king Gereint. King Ine of Wessex is aided by troops from his vassal ally Sussex, led by king Nunna/Nothelm, and wins a decisive victory, killing Gereint; this is probably followed by his fortification of Taunton and (re)conquest of the Exmoor and Devon/Cornwall border areas.

IRELAND

Death of ‘High King’ Congal of the Northern Ui Niall of ‘Tir Conaill’ after a seven-year reign, possibly of a fit which is linked by Church writers to his recent plundering of the church of Kildare. He is succeeded by Fergal mac Mael Duin of the ‘Cenel nEoghan’ branch, who now take over prominence among the Northern Ui Niall and turn their resources against the ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ of Western Brega.

711 BYZANTIUM

Early. Pope Constantine and clergy arrive at Constantinople and are met by prince Tiberius and Patriarch Cyrus; they enter capital in state and

go to meet Justinian. Justinian fears treason in Cherson; leading citizens are arrested and others killed, but imperial fleet damaged in storm as returns prisoners to Constantinople.

FRANCIA

‘Mayor’ Pepin’s second son and heir Grimoald is married off to Theudesinda, daughter of the powerful and truculently autonomist duke Radbod, ruler of the pagan Frisians on the NW borders of Austrasia (which Pepin continues to rule directly while Grimoald is ‘Mayor’ of Nesutria for him).

23 April. Death of the puppet-king Childebert III, nicknamed ‘the Just’, at St Etienne on the upper Loire, after a nominal rule of sixteen years; he is probably in his late twenties. He is buried at Choisy near Compiègne. His uncle Pepin of Heristal, ‘Mayor of the Palace’, chooses the new king – his son Dagobert (III), aged twelve.

BYZANTIUM

Admiral Helias decides to join rising discontent in Cherson, revolts with city’s support, and allies with Khazars; Justinian sends a second fleet but they join revolt and proclaim Armenian officer Philippicus Bardanes as Emperor. Justinian sends third fleet to Cherson; Philippicus retires inland to join Khazars, who attack Byzantines.

Anatolian troops revolt; Justinian leads armies to Sinope, hears rebel fleet heading for capital, and hurries back; capital surrenders to rebels; Justinian flees as troops desert, and is pursued and killed *4 november* aged forty-two; Philippicus executes chief ministers, and murders prince Tiberius in church.

FRANCIA

Approximate date of the elevation of the two (probably) older sons of duke Theudo of Bavaria, who is based at Regensburg, to be his co-rulers; Theudebert, based at Salzburg, and Theobald probably with his father at Regensburg. It is unclear if authority is formally divided on a geographical basis yet or if all are ruling the whole duchy together.

SPAIN/NORTH AFRICA

Tariq ibn Zayid, ?Berber (some sources say Persian) commander of the Arab garrison at Tangier, legendarily a former slave of governor Musa ibn Nusayr of North Africa, decides to cross the Straits of Gibraltar and attack the Visigothic kingdom. The mostly C9th narratives refer to disaffection by the sons of the late king Wittiza against king Roderic the

usurper, but their historicity (or at least identity as his ‘sons’) must be doubted. The early C9th historian Ibn Abd-al-Hakam (Egypt) refers to the story of ‘Julian’, the (Byzantine??) commander at Ceuta whose daughter had been impregnated but not married by her supposed protector, king Roderic, who had demanded her as a hostage and promised to educate her, then sent her home – thus causing Julian to angrily loan his ships to Tariq and transport his men to Algeciras.

Spring. Tariq’s probably small and mostly Berber force is transported to the site of later Algeciras, the ‘Greek Island’, which they fortify; Roderic is away in the North fighting the Basques, and the Moslems plunder Northwards into the Guadalquivir valley. Roderic hurries back with his presumably tired men to take them on, while Tariq halts South of the river within reach of the coast and sends for 5,000? more men from Morocco. Possibly dissident Goths join him, with uncertainty over whether the recent anti-Jewish legislation or Wittiza’s possible allowing clerical marriage had produced Jewish or Catholic anger and disaffection.

?19 *July.* (Arab sources) Battle near Medina Sidonia, probably on the River Guadalete; Roderic is supposed to have had c. 100,000 troops to c. 12,000 Moslems by later sources but this is unlikely. Part of the Gothic army is said to have turned tail and fled the battlefield, possibly including partisans of Wittiza’s family; the C8th Christian (Seville) ‘Chronicle of 754’ implies treachery by Achila, ruler of the NE and opponent of Roderic, or his partisans. This opens up the flank of Roderic’s infantry centre to a charge by Tariq’s Berber cavalry, but fighting goes on for hours. The king is killed and his army disintegrates; Tariq strikes into the Guadalquivir valley, storms the town of Ecija on the River Genil, and sends Mughith and 700 men on to reconnoiter Cordoba. Legendarily the attackers are assured by a local shepherd that the leading citizens have fled and only the governor and a small guard (500?) are in residence and he leads the Moslems to scale the wall near the gate by the Roman bridge where there is damage, so a picked party can climb up easier. They take the wall, open the gate and let the other Moslems in; the city is taken except a church where the governor and his men barricade themselves in. Later (three months??) the governor escapes to make for the mountains but is caught and killed by Mughith.

Tariq heads for the capital, Toledo, which the ‘Chronicle of 754’ says that archbishop Sindered deserts; so does the mysterious ‘Oppa’, who sources say claimed royal rank and was a ?brother of Wittiza. He may have been in rebellion against Roderic already, or just taken advantage of his fall. The city is taken with little resistance and some of the leading nobles are executed. Tariq sets up his headquarters there after a probable exploratory attack towards the upper Ebro valley.

ITALY

?*Autumn*. Ex-regent Ansprand invades the Lombard kingdom across the Alps from Bavaria, helped by his host in exile there, duke Theudebert of Salzburg, who loans him troops from the territory that is later Austria; his son Liutprand, by now probably married to Theudebert's sister Gerberga, accompanies him; war in the Po valley follows.

IRELAND

Battle of 'Slab Fuait' in the Fews, Co. Armagh, where the new 'High King' Fergal of the 'Cenel nEoghan' and his allies defeat the 'Ui Meith' and the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' of Brega.

BRITAIN

Battle of 'Lough Eclet' in Dalriada, won by king Selbach over the Britons of neighbouring Strathclyde and possibly his own rebels, their allies.

712

BYZANTIUM

Early. Philippicus forces deposition of Patriarch Cyrus, replaced by John VI, for opposing his religious plans; he issues edict reversing the decisions of 'Sixth General Council' of 680–1 and restores Monotheletism, and there is little public opposition.

ITALY

March. Ansprand defeats usurping king Aripert in battle on the River Ticino near Pavia, and Aripert is apparently drowned while fleeing the battlefield; Ansprand occupies the city of Pavia and becomes king.

June. Death of Ansprand, probably in his fifties; accession of his son, king Liutprand, who is an ally of his brother-in-law, co-duke Theudebert of Bavaria.

Philippicus' edict to restore 'Monotheletism' is defied at Rome; Pope omits his name from official documents.

SPAIN

Spring. Governor Musa ibn Nusayr of 'Ifriqiya', Tariq's overlord, brings his own army to Southern Spain, with around 18,000 men and a larger proportion of Arabs plus some veterans who converted to Islam in the generation after the Prophet's career (i.e. the 640s–60s); *June*. They land at Algeciras and Musa takes some towns that have not fallen yet, including Medina Sidonia and Carmona, before heading NW to Seville; its garrison abandons it and flees into Lusitania.

Musa heads North along the main road to Merida, which holds out and is besieged for months (autumn).

BRITAIN

King Selbach of Dalriada besieges Dunaverty Rock in S Argyll (Kintyre), probably to overcome rebels who may be linked to foes in Ulster backed by his exiled brother Ainbcellach.

IRELAND

(or 713) King Cormac mac Aillel of Munster is killed in battle at Carn Feradaig/Cahernarry by the sub-dynasty of the 'Deisi', rulers of Thomond in NW Munster; he is succeeded by Cathal mac Finguin, whose father was king to d. 696, the head of the 'Glendamna' branch of the dynasty. He reigns to 742, and is soon embroiled in war with Munster.

713

ITALY

Philippicus' religious edicts defied and his officers are expelled from Rome after fighting rebel citizens as Pope Constantine persuades 'Exarch' not to spill further blood.

BYZANTIUM

Philippicus brings in Opsicion troops under 'Count' George Buraphus to capital en route to fight Bulgars; 3 *June* officers at George's instigation enter Palace while Philippicus is resting after dinner, seize him and drag him to 'Green' 'deme"'s headquarters, and blind him; 4 *June* crowd at Hagia Sophia chooses imperial official, 'protoascretis' Artemius, as Emperor and he chooses title of Anastasius II; George and other plotters are blinded, but Philippicus' religious legislation reversed and Anastasius announces his adherence to 'Chalcedonian' doctrines.

SPAIN

5 *April*. Landmark 'Treaty of Orihuela' between Musa's son and local commander, his son Abd-Al-Aziz, and Theudemir, the Gothic commander of Murcia and lord of the local district (seven cities); the latter is allowed to stay unmolested with his co-religionists provided that they pay the 'jizya' poll-tax to the Moslem state and hand over any rebels to it. This is taken as a template for subsequent Moslem relations with their new Christian subjects.

30 *June*. Fall of Merida to Musa; he sends his son Abd-al-Aziz back to Seville to deal with an uprising and heads to Toledo, where he takes over command from Taraiq and forces him to hand over the Visigothic royal treasury and other loot. The Arab sources recount how Tariq tried to get round orders to hand over the most prized piece of his loot, the 'Table of Solomon' (possibly a part of the Visigothic haul of Temple treasures from Jerusalem in AD 70, taken from its conqueror Rome in AD 410),

by hacking off one of the legs and substituting a cheap fake for it; Tariq retires to Cordoba at odds with his commander. Possibly the largely Berber contingent of Tariq's 712 invasion-force were at odds ethnically with the Arab forces of Musa, and Cordoba became their centre of settlement and opposition to the new governor and his Toledo-based Arab garrison.

BRITAIN

Death of king Ealdwulf of East Anglia after a reign of forty-nine years, the longest in Anglo-Saxon history except possibly for Aethelbert of Kent; succeeded by his son Alfwold, who is probably middle-aged.

714

IRELAND

King Fogartach mac Niall (acceded 701) of the 'Ui Chernaig' branch of the Ui Niall of Brega, currently king of Brega, is deposed and flees into exile in Britain; possibly a victim of the expansionist 'Cenel nEoghan' of Co. Tyrone led by the current 'High King' Fergal, but more immediately of his own uncle Conall 'Grant' ('Grey-Haired'), who succeeds him, and the latter's ally Murchad 'Midi' mac Diarmait, king of Uisnech, of the 'Clan Colmainn' branch.

SPAIN

Musa overruns the Ebro valley, and takes Saragossa and Lerida; the Arabs dominate this NE part of the conquest and subsequent establishment of garrisons.

Both Musa and Tariq are recalled to Damascus, technically to tell their exploits to the Caliph but probably for fear of their potential threat as independent rulers; Musa and Tariq take their armies N to overrun the lands South of the Cantabrian mountains, and Tariq takes Leon and Astorga and then crosses the mountains to Oviedo.

FRANCIA

As 'Mayor of the Palace' Pepin of Heristal's health starts to decline, his eldest surviving legitimate son and heir, 'Mayor' Grimoald of Neustria, is assassinated at the shrine of St Lambert at Liege, probably an act of personal feud but linked to anti-Pippinid dynastic resentment by some of the nobles; legends of Lambert refer to Pepin's mistress Alpaida (mother of his illegitimate son Charles) being denounced for their affair by the saint and her brother, the Pippinid official Drogo, being linked to Lambert's death so there may be anti-Pippinid feuds behind the murder.

Grimoald leaves a young son, Theudoald, by his widow Theudelinda (the daughter of duke Radbod of Frisia). Pepin's wife Plectrudis secures her

husband's promise of the succession for Theudoald in place of Pepin's older and more experienced but illegitimate surviving son, Charles (later 'Martel').

16 December. Death of Pepin of Heristal, real ruler of Neustria since 681 and of all Francia since 687; he is aged probably somewhere in his seventies. His widow Plectrudis serves as regent for their grandson, the young and untried Theudoald, and arranges for her illegitimate stepson Charles, son of Pepin by his mistress Alpaida (probably at this juncture in Austrasia), to be seized and imprisoned at Cologne to prevent him rebelling. As Theudoald's mother Theudelinda is daughter of the region's neighbour duke Radbod of Frisia, he and his warriors are useful allies for the new regime. Possibly Arnulf, the eldest son of Pepin's late elder legitimate son Drogo, assumes titular power as 'Mayor' in Austrasia; he may be in his teens.

Charles escapes from prison at Cologne and rallies that part of the 'Pippinid' faction in Austrasia which prefers him, an adult and militarily experienced, as ruler to the younger Arnulf. He is elected as their 'Mayor' for Austrasia. Possibly the involvement of Charles' mother Alpaida's kin in the murder of the popular local NW Austrasian saint, Lambert of Maastricht, is a cause or symptom of anti-Charles sentiment in this region, but he has lands from his mother's family in the Meuse valley so some local vassals.

715 CALIPHATE

February. Death of Caliph Walid; succeeded by brother Sulaiman, who starts to plan second siege of Constantinople; Arab ships collect timber in Caria.

ITALY

9 April. Death of Pope Constantine; *19 May* Gregory II, a Roman, elected.

FRANCIA

Civil war over the succession of Theudoald as the new senior Pippinid ruler of Francia, and resistance by the family's enemies coalesces; a coalition of Neustrian rebels takes up arms and defeats Theudoald's and regent Plectrudis' army at the Forest of Cuise near Compiègne, and then declares their candidate Ragamfred as the new 'Mayor' of Neustria. They then advance to the River Meuse to link up with their ally Radbod, who may have earlier backed Plectrudis as her grandson is also his own grandson, but who now regards Frisia as independent and abandons the cause of his own grandson Theudoald.

Charles is defeated by Ragamfred's army in the lower Rhine region and retreats to the Eifel mountains; by now Plectrudis and her candidate

Theudoald have retreated to Cologne, possibly in the vain hope of attracting help from Radbod who abandoned them, and Ragamfred and his army march on the city; Plectrudis bribes them to withdraw with a substantial part of her late husband's treasure.

Autumn or late autumn? Death of the Merovingian puppet-king Dagobert III, probably aged fifteen or so; Plectrudis and her faction are wrong-footed as the faction of Ragamfred proclaim an obscure Merovingian relation, a monk called Daniel (probably the disinherited son of Childeric III excluded in 675), as their new king 'Childeric IV' (probably winter 715–16).

SPAIN/AFRICA

Musa appoints his son Abd-Al-Aziz as governor before he leaves Spain; the new province is named as 'Al-Andalus' ('The West'). Back in Africa, he appoints two other sons to rule Algeria (at Sus) and Tunisia (at the capital, Qairouan). Back at Damascus, both commanders are placed under arrest for suspected insubordination and potential plotting against the Caliph; Musa dies in custody a year or two later and Tariq dies in c. 720.

BYZANTIUM

Troops en route to Rhodes for naval attack on Arab timber-fleet mutiny, sail to Adramyttium, and take unwilling tax-collector Theodosius as Emperor; they sail to Chrysopolis, land in Thrace, and c. ?*August* enter Constantinople; Anastasius holds out in Bithynia but Theodosius III recognised in European provinces.

BRITAIN

King Ceolred of Mercia fights against king Ine of Wessex at 'Adam's Grave' on the Downs of Northern Wiltshire; it is not clear who is the aggressor but there is no decisive result.

IRELAND

King Conall 'Grant' of Brega (head of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' branch of the Ui Niall) has his local rival Murchad 'Midi' mac Diarmait, king of Uisnech and head of the 'Clann Colmann' (the descendants of Colman 'Mor', son of 'High King' Diarmait mac Cerbhall who died in 546/5) in Brega, assassinated. This is possibly to prevent 'High King' Fergal and his 'Clann nEoghan' using the latter against him. Murchad is probably succeeded by his son Domnhall 'Mid', later 'High King', though the latter does not appear in annals until 730; Conall and his kin temporarily dominate the Western Midhe Ui Niall.

715/ BYZANTIUM**16**

Six months after start of civil war, Anastasius II abdicates at Nicaea in negotiated surrender; becomes a monk and goes to Thessalonica.

FRANCIA

Probable date of the death of the aged duke Theudo (V) of Bavaria, effectively autonomous of Austrasia, after a reign of thirty-five years or so; succeeded by his four sons who divide the duchy. Theudebert, the senior, reigns at Salzburg and Theobald at Regensburg, his father's capital; the other brothers are dukes Tassilo (II) and Grimoald, probably of Freising. War between several or all of them follows.

SPAIN

Probable date of the conquest of the later Portuguese lands as far as Galicia by governor Abd-al-Aziz, who by now is based at Seville as his 'capital'.

716 BYZANTIUM

Sulaiman's brother Maslamah leads army into Anatolia to prepare for grand attack on Constantinople; *Summer* as Leo, 'strategos' of 'theme' of Anatolicon, a partisan of Anastasius II, defies Theodosius' government, Maslamah besieges Amorium in his territory and tries to negotiate alliance; Leo temporises so Maslamah invades Thracesion; *Winter* Maslamah winters at Sardes, near coast so in touch with Arab fleet.

SPAIN

(or late 715, or 717 – ordered in reign of Caliph Sulaiman). Assassination of the Moslem governor, Abd-Al-Aziz, by his officers – according to Ibn Khaldun (C14th) by his deputy, the general Habin Ibn Abi Obeida of the eminent 'Fihrid' dynasty of Qairouan whose grandfather was Uqba the 670s conqueror, according to earlier sources by a minor officer called Ziyad. Caliph Sulaiman, fearing the governor's potential for revolt due to his creating links to the Visigothic elite, is probably behind it. According to traditional stories, recounted by historian Ibn Abd-al-Hakam c. 850, the killing is due to his presumption and potential for rebellion in assuming royal state, marrying the widow (Egilon) of the late king Roderic with rumours that she will convert him to Christianity, and forcing his subordinates to bow to him like a king not a democratic Moslem commander by building a low doorway to his hall of state which they had to duck under.

Abd-al-Aziz's cousin Ayyub ibn Habib takes over control of 'Al-Andalus'.

(or 717?) According to the early C10th 'Chronicle of Alfonso III', start of the fight-back by the Christians of Northern Spain as the refugee Visigothic noble Pelayo (aka 'Pelagius', called after the C5th heretic or the C6th Popes), son of Favila who served king Egica, escapes from the Toledo region before he is due to be arrested. He flees into the Cantabrian mountains, famously swimming his horse across a swollen river which his nervous Arab pursuers flee to cross; he rallies an army in the region of the 'Astures' in the high and not easily accessible 'Pico de Europa' region and the Moslems prepare to attack him. He probably defeats the local governor, Uthman ('Munuza') of either Gijon or Leon.

FRANCIA/BITAIN

Separatist duke Radbod of Frisia rejects Frankish authority knowing that his allies, the Neustrian faction of Ragamfered, need his help too badly to object; he also turns on the Catholic mission of bishop/St Willibrod, based at Utrecht, as perceived Frankish allies. Charles 'Martel' attacks him.

The West Saxon missionary Winfrith (St Boniface) arrives by sea in Frisia from England to assist St Willibrod with the evangelization of the Frisians; their work is disrupted by the current war between Charles 'Martel' and Frisian duke Radbod, with Radbod killing Christian converts and burning churches; the disheartened Willibrod gives up and retreats to his new monastery in the Ardennes at Echternach; Winfrith returns to his 'alma mater' monastery at Nursling, Hampshire, and later travels to Rome (716 or 717?) where Pope Gregory renames him 'Boniface' and sends him to the pagan Eastern frontiers of Austrasia (later Germany) to evangelise.

Radbod and the Frisians defeat Charles near Cologne and secure the NW of Austrasia; Ragamfred and his allies, bringing along their puppet-king Childeric III, march on Plectrudis and Theudoald who have retreated out of Neustria to their stronghold at Cologne and hope to take over all of Austrasia as Charles' cause collapses. They occupy Cologne and loot Plectrudis' treasure, but as they withdraw Charles pursues them, defeats them at Ambleve near Liege, surprising them at midday while they are resting and then luring them into a trap with a feigned retreat before ambushing them. Most of the Neustrian army is killed, and Charles takes their loot. This probably secures him the Ardennes and lower Rhine areas.

BRITAIN

King Coelred of Mercia, remembered by monastic tradition as a tyrant and allegedly warned by the monks of Much Wenlock of a vision that the angels have abandoned his kingdom due to his godlessness, dies suddenly at a banquet, aged probably under thirty. It is supposedly a fit, but poison is possible due to his recent purges; possibly a kinsman, the elusive 'Ceolwald', reigns briefly but if so is opposed. Their distant

kinsman Aethelbald, descended from ‘Alweo’ the brother of Penda in the official genealogies, returns from exile and is elected as king. (He is to reign for an impressive forty-one years.)

The allegedly tyrannical young king Osred of Northumbria, aged around twenty-one, is killed in battle in Lothian, fighting rebels who are possibly led by the man who succeeds to the throne – Coenred, son of Cuthwine and allegedly descended from Ocg, a younger son of founding king Ida (d. c. 559) whose historicity is dubious. This presumably reflects a noble ‘coup’, and the late king’s younger brother or cousin Osric is passed over for the throne.

King Nechtan mac Derile of the Picts asks abbot Ceolfrith of Jarrow and Monkwearmouth, Bede’s superior, for advice on whether the practices (e.g. the dates for celebrating Easter) of the ‘Celtic’ or the ‘Roman’ Church are more accurate. This may be prompted by or accompany the mission of the Northumbrian priest Ecgbert to the ‘Columban’ Church headquarters at Iona around this time, where the visitor persuades the community to adopt ‘Roman’ practices.

The veteran abbot Ceolfrith of Jarrow, superior of Bede the historian, hands over his office to a protégé and heads for Rome on a mission to hand a completed artistic masterpiece book, the ‘Codex Amiatinus’, to the Pope; he dies en route in Burgundy (27 September) and the book ends up in a monastic library in Florence.

717 **BYZANTIUM**

Leo advances towards Constantinople with Artavasdus, ‘strategus’ of Armeniakon; ?*February* his forces capture Theodosius III’s son and some officials at Nicomedia, and negotiate peaceful surrender of the Emperor; they arrive at Chrysopolis and Theodosius abdicates to become monk.

FRANCIA

21 March. Charles defeats the army of Ragamfred at Vinchy near Cambrai; the survivors flee and their cause in Eastern Neustria collapses as Charles advances temporarily to Paris. Charters show that they still have control of the lower Seine basin for some months and the Loire into 719, and they now form an alliance with autonomist duke Eudes of Aquitaine to the South West.

Charles then defeats Plectrudis and Theudoald, forces them to surrender at Cologne, and recovers the treasury of Pepin of Heristal from them in a wary peace with them recognising his power in Austrasia but not being imprisoned or killed; Plectrudis dies a few months later. He takes over Austrasia and proclaims his own Merovingian puppet-king, Chlotar IV (perhaps a son of Theuderic III). The untrustworthy archbishop Rigobert

of Rheims is soon sacked and replaced by a partisan of Charles, Milo, count of Trier and son of archbishop (St) Liutgar/Leodwin of Trier, who will lead the Church to play up his legitimate inheritance of power and later his role as backed by God in his fight against Islam. In Western Neustria, Ragamfred holds out.

Death of the secular-minded and acquisitive bishop Savaric of Auxerre, by this date practically autonomous in the chaos of the civil war and notorious for armed incursions to seize his neighbours' lands – he has already taken over the bishopric of Orleans and held it illegally. His death occurs during an armed attack on the archdiocese of Lyons; he is succeeded in Auxerre by the equally 'political' Ainmar and in Orleans by his own nephew, Eucherius (both to end up sacked by Charles in the 730s).

CALIPHATE

Arab forces, allegedly 120,000 men, advance across Anatolia and take Pergamum to aid advance of fleet. *July* Maslamah crosses Hellespont from Abydos and marches on Constantinople by land; Constantinople besieged and Arabs construct extra siege-wall facing outwards to keep Leo's Bulgar allies from attacking.

8 September. Death of Caliph Sulaiman; succeeded by cousin, pious Omar II, son of Abd-al-Malik's brother, who attempts to ban alcohol.

September. Arab fleet arrives at Constantinople, but rearguard destroyed by 'Greek fire' so their blockade is maintained at distance; Byzantines have ample food, Bulgars aid attacks on Arab foragers, and a very harsh winter causes disease and famine in Arab camp.

ITALY/FRANCIA

St Boniface arrives from Rome in Eastern Austrasia, the later 'Germany', to lead its evangelization.

SPAIN

Six months after the assassination of governor Abd-Al-Aziz, the new governor Al-Hurr Ibn Abd-Al-Rahman arrives from the Ummayyad court to take command of 'Al-Andalus' and replaces interim governor Ayyub; he moves the capital from Seville to Cordoba and starts to set up a civil administration. This is accompanied by the conquest of the remaining independent lands of the North, probably Galicia, except for the remotest Cantabrian mountains.

The date of 717 is also the apparent time of the first, unsuccessful Moslem invasion of Septimania across the Eastern Pyrenees by Al-Hurr; the refugee Visigothic king Ardo (Ardobast?) manages to drive him back.

BRITAIN

King Nechtan mac Derile of the Picts agrees to force the Church in his kingdom to replace its use of the ‘Celtic Church’ rites and practices, e.g. the date of Easter and the monastic tonsure, with the ‘Roman’ ones; objecting clerics and monks are expelled to Dalriada. This possibly reflects a Pictish move to ally with the pro-‘Roman’ kings of Northumbria and Mercia as well as close links with the bishopric of York and archbishopric of Canterbury.

718

BYZANTIUM

Spring. Moslem relief-fleet of 400 ships from Egypt and 260 from North Africa arrives from Caliphate to land reinforcements at Chalcedon, but their native African crews include many Christians who defect to Leo; with their guidance his fleet attacks and severely damages Moslem fleet.

ITALY

Summer. Revolt of Sicilians under ‘strategus’ Sergius suppressed by fleet sent from Byzantium.

SPAIN

Probable resumption of the Moslem attack on Septimania and/or conquest of the remnants of the Visigothic kingdom in the upper Ebro valley to Eastern Cantabria; the Basques hold out.

BYZANTIUM

Arabs are disheartened and fail to secure enough supplies, their relief-army from Syria reaches Nicaea but is ambushed in hills near Nicomedia and flees; plague breaks out in camp and 15 *August* siege abandoned; Arabs re-embark on fleet and sail for home, but heavy losses in storm.

SPAIN

(Traditional date in the C10th ‘Chronicle of Alfonso III’ is 717, but 718 more likely: alternative date is 722).

Attack on the new Christian kingdom holding out in the Asturias by the Moslems is defeated in the ‘Picos de Europa’ by rebel leader Pelayo, at the site of ‘Covadonga’. (Later Christian legend gives an invading army of 187,000 which is implausible.) The attacking commander is apparently ‘Alqama’, assisted by ‘Munuza’ i.e. probably Uthman, governor of Gijon or Leon and Pelayo’s main opponent until now. They are assisted by the collaborationist bishop Oppa who before the battle tries to induce surrender by telling Pelayo that the Arabs have defeated the entire Gothic

army so his cause is hopeless. The Arabs attack and are defeated, losing large numbers, and have to retreat abandoning the mountains to the Christians; after this Pelayo founds the new kingdom of the 'Asturias', which will become 'Leon'.

Possibly the absence of any Arabs used to fighting in the mountains or their long supply-lines is more vital than any one battle in the decision to abandon the campaign, and 'Covadonga' is a minor clash later exaggerated in Christian propaganda; its date is also uncertain but presumably post-717.

FRANCIA

Charles defeats Ragamfred and his puppet-king Chilperic at Soissons; he also attacks the pagan Saxons who have taken advantage of the civil war to raid into Austrasia and decisively defeats them, ravaging their lands as far as the rivers Weser and Lippe and forcing them to submit.

BRITAIN

(or 717?) Death of (St) John of Beverley, bishop of York; succeeded by Wilfrid (II).

Death of the new king Coenred of Northumbria after a two-year reign, possibly but not definitely in a rebellion. His predecessor's younger brother or cousin Osric (probably son of king Aldfrith by Cwenburh of Wessex and so aged around twenty, but possibly the son of king Alchfrith and so aged over fifty) succeeds in the restoration of the legitimate dynasty.

Death of the Wessex 'atheling' Ingeld, brother and presumed heir of the childless king Ine (and ancestor of the later royal line under Egbert from 802 according to the official genealogies).

IRELAND

Killing in battle of Conall 'Grant', uncle and rival to king Fogartach of Brega as head of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' in Western Midhe, by 'High King'; Fergal mac Mael Duin. This is possibly to neutralise him after he defeated a coalition of the Southern Ui Niall kings at Kells and resumed his earlier position as a threat to his overlord, which Fergal had hoped to halt by restoring his nephew and victim Flaithbertach to the throne of Brega which he had seized.

FRANCIA

Charles invades Western Neustria and defeats Ragamfred, Eudes of Aquitaine, and their puppet-king Childeric; he decisively defeats them, and chases Eudes as far as Orleans before forcing him to accept peace

and hand over Childeric. Reunion of the Frankish realms under Charles' control; Childeric is 'raised on the shield' before an assembly of the Frankish military elite as the usual symbol of acceptance as king. This presumes that Chlotar IV, Charles' own puppet-king, is dead by this point, but some sources have him surviving into 720 and if so his authority is presumably abandoned or restricted.

Death in battle of the rebel Frisian pagan duke Radbod and end of the rebellion in Frisia; the missionary leader St Willibrod, bishop of Utrecht, is able to return there from the abbey of Echternach to resume work, as arranged by 'Mayor' Charles who gives his mission military backing, and he is soon joined by his friend St Boniface who is now en route to Germany.

Probable approximate dates of the deaths (violent or not) of the feuding brother dukes Theudebert of Salzburg and Theobald of Regensburg, co-rulers of Bavaria, following that of their brother Tassilo (II); the survivor of the four is Grimoald, probably duke of Freising, who marries Biltrud, widow of one of his brothers, in a presumed move to win over their partisans.

SPAIN

Al-Samh ibn Al-Malik al-Thawani succeeds as governor of Spain after a two-year rule by Al-Hurr ibn Abd-al-Rahman, and now or in 720 launches a successful invasion of Catalonia; logically he first completes the conquest of the East coast or the upper Ebro.

BRITAIN

September. Battle of 'Finnglen' in Dalriada: king Selbach defeats and kills his invading brother Ainbcellach, who has brought in help from Ulster.

October. Selbach defeats his rival from the main line of the kings of Dalraida who he has superseded, the 'Cenel Gabhran', led by Dunchad 'Becc', off the promontory of 'Ard Nesbi'.

720

CALIPHATE

Death of Caliph Omar II, succeeded by cousin Yazid II, Sulaiman's brother.

FRANCIA

Approximate date of the forced baptism of the new duke of the Frisians, Andegisl, by bishop (St) Willibrod, as ordered by the latter's patron 'Mayor' Charles; the Frisians are now mostly converted to Christianity as Frankish subjects under the threat of military coercion.

SPAIN

Probable date of the fall of Barcelona to the Moslems under the new governor of 'Al-Andalus', al-Samh ibn Al-Malik. Crossing of the Eastern Pyrenees; final defeat and death or eviction of the Visigothic king of Septimania, Ardo; Narbonne, his capital, is taken and the Moslems raid Eastwards to besiege and conquer Beziers, Montpellier and Nimes. The Moslems probably now rule to the lower Rhone, possibly fulfilling a plan made earlier by the first governor, Musa (only attested to in later stories), of being in a position to attack the Byzantines in Italy from the NW with the ultimate aim of heading for Constantinople.

721

BRITAIN

King Ine of Wessex executes the rebel 'atheling' Cynewulf and exiles another plotter, Ealdberht. Presumably the death of his brother and heir Ingeld has led to plotting for the succession, aided by a reaction to his centralising policies which have seen the replacement of 'sub-kings' in the kingdom's counties by more controllable (non-hereditary?) governors, the 'ealdormen', since c. 690.

IRELAND

Alliance between the recent foes kings Murchad mac Bran Mut of Leinster and Cathal mac Finguin of Munster to attack Brega, the heartland of the Southern Ui Niall, in Western Midhe; after this war the 'High King' and head of the Ui Niall, Fergal, wins over Munster and with them neutralised attacks Leinster. The overwhelmed Murchad is forced to pay the historic but resented 'cattle tribute' to Midhe, symbol of Leinster's submissive role to the Ui Niall.

FRANCIA

13 February. Death of Chilperic, puppet-king of the Franks, aged at most around forty, at the royal estate of Attigny; 'Mayor of the Palace' Charles chooses an obscure Merovingian prince, Theuderic (IV) who may be the son of Dagobert III and in that case is probably aged around eight to ten, as king.

ITALY

Pope Gregory leads resistance to heavy new Byzantine taxes.

Approximate date of Liutprand the Lombard securing control of Corsica by expelling seaborne Arab invaders; he subsequently gains Sardinia too.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

Al-Samh returns to Cordoba from Septimania over the winter to collect reinforcements; he then attacks NW from Narbonne, the new Moslem headquarters of conquered Septimania, on Aquitaine; duke Eudes fortifies Toulouse and retires Northwards to collect reinforcements; his men withstand a siege but after several months are running out of food. Eudes returns in time to save the city, and co-ordinates an attack on the besiegers with a sally by the besieged.

9 June. Battle of Toulouse: the Franks under Eudes defeat the Moslems heavily and kill their commander, governor Al-Samh; his officer (Abu Said) Abd-ar-Rahman ibn Abdullah, later governor, leads the retreat back to Narbonne. After this the regular Moslem raids move Eastwards away from Aquitaine to ex-Visigothic Septimania.

Anbasa ibn Suhaym is appointed by the Caliph as the new governor of Al-Andalus.

722 FRANCIA

Approximate date of St Boniface's return to Germany from Frisia to start the main work of evangelization of the pagans; the climax of this, probably dateable within the next year or two, is his chopping down the sacred oak of Thor/Woden/'Jove' at an unlocated pagan ritual centre in Hesse, probably near Fritzlar.

29 September. Death of archbishop (St) Liutwin/Leodwin of Trier, aged probably in his early sixties, leading cleric of the Rhineland and Austrasia; succeeded by his son Milo, archbishop of Rheims and chief clerical supporter of Charles 'Martel'.

SPAIN

Second possible date for the battle of Covadonga and successful resistance of the kingdom of the Asturias under Pelayo (see 718), if this was sparked off by the defeat of the Moslems at Toulouse in 721.

BRITAIN

Defeat of king Ine of Wessex by the kingdom of Dumninia (Cornwall) on the river Tamar, probably marking the end of his attempt to conquer Eastern Cornwall. At around this time his vassal ally Nunna/Nothelm of Sussex dies, and subsequent events imply a backlash against him in Sussex leading to aid to Wessex rebels. The plotting 'atheling' Ealdberht mounts another attack on Wessex, possibly in association with the triumphant Cornish, and ends up besieged in Taunton by Ine's wife queen Aethelburh. Presumably the king is either preoccupied elsewhere or ill; Aethelburh burns Taunton and the rebel escapes to Sussex where he is able to hold out for a three-year civil war.

At this time Athelstan seems to be the ?pro-Ine 'loyalist' king of Sussex from the coinage; his attitude to the rebels is unclear.

?Death of king Beli mac Elphin of Strathclyde; possibly succeeded by his son Teudubur, the next known king of this realm.

IRELAND

11 December. Battle of Allen: 'High King' Fergal, head of the 'Ui Chernaig' sub-dynasty of the Ui Niall, is killed in battle by king Murchad mac Bran Mut of Leinster, head of the 'Ui Dunlainge' sub-dynasty, and his son Dunchad (aided by Aed Allan of the 'Ui Cennsalaig' sub-dynasty) while invading Leinster. Also killed are his brother and other Ui Niall princes such as Suibne mac Congalaig of the 'Ui Conaing'; he is succeeded by his rival Fogartach of Brega as 'High King'. Cinaed mac Irgalach, son of the late king Irgalach of Brega (d. 702) is either already co-ruler of the 'Ui Conaing' and king of Cnogba/Knowth with his uncle Suibne from the time of his other uncle Amalgaid's death in 718, or now succeeds him.

723 BRITAIN

Abdication to become a monk of king Selbach of Dalriada; he is succeeded by his son Dungal. Possibly his superseded late brother Muiredach, who succeeds to their ancestral sub-kingdom of Loarn some time in the early-mid 720s, is 'bought off'.

724 CALIPHATE

Death of Caliph Yazid II; succeeded by brother Hisham.

SPAIN

Possible date for governor Anbasa doubling taxes on Christians and confiscating Jewish property, if this was done by him in response to similar legal restrictions on these faiths by the new Caliph in the East as a way of showing his loyalty after the death of his main patron. This is also the probable year of a successful revolt by the Aragonese in the upper Ebro valley, following successful Basque defiance of the Moslems in the aftermath of the battles of Covadonga and Toulouse.

?Governor Anbasa restores his military position in the lower Ebro region, then crosses the Pyrenees to secure the province of Septimania by conquering Carcassonne. He may go on Eastwards towards the Rhone (more likely in 725).

ITALY

Duke Faroald of Spoleto is deposed and put in a monastery by his ambitious son Thrasimund (II).

ITALY/FRANCIA

The Pope sends a Frankish missionary, (St) Corbinian, to resume the interrupted evangelization of Bavaria; he is received by duke Grimoald and sets up his headquarters in a new monastery at Freising, but his denunciations of Grimoald's marriage to his brother's widow Biltrud leads to the latter planning to murder him; he has to flee Bavaria within a year.

BRITAIN

King Nechtan mac Derile of the Picts abdicates after an eighteen-year reign, voluntarily or not, and is succeeded by an obscure dynast called Drust.

IRELAND

Battle of 'Cenn Dialgden': 'High King' Fogartach (his title is not recognised by all annalists), head of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine', is defeated and killed by his dynastic rival, Cinaed 'Caech' ('the One-Eyed') mac Irgalaig, son of Fogartach's father Niall's killer in 701, of the 'Ui Conaing' of Brega (acceded 718/722), who now succeeds to the 'High Kingship'.

725

FRANCIA

Charles 'Martel' invades and subdues Bavaria, and kills duke Grimoald in battle; he carries off the latter's 'incestuous' wife Biltrud as a prisoner; Grimoald's late brother Theudebert's son Hugbert is made duke, and decides to resume Catholic evangelization; he recalls the exiled missionary St Corbinian who resumes his work at Freising.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

Moslem governor Anbasa secures the lower Rhone including Nimes which surrenders and has prominent citizens deported to Spain as hostages (or late 724?); he launches a raid across the Southern Auvergne to Autun which is sacked, but dies naturally during the course of this expedition which is abandoned.

BRITAIN

End of the rebellion against Ine in Sussex and death or exile of the rebel leader Ealdbert.

Death of king Wihtrud of Kent after a thirty-four/five-year reign; succeeded jointly by his three sons Eadberht, Aethelbert and Ealdbert; it is not clear if all three reigned concurrently long-term as their coinage and charters are chronologically disjointed.

726

BYZANTIUM

Eruption of submarine volcano on Thera in Aegean Sea; Leo apparently maintains that it illustrates divine wrath at worship of icons as idolatry and that it violates Ten Commandments to honour 'graven images'; he orders picture of Christ over the Palace gateway ('Chalke') removed, but soldiers carrying out orders are lynched by mob; work completed, leading rioters mutilated, and Leo issues edict banning worship of saints; Patriarch Germanus does not react.

ITALY

Pope Gregory rejects imperial order to stop veneration of icons.

SPAIN

January. (late ?725 appointment, arrives in Spain in early 726) Uddra ibn Abdullah al-Salama is appointed as the new governor of Al-Andalus by the Caliph; he is in office for a few months.

March. Yahya ibn Salama, from the Arab peninsula tribe of the Al-Khalbi, becomes the governor of Al-Andalus as the Caliph's nominee; a two/three-year term of office. He is more conciliatory to his subjects.

BRITAIN

King Ine of Wessex abdicates to journey to Rome after a thirty-eight-year reign, the longest in West Saxon history – presumably he is aged around sixty at the youngest. His wife Aethelburh's brother Aethelheard fights an obscure 'atheling' called Oswald for the succession and wins with Mercian military backing from king Aethelbald – his wife Frithugyth appears to be Mercian and may be related to the royal house of the (by now defunct?) sub-kingdom of Surrey. Probably Aethelheard becomes a Mercian vassal.

King Dungal mac Selbach of Dalriada, possibly less feared than his father and so less secure as a ruler from the 'usurping' junior royal line of Loarn, is overthrown by his rival Eochaid mac Echdach, of uncertain origin.

King Drust of the Picts is overthrown by his predecessor Nechtan mac Derile, who regains the throne; both are later challenged by a rival, Oengus/Angus, either now or in the next clash in 728.

726/7

ITALY

With the 'Exarchate' disrupted and leaderless after exarch Exhilaris' lynching in an anti-iconoclast riot in Ravenna, king Liutprand the Lombard invades South of the Po and takes Bologna, Rimini and all of 'Aemilia' to secure the surroundings of Ravenna; he then takes Ancona

to the South and the capital's port of Classis, defeating the new 'Exarch' Paul.

'Exarch' Paul, pro-iconoclast new 'strongman' for Emperor Leo and hostile to the resisting Papacy, is murdered in a revolt by soldiers at Ravenna, apparently with Pope Gregory's support; the eunuch Eutychius is appointed 'Exarch', and sails to Naples where he unsuccessfully tries to order the citizens to help him by killing the Pope.

Liutprand the Lombard invades central Italy and heads for Naples, and Eutychius meets him and offers to help him secure and then recognise the subjection of the autonomous duchies of Spoleto and Benevento if he will help the Empire overthrow the Pope; Liutprand agrees, and subsequently defeats and expels duke Thrasimund of Spoleto and the duke of Benevento.

BRITAIN

Ex-king Selbach of Dalriada leaves his monastery in a failed bid to overthrow his son Dungal's replacement, usurper Eochaid mac Echdach, but is defeated.

IRELAND

Battle of Druim Fornoct between the two rivals to lead the Northern U Niall, Flaithbertach mac Loingseg of the 'Cenel Conaill' (Tir Connaill) and Aed Allan mac Fergal, king of Ailech and head of the 'Cenel nEoghan'; their conflict is mainly over the plain of Mag Itha, in the Finn valley in Co. Donegal, which Flaithbertach covets to connect two of his territories. The war will go on sporadically into the mid-730s.

728

ITALY

Meeting and treaty at Sutri between Lombard king Liutprand and Pope Gregory II, presumably after Liutprand gains control of nearby Spoleto (?and Benevento); Liutprand hands over Sutri and other towns in Latium to the Pope to extend the 'Papal State', securing his Southern flank in Umbria.

SPAIN

June. The governor of 'Ifqriqiya' in Qairouan sacks governor Yahya of Al-Andalus and installs a replacement from the Arabian Peninsula Al-Qays tribe (Hudeitha ibn al-Ahwas), who also have officers and men now settled in Spain; his people are rivals of Yahya's Al-Kalbi tribe so this implies their rivalry being fought out politically in Qairouan and Spain and probably the Al-Qays commanders in Spain denouncing Yahya to his superiors.

BRITAIN

Death of ex-king Ine of Wessex in Rome as a pilgrim.

Ex-king Drust of the Picts overthrows and imprisons his rival, Nechtan mac Derile, but then has to fight his own challenger Oengus/Angus mac Fergus.

IRELAND

Battle of Druim Corcain: 'High King' Cinaed mac Indretach, head of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' of Midhe/Brega (and from their 'Ui Chonaing' branch); is defeated and killed by his rival, Flaithbertach mac Indreatach of the 'Cenel Conaill' of Tir Connail in NW Ulster; he succeeds as 'High King' but is challenged in his own region of Ulster by Aed Allan, head of the rival Northern Ui Niall 'Cenel nEoghan' and king of Ailech.

SPAIN

?*December*. Uthman ibn Abi Nisa replaces Hudeitha as governor of Andalus.

729

ITALY

'Exarch' Eutychius and Liutprand ally to restore order in Italy in a joint campaign; they arrive outside Rome threatening a siege but Gregory persuades Liutprand not to attack and to present royal insignia to St Peter's; Eutychius enters Rome and Gregory negotiates new agreement with him. Liutprand confirms imperial control of Ravenna, which is at his mercy.

Eutychius aids Liutprand to reassert authority over duchies of Spoleto and Benevento.

SPAIN

April. Al-Haytham ibn Al-Ubayd becomes governor of Al-Andalus; one year in office.

BRITAIN

Death of king Osric of Northumbria after an eleven-year reign, aged around thirty if he is the younger son of Aldfrith but older if he is the son of Alchfrith; he is the last of the direct line of the dynasty. Election of his successor Ceolwulf, the younger brother of king Coenred (ruled 716–18) and according to the approving Bede devout and virtuous, who probably gives away too much of the king's lands to the Church and so alienates nobles denied land-grants.

24 April, Easter. Death at Iona of the aged Anglo-Saxon missionary leader St Egbert, probably a Northumbrian, who as a long-term ‘pilgrim’ has been travelling around Britain and Western Europe for decades and has been based since the ?660s at the abbey of ‘Rathmelsigi’ (?Mellifont) in Ireland; he is most notable on the Continent for his inspiration of the Anglo-Saxon evangelization of the Frisians by Willibrod and in Britain for his persuading the Dalriadans, the monastery of Iona, and probably the Picts to convert from the ‘Celtic rite’ practices (e.g. when to celebrate Easter) to the ‘Roman rite’, finishing the work begun at the Synod of Whitby in 664.

King Drust of the Picts is overthrown by his rival Oengus/Angus, who restores stability to the kingdom and rules until 750.

730 BYZANTIUM

January. Leo holds a combined lay and Church Council of sympathisers to condemn iconoclasm; Patriarch Germanus refuses to attend as a full Church Council needed, and 17 *January* persuaded to abdicate; succeeded by his deputy, ‘Syncellus’ Anastasius.

Depictions of religious persons, including Christ, banned but cross permitted.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

February. Muhammad ibn Al-Ashja’i becomes governor of Al-Andalus; replaced about a month later by the Caliph’s nominee, the veteran general Abd-Ar-Rahman Ibn Abdullah al-Ghafiqi.

The governor of Catalonia, Uthman ibn Naisa (aka ‘Munuza’, possibly the same man as the governor of Leon defeated by Pelayo of the Asturias in the late 710s/early 720s), is a Berber by descent and is alarmed at reports of the oppression of local Berber Moslems by ‘incomer’ Arabs in North Africa; he apparently fears the same fate himself, logically by Abd-ar-Rahman as the new Caliphal ‘strongman’, and forms an alliance with his Christian neighbour, duke Eudes of Aquitaine, whose daughter he marries.

FRANCIA

8 September. Death of the missionary leader and abbot St Corbinian of Freising in Bavaria; he is succeeded in his work and at that monastery by his brother Erembert.

BRITAIN

Death of ‘atheling’ Oswald of Wessex, former challenger in 726 to the successful candidate, Aethelheard – possibly still resisting him and his Mercian patrons.

Death of ex-king Selbach of Dalriada (abdicated 723).

731

ITALY

11 February. Death of Pope Gregory II; *18 March* Gregory III, Syrian, elected.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

The rebel Berber governor of Catalonia, Uthman ('Munuza'), is defeated in battle and besieged in the fortress town of Cerdanya by the new governor of Al-Andalus Abd-ar-Rahman; he is either killed there or manages to escape but kills himself in hiding to evade capture; meanwhile his ally duke Eudes is attacked by Charles Martel for apparent secessionist intentions. Charles ravages Northern Aquitaine twice, and sacks Eudes' headquarters at Bourges; the losses that Eudes suffers weakens him ahead of the immanent Moslem attack from Abd-ar-Rahman in Spain. Some Frankish sources claim Eudes even allied with Abd-ar-Rahman in 731–2, but this may be pro-Charles propaganda.

BRITAIN

Death of archbishop Beorhtwald of Canterbury after a thirty-eight-year episcopate; succeeded by Tatwine, a monk from the Mercian monastery of Breedon-on-the-Hill and thus probably an election under the influence of his king Aethelbald as overlord of Kent.

A short-lived coup in Northumbria sees king Ceolwulf being kidnapped by dissident nobles, tonsured as a priest, and imprisoned in a monastery; it is not known if anyone replaces him briefly as king or if there is a failure to agree on his successor. Probably the arrested king is accused of undue partiality for the Church in his grants of estates. Later Ceolwulf is restored, but the expulsion of bishop Acca of Hexham is not reversed.

ITALY

November. Pope Gregory's synod condemns iconoclasm and excommunicates iconoclasts; breach with Constantinople.

732

FRANCIA/SPAIN

(The mid-C8th Christian Spanish 'Chronicle of 754' dates this to the third year of Abd-ar-Rahman's governorship, i.e. 733, but the Frankish sources all date it to 732.)

Abd-ar-Rahman invades Aquitaine with (C9th Moslem sources) around 50,000 men, probably a mixture of a defensive move to protect Septimania (punishing duke Eudes for aiding Uthman/'Munuza' of Catalonia) and offensive (an exploration of how far his armies can reach and 'jihad' to loot Christian cities and shrines). He attacks Bordeaux, and catches

Eudes' smaller army outside the city where he defeats it comprehensively – probably a victory by his skilled and much larger cavalry as in the later legends, with the Frankish cavalry less well-armed or disciplined and quickly broken up to enable Abd-ar-Rahman to crush the unprotected infantry.

He sacks Bordeaux as Eudes flees North, and pursues him as far as Poitiers where the Moslems sack and loot the shrine of St Hilary. Eudes calls in his unwelcome overlord Charles 'Martel' to help him; the two armies link up somewhere near Tours before the Moslems arrive. Eudes is forced to accept Charles definitively as his overlord.

(Traditional date, from the mid-C8th Christian Spanish 'Chronicle of 754') *Saturday 15 October*. Somewhere near Tours, probably at the town of 'Moussais La Bataille': battle known alternatively as 'Tours' or 'Poitiers' by the Christians, and as 'Balat ash-Shuhada', 'Battle of the Palace of Martyrs', by the Moslems. Charles takes up position on a hilly ridge with forests to either side, to prevent the enemy seeing how large his army is, and with trees and scrub to prevent an easy massed cavalry attack according to the 'Chronicle of 754'. The armies are more evenly matched than in legend: probably less than 50,000 Moslems, though some sources say 80,000/around 15–20,000 Franks including Burgundian, Swabian, Austrasian, and Lombard troops plus Eudes' Aquitaine levies. They end a wary confrontation between their camps of a week, during which the Moslems are joined by absent detachments. Presumably the Moslems attack. They are probably mainly Arab and Berber cavalry, given their earlier speed of movement; the Franks are mainly or entirely infantry and rely on the 'shield wall' which the enemy cannot breach. Abd-ar-Rahman is killed, and the Franks chase the Moslems back to their camp at dusk but then halt for the night.

Next morning, they find the enemy camp empty; the Moslems retreat swiftly and unmolested to Septimania. The battle is known to Bede in Northumbria within a year or two as decisive and so is clearly seen as such in retrospect, but this may be due to Arab caution after it inhibiting major raids Northwards rather than to the severity of their losses or the effect on morale. The border between the two faiths is not immediately altered, but the victory is a major boost for the Franks and for Charles in terms of propaganda and being able to create a sense of 'mission' (and unity) thereafter. The battle is later supposed to have been the occasion of Charles assuming the nickname 'Martel' ('Hammer') in imitation of the Old Testament hero Judas Maccabeus.

At the time of the Moslem war, Charles is prevailed upon to arrest and exile the bishop of Orleans, (St) Eucherius, who is banished to Cologne after complaints from the local elite and put in the custody of loyal official Chrodoberhts. This may have political implications if Eucherius is seen as a potential enemy of Charles (i.e. ally of duke Eudes?).

IRELAND

Death in battle of 'High King' Flaithbertach of the 'Cenel Connail's' cousin Flann Gohan mac Conaing in renewed war with their rival, Aed Allan of the 'Cenel nEoghan', over the plain of Mag nItha in Co. Donegal.

SPAIN

Late. Abd-al-Malik Ibn Qatan al-Fihri, from a wealthy expatriate Arab family in North Africa, is appointed from Qairouan as the new governor of Al-Andalus, but lacks military experience so on his arrival he is mocked by assorted veteran officers.

733 ITALY/FRANCIA

Second visit of St Boniface to Rome; he is made archbishop of Germany to lead its evangelization and returns there to organise mass-baptisms.

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Manes, 'strategus' of Cibyrrhaeots, leads fleet to Italy to intimidate Papacy but his ships are wrecked in Adriatic and campaign abandoned.

BRITAIN

Aethelbald of Mercia invades his client-king Aethelheard of Wessex's Western territories and takes Somerton in Somerset, probably rounding off his advance of his frontier South through the Wiltshire Avon valley. By now he controls Bath.

Muiredach, son of the late (deposed) king Ainbcellach of Dalriada from the Loarn/Lorne branch, replaces Eochaid mac Echdach as king.

SPAIN

?Expedition by the extortionate new, civilian governor of Al-Andalus, Abd-Al-Malik ibn Qitan, to the upper Ebro valley to show his military capability; he besieges rebel Pamplona and then goes on to attack the Basques in the Pyrenees but is severely harassed in ambushes.

c.733 BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Leo confiscates Papal estates in Southern Italy and Sicily to punish Gregory III for not supporting iconoclasm.

BRITAIN

Challenge to king Muiredach of Dalriada by a prince of the main royal line, Alpin the brother of the late king Eochaid mac Echdach, who either splits the kingdom or else replaces him some time between now and 736. Given that he has already ruled briefly as king of the Picts in 726, he probably has a Pictish mother and some Pictish support.

(or 734) Ecgbert succeeds Wilfrid (II) as bishop of York.

734

ITALY

Liutprand the Lombard takes Ravenna by a surprise attack; either during or after the siege he falls seriously ill, and his senior nobles elect his nephew ‘duke’ Hildeprand as the next king; Liutprand recovers and has to accept his nephew as co-ruler.

SPAIN

(Or 736/7) Uqba ibn Al-Hajjaj is appointed by the new governor of North Africa based at Qairouan, Ubaid Allah, as governor of Al-Andalus; his lineage and experience imply that he is a ‘military’ man more acceptable to the restless Arab officers of the army in Spain than his predecessor. He denounces his predecessor as civil governor (‘wali’), Abd-al-Malik ibn Qitan, for extortionate tax-collections, arrests and despoils him, and conspicuously restores limited taxation and just rule, allowing the Christians and Jews to live by their own traditional laws – probably a move to ward off unrest after the losses of 732 in Aquitaine. This is followed by a series of agreements between Uqba’s governor of Narbonne, Yusuf ibn Abd-Ar-Rahman, and Christian ex-Visigothic towns in Eastern/central Septimania for Arab protection of them against the Franks – showing there was no distinct ‘Christian vs Moslem’ confrontation and many ex-Visigoth subjects preferred Arab to Frankish rule, as the citizens of Narbonne were to do in 737.

BRITAIN

July. Death of archbishop Tatwine of Canterbury.

IRELAND

After another defeat of his (Ulster Ui Niall) ‘Cenel Conaill’ forces by Aed Allan of the rival ‘Cenel nEoghan’ of Ailech, in 733, the second in two years, and the death of his cousin Conaing mac Congal there, ‘High King’ Flaithberach takes the field against Aed Allan; he calls in the fleet of Dal Riata from Eastern Ulster to launch a naval attack on his foe’s lands. Less reliable sources say that Aed Allan is assisted by the local Ulster foes

of the Dalriatans, the 'Ulaid' of Dal Fiatach led by Aed Roin mac Becce Bairrche (acceded 708). The Dalriatan fleet is defeated in the River Bann, but Flaithbertach wins a land battle over ?Aed Allan with the aid of a Dalriada contingent from Argyll.

The campaign cannot be that successful, as Aed Allan holds out and soon afterwards Flaithbertach abdicates to enter the monastery at Armagh, possibly driven to resign by his rivals (he lives until 765); Aed Allan succeeds as 'High King'.

735

BYZANTIUM

'Exarch' Eutychius reconquers Ravenna with the support of Pope Gregory III and of 'duke' Ursus/Orso of Venetia, ruler of the emerging lagoon town of Venice, who loans him his fleet; Liutprand has to accept the loss of Ravenna and turns his attention to helping his Frankish ally Charles 'Martel' against the Arabs, who he has already fought in Corsica in the early 720s, in Septimania; the Pope sends an anti-iconoclast embassy to Leo.

?Leo transfers Papal authority over Greece and Balkan peninsula, and Byzantine Southern Italy, to Patriarchate of Constantinople to punish Pope.

FRANCIA

Probable date of the death of duke Eudes of Aquitaine, unwilling vassal of Charles 'Martel' and the Franks since 732; his nobles proclaim his son Hunold as duke without waiting for or seeking approval from Charles and the latter has to accept this sooner than face a potential revolt with Yusuf ibn Abd-ar-Rahman of Septimania poised to attack North again or turn East on Provence. Probably the danger of an 'axis' between Aquitaine and the restive duke or 'patrician' Maurontus of Provence (based in Marseilles) against domination by their Francian overlord, with Moslem help, is already apparent, and the advance of Moslem troops from Narbonne under governor Yusuf to sack and garrison Arles by agreement with Marontus, allied to new Moslem raids up the Rhone valley towards Lyons, may belong to this year. (Alternatively this may be in 736.)

BRITAIN

The Pope raises the see of York to the rank of archbishopric, thus dividing Britain into two ecclesiastical 'provinces'; Egbert is the first archbishop, possibly from the royal line of founding king Ida given the later dynastic claims of his brother Eadbert as the next king in 737.

25 May. Death of the ‘Venerable’ Bede, historian and author of ‘The Ecclesiastical History of Britain’, at his monastery of Jarrow; aged around sixty-two.

Nothelm is appointed as archbishop of Canterbury – from his name, probably from Kent or Sussex.

IRELAND

Dispute between the new ‘High King’ Aed Allan and his former allies of the ‘Dal Faitach’ under Aed Roin; the subsequent battle of Faughart in County Lowth is won by Aed Allan and Aed Roin is killed.

736 FRANCIA/SPAIN

(or 735) Maurontus of Provence allies with the Moslem governor Yusuf of Septimania and the latter sends troops to garrison Arles and ?Avignon, with the latter resisting and being stormed; thus Yusuf secures control of the lower Rhone. Charles ‘Martel’ prepares to attack this new threat and calls on the Lombards for help from Italy.

BRITAIN

A charter issued in Hwicce makes the first reference to its over-king Aethelbald of Mercia as ‘king of the South Angles’ (i.e. those South of the Humber) and as ‘king of Britain’.

King Muiredach of Dalriada is defeated at the battle of ‘Cnoc Caipre’ by his challenger, Talorcan the Pict, and expelled from his kingdom; Irish annals say he died in exile as late as 771 or 776. An elusive ‘Eogan’, of uncertain lineage, assumes the kingship but either fights the half-Pictish Alpin over power or is Oengus’ ally and nominee as his vassal as some accounts make Oengus ruler from 736.

FRANCIA

Death without heirs of duke Hugbert of Bavaria, who has had to use Merovingian coinage so he is presumably less autonomous than his predecessors; he is succeeded by Odilo, count of Thurgau, as vassal ruler to ‘Mayor’ Charles ‘Martel’ and his king. Odilo also backs St Boniface and the Catholic evangelization of the duchy led by St Boniface as archbishop of Mainz – which implies control by this Frankish see of the duchy’s Church and probably sparks off resentment.

Charles ‘Martel’ attacks rebel Aquitaine, sacks Bordeaux, and forces rebel duke Hunald into flight across Gascony; he subsequently agrees to Hunald continuing as duke once the latter does homage.

737

ITALY/FRANCIA

(or 736) Liutprand leads a military expedition to Septimania to link up with Charles 'Martel' in reconquering Arles from the Arabs under Yusuf. Charles attacks and storms Arles, and his brother and deputy Childebrand besieges Avignon until Charles can arrive to help; Avignon is stormed and its walls razed. Then Charles moves West to retake Nîmes, which resists and is sacked and levelled (indicating that he thinks the local Visigoths untrustworthy), Montpellier, Beziers and other towns; he besieges the capital of Septimania, Narbonne.

Governor Yusuf of Al-Andalus sends a relief army to rescue Narbonne by sea; it lands successfully but is routed as the Franks attack it at the battle of the (mouth of the) River Berre near Narbonne. The siege ends in stalemate, but the Moslems have lost all their inland towns and only hold part of the Septimanian coast.

Rebel duke Maurontus of Provence, who called Yusuf in in 736, flees to Marseilles and calls on Yusuf to send aid; he is besieged there by Childebrand, and the Lombards arrive to help the Franks on which news Yusuf's relief-army turns round and retreats to Narbonne. Maurontus abandons Marseilles and flees into the Alps; the Franks now control Provence and the Eastern and central parts of Septimania.

St Boniface's third visit to Rome; he is made Papal legate for Germany and returns to resume evangelization and create and bestow new bishoprics.

Death of the Frankish puppet-king Theuderic IV; Charles leaves the throne vacant.

SPAIN

Death of Pelayo (Pelagius), first king of Asturias and successful defier of the Moslem conquest in the Cantabrian mountains, after a reign of around twenty years; succeeded by his son Favila.

BRITAIN

Queen Frithugyth of Wessex goes on pilgrimage to Rome, presumably on behalf of her husband Aethelheard as he cannot spare the time to do so without the risk of being overthrown.

King Ceolwulf of Northumbria abdicates for a second time, this time voluntarily, and is tonsured as a monk at the monastery of Lindisfarne; he is succeeded by Eadberht, brother of archbishop Ecgbert and so presumably the Church candidate, who is a far more effective war-leader.

IRELAND

‘Summit’ between ‘High King’ Aed Allan of the Cenel nEoghan, head of the Northern Ui Niall and currently dominant king of the Northern Irish, and his Southern Irish counterpart, king Cathal mac Finguin of Munster, at Terryglass near the frontier; whether Cathal accepts the primacy of his Northern counterpart is disputed. Both kings accept the primacy of the ‘law of Patrick’ under Church backing, i.e. the application of the ‘central’ ecclesiastical laws of the see of Armagh.

738

FRANCIA

St Boniface and his patron Charles ‘Martel’ create a new system of four bishoprics in the duchy of Bavaria (Regensburg, Salzburg, Passau and Freising); abbot (St) Erembert of Freising, in charge of evangelization in future Austria, becomes bishop of Freising. He is backed by duke Odilo but sparks off autonomist resentment.

The Saxons are defeated by Charles and become tributary to Francia.

Approximate date of the arrest and sacking of the military-minded bishop Ainmar of Auxerre, who has commanded his diocese’s troops in aid of Charles in the 737 Rhone/Provence campaign, for letting the troublesome duke of Aquitaine elude capture after an armed clash with Charles’ troops; he is later ‘killed while attempting to escape’.

ITALY

Liutprand resumes his attack on the Southern Lombard duchies after a revolt by duke Thrasimund (II) of Spoleto; Liutprand invades and he flees to the Pope in Rome; Liutprand seizes Spoleto and then its ally Benevento and installs his nephews as his vassal-rulers.

BRITAIN

Death of co-king Swaebert of Essex, ruler with Saelred since 709; the latter continues to reign.

IRELAND

(Probably before the event below) Death of king Faelan mac Murchado of Leinster, head of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’ sub-dynasty; succeeded by his brother Bran Brecc. One or other of them is attacked by and forced to pay tribute to Munster.

Battle of Ath Senaig (‘Battle of Groans’) between ‘High King’ Aed Allan and Aed mac Colggen, sub-king of Leinster and head of the ‘Ui Cennsalaig’ sub-dynasty, and his ally king Bran ‘Becc’ mac Murchado,

recently acceded as king of Munster and head of the 'Ui Dunlainge' sub-dynasty; Aed mac Colggen may be fully king of Leinster but not if the 'Ui Dunlainge' dynasty have accepted this. The two Leinster commanders are both killed in an Ui Niall victory, and the 'Ui Cennsalaig' losses are severe enough to impede their power within Leinster for the rest of the century as the Ui Dunlainge regain the kingship.

739

ITALY

Liutprand invades the Papal States and occupies the 'Ducate' around Rome, including the city's harbour at Portus; his nephew and heir Hildeprand attacks the Papal lands around Ravenna and then goes on (August) to the 'Pentapolis' around Rimini.

Pope Gregory sends appeal to Charles Martel, 'Mayor of the Palace' and the real ruler of Frankish state, for aid against the Lombards with accusations of atrocities and an intended Lombard takeover of Rome which the Pope's allies should prevent as their religious duty; Charles subsequently sends an embassy to mediate (740?).

SPAIN

Death of Favila, second king of Asturias; succeeded by his sister Ermesinda's husband, Alfonso (I), son of duke Peter of Cantabria, who soon launches the first successful counter-offensive Westwards.

FRANCIA

?Rebellion in Bavaria leads to duke Odilo having to flee to Francia to get military help from Charles 'Martel'; he is restored to power (or 740), having married Charles' daughter by his first wife, Hiltrude, despite the opposition of her full brothers Pepin and Carloman.

BRITAIN

?Alpin, former king of both the Picts and the Dalriadans, is finally expelled from the latter kingdom as or after the Pictish king Oengus/Angus (acceded 729) replaces king Eogan of Dalriada; end of the Dalriadan civil war as Oengus unites the two kingdoms. Possibly Oengus has to end his intended experiment of ruling Dalriada through a proxy, i.e. Eogan, due to a challenge by him or Alpin. This is the first 'union' of the kingdoms of Picts and Scots, probably a personal not institutional one and carried out by Oengus to prevent a military challenge from within unstable Dalriada.

Cuthbert succeeds Nothelm as archbishop of Canterbury.

FRANCIA

7 November. Death of St Willibrod, first bishop of Utrecht and Anglo-Saxon evangeliser of the Frisians, at his Ardennes monastery of Echternach.

An appeal from Pope Gregory arrives for military aid against the Lombards.

c.740 BYZANTIUM

Leo issues definitive revision and modernisation of imperial law-code, the *‘Eclogue’*.

740 FRANCIA

Charles ‘Martel’, his health failing, appoints his elder son Pepin ‘the Short’, aged around twenty-five, as ‘Mayor of the Palace’ of Neustria and Burgundy and his younger son Carloman as ‘Mayor of the Palace’ of Austrasia; Pepin and his uncle Childebrand, Charles’ brother, raise an army to fight the Lombards in N Italy on Pope Gregory’s 739 request.

SPAIN

Conquest of Galicia by king Alfonso of Asturias; effective creation of a viable North Spanish Christian state independent of the Moslem province, with Alfonso rather than his late father-in-law Pelayo possibly the first real ‘king’.

AFRICA

Revolt against the oppressive extortionate and pro-Arab, anti-Berber discriminatory regime of the Ummayyad government in Qairouan (Tunisia), which has been under insecure and harsh ‘new man’ governor Ubaidullah ibn Habhab since 734. It breaks out among the Berbers in Morocco to the West, who are simmering against excessive taxes, pillaging, and slave-raiding; they are also inspired by radical ‘Khawarijite’ Islamic preachers to seek a ‘purer’ and more egalitarian form of Islam centered on their own people. They are initially led by a ‘water-carrier’ Ibn Matghara, and later after his deposition by a chief of the Zenata tribe, Khalid ibn Hamid. The main Arab army in Tunisia under Habib ibn Abi Obeidah is absent invading Sicily as the rebellion breaks out, and Ubaidullah sends his own, less experienced elite Arab cavalry West; they are routed at the ‘Battle of the Nobles’ in December (so-called because so many Arab aristocrats were killed) near Tangier. The army from Sicily returns too late, and can only hold onto Tlemcen in Algeria.

Caliph Hisham raises an elite army from the Arab tribal regiments settled in and around the towns of Syria to march West and defeat the Berbers – mostly of men from the ‘Qays’ tribal confederacy of N Arabia/Syria.

BRITAIN

Death of king Aethelheard of Wessex after a fourteen-year reign, effectively as subordinate ally to Aethelbald of Mercia; he is succeeded by the obscure Cuthred, who historian Simeon of Durham 300 years later claims was his brother and if so is presumably middle-aged.

King Aethelbald of Mercia attacks Northumbria, presumably to destabilise the new king Eadbert, and sacks York but cannot hold it for long and is driven out; this is presumably but not definitely in co-ordination with a rebel pretender, Eanwine the brother of the late usurper king Eadwulf (ruled 704–5), who Eadbert seizes and executes. With no puppet-king to hand, Aethelbald has to give up and go home.

This may precede the Welsh wars of the 740s that Aethelbald launches next and so mark the king’s decision to move West as he has been blocked in the North. The evidence is minimal, but the construction of the defensive ‘Wat’s Dyke’ to protect the Northern part of the Welsh frontier around the 720s–40s suggests that a major conflict with Gwynedd was unable to halt raiding by the latter around this time and that Aethelbald built a defensive ‘dyke’ there and turned on Powys or Dyfed instead.

SPAIN

December. Death of the governor of Al-Andalus, Uqba ibn Al-Hajjaj; his disgraced predecessor Abd-al-Malik is restored by the government in Qairouan. He is a ‘Kalbite’ by tribal origin so at odds with the majority of the Arab army from the ‘Qays’ tribes now intended to reconquer Morocco.

741

BYZANTIUM

18 June. Leo III dies of dropsy, aged around 60; son Constantine succeeds to throne but brother-in-law Artavasdus starts plotting, probably with iconophile support. *Late June* Constantine leaves capital for expedition to repel Arab raiders; Artavasdus attacks imperial camp; Constantine escapes but Artavasdus proclaims his death and wins capital; Constantine is supported by Anatolicon and Thracesion troops and civil war follows.

SPAIN/AFRICA

Late spring/June?? The Arab relief army under its commander Kutlum ibn Iyad sent by Caliph Hisham arrives in Qairouan to save the Ummayyad

province, with Kutlum's hot-headed and confident nephew Balj ibn Bishr Al-Qushayri in command of the light cavalry; most of the army are from the 'Qays' tribes settled in Northern Arabia/Syria like him, and there is tension with the troops in the province of Southern Arabian/Yemeni origin (centred on the 'Kalb' tribal confederation). This undermines their effectiveness as they march West to link up with Habib's retreating army at Tlemcen, and Kutlum allegedly puts the latter under the orders of his own officers for the forthcoming campaign to their fury. They march West into Morocco.

?*October*. Battle of Bagdouras, near the site of Fez; Kutlum's nephew Balj ibn Bishr Al-Qushayri allegedly ignores local veterans' advice to be cautious, and is chiefly responsible as the outnumbered Berbers trick and rout the Umayyad forces; Kutlum is killed amidst heavy losses, and in effect much of Morocco is independent of Qairouan after this. Balj flees North to the Mediterranean with his surviving regiments.

FRANCIA

22 *October*. Death of Charles 'Martel' at his estate at Quierzy-sur-Oise, aged fifty-five; he is succeeded by his sons by his first marriage as 'Mayors of the Palace' under his appointments of 740, Pepin in Austrasia and Carloman in Neustria and Burgundy. His son by his second marriage, to Swanhilde of Bavaria, is Grifo who may have been promised part of the realm but is excluded by his brothers. Grifo subsequently seizes the town of Laon in Artois, but is besieged by his half-brothers in Laon, captured, and taken into custody by Carloman who imprisons him at the monastery of Neufchateau in the Ardennes.

ITALY

29 *December*. Death of Pope Gregory III; 2 *December* Zacharias, Greek, elected Pope.

SPAIN

Late. Balj and his mainly Syrian/N Arabian cavalry troops, dominated by the 'Qays' tribes, set up their base at Ceuta and he requests permission to cross to Al-Andalus from its governor, Abd al-Malik; the latter is from the 'Kalb' tribal confederation and, fearing his ambitions, refuses.

SPAIN

Early spring. Following a Berber troops' revolt in Al-Andalus in support of the Berber revolt in Morocco, Abd-al-Malik relents and allows Balj and his mainly 'Qays' tribal regimental cavalry to cross from Ceuta. They join his army under strict terms of subordination to him for a limited

term of one year and defeat the Berber rebels at Medina Sidonia and near Cordoba, but tension between these incoming ‘Qays’ troops and Abd-al-Malik’s own ‘Kalb’ troops follows; Balj refuses to arrange to return to Africa as the governor demands.

Balj plans a coup, and (March?) has the governor seized and killed, contemptuously crucifying him between a pig and a dog. Balj takes over as governor and the ‘Qays’ officers from his own force and their local fellow-tribesmen dominate his army. However Abd-al-Malik’s sons lead a rebellion by the local troops, especially the ‘Kalbite’ tribal troops from their own connections, and attack Balj in Cordoba.

6 August. Battle of ‘Aqua Portora’ near Cordoba; Balj and the ‘Qays’ troops win, but he is mortally wounded; he nominates his lieutenant Thalama ibn Salama (a Yemeni ‘Kalbite’ by birth so acceptable to the non-‘Qays’ tribal troops, and brought up in Jordan whose regiment in the 741 African relief expedition he commands) to succeed him as governor.

Chaos in Al-Andalus; Thalama’s authority is restricted to the Guadalquivir valley for most of the following months as the rebel Berbers run rampage.

BYZANTIUM

May. Artavasdus is trapped by Constantine and defeated. Constantine advances; September Constantinople besieged.

ITALY

Peace between Liutprand and Pope Zacharias; Liutprand restores the confiscated ‘Ducate’ around Rome to the Papacy.

FRANCIA

Pepin and Carloman invade Aquitaine to force rebel duke Hunald to do the homage that he and his father Eudes did to their father Charles, taking and sacking the town of Loches. In retaliation Hunald probably attacks Chartres, but eventually submits. The brothers then renew the agreed division of their territories at Poitiers. Later Carloman campaigns in Alemannia, whose inhabitants have tried to break away from Francia.

21 April. (or 743) Carloman holds the first Church Council of the German lands, centred on Austrasia but also of the recently-converted Bavarian, Thuringian and Saxon territories, the ‘Concilium Germanic’, presided over by archbishop (St) Boniface of Mainz. Centralised regulations for conduct and administration are imposed.

(742/3) This is the date traditionally given for the birth of Pepin’s elder son by his mistress or ‘common-law’ wife, Bertrada, Charles (aka ‘Charlemagne’) the later Emperor; but the early sources do not give that

specific a date. All that is clear is that he was old enough to act as his father's representative in greeting the Pope in 752, i.e. he was probably five or six at least; possibly Carloman's legitimate son Drogo is the heir at this point.

743 CALIPHATE

Death of Caliph Hisham; succeeded by libertine nephew Walid II, who mainly resides at Syrian desert palaces.

SPAIN

Early spring. Thalama defeats the mutinous Andalusian Berber regiments and other dissidents as he attacks and takes their base at Merida; they besiege him in the town but are too confident and carelessly enable him to storm their camp. He carries off thousands as prisoners of war to be sold as slaves, and this victory ends the main strength of the rebellion. A month or two later (March or May) the nominee of Handhala, the governor of Ifriqiyah at Qairouan, namely Abu al-Qatta al-Husam, arrives with a new army from Africa to supersede him as governor. He is of the same tribal origin as most of the troops in Al-Andalus and so is more acceptable as their leader. Thalama returns to the Caliph, and ends up as governor of Jordan to the last Ummayyad Caliph, Marwan, who he helps to flee after his defeat in the Abbasid revolt in 750.

ITALY

Liutprand besieges Ravenna; with no Byzantine help possible 'Exarch' Euthymus gets Pope Zacharias to *June* visit Pavia and arrange peace.

FRANCIA

Pepin and Carloman attack the duke of Bavaria, Odilo, husband of their sister Hiltrude, who is apparently also claiming independence and may have been linked to their plotting half-brother Grifo to whose mother he is uncle; they presumably come to an agreement renewing his homage. Then Carloman attacks the rebelling Saxons to the NE and takes the fortress of (Hohen) Seeberg in Thuringia. The Saxon leader Theodoric submits.

Pepin and Carloman raise an obscure Merovingian of unclear parentage, Childeric (IV), to the vacant throne – ending the seven-year vacancy and an implication of their needing his 'legitimate' sanction for their family's continued rule.

?Odilo backs the conversion and alignment as a Bavarian duchy of the Slav principality of 'Caretania' in central/Eastern Austria.

BRITAIN

King Aethelbald of Mercia attacks the Welsh (probably Morgannwg/Gwent and Dyfed in the SE or Powys in the central region) and summons his junior ally Cuthred of Wessex to help him.

IRELAND

King Domnhall ‘Midi’ mac Murchada of Uisnech in Co. Westmeath, head of the Western branch of the Ui Niall (the ‘Clann Colman Mor’), defeats and kills his main rival Aed Allan, currently ‘High King’, at ?Seredmag. This may mark the start of his own reign as ‘High King’, and certainly he and his kindred are in the ascendancy among the Ui Niall for the next twenty years. Domnhall apparently retires into monastic life for a few years around 744, then returns to the throne. His apparent deputy in the North from 743, Aed ‘Muinderg’ (‘Red-Necked’) the son of former ‘High King’ Flaithbertach (abdicated 734) and king of the ‘Cenel Conaill’ Northern Ui Niall, is described as ‘King of the North’ in the annals and may stand in for him while he is a monk.

BYZANTIUM

Artavasdus besieged in Constantinople; 2 *November* city surrenders as Constantine launches attack; Artavasdus and sons are blinded and some others imprisoned but no major punishments.

744

ITALY

Death of Lombard king Liutprand, succeeded by his nephew Hildebrand; the latter is deposed a few months later by Ratchis, duke of Friuli, in a possible pro-Papal move against the ‘hard-line’ attitude of Hildebrand to the Pope.

FRANCIA

Carloman campaigns in Saxony again and defeats Theodoric; Pepin campaigns in Alsace.

IRELAND

King Muiredach mac Murchado of Leinster, head of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’ sub-dynasty, secures his dynasty’s mid-century predominance in the kingdom by destroying the army of the rebelling rival sub-kingdom, the ‘Ui Maine’, at the battle of Ailen da Berrach in the district of Cuala (Co. Wicklow); their rulers Cathal and Aillel, grandsons of king Cellach of Munster (d. 715), are killed. His policies have by now brought stability to Leinster, based on a potentially controversial alliance with the Ui Niall of Midhe.

CALIPHATE

April. Caliph Walid II killed in revolt by cousin Yazid (III) who seizes power with Yemeni tribal troops; another cousin, Marwan son of Abd-al-Malik's brother, revolts against Yazid and *October* deposes him; Yazid's brother Ibrahim resists at Damascus but deposed too *November*.

745 FRANCIA

Second successful campaign by Pepin and Carloman against an attempted breakaway by duke Hunald of Aquitaine, which is defeated.

(or 748) Duke Hunald abdicates and retires to a monastery, possibly on the island of Rhe; succeeded by his son Waifer. Hunald subsequently moves to Italy.

(or 746) Carloman announces his intention to withdraw from the world and go to Italy to become a monk; Pepin is to inherit his lands, as he has no son. Possibly this re-arouses Grifo's resentment and leads to him plotting his escape to Eastern Germany where his mother's family have connections.

SPAIN

August. Tuwaba ibn Salama, nominee of the governor at Qairouan, succeeds Abu al-Qatta as governor of al-Andalus.

746 FRANCIA

Carloman assembles the fractious nobility of the Alemanni for a meeting at Cannstadt in the Neckar valley (known subsequently as the 'Blood Court') and orders mass-arrests and executions; the survivors are cowed into obedience. Frankish counts, i.e. the usual local officials for a full part of the kingdom, replace the previous rule by semi-autonomous dukes.

BRITAIN

Violent death of king Saelred of Essex, ruler since 709, but it is not recorded if this was at the hands of his kin or of his overlords in Mercia. He is succeeded by a cousin, Swithred son of Sigmund, as a Mercian vassal; given his name, he is probably descended from 660s king Swithhelm.

SPAIN

October. Abd-al-Rahman ibn Kattir succeeds as the governor of Al-Andalus; the current 'run' of brief appointments has been arranged with the governor of Ifriqiya in Qairouan to satisfy the disparate tribal groups of troops in Spain by rotating governors from different tribal lineages.

747

SPAIN

January. Yusuf Ibn Abd-al-Rahman al-Fihri, the former (mid-730s) governor and from a distinguished Syrian tribal family, returns to al-Andalus as governor. He conducts a major census to determine who pays what taxes, including listing the Christians liable to pay the 'jizya' poll-tax.

FRANCIA

(After 15 August) Carloman abdicates and leaves for Rome as a pilgrim; there he builds a monastery to St Silvester on nearby Mount Soracte and enters it as a monk. Pepin takes over his lands. It is unclear what the arrangement is re: the succession, as Pepin and his son Charles' mother Bertrada are not married yet – and some historians think Charles was born in 747/8 not earlier.

Grifo is released from his monastery and subsequently flees to Saxony to raise rebellion against his half-brother Pepin; he and his Saxon allies take up a position on the River Oder. Pepin leads an army against him and advances, via Thuringia to ensure that region's submissiveness, to the river Meissau near Schoningen. Grifo agrees to a truce and treaty, on unclear terms. Possibly Carloman's son Drogo is 'Mayor of the Palace' for Austrasia at or until this point, and is removed by Pepin and flees into hiding as a rebel (or this is later?).

IRELAND

Death of Aed 'Muinderg' ('Red-Necked'), head of the 'Cenel Connail' Northern branch of the Ui Niall and 'King of the North', deputy to 'High King' Domnhall 'Midi'; he is succeeded by his brother Flaithbertach (d. 754) as lord of the Northern Ui Niall but not in the full kingly title.

CALIPHATE

Ibrahim, descendant of the Prophet's uncle, raises revolt against 'corrupt' Ommayad regime in Persia, claiming mission to purify Islam; principal general is the brilliant Abu Muslim, who defeats existing rebel leader Ibn Muawiya's regime in Fars; however, Ibrahim is soon killed while on pilgrimage, though rebellion continues and Persia lost to Ommayad control.

748

FRANCIA

18 January. Death of duke Odilo of Bavaria; his son Tassilo is underage, which leaves his widow Hiltrude (Pepin's sister) as regent, and his distant relative Grifo decides to seize the duchy for himself and hurries there in secret from Saxony. Grifo captures Hiltrude and Tassilo and is

joined by duke Suidger, but Pepin advances and overcomes the rebels. Tassilo is installed as vassal duke, and Grifo is deported to Francia and given twelve counties in Neustria. He subsequently turns traitor again and flees to duke Waifer of Aquitaine.

BRITAIN

Death – in a mutiny according to much later sources – of the obscure ‘atheling’ (‘throne-worthy’ prince) Cynric of Wessex, clearly related to king Cuthred and his chosen heir. He may be Cuthred’s son; if so the succession is thrown into doubt and this is reflected in the political instability of the next date.

Approximate date of the abdication or removal of Aethelbert II, junior co-king of Kent with his (probably) elder brother Eadberht since 725; he disappears from the Kentish charters, but is to reappear later. Neither king appears to have a son, or if so these were disinherited.

749

ITALY

Ratchis deposed as Lombard ruler by Aistulf, and becomes monk at Monte Cassino.

FRANCIA

Pepin marries Bertrada, mother of his son(s); possibly a move to cut out his unreliable nephew Drogo from the succession, resulting from or leading to Drogo fleeing into hiding.

BRITAIN

Probable date of the death of king Alfwold of East Anglia, after a thirty-six year reign – the long reigns of the last two kings there suggests political stability, as backed up by the kingdom’s prosperity seen in the archaeological record. He is succeeded (according to the coinage as no C8th regional history survives) by Beonna, who from his name does not seem to be a relative and may have Mercian connections – imposed by his overlord Aethelbald of Mercia?

CALIPHATE

Revolt of Ibrahim’s brother Abdul Abbas against Marwan; *August* his general Qahtaba killed at victory on Euphrates, but son Hassan secures Kufa and Abdul Abbas introduced to mosque as rightful heir to the Prophet and *30 October* receives homage as Caliph; his generals fight retreating Marwan in West Mesopotamia, and Abu Muslim commands in Persia.

750

CALIPHATE

25 *January*. Caliph Marwan defeated near Mosul and flees to Egypt; Abbasid forces advance through Syria and takes Damascus; foundation of new caliphal dynasty, called 'Abbasid' after Abdul Abbas' great-grandfather Al-Abbas, the Prophet's uncle.

June. Abbasid commander summons Omayyad relatives resident in Syria and Palestine to a banquet near Jaffa and massacres them to secure the new dynasty; one prince, Abd-al-Rahman, escapes to Spain (and founds dynasty there in 756).

Marwan killed at battle of Busiris near River Nile; Egypt secured.

FRANCIA

Pepin sends bishop Burchard of Wurzburg and the royal chaplain Fulrad to Pope Zacharias to ask if it is correct for a man who does not hold any real power (i.e. the titular Merovingian king, Childeric IV) to be the king rather than the one who really wields authority, i.e. himself. The Pope duly approves of his intention to replace Childeric with himself as king. (Frankish, not Italian, sources only: the 'Continuation of Fredegar' emphasises that the Frankish people formally approved of Pepin sending the mission beforehand so it was fully in accord with tradition.)

BRITAIN

Defeat of the army of the great ruler of both Picts and Scots, Oengus/Angus, by the army of Teudubur of Strathclyde at 'Mucetauc', probably Mugdock; Oengus' brother Talorcan is killed. This disaster presumably secures Strathclyde's independence, and touches off a successful revolt against Oengus in Dalriada, led by Aed 'Finn/Find' ('the Fair'), son of king Eochaid (ruled 726–33). Dalriada breaks away from the Picts. Eadbert of Northumbria subsequently annexes the 'Kyle' in Galloway from Strathclyde, presumably striking before that kingdom can recover its earlier military power or Angus can recover and intervene either.

Apparent attempted revolt by Offa of Northumbria, an alleged son of the late king Aldfrith but if so excluded from consideration as king in 705 or 729, against king Eadbert; this is probably in Bernicia given the outcome. He is defeated by the royal army and flees to sanctuary at the island monastery of Lindisfarne; Eadbert is too wary of annoying the Church by breaking sanctuary to seize him so he has him starved out instead; the rebel's ally, the bishop of Hexham, is imprisoned and the king's brother archbishop Egbert keeps the Church loyal.

751 | ITALY

Summer. Aistulf takes Ravenna; end of the ‘Exarchate’ and Byzantine Northern Italy.

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3 Chronology: AD 751–840

751 FRANCIA/ITALY

The assembly of the Franks, meeting at Soissons according to the ‘Annales Rgeni Fancorum’ in the 790s, deposes Childeric IV, the last of the Merovingians, and raises Pepin to the throne as ‘King of the Franks’, the first of the Carolingian dynasty. Pepin is anointed as king, according to the precedent of Samuel anointing Saul as king of Israel and the Christian Roman/Byzantine coronations, by archbishop (St) Boniface of Mainz, on behalf of Pope Zacharias.

Childeric is tonsured as a monk and sent to a monastery.

ITALY

15 March. Death of Pope Zacharias; first choice of successor, Stephen, sometimes known as ‘II’, dies within days; *26 March* Stephen II, alternatively III, elected Pope and appeals to Franks against Aistulf.

BRITAIN

King Cuthred of Wessex defeats a rebellion by an unknown ‘arrogant ealdorman’. He also fights his probable overlord, Aethelbald of Mercia, at the battle of ‘Beorgford’, probably Burford in the Cotswolds; it is unknown if the two events are connected and Aethelbald is trying to overthrow him. The Mercians have the better of the battle but cannot evict Cuthred or seize new territory; at most his appearance as a witness at the Mercian royal court in charters later suggests that his vassalage was reinforced.

752 BRITAIN

?Death of king Teudubur of Strathclyde, restorer of the kingdom’s power against the Picts; succeeded by a man not recorded as a relative so possibly a usurper, Rhodri.

753 **FRANCIA**

Revolt by the Saxons, and they attack Westwards; Pepin marches to repel them. Bishop Hildegar of Cologne is killed by the Saxons at Iburg near Osnabruck, but Pepin drives the Saxons back to Rehme near Minden. On his return home he is told that his rebel nephew Grifo has been killed in Gascony.

ITALY

October. Pope Stephen leaves Rome with a Frankish escort; *November* he calls on Aistulf at Pavia to demand return of Exarchate to Byzantium as Constantine requested, but no reply so he goes on to France across the Alps. The abbot of Monte Cassino is ordered by his sovereign Aistulf to send his monk Carloman, ex-co-ruler of Francia, to his brother Pepin to persuade him to reject the Papal appeal for help.

754 **FRANCIA**

January. Pope Stephen arrives at St Maurice d'Agaune on the North side of the Alps to be greeted by Abbot Fulrad of St Denis and duke Rothard on behalf of Pepin; he is then welcomed by Pepin's elder son Charles around 100 miles from Paris and escorted to the city.

6 January. Pepin and his court meet the Pope at Ponthiou. The two men hold talks at the royal estate of Quierzy; Carloman arrives to ask Pepin to ignore the Papal requests and leave Italy alone but is rebuffed. The Pope insists that Pepin promise to hand over the Exarchate of Ravenna to him when it is retaken from the Lombards.

Mid-April. Pepin formally swears to restore all the Pope's lost territory.

Pepin is anointed as king by the Pope at St Denis; his wife, Bertrada, and sons, Charles and Carloman, are also anointed, marking the official Papal approval for the creation of the new Frankish dynasty as fully royal in the tradition of the Old Testament kings of Israel; also their 'Chosen People' status is played up as the Pope's and Western Christianity's strongmen. As seen in Rome, this would imply formal rejection of the Papacy's old protector, the now 'heretic' Eastern Emperor.

Pepin sends an embassy to king Aistulf of the Lombards ordering him to stay out of Papal territory or face invasion – the 'quid pro quo' for the Pope in the alliance. Talks go on for months, postponing any campaign to 755, possibly implying Pepin's reluctance to fight.

SPAIN

Conquest of the city of Leon by king Alfonso I of Asturias; this will replace the original capital, Cangas di Onis. The collapse of order in the Moslem province of al-Andalus into feuding between tribal regiments and

local governors plus the Basque advance into the upper Ebro plus the 755 Saragossa revolt aid the limited reconquest.

FRANCIA

5 June. Martyrdom of St Boniface, Anglo-Saxon first archbishop of Mainz, as he resumes his early mission to convert the Frisians; he is attacked and killed near Dokkum as he arrives for an assembly during his mass-conversions, by robbers who think his baggage contains valuable ornaments. He is probably aged around eighty; his body is taken to the local cathedral at Utrecht, and after an attempt by his successor as archbishop of Mainz, Lull, to move it to Mainz it is buried at the abbey of Fulda.

BRITAIN

?Death of long-reigning king Rhodri 'Molwynog' ap Idwal of Gwynedd, who has ruled for around thirty-nine years; succeeded not by his son but by a distant kinsman, Caradog ap Meiriau from the junior principality of 'Rhos' (Clywd valley). His line is allegedly descended from king Cynglas, fl. 550, a cousin of Maelgwyn (d. 547/9), so this may represent a coup by a disaffected sub-province.

?Dumnagual, son of Teudubur, succeeds the non-dynastic (?) Rhodri as king of Strathclyde.

755

FRANCIA/ITALY

Spring. Pepin crosses the Alps into Italy, and is held up by the Lombards at the 'clusae', the valleys around Susa near the Mont St Cenis pass; he secures victory and marches on into the Po valley. He besieges Aistulf in Pavia.

Carloman, Pepin's brother, is left behind sick at Vienne with queen Bertrada as the Frankish army crosses the Alps; he subsequently dies, presumably in his thirties.

Pepin's troops escort the Pope back to Rome; Aistulf opens talks, and a peace-treaty follows which presumably involves his promises to restore all land taken from the Pope. He hands over forty hostages to Pepin. Pepin goes home without waiting to see that Aistulf keeps his word, probably in case of any political trouble after Carloman's death from his family adherents.

SPAIN

Having decided that he will have to leave the Moslem African province of Ifriqiyah (centred on Tunisia) as governor al-Habib is turning on Umayyad exiles to win favour with their Abbasid supplanters in the

East, the refugee Ummayyad prince Abd-al-Rahman sends his Greek freedman Bedr to Spain to sound out the leaders of various expatriate Syrian/Jordanian tribal regiments there (mostly of the North Syrian ‘Qays’ tribal grouping) about their helping him to overthrow the unpopular governor Yusuf ibn Abd-ar-Rahman al-Fihri. The latter’s restive son-in-law and vizier Sumayl, a leading regimental commander now in the NE at Saragossa, is uncooperative and only a few commanders back Abd-al-Rahman so he turns to their Southern Arabian, Yemeni (‘Kalb’ tribal grouping), connected ethnically to Yusuf but hating Sumayl, rivals with more success. The province of al-Andalus is currently riven by a struggle between these two groups and their North African, Berber enemies.

?*September*. Abd-al-Rahman eludes a Berber ambush and sails from Ceuta to near Malaga; tribal commanders Abu Uthman and Ibn Khaled with 300 cavalry join him and he gains substantial local support as a ‘legitimate’ Ummayyad prince who can restore order. Based in Malaga, he wins over the region and Yusuf offers him a marriage-alliance to play for time; (or early 756?) Yusuf and Sumayl have to head North to deal with a military revolt in Saragossa rather than tackle him.

Yusuf defeats the rebels and advances into the Pyrenees to punish a Basque rebellion, but his column of troops is ambushed and savaged and he loses many men – possibly fatally weakening his army for the 756 civil war.

756

ITALY

January. Aistulf besieges Rome in presumed anticipation that Pepin will not bother to return, but is mistaken; at the Pope’s appeal Pepin returns to Italy and besieges Pavia again.

June. Pepin forces Aistulf to submit at Pavia; Ravenna and the ‘Pentapolis’ (Rimini etc.) are given to the Papal state, thus transferring the Byzantine ‘Exarchate’ lands to the Papacy, at which Byzantine envoys protest to Pepin.

SPAIN

March. Abd-al-Rahman and his growing army, dominated by ex-Yemeni troops of the ‘Kalb’ tribal confederation opposed to Sumayl’s ‘Qays’ regiments, enter Seville, capital of the South of al-Andalus, unopposed. Yusuf returns South to deal with him with a larger and better-supplied army, an advantage at a time of drought.

May. Battle of Masara, on the plain by the River Guadalquivir near Cordoba; Yusuf and Sumayl offer Abd-al-Rahman Yusuf’s daughter and the succession but turns this down despite his food running out. Abd-al-Rahman quells trouble among his fickle Yemeni troops and wins the subsequent battle.

Abd-al-Rahman enters Cordoba and becomes emir, aged around twenty-six; Yusuf surrenders but later plans treachery and flees to join a rebel assembly of mutinous troops to attack Seville; its governor defeats him and he flees to Toledo but is captured and killed. Sumayl is murdered too so Abd-al-Rahman is unchallenged in the South. The North, especially around the Ebro, remains defiant under local rebel Arab tribal commanders.

BRITAIN

King Eadbert of Northumbria allies with king Angus of the Picts, who was heavily defeated by Strathclyde in 750, to attack the latter's principal royal fortress, Dumbarton Rock ('Stronghold of the Britons'); they take and loot the fortress and force the new king Dumnagual to submit to a treaty making him a vassal of Northumbria in the latter's greatest triumph in the Forth region since the disaster of 685.

Death of king Cuthred of Wessex, apparently without heirs; the obscure Sigebert, from his name with East Anglian or Francian connections, is elected king. According to C12th historian Henry of Huntingdon he is tyrant.

ITALY

December. Death of Lombard ruler Aistulf, who falls from his horse while hunting; Pope Paul backs his leading 'duke' Desiderius of Tuscany to seize the throne, but ex-king Ratchis (connected by family to his old duchy of Friuli) leaves his monastery at Monte Cassino to try to seize the throne. The Pope backs Desiderius who defeats Ratchis, and the ex-ruler returns to his monastery; Paul crowns Desiderius who promises to return many Lombard-seized towns but does not do so. Paul later (756/7?) persuades the dukes of Spoleto and Benevento to declare independence to weaken the kingdom.

757

ITALY

26 *April.* Death of Pope Stephen II; 29 *May* his brother is elected Pope Paul I, defeating the rival candidate archdeacon Theophylact.

FRANCIA/BYZANTIUM

Arrival of an imperial embassy at the Frankish court to present valuable gifts, including an organ, to Pepin at Compiègne and restore good relations. Duke Tassilo of Bavaria also arrives to swear allegiance as sub-ruler to Pepin and to his sons Charles and Carloman.

SPAIN

Death of king Alfonso I ('the Catholic') of Asturias, at his capital of Cangas de Onís, after an eighteen-year reign; succeeded by his less scrupulous and reputedly tyrannical son Fruela.

BRITAIN

Murder, by his bodyguards at the royal estate of Seckington, of the pre-eminent king in Britain, Aethelbald of Mercia. He has reigned for forty-one years, one of the longest in Anglo-Saxon history, and been called ‘king of the Angles/English’ (the first such) on his coinage; he is presumably aged around sixty to sixty-five and has an unsavoury reputation with the Church for debauchery, rapine, secularisation of ecclesiastical estates and oppression. He has no recorded children and is unmarried. He is succeeded by an obscure usurper, Beornred, whose name suggests no close royal blood if any.

Within weeks Beornred is overthrown by Aethelbald’s first cousin and presumably the senior noble of royal blood (unless others were ignored or liquidated), Offa the son of Thincgfrith and grandson of Eanwulf, a noble from Hwicce (NE Gloucestershire and S Worcestershire) and founder of the Worcs monastery of Bredon. Offa, as ‘the Great’, goes on to add to Mercian power and dominate all of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms until his death in 796, and is as ruthless as Aethelbald; it is unclear at what point he resumes his cousin’s severe attacks on Wales, especially Powys (mid) and Dyfed (SW), but this is logically within a few years of his accession.

Deposition of the apparently tyrannical new king Sigeber of Wessex; succeeded by the more capable but equally obscure Cynewulf, who will reign for thirty-one years. Sigeber is allowed to retain the rule of the county of Hampshire, presumably the basis of his support – suggesting a political compromise among equally-balanced factions, but soon quarrels with and murders its ‘ealdorman’, Cumbra. He is driven out into the Weald in Sussex and killed there later by a herdsman, which was recorded as socially demeaning to him.

The accession of the obscure ‘Osmund’ as sub-king of Sussex, vassal to Mercia, is unclear but apparently pre-760; his predecessor was ‘Athelstan’ but power may have been transferred as early as the 730s. Coinage and charters for both are limited.

758

ITALY

Desiderius the Lombard subjugates the autonomous duchies of Spoleto and Benevento and sends envoys to Empire. He has to put down a revolt in Benevento, and on the way home calls in at Rome to promise Pope Paul that he will return the disputed town of Imola in the ‘Pentapolis’ (Romagna) if Paul writes a letter to king Pepin to accompany a forthcoming Lombard embassy, asking him to return a group of important Lombard hostages. The Pope does so, but sends along a second, secret letter telling Pepin that Desiderius has agreed to help the Byzantines reconquer Ravenna and asking for a Frankish invasion.

Deposition and flight of duke Liutprand of Benevento, main Southern Italian vassal of the Lombard kingdom and foe of the late king Aistulf; he is succeeded by his son Arechis who soon marries Adelberga, daughter of the new king Desiderius. (They are the patrons of the Lombard historian Paul ‘the Deacon’ and commission his work.)

FRANCIA

Pepin attacks and punishes the rebel Saxons, taking Sythen, and forces their leaders to submit as his vassals and swear allegiance.

BRITAIN

Abdication of the militarily successful king Eadbert of Northumbria, its last dynamic and relatively stable leader for decades; he is probably in his late fifties or sixties, has reigned for twenty-one years, and becomes a monk at York where his brother is archbishop. He is succeeded by his son, Oswulf.

759

ITALY

Byzantine embassy to Desiderius the Lombard; alliance agreed.

BRITAIN

27 July. Assassination at Market Weighton of the new king Oswulf of Northumbria, apparently by relatives of the pretender Eanwine who his father executed in 740. This is allegedly the family of a younger son of founding king Ida (d. 559/60?). No king is immediately proclaimed, which suggests a private grudge not a well-organised coup.

5 August. Election of the new king – the obscure Aethelwald ‘Moll’, descended from a prince or noble called ‘Mull’/‘Moll’ who was the brother of an unidentified previous king. His reign is short and unstable.

Death of king Swithred of the East Saxons after a thirteen-year reign; succeeded by his predecessor Saelred’s son Sigeric, presumably as now being of age.

760

ITALY

Constantine sends fleet to Sicily to prepare (abortive) attack on Southern Italy’s Frankish adherents.

FRANCIA

Duke Waifer defies Pepin, apparently involving him retaining or seizing various Church lands to which the king lays claim; Pepin invades

Aquitaine and forces him to send envoys with hostages for the performance of his promises to return the disputed lands.

SPAIN

Approximate date of an armed conflict and subsequent treaty between king Fruela of Asturias and his Eastern neighbours the Basques; this is probably the occasion of the king's marrying the Basque noblewoman Munia, mother of his son Alfonso (II).

BRITAIN

Plague in Northumbria.

Battle of 'Henfford', possibly Hereford, between the Southern Welsh and the new king Offa of Mercia. Only recorded in Welsh sources; the limited record of the crucial Mercian-Welsh wars of this period makes it unclear which side was on the offensive, and when Offa decided to erect his defensive 'Dyke' (or to consolidate earlier ones and give the result his own name). The apparent annexation of the earlier kingdom of 'Magonsaetan' (Herefordshire and S Shropshire) by Mercia some time in the early C8th may mark a need for Mercia to throw its resources into the balance to protect the weaker local kingdom from the resurgent Welsh – or an excuse to that effect. The early C9th 'Pillar of Eliseg' in the vale of Llangollen in Powys marks an earlier monument set up in the mid-C8th by king Eliseg, who 'recovered his inheritance from the English' by fire and the sword, which may mark a recovery by Powys of the Radnorshire area in the 740s–50s to which Offa now responded.

Death of archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury after a twenty-one-year episcopate.

761 FRANCIA

Duke Waifer of Aquitaine violates his promises of 760 and raises his army to cross the Loire and invades Francia, apparently with his vassal Basque mercenaries; his NE border lieutenants, count Chunibert of Bourges and Blandinus of the Auvergne, are sent to march North and reach Chalons; Pepin summons his troops and attacks him, with his elder son Charles taking part in his first campaign. Pepin takes Bourbon, Chantelle, and Clermont, and other fortresses submit to him; he marches as far as Limoges before winter, and holds his Christmas court at Quierzy.

BRITAIN

6–9 *August*. King Aethelwold 'Moll' of Northumbria fights a three-day battle in the Eildon Hills in Lothian against the forces of an unknown pretender, who he defeats. This takes place at the start of his third regnal year, and may mark a revolt in Lothian given the location.

Breguwine becomes archbishop of Canterbury (to 764).

Death of king Angus of the Picts after a thirty-two year reign, and after having also ruled the Dalriadans in 739–50 in a first union of the two kingdoms. He is succeeded by his brother, Bridei/Brude mac Fergus.

762

FRANCIA

Pepin invades Aquitaine again, and takes Bourges and Thouars, i.e. the land West of his previous targets. Waifer's cousin attacks a Frankish force outside Narbonne in a move SE into Frankish-held Eastern Septimania but is driven back.

BRITAIN

King Aethelwold 'Moll' of Northumbria marries Aetheldreda, possibly the mother of his son Aethelred 'Moll' – which in that case enables identification of the latter's approximate age.

Death of king Aethelbert II of Kent, probably last of the main royal line descended from king Aesc (d. 512/22?) and last of three royal brothers. The next king, Sigeric, is probably non-royal by blood and a nominee of the kingdom's aggressive overlord, Offa of Mercia. Given that he witnesses 762 charters in Rochester, he may be only king of Western Kent.

This is followed or accompanied by the election of a second man as king of Kent–Eanmund or Ealhmund, probably the West Saxon prince who was to be father of king Egbert (acc. 802) and if so is the son of Eafa and descended from king Ine (d. 726)'s brother Ingeld. It is unknown if this represents an anti-Mercian faction calling in West Saxon help, or if Offa agreed to it at first – but Offa is soon to attack Eanmund/Ealhmund.

The early 760s are presumably the approximate date of the death of king Beonna of East Anglia, whose coins now end, and the accession of his successor Aethelred – from his name, no close kin. But this is only logic not definitive.

763

FRANCIA

Waifer offers to hold Bourges and its region as a Frankish vassal and pay tribute for them, but is rebuffed. Pepin's third attack on Aquitaine is held up as his nephew Tassilo of Bavaria, arriving with his contingent for the campaign, quarrels with him and goes home without permission. Later Pepin marches South to Cahors and the Garonne valley.

SPAIN

Caliph Al-Mansur sends his general Abu Ala ibn Mugith with an army to invade Spain and remove the Umayyads; the invaders probably land

near Beja, and Abd-al-Rahman blocks their advance at Carmona where he is besieged for several months. He mounts a surprise sally and routs the attackers; Abu Ala and other leading Abbasid officers are killed, and their pickled heads are sent to the Caliph as a gesture of defiance. After this the reduction of outlying regions in al-Andalus commences.

BRITAIN

Death of the new Pictish king Bridei/Brude mac Fergus, after a two-year reign; succeeded by a rival dynast, Cinioch mac Feredach of the sub-kingdom of Loarn (Lorne) who once held the main Pictish throne briefly but are usually excluded. This may represent a bid for power by this region after the military reverses suffered by Brude's brother king Angus in the early 750s.

IRELAND

26 November. Death of 'High King' Domnall 'Midi'; succeeded by Niall 'Frossach' ('the Showery'), son of the late 'High King' Aed Allan (k. 743), who has ruled as king of Ailech and head of the Northern, 'Cenel nEoghan' branch of the Ui Niall since 743.

764

FRANCIA

Pepin holds an assembly at Worms on the middle Rhien and does not attack Aquitaine, dealing with and probably negotiating with Tassilo instead to keep him and Waifer from co-operating.

BRITAIN

Famine in Northumbria after a severe winter.

Offa witnesses charters in Canterbury, capital of Kent, as its overlord, presumably asserting his rights there with an army. This is logically, but not definitely, the point at which he replaces its king or kings; possibly his target is the 'unreliable' Eanmund/Ealhmund as a West Saxon nominee or ally.

Eanmund/Ealhmund and Sigereð are recorded in charters as each 'king of half Kent' – probably of the East and West respectively. Soon afterwards Eanmund/Ealhmund disappears from the charters after the Mercian invasion and Offa's visit to Canterbury, logically deposed by Offa; Sigereð disappears too and is replaced by Heaberht, presumably a Mercian puppet, who is joined by 'Egbert' in 764/5.

This may represent Offa dividing Kent between two vassal-kings to counter each other; and it is possible that Egbert was of royal blood as he is named after the Kentish king of the 660s. He may also be related to the West Saxon king Egbert (acceded 802), logically his grandfather

or a cousin as the latter seems to have had Kentish royal blood; and if so he may be son-in-law or cousin to Ealhmund.

IRELAND

The late ‘High King’ Domnhall Midi (d. 764)’s younger son Diarmait ‘Dubh’ is killed in battle leading the tenant forces of their kin’s protégé, the monastery of Durrow, against those of their rivals Clonmacnois, led by his ?cousin, Bressal.

765

ITALY/FRANCIA

Constantine V sends envoys to Pepin asking the Frankish Church to back iconoclasm, but its bishops refuse at subsequent synod. Pope Paul asks Pepin to detain the embassy and hold up imperial plans until he can hold another council in Rome to present a united Western Church ‘front’ against iconoclasm.

BRITAIN

Jaenberht, a Mercian, becomes archbishop of Canterbury – probably the choice of Offa to keep the Kentish Church loyal to Mercia and counter local autonomy.

30 October. A national council of nobles and clerics deposes the evidently unpopular king Aethelwold ‘Moll’ of Northumbria – possibly accused of causing divine wrath as a usurper after recent natural disasters. He is put in a monastery and is replaced by Alchred, son of the noble Eanwine and grandson of Beornholm who from his name is probably from Lothian. The new king later marries Osgifu, daughter of the murdered king Oswulf (d. 759) and grand-daughter of the abdicated and still alive king-turned-monk Eadbert; this is presumably to unite their factions.

IRELAND

Battle of ‘Carn Fiachach’ (Rathconrath, Co. Westmeath): the late ‘High King’ Domnhall Midi’s eldest? and most prominent son, the future ‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Midi’, kills his younger brother Murchad in battle with the aid of the current ‘king of Midhe’, Fogalach mac Conn Congalt, head of the junior ‘Ui Niall’ line of the ‘Clan Colman Becc’. This clears the way for himself as eventual dominant warlord of his family and ‘High King’, overshadowing current ‘High King’ Fergus, in alliance with Fogalach’s kin.

766

FRANCIA

6 March. Death of bishop (St) Chrodegang of Metz, in office since 742 and formerly chancellor to Charles ‘Martel’; he founded the abbey of

Gorze (749) and instituted a new version of the monastic ‘Rule of St Benedict’ there, as the first major Frankish (as opposed to English/Irish) monastic innovator in Francia.

Pepin invades Aquitaine to restore the royal fortress of Argenton West of Bourges, previously pulled down by Waifer.

BRITAIN

November. Death of archbishop Egbert of York, first holder of that office, after a thirty-one-year episcopate.

IRELAND

Death in battle of Fogartach mac Conn Congalt, current ‘king of Midhe’ and head of the junior Ui Niall branch of the ‘Clan Colman Becc’. His removal leaves his recent ally, Donnchadh mac Domnhall ‘Mor’, as the leading warlord of the regional Ui Niall. The killing is reckoned as ‘treacherous’ in the annals – by whom is not recorded. Donnchadh now styles himself as ‘king of Midhe’.

767

BRITAIN

Spring. Aethelred, a relative of the late king Eadberht and head of the cathedral school at York, becomes archbishop of York (consecrated 24 April) – probably a move by the king to secure Church support as a stable ruler, in the manner of the successful king Eadbert (ruled 737–58). He is the teacher and patron of the polymath York scholar Alcuin (born mid-730s?), who succeeds him at the school, and both men have been organizing the rebuilding of York Minster after a fire in 741.

FRANCIA

Early. Pepin holds a Church Council at Gentilly, with Papal and Byzantine envoys present, to reaffirm Frankish support for icons.

Spring. Pepin invades Aquitaine in his furthest march yet, and takes Toulouse, Albi and Gevaudan; he returns home to celebrate Easter at Vienne.

August. Pepin holds an assembly at Bourges, and marches into Aquitaine to overrun the Garonne valley.

Disappearance from the records of the rebel duke Waifer, who probably died; he is succeeded by Hunoald/Chunoald, either his son or a return to power by his aged father who has been a monk for two decades.

ITALY

28 June. Death of Pope Paul; Constantine, the layman brother of powerful local governor ‘Duke’ Toto of Nepi, is chosen as Pope by an assembly of their aristocratic faction in the family mansion in Rome as he and his brothers arrive in the capital with an armed posse. They ignore the hostile election meeting being held in St Peter’s Basilica by the most powerful of the Papal ministers the ‘primacerius’ (chief notary) Christopher, and his son Sergius as these oppose Constantine and refuse them help. They march on the Lateran Palace and force bishop George of Praeneste to ordain Constantine as a monk so he can be eligible to be Pope; *29 June.* Constantine is ordained as a sub-deacon and then deacon, illegally on the same day; *5 June.* He is ordained as Pope by George and other bishops, acting under threat from his family retainers, and is installed in the Lateran.

Christopher and Sergius take sanctuary in St Peter’s Basilica against threats from Constantine, who writes to king Pepin claiming to have been duly elected by the people of Rome and its region and asking for recognition.

768

SPAIN

14 January. Having murdered his younger brother Vimerano and made the latter’s son Bermudo/Vermudo his new heir, king Fruela of Asturias is assassinated by disgruntled nobles and his own kinsmen in his capital, Cangas de Onis. His cousin Aurelius is chosen to succeed him.

BYZANTIUM

Failure of negotiations to marry prince Leo to Frankish king Pepin’s daughter Gisela.

FRANCIA

Pepin marches into Aquitaine again, captures and executes Waifer’s uncle Remistagnus who has abandoned the royal cause and seized some fortresses, and takes Waifer’s mother, sisters and nieces prisoner at Saintes. He reaches the Garonne, returns home for Easter at Sels (Chantoceaux), and leads another expedition as far as Perigord. Queen Bertraa accompanies him as far as Saintes.

ITALY

April. Christopher the ‘primacerius’ and his son Sergius the treasurer of Rome, in sanctuary in St Peter’s, persuade Anti-Pope Constantine that they want to give up and become monks at a monastery near Reate; they

slip out of Rome and head to Spoleto, where duke Theodicius offers them help and sends them on to king Desiderius with support.

30 July. Desiderius' troops arrive outside Rome with a Lombard priest, Wilipert, to organise the Church against and remove Constantine; they seize the Janiculine Hill and aid a Roman revolt as Sergius is let into the city via the gate of St Pancratius; Constantine's brother 'duke' Toto of Nepi resists with his retainers but is overwhelmed and killed and Constantine takes sanctuary in the Lateran.

31 July. Constantine is arrested in the Lateran, and the Lombards, organised by Wilipert, try to make a local monk called Philip from the monastery of St Vitus on the Esquiline Pope. He is told he has been chosen as Pope and escorted to the Lateran Basilica to be installed and the usual feast follows, but then Christopher, restored to power over the Papal administration, arrives and refuses to enter Rome until Philip is deposed; the candidate is returned to his monastery. Constantine is imprisoned in a monastery, and his brother Passivus is blinded.

6 August. Constantine is forced to abdicate at a clerical assembly, recants later and claims his election was no more irregular than others', and is sent to monastery and within a few days is blinded by his enemies' soldiers and left lying in the street before deportation; *7 August* Stephen III, a Sicilian monk close to the late Pope Paul, is elected as Christopher's puppet and accepted by foreign rulers.

BRITAIN

Major victory by king Aed 'Find' ('the Fair') of Dalriada in Argyll, who threw off Pictish rule of that land in 750, over the Picts under king Conall mac Tadhg in Fortriu, North of the Firth of Forth. The site implies a Dalriadan offensive into the Southern heartland of the Pictish kingdom; the results confirm Dalriadan military recovery.

FRANCIA

Pepin falls sick during his second Aquitaine campaign, and returns home via the shrine of St Martin at Tours; *24 September.* He dies (of dropsy according to his son's biographer Einhard) at St Denis, aged fifty-four. His sons succeed him as co-rulers, with Charles ruling as senior and holding the 'outer', frontier regions in an arc North from Aquitaine to Northern Neustria, the Low Countries, and Eastern Austrasia and Carloman holding the upper Loire valley, Provence, Burgundy and Alemannia.

9 October. (Feast of St Denis, the patron saint of the Frankish kings) Charles, aged probably around twenty-one, is anointed as king and acclaimed by an assembly at Noyon; Carloman, aged seventeen, is anointed and acclaimed at Soissons. Charles celebrates Christmas at Aachen, his future main residence.

BRITAIN

Last of the ‘Celtic’ (not a contemporary term) peoples, the Welsh kingdoms accept the Rome-directed dates for celebrating Easter, the monastic tonsure etc; this is the culmination of a process by the centralising Catholic Church begun at the Synod of Whitby in 664. The move is taken at the direction of ‘bishop Elffodw’ (or Elvodug), apparently the Episcopal mentor of the early C9th historian ‘Nennius’ and the bishop of Gwynedd which is the pre-eminent Welsh kingdom at this point. In the SW, even the rulers of Dyfed are unclear and it loses control of its Northern region in Ystrad Tywi to the emerging kingdom of Ceredigion (a junior line of Gwynedd according to later genealogies) under Seisyll ap Artglys around 760–75. This is named ‘Seissylwg’ after him, but his dates are extremely unclear.

769

FRANCIA

Charles takes the lead in an invasion of Aquitaine, joining Carloman at Duasdivs; for some reason, presumably a quarrel, Carloman goes home leaving Charles to fight alone. Charles goes on to Angouleme, commandeers men and building-materials, and marches to the Dordogne to build the castle of Fronsac. He occupies the Dordogne region; Hunoald flees ahead of his army and is narrowly captured, but reaches Gascony and takes refuge with duke Lupus. Charles sends envoys threatening war on Lupus if he does not hand Hunoald over, so he does so; Hunoald and his wife are deported as prisoners to Francia.

Charles holds his Christmas court at Duren.

BYZANTIUM

Constantine arranges son Leo’s marriage to Irene, of noble Athenian family (and secret iconophile).

770

FRANCIA

Charles holds his Easter court at Liege and then goes to Worms for an assembly of Austrasia. War with the Lombards may be intended, and if so is forestalled as the Frankish kings’ mother queen Bertrada meets her younger son Carloman at Seltz in Alsace and goes on via Bavaria (?arranging a reconciliation between Charles and duke Tassilo there) to Lombardy to arrange a marriage-alliance with Desiderius, calling in at Rome to visit the holy sites first. One of Desiderius’ other daughters is married to Tassilo, so she may have used this link to get the duchess to approach her father about the Charles/Lombardy marriage and to keep Tassilo away from thoughts of defying Charles with Lombard help.

ITALY

Papal/Lombard dispute over archbishopric of Ravenna, with Desiderius promoting his own candidate; he is encouraged by possibility of ‘rapprochement’ with the Franks, and arranges with Bertrada for his daughter Desiderata to marry Charles. Under this alliance, the ‘Pentapolis’ around Ravenna will be returned from Desiderius to Papal control, Charles guaranteeing the agreement; Desiderius will have to accept the Papal candidate as archbishop of Ravenna. The Pope still denounces the marriage as unfittingly ‘barbaric’ for Charles and reminds him that his father Pepin explicitly intended his sons to marry Franks, but has to accept the plans eventually.

Desiderius now wants the destruction of his main opponents in Rome, the chief Papal ‘notary’/‘primacerius’ Christopher and his son Sergius the treasurer; as Charles will not help them and Desiderius is approaching Rome the Pope asks them to retire to a monastery where they may be safe, but their enemies, led by Paul the Papal chamberlain, kidnap them from St Peter’s Basilica, where they are under arrest, as the Lombard king arrives and hands them over to be blinded.

Bertrada takes Desiderata back to Francia to marry her to Charles, who already has an illegitimate son (Pepin) by Himiltrud. The Charles/Desiderius alliance goes ahead.

IRELAND

King Cellach mac Dunchada of Leinster and his sub-rulers submit to the ‘High King’ Niall’s deputy, Donnchad ‘Midi’ of Midhe (son of the late ‘High King’ Domnhall ‘Midi’), in a major Ui Niall invasion of Leinster; this renews the usual mid-C8th alliance of Cellach’s ‘Ui Dunlainge’ sub-dynasty with the Ui Niall and also marks the emergence of Donnchad ‘Midi’ as a warlord overshadowing his superior. The Southern Ui Niall ‘Clann Colman’ of Domnhall and Donnchad thus reasserts itself in the balance of power with their Northern ‘Cenel nEoghan’ neighbours of Ailech, Niall’s family.

771

BRITAIN

Invasion of East Sussex and defeat of the men of the ‘Haestingas’, i.e. the Hastings area, by the kingdom’s overlord Offa of Mercia. This is only recorded by Simeon of Durham over 300 years later, and if accurate presumably marks his defeat of a bid to throw off Mercian overlordship by the region furthest from his borders. By this time Ealdwulf (probably East Sussex from the location of his charters) and the brothers Oswulf and Oslac, probably sons of the mid-C8th king Osmund (probably West Sussex) are ruling as Mercian ‘duces’, i.e. governors not kings, in a presumed move towards central control by Offa.

FRANCIA

(autumn, or early 772?) Charles divorces his unwanted wife Desiderata and sends her back to her father Desiderius, implying a move back towards confrontation with the Lombards. This may follow Carloman's death, as below, but this is unclear.

4 December. Death of king Carloman at Samoussy, aged twenty, possibly involving uncontrollable nosebleeds; Charles goes to the royal 'vill' of Corbeny to meet Carloman's leading lay magnates with archbishop Wilchar of Sens, abbot Fulrad of St Denis the royal chaplain, and other clerics. He is accepted as king of Carloman's domains and reunites Francia, but Carloman's widow Gerberga, with her two children (eldest is son Pepin), and a few of her followers flee to Italy to seek Lombard help.

Charles celebrates Christmas at Attigny.

772

FRANCIA/ITALY

January. Death of Pope Stephen III; *1 February* Hadrian I elected Pope; ends practice of dating documents by Byzantine imperial reigns and wins Charles' support to attack Lombard kingdom and save Papal territories from Desiderius. Hadrian has the murdered Papal ministers Christopher and Sergius, Desiderius' victims, disinterred and given a state funeral. Desiderius asks him to crown Carloman's refugee son(s) as lawful claimant(s) to the Frankish crown in opposition to Charles, but Hadrian refuses.

Charles meets the senior Alemannic nobles Warin and Adalhard in a 'charm offensive' to win over the local nobles in a once-rebellious part of Carloman's realm.

Charles marries Hildegard, of noble Bavarian/Aelmannic descent as daughter of the late count Gerald; her links may also mark a reconciliation with the suspected potential rebel duke Tassilo and luring Tassilo away from any plans to help Carloman's widow.

Queen Bertrada and the senior noble count Adalhard, son of the late king Pepin's illegitimate half-brother Bernard and a lay member of the confraternity of the monastery of Corbie so probably religiously-minded, object to Charles divorcing his previous wife Desiderata; Adalhard calls it immoral and leaves Francia for the monastery of Monte Cassino in Italy.

Charles holds a military assembly for Austrasia at Worms, invades the Saxons' lands to force their submission in the first Frankish offensive since 753, and takes the fortress of Eresburg on the River Diemel. He ceremonially chops down their sacred tree idol, Irminsul, at a major pagan sanctuary which is sacked, apparently flooded to ruin it (by a diverted

river?), and looted of its gold offerings; he takes hostages for the Saxons' submission and returns home.

?*Autumn*. Birth of Charles' first of three sons by Hildegarde, Charles 'the Younger', who is to be designated as heir in the central Francian lands. This may displace Charles' eldest son by a ?marriage of unclear legality, Pepin 'the Hunchback'.

IRELAND

Approximate date of the abdication of 'High King' Niall, head of the Northern, 'Cenel nEoghan' branch of the Ui Niall, to become a monk; he is succeeded by his aggressive deputy, Donnchad 'Midi' of the 'Clann Colman'; this timing is unclear but precedes by a few years Niall's death as a monk on Iona in 778.

773 FRANCIA/ITALY

The Saxons attack and drive out the Frankish garrisons and settlers around Buraberg where their victims take refuge; they burn the Frankish mission church at Fritzlar founded by St Boniface, near the site of the sacred tree which he chopped down there – a symbolic retaliation for Irminsul's destruction?

Birth of Charles and Hildegarde's second son, Carloman (later renamed Pepin).

Mid-autumn? The Pope appeals to Charles for aid after more Lombard aggression in the 'Pentapolis' and threats to attack Rome. The messengers reach Charles at his intended winter base at Thionville near Metz and he sends to Desiderius to offer him 12,000 gold 'solidi' if he will withdraw from the towns he has seized. Desiderius takes no notice; Charles agrees to come to Italy.

November? Charles crosses the Alps by the Mont Cenis pass and drives back Desiderius' confronting Lombard troops; the latter sees that Charles has used his camp as 'bait' and has troops waiting in the hills nearby to attack him, and withdraws to the lowlands. A second force crosses the Great St Bernard Pass. Charles reunites his army and invades Lombardy; he besieges the Lombard capital Pavia. He winters outside Pavia.

Carloman's widow Gerberga and her children take refuge in Verona with Desiderius' son Adalgis.

774 BRITAIN

Easter. After a dispute with archbishop Aethelred of York, his supposedly compliant relative, king Alchred of Northumbria is deposed by a council of nobles and clerics called at York by the Church; he is sent off to the Pictish royal court and is replaced by Aethelred 'Moll', son of the former

king Aethelwold ‘Moll’ (deposed 765). If the new king is his father’s son by his second marriage, he is no more than thirteen; he only lasts five years as king.

ITALY

Charles leaves the siege of Pavia to visit Rome for Easter, meets Pope Hadrian, and 6 *April* confirms Papal territories taken from the Lombards for the Papal state, accepting the faked ‘Donation of Constantine’ Papal propaganda claim that that Emperor abdicated rule of Italy and all the West to the Papacy. Verona falls to Charles and he arrests his sister-in-law Gerberga plus her children, but Desiderius’ son Adalgis escapes.

June. Pavia falls as the Lombards run short of food, and Charles deposes Desiderius and takes the title of king of Italy. Desiderius and his wife Auda and family are deported to Francia (Liege?); Charles also requires the runaway dissident Frankish noble Adalard, his cousin, to return home from Monte Cassino monastery but takes no action except to keep him in the monastic life he has chosen – at Corbie where he later becomes abbot.

The Lombard kingdom is incorporated into Frankish dominions, and its nobility comes to Charles to do homage as the new lord; Desiderius’ son-in-law Adelchis, duke of Benevento, proclaims his independence as prince with his own coins and ignores the Franks; the Lombard nobility are required to swear allegiance to Charles but most regional ‘dukes’ keep their territories.

Charles returns home to hold council meetings at Worms and rearrange the new Lombard/Italian sub-kingdom; he keeps hold of the Ravenna area rather than giving it to the Pope; meanwhile Pope Hadrian sends troops to the most threatening mid-Italian duchy, Spoleto, to depose the ambitious and hostile duke Theodicius and install a compliant ally. Other Lombard dukes are apparently hoping for Desiderius’ runaway son Adalgis to return home from the Eastern Empire so they can join him in revolt.

SPAIN

Death of king Aurelius after a six-year reign; succeeded by his uncle Alfonso I’s daughter Adosinda’s husband, the noble Silo, who moves the capital from Canga de Onis to the region of his own estates, Pravia.

FRANCIA

After Christmas 774 at Quierzy, Charles orders another attack on the Saxons who are accused of treachery and oath-breaking; he orders their lands to be ravaged and all who will not convert to Christianity are killed.

Spring. Charles marches up the Ruhr valley to seize Syburg; he goes on to the Diemel valley to recapture Eresburg, built a couple of years before but already lost to the Saxons, and then invades the Weser valley where he defeats a major Saxon army near Braunsberg.

Charles divides his army; he leads one section East to the River Oker to receive the submission of the Austreleudi under Hassi and (at Buckegau) the Angrarii led by Bruno; the other section of the Frankish army is attacked in the lower Weser valley in Westphalia, as Saxons sneak into their camp at Lubbecke near Minden with returning foragers then cause chaos but are driven out. Charles has to hurry to reinforce them. The reunited army then forces the Saxons in their path to submit.

With Charles busy in Saxony, duke Hrodgaud of Friuli, the main sub-ruler of NE Lombardy on the Dalmatian borders, revolts against the Franks; he may claim to be king; this may be linked to the plots to put Adalgis on the throne. Hrodgaud probably becomes involved with Adelchis of Benevento in a plot to attack the new Frankish kingdom of Italy.

Charles holds his Christmas court at Schlettstadt near Strasbourg.

BYZANTIUM

14 September. Constantine V dies; son Leo IV succeeds and relaxes iconoclast persecutions.

BRITAIN

Death of king Ffernfael ap Ithael of Gwent/Morgannwg in SE Wales ('*Annales Cambriae*'); he has probably ruled for thirty years or so and is the grandson of king Morgan (d. 664/5).

Approximate date of king Cinioch mac Feredach of the Picts, of the junior line of Loarn, being succeeded after a reign of around twelve years by the equally obscure Alpin mac Feret/Feredach, possibly his brother.

c.775 ITALY

Giovanni Galbaio 'Doge' of Venice.

776 FRANCIA/ITALY

Early spring. Charles invades the duchy of Friuli; duke Hrodgaud is defeated and killed and Charles annexes Friuli as a 'March' (frontier region) of Francia; he holds his Easter court at Treviso, and marches on into the Italian peninsula and installs a system of loyal new counts there. Adelchis of Benevento flees as the Frankish army invades his lands.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

(or 775) The refugee Adalgis, son of ex-king Desiderius of Lombards, is welcomed in Constantinople as a potential ally against Franks.

FRANCIA

While Charles is in Italy the Saxons revolt again, regaining the border fortress of Eresburg for the second time by a trick and unsuccessfully besieging Syburg.

Charles returns home (June?), holds an assembly for his army at Worms, and heads to Saxony to reconquer Eresburg and this time colonise the area with Franks; the Saxons surrender en masse at a meeting at the source of the river Lippe. He then builds the fortress that will be the nucleus of the town of Paderborn on the Lippe. The fortress becomes a major royal residence.

BRITAIN

War between king Offa of Mercia, overlord of most of England, and the militarily much inferior kingdom of Kent, currently ruled by his vassal king Egbert. The latter's co-king Heaberht disappears from charters after 771 and is probably dead, removing an ameliorating factor between Egbert and Offa. Presumably Egbert faces removal by Offa for rebellion or potential disloyalty, and surprisingly the subsequent battle at Otford is a 'draw' or at least not so emphatic a Mercian victory as to lead to Egbert's removal. Possibly most of Offa's army was absent keeping an eye on the restive Welsh, and/or fighting in Powys or Dyfed. Egbert remains king, probably as a Mercian vassal.

FRANCIA

Charles celebrates Christmas at Heristal, home of his great-grandfather 'Mayor of the Palace' Pepin (d. 714).

777

FRANCIA

Charles holds an inaugural Eastern Francian assembly or 'Marchfeld' at his new fortress at Paderborn in Saxony, and forces the local Saxons to come to be baptised en masse.

Division of Saxony into several distinct regional zones for Christian evangelization at a council at Paderborn by the Frankish authorities; the Anglo-Saxon (probably York) missionary leader (St) Willehad, a friend of Alcuin's who has been preaching in Frisia for around a decade, is awarded the lower Weser region around Bremen.

The rebel Saxon noble Widukind flees to Denmark rather than submit to Charles, and probably wins some support for his planned return.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

Sulaiman ibn Yaqqdhanu al-Arabi, anti-Ummayyad ruler of Barcelona, revolts against the authority of the Ummayyad emir Abd-al-Rahman with Abbasid support, and goes to Paderborn to offer alliance/allegiance to Charles in return for help.

BRITAIN

(or 778: Welsh sources) Major war between Offa of Mercia and the Welsh, probably involving a Mercian invasion of Powys and/or Dyfed – via the Wye route into Centre Mawr or via the lowlands of Gwent and Morgannwg?

IRELAND

War between ‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Midi’, leading Ui Niall ruler of Western Midhe, and the less powerful ‘Ua Conaing’ Ui Niall kindred/sub-kingdom of Cnobga/Knowth in North Brega under Congalach mac Conaing, ‘king of Brega’.

778

FRANCIA/SPAIN

Charles invades Spain across the Western Pyrenees to back up the rebel pro-Abbasid faction at Barcelona and probably to establish a protectorate over the Ebro valley; his ally Sulaiman ibn Yaqqdhanu advances from Catalonia to take Saragossa ?from the loyalists of the Ummayyad emir Abd-al-Rahman.

Charles leads his section of the army to Pamplona while a second force takes another route over the Pyrenees; however, Saragossa’s inhabitants refuse Sulaiman’s proposals to ally with Charles and threaten to revolt, so the Arab leader abandons their plan; Charles gives up the invasion and returns home, demolishing the fortifications of Pamplona, and en route back over the Pyrenees his rearguard baggage-train is ambushed by Basque locals in the pass of Roncesvalles (mid-August?). A number of senior Frankish officers are killed as the better-armed and more numerous Franks are routed, and among them are the ‘seneschal’ Eggerhard, the ‘Count of the Palace’ Anselm, and the commander of the Breton ‘march’, Hroudland – the original of the ‘Count Roland, Charlemagne’s nephew’ killed by the Moslems in the battle of Roncesvalles in the later epic ‘Chanson de Roland’. That is based on this campaign; but the attackers were really Christian Basques not Moslem Arabs and the Franks were not betrayed by ‘Count Ganelon’. Nor does Charles invade Spain again to retaliate afterwards.

With Charles in Spain, Widukind returns to Saxony and leads a massive revolt; the Saxons expel or massacre Frankish settlers and sack churches, advancing as far as the Rhine at Deutz; Charles hears of the revolt at Auxerre and marches East to deal with it. The Saxons retreat from the Rhine via the Lahngau and the Frankish army catches them up at the river Eder near Leisa to win a battle there.

Birth of Charles and Hildegard's third son, Louis ('the Pious' or 'the Fair'), later to be designated ruler of Aquitaine.

BRITAIN

Execution of three suspected Northumbrian 'ealdormen' by king Aethelred 'Moll's officials Aethelbald and Heaberht. This is seen as a symptom of his growing ruthlessness, or desperation to survive in a turbulent and faction-ridden state by a reign of terror; the intended intimidation fails.

Death of king Aed 'Find' of Dalriada after a twenty-eight-year reign; succeeded by his younger (presumably) brother Fergus, who rules for three years.

IRELAND

Congalach mac Conaing, head of the junior Ui Niall kindred and kingdom of the 'Ua Conaing' of Cnogba/Knowth in North Brega and 'king of Brega', is killed at the battle of Forchalad, in a second invasion by his predatory neighbour 'High King' Donnchad 'Midi'. Other junior kings are also killed; Congalach's brother Diarmait succeeds him.

FRANCIA

Charles celebrates Christmas at Heristal.

779

BRITAIN

Around Easter. Deposition of the murderous king Aethelred 'Moll' of Northumbria by his nobles, after a five-year rule. He may still be in his mid-late teens. He is replaced by Aelfwald (I), the son of the late king Oswulf (k. 759) and grandson of king Eadbert; his backer, the nobleman Beorn, is seen as the 'kingmaker'.

War between Offa of Mercia and his vassal, Cynewulf of Wessex; Offa defeats the army of Wessex at 'Bensington', probably Benson in the upper Thames valley, but is unable to annex any extra land in the region as Cynewulf is still witnessing charters there as king a few years later.

Hygebeorht succeeds Beorhtun as bishop of Lichfield, the 'capital' of Mercia, and as chief ecclesiastical ally of king Offa; he serves to 803.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Midi’, also king of Midhe, attacks his Ui Niall rivals of the ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ sub-dynasty; he is aided by the army of Leinster under his ally king Ruadhri mac Faelan.

Donnchad Midi defeats Domnhall mac Aed Muinderg, ‘king of the North’ (i.e. NW Midhe and W Ulster) and head of the Ui Niall branch of the ‘Cenel Connaill’ since 767, and forces him to accept his supremacy.

FRANCIA

After Easter at Heristal, Charles holds a court/assembly at Compiègne; duke Hildebrand of Spoleto arrives to assure his loyalty as he returns to Austrasia to collect his army, and attends him and presents gifts to him at Verzenay.

Charles assembles his army at Duren, crosses the Rhine at Lippeham, and attacks the Saxons’ position at Bochholt in Westphalia which is abandoned; he crosses Westphalia to the Weser and the locals submit and hand over hostages at Medofulli. Charles celebrates Christmas at Worms.

780

FRANCIA

Charles marches across Northern Germany to Etesburg to hold an assembly, then advances to the Lippe and on to the Elbe; the people of the Bardengau and the Nordliudi are baptised en masse at Ohrum on the river Oker. He reaches the confluence of the Ohre and the Elbe and settles the affairs of the locals then returns to Francia.

IRELAND

War between ‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Midi’ of the Ui Niall, king of Midhe, and his previous ally king Ruadhri mac Faelan of Leinster; probably connected to the marriage of Donnchad’s daughter Eithne to Ruadhri’s rival and challenger Bran Ardchenn, ‘Ui Dunlainge’ dynast of Mullaghmast/Maistiú. Ruadhri and his ally and sub-king, Cairpre the head of the ‘Ui Cennsalaig’ sub-dynasty (rivals of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’ to rule Munster), are defeated at the battle of Ochtar Ocha; their Northern territories in Co. Kildare are ravaged by the Ui Niall and churches pillaged. Subsequently there is an Ui Niall/Leinster dynastic conference to restore peace.

BRITAIN

(Three years after the ?777 war, according to Welsh sources) Second major war between the Welsh – Powys or Dyfed – and Offa of Mercia.

BYZANTIUM

8 September. Death of Leo IV; son Constantine VI succeeds aged nine with Irene as regent but effective co-ruler; she insists on her holding imperial orb on coinage and refers to herself as co-ruler.

BRITAIN

November. Retirement of archbishop Aethelred of York after a thirteen-year episcopate; this possibly weakens the power and ‘focus’ of the Northumbrian Church in backing or if necessary removing kings and adds to the endemic instability there. Eanbald becomes archbishop.

December. Beorn, ‘strongman’ of king Aelfwald in Northumbria, is murdered by two leading partisans of the deposed Aethelred ‘Moll’, ‘ealdormen’ Osbald and Aethelheard.

FRANCIA/ITALY

Charles and his wife Hildegard and second son by her, Pepin (intended as the next ruler of the kingdom of Italy), arrive in Lombardy en route to Rome, and celebrate Christmas at Pavia.

781

ITALY/FRANCIA/BRITAIN

Mission of the Northumbrian scholar Alcuin to Rome from York, at the request of king Aelfwald, to confirm the status of York as an archbishopric and the election of Eanbald as the new archbishop.

February. Elpidius ‘the Patrician’, new governor of Sicily, recalled on suspicion of disloyalty; refuses to return so declared a rebel and family imprisoned.

Easter. Charles visits Rome, and makes his second legitimate son Carloman, now renamed Pepin ‘King of Italy’ (ex-Lombard state); Pepin is baptised by the Pope who is his godfather. Pepin is anointed/crowned as king of Italy, and his next brother Louis is anointed/crowned as king of Aquitaine.

Irene sends embassy proposing that Constantine VI marry his daughter Rothrud.

Charles returns to Francia via Milan. En route, at Parma he meets the Northumbrian scholar Alcuin who is on his way home from his mission to Rome; he persuades Alcuin to join his palace school and bring his Northumbrian literary heritage and cultural assets to the Frankish elite.

The Pope sends bishops Formosus (the future Pope) and Damasus with Frankish envoys to duke Tassilo of Bavaria, appealing to him not to carry out rumoured threat to rebel against Frankish sovereignty and to hand over hostages for his good behaviour as Charles demands; Tassilo agrees

and comes to a subsequent assembly at Worms to assure Charles of his loyalty.

BRITAIN

Death of king Fergus of Dalriada after a three-year reign; succeeded by an obscure Domnhall mac Constantine, not by Fergus' own son Constantine. Unless Domnhall's father is this Constantine and is his 'stand-in', possibly due to his own involvement in Pictish politics (he becomes Pictish king later), presumably the throne is rotating among rival dynasts by agreement or by coups.

?Talorcan mac Drust, possibly the 'Dubthtalorc' ('Black Talorc') who is named as king of the southern Picts – i.e. of Fife and Fortriu – succeeds Alpin mac Feret/Feredach as king of the Picts; he rules for around two years.

ITALY

Autumn. Theodore 'the Patrician' leads large expedition to Sicily and defeats outnumbered Elpidius.

BYZANTIUM/FRANKS

Autumn. Constans the 'Sacellarius' leads embassy to Aachen to confirm the proposal that Constantine VI marry Charles' daughter Rothrud; Ellissaeus the 'notary' left behind to teach Rothrud Greek.

Charles holds his Christmas court at Quierzy.

782

ITALY

Elpidius abandons Sicily and flees to North Africa, where governor gives him imperial insignia; eventually goes to Caliph.

FRANCIA

The continuing Saxon rebellion under Widukind causes the leading Christian missionary in the region, (St) Willehad, to flee for his life and stay away for several years; he probably settles temporarily at the monastery of Echternach in Luxembourg, founded by his predecessor Willebrod.

Charles crosses the Rhine and marches to the source of the Lippe to hold an assembly; in response to his demands for surrender and oaths of loyalty most of the Saxon leadership turns up to swear allegiance but Widukind holds out. King Sigefrid of Denmark, as a former patron of Widukind, and the Avar 'khagan' in the Hungarian basin also send envoys led by

his presumed kinsman Halfdan (possibly father of the brothers who assume the throne in 812, qv) to assure their goodwill.

Charles returns home, and sends his officers Adalgis, Gailo and Worad to lead an army of Franks and Saxons against the latter's Eastern neighbours, the Slavs (Sorbs) of Lusatia, who have attacked Saxony and Thuringia; before the Franks join up with the Saxons they hear that the latter's host has joined in a new revolt by Widukind, so they attack them instead and win a quick victory by surprise as local duke Theodoric assists them. The rebels are routed in battle in the Suntel mountains, but Adalgis and Gailo die in the battle after risking a headlong attack without waiting for Theodoric in order to boost their own reputation.

Charles musters his army and hurries to the confluence of the Aller and the Weser; the Saxon leadership turns up to surrender as ordered, but Charles seizes 4,500 suspected personnel and executes them en masse as a warning. Widukind escapes again.

Alcuin joins the palace school at Aachen, and starts to teach Charles' legitimate sons and other young elite lay figures as well as future clerics, using the methods and books of the school at York; he also teaches Charles about the 'classics' of Christian literature and with his permission brings in his own assistants from York to teach.

FRANCIA

Charles celebrates Christmas at Thionville.

783

SPAIN

Death of king Silo of Asturias after a nine-year reign; his widow Adolinda arranges for an assembly of the nobility to elect the legitimate heir, her late brother king Fruela's (now adult?) son Alfonso (II), but the latter is swiftly evicted from the capital in an armed attack by Fruela's illegitimate half-brother, Mauregatus, who seizes the throne. Alfonso takes refuge in the district of Alava.

FRANCIA

30 April. After the Easter royal court at Thionville, on the eve of the Feast of the Ascension, queen Hildegard dies leaving three sons by Charles – Charles 'the Younger', Pepin of Italy, and Louis of Aquitaine.

Charles leads a small army into rebel Saxon lands and routs a larger force of the enemy at Detmold, en route to his main assembly of troops at Paderborn; he then holds the planned assembly at Paderborn, and advances to the River 'Hase' where he secures another major victory. He crosses the Weser and advances as far as the Elbe.

12 July. Death of Charles' mother queen Bertrada.

Charles ends his campaign in Saxony and proceeds to Worms, where he marries his third wife, Fastrada; they will have two daughters, Theoderada and Hiltrude.

BRITAIN

(or 784: Welsh sources) Major war between Offa of Mercia and the Welsh. This period possibly marks the revival of Powys rule of its Eastern lands in Radnorshire which were lost by Offa, and the king's decision to abandon the region and construct the massive 'Offa's Dyke' to mark the border and prevent or limit further raiding. (The recent archaeology suggests that he may have extended existing works not commenced an entirely new one.) The main thrust of his mid-780s attacks shifts to Dyfed in the South West.

SPAIN

Elipandus (in office to 808) succeeds Cixila as archbishop of Toledo, the main cleric in charge of the Christian community in Umayyad Spain; over the next few years he revives the 'Adoptionist' heresy that Christ was only the adopted son of God, not His real son.

FRANCIA

Charles celebrates Christmas at Heristal.

784

FRANCIA

Widukind renews the Saxon rebellion; Charles crosses the Rhien at Lippeham and devastates rebel territory as far as Hockeleve (Petershagen) near Minden; he takes one army East by way of Thuringia, avoiding his usual route because of floods, while his eldest legitimate son Charles invades via Westphalia with a second force; king Charles marches to the Elbe and to Steinfurt and Schoninghen to link up at the latter with his son.

After the king heads back to Worms, his son hears of a Saxon host assembling on the Lippe and attacks them; his war in the Dreingau ends with another victory, and he rejoins his father.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death or deposition (by Mercia??) of king Egbert of Kent, who vanishes from the charters after c. 780; the reappearance of king Eanmund/Ealhmund, possibly father of the later king Egbert of Wessex who was a child at this point, suggests that he was imposed on Kent as its new king by Offa. Possibly Offa, tied down militarily in Wales, needed a 'legitimate' and locally acceptable sub-ruler rather than being able to attack and annex Kent.

IRELAND

A planned meeting between ‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Midi’, as dominant leader of the Ui Niall, and king Fiachnae mac Aed Roin (acceded 750) of the ‘Dal Fiatach’ kindred of Eastern Ulster, the ruler of the ‘Ulaid’, on board ship at the ‘Inis na Rig’ (the Skerries) on the Ulster coast collapses as Donnchad refuses to lose status by leaving the shore to board his junior rival’s vessel and Fiachnae refuses to come ashore.

FRANCIA

A rare winter-time campaign sees Charles devastating Saxon rebel lands and celebrating Christmas in camp near Schneider in the Weissgau on the river Emmer.

785

FRANCIA

Winter–Early Spring. Charles campaigns as far as Rehme on the Weser, and is affected by floods again; he then celebrates Easter with his queen and family at Eresburg. From this base he directs systematic punitive action across rebel areas, before a general assembly at Paderborn. After this his army marches to and fro across Saxony punishing rebel areas, and when he arrives in the Bardengau, Widukind and his ally Abbi accept summonses to come to him under a truce. The rebel leaders are told to come to him in Francia to do homage or face destruction, and ask for and receive hostages for safe-conduct.

Once Charles’ envoy Amalwin has delivered the hostages Widukind and Abbi travel with him to Charles’ court at Attigny (autumn?), where they are baptised and presumably do homage.

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

29 *August.* Irene and Tarasius write to Pope Hadrian announcing ‘Oecumenical Council’ and inviting him to come or to send legates; he chooses the latter.

BRITAIN

Probable date of another Mercian invasion of Kent, and the end of king Ealhmund/Eanmund’s brief second reign in Kent, as he ceases to appear in charters. From now on no Kentish kings appear in records or coinage until after Offa’s death, probably indicating that he annexes the kingdom as part of Mercia and rules it himself.

FRANCIA

Charles celebrates Christmas at Attigny.

786 | **FRANCIA**

Charles sends an army under his seneschal Audulf into Brittany to punish the autonomous Bretons for defiance and raiding; the latter have their towns sacked and are forced to send envoys to Charles' assembly at Worms to do homage.

Obscure rebellion by count Hardrad and other nobles in Thuringia, presumably against Frankish rule as such and apparently claimed by him and his allies to be legal as they had never sworn fidelity to Charles; suppressed. The accused are taken before a Frankish court, found guilty, pardoned by Charles, then sent around the kingdom in groups to publicly confess and show their loyalty before local assemblies before being returned to Worms to be stripped of their possessions and sent to monasteries; some are blinded too.

BRITAIN/ITALY

Mission of a group of Papal envoys, led by the legates, bishops George and Theophylact (of Todi), to Southern England to check up on the local churches' adherence to canon law, check up on the current state of the mission set up on Papal orders in 597, and hold a synod for the province of Canterbury. Kings Offa of Mercia and Cynewulf of Wessex attend a synod for the bishops of the province of Canterbury, i.e. all Southern England.

The legate Theophylact then travels to Mercia to meet king Offa for further talks, possibly at his suggestion as he proposes to raise the kingdom's senior see of Lichfield to an archbishopric (which will alter Pope Gregory I's plan for only two metropolitan sees in Britain) and thus make it independent of the potentially disloyal Canterbury, a see in a hostile sub-kingdom. The envoys have to travel West beyond Mercia into Wales to meet Offa, who is on campaign there again. From Welsh sources, this seems to be the occasion of his ruthless ravaging of Dyfed, which does not have any known kings or much recorded history at this time – a probable indication of its collapse. The legate George goes on separately to Northumbria for the legatine synod of the province of York.

George's mission holds a synod for the York archiepiscopal province at 'Scythlecester', probably Chesters-on-the-Wall, Co. Durham. Later both legates head back to Kent and a final synod, attended by Offa and archbishop Jaenbeorht, issues new canon laws there.

Notorious killing of king Cynewulf of Wessex, after a twenty-nine-year reign, by the brother of his predecessor Sigebert. This man, Cyneheard, clearly regards the king as responsible for his predecessor's death and seeks revenge in a traditional 'blood-feud', by trapping him and his bodyguards at the royal estate of 'Mereton' – probably Merton Park SW

of Winchester – while Cynewulf is visiting his mistress there. The king is ambushed and murdered, but his bodyguards hold out as Cyneheard's men surround them and refuse to surrender so he has to kill them all; the incident is written into the 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle' a century later, presumably on the orders of king Alfred, as an inspiring example of loyalty to one's lord.

Election of the dynastically peripheral Beorhtric as the new king of Wessex; according to a later story he defeated the claims of the future king Egbert, probably a closer relative of the C6th and C7th kings but younger (in his early teens??).

FRANCIA/ITALY

?*Autumn*. Charles heads from Italy again, claiming rule of all the former sub-dukies of the Lombard kingdom whose rule he has taken over and negotiating with the Empire for acceptance of this and imperial abandonment of the 'rebels' at Benevento; he spends Christmas at Florence.

787 BYZANTIUM/FRANCIA

Charles goes to Rome to meet Pope Hadrian; duke/prince Adelchis of Benevento sends his son Romuald to them with rich gifts but requires Charles to stay out of his domains; Charles ignores him and advances as far as Capua, whereupon Adelchis flees blockable inland Benevento to hold out in coastal Salerno.

?*March/April*. Charles campaigns against Benevento; Adelchis offers his sons Romuald and Grimoald as hostages as he proposes to negotiate, and Charles agrees to open talks and names a list of hostages to be handed over led by Romuald and by Grimoald's son; they swear allegiance to him and Charles releases Romuald as a goodwill gesture.

Adelchis agrees to become ally, swears allegiance, and Grimoald stays as a Frankish hostage.

Spring. Irene sends embassy to Charles proposing that his daughter Rothrud marry Constantine. Charles receives them on his way to Rome to celebrate Easter with the Pope.

BYZANTIUM

4 *September*. Church Council meets at church of St Sophia in Nicaea; 23 *October* after Council has agreed to restoration of icons and anathematized iconoclasts it presents decisions to Irene and Constantine who sign the acts before disciplinary canons against iconoclast misbehaviour in past are approved.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Tassilo of Bavaria sends an embassy to the Pope to ask him to mediate with Charles; the latter is bitter against Tassilo for repeated treachery and wants quick and unequivocal submission, but when Hadrian requires these terms of the Bavarian embassy they say they are not empowered to do this. He threatens excommunication unless they give in and says no blame will lie with Charles if he devastates Bavaria in response to their and Tassilo's behaviour and the Papacy will back any Frankish action; they take these terms to Tassilo.

August. Adelchis of Benevento dies; succeeded by son Grimoald, currently a Frankish hostage, on Charles' agreement; he is allowed to return home as Charles' vassal-king.

FRANCIA

(St) Willehad, back preaching in Saxony since the suppression of the 782 rebellion, is made the first bishop of the lower Weser region; he founds the local Episcopal see at the town of Bremen and builds its cathedral.

Charles arrives at Worms to rejoin queen Fastrada; he explains the Bavarian situation to his nobles and clergy, and sends an embassy to Tassilo demanding complete submission to back up the Papal embassy. Tassilo refuses to come to court and do homage; Charles leads his army into Bavaria and marches to the Lechfeld by Augsburg, with the Eastern Franks/Thuringians/Saxons to bring troops to Pforring on the Danube and a third army to arrive Northwards from Italy under his son Pepin. Tassilo, outnumbered, surrenders and comes to Charles to do homage; the vassalage of Bavaria to Francia is renewed.

BRITAIN

A contentious Church Council at Chelsea, near London; king Offa, as overlord of Kent, requires archbishop Jaenbeorht and the senior clergy of all the Southern archiepiscopal province to recognise the elevation of the see of Lichfield to its own archbishopric, thus making the Mercian Church independent of and equal to Canterbury. Jaenbeorht has to agree and consecrate Offa's choice, bishop Hygeberht of Lichfield, as its new archbishop and thus 'metropolitan' of Mercia and its ally East Anglia.

Offa's only son and heir, Ecgfrith, is anointed as king of Mercia by Hygeberht, thus elevating the king's heir with Church sanction in the ruler's lifetime as co-ruler as per the usual Eastern Roman/Byzantine procedure and cutting out the notion of election of the next king – supposedly ensuring stability but reducing the nobles' part in choosing kings too.

IRELAND

Maelduin mac Aed Allan, head of the ‘Cenel nEoghan’ branch of the Ui Niall in Co. Tyrone, defeats his local rival, ‘king of the North’ Domnhall mac Aed Muinderg the head of the ‘Cenel Connaill’, and takes over headship (and probably the kingship) of the Northern Ui Niall; however, he dies a year later and Domnhall then reasserts himself.

FRANCIA

Charles holds his Christmas court at Ingelheim near Mainz.

788

FRANCIA

?*Spring*. Charles holds an assembly at Ingelheim, and Tassilo arrives with his vassals but is accused by some of the latter to be plotting again, egged on by his wife. He confesses, to plotting and sending emissaries to the avars for aid in a rebellion, in a public session of the the assembly and defiantly says that he prefers death to humiliating vassalage. The angry crowd demand that he be executed, but Charles decides to be merciful (‘Annales Regni Francorum’ account).

Tassilo is sentenced to be deposed and tonsured as a monk; 6 *July*. He is tonsured at St Goar and sent to the monastery of St Jumieges, and his son Theodo, wife and daughters are all put in the monastic life too; Bavaria is annexed to Francia.

FRANCIA/ITALY

The Frankish commander Winigis aids duke Grimoald of Benevento, as a Frankish vassal ally, to defeat an attack from the rebel duke Hildebrand of Spoleto.

The Avars, as arranged with the treacherous Tassilo earlier, invade the NE Italian ‘March of Friuli’ but are defeated by the locals and the Franks and driven out; a second Avar army invades Bavaria but is defeated by the locals and by Charles’ representatives Grahamannus and Otgar on the ‘Ybbsfeld’ river; later a second Avar attack is mounted on Bavaria but is routed and the enemy are driven into the nearby Danube and drowned en masse.

Theodore, imperial governor of Sicily, attacks the pro-Frankish principality of Benevento but is defeated in battle in Calabria by its duke Grimoald, the reconciled duke Hildebrand of Spoleto, and the Frankish general Winigis.

SPAIN

Probable date (though it may be as early as 786) of the death of founding emir Abd-al-Rahman the Umayyad of Cordoba, ruler of Al-Andalus and

hereditary foe of the Abbasid Caliphs whose ancestors killed his kinsmen. He is aged fifty-eight and has reigned for thirty-two years if this is his date of death; his favourite son Hisham succeeds him and has to fight off a challenge from his other sons.

BRITAIN

23 *September*. King Aelfwald of Northumbria, recently accused over assorted (presumably political and pre-emptive) killings among members of the elite, is assassinated by a 'thegn' of his called Sigca, after a reign of nine years and aged probably in his early thirties. He is buried at Hexham, which probably indicates a Bernician heartland for his support; a cult grows up around his burial-place like that of the unjustly killed king Oswine (d. 651). His sons Oelf and Oelfwald take refuge in the cathedral precincts in York, and the late king Alchred's son Osred II, who is Aelfwald's nephew if his mother is the latter's sister, succeeds.

The new archbishop Hygeberht of Lichfield receives his Papal 'pallium' of office from Rome.

SPAIN

(or 789) Death of the usurper king Mauregatus of Asturias at his capital, Pravia; he is buried at the church of St John the Evangelist there. The brother of the late king Aurelius, Bermudo (called by the C9th 'Chronicle of Alfonso III' 'the Deacon' so presumably in holy orders) is elected as king instead of the legitimate claimant, Alfonso II son of Fruela, in a presumed agreement by the nobles opposed to the latter's family.

FRANCIA

Charles holds his Christmas court at Aachen.

789 BYZANTIUM/ITALY/FRANCIA

Irene marries her son's new wife Maria of Amnia's sister Euanthia to prince Grimoald of Benevento in alliance.

Death of duke Hildebrand of Spoleto; succeeded by the local Frankish commander, Winigis.

Charles attacks the 'Wilzi' Slavs, a people living between the Sorbs and the Obodrites in Western Poland; he builds two bridges over the Elbe as he advances, and is joined for the campaign by his new Saxon vassals and by his Slav vassals the Sorbs and Obodrites. Dragawit, the most powerful Wilzi chieftain, and his leading men surrender as Charles' army arrived outside their main stronghold, and they swear allegiance and surrender hostages.

Charles imposes an oath of loyalty on all his subjects, so future revolts can be cast as treason to one's lord and punished more harshly – a sign of hidden fears of plots?

FRANCIA/BITAIN

Charles proposes that his eldest son Charles marries one of the daughters of king Offa of Mercia; Offa agrees but proposes that in return his son and heir Ecgrith should marry Charles' daughter Bertha. Regarding Offa as very much a junior ruler in rank, Charles refuses and breaks off relations with Mercia; he is later accused of harbouring exiles hostile to Mercia with intent to use them against Offa, e.g. the later Kentish rebel leader Eadberht 'Praen'. It is unclear if Charles also harbours the opponent of pro-Mercian king Beorhtric of Wessex, the later king Egbert, as the latter's exile in Francia may date to either 789 or 799.

BRITAIN

Offa marries off his daughter Eadburh – later known as a serial killer and clearly both strong-willed and regarded as his agent – to his subordinate ally, king Beorhtric of Wessex. This is probably to shore up the latter's shaky regime, and may coincide with the expulsion from Wessex to Mercia, or even from refuge in Mercia to exile in Francia, of Beorhtric's rival (future king of Wessex) Egbert, son of Ealhmund and descendant of king Ine's brother Ingeld. (The date of Egbert's exile to Francia may be either 789 or 799.)

First – and violent – landing of Scandinavian voyagers in England, somewhere in Dorset – the 'Annals of St Neots' say Portland. They will later be generically known as the 'Vikings', presumably 'men of the viks/fjords'; these are three shiploads of Danes from Hordaland according to the ASC. The king's 'reeve' (local official running his estates) calls on them and requires them to accompany him to the county town, Dorchester, as per the usual West Saxon rules for traders to be officially noted in the records; they refuse, kill him and sail off.

Expulsion of king Conall mac Tadhg from the Pictish throne (he will end up as king of Dalriada later); it is taken by a prince of Dalriada, Constantine mac Fergus, who may or may not be the father of their current king Domnhall mac Constantine. Other rulers in Dalriada of the 780s, of uncertain date and physical extent of their lordship, include Eochaid 'the Poisonous', ruler of Kintyre.

IRELAND

Battle of Cloitech/Clady (Co. Tyrone): Aed 'Oirdnide' or mac Niall, son of the late 'High King' Niall Frossach (abd. ?772, d. 778) and the new head of the 'Cenel nEoghan' of Tyrone from 788, defeats his rival,

Domnhall mac Aed Muinderg the head of the ‘Cenel Connail’. He secures the headship of the Northern Ui Niall and effective domination of NW Ulster for the ‘Cenel nEoghan’ branch of the dynasty for a generation, along with the disputed lands around Raphoe, and advances to the position of influence whereby he will be able to succeed ‘High King’ Donnchad Midi in 797.

FRANCIA

8 *November*. Death of (St) Willehad, evangelizing Anglo-Saxon (York?) first bishop of Bremen, at Nordenham, down the River Weser from his seat; buried at his foundation, Bremen cathedral.

Charles celebrates Christmas at Worms.

790

FRANCIA

Charles in the Rhineland; he negotiates with envoys from the ‘Huns’ (Avars) concerning their borders and cannot reach agreement. He also sails up the Main river to his new palace of Salz in lower Franconia.

BRITAIN

?Alcuin returns to Britain after around eight years teaching at Charles’ palace school in Aachen, to teach at York again; he becomes a staunch critic of the moral decline of the Northumbrian elite, particularly of the ruthless methods of king Aethelred.

September. Rebellion in Northumbria against the insecure new, young king Osred II, son of Alchred and ?nephew of Aelfwald II so supposed to be able to unite their factions. He is deposed and flees to the Isle of Man, presumably via Cumbria; he is succeeded by the ex-king Aethelred ‘Moll’, ruler from 774–9, who is now recalled but proves no less controversial as he resumes his earlier killings of potential rivals.

Possible date of the accession of king Aethelbert of East Anglia; all is known is that he succeeds his father Aethelred at an unknown date pre-794, aged fourteen. Assuming that he was still reasonably young when he was seeking a wife in 794, this would place his accession not that many years earlier; he is presumably a Mercian client of king Offa.

FRANCIA

Charles spends Christmas at Worms; his wooden palace is burnt to the ground one night while he is in residence.

791

SPAIN

The new and reputedly ex-clerical king Bermudo of Asturias is defeated in a Moslem invasion of Eastern Galicia by commander Yusuf ibn Bukht

at the battle of the river Burbia; he subsequently abdicates and returns to the cloister. The legitimate claimant Alfonso II, son of the assassinated (768) king Fruela I and grandson of Alfonso I, takes the throne.

FRANCIA

Charles crosses Germany to Regensburg en route for a campaign to punish the Avars for their recent raids and aggressiveness, and at that city meets up with representatives of his Eastern vassals who will join his war; the Saxons and the Frisians march on the North side of the Danube and himself with the main army marches on the South as they descend the river to the Avar frontier. The Avars have manned fortifications by the river at 'Cumeoburg', probably the Vienna Woods, but are overawed by the size of his army and his fleet and abandon them; he advances across their territory to the river Raab but does not encounter their main army. The campaign ends uneventfully apart from an epidemic hitting his horses.

BRITAIN

The ruthless king Aethelred 'Moll' lures the sons of the late king Aelfwald, Oelf and Oelfwine, out of their blockaded sanctuary in York Minster with promises of safety but then has them drowned.

17 July. Consecration of Baldwulf as bishop of Whithorn, the restored C5th bishopric of Galloway based at that ancient monastery, by archbishop Eanbald and bishop Aethelbert.

IRELAND

A battle breaks out at the Ui Niall kindred annual assembly ('oenach') at Taittiu, as 'High King' Donnchad (who is later accused of dishonouring the relics of Jesus and St Patrick, i.e. he is the aggressor) attacks his son-in-law and uneasy junior ally, Aed 'Oirdnide' mac Niall, the king of the Northern Ui Niall and head of the 'Cenel nEoghan' of Tyrone; Aed is forced to flee from the assembly and the Boyne valley back to his home territory and a number of other elite personnel are killed in the armed clash.

FRANCIA

Charles celebrates Christmas at Regensburg.

FRANCIA

Spring. While Charles is in residence in Regensburg, the North Spanish bishop Felix of Urgel is accused of the 'Adoptionist' heresy, i.e. proclaiming that Christ is the adopted not the actual son of God. He is summoned to the king's court to defend his beliefs publicly before the

bishops, is convicted of heresy out of his own word, and is forced to recant publicly; he is sent on to Rome to repeat his repentance to the Pope before he is allowed to go home, but there relapses by 794 when he is arrested again. At around this time Charles successfully asks his old friend and cultural mentor Alcuin to return to Francia to use his skills in combating the heresy.

August. Mysterious alleged conspiracy against Charles at Regensburg by his eldest but illegitimate son, Pepin ‘the Hunchback’. He and his accomplices are supposedly angry at the cruelty of queen Fastrada, his step-mother, and her influence on the king and intend to murder the latter; Farulf the Lombard betrays them and is awarded the abbey of St Denis. Some conspirators are beheaded for treason and other are hanged; Pepin is put in the monastery of Prum.

Charles has a collapsible bridge constructed at Regensburg and tried out for later use on the Avar campaigns.

BRITAIN

August. Death of archbishop Jaenberht of Canterbury; succeeded by abbot Aethelheard of Lowth, an East Mercian, presumably at Offa’s request, by July 793.

Ex-king Osred II returns from exile on the Isle of Man to start a rebellion in Northern Northumbria, presumably recalled by dissident ‘thegns’ after his successor Aethelred ‘Moll’ resumed his earlier brutality. He is overwhelmed by a loyalist army and killed (14 September) somewhere on the Tyne, and is buried at Tynemouth priory.

A fortnight later, the victorious Aethelred married Aelfleda, daughter of his ally king Offa of Mercia, at Catterick, thus securing the backing of the Angles’ most powerful ruler for his shaky regime. He probably does not have to do homage or recognise his subordinate role as a client-king, though the extent of Mercian control/influence is unclear; the rebellion of Osred was presumably intended by his desperate foes to forestall the Mercian alliance.

Winter. Famine in Northumbria (ASC), later seen as a portent of the immanent Scandinavian attack.

BRITAIN

8 January (ASC), or *8 June* (Annals of Lindisfarne, presumably more likely to be accurate). Sacking of the isolated and vulnerable island monastery at Lindisfarne by a raiding party from Scandinavia – the first deliberate looting attack on mainland Britain by the ‘Vikings’. This makes a vivid impression on contemporary writers, e.g. Alcuin in Francia, and on later analysts as the start of the ‘Viking’ troubles, and the later Anglo-

Saxon Chronicle refers to a series of portents of approaching doom e.g. strange lights in the skies. Alcuin writes to king Aethelred that it is clearly God's vengeance on the sinful Northumbrians for their recent moral lapses, royal tyranny and civil conflict.

FRANCIA

Charles spends Easter at Regensburg; at the assembly it is agreed that a new oath of loyalty will be taken by all subjects to him (presumably due to insecurity over Pepin's plot) and this is administered by travelling royal agents, the 'missi', in each region; after the assembly he is leading his army off for the immanent Avar campaign when he is told that count Theodric and his Frisian levies have been ambushed and massacred en route across the Weser valley in the forest of Rustringen by insurgent Saxons. He marches on Saxony instead and puts off the Avar campaign; he marches into central Germany but (September–November?) is held up by a new project to construct a canal from the Rhine to the Danube by digging a long ditch between the rivers Altmuhl and Rednitz. Due to the soggy ground the day's work keeps collapsing at night and as no water can be diverted into the uselessly shallow ditches the project is abandoned. The Saxons continue to ravage unabated.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

Autumn. While Charles is busy with his failed canal project, the new emir Hisham of al-Andalus crosses into Septimania on a 'jihad', captures Gerona, and defeats the local commander 'Margrave' William of Orange near Carcassonne; however, he is more interested in loot and prestige than conquest.

794

BRITAIN

10 March. Notorious killing of the visiting king (St) Aethelbert of East Anglia at the royal Mercian manor of Sutton Walls near Hereford – in the far West of Mercia, distant from his homeland. According to his later hagiography he was on a visit to arrange his marriage to a daughter of king Offa, and was killed for unclear reasons by the latter's wife queen Cynethryth. The avoidance of placing blame on Offa himself may be political to avoid embarrassment; possibly he was accused of planning rebellion and was 'made an example of' to terrify other sub-kings into obeying Offa unhesitatingly, and in any case the murder backfires. He is buried temporarily nearby at Marden, but is popularly regarded as a saint and is later moved to a new shrine at Hereford where the cathedral is re-dedicated to him as co-patron. No East Anglian coins appear until Offa's death, so probably Offa annexes East Anglia as he did to Kent in c. 785/6.

FRANCIA

Easter. Religious council at Frankfurt as Charles prepares for his delayed Saxon war. Pope Hadrian's envoys, bishops Theophylact and Stephen attend. Both iconoclasm and adoptionism are condemned, and bishop Felix of Urgel is summoned to be tried and condemned for the latter. All those present including the royal family sign up to the conclusions. Alcuin is among the speakers in favour of orthodox Catholic doctrine.

Death of the controversial queen Fastrada after the council. Charles marries his fourth and last wife, Liutgard, later in the year.

Charles leads one army into Saxony and his eldest legitimate son Charles leads the other; they ravage rebel territory and advance to the Sindfeld near Paderborn where the rebel army is drawn up. The Saxons, finding themselves seriously outnumbered, open negotiations and agree to swear allegiance, become Christian, and hand over hostages; this is accepted.

Charles celebrates Christmas at Aachen.

795

IRELAND

6 May. Notorious assassination of king Bran Ardchenn of Leinster and his wife Eithne, daughter of 'High King' Dunnchad Midi, in the burning of the church at Cell Cuile Duma near Stradbally by his 'Ui Dunlainge' rival, Finsnechta Cethardec mac Cellaig (son of king Cellach who died in 776). Finsnechta takes the throne, but faces Ui Niall hostility.

Sack of the monastery and shrines on Rathlin Island off Ulster by Vikings.

BRITAIN/FRANCIA

First 'Viking' sack of the main Hebridean monastery of Iona, centre of the Church in Dalriada – a probable indication that the exploring Scandinavians (mainly Norse in this region) are moving SW towards Ireland.

?Offa sends archbishop Aethelheard of Canterbury to Charles' court on a mission to demand that assorted dangerous exiles are arrested and returned – including a Kentish refugee and runaway priest called 'Odberht', probably the future rebel Eadbert 'Praen'. Charles sends them out of his dominions to Rome so he has an excuse for not returning them.

Charles holds his spring assembly at Kostheim near Mainz; there he hears of yet another Saxon revolt in defiance of their oaths, so he attacks Saxony again and marches to the Elbe at Lune; his ally Witizin king of the Slav Obodrites is killed by the Saxons as he invades their land to help Charles. Charles ravages rebel territory, apparently now resolving on a drastic solution of killing and removal of the population, and receives an embassy from the Avar 'tudun', a sub-ruler and possibly the deputy of the 'kaghan', who claims that he wants to be converted to Christianity as a loyal vassal.

The references to an Avar civil war imply that one faction turned to the Franks for help, and probably their overall manpower was fatally weakened; the ‘kaghan’ is said to have been killed in the war. The Saxons submit again and send hostages.

Charles celebrates Christmas at Aachen.

ITALY

25 December. Death of Pope Hadrian, who has recently received presents of Avar loot from Charles. When he hears Charles has Masses said in his memory and sends a memorial slab of stone to Rome.

26 December. Election of the Southern Italian cardinal priest of Santa Susanna, Leo (III), as the new Pope; he sends the keys of St Peter from the Saint’s tomb and the Papal flag to Charles as his supporter and asks for an envoy to come to Rome to receive the citizens’ oath of loyalty. Charles sends Agilbert as his envoy and asks the new Pope to carry out Moses’ mission of praying for the success of the secular godly rulers.

796

FRANCIA

Duke Eric of Friuli invades Avar territory from NE Italy during an Avar civil war, aided by Wonimir the Slav and his men; they besiege the principal Avar headquarters, the fortified ‘Ring’ somewhere in Pannonia near the Danube (Western Hungary), and storm it, seizing a vast quantity of loot from the Avars’ centuries of depredations. This is sent to Charles at Aachen.

BRITAIN

March or (ASC) *19 April.* Assassination of king Aethelred ‘Moll’ of Northumbria by Ealdred, a partisan of a challenger called Osbold who now usurps the throne; the late king is probably a little over thirty if he is the son of Aethelwald ‘Moll’ by his second marriage. The ASC notes that the king fell victim to his own nation. The end of the clearly paranoid and ruthless king, condemned for his misrule by his expatriate contemporary Alcuin and unsuccessful in keeping down his fractious elite despite his murders, does not restore stability. If a coup was planned rather than a rival taking advantage of an unexpected security lapse, it fails to win acceptance – and the regicide will be killed in 799 by Aethelred’s supporter ‘ealdorman’ Torhtmund so the late king inspires some loyalty.

24 April or (ASC) *14 May.* After thirty-seven days as king, Osbold is deposed by an invading force led by Eardwulf, the royal contender of 790 nearly murdered by Aethelred. He flees to Lindisfarne, suggesting backing from Bernicia; Earwdwulf secures the throne and is crowned/

anointed by archbishop Eanbald in York Minster (26 May, according to the ASC) but does not stop further plots.

Sacking by Scandinavians of the monastery of Jarrow at the mouth of the Tyne, in the same year as Aethelred's death (ASC); one of the attackers' commanders is killed so there is resistance, and later some of the raiders' ships are damaged and blown ashore in bad weather and the locals kill some of the raiders.

Death of king Maredudd of Dyfed (*Annales Cambriae*, same year as Offa but mistakenly listed as '797'); succeeded by his eldest son Rhain.

SPAIN

12 June. Death at his capital, Cordoba, of emir Hisham the Ummayyad, after a reign of around eight years, aged thirty-nine. He is succeeded by his son al-Hakam, but his brother Sulaiman flees to North Africa plotting revolt.

BRITAIN

10 August. Death of Offa 'the Great', king of Mercia and overlord of most of the English, after a reign of thirty-nine years, aged probably in his sixties. He is succeeded by his son Ecgfrith, already crowned. Archbishop Eanbald of York dies on the same day.

14 August. Eanbald (II) is made archbishop of York.

FRANCIA

The Avar ruler comes to Charles to submit and be baptised a Christian, as promised earlier in the year, and swears allegiance; after his return home the Franks hear rumours of his intended treachery.

Charles invades and ravages rebel Saxony, while his son Pepin invades Avar territory from Italy; the new 'khagan' comes to Pepin to submit and the Franks occupy the Avar 'Ring' and carry off the rest of its treasure to be sent to Charles. The latter hears the good news in Saxony, and marches across the territory before returning to Aachen for the winter. The Avars become Frankish vassals and break up as a nation and most are probably baptised; Pannonia and Carinthia to the middle Danube are occupied by the Franks.

Alcuin, who is seeking a reason to retire from court life at Aachen, is granted the abbacy of the abbey of Marmoutier, outside Tours and founded by the latter's St Martin in the late C4th, on the death of abbot Itherius; he leaves court for Tours but continues to advise Charles by letter when consulted.

BRITAIN

Late. Death of the new king Ecgrith of Mercia, after a reign of 141 days; this unexpectedly brings an end to the direct Mercian royal line, and possibly Offa himself has weakened the chances of stability as Alcuin refers to his elimination of assorted men of royal blood i.e. possible rival heirs. The choice of the next king goes to the obscure Coenwulf, son of Cuthbert, proclaimed as the descendant of Penda's younger brother Cenwalh (this is unclear). Given the location of his family estates and of people with similar names among the elite, he appears to be based around Winchcombe in NE Gloucestershire and may be connected to the aristocracy of the defunct kingdom of Hwicce. Possibly from what Alcuin writes, Coenwulf divorces his current wife by dubious means to marry a rival who is closer connected to the royal family and the Church objects.

The temporary power-vacuum in Mercia leads to a revolt in Kent, either now or in 797, led by an exile (probably a runaway priest who was unwillingly tonsured earlier to politically neuter him) called Eadbert 'Praen', who possibly returns from exile in Rome/Francia. He drives out archbishop Aethelheard, who is at odds with Mercia over its new archbishopric of Lichfield but refuses to consecrate Eadbert as king. Also, the first coins of a new king of East Anglia, Eadwulf, appear within a year or two which suggests a possible revolt.

797

FRANCIA/SPAIN

Zatun, Moslem governor of Barcelona, revolts against the Ummayyad emirate and calls on the Franks for protection; he journeys to Francia to do homage to Charles and ask for help. Charles sends his son Louis, king of Aquitaine, to march into Catalonia to help Zatun against the Ummayyads and take the town of Huesca in the upper Ebro valley.

Charles marches into Saxony to ravage rebel areas again in a campaign of devastation and population-clearance, and marches down the Weser valley to the North Sea at the promontory between the Weser and Elbe rivers.

BRITAIN

King Coenwulf of Mercia secures Papal recognition that he is rightful king of Mercia (the well-connected Alcuin in Francia is among those who have called him a usurper) and that Eadbert 'Praen' of Kent is a usurper and there will be no repercussions for invading to overthrow him. He tries to win the Pope's support for installing the refugee archbishop Aethelheard of Canterbury, now in Mercia, as archbishop of a new metropolitan see of London to replace the controversial one at Lichfield against which the Church of Canterbury is lobbying – the placing of the see at London was Pope Gregory's initial intention in 596. He also agrees

to let the Pope decide whether the archbishopric of Lichfield should be abandoned. The Pope refuses to let London become an archbishopric.

IRELAND

6 February. Death of ‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Midi’, head of the Southern Ui Niall and of ‘Clan Colman’ in Eastern Midhe, after a reign of around twenty-five years; aged probably sixty-four. He is succeeded as ‘High King’ by his son-in-law and victim in the 791 war, Aed ‘Oirdnide’ of the ‘Cenel nEoghan’ who is ruler of the Northern branches of the Ui Niall; Donnchad’s son Domnhall succeeds to the rule of ‘Clan Colman’ and of Midhe but is killed within a year or so.

Aed defeats Donnchad’s brothers Diarmait and Finsnechta and their ally, Finsnechta mac Falloman of ‘Clann Colman Becc’ (another, junior line of the Southern Ui Niall), at the battle of Drium Rig/Drumree and ravages Brega and other parts of Midhe; he thus cows the Southern Ui Niall and secures the kingship and overall leadership of the Ui Niall.

BYZANTIUM

Saturday 19 August. Irene’s allies seize her resentful son Constantine VI, put him on galley, and return him to Palace as prisoner; he is locked in ‘Purple Bedchamber’ where he was born and eyes are put out as Irene seizes throne but position uncertain as a sole female ruler unprecedented; calls herself ‘Emperor’.

FRANCIA

Abdallah, the son of the late emir Abd-al-Rahman and brother of the recently deceased emir Hisham, arrives at Aachen from a stay in exile in North Africa to ask for help against his nephew; envoy Theoctistus arrives from Nicetas, the Byzantine governor of Sicily with an imperial letter from Irene.

November. Charles marches into Saxony again for a winter campaign of ravaging, and sets up his winter quarters in camp at ‘Herstelle’ on the Weser. He sends Abdallah the Ummayyad pretender to Northern Spain escorted by Louis of Aquitaine and sends Pepin back to Italy.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

Embassy of Froius from king Alfonso II of Asturias to Charles, who is in Saxony until after Easter. At Easter the ‘Nordliudi’ Saxons revolt again and kill or hold to ransom some envoys that Charles has sent to them, killing his ambassador Godescal who is en route back from visiting king Sigefrid of Denmark. Charles is furious and marches his army from his

base camp at Herstelle to Minden and ravages Saxony from the Elbe to the Weser.

BYZANTIUM

Spring. Embassy sent to Charles to announce Irene's accession and request extension of current alliance; ?Istria is ceded to Franks.

BRITAIN

(or 797?) Invasion of Gwynedd by Coenwulf of Mercia, involving a major raid to the Conwy estuary and a battle at Degannwy, the main royal residence there and former seat of king Maelgwyn (d. 547/9).

This may involve the death of king Caradog ap Meiriau, who is killed by the Saxons according to the 'Annales Cambriae'; he has ruled for around forty years and is head of the sub-kingdom of Rhos (Clywd region) and accession of his son Hywel ap Caradog. Either now or some time after this the crown is disputed by Cynan ap Rhodri, son of Caradog's predecessor Rhodri from the main dynasty, and civil war breaks out.

Coenwulf invades Kent with overwhelming force and defeats and captures Eadbert 'Praen' the rebel king, who is blinded and has his hands cut off and is then deported to a Mercian monastery. Coenwulf's brother Cuthred becomes his vassal-king of Kent, which is not officially annexed. Aethelheard is restored to the archbishopric of Canterbury.

Abdication of king Sigeric of Essex after a long, thirty-nine-year reign; succeeded by his son Sigered.

Approximate date of the disappearance of the coinage of the new king Eadwald in East Anglia – presumably meaning that he is deposed or reduced to a royal governor by his new overlord Coenwulf, who re-imposes Mercian control and coinage.

May. The new king Eardwulf of Northumbria defeats a rebellion in the name of his deposed predecessor Osbald, at the battle of Billington Moor.

FRANCIA/BYZANTIUM

The rebel 'Nordliudi' Saxons beyond the Elbe attack the pro-Frankish 'Obodrite' Slavs, and the latter's duke Thrasco and Charles' envoy Eburis defeat them; 4,000 Saxons are killed in battle and the losses cause some of the rebels to give up and send hostages to Charles including leading 'troublemakers' who their nobles hand over to appease the king.

Charles returns to Aachen and receives the imperial ambassadors, Michael and the priest Theophilus; he agrees to peace and hands over Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople's brother (captured years before in Italy) as a goodwill gesture.

799 | ITALY

25 *April*. Pope Leo is attacked in the street while riding back from saying Mass by a gang sent by his enemies, the late Pope Hadrian's kinsman the sidelined Papal chief notary Paschalis and Camalungus the keeper of the Papal purse; he is injured in a failed attempt to cut his tongue out and blind him and left lying in the street, before being collected and taken to a monastery while his foes declare him deposed. His chamberlain Albinus rescues him by smuggling him over the wall at night, and he is taken to duke Winigis of Spoleto as the latter arrives on news of the attack. Winigis sends him with an escort to Charles at Paderborn; Charles is pursuing his latest Saxon campaign regardless of the news and receives Leo en route to the war. He sends his son Charles with one section of the army to the Bardengau to link up with the Slavs and receive envoys from the rebel 'Nordliudi', and keeps the other part of the army with him.

Count Wido, commander of the 'Breton March', launches a major invasion of Brittany, overruns the country, and receives the submission of its leaders. Their weapons are sent to Charles as he returns from Saxony.

Duke Eric of Friuli is killed by the locals in Istria as he besieges Tarsatika (now Riejika).

Count Gerold of the Eastern 'march' is killed fighting some rebel Avars.

After the Saxon war the king considers what to do with Leo; Alcuin reminds him that the Pope cannot be judged by any lay power. 25 *November*. Leo is restored to Rome by Frankish troops and the leadership of the latter carries out a formal legal process to absolve Leo of the charges made against him by his enemies and arrest and try the latter for slander; they are found guilty and deported to Francia.

Charles himself returns to Aachen. He receives envoys from the Balearic Islands, which put themselves under his protection after the recent Moslem raids.

A monk brings sacred relics and a banner from the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, as arranged by the (Orthodox) Patriarch, to Charles and implicitly makes him the holy shrine's new protector – the start of the French role as protector of Christians in the Middle East.

BRITAIN

Treaty between Coenwulf of Mercia and his junior ally king Beorhtric of Wessex, renewing the alliance of Offa with Beorhtric and stressing Wessex's role as a vassal of Mercia. The terms apparently include the (new or continued??) exile of Beorhtric's Wessex rival Egbert in Francia.

NORTH AFRICA

Creation of independent state in Tunisia under 'Emir' Ibrahim ibn Al-Aghlab; foundation of 'Aghlabid' dynasty.

FRANCIA

Charles sends the visiting monk from Jerusalem back with gifts to the Patriarch, and builds a fleet to keep down piracy on the North Sea, Channel and Atlantic – probably mainly by the rising threat of the Scandinavian 'Vikings'. He then leaves Aachen in mid-March and tours the coasts and spends Easter at St Riquier.

Charles travels South from the later Normandy region to pray at Tours, where his fourth and final wife Liutgard dies (4 June); he returns via Orleans and Paris to Aachen.

August. Charles arrives at Mainz; he announces an expedition to Italy and crosses the Alps to Ravenna.

ITALY

Charles announces a campaign against Grimoald of Benevento, who has been in revolt sporadically since c. 792 when he ceased using Frankish coins and minted his own; he sends his son king Pepin with an army to attack Benevento.

November. Charles meets Pope Leo at Mentana outside Rome; *24 November.* He arrives in Rome with his army and is welcomed on the steps of St Peter's Basilica by the Pope; Charles convokes an assembly of the Romans to hear their requests and do justice.

1 December. Charles convenes a court to hear the accusations against Pope Leo, who is cleared of them.

23 December. Pope Leo swears his innocence of his enemies' charges to the populace from the pulpit in St Peter's Basilica; Charles has his accusers arrested but spared on Leo's intercession. The king's envoy Zacharias returns from his mission to Jerusalem, with monks from the monasteries of St Sabas and Mount Olivet who present the keys of the Holy Sepulchre and of the city of Jerusalem to Charles.

25 December. Leo unexpectedly crowns Charles during the Christmas service in St Peter's, presumably as 'legitimate' Emperor (of West) as Irene is reckoned to be ineligible for the imperial throne as a woman and a usurper. He is acclaimed by the populace as 'Augustus'. Whether Charles expected the coronation and had planned it and regarded the imperial title as the logical culmination of his accretion of powers and honour across the old Western Roman Empire lands (or making him legally unassailable as supreme autocrat) is unclear; possibly Leo initiated the

move to place the Papacy under a ‘legal’, firmly Catholic, and personally close ally as Emperor and to protect his own position.

Charles’ eldest son Charles ‘the Younger’ is crowned as king of the Franks by Pope Leo later in the same service.

c. 29 *December*. Charles sends the Pope’s convicted accusers into exile.

801 **FRANKISH EMPIRE/CALIPHATE**

25 *April*. Charles leaves Rome to head to Spoleto, where there is an earthquake. He proceeds to Ravenna and then Pavia, where he hears of envoys from Caliph Harun-al-Raschid who have landed at Pisa. He receives them near Vercelli as he moves back towards the Alps, and hears that the survivor of his 797 envoys to Harun are returning shortly; they are bringing an elephant as a gift from Harun, and Charles order ships to be prepared to collect the gifts. Another goodwill embassy arrives from Harun’s Tunisian governor, Ibrahim ibn Al-Aghlab (founder of the Aghlabid dynasty).

After celebrating the feast of St John (25 June) at Ivrea, Charles crosses the Alps to Francia.

October. Isaac the Jew and the embassy to Harun arrive in Italy with the elephant; they do not cross the Alps to Francia until spring 802.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

Fall of Barcelona to Frankish forces, after a two-year siege; governor Zatun, who resumed allegiance to the Umayyds in 798/9, is imprisoned.

802 **BYZANTIUM/FRANKISH EMPIRE**

Early. Leo the ‘spatharius’ sent as envoy to Charles at Aachen, and good relations are restored; Charles arranges an embassy to Irene.

Summer. The Frankish envoys, bishop Jesse of Amiens and count Helmgaut, arrive at Constantinople, proposing that Charles marry Irene and the two Empires are united.

Fall of Ortona in Eastern Italy, on the Adriatic, to the Franks. The fall of Lucera secures control of Western Apulia.

20 *July*. Isaac the Jew brings the elephant (Abul Azaz) and other gifts from Harun to Charles at Aachen.

BRITAIN

Notorious accidental murder of king Beorhtric of Wessex, after a sixteen-year reign, at his residence at Wareham in Dorset; his homicidal wife

Eadburh, daughter of Offa, has prepared a poisoned drink for a ‘thegn’ she hates but Beorhtric drinks it by accident and dies. The nobles recall the exiled Egbert, son of Ealhmund (?the king of Kent in the 760s–80s) and alleged descendant of Ingeld brother of king Ine, from Francia as the new king; he may be aged around twenty or a decade older and is married to Redburga, a ‘daughter’ (untraceable) of Emperor Charles.

‘Ealdorman’ Weohstan of Wiltshire fights the invading Mercian ‘ealdorman’ of Hwicce on Egbert’s accession; both are killed. This may be a move by Coenwulf to destabilise Wessex, or a private feud.

According to Alfred’s biographer Asser (880s?), our source for the (biased?) history of queen Eadburh of Wessex, after she flees abroad the nobles insist that the title of queen is banned; she ends up at the imperial court in Francia, where Charles asks if she would prefer to marry him or his son; she chooses the latter as likely to live longer and he angrily expels her; she is given a nunnery to rule as abbess, but later runs away to Italy and allegedly dies as a prostitute in Pavia.

Second ‘Viking’ sack of the Hebridean monastery of Iona; the church and monastery are burned.

BYZANTIUM

Minister Aetius tries to induce Irene to reject Charles’ proposal of marriage and name his brother Leo as her successor; the ‘general logothete’ Nicephorus leads a conspiracy against Irene; *31 October* plotters arrive at the Chalke (Palace gate) announcing that Irene, absent, has ordered them to proclaim Nicephorus co-Emperor and guards admit them; Nicephorus proclaimed and sends troops to arrest Irene. *1 November* Irene is brought to Palace and agrees to abdicate, and Nicephorus is crowned.

803 BYZANTIUM/FRANKISH EMPIRE

Spring. Byzantine embassy by bishop Michael, abbot Peter and ‘candidatus’ Callistus to Charles in Francia announcing Nicephorus’ succession; they meet Charles at Salz on the river Saal as he arrives in Germany. Byzantine rule of Venetia is recognised but Nicephorus delays accepting Charles’ imperial title.

Charles tours Germany and Pannonia (the Avar frontier).

IRELAND

‘High King’ Aed Oirdnide, head of the ‘Cenel nEoghan’ Northern branch of the Ui Niall, forcibly divides up the lands of his Southern rivals the ‘Clann Colmann’ of Western Midhe between the two feuding sons of his

predecessor (as ‘High King’) Donnchad Midi, namely Conchobar and Aillel mac Donnchada. At some point Conchobar becomes his son-in-law but the alliance does not last.

BRITAIN

Death of archbishop Hygebeorht of Lichfield; king Coenwulf of Mercia agrees to abolish the controversial archbishopric as the Church of Canterbury is demanding and as the Pope has now formally approved (802), and to restore the rule of that archbishopric over all Southern England as was the case from 597 to 787. The decision to abandon the arch-see of Lichfield is duly approved at a council of the Southern archbishopric’s bishops at ‘Clovesho’. Ealdwulf succeeds as bishop of Lichfield (to 814/16).

804 ITALY

‘Doge’/duke Giovanni Galbaio of Venice and unpopular family expelled; replaced by Obelearius degli Antonii.

IRELAND

King Finsnechta Cethardec of Leinster is defeated by the ‘High King’ Aed Oirdnede, ruler of Midhe.

FRANKISH EMPIRE/DENMARK

Summer. Charles marches from Aachen into Saxony and carries out mass-deportations of the Saxons living beyond the Elbe; the land beyond the Oder is given to his allies the Obodrite Slavs.

19 May. Death of the leading Northumbrian expatriate cultural figure Alcuin of York as abbot of Marmoutiers near Tours, aged around seventy.

Charles arranges a meeting with Godfred/Godefrid, king of the Danes, and travels to Hollenstedt at the mouth of the Elbe; Godefrid comes as far as Schleswig but does not show up for the meeting and sends envoys to convey his terms. The talks centre on the return of fugitives (presumably mostly rebel Saxons who could attack Francia again) to Francia.

September. Charles returns to Aachen and goes hunting in the Ardennes.

November. After Pope Leo informs the Emperor that he is coming to Francia for Christmas, Charles sends his eldest son Charles ‘the Younger’ to St Maurice to welcome him en route. He himself meets the Pope at Rheims, and they spend Christmas at Quierzy.

805

FRANKISH EMPIRE

Pope Leo returns home from Aachen.

A Hun/Avar prince or 'capcan' who has been baptised, called Theodore, asks and receives permission to settle in the Empire West of the Danube, between Szombathely and Petronell.

The 'capcan' dies soon after, and the new Avar 'kaghan' asks successfully to be recognised as such and backed up by the Emperor.

Charles 'the Younger' is sent to ravage the lands of the Bohemians and kill their chief Lotho.

July. The Emperor heads from Aachen to the Vosges for hunting, and then receives his eldest soon after the Bohemian expedition.

BRITAIN

Death of archbishop Aethelheard of Canterbury; succeeded (August) by Wulfred who is equally determined to oppose encroachments by the kingdom of Mercia on his see's rights, this time over nominating its own favourites to hold church estates. Possibly Mercian fear of potential 'rebels' achieving power in Kent lies behind this.

Death of king Domnhall mac Constantine of Dalriada; the throne is seized by Conall mac Tadg, former (r. 785–9) king of the Picts and presumably partly Dalriadan by blood and/or backing. He is challenged by an obscure Conall mac Aedan.

FRANCIA

Charles holds his Christmas court at Thionville and is joined by his sons Louis and Pepin.

806

ITALY

February. 'Dukes' Oblearius and Beatus of Venetia submit to Charles, as do duke Paul of Zara and bishop Donatus of Zara; he assigns their dominions to the suzerainty of his son Pepin as 'King of Italy'; Nicephorus sends fleet under Nicetas 'the Patrician' to reoccupy Venetian-held Dalmatian ports.

Charles confirms the future division of his Empire at an assembly of the Franks, which is confirmed by oaths by all present: Charles 'the Younger' is to have the main Frankish domains, Pepin is to have Italy, and Louis is to have Aquitaine, the two younger sons as vassals of the senior. The document is then taken to Pope Leo by Charles' future biographer Einhard to be signed, thus tying in the Holy See as guarantor of the new order.

Grimoald IV succeeds his father Grimoald (III) as prince of Benevento, in rebellion against the Franks.

Spring. Charles celebrates Easter at Nijmegen on the lower Rhine, and sends his son Charles ‘the Younger’ to attack the Sorbs on the Elbe; Miliduoch, duke of the Slavs, is killed and fortresses are built on the banks of the rivers Elbe and Saale. The younger Charles then rejoins his father at Seilles on the Meuse.

Bohemia is raided again; king Pepin sends a fleet to Corsica to expel a raiding force of Arabs, who avoid battle and withdraw, but count Hadumar of Genoa is killed in a skirmish due to carelessness.

BRITAIN

King Eardwulf of Northumbria is deposed after a ten-year reign and replaced by a man called Aelfwald (II), presumably connected to the dynasty of Aelfwald I and so backed by their partisans; he flees to Francia and Emperor Charles sends him on to Rome to gain Papal support.

Third Viking attack on the Dalriadan monastery of Iona.

807

FRANKISH EMPIRE/CALIPHATE

Another Abbasid embassy, including monks from Jerusalem led by George the (German) abbot of the Mount Olivet monastery, come to Charles bringing gifts including a magnificent tent.

‘Marshal’ Burchard is sent with a fleet to protect Corsica from the usual Arab attacks; the annual Arab raiding expedition has already raided Sardinia and been mauled before it lands on Corsica, and Burchard defeats it in a naval battle at a harbour; thirteen Arab ships are sunk.

ITALY

(Before August) The Byzantine ‘patrician’ Nicetas, commander of Emperor Nicephorus’ Adriatic naval expedition to Venice, agrees a truce with the blockading army of king Pepin and sails away.

BRITAIN

Death of king Cuthred of Kent, brother and puppet of king Coenwulf of Mercia; the kingdom is annexed outright by the aggressive Coenwulf, returning to Offa’s policy of the late 780s.

Death of king Arthgen ap Seissyl of ‘Seisyllwg’, i.e. Ceredigion and Cantref Mawr; the son and successor of the founding king Seissyl, he has presumably profited from the ravaging of his Southern neighbour and potential rival Dyfed by the Mercians in the 780s to become the dominant ruler of SW Wales.

King Conall mac Tadhg of Dalriada is overthrown by his rival, Conall mac Aedan.

808

FRANKISH EMPIRE/DENMARK

Spring. Charles celebrates Easter at Nijmegen, then returns to Aachen.

King Godefrid of Denmark invades SE into the lands of the Obodrites; Charles sends his son the younger Charles with an army to Saxony to deal with him if he crosses the Frankish border.

Godefrid manoeuvres on the opposite side of the Elbe from Charles junior and takes some Obodrite fortresses, expels duke Thraso, seizes and hangs duke Godelaib, and makes two-thirds of the Obodrites tributary to Denmark but loses his nephew Ragnald and others in battle. The Wilzi Slavs join Godefrid to attack their Obodrite enemies.

Charles junior builds a bridge to cross the Elbe and march into Obodrite territory; he defeats the Limones and Smeldingi who have defected to Godefrid. Godefrid destroys the trading port of Reric and returns to Southern Denmark, where he halts in Schleswig to build a large dyke/bank to defend the border, right across the peninsula from the Ostarsalt bay on the Baltic West to the River Eider with one gate for traders to use under supervision.

ITALY

Paul ‘the Patrician’, commander of Cephalaria, leads fleet to Venice.

BRITAIN/FRANCIA

Ex-king Eardwulf of Northumbria journeys back from Rome to Francia with Papal support and envoys led by the English deacon Aldulf; Charles adds his own envoys, and the force heads to Northumbria where the locals hastily depose the usurper Aelfwald II (fate unknown); Eardwulf is restored to his throne, apparently without bloodshed.

Death of king Cadell of Powys; succeeded by his son Cyngen, the last king of the old dynasty.

Death of king Rhain ap Maredudd of Dyfed; anarchy and raiding by the Vikings follows in the succeeding decades.

IRELAND

Joint attack by Conchobar mac Donnchada, son of the late ‘High King’ Donnchad Midi and head of the Southern Ui Niall of ‘Clann Colman’, and his ally king Muirgus mac Tommaltach of Connacht on Conchobar’s father-in-law ‘High King’ Aed Oirdnide, head of the Northern Ui Niall of ‘Cenel nEoghan’. They advance to the Ui Niall assembly-place at Tailtiu

to seize it from the ‘High King’, but are later driven back and Connacht is brought to a treaty. However, some annals start to refer to Conchobar not Aed as ‘High King’ well before the latter dies in 819, implying a slippage of power from the latter after 808.

FRANCIA

Charles spends Christmas at Aachen.

809

ITALY

Spring. Paul’s fleet attacks Commachio but repulsed; Obelearius and Beatus unwilling to resist Pepin so Paul retires to Dalmatia.

FRANKISH EMPIRE/SPAIN

King Louis invades Catalonia and besieges Tortosa on the River Ebro, but has to abandon the siege.

The Arabs raid Corsica again at Easter.

FRANKISH EMPIRE/DENMARK

King Godefrid sends an embassy to Charles claiming that the Obodrites attacked him first and violated their treaty, and asks for negotiations on the border; Charles sends envoys who meet Godefrid at Badenflot near the mouth of the Elbe. No agreement is made. Meanwhile duke Thraso of the Obodrites hands over his son as a hostage to Godefrid to secure peace as demanded, and then attacks and punishes the Wilzi with the aid of the Saxons.

November. Charles calls a Church Council at Aachen to examine the state of the Frankish Church and to consider the question of the ‘Procession of the Holy Spirit’, i.e. the insertion of the word ‘Filioque’ (‘and the Son’) in the usual doctrinal formula for it, following doctrinal controversy raised by the Jerusalem monk John of the monastery of St Sabas. The royal chapel at Aachen is using the word ‘filioque’, and the Pope asks Charles to intervene; the Eastern Churches are opposed to ‘filioque’ as an innovation and this will eventually break East/West unity. Envoys Bernhar, bishop of Worms, and abbot Adalhard of Corbie are sent to the Pope for his opinion.

Charles decides that he cannot trust Godefrid of Denmark and assembles an army to march to the Danish border and construct a fortress opposite the new Danish frontier defences, ‘Esesfeth’ at the mouth of the river Stor; count Egbert is placed in command of the work. Meanwhile Thraso of the Obodrites is assassinated at the orders of his rival Godefrid of Denmark, at Reric.

SPAIN

Amorez, commander of Saragossa and Huesca, succeeds the late count Aureolus as Frankish commander of the frontier zone in the Ebro valley.

810

SPAIN

Amorez of Saragossa promises Charles' envoys that he will pay homage to the Emperor but this is delayed.

FRANKISH EMPIRE/ITALY/DENMARK

Overrunning of Corsica and Sardinia by a large Arab fleet.

Charles hears of the landing of a large Danish fleet of 200 vessels led by king Godefrid in Frisia, their ravaging of the islands, a landing on the Frisian mainland, three battles, and the locals paying Godefrid 100 gold pieces to leave; the Danes are on board ship and out of touch before Charles can send help.

Charles summons an army and heads for the Rhine to cross at Lippeham; his elephant dies as the campaign is prepared. Charles sets up camp at the confluence of the Aller and the Weser and awaits the attack which Godefrid is boasting he will carry out.

Obelearius and Beatus of Venetia invite king Pepin to occupy their territories i.e. in defiance of the Eastern Empire, and he marches into their capital, Malamocco; refugees hold out on the Rialto islands of lagoon, and 7 May he tries to construct bridge of boats across lagoon but 'strategus' (governor) Paul of Cephallonia arrives with Byzantine fleet and cuts the bridge.

Pepin retires to the Italian mainland and 6 July dies, aged probably thirty-seven; Rialto remains independent as centre of 'Venice' thereafter, and Paul reports news to Nicephorus as no Frankish authority to negotiate with. Charles now or later recognises Pepin's illegitimate son Berbard as heir to Italy and its new king.

Nicephorus sends 'Spatharius' Arsaphius who deposes Obelearius and Beatus from their rule of Venice; Venetian choose Agnellus Participazio as new 'Doge'.

?July/August. Charles, in camp, hears that Godefrid has been murdered by one of his retainers, that his own son Pepin is dead, and of the arrival of peace-embassies from Nicephorus and from the emir of Cordoba. He settles the affairs of Saxony and returns to Aachen, deeming the Danish threat to attack much reduced by Godefrid's death.

Autumn. Arsaphius goes on from Venice to Aachen (arrives in October) and Charles accepts situation.

Hemming, nephew of Godefrid, succeeds to the throne of Denmark and makes peace with Charles.

SPAIN

Abd-al-Rahman, son of emir al-Hakam of Cordoba, expels Amorez from Saragossa; he retreats to Huesca.

811

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Charles sends as envoys bishop Haido of Basle, count Hugo of Tours, and Aio of Friuli to Constantinople to formalise peace.

After a delay due to the severe and late winter, twelve Frankish and twelve Danish envoys meet on the river Eider at Heilingen and ratify the peace between their rulers. The general assembly at Aachen confirms the treaty; Charles sends one army to Saxony to ravage the territory of the treacherous Linones beyond the Elbe and rebuild the fortress of Hobbuoki which the Wilzi demolished during the Danish war; a second army goes to Pannonia to deal with conflict between the Avars and the Slavs; the third army invades Brittany in response to recent raids.

Charles goes to Boulogne to survey his new Channel/North Sea fleet; he rebuilds the old Roman lighthouse there and goes on to the Scheldt to inspect more ships built at Ghent.

BYZANTIUM

Saturday 26 July. Bulgarians attack the invading Emperor Nicephorus' camp in a Thracian mountain pass, and Nicephorus and most of senior officers are killed.

His son Stauracius is severely wounded, so generals consider whether he will be able to recover and rule; Nicephorus' son-in-law Michael Rhangabe leads survivors back to Adrianople. Stauracius is proclaimed Emperor; he is deteriorating through blood-poisoning so his wife Theophano intrigues for throne and rumours are spread that Michael's wife (Stauracius' sister) Procopia is poisoning Stauracius on husband's behalf. *October* the guards-regiments are assembled and Michael proclaimed Emperor; Stauracius agrees to become a monk.

BRITAIN

Death of king Eardwulf of Northumbria after a thirteen-year reign in two sections; he is succeeded by his son Eanred who will rule for thirty-two years or thereabouts, a rare case of Northumbrian stability.

King Constantine mac Fergus of the royal line of Dalriada, who has already ruled as king of the Picts since 789, seizes the throne of Dalriada on the death of king Conall mac Tadhg; reunion of the kingdoms of the

Picts and Scots for the first time since the reign of Angus pre-750, and the first time that Dalriada took the leading role. It is probable that Scandinavian raids on and settlement in the Hebrides is undermining the strength and unity of Dalriada and both kingdoms agree to combine resources to fight them, but the timing and extent of this and the exact dates of settlements are unclear.

(or 812, or less likely 819?) Traditional date of the murder of the son and heir of king Coenwulf of Mercia, Cynehelm i.e. 'St Kenelm'. This is recorded in his hagiography as occurring on a hunting-trip at a site later dedicated to him in the Clent Hills in North Worcestershire, with the 'boy's evil elder sister Cwenthryth (abbess of Minster-in-Thamet, Kent) arranging for his guardian/tutor to kill him and hide his body. This was later found and translated to a new shrine at Winchcombe on 17 July (his feast-day). In fact, Kenelm is recorded as co-king of Mercia in a Papal letter of 798 so he was probably adult; his murder may be linked to a family feud and it meant that Coenwulf was to be succeeded by his brother Ceolwulf instead in 821, with the dynasty and Mercia then collapsing.

IRELAND

Possible date of the foundation of the Viking base at Dundalk on the East coast, but it is unclear if this was yet a permanent settlement or just an occasional camp for passing raiders each summer.

BYZANTIUM/FRANCIA

Bishop Michael of Synnada leads an embassy to Charles, recognizing his imperial title in return for concessions over Venetia and Dalmatia.

November. Charles receives envoys from Hemming, king of the Danes, and from the Avars and Slavs in Pannonia who the Frankish expedition there has forced to come and submit.

4 December. Death of Charles' eldest son, Charles 'the Younger', aged probably thirty-nine; this leaves only his youngest legitimate son Louis of Aquitaine as his heir and the prospect of a unified Empire continuing. The Emperor winters at Aachen.

812

BYZANTIUM

12 January. Death of ex-Emperor Stauracius of gangrene.

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Death of the new king Hemming (early?); his cousin Sigifrid and his nephew Anulo quarrel over the succession, raise armies, and are both killed in the succeeding battle.

August. Embassy from Francia returns to Constantinople, confirming Charles' ratification of peace-terms and recognition of Byzantine rights in Venetia and Dalmatia; Byzantine envoys Arasfius and Theognostus take a copy of the peace-treaty to Charles in a ceremony at the palace chapel at Aachen and hail him openly as 'Basileus' i.e. legitimate Emperor and equal to their own ruler.

Charles sends his late son Pepin's teenage son Bernard, probably aged fifteen, to Italy with an army led by the experienced general Wala, his nephew, to await an expected attack by a large Arab fleet which is reported to be en route; this lands in Corsica and Sardinia instead and the part which reaches Sardinia is virtually destroyed.

Peace is agreed with the Ummayyad emir of Cordoba, al-Hakam, and with the rebel prince Grimoald of Benevento who resumes his vassalage to Francia and hands over 25,000 'solidi' in gold coins as tribute.

DENMARK/FRANKISH EMPIRE

Heriold/Harald (probably the figure known in Danish history as Harald 'Klak'), uncle of the late contender for the throne Anulo, succeeds to the Danish throne with his brother Ragenfrid; they may be the sons of an obscure late C8th royal figure called Halfdan. They send to Charles asking for the return of their captive brother Hemming, which is agreed.

813

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Charles crowns his surviving legitimate son Louis as co-Emperor at Aachen, and also raises his late son Pepin's illegitimate son Bernard to be king of Italy and has him crowned. Bernard is to be Louis' vassal.

Count Irmengar defeats an Arab fleet returning from a raid on Corsica and rescues its prisoners; other Arab ships then raid Civitavecchia (Italy) and Nice (Provence) in retaliation.

Peace is agreed between Francia and Denmark at a conference on the border, and prince Hemming is handed over to his brothers' envoys as agreed; the latter are currently away in Norway on an attack on Vestfold. However, shortly afterwards all three of them are driven from Denmark in a rebellion by the sons of the late king Godefrid.

BYZANTIUM

February. Bulgarian refugees warn that Krum is planning surprise attack on Adrianople, and Michael leads regiments out to catch him by surprise and force him to retreat; *22 June* at battle of Versinicia troops flee and their commander Leo suspected of treachery; Michael flees to capital; disgruntled troops proclaim Leo Emperor; *11 July* as Leo arrives at walls Michael abdicates, aged around thirty-four.

BRITAIN

Decisive victory of Hywel ap Caradog, head of the dynasty of Rhos (Clywd area), over his rival Cynan ap Rhodri of the main royal line in the Gwynedd civil war; he apparently drives his rival off the mainland back to Mon/Anglesey.

814

FRANKISH EMPIRE

28 January. Death of Charles/‘Charlemagne’ at Aachen, probably aged between sixty-four and sixty-seven; succeeded by third but eldest surviving son, Louis ‘the Pious’ (or more accurately ‘the Dutiful’), aged thirty-six, with Louis’ late brother Pepin’s son Bernard as sub-ruler in Northern Italy (to 817).

Louis arrives from Aquitaine thirty days after his father died, and takes authority and receives the envoys waiting to see him. He holds an assembly of the leading Franks, and receives and endorses the authority of his nephew Bernard of Italy and Grimoald of Benevento. He also receives Harald, refugee king of the Danes, who his people have expelled, and sends him to Saxony to await a plan to restore him. He shows his desire for a moral ‘crackdown’ at court by expelling all his father’s bastards, male and female, and putting them in monasteries – but this has a possible political agenda too in case of revolts.

BRITAIN

?Archbishop Wulfred of Canterbury sets out for Rome to get a Papal ruling in his favour in the dispute over ‘illegal’ lay grants of Church property in Kent by the king of Mercia.

Hywel ap Caradog of Gwynedd drives his rival Cynan ap Rhodri out of Mon/Anglesey.

Murder of prince Gruffydd of Dyfed, eldest son of king Cyngen ap Cadell, by his brother Elised; the latter is duly disinherited and expelled two months later, presumably leaving Cyngen’s daughter as his heiress (thus leading to her being married off to the heir of Gwynedd).

IRELAND

The abbot of Aughrim in Connacht, a daughter-house of Clonmacnois, is killed in a raid by the ‘Ui Maine’ sub-dynasty; king Muirgius of Connacht and abbot Forgellach of Clonmacnois raid their lands in retaliation and are recorded as violating the ‘Law of Adomnan’ on not attacking non-combatants. Muirgius holds an assembly of Connacht at the traditional assembly-place/ancient ‘capital’, Cruchu, to assist the rights/prestige of his ally Clonmacnois by imposing its ‘Law of St Ciaran’ on the Church in his kingdom.

815 BRITAIN

Archbishop Wulfred returns to Kent from Rome with Papal backing over his dispute with Mercia.

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Spring. An early attack on Denmark is halted as the ice melts too soon on the frozen Elbe and the Saxon/Obodrite army assembled by Louis' orders cannot cross; it attacks later (May) with imperial representative Baldrich in charge, and occupies Southern Jutland; the sons of the late king Gudfred hold out on the island of Funen with their fleet offshore; the imperial army eventually goes home to report to Louis who is holding an assembly at Paderborn.

War resumed with the Ummayyads.

FRANCIA/ITALY

Pope Leo seizes and executes some plotters without waiting for imperial orders, annoying Louis. The Emperor sends his nephew Bernard of Italy back from the Paderborn assembly to investigate, joined by count Geriold the 'Warden' of the Pannonian March. Geriold then reports to Louis, followed by the Pope's envoys. While the Pope is ill his enemies assemble a force to ravage the estates which he has seized from subject cities, and Bernard sends duke Winigis of Spoleto to put them down.

Bishop Nordebert and canon Richoin return from Constantinople with a copy of the treaty reached with Emperors Michael and Leo.

816 BRITAIN

Archbishop Wulfred holds a Church Council at Chelsea, outside London on Mercian soil, and reasserts his rights to deprive controversial/disputed lay proprietors of Church lands appointed 'illegally' by lay authorities in Mercia and for the Church of Canterbury not its Mercian royal overlord to appoint all clerical offices during an archiepiscopal vacancy at Canterbury. King Coenwulf refuses to accept it and sends him into exile in Francia; deadlock ensues with the archbishopric in effect vacant.

ITALY

12 June. Death of Pope Leo III; *22 June* Stephen IV, an aristocratic Roman educated in Hadrian I's household, is elected. He is more conciliatory than his divisive predecessor, but has an easier task as he is more noble and 'local'. He writes to Emperor Louis asking for acceptance of his election and a personal meeting. Two months later he sets out to visit Louis.

October. Pope Stephen arrives in Francia, and at Rheims attends a celebrational Mass with Louis and his Empress Ermengard, who he then crowns with an alleged ‘crown of Constantine’ which he has brought from Rome. He also anoints Louis, a sacral addition to the usual imperial coronation-ceremony adding to the Pope’s prestige and crucial role in making a Western Emperor. They also hold some days of discussions and renew the Frankish protection for the Papacy and its state before Stephen leaves for Rome.

After the Papal visit, Louis goes to Compiègne and receives envoys from Abd-ar-Rahman, son of Umayyad emir al-Hakam.

BRITAIN

Cynan ap Rhodri of Gwynedd returns from exile to retake Mon/Anglesey from his rival, king Hywel ap Caradog – probably with help from the Isle of Man given his marital connection to their dynasty by marrying off his daughter and heiress Essylt to their prince Gwriad. He then dies, securing Hywel the throne for his lifetime.

817

FRANCIA/ITALY/BRITAIN

Louis receives envoys from Abd-ar-Rahman, sent from Saragossa, at Aachen, along with envoy Nicephorus from Emperor Leo of the Eastern Empire re: a dispute over control of Dalmatia. The latter business has to wait until ‘Cadolah’, local pro-Frankish lord of Dalmatia, arrives; after talks the latter and the imperial envoy Albgar are sent to Dalmatia to sort out the border.

24 January. Death of Pope Stephen; the same day Pashcal, abbot of the monastery attached to St Peter’s Basilica and a long-serving Papal administrator and protégé of Leo III, is elected; *25 January* Paschal is invested as Pope.

Grimoald (IV) of Benevento is murdered; succeeded by Sico, who rules for fifteen years.

The sons of king Godfrid of Denmark send an embassy to Louis for peace, but are not trusted.

Maundy Thursday. Louis is nearly killed as a raised arcade he is crossing from the Aachen cathedral to his adjacent palace, built of poor quality wood, collapses; Louis is hit by falling wood but not seriously hurt.

After an assembly at Aachen, Louis crowns his eldest son Lothar (born 795) as co-Emperor and makes his younger sons kings, Lewis of Bavaria and Pepin of Aquitaine; Bernard of Italy feels slighted as he is the son of Louis’ elder brother but is now junior to his younger cousins. After the assembly, Louis meets Emperor Leo’s envoys at Ingelheim in the middle Rhineland.

The Obodrites and Slav warlord Sclaomir rebel, the latter in a fury at being forced to cede his former sole control of the Obodrites to a new co-king called Cedraig (son of the late Thrasco), and Louis sends the Saxons against them; the sons of Godfrid in Denmark join an Obodrite force to sail up the Elbe and attack Esesfeld, which holds out.

Count Suppo of Brescia and bishop Ratold of Verona arrive to warn Louis as he returns to Aachen that Bernard has revolted and is blocking the alpine passes around Susa in Piedmont; Louis assembles a large army and Bernard agrees to come to Chalons-sur-Saone and submit to him. So do his accomplices, his friend Eggideo and his chamberlain Reginhard plus others; the bishops of Milan (Anselm) and Cremona (Wolfold) and bishop Theodulf of Orleans are also implicated.

Suppression of the rebellion of Bernard; the leading local North Italian loyalist dynast count Suppo is the main stalwart of Louis' victorious army and is created 'duke' of Parma and Piacenza as a reward. He also becomes a trusted local imperial 'missus'.

Pope Paschal backs archbishop Wulfred of Canterbury against Coenwulf of Mercia, but avoids demanding his immediate restoration to his see.

Battle of Llanfaes in the vale of Conwy, Gwynedd: the participants are not named but this presumably marks a resumption of the late 790s attacks on Gwynedd by its neighbour, Coenwulf of Mercia.

818 **BRITAIN**

Coenwulf of Mercia ravages Dyfed; this possibly fatally weakens its forces in fighting off the Viking raids on its coasts.

FRANCIA

Spring. After Easter, the assembly of the Franks tries Bernard and his conspirators at Aachen and sentences them all to death; Louis blinds them and puts them in monasteries, and the guilty bishops are deposed by a synod.

Louis leads his army from Vannes to ravage rebellious Brittany and arrest the plundering 'rebel' leader Morman, who is killed.

3 October. After the end of the Breton campaign, death of Louis' wife Ermengard two days after his return home.

Ljudovit, ruler of the lower Pannonian March (i.e. Northern Croatia), accuses his rival Cadolah of Friuli of misrule but is ignored.

819 **FRANCIA**

Early. Assembly at Aachen. Louis marries his second wife, Judith (born c. 805), daughter of count Welf.

Sclaomir of the Obodrites is forced to appear with his nobles at a meeting with the arriving Frankish army, accused of misrule, and deposed and deported; his rival Ceadrag is made sole ruler.

July. Assembly at Ingelheim; an army is ordered to punish Ljudovit of lower Pannonia who has now revolted, but he holds out. Death of Cadolah of Friuli; succeeded by Baldrich, who arrives in Carinthia to hear that Ljudovit's rebel army is nearby on the River Drava and successfully ambushes it.

Louis' son Pepin suppresses a Gascon revolt with fire and the sword.

Louis travels down the Rhine to the Ardennes for hunting and then winters at Aachen.

DENMARK

Harald, the Frankish candidate to be king, is escorted home by an Obodrite fleet; two of the sons of Godfrid accept him as their co-ruler and two others refuse and are driven out.

820

FRANCIA

Birth of Louis' and Judith's daughter Gisela, who is later married off to count Eberhard of Friuli (d. 866).

January. Count Bera of Barcelona (lord of the 'Spanish March' since 801) is accused of treason at an assembly at Rouen by count Sanilo.

He is defeated by Sanilo in 'trial by combat' at the imperial court, sacked and exiled to Rouen.

Three Frankish armies, from Bavaria, Carinthia, and Northern Italy, attack the rebel duke Ljudovit in lower Pannonia and ravage his lands but are unable to bring him to a successful battle.

Norse pirates attack Flanders and take loot thanks to the carelessness of the local guards, but have less success at the mouth of the Seine; they succeed in seizing loot in Gascony.

Plague, pestilence in men and cattle, and serious flooding in Francia.

BRITAIN

(or 821) Probable date of a major new military attack on Gwynedd by Coenwulf of Mercia, intending its conquest and annexation (or at least that of the coastal plain as far as the Conwy or Caernarfon). The war is underway before Coenwulf dies in 821, and apparently involves attacks on Powys to the South too.

Death of king Constantine of the Picts and of Dalriada, probably in his fifties at least given his thirty-one-year rule over the turbulent Picts that

only an adult could assume in 789; the (probably only personal) union of the two kingdoms continues under his younger brother, Angus mac Fergus.

BYZANTIUM

25 December. Murder at the Christmas Day service in the Sacred Palace of Emperor Leo V, by partisans of his arrested military colleague Michael ‘the Amorian’ who is about to be executed; Michael (II) is made Emperor.

821

FRANCIA

February. An assembly at Aachen agrees to launch another triple attack on Ljudovit and to attack the Umayyads in Catalonia.

Preceding a military assembly for the campaigns at Nijmegen in May, Louis renews his division of the Empire among his three sons to take account of the sacking of his nephew Bernard, giving Italy to his eldest son Lothar (1 May); he receives Papal envoys and after sending off the army to Pannonia heads to the Vosges to hunt in the summer.

Ladislav replaces his late uncle Bornas as duke of Dalmatia; Patriarch Fortunatus of Grado, adjacent to Venice, is accused of secret dealing with the rebel Ljudovit and flees to Zara en route to Constantinople.

BRITAIN

Late August/early September. ?Death of king Coenwulf of Mercia, on the eve of another major Welsh campaign, after a largely successful twenty-five-year reign – the last great warlord ruler of Mercia. He is succeeded by his younger brother Ceolwulf, who continues the Welsh war; the lack of an immediate coronation may imply that the war takes priority or Ceolwulf is already absent from court in Wales on campaign.

IRELAND

Viking attack on Howth near the mouth of the river Liffey; start of a second wave of Scandinavian raids on the Irish coasts.

FRANCIA

October. Marriage, at the Frankish assembly at Thionville, of Louis’ eldest son Lothar to Ermengarde, daughter of count Hugo of Tours (who d. 826); the leaders of the armies sent to lay waste to Ljudovit’s lands report back, and Louis pardons and restores their property to Bernard’s co-conspirators. Adalard of Corbie, the late Emperor Charles’ disgraced cousin, is recalled from exile and given his abbey back.

SPAIN

23 May. Death of Ummayyad emir al-Hakam of Al-Andalus after a reign of twenty-six years, aged probably fifty-two; he is succeeded by his son Abd-al-Rahman, who is aged around thirty and reigns for thirty years.

FRANCIA

August. At the assembly at Attigny, Louis does penance for his allegedly unjust treatment of his banished half-brothers, Charles' illegitimate sons, his nephew Bernard, and his cousins Wala and Abalard – possibly on the precedent of the holy penance of Emperor Theodosius for an unjust massacre in 390.

Ljubomir, evicted from his overrun lands, flees to Serbia, murders his host there, and sends envoys to Louis offering to surrender in return for pardon.

The Saxons build a new castle at Delbende East of the Elbe to hold the local Slavs back; the counts of the Spanish March attack the Moslem lands beyond the river Segre; the counts of the Breton border ravage Brittany to punish the defiant chieftain Wihomarc.

Autumn. Louis sends his son Lothar to Italy and his son Pepin, the latter after marrying the daughter of count Theotbert, to Aquitaine.

Autumn general assembly at Frankfurt; Louis receives submissive envoys with presents from the Bohemians, Moravians and other Eastern Slavs.

BRITAIN

The Mercians under Ceolwulf are recorded by Welsh sources as continuing the war in North/central Wales; the 'Annales Cambriae' give this date for their conquest of Powys. This is probably the date of the Mercian king allowing archbishop Wulfred to return to Canterbury and accepting his see's ecclesiastical officials' rights to name church office-holders during a vacancy in the archbishopric and to evict 'illegal' lay holders of church estates, as Wulfred has been demanding and as Rome has agreed. (Alternatively, Coenwulf may do this in late 821.)

17 September. Coronation of Ceolwulf, presumably after the campaign.

At around this time (pre-825) Cornwall is occupied and its kings suppressed by Egbert of Wessex, presumably 'training' his army for their coming challenge to Mercia and gaining extra, vassal troops. This may occur as early as c. 815, and ends effective Cornish independence by the declining kingdom of 'Dumnonia'.

ITALY

Suppo, 'duke' of Brescia and Parma/Piacenza, succeeds the Frankish court official Winigis, who abdicates his office to become a monk as his health declines, as duke of Spoleto in central Italy. He hands Brescia on to his son Mauring.

823

FRANCIA/ITALY

Easter. Lothar is anointed and crowned Emperor and king of Italy in Rome by the Pope.

Louis' half-brother Drogo is made bishop of Metz.

May. Frankish assembly at Frankfurt; Louis adjudicates between the two rival kings of the Slav 'Wilzi' and sons of deceased king Liub, the elder but recently deposed Milegast and the younger Celedrag; he decides in favour of the latter as a better ruler.

June. Louis visits Italy to confer with Lothar; the refugee Ljudovit is murdered by his host, the uncle of duke Bornha. He receives complaints against the Pope for the murder in prison of arrested 'plotters', the chief Papal notary Theodore and his son-in-law the 'nomenclator' Leo, and send an embassy to investigate.

13 June. Birth of Charles (later known as 'the Bald'), Louis' son by Judith; her determination to gain him some of his half-brothers' lands will wreck the 817/822 division of the Empire. Judith insists that Lothar be godfather at the baptism and promise not to oppose any grants of land to Charles, annoying him.

BRITAIN

Ceolwulf of Mercia is recorded as marching across Gwynedd to Rhuddlan on the Conwy, either along the coast or directly NW from annexed Powys. He is later forced to or voluntarily abdicates, possibly due to ill-health, after a two-year reign; he is the last male of his dynasty, and is succeeded by an elected noble, Beornwulf, who may be related to the 'usurper' Beornred of 757. He continues the Welsh war.

IRELAND

Viking attack on the offshore monastery of Skellig Michael.

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Autumn. Assembly meeting at Compiègne, where the Pope's envoys defend his actions and Louis agrees that he is innocent of the murders; Harald of Denmark turns up asking for help against the sons of Godfrid,

and counts Theothari and Rodmund are sent to investigate and visit those two; archbishop Ebbo of Rheims, in Denmark preaching, joins and then comes home with them.

823? BRITAIN

At around this date a king of Kent, Baldred, reappears – a Mercian puppet, and probably appointed as war-weakened Mercia's new king Beornwulf does not dare to continue the unpopular policy of direct rule enforced in 807.

IRELAND

The alliance of king/abbot Fedlimid mac Crimthainn of Munster and archbishop Artri mac Conchobar of Armagh establishes the 'Law of St Patrick' in Munster, thus allying the latter to the practices (and secular power) of the most powerful see in Ireland. Fedlimid and his army sacks the monastery of 'Gailinn of the Britons' in county Offaly, in his first major attack on his monastic rivals in the Irish midlands.

824 ITALY

24 February. Death of Pope Paschal, who is so unpopular in Rome for his authoritarian rule that the funeral has to be cancelled for fear of riots; he is later privately buried at the church of St Praxedis. Riots and dead-lock in the Roman elite about a successor ensue.

5 March. Death of duke Suppo, imperial loyalist leader in Northern Italy and duke of Spoleto; he is succeeded by an official called Adelard, who dies five months later and is replaced with Suppo's son, duke Mauring of Brescia; Mauring dies within weeks and is succeeded by his half-brother, Adelchis.

Emperor Louis is asked to intervene and sends his adviser Wala to organise an orderly election and choose someone suitable.

?5 June. Finally, the archpriest of the church of St Sabina on the Aventine Hill, Eugenius (II), is elected as Pope after selection by Wala; he is backed by the nobility and swears an oath of loyalty to Louis which recognises his uncertain position.

August. Louis sends his eldest son Lothar to Rome to preside at talks to restore good and popularly acceptable but still pro-Frankish governance by the Pope of his state, due to anger at Paschal's excesses; exiles are restored and relatives of people killed by Paschal are compensated; *11 November.* A subsequent formal 'Constitution' regularises the governance and legal system of the Papal states, with one Papal and one imperial commissioner acting as supreme legal authority, and allows the populace to take part in Papal elections again (banned in 769); each new Pope has

to swear allegiance to a resident imperial 'legate', and all citizens have to swear loyalty to the Emperor like ordinary Frankish citizens. A Papal synod then confirms these arrangements.

August–November. Louis and his sons Pepin and Lewis command the three parts of an expedition to punish the Bretons for disloyalty.

Counts Aeblus and Asinarius, in command of an expedition to the upper Ebro, are ambushed and captured by the Basques; the former is sent as a prisoner to Cordoba and the latter is released as a relative of his captors.

BRITAIN

Religious council of the Southern bishoprics held at Clovesho.

Ealhstan succeeds as bishop of Sherborne; he is a stalwart of Egbert's family's kingdom for the next forty-three years.

825 BYZANTIUM/FRANKISH EMPIRE

?*Spring.* Byzantine embassy returns from Western 'empire'.

Wihomarc the rebel Breton leader arrives at the Frankish assembly at Aachen, along with most of the nobility, and excuses his past disloyalty and is pardoned; he is allowed to return home but is later murdered after further trouble by the local new Frankish 'strongman', count Lambert of Nantes.

The Bulgars and Obodrites put their rival cases over the placing of the Frankish/Bulgar frontier (i.e. in Eastern Hungary) to Louis, who sends envoys to the Bulgar 'Khan'; Louis then goes hunting in the Vosges before the next (August) assembly at Aachen.

BRITAIN

Rebellion in Cornwall, which has recently been conquered by king Egbert of Wessex – possibly instigated by Mercia whose king Beornwulf invades Wessex while its king is away fighting the Cornish. Egbert defeats the Cornish at the battle of the 'Tax Ford', marches back, and defeats Beornwulf at the crucial battle of Ellandun near Marlborough in Wiltshire. From the results, the Mercian army is clearly severely mauled and demoralised; Egbert sends his son Aethelwulf to invade and take over Kent, aided by bishop Ealhstan of Sherborne, expelling the Mercian puppet-king Baldred.

Aethelwulf now replaces Baldred as king of Kent, which is thus a tributary to Wessex with the extended kingdom of all England South of the Thames created abortively by Caedwalla in 686–8 made permanent. Probably Egbert and his kin are more acceptable than Mercia to the Kentishmen due to a blood-link to their royal family, particularly if Egbert's father

was the king 'Ealhmund/Eanmund' of Kent in the 70s–80s and he is related to the 760s king Egbert too.

(or 826?) Revolt of Essex and East Anglia against Mercia, backed by Wessex; king Sigeric of Essex disappears from the records and is probably removed as a Mercian puppet by Wessex, replaced by its own client-king or annexed. (Sigered appears as king a few years later, possibly as a Wessex puppet or by a recovered Mercia after 830.)

The East Anglian revolt is probably led by Athelstan, who now appears in the coinage as king – he may be a rebelling Mercian governor or a new, rebel leader.

One theory has it that Athelstan is a younger son or grandson of Egbert and is thus imposed by Wessex.

Mercia invades East Anglia in retaliation (either 825 or early 826?) but its army has not recovered from Ellandun and Beornwulf is killed; he is succeeded by the 'ealdorman' Ludecan, of uncertain or no royal blood. In effect, Egbert is now the dominant ruler in Southern England.

Death of king Hywel ap Caradog, disputed ruler of Gwynedd since 796 and foe of Cynan ap Rhodri in a civil war of uncertain length. Hywel, head of the dynasty of the sub-kingdom of Rhos (i.e. Clywd) which has seemingly been overrun by Mercia in c. 820–1, is succeeded by Cynan's daughter Essylt's son by prince Gwriad of the Isle of Man, Merfyn 'Frych' ('the Freckled'); this may mark the arrival of troops from the Isle of Man, whose kings are apparently descended from the C5th dynasty of Coel 'Hen' of York via the late C6th poet Llywarch 'Hen', to tip the balance in the conflict between the two rival dynasties in Gwynedd. The new dynasty takes a more aggressive and successful line to the Mercians, who seem to control most of Powys as of this date but are probably driven back due to their losses in Southern England.

Viking sack of the monastery of Iona in the Hebrides; a monk called Blathmac is martyred for refusing to reveal the location of hidden treasures.

IRELAND

Sacking of the Co. Offaly monastery of the 'Dealbha Breatha' by the aggressively secular king Fedlimid mac Crimthainn of Munster (abbot of Cork and Clonfert) and his raiding army, who are attacking his midlands monastic rivals on a regular basis.

FRANKISH EMPIRE

The Bretons elect a new king, Wiomarch; he travels to Aachen to do homage to Emperor Louis to secure his position from another Frankish invasion, and is accepted as the king's vassal. On his return home his

jealous rival for regional primacy and possible local future target, ‘Count of the Breton march’ Lambert of Nantes, has him assassinated.

October. Peace agreed with the sons of Godfrid after they send an embassy to Louis.

November. Frankish Church Council in Paris condemns both iconoclasts and iconophiles.

826 BYZANTIUM/ITALY

New ‘Strategus’ Constantine Sudes of Sicily plans to arrest fleet-commander Euphemius at request of wife’s brothers; returning from raid on Africa, Euphemius hears and declares himself Emperor, seizing Syracuse; Constantine flees to Catania and is killed, but Euphemius’ lieutenant Plato returns to imperial side and attacks Syracuse; Euphemius flees to Africa.

FRANCIA/DENMARK.

June. Assembly at Ingelheim; the sons of Godfrid send envoys to confirm the peace, and the new Pope sends an embassy too.

Baptism as a Christian of co-king Harald of Denmark, at Mainz, with Louis as his sponsor and godfather; his pagan co-ruler Horik refuses to follow suit or to join Harald in allying with the Franks.

Envoys from Naples come to Louis as he is travelling in the Rhineland. Aizo, a lord of the Basque marchlands in the upper Ebro, defects to the Umayyads and sends his brother to the Emir for aid.

October. Ceadrag, ruler of the Obodrites, is received at the Ingelheim assembly and detained until Frankish envoys have ascertained that he is wanted back by his people and likely to remain loyal.

827 FRANCIA/ITALY

The Emperor’s chancellor Helisachar and counts Matfrid (of Orleans) and Hugh (of Tours) plus Hildebrand and Donatus aid count Bernard of Barcelona, a godson of Louis and son of the late count William of Toulouse who has governed the ‘Spanish March’ since 821, in driving back Aizo’s rebels and their Arab assistance. The Emir’s commander Abu Marwan is able to pillage the Gerona region successfully before Pepin arrives from Louis with the main Frankish army. Matfrid and Hugh end up detesting Bernard, which will lead to them backing Lothar against Bernard’s ally Empress Judith.

June. Euphemius leads at Marzana with seventy Arab ships loaned by Aghlabid ‘Emir’ Ziyadat-Allah of Tunisia; loyal commander Plato attacks them but is defeated and goes to Calabria for reinforcements but is killed.

‡27 August. Death of Pope Eugenius II. The archdeacon Valentine, son of Leontius, is elected unanimously by the people and nobility as the ‘Constitution’ of 824 is brought into effect, but he only lasts a month according to the scholar/historian Einhard.

DENMARK/FRANCIA

Expulsion of king Harald by the pagan sons of Godfrid; his pagan colleague Horik, who has failed to turn up at the Frankish assembly at Nijmegen as ordered by Louis, is sole ruler (to 854).

BRITAIN

Apparent date of the death of king Ludecan of Mercia in a failed invasion of East Anglia – the second Mercian king to be killed there in two years. The victor is presumably king Athelstan, with or without aid from Wessex, but he is ignored by the pro-Wessex ‘Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’ accounts written in the 880s. The next king of the now collapsing Mercia is the obscure Wiglaf, called after the eponymous hero’s nephew in the (C8th??) literary epic ‘Beowulf’. He has a (teenage?) grandson by 840, so he was evidently at least in his late thirties.

IRELAND

Battle of Leth Cam near Kilmore, Ulster: king Niall ‘Caille’, ruler of Ailech and head of the Northern Ui Niall, and his own ‘Cenel nEoghan’ sub-kingdom plus the other Northern Ui Niall sub-kingdom of Cenel Connaill, defeat the ‘Airghalla’ under king Cummascach and his brother Congalach who are killed. This decisive defeat of the ‘Airghalla’ is the culmination of a dispute over control of the abbacy and (arch) bishopric of Armagh, into which Cummascach has intruded his half-brother Artri by 825 at the expense of Niall’s confessor, Eoghan. Arti is subsequently sacked and replaced by Eoghan.

ITALY

‡October/November. Gregory IV is elected as Pope.

Plato’s cousin Michael, governor of Panormus, leads Sicilian resistance.

BYZANTIUM

‡Summer. Michael sends Theodore Crithinus with embassy to Louis.

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Asad lead an Arab army across Sicily to Syracuse to start siege, and governor Michael governor of Panormus/Palermo defeated trying to come

to aid; Michael II sends huge fleet led by Cibyrrhaeot marines; Arabs decimated by plague, Asad dies, and as Michael's fleet arrives Arabs retreat to take inland towns; Photinus 'Strategus' of Anatolicon lands on Crete but is heavily defeated.

Louis sends ambassador to Byzantium.

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Counts Matfrid and Hugh are sacked and exiled, apparently after complaints to Louis by their foe count Bernard of Barcelona.

June. Louis holds an assembly at Ingelheim and orders Lothar and Pepin to attack Spain; he receives a Papal embassy (Quirinus and Theophylact) and goes to Thionville to see Lothar and his army off. But Lothar halts his campaign at Lyons as the Arabs fail to send any troops to the Spanish March that summer to be fought.

The sons of Godfrid retaliate for a raid on their lands by Harald, from Frankish territory but not authorised by the local commanders, by attacking across the Elbe and sacking Frankish villages; they semi-apologise to the Franks but claim it was justified and Harald's fault.

Count Boniface commands a fleet to defend Corsica, and as no Arab pirates turn up raids Tunisia.

829

ITALY

Giovanni Participazio succeeds brother Giustiniano as 'Doge' of Venice.

BYZANTIUM

Michael II is ill with kidney disease and 2 *October* dies aged around sixty; sixteen?-year-old son Theophilus succeeds with stepmother Euphrosyne as co-ruler at Michael's order.

BRITAIN

King Egbert invades Mercia, deposes king Wiglaf, and rules as its king for a year – the ultimate humiliation for Mercia, only four years after dominating Southern England. Egbert marches as far North as Dore in the Peak District, and is recognised as overlord by king Eanred of Northumbria; it is probably now that he assumes the ancient title of 'Bretwalda' ('wide ruler?') as the pre-eminent king in Britain and overlord of a coalition of sub-kings. He then (now or in 830) invades Powys from Mercia, probably to unite the Mercian army under his leadership and show his concern for protecting its frontier against the hereditary enemy.

In Gwynedd, this is the apparent date (the fourth year of king Merfyn, acceded 825) of the commissioning of the 'Historia Brittonum' by Merfyn,

as a patriotic ‘history’ (more legend and inspiring propaganda) of the British struggle against the Saxons; it is written by ‘Nennius’, probably a Gwynedd bishop, and heavily features the elusive figure of ‘King Arthur’ as well as the more historical ‘Vortigern’ (fl. 440s) and Ambrosius Aurelianus (fl. 460s?). ‘Nennius’ also plays up the legend of the founding of the ancient dynasty of British kings by ‘Brutus the Trojan’, a prince linked to the ancestors of the founders of Rome mentioned in the C1st BC Roman epic the ‘Aeneid’.

FRANCIA

August. Assembly at Worms, intended to prepare for a war against an expected Danish attack on Saxony which does not materialise; Louis recalls count Bernard of Barcelona/Septimania, commander of the Spanish March, to become his chamberlain. Bernard allies with Empress Judith, to whose son Charles he is guardian, to undermine the Emperor’s eldest son Lothar, or so Lothar complains; the latter is annoyed at Louis handing over titular rule of Alemannia and Rhaetia to Charles.

830

FRANCIA

2 March. Louis leaves Aachen to head for an army assembly and then to attack Brittany, but his campaign is unpopular and mutiny spreads as his vassals assemble; the plotters intend to make Lothar Emperor, banish Judith, and kill her ally Bernard of Septimania.

April. Lothar, allegedly fearing being sidelined in favour of his half-brother Charles, is in Italy as the army mutiny breaks out against Judith and the Emperor’s ‘evil councillors’, headed by Bernard, in the Frankish army assembled at Rennes intended to attack Brittany. Heavy rain adds to poor morale and discontent. The campaign is abandoned, and Pepin and Lewis are invited to join the revolt by the plotters; Pepin arrives to assist in a coup.

Louis sets out for Rennes, but the army march on Paris demanding justice on his wife and favourites and he has to send Judith to sanctuary at Laons; the army, joined by Pepin, seizes Louis at Compiègne, holds him and Charles prisoner, and makes Judith come to ask him to enter a monastery and then demand that she take the veil as a nun to remove her from court, sending her brothers Conrad and Rudolf to Pepin’s base in Aquitaine; Bernard flees back to Septimania and his brother Herbert is captured, blinded and sent to Italy.

May. Lothar arrives and joins the coup which now has Pepin as its leader, according to Einhard ignoring the latter’s advice to steer clear of it. (Nithard makes him more actively pro-rebellion.)

May. A general assembly at Compiègne sees Louis forced by the plotters and his three older sons to admit his misrule and his favourites’ guilt,

abandon his wife who is put in the nunnery of St Croix at Poitiers, and agree to rule with the advice of his co-Emperor Lothar, who is now the real ruler. Louis is then removed to a monastery, probably that of St Medard at Soissons.

BRITAIN

Either before or after Egbert returns to Wessex, the Mercians revolt and throw off his rule – the course of events is unclear. Ex-king Wiglaf returns to Mercia and is put back on the throne, which may be done by a rebel assembly of nobles or else by a grudging invitation by Egbert to head off a growing rebellion. Wiglaf may or may not be a vassal of Wessex until Egbert dies (839), but in any case he is able to keep the traditional Mercian frontier on the upper Thames (including rule of Northern Berkshire) rather than accept any loss of territory. Egbert's continuing domination of East Anglia is unclear.

IRELAND

A major abbey in Co. Westmeath (NW Midhe), probably Fore Abbey, is sacked and its possessions looted by the aggressive king/abbot Fedlimid mac Crimthainn of Munster, who is 'targeting' rival midlands monasteries of his own Clonfert and those run by his Ui Niall enemies. The Ui Niall prince Falloman, nephew of the 'High King' Conchobar, falls in battle against him. His army also raids and punishes the 'Ui Bruin' dynasty of Connacht to the West – and this warfare serves to undermine Ui Niall and Connacht resources to meet the new Scandinavian raiders and settlers in battle.

FRANCIA

After discontent rises against Lothar's rule, loyalists approach Louis and get his help for a counter-coup; he sends the monk Guntbald on 'religious matters' to his younger sons Lewis and Pepin to promise them more of the Empire if they help depose Lothar, and they agree. An assembly is called at Nijmegen with Louis banning everyone from coming armed and it agrees to depose Lothar to just nominal co-rule and restore Louis, which is done; Judith and her brothers are also recalled.

FRANCIA

2 *February*. A general assembly at Aachen confirms the result of the counter-coup; Lothar is removed from inheriting any lands but Italy and banned from leaving Italy without permission, and extra lands are given to Lewis and Pepin, and assorted co-plotters of his are disgraced and exiled with him forced to pronounce sentence himself. Burgundy and Rheims are given to Charles.

1 May. Louis pardons those sentenced at Aachen at a new assembly at Ingelheim, and reconciles with Lothar.

IRELAND

Attack on the Ulster 'Ulaid' sub-kingdom of 'Conaille Muirthemne' by a large army of Vikings; king Mael Brigde (reigned 824?–69) is captured and held to ransom. The leader of the attackers may be the elusive Danish commander Ragnar 'Lothbrok' ('Leather Breeches') as implied by a garbled account of this expedition by the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus, though much of Ragnar's 'career' in subsequent literature may be fable.

FRANCIA

Autumn. A council is held at Thionville, and Judith and Bernard both swear oaths to their innocence and are officially cleared and restored to all their possessions.

27 December. Pepin of Aquitaine flees at night from the court after a quarrel with his father, who he complains is treating him dishonourably; Louis subsequently either gives Aquitaine now to Charles or in spring 832.

832

BRITAIN

March. Death of archbishop Wulfred of Canterbury after twenty-six and a half years in office, around six in exile (816–?22). He is succeeded (June) by Feolgilð who dies two months later.

IRELAND

Viking sack of the monastery of St Cronan (mid-C6th?) at Clondalkin SW of Dublin, possibly indicating the temporary (?) presence of Scandinavian raiders at the site of Dublin ('Dark Pool' in Gaelic) on the lower Liffey nearby; a fortress is erected at Clondalkin to defend the approach to Dublin, of uncertain date but pre-860s, possibly after the Vikings took Dublin in 837 or 841.

(832/3, over two years) Attacks on the great Irish midlands monasteries of Clonmacnois and Durrow, and ravaging of their lands and burning of their non-church buildings, by the aggressive king Fedlimid mac Crimthainn of Munster (abbot of Cork and Clonfert). The attack on Durrow is probably aimed at its Ui Niall 'Clann Colman' patrons to wreck their resources and prestige, as a 'Munster vs Midhe' campaign.

FRANCIA

Louis summons Lothar from Italy and Lewis from Bavaria to his April assembly planned for Orleans in April.

April. Lewis revolts against his father's grant of 'his' Alemannia to Charles and invades it, joined by the disgraced and exiled count Matfrid; Louis changes his plan for an assembly to holding one at Mainz for 18 April, gathers an army and crosses the Rhine to retake Alemannia as Lewis arrives at Worms with his rebels to be surprised that his father is nearby with a larger army; Louis chases Lewis back into Bavaria where (August) Lewis submits at Augsburg.

Pepin remains in half-hearted revolt against his father in Aquitaine; Louis holds his autumn assembly at Orleans and then summons Pepin; Pepin meets Louis as requested at Jouac near Limoges (September); he is arrested and told he will have to live under supervision away from Aquitaine; he is possibly now sacked as king of Aquitaine if not earlier, but escapes his guards at Doue. Bernard of Septimania/Barcelona is sacked again and replaced by Berengar 'the Wise', count of Toulouse.

Louis spends Christmas at Le Mans, possibly lingering in Neustria to keep an eye on the fugitive Pepin.

ITALY

Death of prince Sico of Benevento; succeeded by his son Sicard, who rules for seven years.

833

FRANCIA

Louis returns to Aachen in the New Year, and then goes to Worms for Lent and Easter (March–April).

Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, writes an 'open letter' to Louis accusing him of breaking his oath of 817 to make Lothar his full heir to the Empire and stealing his lands.

Count Wala, Helsichar, Matfrid and other disgraced and exiled pro-Lothar foes of Judith are recalled by a second conspiracy; the plotters ask Lewis and Pepin to bring their armies from Bavaria and Aquitaine to help and recall Lothar from Italy with his troops to join them in a confrontation with Louis and Judith. The latter are still at Worms (Pentecost, late May).

Pope Gregory goes to France to mediate in revolt of Emperor Louis' sons; the three meet in Alsace, with the Pope escorting and loudly supporting Lothar; 24 *June*. The two opposing armies meet at Rothfels near Colmar, with the rebel sons at Mount Sigwald; the Pope goes to Louis' camp to encourage 'justice' for Lothar and to undermine the Emperor's allies' resistance.

The rebel Lothar, Pepin and Lewis make enough promises about removing Louis' unpopular advisors and wife to start a flood of desertions from Louis' camp, and on the night of 29–30 June most of Louis' supporters leave his camp.

30 June. At the 'Field of Lies' the deserted Emperor is forced to submit to his sons, who the Pope backs, and is sent to the monastery of St Medard at Soissons; Charles is sent to the monastery at Prum and allegedly encouraged by Lothar to become a monk. Judith is taken to Tortona in Italy as a prisoner by Lothar's men.

Pope Gregory returns to Italy; a general assembly is held at Compiègne (October) where many of Louis' followers join in the oaths of loyalty to Lothar, who now receives Provence, Burgundy, Frisia, and the West bank of the Rhine to add to Italy.

November. Louis is tried for misrule at Soissons, who archbishop Ebbo of Rheims assists by publicly listing the Emperor's 'crimes', and does public penance under threat of excommunication; however, now Lewis and Pepin (mainly the former) are perturbed at all the extra land that Lothar has seized.

Lothar arrives at Aachen (November), but (December) Lewis comes to Mainz to meet him and argues with him about releasing Louis to no effect; Lothar returns to Aachen a few days before Christmas.

BRITAIN

August. Ceolnoth becomes archbishop of Canterbury; in office to February 870, for thirty-six years.

IRELAND

Death of 'High King' Conchobar mac Donnchad, ruler since at least 819 and head of the Southern Ui Niall and of their 'Clann Colmann' branch of Midhe; succeeded by his predecessor and rival Aed Oirdnide's son Niall 'Caille' ('of Cellach'), king of the Northern Ui Niall of 'Cenel nEoghan' at Ailech since he deposed his cousin Murchad in 823 and head of the Northern Ui Niall. Niall subsequently wins a major victory over Vikings who have raided Derry.

FRANCIA

January. Lewis of Germany sends an embassy to Aachen to argue to no avail with Lothar and they meet ex-Emperor Louis (under supervision).

February. Lewis of Germany raises his army in revolt against Lothar, and sends envoys to Pepin of Aquitaine who joins him; they advance on Aachen where Lothar is holding Louis. Lothar takes his father and his half-brother Charles as prisoners to St Denis outside Paris, but releases

them as Lewis and Pepin close in and (27 February) flees as his supporters melt away before his brothers' advancing armies; Lothar flees to Vienne. Count Warin of Burgundy advances to the Marne on Louis' behalf, joined by Bernard.

1 March. Louis is formally restored to power at an assembly at the Basilica of St Denis; Louis sends orders to Lothar to withdraw from the Rhone valley to Italy and receives and pardons Pepin, who is confirmed as ruler of Aquitaine.

Louis and Lewis confer about confronting Lothar over Easter.

Judith's guards in Italy desert Lothar and take her to Aachen to her husband as it is rumoured that she will be killed.

Lothar's allies in Western Neustria, Lambert of Nantes and count Matfrid, defeat an army sent by Louis and kill its commander Wido and count Odo of Orleans; Lambert's party send to Lothar to join them, and he advances as far as Chalons-sur-Saone which he storms and burns (June) as an act of revenge on its lord count Warin of Burgundy, having his foe count Bernard's nun sister Gerberga drowned in the river as a witch.

Louis calls his vassals to a military assembly at Langres (October) after Lothar refuses a promise of safety and reconciliation if he comes to court; Lewis of Germany answers an appeal for help by Louis, and their armies join at Blois as Lothar advances as far as Orleans. Lothar marches to confront his father's army at Chouzy, but his men refuse to take part in a fratricidal battle and he has to give up and retire; he is ordered to withdraw to Italy within a time-limit but is promised its rule on the same terms as his uncle Pepin (d. 810) held it under the late Emperor Charles.

Louis holds his autumn assembly at Attigny (November) and goes to Aachen for the winter, with Christmas at Metz with his half-brother archbishop Drogo.

ITALY

Deposition of 'Doge' Giovanni Participazio of Venice; succeeded by Pietro Tradonico.

Frankish deposition of duke Adelchis of Spoleto; he is succeeded by a loyalist official from Neustria, count (818–31) Lambert of Nantes and the 'Breton March', who rules for two years.

FRANCIA

Sack of the North Sea trading-port of Dorestad by a fleet of Vikings (repeated in 835 and 836).

BRITAIN

Death of king Angus mac Fergus of the united realm of the Picts and the 'Scots' of Dalriada; his nephew Drust mac Constantine and an obscure 'Talorc mac Uthall' succeed to the Pictish throne and it is not clear who rules the kingdom of Dalriada, possibly the obscure Alpin of Galloway (father of the later king of both realms, Cinaed/Kenneth).

835

FRANCIA

2 February. An assembly and ecclesiastical synod at Thionville backs Louis' restoration; *28 February.* At Metz the ex-Lothar supporter archbishop Ebbo of Rheims, who presided at Louis' deposition in 833 and has been granted extra lands by Lothar as a reward, has to confess his 'sins' in his own pulpit and is then sacked. So is archbishop Agobard of Lyons.

Easter, 18 April. Louis is at Metz.

Summer. An assembly at Lyons is held, where Pepin and Lewis turn up and are received graciously by Louis but Lothar fails to arrive; Louis summons Berengar of Barcelona and his local foes for an investigation of their rivalries, and after the meeting Berengar suddenly dies so Louis restores the controversial Bernard again.

BRITAIN

Viking attack on the Isle of Sheppey, off Kent.

836

BRITAIN

Viking attack on Devon, leading to a battle with and a rare defeat for king Egbert at either Carhampton (NW Devon on the Bristol Channel) or, less likely, Charmouth (the Devon/Dorset border on the English Channel). The latter battle may be linked to a legendary attack on W Dorset of around this date and the martyrdom of 'St Wite', holy anchoress of Whitchurch Canoniconum.

IRELAND

Devastation of Connacht by the Vikings, launched both from the River Shannon to the East and from the West coast.

Attack on the monastery of Kildare and capture of abbot Forindon of Armagh by the Munster armies of king Feidlimid mac Crimthainn, who is also abbot of Clonfert and a patron of the 'Celi De' reformers; this leads to a war with the 'High King' Niall 'Caille', dominant warlord of the North and patron of Armagh.

FRANCIA

Exchange of envoys with the Danish king Horik; the latter demands blood-money (Germanic ‘weregild’) for the Frankish execution of some Danish raiders.

ITALY

Death of count Lambert of Spoleto, a partisan of Emperor Louis’ son Lothar, in an epidemic in Italy; succeeded in his county of Nantes in Francia by his son by his first marriage (to Itta), Lambert, and in Spoleto by his son by his second marriage (to Adelaide, the daughter of the late king Pepin ‘of Italy’ who died in 810), Guy.

837

FRANCIA

2 February. Church Council at Aachen; the bishops order Pepin of Aquitaine to restore disputed church property which he has seized.

ITALY

After temporary loss of Panormus, Theophilus sends his son-in-law ‘Caesar’ Alexius Musele to Sicily with large expedition.

FRANCIA

May. Louis holds his spring assembly at Thionville after a tour of his defensive measures in Frisia.

Plundering of the Rhine-mouth island of Walcheren by a fleet of Vikings, probably from Denmark – directed by Horik to put pressure on ?Louis at Aachen that autumn.

Louis prepares to journey to Italy and demands an appropriate reception from Lothar who despite sending count Wala to his father to arrange a safe-conduct for his own visit to court (May) has then refused to come on account of an epidemic. Lothar’s supporters Wala, High and Matfrid all die in the epidemic. The Norse attacks along the Channel lead Louis to postpone his journey. Louis heads to Nijmegen to enquire into the failure of the Frisian defences and replaces some of the accused local commanders.

Charles is given extensive lands in Flanders and the Rhine-mouth region by his father Louis, along with the counties of Toul, Blois, Troyes, Auxerre, Sens, and Chartres, plus (now or later?) the county of Paris; confirmed at an assembly.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of Aethelweard succeeding Athelstan as king of East Anglia, presumably now no longer a vassal of Wessex. The fate of Athelstan is unclear, and if he was the son or grandson of Egbert of Wessex he presumably returned home as he next appears as sub-king of Kent in 839.

Death or deposition of the two kings of the Picts, Drust and Talorc; the kingdoms of the Picts and of Dalriada appear to be ruled by a warlord called Eoganan, possibly reuniting in the face of fierce attacks by the Scandinavian 'Viking' settlers in the Hebrides and/or Eastern coastal raiders.

IRELAND

Arrival of one Viking fleet of sixty ships in the River Boyne, and of another the same size in the river Liffey; the latter takes the small local settlement at the site of Dublin, whose establishment as a Viking base is dated at this year by the 'Annals of Innisfallen'. Some Viking sources name their commander in the Liffey expedition as the semi-legendary 'Turgeis' (Thorgils?), who the C13th Icelandic writer Snorri Sturlason mistakenly calls the son of unifying king Harald 'Finehair' of Norway (lived c. 850–934).

The Viking commander in Eastern Midhe, Saxolfr or Saxolb, is killed in battle by the 'Ui Colgain' sub-dynasty of Midhe; this may indicate that he, not 'Turgeis', is their current commander based at Dublin.

King Feidlimid mac Crimthainn of Munster crosses the Shannon to invade Southern Connacht and ravage the lands of the 'Ui Maine'; he is defeated by king Cathal mac Muirgussa, head of the 'Ui Bruin', in battle on the plain of Mag nAi and driven back.

FRANCIA

Autumn. Lothar fortifies the Alpine passes to deny his father admission to Italy.

838

BRITAIN

A major Viking invasion aids a revolt against Egbert of Wessex by the Cornishmen, who were last suppressed in 825. Egbert defeats the coalition at Hingston Down near Launceston, thus presumably crossing the upper Tamar to forestall an attack on Devon. Cornwall returns to rule by Wessex.

FRANCIA

March. Lothar and Lewis meet at Trent in Northern Italy, and Louis interprets this as a plot to attack him; Lewis is called to meet his father ('Octavo of Easter', i.e. 21–27 April) and swears an oath that he promised nothing against his father's interests at the meeting.

A Viking force en route to raid Francia is broken up by a storm.

June. Charles' fifteenth birthday is marked by his being knighted and receiving more lands. At the assembly at Nijmegen (May–June), Lewis has to come to have his 'plot' with Lothar investigated further and has a row with his father, who seizes the Rhineland and Saxony from him but leaves him with Bavaria.

September. Having suppressed another conspiracy at the summer assembly at Quierzy, Louis now makes Charles ruler of the lands from the Seine to the Loire to add to his earlier grants (i.e. in effect Neustria) and grants him a crown; Pepin has to turn up and accepts the new plan. Charles goes on to St Quentin to celebrate the saint's feast (31 October) with his brother, abbot Hugh, and then receives envoys from Horik at Attigny; the latter assures that he has arrested and executed illegal raiders of Francia.

13 December. Death of Pepin of Aquitaine; his sons Pepin II and Charles lay claim to his lands but when Louis, en route to Frankfurt, hears he wants them to go to Charles.

839

BRITAIN

(Easter, Annals of St Bertin) Egbert seeks permission from Emperor Lewis to travel across his lands to Rome on pilgrimage to Rome, probably implying his abdication in the tradition of Caedwalla in 688 and Ine in 726. This is forestalled by his death, aged either in his late fifties (if he was around twenty to twenty-two in 802) or a decade older (if he was a credible candidate for the throne in 786).

Egbert is succeeded as king of Wessex by his (sole or elder?) son Aethelwulf, sub-king of Kent since 825; the rule of Kent goes to Athelstan, possibly the ex-king of East Anglia and either the eldest son of Aethelwulf or the second son of Egbert. If the former, Athelstan is evidently born in the 820s at the latest and so is around twenty-five years older than his youngest brother Alfred (born 848/9) so they presumably have different mothers.

King Eoganan of the Picts and of Dalriada (disputed in the latter?) is killed in battle with most of the Pictish nobles, in a major victory by a Scandinavian army. This may lead to the 'Vikings' rampaging across the Pictish kingdom unchecked, but the sources are limited and unreliable.

FRANCIA

March–April. Louis marches to the Rhine against Lewis, who blocks his crossing at Mainz but after Louis eventually crosses unnoticed the Saxons turn on Lewis and march to aid the Emperor; Lewis flees back East to Bavaria and subsequently submits.

30 May. Lothar obeys a summons to the next assembly at Worms and is reconciled with his father but has to swear never to hinder his half-brother Charles' rights; *1–4 June.* Talks between Louis and Lothar's representatives about an equal division of the Empire between Lothar and Charles, with Lewis left out of it and only allowed to keep Bavaria. The subsequent agreement divides the Empire at the River Meuse – Charles is to rule West of it, Lothar to the East (plus Italy), with Lewis receiving only Bavaria and being ordered to stay there.

July. Lothar returns to Italy.

Autumn. Louis summons his army and marches into Aquitaine via an assembly at Clermont to put down opposition to Charles; the rebels hide in the mountains and forests of the Auvergne and Louis has to give up for the winter.

The Sorbs attack the Eastern frontier and (autumn) are punished by a Saxon/Thuringian army on Louis' orders; the Sorb king Czimislav is killed.

ITALY

Prince Sicard of Benevento is murdered after a seven-year reign and succeeded by the usurper Radelchis, who rules until 851; the late prince's brother Sicanulf survives as the rebel prince of the seaport of Salerno.

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4 Chronology: AD 840–962

840

FRANCIA/ITALY

February. Louis is at Poitiers with Judith and the new ‘king of Aquitaine’ Charles, overseeing the attempt to put down trouble in Aquitaine on behalf of the late Pepin’s sons.

Spring. Louis hears of a new rebellion by his son Lewis against his receiving only Bavaria, and plans an assembly at Worms for 1 July ahead of attacking him. He leaves Judith and their son Charles at Poitiers, celebrates Easter at Aachen (28 March), and heads for the Rhine en route to Thuringia.

20 June. Death of Louis at Ingelheim on the Rhine, aged sixty-two; he is succeeded as Emperor and as ruler of the Eastern lands and Italy by his eldest son Lothar as arranged in 839, with Charles having Western Francia to the Meuse; Lewis of Germany, given only Bavaria in 839, revolts to force a more equal division of dominions. The late Emperor is buried at Metz by his half-brother, bishop Drogo.

Lothar arrives at Strasbourg from Italy (24 July), marches into Germany and secures the Rhineland, but Lewis occupies Frankfurt, sends his troops to overrun defiant Saxony, and confronts him near the Rhine/Main junction at Kostheim; they agree to a truce and to meet again in November, if necessary for a battle.

Lothar sends to Charles promising his goodwill as his godfather, but plans to attack him once Lewis is neutralised; Charles secures the backing of the assembly of Aquitaine at Bourges (July) and promises goodwill and loyalty to Lothar: he is invited to Quierzy by most of the local nobles to secure it from Lothar; and arrives to win their backing. But Charles has to postpone a showdown with Lothar as he hears that his nephew Pepin II is trying to attack his mother Judith and retake Aquitaine.

With his foe Emperor Louis dead, Lothar’s partisan, ex-archbishop Ebbo of Rheims, secures his restoration to his see with Lothar’s backing.

Landulf ‘the Old’, ‘gastald’ (Lombard district/city governor) of Capua, and his ally Guaifer of Salerno rescue the imprisoned brother of the late

prince Sicard of Benevento, Siconulf, and acclaim him in Salerno as a rival ruler of Benevento to the current usurper, Radelchis. Radelchis brings in Arab mercenaries to help his army, and Landulf responds in kind; a destructive civil war follows in Capua and Benevento.

?Gauzbert, younger brother of count Rorgo of Maine (d. 839/40), succeeds him as regent and later full ruler, displacing his nephew Rorgo II.

BRITAIN

(Islamic year 840/1) Outbreak of the rebellion of the Eastern Spanish Moslem chieftain Musa ibn Musa, founder of the 'Ibn Qays' autonomist dynasty of Saragossa, and his Basque half-brother Inigo Arista (lord of Pamplona) after their kinsmen Abul Yabbar ibn Qasi was expelled from his lands by the brothers Abdallah, governor of Saragossa, and Ibn Kalyab, governor of Tudela; they secure the hilly region on the Navarrese frontier but are eventually induced by military pressure from an expedition by the Emir's son Mutarrif to pledge allegiance to the Emir again.

?(or 839) Death of king Wiglaf of Mercia; according to the medieval hagiography of his grandson (St) Wigstan/Wystan, his son Wigmund has died and his grandson Wigmund, whose mother is the late king Ceolwulf's daughter, turns down the throne to live as a holy hermit. The new king is Beorthwulf, from his name presumably related to (son or brother of?) the earlier king Beornwulf who was killed c. 826.

The Wessex 'ealdorman' Wulfheard of Hampshire defeats a raiding Viking force of thirty-three shiploads at Southampton. Later 'ealdorman' Aethelhelm (of Dorset?) is defeated and killed by the Vikings at Portland, presumably where they have camped by the secure harbour.

IRELAND

King Feidlimid of Munster leads his army into Midhe to raid the Ui Niall lands and insults his enemy, 'High King' Niall 'Caille', by camping at the High Kings' traditional ceremonial 'capital' at the Hill of Tara; Niall does not attack him but raids his allies' lands in county Offaly. Neither see the raiding Vikings as their primary target let alone think of combining against them.

Death of king Murchad mac Aedo of Connacht, head of his branch of the 'Sil Cathail' part of the 'Ui Bruin' dynasty, after a reign of one year; succeeded by his distant cousin Fergus mac Fothaid of another branch of the 'Sil Cathail', grandson of king Dub-Indrecht (d. 768), who reigns for three years.

FRANCIA

October. Charles secures Aquitaine, while Lothar seizes lands West of the Meuse and expels local counts, landowners, and clerics who will not recognise his rule; Lothar arrives at Ver near Senlis, joined by Bernard of Italy's son Pepin and other defectors from Charles' cause. With Brittany in revolt again, Charles confronts Lothar near Orleans (November) and it is agreed that he should have Aquitaine, Provence, Neustria West of the Seine, and Septimania but hand over Burgundy and the Seine-Meuse lands (which Lothar already occupies). The brothers will meet again at Attigny in May. Lothar agrees to leave Lewis alone, but once the meeting is over he tries to suborn Charles' vassals into defecting.

December. Charles is at Nevers; he tries to lure Bernard of Septimania, now with Pepin II defying him but with his lands allotted to Charles by Lothar, to join him but Bernard equivocates, says he has sworn an oath to Pepin, and promises to help him win over Pepin's men and if Pepin refuses to reconcile with Charles Bernard will abandon him.

841

FRANCIA

January. Bernard turns up to meet Charles at Bourges and excuses his lack of help in winning over Pepin or his men, but Charles does not trust him and attacks his party by surprise; Bernard flees in time but is impressed enough to agree later to fight for him.

March. Lambert of Nantes and the new Breton ruler, count Nominoe, agree to do fealty to Charles and support him. With his supporters urging Charles at a council to go to the Attigny meeting in May and put the onus on Lothar to show his treachery, not give the latter an excuse to turn on him, Charles heads for the Seine to find that Lothar's men, led by count Gerard, are blocking his route. He heads downstream to Rouen to seize some merchant-ships there and cross the river, and back upstream to St Denis.

14 April, Maundy Thursday. Charles arrives at Troyes; meanwhile Lothar drives Lewis back from the Rhine and is joined by many defectors, but leaves count Adalbard to contain him in Bavaria while he heads back via Easter at Aachen (17 April) to confront Charles.

Lothar and Charles come to a truce despite mutual accusations of bad faith, but when Charles comes to Attigny for the planned 8 May meeting Lothar does not show up and is said to be preparing to attack him again.

Now Lewis, having defeated Adalbard and driven his army back to the Rhine, receives the adherence of Saxony and Thuringia; he sends envoys to Charles, who is dodging Lothar's larger army, to propose alliance against Lothar. Charles moves back to Chalons to join his mother Judith and her army, dominated by the Aquitaine troops, and Lewis crosses the Rhine to join them. He meets Charles near Chalons, and they agree to

attack Lothar who has tried to ruin them both. They agree to send an Episcopal delegation to Lothar to offer him fair terms, subject to what their father envisaged for dividing up the Empire; Lothar rejects this. Pepin joins Lothar at Auxerre.

21 June. The two armies confront each other unexpectedly near Auxerre and agree a twenty-four-hour truce.

22 June. The armies move to seek better positions, Lothar's first to Fontenay-en-Puisaye; more talks are initiated by Lewis and Charles but fail (23 June) as Lothar stalls, apparently hoping for Pepin II to arrive and reinforce him.

25 June. Battle of Fontenay, mainly a cavalry clash; each side may have up to 60–70,000 troops. Lewis and Charles defeat Lothar's army after being reinforced by count Guerin's Provencals to overturn an initial success by Lothar who takes the offensive; the victory is won by a cavalry breakthrough around noon. Around 50,000 men are killed, and it is recalled as the bloodiest fratricidal encounter in Frankish history. Lothar eventually flees, leaving his camp to be plundered. The battle destroys Lothar's hopes of maintaining primacy over his brothers and continuing the Empire under one supreme ruler leaving him with at best a nominal supremacy and in retrospect being the triumph of 'East Francian' (German) and 'West Francian' (French) autonomy over the concept of a unified Empire.

Bernard of Septimania, close to the battlefield with his troops, steers clear of involvement though some sources claim he sends his men to help Charles with the pursuit once it is clear he is winning; afterwards he sends his son William to do homage to Charles and promises him to help defeat Pepin II. Charles gives William an estate promised to him earlier by the late Emperor Louis.

26 June. The clergy call a fast and three-day truce so Charles and Lewis can plan their strategy.

With count Ricuin of Nantes killed at Fontenoy, Charles refuses to allow the untrustworthy ex-count Lambert back there and appoints count Reynaud of Herbuages to take over instead; Lambert defies this and attacks Nantes, probably persuading Nominoe of Brittany to aid him.

July. Lothar is at Aachen; he moves on to Mainz (20 August) to rebuild his army and confront Lewis, then abandons the latter plan (possibly after a failure to gain enough Saxon support) and heads back to Thionville, probably to stop Charles' Eastwards move towards the Meuse.

Charles secures the lower Seine and Rheims regions, en route to a planned meeting with Lewis at Langres on 1 September; Lothar is ready to attack Lewis again, so Lewis does not show up. Instead Lothar marches on Paris, reaching St Denis in late September, and Charles returns to confront him while his men block the Seine crossings; at St Cloud, Charles and Lothar

meet and Lothar tries to tempt Charles to abandon Lewis with a promise of all lands West of the Seine except Aquitaine where he still recognises Pepin II. Charles refuses to abandon Lewis and insists on keeping the Seine-Meuse region, so Lothar abandons the talks and heads to Sens to meet up with Pepin II.

Lothar tries to lure Charles into a battle in the forest of la Perche (November–December) and then marches as far South as Tours, but cannot win much support and is ignored by Nominoe of Brittany; he gives up as Lewis is reported coming to Charles' aid, and Pepin abandons him and moves off to try to save his lands in Aquitaine.

A Viking force raids up the Seine; Rouen and the abbey of St Wandrille are sacked.

ITALY

Moslems capture Bari, and sack Ancona on raid up Adriatic to Istria while the Frankish rulers are fighting civil war in Low Countries.

Capua is sacked by Arab mercenaries in the pay of its ruler Landulf's enemy duke Radelchis of Benevento; Landulf founds a new city on a safer nearby hilltop.

IRELAND

Probable date of the (first or final, secure?) establishment of the Vikings in Dublin as their principal trading fortress town on the central Eastern coast of Ireland, with the construction of a walled town on the hill South of the harbour on the Liffey (the eponymous 'Dark Pool', 'Dubh Linn' in Gaelic). This results from the arrival of a large Scandinavian fleet in the Liffey, but it is not clear if the commander of this is the elusive and partly mythical 'Turgeis'. He is apparently the main Viking commander in the region at this time, though the link of him to Dublin in 841 is not specifically made in Irish annals and is not universally accepted. This is followed by Viking attacks Westwards against the rich monasteries of the midlands, subsequently mythologised in Viking sagas so it is not clear how accurate much of the information is.

Battle of Mag nOchtar, Ireland, near Cloncurry: decisive victory for 'High King' Niall 'Caille' and the Ui Niall over the Munster forces of king Feidlimid of Munster, abbot of Clonfert; the 'Annals of Ulster' gloat at Feidlimid fleeing abandoning his abbot's crozier in a blackthorn bush. From now on Niall is the dominant king of central Ireland, and if Feidlimid's claims to be 'High King' in sympathetic annals have any substance earlier they now end.

Conchobar mac Diarmait, son of the late 'High King' Donnchad Midi (d. 797), tries to depose his uncle Mael Ruanaidh, king of Midhe and head of the pre-eminent 'Clann Colman' branch of the Southern Ui Niall;

he is killed by the latter's younger son Mael Sechnaill, later (846) 'High King'.

842 BYZANTIUM

20 January. Emperor Theophilus dies aged ?twenty-nine; infant son Michael III Emperor, aged two, with his mother Theodora as regent, assisted by postal 'logothete' Theoctistus as chief minister.

FRANCIA/BITAIN

14 February. Charles and Lewis meet at Strasbourg, renew their alliance, and swear oaths of loyalty to each other – Lewis in Old French/'Romance' and Charles in 'Old German'. This is seen in retrospect as the start of the 'creation of France and Germany' as two distinct and diverging states and cultures, each emerging from the dissolving Francian Empire.

Late March. Lothar retires from Aachen, seen as 'abandoning the old capital' in retrospect, and heads to Troyes for Easter (2 April); he then goes on to Lyons.

The Viking fleet in the English Channel sacks the port of Quentovic on the Francian coast, and the threat of them joining in with Saxon rebels leads Lewis to be more intent on securing peace before he is attacked; he meets Charles at Verdun (April) to co-ordinate their action. They follow Lothar South; he sends envoys to them saying that he will agree to peace on the basis of each brother retaining his heartland (Lombardy for him, Bavaria for Lewis, and Aquitaine for Charles) and the rest being divided up between them.

The Viking fleet in the Channel crosses to the English coast to sack London and Rochester.

15 June. Lothar is at Macon. The three brothers meet at a nearby island in the river Saone and agree to a triple division of the Empire, with Lothar having honorary seniority and first choice of territory.

ITALY

Prince Radelchis of Benevento calls in Arab mercenaries to aid him; they terrorise Campania out of his control.

SPAIN

Musa ibn Musa resumes his revolt in the NE of the Ummayyad emirate; his half-brother Inigo Arista of Pamplona is also involved but is soon incapacitated by paralysis so his son Garcia (later king of Pamplona) assists Musa instead.

BRITAIN

London and Rochester are raided by Vikings.

SPAIN

20 March. Death of king Alfonso II of the kingdom of the Asturias and Leon, after a fifty-one-year reign; he has no sons and nominates his kinsman Ramiro, son of his predecessor Vermudo (reigned 788–91, d. 797). However, Ramiro is away from court attending his own second marriage, so Alfonso's 'Count of the Palace' and alleged brother-in-law (disputed by modern historians), Nepotian/Nepocian, seizes power in a noble coup. Ramiro's son Ordono, governor of Galicia, lends his father troops to attack Leon, while the Asturians and Basques (i.e. the East of the kingdom) back Nepotian. Nepotian is defeated by the Galicians at the battle of the bridge of Carellana, captured, blinded, and put in a monastery; Ramiro becomes king. He reigns for seven years.

FRANCIA

19 October. Second 'summit' between the three brothers, Lothar, Charles, and Lewis, at Koblenz; a truce is agreed to June 843. Lothar winters at Aachen and Lewis in Bavaria.

13 December. Charles marries Ermentrude, aged nineteen, daughter of count Odo of Orleans, at Quierzy; he spends Christmas at St Quentin and then heads to Aquitaine.

843

BYZANTIUM

4 March. Theodora's new Patriarch Methodius restores the decrees of 'Seventh Oecumenical Council' to legalise icons in reversal of Theophilus' iconoclast policy.

Sunday 11 March. Service in Hagia Sophia celebrates the restoration of icons: 'Feast of Orthodoxy' ever since on date.

FRANCIA

Count Lambert links up with Nominoe of Brittany to try to seize his lordship of Nantes back from Charles' nominee count Reynaud of Herbauges; while Nominoe is incapacitated by illness, Reynaud attacks Southern Brittany and (24 May) wins the battle of Messac over Nominoe's son Erispoe whose army is caught crossing the river Vilaine unawares of Reynaud's approach. Either later in the same day or a few days later, Lambert arrives to help Erispoe and they rout and kill Reynaud at the battle of Blaine; some sources say that Reynaud is killed by the rebels' Viking ally Hastein, who subsequently gains control of Nantes (as below). Nominoe recaptures Rennes from Charles' supporters.

24 June. Hastein's Viking army sacks Nantes on the Feast of St John the Baptist, choosing that date so they can loot the town's annual fair then. The town is then used as a base for pillaging the lower Loire.

August. The Treaty of Verdun finally ends the Frankish civil war: Lothar gets Frisia, Eastern Flanders, the Meuse region with Aachen, the later lands of Lorraine, Alsace, a corridor via the later Frenche-Comte to Lyons, Provence, and Italy; Charles gets everything West of that, based on what will become medieval 'France'; Lewis gets everything to the East, which will become 'Germany'; Lothar has the imperial title but only honorary primacy. Pepin II is left to be dealt with by Charles.

SPAIN

Emir Abd-ar-Rahman attacks Pamplona and heavily defeats the army of its young co-ruler Garcia, killing his uncle and possible regent Fortun.

BRITAIN

(or 844) Death of king Eanred of Northumbria, ruler since 811 and so probably the longest-ruling king of Northumbria (thirty-two years according to the late C11th Simeon of Durham, thirty-three according to Roger of Wendover). For the first time since the C7th the kingship stays in the same family for the third generation as his son Aethelred succeeds him.

King Aethelwulf of Wessex is defeated by thirty-five shiploads of Vikings at Carhampton in N Devon.

Traditional date of the accession of Cinaed (Kenneth) mac Alpin as joint king of the leaderless Picts and of Dalriada. Both kingdoms have uncertain if any leadership in 839–43 following the death of king Eoganan in battle, and logically Cinaed is the warlord who re-establishes order and drives out the invading Scandinavians. His lineage is unclear but his father Alpin appears to have ruled in Galloway and may be the son of 780s king Eochaid 'the Poisonous' of Kintyre; the later Scots official 'genealogists' link of him to king Aed Find (d. 778) is less reliable. He is probably a 'new man' who wins power as the only leader to stand up to the invaders, and does not create a 'new kingdom of Scots' as the title of 'king of the Picts' continues to be used for his sons into the later C9th. Legendarily called 'An-Ferbasach', 'the Conqueror', he is supposed to have defeated a raiding Anglo-Saxon force in Lothian in the 830s (where the 'Cross of St Andrew' appeared in the sky), to be the patron of the cult of St Andrew at Kilrymond/St Andrews, and to have killed a group of plotting Pictish nobles by plunging them in a pit of stakes under their dining-table at a feast. He reigns until 858.

IRELAND

Death of king Fergus mac Fothaid of Connacht, of the ‘Sil Cathail’ branch of the ‘Ui Bruin’, after a three-year reign; succeeded by Finsnechta mac Tommaltaig, brother of king Diarmait (d. 833) and from the ‘Sil Muiredaig’ who held the kingship in 792/6–839.

c. 844 BRITAIN

King Aethelred of Northumbria is deposed by his nobles, and replaced by Raedwulf – from the context, probably as a better warrior against the raiding Vikings on the coasts. But Raedwulf is killed in battle against Viking marauders within months and Aethelred is restored.

844 ITALY/FRANCIA

25 January. Death of Pope Gregory IV; populace seizes Lateran to install their choice, John, but nobles enforce election of Sergius II. The annoyed Lothar sends his son Louis and his uncle archbishop Drogo of Metz to Rome to reassert his imperial rights over Papal elections.

(February onwards) Charles ‘the Bald’ fights Pepin II over control of Aquitaine; he captures (or has handed over to him) the treacherous and unreliable Bernard of Septimania, who (May) is sacked from his offices and executed for treason.

Charles besieges Toulouse; Pepin ambushes a second West Francian army hurrying to join Charles near Angouleme and routs it, killing Charles’ half-uncle abbot Hugh and other kinsmen and prominent clerics and nobles.

May. Nominoe of Brittany assist Pepin by raiding Maine, where the late Reynaud of Herbauges’ son is now in command as margrave of Neustria.

Pepin invites the Viking commander Oscar and his men to sail up the Garonne and aid him in taking over its cities where they garrison Bordeaux, then in attacking Toulouse which they sack.

15 June. Emperor Lothar’s eldest son Louis II (born 825), designated king of Italy in 839, is crowned in Rome by Pope Sergius and takes over the kingdom of Italy. Sicenulf of Benevento does homage to Louis.

SPAIN

?Spring. After a second attack on Pamplona from a large Cordoban army, its young co-ruler Garcia and his rebel commander uncle Musa ibn Musa subsequently submit to the Emir.

Attack on Gijon, in the kingdom of Leon, by seaborne marauding Vikings, apparently from the expedition that is currently at large on the Garonne in Aquitaine; it is driven off by king Ramiro.

A Viking naval expedition, probably the same one, disembarks at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, and sets up a base on the island of Qutbil/Isla Mena at the river-mouth, normal Viking practice to defend their camps from external attack. It takes Cadiz, and advances upriver to capture and sack Seville; the citadel holds out. The raiders move on towards Cordoba, but are defeated and driven back by emir Abd-al-Rahman who is joined by a force led by the ex-rebel Musa ibn Musa from NE Spain. A Viking squadron loses thirty ships in an encounter with the Moslems at Talayata. The emir executes hundreds of Viking prisoners at Seville and as the gallows are full hangs them up in the orchards outside the city; he sends 200 heads to his ally the governor of Tangier. He then refortifies Seville and constructs a new arsenal there, plus a fleet to patrol the Straits of Gibraltar against Viking raids.

BRITAIN

‘Ealdorman’ Earnwulf of Somerset, ‘ealdorman’ Osric of Dorset, and bishop Ealhstan of Sherborne defeat an invading army of Vikings at the mouth of the River Parret in Somerset; given the location on the Bristol Channel, the Vikings may have come from Dyfed and/or South-Eastern Ireland.

Death of king Merfyn ‘Frych’ (‘the Freckled’) of Gwynedd, founder of a new dynasty, after a nineteen-year reign; succeeded by his son by a princess of Powys, Rhodri ‘Mawr’ (‘the Great’), who will unite the two kingdoms.

FRANCIA

The Western Francian bishops at the synod of Yutz back Charles as their lawful sovereign and order his challengers Pepin II and Nominoe of Brittany to come to terms and accept him as their lord.

Autumn. Charles meets Lothar and Louis for a friendly ‘summit’ at Thionville; the latter two join him in sending messages to rebels Pepin, Nominoe, and Lambert urging their surrender.

845

FRANCIA/GERMANY

March. A Viking army in 120 ships (probably over 5,000 men) moves up the Seine to attack Paris, commanded by a certain ‘Reginhar’ or Ragnar (possibly but not certainly the famous Ragnar ‘Lothbrok’, ‘Hairy Breeches’). Charles moves to defend the city and sets up two smaller armies to block the Vikings’ route, one on either side of the river, but when one of them is defeated he and his demoralised men abandon the defence of the city’s fortified island (Isle de la Cite) and flee to St Denis to defend the shrine there from sacking. Ragnar hangs 111 prisoners on an island in view of the defence to intimidate them, probably as a sacrifice

to Odin. (Easter, either the eve of Easter Day, 28 March, or Easter Day, 29 March.) The Vikings enter and sack Paris, and also loot the monastery of St Germain des Pres on the left bank outside the walls. Charles opens negotiations and promises 7,000 pounds of silver and gold in return for the Vikings leaving; they accept this as an epidemic of dysentery hits their army (said by the Christians to be the revenge of St Germanus/Germain), and he raises the money in three months.

April. The synod of Beauvais confirms the Papal ruling of 844 deposing archbishop Ebbo of Rheims again and appointing Hincmar, abbot of the monasteries of Notre Dame at Compiègne and St Germer de Flys in Picardy as his successor.

Sack of Hamburg and burning of St Mary's Cathedral by the Danish army of king Horik; later it is defeated by Lewis.

Count Seguin of Bordeaux and Saintes, appointed by the late Emperor Louis in winter 839–40, defects from Charles' cause to back Pepin; the latter makes him 'dux Wasconum' i.e. governor of Gascony. He attacks Viking-held Bordeaux but is killed (autumn).

Count Folcrad of Provence revolts against Lothar but this is put down.

SPAIN/DENMARK

The Emir sends an embassy led by Al-Ghazal to the king of Denmark, probably Horik, to establish relations and head off more Viking attacks.

Renewed rebellion by Musa ib Musa in NE Spain, until he is forced to submit to an expedition led by the Emir's son and eventual successor Mohammed.

IRELAND

The Vikings by now based at Dublin ravage far and wide across the plains of the midlands, across Eastern Midhe and ern Leinster to the Slieve Bloom mountains; the monastery at the rock of Dun Masc (Dunamase in Co. Laois) is sacked, as are Kildare, Kells, Kinnitty, Terryglass (Tir de Glas) where the abbot is killed, Killeigh, and Swords.

'High King' Niall 'Caille', head of the 'Cenel nEoghan' of the ern Ui Niall, defeats a major force of Viking raiders in his home territory (based at Lough Neagh), at Mag nItha in Co. Donegal. It is uncertain but probable that the losing commander is the semi-legendary 'Turgeis', who then moves South into County Westmeath.

Niall's Southern Ui Niall rival, king Mael Sechnaill of the 'Clann Colman', defeats and captures Turgeis at a battle by Loch Uair (Loch Owel) in County Westmeath and executes him by drowning, possibly in a ritual; this and Niall's victory temporarily clears the Vikings out of the lands North of the central midlands.

Flann mac Mael Ruanaidh, king of Midhe and of the Southern Ui Niall branch of ‘Clann Colman’, is killed and succeeded by his brother Mael Sechnaill.

FRANCIA

Famine in Francia; Charles comes to the monastery of Fleury near Orleans to meet Pepin, who agrees to do homage as his vassal; in return Charles gives him all of Aquitaine except Poitou, Saintonge, and Aunis. A temporary peace follows.

A Viking fleet is hit (?by an epidemic) as it leaves Francia laden with loot and many die; the Franks regard this as divine punishment for looting monasteries. Horik sends envoys to Charles for a treaty.

The Vikings in Aquitaine seize and settle down in Saintonge for the winter.

Autumn. Charles abandons a planned visit to a religious festival at Tours to attack Brittany on hearing of a probable rebellion whose leaders will help him; his larger and better-armed army (c. 3,000?) is lured into swampy wetlands and ambushed near the abbey of Ballon; *22 November.* Charles is defeated by Nominoe at the battle of Ballon, which secures Breton independence and their recapture of Rennes.

846

FRANCIA

June. Charles holds an assembly at Epernay; meanwhile the Vikings raid Firsia and defeat a local army.

Summer. Charles invades Brittany, but does not fight Nominoe; he comes to terms with him and they exchange oaths of loyalty with Nominoe probably being recognised as duke as he now assumes the title.

Lewis attacks the Slavs with the East Francian army, but is more pre-occupied with his sullen vassals’ loyalty than with the enemy.

ITALY

August. Arab raiders land at Ostia, where defenders flee, and advance on Rome to loot St Peter’s Basilica as the Vatican is outside city walls. They then set up a position on a well-fortified mountain outside Rome and are driven off it by Lothar’s commanders.

Louis II marches against their positions in Southern Italy, but has difficulty extricating himself after an inconclusive war.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Niall ‘Caille’ is drowned in the river Callan near Armagh, after a thirteen-year reign, and buried at Armagh; the ‘High Kingship’

and leadership of the Ui Niall passes back to its Southern branch, in the person of Mael Sechnaill (I) mac Mael Ruanaigh, head of ‘Clann Colman’ of Western Midhe.

Defeat of a raiding Viking army in the NE Munster sub-kingdom of Osraige/Ossory by its ruler, Cearbhall mac Dungal (acceded 842), at ‘Cul Maine’, following their sack of the church of Coolcashin: first emergence of Cearbhall as a leading military and political leader in the region. His rise to prominence mainly follows the death of king Fedlimid of Munster the following year.

FRANCIA

Late autumn. Further attack on lower Neustria (around Bayeux) by Nominoe’s Bretons, possibly stirred up against Charles by Lothar.

847

FRANCIA/DENMARK

February. Lothar, Lewis and Charles meet at Meersen to reaffirm their peace-treaty of 843; Lothar agrees to send envoys to Nominoe of Brittany and Pepin II in Aquitaine (i.e. as his allies) to tell them to agree to peace with Charles. The three brothers send envoys to king Horik telling him to stop his subjects attacking Francia or they will invade Denmark.

The Vikings besiege Bordeaux.

The Vikings invade Brittany and force Nominoe to pay tribute.

Lewis of East Francia attacks the Salvs successfully.

SPAIN

The Ummayyad emirate sends envoys to king Charles for a treaty.

ITALY

27 January. Death of Pope Sergius II; *10 April* Leo IV elected.

An Arab fleet is returning home from Italy with the loot of St Peter’s Basilica when it is hit by a storm, and many ships are sunk; some of the loot is washed up on the coast and returned to the Vatican. (In the ‘847’ entry for the Annals of St Bertin, implying that the raiders of 846 were at large in Italy over winter 846–7 before leaving.)

The Arabs ravage the lands of Benevento up to the frontier with the Papal states.

IRELAND

Death of Fedlimid mac Crimthainn, king of Munster and abbot of Clonfert and leading military aggressor against his favoured ‘Celi De’ movement’s

ecclesiastical rivals; succeeded by Olchobar mac Cinaed, possibly from the 'Eoganacht Aine' sub-dynasty rather than the 'Eoganacht Locha Lein' as previously assumed and probably abbot of Emly.

Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory defeats an attack by the Vikings of the midlands, led by Haakon, on his kingdom at Carn Brammit; he soon becomes Munster's most feared warlord.

848

FRANCIA

Easter. An assembly of the nobles and clergy of Aquitaine at Limoges acclaims Charles as king of Aquitaine in place of his nephew Pepin II, whose incompetence has led to defections; Pepin is deposed. *May*. Charles is consecrated and later anointed at Orleans by archbishop Wenilo of Sens.

Charles defeats the Vikings who are attacking Bordeaux, but later in the year another raiding expedition up the Garonne is let in by the city's Jews and the city is sacked.

Lothar, Lewis and Charles 'the Bald' meet at Coblenz to reaffirm their agreements and peace-treaty.

Charles 'the Bald' recovers most of Aquitaine from Pepin, who is abandoned by most of his troops and flees.

Lewis defeats the Slavs.

ITALY

Lothar defeats the Arabs who have been plundering Benevento.

BRITAIN

The Wessex 'ealdormen' of Somerset and Dorset and their armies defeat a raiding Viking force at the mouth of the River Parret in the Bristol Channel. The contemporary disappearance of any recorded kings from Dyfed in SW Wales suggests chaos and possible Viking bases there – including Swansea ('Sweyn's Island', i.e. in the River Tawe).

(848/9) Birth of the later king Alfred of Wessex, as the youngest of four or five sons of king Aethelwulf; his mother is Osburh, daughter of the royal 'butler' Oslac and descended from the defunct royal family of the Isle of Wight.

IRELAND

'High King' Mael Sechnaill defeats the Vikings of the NW midlands in battle at 'Forrach' (Farrow) near Mullingar in county Westmeath.

Olchobar mac Cinaed, the new king of Munster, and his temporary ally the king of Leinster, Lorcan mac Cellaig (acceded 838?) of the 'Ui Dunlainge', defeat a Viking army in the central/Eastern midlands at the battle of 'Sciath Nechtain' (Castledermot) in County Kildare; the Viking commander Tomrair, son or deputy of the 'king of Lochlainn' (Norway, but only a regional kingdom as the national one did not yet exist in reality), is killed with 200 of his men. Olchobar may be the Irish king who sends an embassy to king Charles 'the Bald' in Francia this year to announce his victory over a Viking army.

The 'Eoganacht Caisil' branch of the ruling dynasty of Munster defeat a Viking army in Southern Ireland at the battle of 'Dun Mail Tuile' near Cashel.

King Tigernach mac Fogartai of the Ui Niall branch of Loch Gabhair (Lagore) in South Brega defeats a Viking army at 'Disert do Chonna', in an oak wood.

Death of king Finsnechta mac Tommaltaig of Connacht, head of the 'Sl Muiredaig' sub-dynasty, after a six-year reign; succeeded by his kinsman Mugron mac Mael Cothaid, who reigns to 872.

849

FRANCIA

Charles campaigns in Aquitaine; Nominoe of Brittany breaks the peace and raids East into Miane; the Vikings in Aquitaine sack Perigeux.

March. Pepin II's younger brother Charles, probably in his late teens, leaves his uncle Lothar's imperial court to head for Aquitaine and start a rebellion against his uncle Charles 'the Bald', intending to join his elder brother who is in flight and is discredited as a Viking ally; he reaches the Loire but is rounded up there by count Vivian of Maine and handed over to Charles, who (June) forces him to address a subsequent Frankish assembly at Chartres and announce that he is renouncing his claim to the throne and becoming a monk; Charles puts him in the monastery of Corbie.

Autumn. A further attack on Neustria by duke Nominoe of Brittany while Charles is busy in Aquitaine. Charles then sends his former foe count Lambert back to command at Nantes against Nominoe.

ITALY

Pope Leo IV starts building walls round the Vatican; he organises fleets of Naples, Amalfi, and Gaeta to defeat Arab pirate fleet off Ostia, aided by storm.

Sack of Luna in Eastern Liguria by an Arab fleet.

Fall of Leontinoi, Sicily to Arabs.

BRITAIN

The date of accession of king Osbert of Northumbria according to Roger of Wendover, who has him reigning for eighteen years to 867. But king Aethelred may not have died until 852, so this may mark a co-kingship, a rebellion, or a successful breakaway by Bernicia.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill, head of ‘Clann Colmann’ in Midhe, and his temporary ally Tigernach mac Fogartai of South Brega unite to attack and storm the Viking base at Dublin; their success does not last and it is probably subsequently retaken by a large fleet of 140 Scandinavian ships, possibly from ‘Lochlainn’ (Norway) as remembered by saga, which now arrives to assert control over the existing Viking settlers and raiders in Eastern Ireland. This may mark the arrival of the so-called ‘White Foreigners’ (Norwegians) in force to usurp the local predominance of the ‘Dark Foreigners’ (Danes).

850

SPAIN/FRANCIA

1 February. Death of king Ramiro I of Leon and Asturias, after a reign of seven years and ten months; succeeded by his son Ordone, who reigns to 866.

Count William, the son of Bernard of Septimania who has recently recovered Barcelona from the Arabs, is lying in ambush; the Arabs raid into Septimania as far as Arles but their fleet is hit by a storm on the return voyage.

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Lewis is ill; in his absence the East Francian army is defeated by the Slavs.

Two of Horik’s nephews revolt and force him to divide Denmark with them; Rorik the nephew of ex-king Harald defects from serving Lothar to return home and lead a Viking fleet to plunder Frisia and up the Rhine and Waal, ravaging eastern Flanders and sacking Therouanne; Lothar grants him Dorestad as his vassal to buy him off.

ITALY

Easter. Pope Leo IV crowns Lothar’s son Louis II, king of Italy, as co-Emperor.

BRITAIN

‘Ealdorman’ Wigca of ?Somerset defeats a force of Viking raiders at ‘Wicganbeorg’, possibly Witchampton in Somerset.

A force of Viking ships in the Channel ravages Kent, but is defeated off Sandwich by sub-king Athelstan and his 'ealdorman' Ealhere and seven ships are captured – a rare Anglo-Saxon naval victory over the Scandinavian experts and suggesting investment in a coherent and competent navy by Athelstan's father and overlord, king Aethelwulf of Wessex. However, the Vikings are still able to winter on the island of Thanet, suggesting that the West Saxons and Kentishmen are too nervous to attack them and/or they are reinforced.

IRELAND

Cinaed mac Conaing, son and successor of king Conaing (d. 849) of the 'Ui Conaing' (of Knowth/Cnogba) branch of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' dynasty of the Southern Ui Niall of Midhe, links up with a Viking army to ravage his enemies' lands across Midhe as far West as the Shannon. The Viking army may be that of the 'White Foreigners' (Norwegians) who arrived in Dublin in 849, and be after revenge for Mael Sechnaill's sack of Dublin earlier in 849. This represents both a revolt against the 'High King' Mael Sechnaill mac Mael Ruadaidh, head of the 'Clann Colman' branch, and an attack on his rival of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine', Tigernach mac Fogartaig, head of the 'Ui Chernaig' sub-dynasty of Lagore/Loch Gabhar, whose 'crannog' fortress on an island in Loch Gabhar is sacked.

Echtigern mac Guaire, king of the 'Ui Cennsalaig' sub-dynasty of Leinster, attacks West into Osraige/Ossory but is killed by its king, Cearbhall mac Dungal.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

August. Charles invades Brittany again and captures Rennes; he replaces the unreliable Lambert as count of Nantes, but the latter soon returns by force.

?The Carolingian 'dux Wasconum' (commander of the Gascon region and 'March'), Sancho Sanchez, is captured by the NE Spain Moslem rebel Musa ibn Musa; Charles 'the Bald' ransoms him and secures his allegiance.

851

FRANCIA

Lothar, Lewis of East Francia and Charles 'the Bald' meet at Meerssen to reaffirm their agreements.

Duke Nominoe drives the Francian garrisons out of Nantes and Rennes and secures full control of Brittany in alliance with count Lambert of Nantes and the lower Loire and the latter's brother Warnar; he marches East to ravage Maine and sacks Le Mans, then heads for Chartres, with Lambert aiding him. He dies suddenly (2 March), and his son Erispoe takes over his army and heads back West.

Lewis overcomes the Slavs and subdues most of them.

A Viking army ravages Flanders, including Ghent, and moves on to Artois to sack Beauvais.

BRITAIN

A force of around 300 Viking ships sails up the Thames and occupies London; king Beorhtwulf of Mercia attacks them but is heavily defeated. The invaders move on South into Surrey, but are defeated by king Aethelwulf of Wessex and his eldest (surviving?) son Aethelbald at the battle of ‘Aclea’ – possibly Ockley in Surrey, on the Roman road SW to Chichester. The battle saves Wessex.

After this campaign Athelstan of Kent disappears from history, and is evidently dead by 855 when Aethelwulf names a new king of Kent.

IRELAND

The rebel Ui Niall dynast Cinaed mac Conaing, head of the ‘Ui Conaing’ sub-dynasty of Knowth/Cnogba, is seized (presumably at a truce-meeting as a grant of safe-conduct is violated) by the ‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill and his own ‘Sil nAedo Slaine’ rival, Tigernach mac Fogartaig of the ‘Ui Chernaig’ branch, and drowned. This secures Mael Sechnaill’s authority within the Southern Ui Niall, but the local Vikings in Midhe are still defiant and their war continues.

The ‘Dark Foreigners’ (i.e. Danes) attack and sack the ‘White Foreigners’ (Norwegians) base at Dublin, probably a response to the latter’s seizure of Dublin in 850; they also seize and take over the Norwegian base at Annagassa in County Lowth.

Death of king Olchobar of Munster; succeeded by Ailgenan mac Donnagaile of the ‘Eoganacht Caisil’, who rules for two years.

?Death of Lorcan mac Cellaig, king of Leinster (some time after his 848 victory, qv); succeeded by Tuathal mac Muirecan or mac Muiredach, of the ‘Ui Muiredaig’ branch of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’, who the ‘Book of Leinster’ gives a three-year reign to 854. He may have succeeded earlier, or been a candidate when Lorcan died earlier but been unable to claim the kingship until 851 due to the domination of Leinster by its neighbour Cearbhall of Osraige.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Louis II of Italy intervenes to halt the civil war between Radelchis the usurper and his predecessor Sicard’s brother Siconulf over Benevento, and insists that Radelchis get rid of his plundering Arab mercenaries; Radelchis

betrays them to be slaughtered by Louis' army, and is allowed to keep Benevento; Siconulf gets the principality of Salerno but soon dies and is succeeded by his young son Sico.

Charles, short of men, hires Saxon mercenaries used to hard frontier fighting from his half-brother king Lewis and (August) invades Southern Brittany along the Roman road from the Loire to Rennes.

22 August. Battle of Jengland at Grand-Fougeray, near Nantes; the smaller Breton army steers clear of a direct clash with Charles and his lethal force of Saxon warriors, and showers them with javelins from a distance; the Franks cannot get to grip over two days and are demoralised. Charles gives up and abandons his camp by night; the Bretons loot it.

September. Treaty of Angers: Charles accepts Breton independence and the loss of Nantes and Rennes, and recognises Erispoe as 'King of Brittany' as his vassal.

SPAIN

(Islamic year 851/2) Death of Inigo, Basque ruler of Pamplona and half-brother of the NE Spain Moslem rebel leader Musa ibn Musa of the 'Al Qays' family; he is succeeded by his son and co-ruler, Garcia I.

July? Climax of first wave of an outbreak of insults to Islam, encouragement of people to convert or revert to Christianity, or refusals to co-operate with the government in its religious laws in Cordoba, with Christian zealots seeking confrontation and trials so they can be 'martyred'. (Evidence from the hagiographic writings of one of their leaders, the monk Eulogius, not a 'professional' history, so the numbers involved may be exaggerated.) Emir Abd-ar-Rahman arrests the city's Christian clergy for encouraging this.

November. Emir Abd-ar-Rahman releases but subsequently requires the Cordoban clergy to hold a council under his supervision and issue the laws that he requires to control their co-religionists, outlawing seeking martyrdom as morally wrong and illegal instead of glorifying it.

852

ITALY

'Leonine Wall' to defend Vatican from Arab raids completed (commenced 851).

Louis II marches South, enters Benevento, and heads for the main Arab stronghold of Bari; his siege is unsuccessful and he is accused of not risking an attack through a breach in the walls when he had the chance, enabling the defenders to repair it.

FRANCIA

Saloman, son and successor of the count of Poher in Brittany and the most powerful lord after duke Erispoe, does homage to Charles and is granted the counties of Nantes, Rennes, and Retz and a third of Brittany as his vassal.

The Vikings attack Frisia but are paid by the inhabitants to sail off without ravaging it.

Charles invites Lothar to a successful meeting at St Quentin and lavishes him with gifts.

Count Lambert of Nantes is killed, either executed by king Charles for his treachery in allying with Brittany in 850–1 or killed in an ambush by his loyalist neighbour count Gauzelin of Maine.

Count Raymond of Limoges (in office since 841) succeeds his late brother count Fredelo as ruler of Toulouse, Albi, and the Rouergue.

September. Pepin II, short of men since 848 and driven out of the Garonne valley, takes refuge in Gascony with Sancho Sanchez, the probably Basque ‘dux Wasconum’; as an ally of Pepin’s uncle Charles since his ransoming, Sancho hands over Pepin to Charles which ends the Aquitaine civil war for a few years.

SPAIN

22 September. Death of Ummayyad emir Abd-al-Rahman of al-Andalus aged around sixty; succeeded by his son Mohammed, who is aged around thirty. The outbreaks of martyrdom-seeking Christians provoking the Cordoban authorities into trying and executing them continue for another seven years.

Anti-Cordoban rebellion breaks out in Toledo; the bishop of Toledo, the monk Eulogius, supports the rebellion. The rebels ask the kings of Leon and Asturias and the Basque ruler Garcia of Pamplona for help, and their troops outnumber the Emir Mohammed’s army as it attacks the city; the Emir has to call on Garcia’s Moslem uncle Musa ibn Musa, in rebellion in NE Spain again since 850, for help and the latter aids his subsequent victory at the battle of Guadalcete.

Musa ibn Musa is recognised as ‘Wali’ (governor) of his region including Tudela and most of the NE, and subsequently claims to be the ‘third king of Spain’ after Mohammed and king Ordono of Leon and Asturias; Mohammed can blockade but not conquer rebel Toledo.

BRITAIN

Probable date of the death of king Beorhtwulf of Mercia, after a twelve-year reign; his successor Burghred, of unknown lineage, rules for twenty-

two years to 874. An alliance between Burghred and Aethelwulf of Wessex is agreed, aimed at Powys as well as at the Vikings.

Probable date of the death of king Aethelred of Northumbria (or else as early as 849??); king Osbert succeeds or else becomes sole king after a joint rule from c. 849.

October. (St) Swithun becomes bishop of Winchester, holding the see for the next ten years.

FRANCIA/DENMARK

Autumn. The late king Harald's son Godfrid, baptised at Mainz under Louis 'the Pious', defects from service with Lothar and returns home to Denmark to collect a fleet; he ravages Frisia and up the river Scheldt, then moves to the Seine; Charles and Lothar join together to blockade him in a camp by the river.

IRELAND

The 'Dark Foreigners' (Danes) in Ireland, under Gorm or Horm, defeat the 'White Foreigners' (Norse) under Zain/Stain and Iargna/Jerkne (who is killed) at a battle on Stranford Lough, which presumably marks their move North to extend their control of Dublin to that of the Viking armies in Ulster.

The Vikings in Munster are defeated by the 'Ciarraige' sub-dynasty at the battle of Bellach Conglais near Cork.

853

FRANCIA

January. After celebrating Epiphany with Charles at Quierzy and becoming godfather to his daughter Judith, Lothar goes home; Charles' war-weary army are unable to stop the Vikings on the Seine breaking out at will and collecting loot and provisions.

March. The Vikings break out to continue raiding up the Seine.

April. Charles holds a Church Council at Soissons and defrocks two priests/monks of the town's monastery of St Medard for plotting to help his captive, monk nephew Pepin escape to Aquitaine; Pepin has to swear publicly that he is satisfied with renouncing the world as a monk. At the council, all the clerics appointed by the disgraced ex-archbishop Ebbo of Rheims are sacked as 'illegally appointed'.

BRITAIN

Easter. Marriage of Burghred of Mercia to his ally Aethelwulf of Wessex's daughter Aethelswith, in Mercia, which her father attends. Aethelwulf then joins Burghred for a massive joint Mercia/Wessex attack on Powys,

which is defeated and overrun; its king Cyngen ap Cadell (probably in his fifties or sixties) abandons his people after a forty-five-year reign and flees to Rome.

Cyngen is succeeded as king of Powys by his sister Nest's son Rhodri, king of the neighbouring Gwynedd; the kingdoms are combined for the next two and a half centuries and the extra manpower will help Rhodri to defeat the Vikings. As normal Welsh royal inheritance was limited to the male line, the irregular transfer of power to Rhodri may well imply a military takeover by the Gwynedd elite which the war-ravaged Powys elite could not halt and the forcible exclusion of Cyngen's surviving sons (if any), nephews, and cousins.

'Ealdormen' Ealhere of Kent and Huda of Surrey are killed fighting against the Vikings on Thanet, probably trying to storm another camp there.

According to Alfred's biographer Asser, the king sends his youngest son Alfred to Rome with gifts for Pope Leo IV in this year; Alfred is 'confirmed' (with the Pope as his godfather) and apparently 'anointed' and made a 'consul' at a ceremony by the Pope. Subsequent claims that he was thus anointed as a potential king seem unlikely as he had many older brothers alive at the time. The ceremony may reflect the similar Papal sanction given by a Pope Leo to Alfred's exemplar Emperor Charles/ 'Charlemagne', at least in Alfred's subsequent propaganda use of it.

IRELAND/BITAIN

Approximate date of the arrival in Dublin of the elusive 'Amlaith', warlord son of a Norwegian ruler called 'Guthfrith' (probably of Vestfold). He has been sent by his father to take command of the Norse settlers in Dublin, the 'White Foreigners', who are at odds with the locally dominant Danes or 'Black Foreigners'; he may become king of Dublin now or in 856 after the Danish Gorm's defeat in Gwynedd. Amlaith is apparently married to a 'daughter of Cinaed', but it is unclear if this is a daughter of the late rebel Ui Niall king Cinaed mac Conaing of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' branch of Knowth/Cnogba in Midhe, enemy of 'High King' Mael Sechnaill, and hence Amlaith is an ally of Cinaed's brother and successor Flann. Alternatively, 'Cinaed' may be the current king of Picts and Scots, Cinaed/Kenneth mac Alpin.

Amlaith may be the equally elusive Viking ruler Olaf 'the White', son of the 'king of Lochlainn' (Norway), who may have ruled Dublin in the 850s and was active in the Irish Sea and Hebrides; he was married around this time to Aud 'the Deep-Minded', daughter of the Hebridean warlord Ketil 'Flatnose', and had a son called Thorstein 'the Red' who was apparently born in the 850s and later conquered Caithness. So if 'Amlaith' is Olaf, he either has two wives or he married the 'daughter of Cinaed' before or (less likely) after he married Aud.

Approximate date of the death of the Northern Irish ruler Godred mac Fergus, 'mixed race' and unusually Irish by male and Viking by female descent; he is king of Airghalla/Oriel in Ulster and also 'Ri Innse Gall', that is, 'king of the islands of the Gael' i.e. the Hebrides. He is later supposed by Scots legend to have been an ally of their king Cinaed/Kenneth mac Alpin.

Death of king Ailgenan of Munster after a two-year reign; succeeded by his brother Mael Guala mac Donngaile.

FRANCIA

July. Nantes is seized by a seaborne army of Vikings who have arrived from the Seine valley, led by Godfrid; Nantes' former ruler Erispoe of Brittany subsequently allies with a second Viking army under Sidroc (?the man killed at the battle of Ashdown in 871) who are supposed to destroy Godfrid's army but in fact secretly allow him to escape encirclement and flee safely to Redon.

Assassination of the loyalist leader count Gauzelin of Maine, possibly by the citizens of Nantes in revenge for his killing their late count Lambert; he is succeeded by his nephew Rorgo II, his brother and predecessor's son.

Robert 'the Strong', founder of the Neustrian dynasty which will take the throne in 888 and 987, becomes Charles' royal 'missus' for Maine and Western Neustria, replacing Gauzelin as the local 'strongman'.

The Church Council of Soissons, presided over by archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, sacks all the clerics given office by the disgraced former archbishop Ebbo (Lothar's supporter) in the early 830s and in 840–4.

Many Aquitaine nobles send envoys to king Lewis in East Francia offering him the throne, probably as Pepin has supposedly given up his claims and they still hate Charles.

The Vikings at Nantes raid up the Loire to (8 November) sack the shrine of St Martin at Tours, but the monks had a warning so they get the saint's relics away safely.

ITALY

Sico of Salerno is deposed by his regent, Peter; the latter is confirmed in office by Louis II of Italy (December). Louis is in trouble with the Byzantine Empire over dragging his feet on a promised marriage-alliance to Emperor Michael III's family.

FRANCIA

Charles meets Lothar at Liege to gain his support against rumours of a move on Aquitaine by Lewis of East Francia.

Early spring. Nobles in Aquitaine opposed to both Charles ‘the Bald’ and his nephew Pepin II send to Charles’ brother Lewis of Germany’ to nominate a son of his to take over the throne. Lewis sends his second son, Louis of Saxony, to take the crown; his father and his maternal cousin archbishop Charles of Cologne back him and he marches from Saxony towards Aquitaine. Charles ‘the Bald’ moves into Aquitaine until after Easter (22 April) but cannot bring his opponents to battle, while Lothar meets Lewis but alarms Charles by (deliberately?) failing to contain his threat to West Francia.

After the Loire Vikings sack Blois, bishops Agius of Orleans and Burchard of Chartres get together an army with shipping to block the Loire upstream; the Vikings retreat.

Lothar meets Charles again at Attigny and agrees to join him in sending envoys to Lewis to tell him to order his son Louis ‘the Younger’ back home from Aquitaine. Charles releases his captive nephew, his late elder brother Pepin of Aquitaine’s son Pepin II, to take over Aquitaine as its adult, legitimate heir and thus rally support against Louis ‘the Younger’. Pepin succeeds in rallying most of the nobility; at Limoges Louis calls off the campaign as unlikely to succeed and goes home. Pepin now resumes his rebellion against Charles, and his younger brother Charles escapes from his monastery at Corbie to start his own revolt too but is defeated and flees to his uncle Emperor Lothar.

Charles ‘the Bald’ puts his fourth son Carloman, aged six, in the Church as a trainee cleric (like his next elder brother Lothar ‘the Lame’) to disallow him from the throne and prevent a later weakening division of his kingdom.

DENMARK

Assassination of king Horik by a nephew who he has exiled and who returns secretly to attack him, after a sole reign of twenty-eight years.

BRITAIN

Major Viking attack on Mon/Anglesey, which they apparently ravage and defeat the forces of Gwynedd.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill, head of the Ui Niall and king of Midhe, attacks Munster to force it to pay him tribute and hostages, or else relies on his wife Lann’s brother Cearbhall, king of Osraige/Ossory, as his main local ally, to do so.

Probable date of the death of king Tuahal of Leinster, according to the ‘Book of Leinster’; succeeded by an uncertain king, possibly Ruarc mac Bran of the ‘Ui Dunchada’ who reigns for ?eight years to 862 according to some accounts though the ‘Book of Leinster’ dates him to 838–47 as rival? king to Olchobar. ?Domination of Leinster by its neighbour Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory.

BRITAIN

24 December. Coronation on Christmas Day of the new and effectively last king of East Anglia, (St) Edmund, aged probably fifteen. His hagiography dates his accession to this point, giving him a fifteen-year reign, but ignores the identity of his father and of his predecessor, if different; the latter appears to have been Beorhtric from the (limited) extant coinage.

c.855 BRITAIN

Death of ex-king Cyngen of Powys in Rome.

855 BRITAIN

Aethelwulf of Wessex has already sent his youngest son Alfred to Rome in 853, and in 855 he follows in person. First he dedicated a tenth of his lands to God, handing them over to the Church – enhancing his Christian reputation and seeking divine favour against the Vikings. The alienation of this land from secular beneficiaries may have alienated personnel who looked to the king for grants, and bolstered the opposition which crystallised around Aethelbald in 856. The Chronicle denies that Aethelwulf had any intention of abdication in naming new co-rulers; he could not leave his people leaderless and appointed his experienced eldest (surviving) son Aethelbald to rule the Western shires and the next, Aethelbert, to rule Kent. Both were presumably at East in their mid-teens, and Aethelbald over twenty as he had fought in 851.

Aethelwulf arrives in Rome after the accession of Pope Benedict (below).

Presumed date of the death of Aethelwulf’s current (first or second?) wife Osburgh, certainly mother of his youngest sons Aethelred and Alfred.

IRELAND

Presumed date of the accession of Conchobar mac Tadhg ‘Mor’, grandson of the late king Muirgius of Connacht (who d. 815), as co-ruler of Connacht with king Mugron – the ‘Book of Leistr’ gives him a twenty-seven year reign to 882. His father Tadhg was killed in internecine wars in Connacht in 810.

FRANCIA/ITALY

The Vikings attack Bordeaux again.

Emperor Lothar makes his second son Lothar, heir to his ‘middle’ lands, marry the politically important Teutberga, daughter of count Boso of Provence and sister of Hucbert the lay-abbot of St Maurice ‘Agaune’ abbey in Switzerland (near Lake Geneva); she turns out to be infertile and Lothar either already has or soon will have a mistress, Waldrada the sister of bishop Thietgaud of Trier and niece of archbishop Gunther of Cologne. Lothar the younger is made sub-ruler of the Flanders/Frisia region, where the Danes are still holding Dorestad.

17 July. Death of Leo IV; Benedict III elected, deposed by Louis in favour of Anastasius ‘Bibliothecarius’, and *29 September* restored after popular uprising.

23 September. Emperor Lothar abdicates and enters Prüm monastery in Germany during a serious illness; *29 September.* Lothar dies, aged sixty. His eldest son Louis II is already ruling Italy; his other sons Lothar and Charles succeed to ‘Lotharingia’ (i.e. basically the Low Countries, Alsace/Lorraine, and Switzerland) and to Provence (including the Rhone valley) respectively.

Count Gerard ‘of Rousillon’ (castle near Chatillon-sur-Seine), married to Lothar’s wife’s sister Bertha, is the new governor of Provence for the under-age Charles (to 863) and count of Lyons and Vienne.

Louis II allies with his uncle Lewis ‘the German’s son Louis against his own brothers Lothar of ‘Lotharingia’ and Charles of Provence with an eye to annexing some of their lands.

October. As local support in Aquitaine turns against Pepin II, the relieved Charles ‘the Bald’ is able to resume his earlier plan to hold Aquitaine in his own family; he names his second son Charles ‘the Child’ as its king, aged eight, and sends him there to take over; the younger Charles is anointed as king at Limoges; Pepin is driven into flight.

The Vikings on the Loire head by land for Poitiers, but are routed by the locals; only around 300 escape.

IRELAND

(or 856) Approximate date of ‘Amlaith’ (not definitely Olaf ‘the White’) returning to Dublin from Scandinavia for a second term as king, with a new army of Vikings and two new colleagues – Ivarr, presumably ‘the Boneless’ (i.e. the son of the pirate warlord Ragnar ‘Lothbrok’) and Auisle. Ivarr is called his ‘brother’, but Olaf was not a son of Ragnar – does this mean brother-in-law or blood-brother? If Ivarr is Ivarr ‘the Boneless’, he rules until 865 then leaves for England to assist his brothers Halfdan and Ubbe with invading the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

Cearbhall, king of Osraige/Ossory kills a Viking chieftain called Rodolb and destroys his army; he then aids a Danish force in his region, possibly the settlers at the new Viking base of Waterford in SE Leinster, and a chieftain called Horm (probably the ‘Gorm’ who is killed in Mon/Anglesey in 856) to defeat a rival army of Norwegians.

856

BRITAIN/FRANCIA/ITALY

February. At Louviers, Charles ‘the Bald’s eldest son and heir, Louis ‘the Stammerer’ (born 846), marries the unnamed daughter of his father’s vassal king Erispoe of Brittany; he is crowned as co-king and ruler of Maine and the ‘regnum Cenomannicum’, in effect of Neustria. His principal vassal there is Robert ‘the Strong’, founder of the later royal dynasty that will take the throne in 888 and 987, but Robert resents having Louis in control and probably soon approaches Charles’ half-brother Lewis with a view to a revolt. There is apparently a general conspiracy among Charles’ vassals to invite in Lewis ‘the German’ to take his kingdom in 856, but this is forestalled as he is busy fighting the Slavs. Instead, a substantial part of the Aquitaine nobility defects to Pepin and deposes Charles ‘the Child’ in his favour.

8 March. Charles, son of the late Pepin (I) of Aquitaine and younger brother of Pepin II, is made archbishop of Mainz and arch-chancellor of Eastern Francia by his uncle Lewis ‘the German’.

18 April. The Vikings on the Loire sack Orleans.

Having spent a year in Rome as a guest of Pope Benedict, Aethelwulf journeys back to Wessex via the court of Charles ‘the Bald’ in Francia and marries Charles’ daughter Judith, aged thirteen or fourteen (October). Aethelwulf is over fifty; the alliance probably complements a military agreement against Viking raiders. Despite the prestige of alliance with the Carolingians the danger of more sons to claim the throne may have seemed a threat to his elder sons. The question arises of whether granting Judith the title of queen (unused since the infamies of Eadburh around 800?) was taken as giving her potential sons rights to the throne ahead of Aethelbald.

Aethelbald, backed by the bishop of Sherborne and ealdorman of Somerset, refuses to allow Aethelwulf back into his kingdom; Aethelbald may have had reason to think his father had broken an agreement.

Aethelwulf is unable to muster enough support to invade the West when Aethelbert backs him and gives him admittance to the East; he has to accept a reduced role as co-king of Kent for the rest of his life.

King Rhodri of Gwynedd and Powys inflicts a heavy defeat on a raiding-army of Vikings from Ireland on Mon/Anglesey, killing their commander Gorm. From Irish sources, these appear to be largely the Danes, ‘Black

Foreigners', resident in Dublin; their losses weaken the Danes' control of Dublin and this leads to their eclipse by arriving Norwegians ('White Foreigners') whose leader 'Amlaith', possibly Olaf 'the White' from Norway, now or earlier gains control of Dublin.

Aquitaine is recovered by Charles for his son Charles 'the Child' as Pepin has to flee and assorted nobles desert him.

October. The Vikings on the lower Seine build a fortified camp at Jeufosse, forty miles downstream from Paris, to plunder the nearby Vexin.

28 December. The Vikings sack Paris again.

SPAIN

Musa ibn Musa attacks Barcelona.

857

FRANCIA

?*Early.* The Loire Vikings sack Tours again.

King Lothar of 'Lotharingia' puts his unwanted and barren wife Teutberga on trial for alleged adultery with her brother, Abbot Hucbert of St Maurice's abbey, with a panel of judges headed by his mistress Waldrada's brother bishop Thiergaud and archbishop Gunther. The queen is divorced and exiled, and Hucbert starts a rebellion; Lothar hands over some lands in the Jura mountains to his brother Louis II of Italy to win his backing for the divorce and tries to win over his uncles Lewis of Germany (successfully) and Charles 'the Bald' (unsuccessfully).

Lothar allies with Charles 'the Bald'; Louis II of Italy allies with Lewis 'the German'.

Pepin II, fighting his uncle Charles in Aquitaine again as more nobles desert the latter and aided by a Viking mercenary army, sacks Poitiers; he is said to have renounced Christianity and become a pagan to increase his links with his troops.

IRELAND

War between king Amlaith of Dublin and his Scandinavian rival Caitill 'the Fair', a warlord at large in Munster, who he defeats – Caitill may or may not be Ketil 'Flatnose', then or later lord of the Hebrides.

FRANCIA

November. Assassination in a church of king Erispoe of Brittany by his leading noble count Saloman of Poher, who seizes power.

BRITAIN

Aethelwulf, king of (now only part of) Wessex, dies (13 January), probably at Steyning (West Sussex) where he is buried, aged around fifty-five to sixty. Aethelbald and Aethelbert maintain the division of the kingdom, Aethelbald ruling the West, and the former marries his young stepmother Judith.

February. Death (at Forteviot near the lower Tay, the Southern Pictish ‘capital’, or ‘Cinnbelachair’) of Cinaed/Kenneth mac Alpin, first king of the ‘united’ realm of Picts and Dalriadan Scots (at least as seen in retrospect) but the third or fourth to hold both kingships simultaneously.

He is probably in his fifties, and has reigned for fifteen years; he is succeeded, as per the Irish system of inheritance, by his brother Donald, not by his sons Constantine and Aed; Donald, remembered as a lawgiver, reigns for four years.

SPAIN

February. Treaty of truce between the new count Hunfrid of Barcelona, a defector from Lewis ‘the German’ given the frontier Spanish ‘March’ (with Roussillon and Narbonne) by Charles in 854/7, and governor Abd-ar-Rahman of Saragossa; Hunfrid then takes his army into Francia to aid Charles against a threatened attack by Lewis, joining him to do homage for Barcelona to him at Beaune in Burgundy (21 March). Hunfrid is subsequently made margrave of Burgundy too.

FRANCIA

March. At Quierzy, Charles ‘the Bald’ and his nephew Louis II hold a summit and agree an alliance.

ITALY

17 April. Death of Pope Benedict III; *24 April* vigorous and assertive Nicholas elected Pope at instigation of visiting Louis II.

FRANCIA

The Seine Vikings attack and loot Paris and burn all the churches except those whose clergy can pay a huge ransom; Charles manages to persuade one of their commanders, Bjorn, to come to him at Verberie and do homage as his ally.

Charles ‘the Bald’ holds an assembly of his nobles and clergy to extract oaths of loyalty; archbishop Wenilo of Sens fails to turn up, blaming illness, but signs the oath later.

Lothar of Lotharingia is compelled by threats from his domestic critics and his uncle Charles ‘the Bald’ to allow his ex-wife Teutberga to clear her name of adultery by undergoing a judicial ‘ordeal’ by water; she is successful and he has to take her back as his wife.

Louis, son of Lewis the German and governor of Saxony, campaigns to the NE against the Obodrites in Mecklenberg.

Count Gerard of Vienne, as regent of Provence for its teenage ruler Charles son of the later Emperor Lothar, arranges for his ward’s elder brother Lothar of ‘Lotharingia’ to succeed him if he dies without children.

The Vikings on the River Seine attack the abbey of St Denis and take abbot Louis, cousin of king Charles, hostage for a ransom. The Bretons attack Maine and are aided by a revolt against Charles by local counts, which causes the king’s eldest son Louis ‘the Stammerer’, his local commander, to flee the region.

July–23 September. Charles ‘the Bald’ attacks the Vikings on the River Seine and blockades them on their island base of Oissel; their commander is probably Ragnar (?‘Lothbrok’). Charles is joined by his son Charles ‘the Child’ from Aquitaine plus Lothar II from ‘Lotharingia’. The siege is halted after twelve weeks by the invasion of Lewis ‘the German’ (see below), which causes Charles to withdraw his army.

Count Saloman, now ruling of Nantes and Rennes after his murder of his predecessor duke/king Erispoe, assumes the title of duke of Brittany. He allies with Robert ‘the Strong’, marquis/margrave of Neustria, against his late predecessor Nominoe’s son-in-law ‘king’ Louis ‘the Stammerer’, son of Charles ‘the Bald’, and they approach king Lewis of East Francia for help in a revolt.

Robert and Saloman ally to rebel and drive Louis ‘the Stammerer’ out of Le Mans and take over Maine; (probably August or September) their ally Lewis ‘the German’ invades and marches via Chalons as far as Orleans, hoping to meet up with Pepin II and gain Aquitaine’s adherence; the majority of the nobility of Neustria deserts Charles and joins a meeting of rebels from Aquitaine to acclaim Lewis as king at Sens. Archbishop Wenilo of Sens joins the assembly and backs Lewis, thus breaking his oath to Charles – the origin of the legend of ‘Ganelon’ as the arch-traitor to ‘Emperor Charles’ (mistakenly assumed to be his grandfather in the 778 Spanish campaign) in the ‘Song of Roland’.

Charles has to flee to Burgundy as he confronts Lewis but realises that his army is unreliable (12 September), but the majority of the bishops of Western Francia back Charles and refuse to crown Lewis as he is demanding. Lewis receives the defecting West Francian nobles at Troyes and heads to Attigny, meets Lothar II who thus abandons Charles, and heads for St Quentin for Christmas.

?While Lewis is preoccupied in West Francia, his son and governor Carloman of Bavaria sacks his father's nominees and loyalists counts Rihher of the Pannonian March and Pabo of Carinthia, and replaces the latter with count Gundachar; Lewis is in no position to interfere but later hands some of Carloman's lands in Pannonia over to the archbishopric of Salzburg to reassert royal authority (c. 860), annoying him.

SPAIN

Surrender of rebel Toledo to emir Mohammed of Cordoba after a six-year rebellion; the city is punished and leading Christian zealots are arrested and imprisoned, including their anti-Cordoban bishop Eulogius who has been encouraging 'martyrs' to defy Islamic law and administrators for a decade or so.

859

FRANCIA

January. Lewis is abandoned by some of his leading supposed supporters, led by count Conrad of Auxerre and his sons, Hugh 'the Abbot' (the fighting abbot of the monastery of St Germain/Germanus of Auxerre) and Conrad (II). Charles drives Lewis back in a largely clash-free series of manoeuvres that winter, and subsequently rewards his allies with new counties, lay abbacies etc; Conrad (II) becomes the new duke of upper Burgundy (i.e. the later Franche-Comte, of Lyons and SW of the Vosges). Conrad of Auxerre, who as the son of count Welf is of East Francian/German descent, is deprived of his lands there by the angry Lewis, his former patron, and thus relocates his part of the 'Welf' dynasty to West Francia.

15 January. At Jouy, Charles 'the Bald' announces his victory over his half-brother Lewis who has now retreated to East Francia.

5 February. Charles meets Lothar II, who has now abandoned Lewis, at Arcis; subsequently Charles holds a church synod at Savonnières near Toul to announce the charges against the defector archbishop Wenilo of Sens.

Charles and Lewis 'the German' meet tentatively on an island on the Rhine near Koblenz to discuss their differences.

Weland's Vikings reinforce the Viking encampment at Oissel on the River Seine and plunder upriver; Charles resumes the siege in their absence but stalemate resumes as he cannot storm it.

ITALY

Death of count Guy of Spoleto, son of count Lambert (d. 856), who also ruled Nantes on the Breton March, and of Adelaide, daughter of Pepin of Italy and grand-daughter of Emperor Charles (d. 814); he is

succeeded by his son by a princess of Benevento (daughter of duke Sico), Lambert II.

Lambert and count Gerard of the Marsi, aided by their junior neighbours the Lombard ‘gastalds’ (minor town/regional governors) of Teieste and Boiano, attack the brigand ‘emir’ Sawad of Bari, ruler of the Se tip of Italy, while he is raiding West into the principality of Capua and try to prevent him returning safely to Bari; he fights his way out of the trap and reaches his city.

SPAIN

Musa ibn Musa assists a Viking expedition across N Spain to attack his own kinsmen in Pamplona by letting them cross his lands; his nephew Garcia Iniguez, the king of Pamplona, is captured and ransomed by them, probably not at Pamplona but somewhere to the South.

FRANCIA

June. Charles ‘the Bald’ proposes to depose the treacherous archbishop Wenilo of Sens for defecting to Lewis in 858 and denounces him in a written declaration, but is later persuaded to accept his continuation in office.

?*Autumn.* St Valery-sur-Somme and Noyon monasteries are sacked by the Seine valley Vikings.

Charles abandons his planned October meeting with Lewis at Basle as he hears that Lothar II will not be there.

IRELAND

‘Amlaith’, king of Dublin, assists Cearbhall, the Irish sub-king of Osraige/Ossory in Munster, to defeat and break away from his overlord, king Mael Gualae of Munster; the two leaders then go on to Midhe for a plundering expedition which sees the highly prestigious sack of Armagh. A conference of Irish and Viking rulers follows in Co. Westmeath, where Amlaith and Cerbhall induce ‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill to accept the transfer of Osraige/Ossory from the kingdom of Munster to that of Midhe.

At around this time, Amlaith marries the daughter of Mael Sechnaill’s Ui Niall rival, Aed Finlaith, in an uneasy alliance – or this alliance may be earlier if Amlaith’s son Carlus, old enough to be killed in battle in 867, is the offspring of this marriage.

Death of king Mael Guala of Munster after a six-year reign; succeeded by Conn Faelad hua Mughithirn, abbot of Emly, of the ‘Eoganacht Aine’ dynasty, who reigns until 872.

February. Synod of Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle of the 'Lothairngian' Church backs Lothar II's divorce from his first wife Teutberga; however, this is opposed by some clerics who appeal to the ignored archbishop of Rheims (superior of the bishops in part of 'Lotharingia'), Hincmar of Rheims; Hincmar denounces the synod and its dubious legal grounds for backing the divorce in writing, which also serves to boost his own claims to authority in the kingdom plus aiding his ally Charles 'the Bald' by illegitimising any children Lothar II may have by his second wife/mistress Waldrada.

1 June. Charles, Lewis 'the German', and Lothar II meet at Koblenz and supposedly agree peace, but Lothar then turns against Charles and offers Alsace to Lewis for an exclusive alliance.

Count Lambert of Spoleto joins his neighbour count Hildebrand in an unsuccessful revolt against Louis II of Italy, made dangerous by Lambert's descent from Emperor Charles and potential as a rival king; they are defeated, and Lambert flees Spoleto to the safety of Benevento, where prince Adelchis is also defying Louis, but is persuaded to return home unmolested in return for a pardon by Louis.

Charles 'the Bald' makes his fourth son Carloman, a trainee cleric so disinherited from the throne, a deacon and abbot of St Medard in Soissons.

SPAIN/FRANCIA

Approximate date of the second battle of Abelda or the 'Battle of Mount Laturce', between king Ordone of Leon and Asturias and his new ally Garcia of Pamplona and their Moslem foe, Garcia's uncle Musa ibn Musa, ruler of the NE of the emirate of Cordoba. Musa is routed, his Basque son-in-law is killed, and his military power is crippled to the benefit of both Leon/Asturias and his uneasy overlord the Emir Mohammed. He is sacked as 'wali' by Emir Mohammed who is now able to stand up to him.

Mohammed attacks the territory of Pamplona and takes king Garcia's son Fortun Garces (known as 'the One-Eyed') prisoner in an attack on the town of Milagro, deporting him to Cordoba as a hostage for his father's good behaviour and keeping him at court under guard. At some point his daughter Onneca joins him at the Ummayyad court.

Arrival in Spanish waters of a large Viking fleet, led by the 'brothers' Bjorn 'Ironsides' (possibly the semi-legendary king of Sweden) and Hastein or Haesten; they plunder around Cadiz, and force their way through the Straits of Gibraltar against a Moslem fleet to sack Algeciras. A raiding Viking army (probably this one) is defeated by the Moslems of Cordoba at Niebla, and part of it moves across the Mediterranean to attack Morocco; Bjorn and Haesten winter in the Camargue in Provence after attacking Arles.

Count Gerard of Vienne and his Provençal regency's army recover Arles and the Camargue from the pillaging Vikings and drive them into sailing off.

BRITAIN

December. Unexpected death of king Aethelbald of Wessex, probably at or near Sherborne where he is buried – its bishop Ealhstan was one of his main supporters when he defied his father in 856. Given that he witnessed charters from c. 843 and was old enough to fight in 851, he was probably aged twenty-five to thirty. His next brother Aethelbert succeeds to all of Wessex and does not give his own Eastern kingdom of Kent to his next brother Aethelred, who (along with the youngest brother, Alfred) apparently hands over his claims to lands to the king to pool the family resources. Possibly Aethelred is too young to rule too, if he was born close in date to Alfred (i.e. c. 845/6); the 'Life' of Alfred by Asser recounts a story, probably told by Alfred himself, of how he and his brother(s) were set a competition to memorise a passage in a book by their mother Osburh, implying that at least one brother was not much older than Alfred.

Following Aethelbald's death, a large Viking 'raiding-army' lands in Hampshire and sacks his capital, Winchester; it is pursued and heavily defeated by 'ealdormen' Oslac of Hampshire and Aethelwulf (a Mercian from Derby) of Berkshire.

IRELAND

'High King' Mael Sechnaill, aided by troops supplied by his allies in Munster, Leinster, and Connacht, attacks his ern Ui Niall rival Aed Finliath of the 'Cenel nEoghan' in Ulster; the campaign is inconclusive but Aed Finliath and his ally Flann mac Conaing of the Ui Niall of South Brega (brother of their king Cinaed) manage to attack the 'High King's' army in camp near Ulster in an unsuccessful raid.

861

BRITAIN/FRANCIA

January. The Seine valley Vikings (under Weland?) sack Paris again.

Aethelbald of Wessex's widow Judith returns home to Francia, and is placed at Sens.

Charles besieges the Seine Viking camp at Oyssel but it refuses to surrender and he dare not launch a head-on attack for fear of defeat; he offers the rival Viking commander Weland 3,000 pounds of silver to ally with him and drive the Oyssel Vikings out, and Weland spins out negotiations and ends up agreeing to 5,000 instead. He then lets the Vikings at Oyssel escape unhindered.

Lewis 'the German's son Carloman rebels, assisted by Rastiz king of the Slav Wends; Carloman seizes most of Bavaria to the river Inn, and Lewis expels the rebel's father-in-law Ernest, the latter's nephews, and other suspected nobles from his realm so they defect to Charles.

Charles creates two new 'March' commands against the attackers of Western Neustria – the 'Breton March', aimed at duke Saloman of Brittany, for Robert 'the Strong' of Neustria, who is now made count of Maine, and the 'Norman March' (i.e. Northman/Viking) for Adalard the Seneschal, a former stalwart of Emperor Louis I and uncle of Charles' wife Ermengard who has recently left East Francia (where he has served since 843) after deserting his patron king Lewis for the latter's rebellious son Carloman. Adalard is opposed by the local commander count Rorgo II of Maine and his brother Gauzfrid, who revolt against him and king Charles – thus damaging the latter's planned Neustrian campaign against the Vikings – and ally to Saloman of Brittany; Robert of Neustria fights them.

Charles attacks Provence and reaches Macon, but fails to elicit enough support from the nobility to evict his nephew Charles from his kingdom there. Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims rallies the Church in Western Francia to demand that he keeps to past oaths to his brothers and leaves his nephew's realm alone, and Louis II of Italy, Charles of Provence's brother, threatens to intervene to secure Provence (which he would like to keep from its current heir, their brother Lothar).

ITALY

Bjorn and his 'brother' (disputed) Haesten arrive with their Viking fleet in the Tyrrhenian Sea; sack of Pisa and then inland Lucca by them. The latter event is marked by a possibly apocryphal piece of Viking cunning recounted of other attacks too, when Bjorn or Haesten allegedly pretends to have died so his followers ask the Christian townsfolk if they can bring his body inside the walls for burial at the cathedral. The townsfolk agree, but the coffin is filled with weapons and once inside Bjorn jumps out to distribute the latter and lead his men in sacking the town. After the Italian expedition the Vikings return home to Scandinavia, losing some forty ships to a Moslem attack in the Straits of Gibraltar en route.

The legendary account of the Luna raid in the later 'Saga of Ragnar's Sons' has Bjorn, presumably aided by his loot from this raid, and his brother Sigurd 'Snake-In-The-Eye' dividing up the Scandinavian dominions of the recently-murdered Ragnar between them after the Luna expedition, with Bjorn ruling the heartland of Sweden, based at the ancient royal centre of Uppsala, and Sigurd ruling Scania and the Danish island of Zealand, while the other sons of Ragnar ruled parts of Britain (i.e. as conquered in historical fact in 866–70), but it is unclear how historical this is.

SPAIN

Musa ibn Musa is defeated on an expedition against his rebel son-in-law and (26 September) dies of his wounds at Tudela.

IRELAND

Another attack by ‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill and his Southern and Western Irish allies on his rival Aed Finliath of the ‘Cenel nEoghan’ of Western Ulster.

FRANCIA

Charles returns from the Rhone valley to hold Christmas at Ponthion, and receives envoys from Lewis ‘the German’ and Lothar.

862

BYZANTIUM/MORAVIA

Prince Rostislav of Moravia sends envoys to Constantinople for missionaries, as Papal missionaries in his realm insist on using unpopular Latin.

ITALY

March. Pope Nicholas writes to the Eastern Patriarchs upholding the sacked ex-Patriarch Ignatius, who has been replaced at the wishes of the new (858) chief minister Bardas (Michael III’s uncle) by the learned lay academic Photius as he was too close to the deposed regime of Michael III’s regents.

FRANCIA

Lothar of Lotharingia separates from his wife Teutberga again, imprisons her, and arranges an annulment by complaisant clergy as the synod of Aachen agrees to this (April).

Judith defies her father king Charles by running off from Sens with the young count Baldwin of Flanders who she marries; her descendants will include William ‘the Conqueror’s wife Matilda of Flanders. Charles hears of her defection and at the subsequent synod at Soissons has Baldwin excommunicated for adultery, refusing to accept the marriage as legal.

Charles’ son Louis is persuaded by Gauzlin of Maine and other plotters to flee from his father and plans a rebellion. The part of the Viking army on the Seine that is still there, commanded by Weland, is blockaded by Charles by means of building a dam downriver from his base so he cannot sail back down to Meaux, then surrounding his camp and starving him out; he has to agree to terms as he runs out of food and becomes a

Christian and is baptised as Charles' godson; he then leaves as agreed. (The methods used to trap him and terms of his surrender are similar to Alfred's tactics with Guthrum in 876–7 and 878 and may inspire him.)

A Viking fleet from the Mediterranean (probably the one that sacked Luna) arrives in Brittany, and is hired by duke Saloman to attack the Loire valley; they are joined by a part of the Viking fleet that has been raiding up the Seine, which has got away from Charles' blockade. The king's son Louis joins them in Brittany and is given help to attack Maine. The loyalist commander Robert of Neustria attacks and defeats the Loire/Maine raiders, taking twelve of their ships, and then bribes the ex-Seine Viking army to defect to him and attack Saloman instead. Louis gives up his revolt and surrenders to his father, and is granted the county of Meaux.

Rebellion of Charles 'the Child', younger son of Charles 'the Bald', in Aquitaine against his father; it is only supported by a few of the region's nobles, led by Hunfrid of Barcelona. Charles holds an assembly at Pitres and prepares to attack Aquitaine; his son agrees to come to meet him at Meung under a safe-conduct during the meeting at Pitres and thereafter holds out but is less dangerous. Charles has fortified bridges built on the Seine to impede Viking ships' passage.

The county of Limoges is seized from the loyalist count Raymond of Toulouse by Hunfrid, count of Barcelona, on behalf of Charles 'the Child'; *19 August*. Charles 'the Bald' sacks Hunfrid from his offices and seizes his lands as a rebel, but is not able to enforce this yet.

Louis, son of Lewis the German and governor of Saxony, campaigns with his father against the Obodrites in Mecklenberg

SPAIN

Probable date of the marriage of Onneca (known in Arabic as 'Durr', 'the Pearl'), daughter of the captive prince Garcia of Pamplona at Cordoba, to Abdallah, the second son of her father's captor Emir Mohammed; she subsequently bears Abdallah a son (Mohammed) and several daughters.

BRITAIN

Probable date of the accession of Aelle as king of Northumbria, or else as only ruler of Deira (i.e. Yorkshire), if the late C11th account of Simeon of Durham of his ruling for five years to 867 is correct. (Other sources say one or four years). This may mark a revolt against the current king Osbert and a division of the kingdom; the two men are at war by 866.

July. Death of the venerable and learned (and modest) bishop (St) Swithun of Winchester, in office for a decade; he famously insists on being buried

outside his cathedral not inside it (on 15 July, later his day as a saint) to avoid any notion of veneration at a shrine, but later the area is roofed over and a shrine is duly built.

FRANCIA

17 September. Charles joins archbishop Hincmar of Rheims for the consecration of the new cathedral of the Virgin at his city.

Autumn. Charles and Lewis ‘the German’ meet at Toul; Charles complains about Lothar II’s behaviour as Lewis intercedes for the latter, with Charles angry at Lothar for his affair with Waldrada and his receiving Judith’s ‘illegal’ husband count Baldwin of Flanders.

IRELAND

27 November. Death of ‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill, head of the Southern Ui Niall of ‘Clann Colman’, after a fifteen-year reign; his rival Aed Finliath of the Northern Ui Niall ‘Cenel nEoghan’ succeeds him as ‘High King’ and Lorcan mac Cathail, of uncertain dynastic origins, succeeds him as head of ‘Clann Colman’ and king of Midhe. Lorcan allies with the Viking warlord Amlaith of Dublin and his co-rulers Ivarr/‘Imarr’ (presumably Ivarr ‘the Boneless’ Ragnarsson) and Auisle and they deny Aed Finliath effective control of much of Midhe, making his actual as opposed to titular role as ‘High King’ disputed. Aed Finliath subsequently married Mael Sechnaill’s widow, Lann the sister of Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory.

?Death of king Ruarc mac Bran of Leinster (or late 840s??) and accession for a one-year reign of Muirecan mac Diarmata mac Ruadrach of the ‘Ui Faealan’ branch of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’; his father was king of the ‘Airthir Lipri’ sub-dynasty and he is nephew of king Muiredach who died in 829.

BRITAIN

Death of king Donald of the united realm of Picts and Scots after a four-year reign; succeeded by his nephew, his brother Cinaed/Kenneth’s elder son Constantine, not his own (probably younger) son Giric.

FRANCIA

December. Lothar marries his mistress Waldrada who he then crowns.

FRANCIA/ITALY

20 January. Death of Charles of Provence, aged around eighteen, of epilepsy; his supposed heir is his brother Lothar of ‘Lotharingia’, but he can only secure the provinces/ecclesiastical archdioceses of Lyons

and Vienne as their other brother Louis II of Italy invades to gain the adherence of the lower Rhone nobility and acquire Arles, Aix, and Avignon.

Lewis of East Francia attacks his rebel son Carloman of Bavaria and allied magnates, marching into Pannonia after them; at the river Schwarza Carloman's ally count Gundachar of Carinthia is supposed to be defending the line of the river but defects in return for Lewis confirming him as count; Lewis is able to cross and eventually brings the refugee but undefeated Carloman to terms.

Louis II sends bishop Liudhard of Pavia to Charles to arrange an amicable settlement over Provence; Lewis 'the German' sends bishop Eberhard of Speyer on a rival mission and asks Charles not to receive his now defeated and fugitive son Carloman of Bavaria; Carloman surrenders to his father and is kept under watch at his court.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Theognostus and other 'Ignatian' exiles reach Rome; *April* Nicholas holds a synod in Lateran to depose Photius, restore Ignatius, and anathematise all 'Photians'. Nicholas sends an embassy under bishop Ratbold to Charles to arrange for him to pardon and accept his son-in-law Baldwin, who has arrived in Rome asking for help; Charles agrees.

FRANCIA

(or 862) Synod of Soissons in Western Francia, called to deal with the so-called 'Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals', forged? ancient Church rulings that allow junior bishops in a see the authority to deprive priests of office without the permission of their archbishops and so an attack on the authority of the latter; the Decretals have been backed strongly by bishop Rotrud/Rothad of Soissons, but his authoritarian superior archbishop Hincmar of Rheims has them condemned by the synod and has Rothad sacked; he goes to Rome to appeal to Pope Nicholas.

Lothar arranges for a synod of the bishops of his kingdom to meet and approve the formal annulment of his marriage to Teutberga (Metz, June), but Pope Nicholas and his uncle Charles 'the Bald' are not satisfied and Nicholas excommunicates archbishop Gunther of Cologne for assisting Lothar by providing fake 'evidence' for the divorce; the Papal legates to the synod ignore their orders by accepting Lothar's request to allow the divorce and Lothar sends archbishops Theutgard of Trier and Gunther of Cologne to take the synod's decrees in favour of the divorce to Rome.

Teutberga escapes and flees to Charles' court for help. The Pope cancels the annulment, sacks Theutgard and Gunther, and proclaims that Teutberga is still Lothar's wife.

Robert ‘the Strong’ of Neustria defends Autun from an attack by Lewis ‘the German’; Saloman of Brittany comes to terms with the invading Vikings who Robert has sent to attack him and pays them to leave.

Count Raymond of Toulouse and the Rouergue is killed as Toulouse is stormed by the rebel count Hunfrid of Barcelona.

Charles marches into Aquitaine to confront his defiant son Charles ‘the Child’ and his rebel noble allies; at Auxerre he receives his runaway daughter Judith and her husband Baldwin and has a properly legal marriage-ceremony performed. He then goes on South to receive the repentant Charles ‘the Child’, who is pardoned.

The Vikings on the Garonne storm and sack Angouleme, but suffer heavy losses; (autumn) Charles comes to the aid of SE Aquitaine as they march on Toulouse and drives them back, but in the interim Poitiers is sacked.

IRELAND

The territory of Flann mac Conaing, Lorcan mac Cathail’s rival to predominance in Midhe, is pillaged by the Vikings of Dublin under Lorcan’s ally Amlaith.

?Dunlainge mac Muiredaig, son of king Muiredach who died in 818 and head of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’ branch based at Maistiú/Mullaghmast, succeeds Muirecan mac Diarmata as king of Leinster. He reigns for six years, overshadowed by his neighbour Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory.

864 FRANCIA/GERMANY

Lewis ‘the German’ and Charles ‘the Bald’ patch up their differences at a meeting at Metz and agree to divide the lands of their nephew Lothar of ‘Lotharingia’ between them.

Lewis ‘the German’ gives his eldest son Carloman the rank of sub-king as ruler of Bavaria to fend off his threats to revolt; this touches off fears by his younger sons Louis (born 835?) and Charles, recently made count of the Breisgau (born June 839), for their rights to an equal share of the kingdom of Germany and leads to them plotting. They subsequently revolt too and Lewis has to promise a division of his lands between them all.

Conrad (II), son of count Conrad of Auxerre, resigns the duchy of upper Burgundy and takes over at Auxerre.

ITALY

The indignant Louis II and his wife arrive in Rome with the sacked archbishops Theutgard and Gunther to demand their reinstatement ‘or

else' from the Pope; amid threats of violence to the Pope, a religious rally outside St Peter's by the citizens is broken up by Louis' soldiers and a relic of the True Cross is smashed up and has to be rescued by some English pilgrims; the Pope flees into hiding from the Lateran but Louis eventually comes to terms and leaves (March?). The deposed clerics leave with him, and Gunther tries to carry on acting as a bishop over Easter in defiance of the Pope; Theutgard gives up and his see is awarded by Lothar II to his cousin Hugh, son of Charles 'the Bald's uncle Conrad.

September. 'Doge' Pietro Tradonico assassinated in faction-fighting at Venice; succeeded by son Diso.

FRANCIA

A roaming Viking army invades the Auvergne and sacks Clermont: Pepin defects to the Vikings again and lives in their manner, but has little support in Aquitaine.

Charles' son Charles 'the Child' is badly injured in a brawl or mock-duel with one of his entourage while hunting in the forest of Cuise.

Count Ranulf of Poitou, duke of Aquitaine, captures Pepin and hands him over to his uncle Charles 'the Bald' at the subsequent assembly at Pistres/Pitres (1 June).

Deposition by his uncle Charles, at Pistres, of the rebel king Pepin of Aquitaine; he is imprisoned in a monastery at Senlis and not heard of again. Charles secures full rule of Aquitaine for his second son and nominee, Charles 'the Child'.

Charles holds an assembly at Pistres and organises a new military system to combat the Vikings; the 'Edict of Pistres' (25 July) requires the inhabitants of regions under threat of attack to build fortifications around their towns plus a network of bridges and causeways on the rivers to disrupt Viking ease of movement. The tactics used to trap Weland are thus extended across Western Francia, and may form a model for Alfred's tactics in Wessex after 878 – though there is little evidence of many new bridges being built. Charles also sets up a force of mobile cavalry to be ready to attack the roaming Vikings at short notice, and closes down most of the unlicensed private mints run by local towns and nobles so he can control the coinage.

The new 'Margrave' of the Spanish March appointed by Charles 'the Bald', Sunifred, drives out the rebel Hunfrid; the latter flees to Italy.

Count Bernard 'Plantapilosa' of Autun and Auvergne, son of the late notorious Bernard of Septimania, is sacked by Charles and is accused of a plot to murder him; he is replaced by Bernard 'of Gothia', son of the late count Raymond of Poitou (who d. 844). Auxerre goes to Robert 'the Strong' of Neustria.

FRANCIA/ITALY

King Lothar's bishops send to Rome to excuse themselves for allowing their king to divorce Teutberga and marry Waldrada. Meanwhile Lothar now claims he married Waldrada before he married Teutberga so the latter ceremony was bigamous and he can reject her on that ground.

IRELAND

Conchobar mac Donnchada, king of Lagore in Midhe and ally of Flann mac Conaing of Brega in the latter's struggle against Lorcan mac Cathaill of Uisnech, head of 'Clann Colman', for the rule of Midhe, is captured and drowned near Clonard by the Viking warlord Amlaith of Dublin; presumably Lorcan is involved as 'High King' Aed Finliath subsequently captures and blinds him, rendering him ineligible for rule so he has to abdicate.

865

BRITAIN

(Probably autumn) Arrival of the 'Great Army' of Scandinavians in Kent, apparently intent on conquering the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms one by one as opposed to the usual raiding. The number of warriors is unclear but is evidently larger than usual and presumably larger than the 350 ships who invaded in 851 – around 6–8000 men? They are commanded by the three sons of the late pirate leader Ragnar 'Lothbrok', i.e. Halfdan, Ivarr 'the Boneless' (presumably arrived from Dublin), and Ubbe or Hubba. According to legend the invasion is in retaliation for the Northumbrians capturing Ragnar (c. 862?) and throwing him into a pit of snakes where he was bitten to death – but this is a common legend.

They land in Kent and force the populace to give them supplies in return for allegedly leaving, but then break out by night and ravage East Kent before sailing off to East Anglia.

King Burghred of Mercia attacks Gwynedd and marches his army along the Irish Sea coast as far as the Caernarfon area, probably heading for Mon/Anglesey; his possible attempt at conquest is aborted by the arrival of the Viking 'Great Army' in England.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

Fifty Viking ships sail up the Seine to plunder and ravage; another fleet sails up the Loire to sack the monastery of St Benedict and then sack Orleans on their return journey downriver. They or another group then sack Poitiers, but 500 of them are killed in a subsequent ambush by count/margrave Robert 'the Strong', now count of Tours.

Death of count Rorgo II of Maine; succeeded by his brother Gauzfrid.

King Charles patches up a peace with him and his ally Saloman of Brittany to end their rebellion, sacks Adalard the Seneschal as commander of the 'Norman March', and gives his title plus his land to Rorgo in return for his allegiance.

Threatened by the Pope with excommunication if he does not restore Teutberga (August) and fearing a joint invasion by Charles 'the Bald' and his own brother Louis II after their recent 'summit', Lothar takes his ex-wife Teutberga back.

Louis, governor of Saxony, and Charles 'the Fat', younger sons of Lewis the German and now in their late twenties, revolt against their father (now sixty) and their elder brother Carloman of Bavaria; this is more of a demonstration of their demand for a share of power than a serious plot to dethrone him, and he agrees to name them as co-heirs to win them over; their treaty sees Louis given the rank of sub-king of Saxony, Thuringia and Franconia (i.e. and mid-Germany) and Charles the rank of sub-king of Swabia/Alemannia and Rhaetia/the upper Rhine and eastern Switzerland (i.e. SW Germany). Louis' engagement to his fiancée, the daughter of the seneschal Adalard, is abandoned.

Death of Charles 'the Bald's third and physically impaired son, Lothar 'the Lame', teenage abbot of St Germain (i.e. St Germanus) d'Auxerre; the abbacy is given to his younger brother, abbot Carloman of St Medard at Soissons.

Charles replaces Bernard of Gothia by Robert 'the Strong' of Neustria as count of Autun, and gives him the 'Septimanian March' instead as his main viceroy on the Ummayyad frontier to replace the sacked count Hunfrid of Barcelona – the lands involved include Narbonne, Roussillon and Nîmes plus Barcelona. The county of Toulouse plus Pallars and Ribagorça go to another Bernard, son of their former ruler count Raymond (deprived 863), who has recently died.

The Vikings on the Loire join up with the Bretons to sack Le Mans; Charles confronts the Viking army on the lower Seine as it camps at Pistres but his officials are too slack about having bridges repaired and fortified as ordered so one party of invaders can get to Paris to acquire wine and another group sails upriver and thence heads off to Chartres on a raid. In Aquitaine, Sigfrid's Viking army is defeated by the locals on the River Charente.

FRANCIA/ITALY/SPAIN

Pope Nicholas sends archbishop Arsenius of Orte as his legate to Western Francia with instructions to restore the disgraced ex-bishop Rothad of Soissons to his see despite his neighbouring bishops having agreed to depose him; archbishop Hincmar of Rheims is forced reluctantly to accept this. Arsenius also calls in on Lothar at Douzy in 'Lotharingia', bringing

the latter's ex-wife Teutberga with him, to tell the king to restore her as his wife or face excommunication.

Autumn. Charles goes to Cologne to meet Lewis 'the German', and reconciles the latter with his son Louis (II) who is in disgrace for planning to marry the daughter of count Adalard without his father's permission.

A West Francian embassy is sent to emir Mohammed of Cordoba in reply to his recent embassy to Charles.

October. A Viking force from the army on the lower Seine spends several weeks looting the abbey of St Denis outside Paris and loading up their ships with its treasures; afterwards their camp is hit by an epidemic.

Unsuccessful campaign in the Douro valley against the kingdom of Leon by Al-Mundhir, elder son and heir of the Emir of Cordoba; he manages to defeat count Rodrigo of Castile on his return march and seizes some border castles.

866

BRITAIN

New Year. Death of king Aethelbert of Wessex, at an unknown exact date and site (possibly late 865?). From his being old enough to be king of Kent in 855, he is presumably at least in his mid-late twenties. He is succeeded by his younger brother Aethelred, who has been witnessing charters (as titular co-king?) since c. 862 and is probably aged around twenty and is still unmarried.

SPAIN

27 May. Death of king Ordone of Leon and Asturias, after a sixteen-year reign; probably aged in his forties. He is succeeded by his son Alfonso III 'the Great', who will reign for forty-three years.

FRANCIA

?May–June. Charles unsuccessfully confronts the Seine valley Viking army as it attacks Melun, and after his main commander count Robert's wing of the Frankish army is defeated by the Vikings he agrees to pay 4,000 pounds in silver and to return all slaves who have run away from their Viking captors; he has to levy a tax on his subjects to raise the money.

King Saloman of Brittany allies to the Viking commander Hastein/Hasting and they invade Maine, whose new count Gauzfrid has recently abandoned his alliance with Saloman to serve king Charles and their mutual supposed rival Robert 'the Strong' of Neustria; they ravage Maine and on to the Loire valley, but Robert and his ally Gauzfrid call in duke Ranulf of Aquitaine, count of Poitou; they catch up the retreating Breton/

Viking army at Brissarthe, where the latter take refuge in a church but are detected trying to withdraw under cover of darkness and are attacked.

2 July. Battle of Brissarthe: Robert's army wins the battle over Saloman and Hastein, but he is killed, his ally Ranulf of Poitou mortally wounded, and his ally Gauzfrid of Maine wounded; the rebels escape back to Brittany. Robert is succeeded as 'margrave'/'March' commander of Neustria by his wife Adelaide's (probable) second husband, Hugh 'the Abbot' (of St Germain d'Auxerre), who also becomes count of Tours and lay abbot of St Martin there and of Noirmoutier. As principal warlord of Western Neustria and 'regent' of the lands of count Robert for his under-age sons Eudes/Odo and Robert, Hugh dominates the lands between Seine and Loire into the 880s and now takes over fighting the local Vikings.

Ranulf of Poitou is succeeded by his son by Bilichild of Maine, Ranulf II.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Emperor Louis II attacks Benevento; his brother Lothar sacks archbishop Hugh of Cologne and replaces him with the brother of the Papally-disgraced former archbishop Gunther, Lothar's ally, who is thus able to continue extracting the see's revenues as its administrator.

BRITAIN

The 'Great Army' camp in East Anglia, and force king Edmund to give them supplies and horses in return for a promise to leave his kingdom alone. They are to attack Northumbria next, and Edmund gives in – probably hoping they will be defeated as well as to avoid inevitable defeat. The 'Great Army' head on by land on their new mounts to York, and arrived during a civil war between kings Aelle (probably holding York as he is called 'king of Deira') and Osbert.

Fall of York; the 'Great Army' sets up its winter headquarters there.

IRELAND/BRITAIN

Aed Finliath, 'High King' and head of the Ui Niall of Cenel nEoghan in W Ulster, takes advantage of the departure of Amlaith (Olaf?), the Viking ruler of Dublin, and his colleague Auisle on an expedition against the kingdom of Picts/Scots in Scotland to overrun all the Viking naval bases in Ulster. Presumably the absence of Ivarr 'the Boneless' and his men in England also helps; it is unclear if Amlaith's attack on king Constantine of the Picts and Scots is intended to help Ivarr and his brothers by keeping the Scots from aiding Northumbria.

Ar around this date Aed Finliath marries, thirdly, the ‘daughter of Cinaed’ – who may be the daughter of the late king Cinaed/Kenneth of Scots and sister of the current king Constantine, in which case he allies to Constantine against their mutual foe Amlaith of Dublin.

Successful expedition to the Scots Lowlands by the Viking ruler Amlaith (Olaf?) of Dublin, probably to secure control of the route from the Firth of Clyde to the Forth. He may be the elusive Viking ruler in Eastern Ireland, ‘Olaf the White’, in which case his wife Aud’s father Ketil ‘Flatnose’, lord of the Hebrides in the 860s–70s, is presumably allied to him and assisting in his expansion.

FRANCIA

29 *September*. Death of Charles ‘the Child’, eldest son of Charles ‘the Bald’ and titular king of Aquitaine since 864, at Limoges, aged nineteen, some time after being incapacitated by a blow to the head during a minor (mock?) combat with one of his men. He is succeeded as under-king by Charles’ elder son, Louis II ‘the Stammerer’, but his disinherited younger brother abbot Carloman probably now starts to consider claiming his own rights to a kingdom by force and leaving the Church.

Queen Ermentrude leaves her husband Charles ‘the Bald’ after he executes her rebel brother and retires to her own nunnery of Chelles.

With his son Louis II in rebellion, Lewis ‘the German’ is unable to come to meet Charles at Metz as planned; his rebel son incites the Wends to invade Eastern Francia to distract Lewis but they are dealt with by Lewis’ loyal son Carloman of Bavaria. Charles turns up at the planned venue anyway with an army but Lewis sends messages that he has no need of his help; Charles ravages his nephew Lothar’s lands around Verdun instead after Lothar snubs him about holding a meeting and stays at Trier trying to persuade his unwanted wife Theutberga to enter a convent.

867

BRITAIN

Midwinter. The two feuding kings Aelle and Osbert of Northumbria unite to attack the ‘Great Army’ in York, but are routed; they are both killed, and according to legend the Viking leader sacrifices their father’s murderer Aelle to the god Odin by carving his ribs open in the ‘blood-eagle’.

The ex-kingdom of Deira in Yorkshire is taken over by Scandinavians as the new kingdom of York (‘Yorvik’); possibly the settlement of York begins at this date. The sons of Ragnar impose a vassal-king, either of Bernicia or of all Northumbria, called Egbert to keep the land loyal while they finish off the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

FRANCIA

Lent, March. Charles appoints his son Louis as the new king of Aquitaine and takes him to Pouilly on the Loire to set up his household there and have the magnates swear allegiance to him. He then spends Easter at St Denis, where his nephew the abbot Hugh (son of Emperor Charles' daughter Rotrud) has died and he takes the abbey into his own hands.

BRITAIN

Autumn. The 'Great Army' invades Eastern Mercia, and sails up the River Trent to Nottingham to set up their winter camp there – linked to the sea by their control of the river. Either now or early in 868 king Burghred calls on his wife's brothers Aethelred and Alfred of Wessex for military aid to attack Nottingham.

Death of the aged bishop Ealhstan of Sherborne after forty-three years in office; succeeded by Heahmund.

IRELAND

Aban mac Cinaed, heir of the king of Connacht Mugron mac Mael Cothaid, is killed in battle by Sochlachan mac Diarmiat; this leaves the field open for Mugron's co-ruler Conchobar mac Tadhg 'Mor' and his sons to hold the kingship until 925.

FRANCIA

Saloman of Brittany sends his brother Pascweten to negotiate terms with king Charles and fend off an invasion as Charles calls an army assembly for 1 August ready to attack; *August.* Peace is agreed at Compiègne and Pascweten swears allegiance to Charles on Saloman's behalf, in return for which Saloman is recognised as 'king' of Brittany.

Lothar sends Theutberga to Rome, hoping that she will incriminate herself in her lobbying of Pope Nicholas and the latter will let him divorce her and marry Waldrada; this plan fails. He raises an army to allegedly deal with a new threat of the Viking chief Rorik, driven out of Frisia by the locals recently, returning but really to head for Italy and intimidate the Pope, and meets Lewis 'the German' to secure his support.

BYZANTIUM

24 September. Michael III murdered and succeeded by his 'favourite', the rough Balkan ex-herdsman turned court chamberlain Basil I (founder of the Macedonian dynasty), a far more effective and ruthless ruler.

ITALY

13 November. Death of the forceful Pope Nicholas I in Rome.

14 December. Election of Hadrian II (born 792), cardinal priest of St Mark and a compromise candidate in a viciously factional election, as Pope; he was an unsuccessful candidate in 858. Soon afterwards Rome is attacked and pillaged by the local warlord Lambert of Spoleto.

868

BRITAIN

King Aethelred and his brother Alfred of Wessex arrive to join king Burghred of Mercia in besieging the ‘Great Army’ in Nottingham. The Vikings ‘sit it out’, aided by possession of the river so their ships can bring supplies in; meanwhile Aethelred and Alfred take Mercian wives, Aethelred marrying Wulfrida and Alfred marrying Ealhswith, daughter of the ‘ealdorman’ of the Gaini (SE Midlands) and of the formidably learned Eadburh.

The Mercian and Wessex armies are unable to storm the walls of Nottingham, and the Vikings refuse to come out and fight. Burghred, later accused of weakness by Wessex sources, agrees to a treaty with the Vikings and pays them to leave Mercia; the Wessex army goes home. The ‘Great Army’ returns to York.

IRELAND

Battle of ‘Cell ua nDiagri’ (Annals of Ulster): ‘High King’ Aed Finliath, aided by co-king Conchobar mac Tadhg ‘Mor’ of Connacht, defeats Amlaith (Olaf?) of Dublin and his ally king Flann mac Conaing of Brega, killing the latter and routing a mixed Viking/Midhe Ui Niall force; this secures his control of his Irish rivals in Midhe but Amlaith continues to wage war on him.

FRANCIA

Saloman of Brittany receives royal regalia from king Charles as his vassal-king.

The inhabitants of Aquitaine defeat another Viking invasion up the Garonne; this turns the tide of Viking attacks in SW Francia.

SPAIN

Annexation of Oporto by king Alfonso III of Leon and Asturias brings the Christian border to the river Douro.

June. Pope Hadrian II excommunicates ex-Patriarch Photius in retaliation for his excommunication of Nicholas I.

Lothar marches into Italy despite an order from his brother Louis II which he receives at Ravenna to halt; Louis does not abandon his siege of Arab-held Bari but his wife Engelberga joins Lothar as he arrives to meet Pope Hadrian at Benevento and intercedes for him; the Pope agrees to grant absolution to Lothar on his swearing that he has not set eyes on Waldrada since he was ordered by the Church to dismiss her.

?Marriage at Aschaffenburg of Louis (II), under-king of Eastern Germany to Liutgard, daughter of the late Saxon count Liudolf, who died in March 866 (related to the later Ottonian dynasty as grandfather of Henry ‘the Fowler’) and Oda (d. 913) of the Billung dynasty; her brother is the current Saxon leader, count Bruno (killed 880).

Lothar visits Rome and starts back for his kingdom.

8 *August.* Death of Lothar of ‘Lotharingia’ at Piacenza in Italy, aged thirty-four. His uncles Lewis ‘the German’ and Charles ‘the Bald’ have agreed (864) to divide his lands between them, but Lewis is currently ill and his army is fighting Slav tribal rebels in the NE so Charles makes haste to Metz with episcopal encouragement (early September), holds a synod there to win Church support by denouncing Lothar’s irregular private life and insults to the Church, and annexes all of Lotharingia ignoring Lewis’ protests.

6 *October.* Death of queen Ermentrude of Western Francia, separated wife of Charles ‘the Bald’, at her nunnery of Chelles, aged forty-six; buried at St Denis. Charles immediately summons his mistress Richildis, sister of count Boso, to court as he heads to ‘Lotharingia’ for the winter.

The archbishop of Arles is captured by Arab pirates while he is constructing a fortress in the coastal Camargue, is carried off by ship as a hostage, and is ransomed with the pirates not revealing that he has died on board until they have the money.

BRITAIN

Autumn. The Scandinavian ‘Great Army’ returns to East Anglia, riding across Eastern Mercia to winter quarters at Thetford in the heart of Edmund’s kingdom. Unusually, they do not bother to choose a site easily reachable by their ships – possibly a sign of confident contempt of their opponents. At this point the legend of St Edmund takes over from contemporary chronicles, with the king portrayed as a Christian hero prepared to sacrifice himself for his people – according to one account he dismissed his main army to minimise casualties. He may have rejected a summons to hand over (part of?) his kingdom for settlement; it is unlikely that he is ordered to abjure Christianity. He takes on the Viking

army in battle at Hellesdon/Hoxne in November 869 and is defeated and killed; the stories that he was captured alive and tortured to death, probably by being tied to a tree and used as target-practice, are persistent enough to be based on genuine memories. He may have had the ‘blood-eagle’ carved on him like Aelle of Northumbria; he was apparently beheaded and his remains later recovered by local followers and buried near the site. East Anglia was settled by the victors, but a few scattered coins of a subsequent Anglian ruler in the 870s (Oswald) suggest that Halfdan Ragnarsson and his brothers temporarily installed a puppet-king. A cult of St Edmund grew up in later decades, encouraged by the newly Christianised Scandinavian warlord Guthrum and serving as a unifying factor for Anglians and Danes. By 915 Edmund was an important enough figure to have his relics translated to Bedricsworth (later renamed ‘Bury St Edmunds’) as the centre of a cult based at a major shrine; the cult grew in importance after the West Saxon annexation of East Anglia and king Edward appears to have called his fourth son after the saint. By the C14th Edmund was one of the patron saints of England.

IRELAND

?Aillel mac Dunlainge of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’ sub-dynasty of Mullaghmast succeeds his father Dunlainge mac Muiredach as king of Leinster, for a two-year reign.

FRANCIA

Charles spends Christmas at Aachen.

c.870 BRITAIN

(870 or late 869) The Vikings in East Anglia sack Peterborough abbey and parcel out all or most of East Anglia among their settlers; possibly Oswald is installed as puppet-king.

Invasion of Strathclyde by a large Viking force from Ireland, led by Amlaith/Olaf ‘the White’; this besieges king Artgal in the kingdom’s principal fortress and royal residence, Dumbarton, and when the well there runs dry he and his men have to surrender. The fortress/town is sacked and looted, and Artgal is held to ransom and made a Viking vassal who allows passage across his lands for Vikings travelling from Ireland via the Firth of Clyde to the Firth of Forth and the North Sea probably a major objective of the expedition. In effect the Vikings now control the Scottish Lowlands.

‘The Great Army’ invade Wessex late in 870. Some settlers probably remain behind in East Anglia, as others had in York, and a ‘king Oswald’ who appears in East Anglian coinage c. 80–3 may be their local puppet-king.

Possibly one or more of Ragnar's sons has also left the invading force by this time; numbers are made up by new arrivals, with several major warlords, kings or 'jarls', among the commanders. The Vikings, probably led by Halfdan, sail up the Thames and seize a strategically important, easily-defensible riverside town as their base for raids, as in Northumbria and Mercia – Reading, where they erect a rampart between Thames and Kennet to withstand attack. A few days later 'ealdorman' Aethelwulf of Berkshire defeats a large raiding-party under two 'jarls' at Englefield (West or East of Reading). Aethelred and Alfred then bring the main army of Wessex forward to besiege Reading, pressing a quick assault with more vigour than Burghred has shown at Nottingham.

They meet defeat, among the casualties being Aethelwulf, and have to retreat Westwards onto the Downs. The late 'ealdorman's followers take his body home successfully for burial at Derby. The Vikings move out of Reading to give chase to the army of Wessex, probably around the New Year.

FRANCIA

January. At Aachen, Charles receives angry messages from Lewis 'the German' telling him to leave Lothar's realm alone or face war; he marries his mistress Richildis as his second wife (22 January, Aachen). Richildis is a politically valuable noblewoman who is niece to the late Lothar II of 'Lotharingia's wife Teutberga and so can bring in her supporters to win Charles backing in Lotharingia. Richildis' elder brother count Boso is lay abbot of St Maurice (Switzerland, SE of Lake Geneva) after his meddling uncle Hucbert; her father was count Bivin, lay abbot of Gorze monastery, and her mother's (Richildis?) father Boso was count of Turin and Valois. Her brother Boso now becomes count of Lyons and Vienne in place of the late Emperor Lothar's partisan and Charles' long-time foe count Gerard 'of Roussillon' (castle near Chatillon-sur-Seine, not province), strongman of the regime of Lothar's son Charles of Provence in 855–63, who is sacked and evicted; Gerard's wife Bertha (sister-in-law to Lothar) withstands a siege by Charles' troops for some time in Vienne but is expelled and she and her husband retire to Avignon.

Charles goes to Nijmegen to negotiate with Rorik the Dane. The clergy negotiate between him and Lewis.

Charles is at Compiègne for Easter, then (May) at Attigny while bishop Odo of Beauvais and counts Odo and Harduin take his proposals to Lewis at Frankfurt; Lewis proposes a meeting near Meerssen which is agreed, with him coming to a halfway-point from Meerssen and Charles the same distance from Heristal.

28 July. Treaty of Meerssen agreed between Charles and Lewis:

'Lotharingia' is divided up, with Lewis gaining two-thirds of Frisia, the Trier and Aachen districts (thus putting the 'capital' of their grandfather

Charles in his realm and the future Germany), the Eastern Ardennes, most of Alsace, and Strasburg and Basle; thus the approximate future medieval Franco-German border is created.

Plot of uncertain extent against Charles by his disinherited fourth son Carloman, abbot of St Medard at Soissons and St Germain d'Auxerre; part of the Lotharingian nobility backs the prince, aged around twenty, as he starts a rebellion but he is overwhelmed by the royal army, arrested, and taken to Senlis to be imprisoned in a monastery there as a monk.

IRELAND

'High King' Aed Finliath and his ally Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory attack Leinster, a former and possibly still ally of Amlaith (Olaf?) of Dublin against him. Cearbhall's camp is attacked by a party of Leinstermen during the expedition and a kinsman of his is killed.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Death of duke Gregory III of Naples; succeeded by his unscrupulous son Sergius II, who allies with the Moslem powers and accepts military support from the Aghlabids of Tunisia to the horror of the Papacy and his own uncle, bishop (St) Athanasius of Naples.

Pope Hadrian sends a letter to Charles as he attends the fast of St Denis at that saint's cathedral in Neustria (9 October) ordering him to leave Lothar's realm to his rightful heir, i.e. his brother Emperor Louis II of Italy; Charles is furious. His son Carloman escapes from his monastery and heads for Flanders to start a revolt, but can only pillage with a small band of followers and is driven into flight to Alsace.

Lewis is laid up at his new gain, Aachen, by an infection from an injury received in a roof-timber fall as he was heading to meet Charles earlier; his favour to his eldest son Carloman leads to the latter's younger brothers Charles and Louis refusing a summons to court and their reconciliation has to be negotiated.

Late. Charles heads to the lower Rhone to take over the late Lothar's lands from Lyons South to Vienne; the resisting count Gerard's wife is besieged in Vienne and forced to surrender, and Charles spends Christmas there.

SPAIN

Wilfred or Wifred 'the Hairy', founder of the later dynasty ruling Catalonia, is appointed as the West Frankish count of Urgel and Cerdanya in the Pyrenees.

The crucial battle of Ashdown takes place West of Reading on ?4 January; the invaders' first serious check since their arrival, and a rare English victory in open conflict. The site is disputed except that it takes place on the Berkshire Downs, a few days' march from Reading; it was later linked to White Horse Hill above Uffington, but was probably somewhere on the ridge of the Downs. An alternative site is at Cholsey, on a lower chalk ridge nearer the Thames. Both armies fight in two sections, with Aethelred's facing Halfdan and his fellow-king Bacseg and Alfred facing the 'jarls'. Alfred's biographer Asser claims that the Vikings started to advance while Aethelred was still at prayer and Alfred urged him to attack by surprise while they were still marching into place; the king prefers to finish prayers so Alfred attacks alone with his wing. The West Saxons score a decisive victory with fighting raging until nightfall; Bacseg and five 'jarls' (Sidroc 'the Old', Sidroc 'the Young', Osbern, Fraena, and Harald) are killed and the Vikings put to flight. The West Saxon success at Ashdown does not have any significance in the short term; the Vikings, reinforced by fresh arrivals, move south to northern Hampshire. Aethelred and Alfred meet them at Basing fourteen days after Ashdown (18 January?), and this time they are defeated. The West Saxon army remains in the field throughout what was subsequently called the 'battle-winter', putting up a stronger fight than the other kingdoms. It suffers a second defeat at Merton (?Martin near Ringwood or Merton Park near Winchester) in mid-late March. It is probable that Aethelred was seriously wounded, at East from Asser's account. Probably bishop Heahmund of Sherborne is killed at the battle of Merton. Another Viking fleet arrives, tipping the balance further.

Aethelred dies on 23 April, probably at Witchampton near Wimborne where he is buried; he is probably aged around twenty-eight and has reigned for five years and ?three months. His infant son Aethelwold is superseded by the adult and military experienced Alfred, aged twenty-two or twenty-three, as is necessary in the crisis. Overshadowed by his younger brother's subsequent success and largely forgotten except as an adjunct to Alfred, Aethelred plays a major role in the ultimately successful resistance which Wessex mounts to the first major Viking invasion.

A new 'summer army' of Vikings arrives in Wessex to make up the invaders' losses (May/June?), and the West Saxons cannot call on any known reinforcements; Burghred seems to stay out of the war, presumably in fear of another attack by Halfdan. Resistance continues by Wessex with another battle at Wilton near Salisbury (indicating a Scandinavian advance SW from Reading or West from the upper Test valley on Wiltshire), where the West Saxons hold the advantage for most of the day but lose. The effects of war-weariness must have been mounting in a campaign reckoned as nine major battles and countless skirmishes, and Alfred now negotiates in order to survive. The West Saxons had to

pay tribute in return for the Vikings leaving, later covered up by their embarrassed propagandists, and the invaders retire from Reading to London.

(or 872?) Apparent death by drowning of king Gwgon of 'Seisslywg', i.e. Ceredigion/Cantref 'Mawr', the pre-eminent or only effective ruler of SW Wales following the collapse of the kingdom of Dyfed. The 'Brut y Tywysogyon' says it occurred as he was leading his army across the River Loughor in Carmarthenshire en route to attack the Vikings in Southern Dyfed, who may be led by Ubbe Ragnarsson if this is after the end of the 'Great Army' campaign in Southern England. He is succeeded by his sister Angharad's husband, his Northern neighbour Rhodri 'Mawr' of Gwynedd – whether the latter was accepted easily or drove out rivals, as in Powys which he 'inherited' in 853, is unclear. In effect, Rhodri now rules all West Wales as far South as Pembrokeshire.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

Charles holds a church synod at Douzy (August) to depose bishop Hincmar of Laon, who has been attacking his alleged depredations of church autonomy and property; he receives his brother Lewis' estranged sons Charles and Louis, and then intercedes with their father Lewis for them at a meeting at Maastricht; his negotiations with his own son Carloman, now a fugitive in the Jura mountains, are unsuccessful despite the mediation of the miscreant's sister Judith's husband count Baldwin of Flanders.

The East Francian commander of the 'Pannonian March', 'margrave' William II, and his brother and co-ruler Engelschalk I are killed on campaign against the Moravians; Lewis the German appoints an outsider, Arbo/Aribo, as the new commander of the March not the late rulers' sons to their annoyance.

Abortive rebellion of Louis of Germany/Bavaria against his father Lewis 'the German'; a reconciliation is patched up.

ITALY

Louis II invades Southern Italy, driving Arabs out of all cities and towns except Taranto, and recaptures Bari.

Louis is seized on a visit to his untrustworthy vassal Adelchis of Benevento in a plot by Adelchis, count Lambert of Spoleto, and count Guaimar of Salerno; the Arabs of Sicily who have failed to save Bari then attack Salerno, and the alarmed Adelchis releases Louis to lead the regional army against them in return for a pardon. Louis defeats the Arabs, keeps his word to Adelchis for the moment but sacks Lambert from the rule of Spoleto, which he gives to his wife Engelberga's cousin Suppo.

IRELAND

Presumably after the end of the Viking campaign in Wessex, Ivarr ‘the Boneless’ arrives in (or returns to) Dublin and assumes co-rulership of the Viking kingdom there with Olaf ‘the White’.

This is the approximate date of Olaf’s current or divorced wife Aud ‘the Deep-Minded’ and their son Thorstein ‘the Red’ leaving Dublin for the Hebrides, to join Aud’s father Ketil and subsequently to start setting up a new dominion in the mainland Scotland based on Caithness. It is disputed whether this resulted from or led to Olaf setting up his son by another wife, Eystein, as his heir in Dublin – Eystein’s father king ‘Amlaith’ may not be Olaf at all.

?Domnhall mac Muirecan, son of king Muirecan who reigned in ?862–3 and from the ‘Ui Faelan’ branch of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’ dynasty, succeeds Aillel mac Dunlainge (two-year reign) as king of Munster; he reigns for thirteen years, overshadowed by his powerful neighbour Cearbhal of Osraige/Ossory. The ‘Chronicum Scotorum’ has him acceding only in 880 for a shorter reign, possibly reflecting Cearbhall defying his authority to be king.

ITALY/FRANCIA

?*Late autumn*. Prince Adelchis of Benevento captures Louis II by treachery on a visit to his city, inspiring an attack on his residence by an armed crowd and forcing him to accept the independence of Lombards in Southern Italy and swear not to break this treaty. Once Louis and his wife Engelberga have sworn to this effect they are allowed to leave and Louis retires to Ravenna and gets a Papal absolution from the oath; he blames duke Lambert of Spoleto for backing Adelchis and the latter flees in fear of arrest.

Hearing a rumour that Adelchis has killed Louis, Charles ‘the Bald’ heads to Besancon ready to invade Italy/Provence if it is true but soon hears the truth; he arrests and imprisons his surrendering son Carloman.

872

FRANCIA

January. Charles meets the Viking leaders Rorik and Roderick for talks on the river Sambre.

ITALY

18 May. Hadrian II crowns Louis II of Italy as ‘Emperor’.

Exile of bishop (St) Athanasius of Naples, uncle and critic of the pro-Moslem duke Gregory III, by his nephew; he is in touch with Louis II who rescues him from his ‘escort’ and has him sent to Rome to seek Papal help; he dies en route and subsequently becomes co-patron saint of Naples.

FRANCIA/ITALY

May. Charles plans to meet Empress Engelberga who Louis has sent North to reassure his kin; she meets Lewis ‘the German’ instead and secures his agreement that he will bequeath those lands in the late Emperor Lothar’s realm that he has taken at Charles’ expense to Louis II not to Charles. Charles appoints his wife Richildis’ older brother Boso as chamberlain and effective chief minister to his teenage second son Charles ‘the Child’ in the kingdom of Aquitaine, and also as count of Bourges.

Bernard of Septimania’s son by the renowned author Duoda, Bernard ‘Plantpilosa’ (born March 841), count of Autun in 864–9, succeeds his wife Ermenburga’s father as count of Auvergne (to 886) and is also granted the counties of Carcassonne and Razès.

Lewis ‘the German’ forces his younger sons Louis and Charles to reconcile with their elder brother Carloman, and they swear oaths to each other at his court.

On an expedition to attack the treacherous duke Adelchis in Benevento, Louis II is encouraged by his Italian nobles to divorce the acquisitive and unpopular Engelberga and marry the local daughter of duke Winigis instead.

SPAIN

Ismail and Lubb, the sons of Musa ibn Musa (d. 862) of the ‘Banu Qays’ rebel dynasty in NE Spain, start a new rebellion against the emirate of Cordoba and seize Saragossa and Monzon; they are probably backed by Musa’s nephew Garcia, Christian Basque king of Pamplona. Another son of Musa, Mutarrif, subsequently takes Huesca with local support but Emir Mohammed offers it to the family’s local rival, rebel commander Amrus.

BRITAIN

Capture and murder of king Artgal of Strathclyde, since 870 a Viking vassal, by his Northern neighbour, king Constantine of the Picts and Scots. He is replaced by his son Rhun, who is married to a ‘daughter of Custennin’ which probably means that he is this Constantine’s son-in-law and ally. Rhun, possibly complicit in his father’s removal, becomes a Scots ally.

?Deposition of king Egbert of Bernicia (or all Northumbria except the Viking settlements in and around York), tributary ally of the Viking kingdom of York; he is replaced by Ricsige, whose attitude to the Vikings is unclear; he may or may not be in revolt against them.

IRELAND

?Olaf ‘the White’ leaves Dublin, either voluntarily or driven out by his co-ruler Ivarr ‘the Boneless’. The Irish sources say he left to fight in his Norwegian father Guthfrith’s wars against the unifying first king of Norway, Harald ‘Finehair’; Icelandic sources say he headed to Scotland where he may have had vassals in the Hebrides and ended up being killed on the mainland (by the Scots?) at an unknown date thereafter.

Death of king Mugron mac Cothaid of Connacht (‘Sil Muiredaig’ branch of the ‘Ui Bruin’ dynasty), who acceded in 848; succeeded by his co-ruler Conchobar mac Tadhg Mor (acceded 855) of the ‘Ui Bruin’ branch of the ‘Sil Muiredaig’, who rules to 882.

Death of king Conn Faelad of Munster, after a thirteen-year reign; succeeded by Dunchad mac Duib-da-Bairenn mac Crundmael of the ‘Eoganacht Caisil’ dynasty. He reigns for sixteen years.

FRANCIA/ITALY

November. Charles meets Rorik and Roderick the Danish Viking commanders at Maastricht.

Pope Hadrian dies and *14 December* John VIII, an elderly but forceful archdeacon close to Nicholas I, is elected Pope. He orders St Peter’s and its surroundings to be fortified to prevent further Arab raids as in 846.

873

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Methodius is released on orders of Pope John VIII and returns to Moravia. Basil fights the Moslems in South-East Anatolia, capturing Zapetra and Samosata; he is later defeated near Melitene.

SPAIN

Amrus takes Huesca from the rebel ‘Banu Qays’ dynasty on behalf of the emirate of Cordoba, deporting its commander Mutarrif ibn Musa and his sons to Cordoba where Emir Mohammed has them crucified; at around this date the Emir installs the ‘Banu Tulib’ clan in the region to combat the ‘Banu Qays’ on his behalf and offers them Saragossa.

IRELAND

?Death of Ivarr ‘the Boneless’, son of Ragnar ‘Lothbrok’ and king of Dublin; he is succeeded by Eystein, son of his former co-ruler ‘Amlaith’ or Olaf ‘the White’. The latter is later expelled by Ivarr’s brother Halfdan Ragnarsson, who arrives from his own kingdom of York.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

A Byzantine army under a 'patrician' lands at Otranto to help Adelchis of Benevento once he has sworn to pay tribute to Emperor Basil not to the Franks; Louis II is alarmed into giving up his latest planned attack and despite his public oath to keep fighting until Adelchis is deposed; he secretly asks the Pope to issue a plea for their reconciliation so he has legal grounds to agree peace instead.

FRANCIA

Charles 'the Bald's son Carloman is deposed from his clerical orders for misdemeanours and starts to claim that now he can inherit a crown again so Charles has him blinded; he flees in secret to Lewis 'the German'. The latter receives him at Mainz but cannot help him as his own son Carloman is under attack by the Wends and Lewis has to march to Carloman's rescue.

Charles 'the Bald' collects his army, and pretends he is heading to attack Brittany to lull the Loire Vikings into a false sense of security; he then attacks their headquarters at Angers by surprise and is joined by Saloman of Brittany with his army; they blockade Angers until the Vikings seek terms and agree to either leave or be baptised and enter Charles' service. They are allowed to stay on their Loire island at Angers until February 874.

874

BRITAIN

The 'Great Army' moves into Eastern Mercia unopposed and marches on one of the main central towns and royal residences, Repton; king Burghred gives up and flees to Rome, ironically the same fate as king Cyngen of Powys who he deposed in 853. The invaders parcel out Eastern Mercia, E of Watling Street, for settlement; it becomes the 'Danelaw' (i.e. where Danish law is observed), divided up into decentralised settler communities based on 'boroughs' like Cambridge, Stamford and Nottingham.

Western Mercia is given to a Mercian collaborator, Ceolwulf II the 'foolish king's thegn' (Anglo-Saxon Chronicle nickname), who promises to hand it over when the Scandinavians want it.

IRELAND

Aed Finliath, 'High King', and his ally Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory attack Leinster, a probable ally of Viking Dublin, for the second time.

ICELAND

Traditional date (in the 'Landnambok') of the landing of the first permanent Scandinavian settlers in Iceland, led by the exiled warrior Ingolfur Arnarson who has had to leave Norway after a conviction for murder. He is supposed to have thrown his honorific chiefly 'high seat' pillars overboard from his ship in order to settle where they drifted ashore as per the usual ritual, and his men found them a couple of years later in a bay at the site of Reykjavik so he settled there. In fact, the latest archaeological evidence from the settlement shows the wood used was cut down in the year 871, as the tree-rings are those of the year of the volcanic eruption of 871.

FRANCIA

Saloman of Brittany is deposed in a plot by his son-in-law Pascwetan, count of Vannes, the late ruler Nominoe's son-in-law count Wrwant/Gurwant of Rennes, and count Wido of Cornouaille; his son and heir Wico, who did homage to king Charles as the next king of Brittany at the siege of Angers in 873, is murdered and Saloman is arrested fleeing from a monastery hideout and is executed by some Frankish officers on their Breton allies' behalf. Pascwetan (larger share) and Wrwant (smaller share) divide up Brittany in a civil war.

December. Charles meets Lewis 'the German' at Heristal.

875

FRANCIA

February. Having forced his eldest son Louis 'the Stammerer' to divorce his wife Ansgard of Burgundy, mother of his sons Louis (III) and Carloman, with the help of the Pope in granting a divorce, Charles 'the Bald' makes him marry a distant cousin, Adelaide of Paris, who is descended from an illegitimate daughter of Charles' father Louis 'the Pious'.

BRITAIN

Death of exiled king Burghred in Rome.

Halfdan and his part of the 'Great Army' that has not settled in Mercia returns to Northumbria and formally sets up the new kingdom of York, dividing out the lands of Deira (to the River Tees) for settlement. The north of Northumbria, Bernicia, remains a dependent sub-state; Halfdan marches his forces to the lower Tyne, presumably to overawe any resistance there and threaten the kingdom of Scots to the North.

Guthrum, Oscytel, and Anund, three Viking kings not included in the settlement in the main 'Danelaw' or in Deira/York, go with their followers to Cambridge and are based there for a year.

The Dublin Vikings invade the Scots Lowlands, possibly in retaliation for the defection of their former vassal Strathclyde in 872 and so a threat to their control of the crucial Clyde-Firth of Forth route. King Constantine of the Picts and Scots is defeated at Dollar. It is unclear if the Viking leader is Olaf ‘the White’, ex-king of Dublin, who in the early-mid 870s is apparently active in and dominating the Hebrides (possibly via his marital alliance to the local warlord Ketil ‘Flatnose’, unless he has divorced Ketil’s daughter Aud by this date and so made an enemy of him). This war may be connected to the Scots war where Icelandic sources say Olaf was killed.

IRELAND

?’High King’ Mael Sechnaill attacks the Viking kingdom of Dublin in alliance with king Halfdan’s excluded nephew Bardar, son of Ivarr ‘the Boneless’; he clearly intends to halt the major threat of a Dublin kingship backed up by the resources of Viking York. He evicts Halfdan and installs Bardar as his ally, driving Halfdan into Ulster.

ITALY

12 August. Death of Emperor Louis II during Southern Italian expedition, aged fifty; as his troops return home the citizens of Bari open gates to Byzantine army.

SPAIN

Death in an accident at Vigaura of Lubb ibn Musa, one of the rebel sons of Musa ibn Musa; succeeded as principal warlord of his family by his son, Mohammed ibn Lubb of Saragossa, aided at times by his uncle and rival Ismail ibn Musa at Monzon.

NORWAY

Most probable approximate date (within a decade) of the semi-mythical ‘Battle of Hafrsfjord’, where the kingdom’s first unifying ruler, Harald ‘Finehair’ (born c. 850/55?), defeated a coalition of his enemies and secured control of the kingdom. More likely, this was only the Southern lowlands and fjords centered on his own inheritance, Vestfold; the truth has been hopelessly muddled by heroic saga and even Harald’s date and lineage are unclear. His ‘reign’ is presumed to have lasted for around forty to fifty years after this, into the mid-late 920s.

BRITAIN

(Probably autumn 875 from the ASC account, rather than spring 876.)

Guthrum leads an army into Wessex, probably marching or riding overland from the Thames valley and apparently catching the West Saxon border guards unawares and outstripping them in a hasty journey SW to Dorset. They take over the useful port of Wareham (on a navigable river for sea-access, like earlier bases), West of Poole Harbour, as a centre to ravage Dorset which has not had a major Viking attack for decades and so has rich pickings. Alfred blockades them there successfully but they refuse battle and are too strongly entrenched to be attacked, as at Nottingham in 868.

FRANCIA

August. Charles ‘the Bald’ hears of his nephew Louis II’s death while he is at Douzy in the Ardennes; he sends his son Louis ‘the Stammerer’ to take over that part of Louis II’s realm that the latter inherited from Lothar II in 869.

Pope John sends envoys, including legate Formosus, to Louis’ uncle Charles ‘the Bald’ for assistance in Italian power-vacuum. He agrees to come to Italy and sets out (September) via St Maurice in the upper Rhone valley near Lake Geneva. Lewis ‘the German’ sends his son Charles ‘the Fat’ to intercept him, but the elder Charles forces him to withdraw; the same happens to Carloman. Incited by Charles ‘the Bald’s’ defecting ex-chamberlain Engelram, a victim of queen Richildis, Lewis invades West Francia in Charles’ absence but only secures the central border.

24 December. Pope John crowns Charles ‘Emperor’ in Rome.

25 December. Lewis spends Christmas at Attigny within Charles’ realm.

876

FRANCIA/ITALY

5 January. Charles leaves Rome for Lombardy.

31 January. Death of Emma of Altdorf, wife of Lewis ‘the German’ and mother of his sons Carloman, Louis and Charles.

February. At Pavia on his return journey to Francia, Charles ‘the Bald’ nominates his wife Richildis’ younger brother Richard as ‘Duke’ of Italy and his viceroy there. Her elder brother count Boso of Bourges, chief minister of Aquitaine, becomes the royal ‘missus’ for Italy and governor of Provence. After Charles leaves for Francia, Boso marries the late Emperor Louis II’s daughter Ermengard and secures his own ‘adoption’ as ‘son’ by Pope John, apparently aimed at building up his own chances of power in Italy.

April. Pope John excommunicates suspected plotters, led by the head of Papal protocol (‘Nomenclator’) Gregory and his son-in-law George of the Aventine, a thug and extortionist who has murdered his own brother and

later killed his own wife before marrying Gregory's daughter; their group, which escapes Rome successfully, includes the ex-legate and future Pope Formosus, who flees to the Lombards at Spoleto to seek help from count Guy. Formosus is sacked as a bishop in retaliation.

Charles 'the Bald' reinstates the former duke Lambert of Spoleto (sacked by Louis II in 871) to rule that city.

Easter. Charles is at St Denis near Paris.

BRITAIN

Guthrum and his Vikings are forced to accept terms from Alfred as the siege of Wareham continues. This is probably due to lack of food and reinforcements, and may imply a West Saxon blockade of Poole Harbour or the Rivers Trent and Frome to stop supply-ships arriving – or else a relief fleet is late arriving. The Viking leaders swear oaths to depart Wessex. But their land-army breaks out by surprise before they are due to leave, and heads West quickly for Exeter, another strategic site on a river whence they can pillage Devon.

Seaborne reinforcements arrive from overseas to join Guthrum, but the Viking fleet based at Wareham is destroyed in a storm off Peveril Point, Swanage with 120 ships lost on the notorious rocky coastline. The losses of men and supplies disastrously weaken Guthrum's force at Exeter, as they were meant to enable him to survive another long blockade. Alfred starves him out at Exeter over the winter, into 877.

Approximate date of Egbert II replacing Ricsige as king of Bernicia in tributary alliance to the Viking kingdom of York.

FRANCIA

?*Summer.* Deaths of the rival rulers of Brittany, counts Pascwetan of Vannes (succeeded by his brother Alan 'the Great' who will later reunify the country) and Wrwant/Gurwant of Rennes (succeeded by his son Iudicael).

Charles 'the Bald' persuades Pope John to give his chosen ally, archbishop Ansegis of Sens (in office from 871), special powers as Papal 'vicar' of all Western and Eastern Francia and supreme primate of this region – thus giving him greater influence over the appointment and administration of clergy outside his own current realm, as befits his imperial claims. This is opposed at the synod of Ponthion by Charles' usual ally, archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, as threatening the usual legal rights of archbishops within their own dioceses; Hincmar writes a treatise in support of these rights and against any innovations.

June–July. Charles presides at West Francian synod at Ponthion.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

26 *August*. Death of Lewis ‘the German’, king of Eastern Francia/Germany, at Frankfurt, after a thirty-six-year reign, aged seventy-nine or eighty. He is buried by his second son, Louis, at Lorsch abbey in his domains as a sign of Louis’ alleged pre-eminence as heir to his father’s central lands. He is succeeded by his three sons, already sub-kings – Carloman, aged forty-eight, in Bavaria (SE), Louis II, aged around forty-one, in northern and central Germany based on Saxony (N), and Charles ‘the Fat, aged thirty-seven,’ in Swabia (SW). They meet at Ries, a suburb of Graz (now Austria), to divide up their lands amicably.

Charles ‘the Bald’ breaks his treaty with Lewis and tries to seize his share of ‘Lotharingia’, advancing via Aachen to Cologne; he refuses Louis II’s request to let him succeed to northern Germany and confronts his army on the banks of the Rhine near Cologne. Louis II arranges a public ‘ordeal’ trial for volunteers from his army to show his men that God is on their side in his inheriting the lands his father promised him, which is successful. Meanwhile Charles’ pregnant wife Richildis is left at Heristal, whence she and her new-born son have to flee after Charles’ defeat.

7 *October*. Charles marches against Louis II but his army is hit by a night of heavy rain and (8 October) is defeated by Louis at the battle of Andernach, on the Rhine of Coblenz. His army blunders back into their own baggage-train as it retreats and many prisoners are taken by Louis II’s troops; he flees back to West Francia.

November. ‘Summit’ of the three sons of Lewis ‘the German’ at Nordlingen; they divide Lotharingia between them and agree to maintain the division of their father’s realm which he made with them in 865, reaffirmed in 872.

877

BRITAIN

(Probably early) Guthrum agrees to peace with Alfred as he runs out of food inside blockaded Exeter; hostages are handed over in another (broken) peace-treaty and Guthrum and his leadership swear to keep the peace on their sacred arm-rings. The invaders depart for Mercia, probably being escorted up the Fosse Way to the Cotswolds as they end up at Cirencester.

In Gwynedd, a major Viking invasion force (probably from Dublin) lands on and conquers Mon/Anglesey; king Rhodri is defeated and driven out of his kingdom, and flees to Ireland to enlist troops while his lands are ravaged.

In Scotland, king Constantine is killed in battle, probably by the Vikings from Halfdan’s forces in Yorkshire and the lower Tyne region – at Inverdotat near Newport-on-Tay (Chronicle of the Kings of Alba),

or at the ‘Black Cave’ (Chronicle of Melrose Abbey) or ‘Black Den’ (John of Fordun, C14th). He is probably in his forties, and is succeeded by his next brother, Aed ‘Wingfoot’.

IRELAND

Donnchad, son of Aedecan mac Conchobar, king of Midhe, is killed ‘deceitfully’ (Annals of Ulster) by Flann Sinna (‘of the Shannon’), son of the late ‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill and stepson of the current HK Aed Finliath; Flann takes the kingship of Midhe.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

(or possibly 872) Eight years after taking over Carcassonne from expelled count Oliba, count Raymond of Toulouse is murdered by a follower of the rival claimant Bernard ‘Plantapilosa’, son of Bernard of Septimania, who seizes power; Raymond’s county of Limoges and the Limousin remain with his family (his brother) and Pallars and Ribagorça are taken by a new ruler, another Raymond.

ITALY/FRANCIA

July. Invited back to Italy to help the Pope fight his enemies, Charles ‘the Bald’ holds a farewell assembly of his vassals at Qierzy where arrangements are made for the governance and taxation of West Francia under his son Louis ‘the Stammerer’ in his absence. These include a law granting the sons of current vassals the right to succeed to their father’s lands without prior sanction by the king – seen by later historians as the ‘abdication’ of royal rights over inheritance of the king’s ‘feudal’ vassals in favour of automatic inheritance by heirs and so a ‘milepost’ in the creation of a decentralised ‘feudal system’, but in fact just a temporary measure for the conditions of 877–8 in Charles’ absence in Italy.

Charles returns to Italy to aid the Pope against the Arabs, but arrives in Lombardy to find little enthusiasm for his expedition to the South; his main local ally, Boso of Provence, fails to join him. He meets the Pope at Vercelli and heads to Pavia.

August–September. With local encouragement, Charles’ nephew Carloman of Bavaria invades Lombardy to cut Charles’ route back to Francia. Shortly after Charles’ coronation of his wife Richildis as Empress at Tortona, the royal entourage have to leave in a hurry as Carloman is approaching, but in fact Carloman withdraws too out of caution then falls ill. Charles decides to retreat to West Francia; the Pope leaves for Rome.

6 October. Death of Charles ‘the Bald’, aged fifty-four, at St Bride-les-Bains on the Mont Cenis pass over the Alps, during his retreat from his nephew Carloman’s invasion of Italy. He has reigned for thirty-five years

in Western Francia, and is buried near where he died not at St Denis as planned; he is succeeded by his surviving son Louis II ‘the Stammerer’, aged thirty-one.

FRANCIA/GERMANY/ITALY

Autumn. Second ‘summit’ between the three sons of Lewis ‘the German’, Carloman, Louis, and Charles ‘the Fat’, to reaffirm their territorial division and their shares of Lotharingia.

The claims of Charles ‘the Bald’s late brother Lewis’ heirs (sons Louis II, Carloman and Charles ‘the Fat’) to the Western Francian throne are denied by a synod of the kingdom’s bishops, which Hincmar of Rheims sways in favour of Louis (II) ‘the Stammerer’; so is an apparent plot in favour of the ambitious Richildis and her kin, whose rumoured plan leads to a confrontation with Louis II who was headed to St Denis on expectation of Charles’ body arriving there for burial but finds that he has been buried in the Alps instead. Louis goes to an assembly at Compiègne and (30 November) meets Richildis’ faction for peace-talks nearby.

8 December. Louis is crowned by Hincmar at Rheims.

Louis II of North Germany, Carloman and Charles ‘the Fat’ divide up ‘Lotharingia’ between them; Carloman secures all of Italy.

The pro-Moslem duke Sergius II of Naples, ally of the Aghlabids of Tunisia, is deposed and blinded by his brother, bishop Athanasius (II) of Naples, who succeeds to the duchy as its secular as well as religious leader and a Papal ally against the Arabs.

878

BRITAIN

The Scandinavians under Guthrum have settled for the winter 877–8 close to the Wessex frontier, and in the New Year Guthrum returns to the offensive by surprise from Cirencester. Attacking the royal manor at nearby Chippenham while Alfred is there at Twelfth Night (5/6 January), he intends to kill his foe and then overrun the leaderless kingdom. Alfred escapes SW and takes refuge in the Somerset marshes at Athelney, an ‘island’ surrounded by marsh which is flooded in winter and during high tides. He is reduced to a guerrilla leader while the Scandinavians roam at will across Wessex, probably un-resisted by a leaderless army who at first think their king dead; the ASC has to admit that most of Wessex was overrun and many people fled overseas. It is possible that Guthrum intends to set up a puppet-king, as has been done in other kingdoms, but if so the ‘quisling’ and his supporters were expunged from the record.

It is to this period that the apocryphal story of Alfred burning a poor cottager’s bread (the ‘cakes’) and accepting her scolding belongs; it seems to have emerged from a hagiography of St Neot and presumably occurred (if at all) during his weeks as a guerrilla leader.

Alfred rallies his men, and a seaborne descent on Devon from South Wales by the surviving Ragnarsson, Ubbe/Hubba – probably intended to take Alfred in the rear at Guthrum’s request – is crushed by ealdorman Odda at Cynwit (Countisbury?). Odda probably ‘holes up’ in the fortress on Exmoor due to the size of Ubbe’s army, but wins a surprise counter-attack against the besiegers. The dead invader’s magical ‘raven banner’ is taken by the West Saxons, the victory inspiring them to rally to their king.

ITALY/FRANCIA

March. Lambert of Spoleto attacks Rome with the aid of Adalbert of Tuscany and forces Pope John to support the election of Carloman of Bavaria as the new king of Italy; the Pope then flees to Francia and offers the crown to Louis II ‘the Stammerer’ instead.

Having secured Italy, Carloman offers his share of ‘Lotharingia’ to his brother Louis II of North Germany to buy him off; Louis divides this up with their brother Charles ‘the Fat’ of Swabia.

BRITAIN

In the seventh week after Easter Alfred meets up with his army at a rendezvous at ‘Egbert’s Stone’, probably on the South-Western edge of Salisbury Plain near Longleat and SW of Warminster. The West Saxon army heads for Guthrum’s headquarters at Chippenham, and he intercepts them en route at ‘Ethandun’, probably Bratton Down above Edington, East of Westbury on the NW edge of the Plain. The vital battle goes the West Saxons’ way, saving Wessex and England as fondly remembered for centuries (and possibly commemorated by the original ‘White Horse’, a Saxon war-symbol, on the down, though the extant Horse is from the 1780s).

The defeated Guthrum flees back to Chippenham, where Alfred blockades him for a fortnight and he has to seek terms. Probably he has lost too many men to hold the walls and is short of supplies. This time he is required to become a Christian – as Alfred’s godson – as well as give hostages and depart Wessex for good, in the Treaty of Wedmore. Baptised at Aller near Glastonbury, he leads his men back to Cirencester. Under the terms of the agreement, the Scandinavians are to rule all the lands East of Watling Street (running NW to SE across central Mercia) and down the River Lea from Buckinghamshire to London; implicitly Alfred has control over Western Mercia and its king Ceolwulf II.

This time the peace lasts and Alfred’s unexpected victory discourages ambitious Vikings from trying their luck in Wessex for fourteen vital years. Military victory is followed by Alfred’s famous administrative reforms, which reorganised Wessex for defence – with the caveat that he may have begun some of them before 878. Wessex had been divided into

a network of counties run by royal officials (led by the ealdormen) not by semi-autonomous sub-kings since Ine's time, with the local levies for the army led by the ealdormen. Now Alfred arranges for a Wessex-wide network of fortified towns, the 'burhs', which serves to gather troops and supplies and deny these vital positions to invaders; the Scandinavians can no longer attack suddenly, seize a major town, and build a fortification there to sit out a siege and plunder the countryside.

The advantage of a safe defensive position in any confrontation from now on belongs to the West Saxons; and the presence of the defenders in a strong position dominating the invaded countryside would force attackers to spare many men from plundering to watch them. If they gave up and moved on, it diminished the amount of territory they could plunder; if they stayed to besiege the 'burh' it gave Alfred time to arrive with the main army. The 'burhs' thus end several Scandinavian advantages used in 870–8, possibly influenced by similar fortified towns in Charles 'the Bald's' Francia.

In Gwynedd, king Rhodri returns from exile with troops from Ireland to regain his Viking-ravaged kingdom; possibly many of the attackers of 877 have gone off to join in the attack on Wessex. Later that year he is killed in an invasion by Ceolwulf II of Mercia, who is possibly trying to restore his reputation after discontent over his passive attitude to his Viking patrons by emulating past successes by his predecessors in Wales and presumably attacks via eastern Shropshire or Chester. Rhodri, who has reigned for thirty-four years in Gwynedd and twenty-five in Powys, is succeeded by joint ruler by his sons, with the senior, Anarawd, as the main king, Merfyn assisting him in Gwynedd/Powys, and Cadell ruling Ceredigion/Seisyllwg; the Mercians may still occupy Clywd until 880.

In Scotland, the new king Aed 'Wingfoot' is killed after a reign of around a year, in an apparent murder-plot as he is ambushed near the 'civitas of Nnurim' (Chronicle of the Kings of Alba) which may be Inverurie in Aberdeenshire. Andrew of Wyntoun's alternative version is that he is killed in Strathallan by his cousin Giric, son of the late king Donald (reigned 858–62), who succeeds him. Nicknamed 'Mac Rath' ('Son of Fortune'), Giric is a vigorous and dynamic warlord who forms a close alliance with the new king Eochaid mac Rhun of Strathclyde, who is apparently his foster-son and possibly co-ruler of the Scots; their alliance of Scots and Britons seems to have regained control of the Clyde-Forth corridor after the death of Halfdan in Ireland (877) and possibly extended their power via raiding into Bernicia.

ITALY

21 May. Fall of Syracuse to Arabs; Taormina left as main Byzantine base.

Summer. Pope John allows his rival Formosus to return to Rome and to the episcopate.

FRANCIA/SPAIN

June. Council of Troyes held by Louis II ‘the Stammerer’: Wifred ‘the Hairy’, count of Urgel and Cerdanya, is appointed as count of Barcelona, Girona, and Besalu by Louis ‘the Stammerer’ to act as principal lord of Catalonia. Effective founding of the dynastic state of Catalonia, as seen in retrospect. Wifred’s brother Miro is made count of Empuries, which is confiscated from the rebel Sunyo.

Annexation of Coimbra by king Alfonso III of Leon and Asturias brings the Christian border South to the edge of the Tagus valley. He defeats prince al-Mundhir, elder son and heir of Emir Mohammed of Cordoba, at Valdemora.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

7 September. The Pope crowns Louis II ‘the Stammerer’ as king of West Francia, but refuses to crown his (second) wife Adelaide over their close degree of consanguinity making their marriage questionable under canon law.

September. After Carloman of Bavaria relinquishes his share of Lotharingia, his brothers Louis of Germany/Saxony and Charles ‘the Fat’ of Swabia meet in Alsace to divide up the territory between them.

1 November. Treaty of Voeren (near Meersen) between Louis ‘the Stammerer’ of West Francia and Louis (II) of northern Germany/Saxony; they agree to respect each other’s territories and let their sons inherit their lands unchallenged.

879

BRITAIN

Guthrum moves on from Cirencester to London, where a new Viking fleet arrives to camp at Fulham near his base but he persuades its commanders to keep the peace and settle not fight. He goes on to East Anglia which he rules as a Christian king for the next eleven years.

Denewulf succeeds Tunbeorht as bishop of Winchester.

IRELAND

20 February. Death of ‘High King’ Aed Finliath, head of the Ui Niall of Cenel nEoghan in Ulster, at Druim Inisclainn/Dromiskin in S Ulster, after seventeen years as ‘High King’ and twenty-four years as king of Ailech; succeeded as ‘High King’ by Flann Sinna, his stepson and son of his wife Lann by her first husband, his predecessor ‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill.

His own elder son Domnhall mac Aed succeeds as king of Ailech. Flann demands hostages from Leinster as the traditional right of an Ui Niall ‘High King’ over their kingdom.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

10 April. Death of king Louis II of Western Francia, aged thirty-two or three, after a reign of one year and six months; he sends his trusted envoys abbot Hugh and count Odo/Eudes to his elder son Louis (III)'s chamberlain Theuderic with the crown as his designated heir, but his plans are thwarted as abbot Gauzlin/Joscelin of St Denis and count Conrad of Paris invite in Louis of Germany, son of Lewis 'the German', instead – unlike Louis III, he has sons to succeed him. Hugh and Odo's group successfully buy him off with an offer of those lands which their late master's father Charles 'the Bald' obtained in 'Lotharingia' as heir to Lothar II in 869, though Louis' wife is furious with him for not pressing on. As Louis of Germany's elder brother Carloman of Bavaria is in declining health, Louis concentrates on his realm instead for several crucial months.

The kingdom of West Francia is given by the majority of magnates at an assembly to Louis 'the Stammerer's two teenage sons by his first marriage, Louis III and Carloman, although his stepmother Richildis' brother count Boso leads an unsuccessful proposal to have Louis III as sole king. Richildis is effectively regent for the boys but is soon arrested and dismissed after she tries to persuade the nobles to elect her brother count Boso as king instead and is accused of committing incest with him.

Louis (II) of Germany returns to the attack on West Francia later and marches as far as Verdun, but Louis III and Carloman muster the majority of the nobles and an adequate army and march to confront him; he agrees to accept their late father's share of Lotharingia (i.e. most of the later Lorraine to add to his current possession of Alsace) in return for giving up his claim to their throne.

Carloman of Bavaria has a stroke and as he has no legitimate son nominates his next brother Louis (II) of northern Germany/Saxony as his heir. Carloman's illegitimate son Arnulf (born c. 850), duke of Carinthia since 878/9, may have been legitimated by Carloman's subsequent marriage to his mother but if so is ignored as a potential king (or 'written out' as not a serious candidate by his clerical detractors in the chronicles).

FRANCIA

Summer. With Carloman of Bavaria incapacitated, his illegitimate son Arnulf takes over the rule of Bavaria to add to his own duchy of Carinthia to the South.

July. Count Boso, as ruler of Provence and husband to Ermengarde the daughter of the late Louis II of Italy, proclaims his independence of the kingdom of Western Francia.

17 September. Birth of the later (898) Francian king Charles 'the Simple', posthumous son of king Louis II by his second wife.

15 October. Synod of Mantaille, for the bishops of the four archdioceses of the kingdom of Provence plus a lay assembly of the kingdom's nobles; they elect Boso as king of Provence, thus the first 'breakaway' state from the rule of the Carolingian dynasty since 751. The new state is opposed by Boso's younger brother count Richard, who remains loyal to Louis III and Carloman and seizes control of Autun and the Eastern Auvergne from Boso that winter.

Part of 'Lotharingia' based on Verdun is seized from the claims of Louis III and Carloman by its late ruler Lothar II (d. 869)'s son by his mistress/second wife Waldrada, Hugh.

BYZANTIUM

November. Church Council at Hagia Sophia to end 'Photian Schism'; Pope John VIII sends legates to it on condition that Photius publicly apologises and Byzantium renounces supremacy over Bulgarian Church, but his letters are deliberately modified in Greek translation so as not to cause anger and effectively ignored.

880

FRANCIA/GERMANY

Louis II of Germany and his wife march into 'Lotharingia' and as far as Attigny, threatening West Francia; abbot Joscelyn of St Dens and count Conrad fail to muster as much support for them as they had planned so they halt.

February. Treaty of Ribemont between Louis (II) of northern Germany/Saxony, Bavaria, and now Alsace/Lotharingia and Louis III and Carloman of West Francia; the cession of all of Lotharingia to Louis II is confirmed, thus creating the usually stable Franco-German border for several centuries and confirming the dissolution of the 'middle kingdom' of Lothar I and II.

Louis II drives his late brother Lothar II's illegitimate son Hugh, pretender to the rule of Lotharingia, out of his fortress at Verdun.

February. Louis II campaigns in the Low Countries against the main Viking army in Western Europe, which has been diverted to the Continent by Alfred's victory in 878 and Guthrum's refusal to aid a new attack in 879, and wins the battle of Thimeon near Charleroi; however, his illegitimate son Hugh is killed in the battle. He goes on to the lower Rhine to reoccupy the old Francian royal residence of Nijmegen which has become a Viking base. However, his northern German lieutenant count Bruno of Saxony is killed in battle against another Viking army in Saxony. Bruno is succeeded as count by his brother Otto, father of the later king Henry 'the Fowler'.

March. Formal division of the kingdom of Western Francia agreed between Louis III and Carloman. They hold Easter at Compiègne, then

meet Louis II of Germany's envoys and Charles 'the Fat' for a 'summit' at Gondreville (June) and join their step-grandmother Richildis' brother Richard, now the loyalist count of Autun, to attack the latter's brother 'King' Boson of Provence and take Macon from him. Louis of Germany sends troops to help this expedition. It also captures Lyons and overruns the central Rhone valley.

BRITAIN

Anarawd of Gwynedd/Powys and his brothers Merfyn and Cadell defeat the army of Mercia on the river Conwy, probably near Degannwy; this ends any plans by king Ceolwulf II to overrun Gwynedd and possibly fatally undermines his authority given that his rule does not last much longer.

BRITAIN/NORWAY

Traditional approximate date (within five to ten years?) of the creation of the new 'Jarldom of Orkney' in the islands North of Caithness, by the expatriate Norwegian nobleman Rognvald, 'jarl' of More – father of Hrolf or Rollo, later the first count/duke of Normandy (see 911). Rognvald is said by his dynasty's 'Orkneyinga Saga' to have been the son of Eystein 'the Noisy', son of Ivarr of ?Uppland in Norway; other sagas in Norway give him a different father. He may have been appointed, as per the 'Orkneyinga Saga', as local lieutenant of king Harald 'Finehair' of Norway to keep the islands loyal after Harald made an expedition there to root out refugee dissidents who could attack Norway. By contrast, the Icelandic 'Landnamabok' (reflecting the traditions of Norwegian exiles of c. 870–900 hostile to Harald) has it Harald did make an expedition but more trouble followed his return home – and that the major role in the region, or at least the Hebrides ('Sudreys', 'South Islands'), was taken by the expatriate Norse warlord Ketil 'Flatnose', son-in-law of Olaf of Dublin and appointed by Harald to hold down his local enemies.

The entire 'expedition by King Harald' story may have been invented, or exaggerated, by later writers to give sanction of past precedent to C12th and C13th intervention in the region by kings of Norway, by showing that their founder Harald did this. But it appears that by c. 880 Rognvald was ruling in the Orkneys, however he established his power, and Ketil further South (possibly since c. 855, see earlier entries).

NORWAY/ICELAND

Approximate date ('Landnamabok' and 'Laxdaela Saga', probably 1220s–30s) of the arrival in Iceland and settlement of two of the sons of Ketil 'Flatnose' and brothers of Aud 'the Deep-Minded', Bjorn 'the Easterner' (so-called because his settlement was to the East of the main settlements) at Bjornshavn on Broadfirth and Helgi at Keelness. This is

linked, probably unhistorically in the sagas, to Ketil choosing to go to the Hebrides at the same time as his sons went to Iceland, as the latter was only a ‘land of fishermen’ with no loot – probably Ketil was in the Hebrides a couple of decades earlier.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

August–November. Louis III and Carloman of Western Francia and count Richard of Autun are joined by their new ally Charles ‘the Fat’ of Swabia in an unsuccessful siege of Vienne, capital of the rebel ‘King’ Boson of Provence. They have to give up, but Boson can only hold onto Southern Provence.

29 September. Death of king Carloman of Bavaria, after a four-year reign, aged fifty-one; he is succeeded by his next brother Louis (II) of northern Germany and Saxony, excluding his illegitimate son Arnulf.

ITALY

Death of duke Lambert of Spoleto as he is besieging Capua; his son Guy (II) succeeds him in Spoleto, elected by the nobles, and his younger brother Guy succeeds to the ‘March’ of Camerino, the SE region of the duchy neighbouring Naples, as appointed by the Pope and Charles ‘the Bald’ in 876. Guy (II) refuses a Papal appeal for a meeting and attacks the Papal states, causing Pope John to appeal to Charles ‘the Fat’ in Germany for help.

Nasar takes 140 Byzantine vessels to Sicily and *October* defeats Arab fleet off the Liparae Islands; Arabs in Southern Italy are cut off and Taranto reconquered.

SPAIN

Release of Fortun Garcés, hostage son and heir of king García of Pamplona, by Emir Mohammed of Cordoba; he returns home as a Cordoban ally with his daughter married to a younger son of the Emir, but historians disagree over whether his father is still alive and ruling as of this date.

FRANCIA

Autumn. Major Viking attack on Flanders; (November) Kortrijk is sacked; (December) Courtrai and Arras are sacked.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Charles ‘the Fat’ arrives in Northern Italy from Swabia to aid the Pope against Guy II of Spoleto, his uncle Guy of Camerino, and the Arabs.

Guy of Spoleto has attacked Rome with the support of Guy of Camerino, who is allied to the Arabs so Charles declares him deposed from his fiefs for treason at an assembly at Verona.

February. Pope John VIII crowns Charles ‘the Fat’ of Swabia as Western ‘Emperor’ in Rome.

After sacking Amiens and Corbie (January or February?), the Vikings ravage Picardy.

3 *August.* Battle of Saucourt-en-Vimeu near Abbeville; Louis III and Carloman heavily defeat the Vikings, with up to 8,000 of them killed.

The main Viking army heads North up the coast out of the immediate reach of the West Frankish kings, sails up the Meuse, and camps at Elseloo on the Maas (called ‘Asselt’ in the main sources, and the ‘Annales Fuldenses’ say it was on the Meuse) for a year as it ravages Flanders.

IRELAND

The new ‘High King’ Flann Sinna campaigns against his foes in Southern Ulster as far as Armagh, aided by an army of ‘Foreigners’ i.e. the Vikings of Dublin and other Eastern ports of Ireland; he has probably married his sister to one of their chieftains by this point.

882

FRANCIA

20 *January.* Death of king Louis II of Northern Germany/Saxony (and since 880 Bavaria) at Frankfurt after a six-year reign, aged forty-six or seven. He is buried at Lorsch beside his father Lewis. He has no legitimate son alive as his son Hugh died as an infant in 879 and only one daughter by his ambitious wife Liutgard, so his younger brother Charles ‘the Fat’ of Swabia succeeds to all of his lands including Lotharingia. Some of Louis II’s magnates offer the throne to Louis III of West Francia, who is fighting the Vikings in Western Flanders, but he refuses due to his oath to Charles ‘the Fat’ to let him have this realm and just sends them a military force to help keep the Vikings back.

FRANCIA/ITALY/BRITAIN

February. Charles ‘the Fat’ holds a conference of northern and central Italian rulers at Ravenna and restores peace between Guy II of Spoleto and Pope John; Guy promises to restore disputed lands but does not.

Charles empowers Berengar of Friuli to dispossess Guy’s uncle, Guy of Camerino, for treason and take his lands, but the campaign fails.

The lower Rhine Vikings under Godfrid sack Maastricht, the town and abbey of Prum, and Coblenz in a campaign of ravaging around the lower

Rhine; Charles ‘the Fat’ blockades their camp at ‘Asselt’ and forces Godfrid to come to terms, become a Christian, and swear allegiance to him (on the precedent of Alfred’s tactics in England in 878?).

Godfrid is granted the rule of the land of ‘Kennemerland’, *ern Frisia*, as Charles’ vassal and is supposed to keep the peace, but is still untrustworthy.

Rebellion of Engelschalk II, son of the late ‘Margrave’ of the ‘Pannonian March’ Engelschalk I (d. 871), and his brothers, against their father’s and uncle William II’s successor, margrave Aribio; the latter appeals to their neighbour duke Svatopluk of Moravia for help.

April. The late Lothar II’s illegitimate son Hugh secures the rule of Alsace as its duke, but is soon driven out and flees to Burgundy.

BRITAIN

Pope Marinus sends a portion of the ‘True Cross’ to Alfred as a recognition of his work for the Christian cause. Sigehelm and Athelstan take a financial gift from Alfred to Rome and (according to the ASC) go on to the Christian community of St Thomas in India.

Approximate date of the death or deposition of Ceolwulf II, Viking puppet-king of Western Mercia, and his replacement by a more determined and anti-Viking ruler, the ‘ealdorman’ Aethelred. There is probably a coup by the nobles with or without support from Alfred, and the new ruler is probably based in Gloucester well away from the Viking frontier and may be a local man; he subsequently refortifies Chester in the NW as another major base. Whether Aethelred needs Alfred’s help against a resurgent Gwynedd after the military disaster of 880/1 and does homage to him now is unclear.

Alfred’s new navy defeats a small Viking squadron of four ships, capturing all of them and killing their crews.

FRANCIA

Louis III of West Francia heads to the Loire valley en route to attack the Vikings, but Hasting’s expedition leaves the Loire for the English Channel; Louis falls ill at Tours and is taken back to St Denis on a litter.

The main Viking army goes up the river Scheldt from the Maas, and camps at Conde. The ailing archbishop Hincmar of Rheims has to flee from his city with St Remigius’ relics as the Vikings approach, but the city holds out.

5 August. Death of co-ruler Louis III of Western Francia at St Denis, aged around nineteen, after a three-year reign; his full brother Carloman rules alone and is recalled from his Rhone valley war against Boso’s family.

August–September. Successful siege of Vienne, capital of the kingdom of Provence, on Carloman's behalf by his local governor of the Rhone region, count Richard of Autun; he forces his brother Boso, king of Provence, to recognise West Francian control of all but the lower Rhone region.

SPAIN

Battle of Aibar in Navarre between the army of the Navarrese of Pamplona, probably led by the aged king Garcia (though some earlier historians thought he was dead by the early 870s) who may die there, and their ally the Andalusian rebel Umar ibn Hafsun (possibly of Christian Visigothic descent, though this is only reported centuries later, and his contemporaries call him of black slave North African descent), lord of the castle of Bobastro and a leading brigand/guerrilla irritant to the emirate around Malaga, and a Cordoban army.

Al-Mundhir, son and heir of Emir Mohammed of Cordoba, recaptures Badajoz in the SW from the rebel commander Ibn Marwan.

IRELAND

Aed mac Conchobar of the 'Sil Muiredaig' branch of the 'Ui Bruin' succeeds his father Conchobar mac Tadhg Mor (acceded 855) as king of Connacht, and reigns for six years. Conchobar is the man after whom the later 'Ua Conchobair' or 'O'Connor' family is named, and his kin will dominate the kingdom for centuries.

ITALY

16 December. Pope John VIII is murdered by his entourage; Marinus, bishop of Caere and a former member of the Papal mission to the 869–70 Eastern Church Council in Constantinople, is made Pope in violation of canons prohibiting translations between sees.

Late. (or early 883) Death of the young duke Guy II of Spoleto; he is succeeded by his uncle Guy, ruler of Camerino.

FRANCIA

21 December. Death of archbishop Hincmar of Rheims (in office since 845), ecclesiastical 'strongman' of the Western Carolingian realm aged seventy-six. He is succeeded by the equally powerful and politically prominent Fulk, brother of count Anscar of Oscheret (in Burgundy), an ally of Charles 'the Fat' and opponent of the 'Robertian' count Eudes in the 880s.

883 | ITALY/FRANCIA

Large expedition under Stephen Maxentius sent to Sicily. Andreas, most successful of Basil's generals, sent to Cilicia with army for campaign.

May–June. Western Emperor Charles 'the Fat' visits Italy and agrees with the Pope in talks at Nonantula to ally with him against count Guy of Spoleto and Camerino. The imperial 'Diet' at Nonantula deprives Guy of his lands for alleged treason, and Charles sends his ally Berengar of Friuli to attack him and seize the lands; Berengar overruns the Romagna and attacks Spoleto but has to retire after his army is hit by an epidemic.

The main Viking army in northern Francia moves from the upper Scheldt to Amiens on the river Somme – keeping to bases located on rivers for easy ship-access with supplies, as in Britain in the 870s.

BRITAIN

Alfred secures control of London by a successful siege – but it is not clear if he is suppressing resisting Vikings or Mercians.

Possible date of the founding of Alfred's new monastery of Athelney at the site of his guerrilla hideout in 878, or if this was earlier of the incident where the zealous new abbot, John the 'Old Saxon' from the Continent, finds that his strict imposition of 'Francian standards' of Benedictine rules lead to an attempt to murder him by disgruntled lazy English monks.

Possibly around this time Rognvald of Orkney returned home to Norway to secure his family estates there; the date is unclear but his rule as Jarl of Orkney was apparently short. He nominated his brother Sigurd to succeed him; but control of Caithness appears to have been with Thorstein 'the Red', grandson of Ketl 'Flatnose' and son of Olaf 'the White' and of Aud the 'Deep-Minded', c. 875–85.

SPAIN

(and 882) Two successful campaigns by count Diego Rodriguez Porcelos, warlord second count of Castile as a vassal of the kingdom of Leon, to defend the upper Ebro valley from the expanding 'Al Qays' dynasty of Tudela/Saragossa.

884 | FRANCIA/MORAVIA

End of the 'Wilhelminer War' on the Pannonian March as the rebel leaders, Engelschalk II and his brothers, are defeated by margrave Aribon and his ally, duke Svatopluk of Moravia; one of the brothers is captured and mutilated and the others flee to seek help from their neighbour to the South, Charles 'the Fat's' illegitimate nephew Arnulf of Carinthia (son of Carloman of Bavaria, d. 880). Arnulf refuses to hand them over as

Charles orders, and ends up in rebellion against him and his allies Aribio and Svatopluk.

ITALY

15 May. Death of Pope Marinus; 17 May Hadrian III is elected Pope.

SPAIN

The army of the emirate of Cordoba finally retakes the rebel stronghold of Saragossa in the upper Ebro, either from Mohammed ibn Lubd of the 'Banu Qays' (who now relocates to Calahorra) or from his new ally, the Christian noble count Raymond of Pallars and Ribagorza.

IRELAND

?Muiredach mac Bran, lay abbot of Kildare and brother of king Ruarc Mac Bran of the 'Ui Dunchada' sub-dynasty who died ?862, succeeds Domnhall mac Muirecan as king of Leinster, for a one-year reign limited by the power of his neighbour Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory.

BRITAIN/FRANCIA

N. part of a raiding Viking fleet tests Wessex, landing at Rochester and of fortifying a camp there to besiege the 'burh', while a second division of the fleet crosses the Channel to attack Louvain; the locals at Rochester hold out in the fortified town; the invaders cannot storm the town, and are duly blockaded and starved out by Alfred over the winter.

12 December. Death of Carloman, sole king of Western Francia in a hunting accident, after a reign of five years and eight months (some of it with his brother Louis III), aged around eighteen; his surviving half-brother Charles is only five so the magnates offer the throne to his adult cousin, Charles 'the Fat', king of Swabia in SW Germany.

ITALY

Autumn. Failure of Charles 'the Fat's campaign to dispossess Guy of Spoleto and Camerino; he agrees to a treaty and lets him keep his lands.

SPAIN

31 January. Traditional (Navarrese chronicle) but disputed date of the death in battle, possibly at Cornacilla, of the second count of Castile, Diego Rodriguez Porcelos – though others suggest it may be as late as 890. His current foe and probable killer is Mohammed ibn Lubd, head of the 'Al Qays' dynasty of Tudela/Saragossa in the upper Ebro valley.

FRANCIA

20 May. Coronation of Charles ‘the Fat’ as king of Western Francia, probably by bishop Geilo of Langres at Grand in the Vosges.

The Viking sub-ruler of Northern Frisia, Charles ‘the Fat’s vassal Godfrid of Kennemerland, is accused of assisting a recent rebellion by ex-duke Hugh of Alsace, who is his wife Gisela’s brother and is trying to regain his late father Lothar II’s ‘Lotharingia’; he is summoned to Charles’ court and assassinated by a group of Saxon and Frisian nobles, allegedly sent by his neighbour duke Henry of Saxony and Franconia. Hugh is blinded and exiled to the abbey of Fulda, later to Prüm.

The main Viking army moves West from Louvain in Western Flanders to (25 July) enter the Seine and head upriver towards Paris. This is between 300 and 700 ships in size, i.e. somewhere over 5–6000 men, and is commanded by Sigfrid, Sinric and Hrolf (possibly the ‘Hrolf the Walker’, aka ‘Rollo’ who will go on to become first count of Normandy in 911, and if so the son of Rognvald, jarl of More in Norway and first Jarl of Orkney). They are held up at Pontoise for several weeks. The defender of the region and its main landowner, count Eudes/Odo of Neustria (son of Robert ‘the Strong’ who d. 866), withdraws into Paris outnumbered.

BRITAIN

?*Early summer*. Alfred forces the Vikings besieged outside Rochester to surrender and sail off, abandoning their horses. He then takes his fleet across the estuary of the Thames to the mouth of the River Stour in Essex, where they defeat a Viking squadron of sixteen ships and take all of them. En route home, however, they are defeated by another, larger Viking fleet.

This may be connected to the apparent arrival of a ‘raiding-army’ in East Anglia, which the ASC records as breaking the peace with Alfred.

(or 886) Death of the king of ‘Glywysyng’ (Glevissseg, around Cardiff) in SE Wales, Hywel ap Rhys, on a pilgrimage to Rome.

FRANCIA/ITALY

Charles ‘the Fat’ plans for the legitimization of his illegitimate son Bernard, presumably as his heir as he has no legitimate sons, and fails to win over the West Francian bishops to agree to this; he has an assembly at Worms planned for the autumn for the legitimization, but now faces having to replace the obstructive bishops to get this passed and asks Pope Hadrian for help; Hadrian agrees to come to Worms, and possibly to depose the bishop as Charles wants. Archbishop Liutbert of Mainz probably backs the Emperor’s opponents, presenting the threat of East Francian opposition too.

September. Death of Pope Hadrian III at the River Po, en route to the Worms assembly which now cannot remove the obstructive bishops and legitimise Bernard; Hadrian is succeeded by Stephen V, cardinal priest of SS. Quattro Coronati.

Charles is annoyed at not being consulted over the new Pope and sends his envoy, his chancellor bishop Liutward of Vercelli, to Rome to investigate whether to depose Stephen, but the latter persuades him that he was the unanimous choice of the people and clergy so Charles accepts it.

Late. Charles goes East to Kaumberg to meet his ally Svatopluk of Moravia and confirm his role as a loyal vassal and thank him for his aid against the rebels who tried to unseat margrave Aribio of the Pannonian March in 882–4; this implies Charles backing Svatopluk against his own nephew Arnulf of Carinthia, who has sheltered the rebels.

IRELAND

Accession of Cearbhall mac Muirecan, son of king Muirecan who died in ?863, of the ‘Ui Faelan’ as king of Leinster; he reigns for twenty-three years and from the death of Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory in 888 can be counted as having full authority in his kingdom.

FRANCIA

25 November. The Viking army arrives outside Paris – 40,000 men according to chronicler Abbot of St Germain-des-Pres (in a heroic but probably inaccurate poem about the siege) but probably much less. Its leader Sigfrid demands its surrender and tribute from bishop Gauzlin/Joscelin at a parley; this is refused. Count Eudes/Odo, his younger brother Robert (late king of West Francia in 922–3), and bishop Gauzlin lead the defence of the fortified ‘Isle de la Cite’ despite being vastly outnumbered. (There are supposed to be only 200 fighting-men in the city.)

The city is besieged and the Vikings, camping outside for the winter, use various siege-engines in attempts to take the walls; as the Viking fleet cannot pass under the fortified bridges built from the island to the North and South banks of the river these are the main Viking targets.

26 November. First Viking attack on the Eastern tower at the Northern end of the North bridge from the island to the mainland, where the Vikings are camped on the ‘right bank’ of the river; repulsed with tar and pitch used to set fire to the Viking siege-engines. After the first day’s attacks the defensive tower has an extra story added overnight to overtop the siege-engines.

27 November. A second day of unsuccessful attacks on the NE tower of the bridge; bishop Gauzlin leads the defence in person, unusually for a Continental bishop (though Anglo-Saxon bishops have fought in Alfred’s army in the 870s).

886 | FRANCIA

January. Having built new siege-engines and tried to set the Northern bridge on fire to no avail, the Vikings spend two days throwing debris and dead bodies into the river upstream of the bridge to block the river there and enable their men to cross the debris to surround the NE tower. The next day, some burning ships are sent downstream to crash into the wooden bridge and set fire to it; this fails but the bridge is weakened.

6 February. After heavy rain swells the Seine, the weakened bridge to the Northern side of the river from the Isle de la Cite finally collapses.

The NE tower on the mainland side of the break is cut off, and the Vikings try to persuade the twelve defenders left inside to surrender.

They refuse and are killed as the tower is stormed. Next day the first part of the Viking fleet sails past the Isle de la Cite to head on upriver.

February. The siege of Paris continues, but as assaults on the walls fail it turns into a long-drawn-out blockade and the Vikings grow restless; a first contingent of the besiegers moves on upriver to raid the upper Seine and into Maine to Le Mans, using the reopened river on the Northern side of the Isle de la Cite to the mainland to do so; *April.* The lack of supplies in the city leads Eudes to successfully sneak out and head to Italy to plead with Charles ‘the Fat’ to send troops to aid the defence. He returns, and Charles sends his new ‘Margrave’ of Neustria, count Henry of Saxony/Franconia (lord of Babenberg castle), to drive the attackers off. Henry’s smallish contingent is however defeated in an ambush and retreats again.

At around this date, the death of Eudes’ probable stepfather Hugh ‘the Abbot’, margrave of Neustria and brother of count Conrad of Auxerre, prevents this ageing warlord from relieving the siege of Paris and hands his lands to Eudes and Robert.

April. A second, larger contingent under Sigfrid leaves the siege after being paid off to do so by the defenders; Hrolf/Rollo commands the remaining besiegers.

May. An epidemic hits the defenders of Paris and bishop Gauzlin dies; Eudes heads off to Charles ‘the Fat’ again to urge him to hurry to the relief, and Charles sends count Henry with a larger force and follows himself.

Death of Bernard ‘Plantpilosa’, son of Bernard of Septimania and count of the Auvergne (‘Duke of Aquitaine’ 885) since 872, aged forty-five; succeeded by his teenage son William, later ‘the Pious’ and the founder of the famous abbey of Cluny.

BRITAIN

Alfred takes over the vital fortified position of London, which guards the lower Thames from invasion, and according to Asser ‘restores’ it which probably means restoring the walls to defend it properly and moving the populace into the walled Roman city from the nearby unwallled settlement on the ‘Aldwych’ (‘old settlement’) to the West. He hands it over to his new ally Aethelred, the ealdorman of Western Mercia who has taken over from Ceolwulf II. Mercia has legal claim to the place, and Alfred avoids antagonism by not using his military supremacy to secure it from them; Aethelred, now (at London?) or recently married to Alfred’s eldest daughter Aethelfleda (born probably 869 or 870), proves a staunch ally for Wessex. He apparently recognises the supremacy of Alfred as his overlord, with Asser saying that he formally gave him homage, as he avoids using the title of ‘king’ and Alfred claims to be ‘king of the English’ on his coins.

Around this time, king Anarawd of Gwynedd makes an alliance with the Vikings of York – presumably against the joint threat of Alfred and Aethelred.

Approximate date of Eardwulf, the lord of Bamburgh Castle in Bernicia, taking control of that sub-kingdom as its ruler, in a presumed revolt against alliance with the Vikings of York and/or the earlier king Egbert of Bernicia who disappears from the records. Eardwulf recognises Alfred of Wessex as his lord and ally.

?Alfred secures the agreement of archbishop Fulk of Rheims, as abbot of St Bertin in Flanders, to hire the latter abbey’s scholarly and learned monk Grimbold as his ‘mass-priest’ at court – and a teacher at his Winchester ‘palace school’ as he revives Christian learning.

FRANCIA

The siege of Paris continues, and count Eudes leads the successful defence; Charles ‘the Fat’ slowly gathers an army to relieve the city, and Henry of Saxony/Franconia arrives with the advance-guard but is incautious about probing the Viking counter-defences and is killed blundering into a ditch.

?*July*. A final Viking attempt to storm the walls of Paris fails.

Charles finally arrives nearby and camps at Montmartre, eleven months into the siege (October). Rather than risk fighting, he offers money for the attackers to leave and allows them to go on SE into Burgundy which is defying his authority; his reputation in Neustria suffers as a result, to count Eudes’ benefit.

The main Viking army goes on up the Seine, but the citizens of Paris refuse to let them pass the Isle de la Cite unhindered so they have to drag their

ships across the land to bypass the city and refloat them a safe distance away. They go on to the Marne to enter Burgundy and winter at Chezy.

Nantes is taken by another Viking army, which commences a new wave of attacks on Southern Brittany; count Alan of Vannes opposes them.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

Spring. Emperor Charles III arrives in Italy, but is unable to help the Pope as trouble in Francia leads to him leaving early.

SPAIN

4 August. Death of Ummayyad emir Mohammed of al-Andalus after a nearly thirty-four-year reign, aged in his early fifties; succeeded by his eldest son al-Mundhir, who is probably in his mid-thirties.

BYZANTIUM

29 August. Death of Basil I after hunting-accident as he is gored by a boar; succeeded by his second but eldest surviving son, Leo VI, aged twenty.

887

FRANCIA

11 January. Death of 'King' Boso of Provence, ruler of the lower Rhone region; succeeded by his son Louis (later called 'the Blind'), aged around seven, with Boso's widow Ermengard, daughter of the late Louis II of Italy, as regent for her son.

The main Viking army under Hrolf/Rollo plunders around the Marne above Paris, and then on South to the river Yonne.

Spring. Charles successfully offers the main Viking army of Hrolf/Rollo 700 pounds of silver to leave his dominions.

SPAIN

12 March. Backed by the Ummayyads of Cordoba, Mohammed ibn Abd-al-Malik of the 'Al Tawil' dynasty (the 'Banu Sabrit'), local to Huesca on the Navarrese frontier, kills the rebel governor of Huesca, Masud ibn Amrus from the family of the NE Spain rebel leader Amrus, and seizes Huesca to set up a new local warlord dynasty there.

FRANCIA/ITALY

Charles accuses his wife Richardis of having an affair with his unpopular chancellor, bishop Liutward of Vercelli, and forces her to undergo trial

by ordeal (with a heated coal); she is acquitted and withdraws from court to a nunnery. Charles does not seek another wife; his attempt to push for his illegitimate son Bernard to be legitimised and then probably given the kingdom of 'Lotharingia' – intended to be named as heir? – is abandoned as the assembly called for this at Waiblingen (in April–May) is stymied by Pope Stephen failing to turn up. Liutward quarrels with Charles' main Northern Italian ally, count Berengar of Friuli the son of Charles 'the Bald's sister, who is furious at him abducting his late brother count Unroch of Friuli (d. 874)'s daughter from her convent in Brescia and marrying her off to a relative of his – which could threaten his own rights in Friuli. This dispute causes a rift between Charles and Berengar, halted by the latter who turns up at the Waiblingen assembly (May) with rich gifts. Possibly Berengar is aiming at the heirship for Italy.

Charles sacks his unpopular chancellor Liutward and replaces him with archbishop Liutbert of Mainz.

May. He receives the new, under-age king Louis of Provence and his mother and regent, Ermengarde (daughter of the late Emperor Louis II), at an assembly at Kirchen and confirms him as ruler of Provence – and adopts him as his son. He is possibly intending him to receive the entire Empire too, going back on previous offers to others.

July. Berengar of Friuli attends Charles' court at Kirchen, and is possibly recognised as king of or heir to Italy to buy him off from turning on Charles and Louis. Eudes of Paris/Neustria also attends the court, possibly concerning his own claims to West Francia.

11 November. An assembly of East Francia at Frankfurt, called by Charles, is thrown into chaos as he hears that his late brother Carloman of Bavaria's illegitimate son Arnulf has raised rebellion in Bavaria with Bohemian Slav help and is marching on central Germany.

Mid-November. (Eight weeks before his death on 13 January 888.) Deposition of Charles 'the Fat' as 'Emperor' in co-ordinated revolt; his Western dominions break up as his nobles in each kingdom meet to elect his replacements, firstly Arnulf, who is elected by a Diet at Tribur, in Eastern Francia (Germany), and later count Eudes in Western Francia. and count Guy of Spoleto disputing the election of Berengar of Friuli in Northern Italy.

Control of the region of modern Burgundy and Southern 'Lotharingia' is seized by count Richard 'the Justiciar' of Auxerre, with his election as duke by the local nobles; Richard's wife Adelaide's brother count Rudolf, son of the late Conrad (II) of Auxerre, nephew of the late Hugh 'the Abbot', and himself lay abbot of St Maurice SE of Lake Geneva, is elected by the nobles of 'Upper Burgundy' (N and E of Lyons, East of Richard's lands, including the later 'Franche Comte') as their king now or early in 889.

IRELAND

Aed mac Conchobar, king of Connacht, defeats the Vikings of Limerick.

BRITAIN

11 November. According to Asser, this is the date when king Alfred has his ‘breakthrough’ in mastering the ability to read and translate into Latin; he may well already be literate in English. After this, he commences to translate Pope Gregory the Great’s book ‘Pastoral Care’, a guide to the duties and ideals of a responsible and devout Christian ruler.

888

FRANCIA

13 January. Death of the deposed ex-Emperor Charles ‘the Fat’, aged forty-eight, at his German estates at Nordingen which he has been granted by the pro-Arnulf East Francian assembly in November 887 as his terms for abdicating peacefully.

SPAIN

29 January. Death of Ummayyad emir al-Mundhir of al-Andalus/Cordoba at Bobastro, after a reign of one year and ten months; succeeded by his younger brother, Abdallah, who reigns until 912 and who some later accounts claim murdered him. The latter is married to an (ex-?) Christian princess from Navarre, Onneca/Durr, and he makes their son Mohammed his heir to the annoyance of his sons by other wives and mistresses.

FRANCIA/ITALY

?*March.* The vacant throne of Western Francia is offered to the leading Neustrian magnate, count Eudes/Odo of Paris. As a descendant of the founding Emperor Charles (d. 814), the ambitious Guy of Spoleto is en route into Francia to attend the election assembly and try to get elected himself when he hears, at Langres, that Eudes/Odo has been elected; his ally archbishop Fulk of Rheims crowns him there but he cannot attract much support so he goes home; he is joined by Fulk’s brother, count Anscar of Oscheret (Burgundy), a leading foe of Eudes, who Guy makes his ‘margrave’ of Ivrea in NE Italy.

?Duke Ranulf (II) of Aquitaine, count of Poitou, assumes the royal title in Aquitaine in defiance of Eudes.

(or 889) The rival counts Alan of Vannes and Iudicael of Poher in Brittany unite to defeat the ravaging Vikings, but Iudicael is killed at their victory over the invaders at Questembert near Nantes. Alan unites Brittany.

May. Arnulf of Eastern Francia meets queen mother/regent Ermengarde of Provence at Forcheim and agrees to her son Louis continuing as ruler of Provence as his ally.

BRITAIN/ITALY

Ealdorman Beocca and Alfred's sister Aethelswith, queen of the late Burghred of Mercia, take Alfred's regular financial gift of 'alms' to Rome; Aethelswith dies there, aged probably around fifty as she was married in 853.

30 June. Death of archbishop Aethelred of Canterbury, who has been in office since 870.

(or after 890?) Approximate date of kings Brochfael and Ffernfael ap Meurig of Gwent (SE Wales) appealing for help to king Alfred against the threats posed to their small kingdoms by Mercia (possibly attacking them now that Mercian expansion against Gwynedd has been defeated in 880/1) and by Mercia's enemy, king Anarawd of Gwynedd/Powys. They are supposed by Anglo-Saxon sources to have accepted Alfred as their overlord. A year or so earlier a Dyfed cleric, Asser, joins Alfred's learned court, where the king has set up a 'palace school' in emulation of Charles/Charlemagne in Francia, and becomes his adviser and literary mentor, later writing his biography in emulation of Einhard's biography of Charles.

IRELAND

(or 887) 'High King' Flann Sinna and his ally king Aed mac Conchobar of Connacht (who is killed) are defeated at the 'Battle of the Pilgrim' by the Vikings of Dublin; the abbot and bishop of Kid are among the casualties. Aed is succeeded by his younger brother, Tadhg mac Conchobar, who reigns to 900.

Death of king Dunchad of Munster after a sixteen-year reign; succeeded by Dub-Lachtma, son of the late king Mael Guala (d. 859), of the 'Eoganacht Caisil' dynasty. He reigns for seven years.

Murder in an internal Viking power struggle in Dublin of Sigfrith, son of the late ruler Imar/Ivarr (presumably Ivarr 'the Boneless').

Donnchad, son of Aed Finliath, leads an expedition of the *ern* Ui Niall of Ailech in Ulster to attack the Southern Ui Niall in Midhe, presumably the 'High King' Flann's allies.

Death of Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory, first prominent king of his sub-kingdom, after a highly successful reign of around forty years; succeeded by his brother Riacan, under whom Osraige drops out of the records again.

ITALY

Summer. Brief war in Lombardy between Guy of Spoleto, who has returned home after his failed attempt to secure West Francia, and Berengar of Friuli who Guy attacks; both sides lose men but Berengar has a slight advantage as at their clash at Brescia.

Autumn. An assembly of nobles at Pavia, the ancient Lombard capital, elects Guy of Spoleto as ‘King of Italy’, and offers him the ‘Iron Crown’ of Lombardy, defeating the lobbying of his rival Berengar of Friuli. The two are at truce until January 889.

?*December.* Arnulf of Carinthia marches into Friuli to attack Berengar, but they come to terms and Arnulf recognises Berengar as his local vassal in Italy, i.e. giving him not Guy his support, Arnulf spends Christmas in Friuli, but confiscates two border counties.

889

FRANCIA

?*January.* Eudes visits Aquitaine to win the backing of duke Ranulf, who has custody of the late king Louis II’s surviving son Charles ‘the Simple’ and who the ‘Annals of Fulda’ say comes to him with his ward to do homage and swear allegiance. It is debatable if Ranulf is by now claiming or now gives up the royal title.

ITALY

Early. Guy of Spoleto defeats his rival Berengar of Friuli at the battle of the river Trebbia and secures Lombardy and the Frankish ‘kingdom of Italy’ lands but not Friuli.

BRITAIN

Death of king Giric of the (Picts and) Scots; he is succeeded by his cousin Donald, son of Constantine I (d. 877), who according to the later ‘Prophecy of Berchan’ is nicknamed ‘the Mad’ from his berserk outbursts. He reigns for eleven years; it is not clear who rules Scotland’s junior ally Strathclyde at this point after king Eochaid, but it is probably Donald.

June. Death of archbishop Aethelred of Canterbury after nineteen years in office.

BOHEMIA

Approximate date of the death of the first certain ruler of Bohemia, a Slav sub-state of the current ‘Great Moravian’ kingdom, Borivoj, of the Premyslid dynasty; his sons by the Christian (St) Ludmila, Spytihnev and Vratislav, are under-age so their overlord duke Svatopluk of Moravia acts as regent.

890 **BRITAIN**

Death of Guthrum, as the Christian king ‘Athelstan’ of East Anglia; he is succeeded by his son Eric, who may assist subsequent Viking attacks on Wessex by allowing his subjects to join in but does not get involved himself until 902/3.

Plegmund becomes archbishop of Canterbury (to 914).

FRANCIA

Count or duke Alan of Brittany, now ruler of all the region since 888/9, defeats the region’s Vikings at the crucial battle of St Lo, driving the enemy into the nearby river where many are drowned. This commences a period of peace for Brittany under Alan’s rule, but it is unclear if he claims to be ‘King’ or not.

5 August. Death of duke Ranulf of Aquitaine, who is also count of Poitou; the latter title goes to his legitimate son, Ranulf (III), but his illegitimate son Ebalus ‘Mazer’ (Hebrew for ‘the Illegitimate’), secures the rule of Aquitaine, possibly opposed by king Eudes.

August. The ‘Diet of Valence’ in Provence formally proclaims Lewis, son of the late count/king Boso, as king of Provence and Cisjurane Burgundy.

891 **SPAIN**

28 January. Assassination of the heir to the emirate of Cordoba, Mohammed son of Emir Abdallah, by his half-brother Mutarrif – purportedly at the orders of their suspicious father. Mutarrif becomes the heir.

ITALY

21 February. Pope Stephen V crowns his ally Guy of Spoleto as ‘Western Emperor’ and crowns his son Lambert as king of Italy.

14 September. Death of Pope Stephen V; succeeded by the septuagenarian veteran Papal diplomat Formosus, former Papal legate to Francia and Germany in the late 860s–mid 870s and also bishop of Porto so technically he should not be translated to another see under Church canon law. Formosus abandons his predecessor’s alliance with Guy of Spoleto.

SPAIN

Defeat of the Andalusian rebel leader Umar ibn Hafsun, who around this time converts or reverts to Christianity, by a Cordoban army led by the Emir’s son Abdallah; he subsequently returns to his first headquarters at Bobastro.

892 | BRITAIN

The main Scandinavian ‘raiding-army’, which was occupied in Northern Francia through the late 880s, returns to Kent after being fought to a standstill by the Franks in Flanders. It embarks at Boulogne, and sails quickly across to Kent in two sections – one to the South (Romney marsh) and one to the Thames estuary (North). Denied their usual fortified towns as bases by the West Saxon ‘burhs’, the invaders have to build their own camps; one force, in the South, marches four miles inland to take an abandoned earthwork and build a camp at Appledore and the second, led by Haesten (eighty ships), sails up the Swale in the North to camp at Milton Regis near Sitting Bourne.

Both are besieged by the Wessex ‘fyrd’ and Alfred positioned himself between them; he outsmarts the invaders when they sit it out waiting for the West Saxons levies’ term of military service to expire so their army would have to disperse or else leave their agricultural work at home neglected. Alfred’s rota, whereby only half the army was in service at any time and when one half has to be discharged the second takes over, means that the sieges are continuous and the Vikings cannot break out easily to gather provisions or ravage new territories. The second major Viking war turns into a mixture of prolonged sieges and occasional breakouts for plundering expeditions.

IRELAND

Some kind of leadership dispute among the Vikings of Dublin leads to a split between the followers of a ‘son of Imarr/Ivarr’ (presumably a son of Ivarr ‘the Boneless’, ruler in the late 850s and c. 871–3) and Jarl Sigfrith; many Vikings leave the city as a result, to the benefit of ‘High King’ Flann Sinna.

ITALY

30 April/May. Pope Formosus has to crown Guy of Spoleto’s son Lambert as co-ruler, as he is offered no help against them by any Carolingian rulers.

FRANCIA

Duke Ebalus ‘Mazer’ of Aquitaine is deposed and evicted by a kinsman of his father the late duke Ranulf, backed by king Eudes; he flees to the court of his ally, the young count William ‘the Pious’ of the Auvergne. Possibly this marks the point at which Eudes is formally accepted as king by Aquitaine, as the title is not used there for him before 892.

BRITAIN

Approximate date (within a decade?) of the bizarre death of the new Jarl Sigurd of Orkney, after a battle with his local rivals under a ‘mormaer’ (i.e. the Pictish title for ‘earl’ or regional governor), Gillebride, in Caithness. According to the ‘Orkneyinga Saga’ he and his foe had agreed to bring forty champions each on horseback to a formal combat to establish rule of a disputed area, but Sigurd ‘cheated’ by putting two men on each horse. The extra men then dismounted to assist the others as they charged the enemy; Gillebride was killed and Sigurd cut off his head and hung it from his saddle, but later his horse stumbled and threw him forward and his leg was gashed by his victim’s tusk-like teeth; he soon died of blood-poisoning. He is buried at ‘Ekkalsbjakka’, possibly in Strath Oykel, and is succeeded by his son Guthorm.

893

BRITAIN

A year after the start of the sieges of Appledore and Milton, the Vikings in Northumbria and in East Anglia send men to aid the attackers in defiance of their oaths of peace with and sending hostages to Alfred. But Haesten is eventually driven to come to terms with Alfred, and agrees to be baptised as Guthrum did in 878. This ceremony is to be followed by his evacuating his army to East Anglia and keeping the peace – he does the first but not the second.

The blockaded Southern army at Appledore breaks out to plunder across Sussex into Hampshire; Alfred’s eldest son Edward, in his first recorded campaign and probably aged in his early twenties, leads the pursuit, and catches the enemy (who are probably following the North Downs Way to the North of the Weald forests) at Farnham in Hampshire where the local levies of Hampshire and Surrey start the attack without waiting for him. He arrives to reinforce them and defeats the Vikings heavily, recovering some of their loot. The defeated raiders have to flee NE to the Thames valley in a failed attempt to get to the Northern army, which Haesten has now evacuated to a new camp at Benfleet in Essex as he promises Alfred to withdraw from his kingdom and gives hostages.

The Farnham survivors, hampered by their injured commander, are caught in the Colne valley in Buckinghamshire and are besieged on an island in the river near Iver; however, when the West Saxon besiegers’ term of service ends and they are starting to disperse the Vikings try to break out before Alfred, en route from besieging Haesten to relieve them, can get to the Colne siege site. Edward, short of men, is joined in time by Aethelred of Mercia but they agree to let the Vikings leave sooner than risk a reverse. The Vikings get safely back to Haesten, who Alfred then blockades at Benfleet after he breaks the peace to start raiding again.

(Approximate date) After a reign of around a year, Jarl Guthorm of Orkney dies and is succeeded by his uncle (the feuding ‘jarl’) Rognvald’s son Hallad, who arrives by sea from Norway as Rognvald’s nominee.

ITALY

Autumn. Pope Formosus invites Arnulf of East Francia/Germany to invade Italy and overthrow the ‘tyrannical’ ruler count/‘Emperor’ Guy of Spoleto. Arnulf refuses an invitation to meet the Pope at Trento (S of the Brenner Pass) and be crowned as Emperor, but sends his illegitimate son Zwentibold with an army; he and the Arnulfian ally Berengar of Friuli link up to besiege Guy in Trento but cannot take the town and give up –bribed? by Guy to leave.

FRANCIA

Revolt against king Eudes by nobles loyal to the Carolingian family; the fourteen-year-old Charles (later known as ‘the Simple’), last surviving son of Louis II ‘the Stammerer’, is crowned by the rebels’ leader archbishop Fulk at Rheims and his allies fight Eudes over Neustria.

Count William ‘the Pious’ of Auvergne, son of Bernard ‘Plantpilosa’ and grandson of Bernard of Septimania, assumes the title of duke of Aquitaine (to d. 918), previously held by the recently expelled Ebalus ‘Mazer’ of Poitou who is now or later his refugee protégé; possibly king Eudes agrees to this in return for William’s keeping his foe Ebalus under control.

EAST FRANCIA

Autumn. Birth of Arnulf’s legitimate son by Ota of Saxony, Lewis later known as ‘the Child’. Arnulf then names his older, illegitimate son Zwentibold as king of Lotharingia.

894

BRITAIN

A diversionary attack on Devon and Exeter by an allied Viking fleet of 140 ships from Northumbria and East Anglia draws Alfred off Benfleet; one group of the attackers (100 ships) apparently fortify a position on the Bristol Channel and then sail off to join the other group (40 ships) to attack Exeter but cannot storm it. Alfred relieves it in time, and before his return Benfleet (in Haesten’s absence on a raid) is stormed. The defenders and their loot are taken off to London in triumph, and Alfred and his son-in-law Aethelred find that their godsons, Haesten’s sons, and their mother are prisoners; they return them to Haesten as a goodwill gesture.

The Scandinavians in East Anglia, reinforced from the North, set up a base at Shoeburyness to join Haesten's army but abandon this to avoid another siege; led probably by Haesten, they move off quickly, perhaps on horseback as they outstrip the West Saxons, up the Thames valley to Western Mercia, to plunder the Severn valley. The West Saxons and Welsh come to the Mercians' aid and the invaders are besieged at Buttington Walls in Shropshire, starved out, and defeated in battle. The remnants escape back to Essex.

Another Scandinavian force heads NW from Essex to Wales and outmarches the Mercian army to seize Chester; it sits securely in the fortified city safe from attack and plunders the locality, Eastern Gwynedd included, but is starved out over the winter.

Approximate date of king Anarawd of Gwynedd having to accept vassalage to Alfred of Wessex and coming to his court with his brothers to do homage (or so Anglo-Saxon sources claim), or at least abandon his alliance with the Vikings of York and ally with him against the threat of the Vikings at Chester; he submits to re-baptism in the regular Catholic manner.

FRANCIA/ITALY

Lewis of Provence does homage to Arnulf as his overlord, thus confirming the extension of the 'Imperial' authority in East Francia/Germany over the Rhone valley and delta.

Zwentibold, son of Arnulf, returns to the Trento with a Bavarian army and marches South to help Berengar of Friuli defeat Guy at Bergamo; he takes Milan and overruns central Lombardy and Berengar occupies Pavia with him.

Autumn. Death of Guy of Spoleto, 'Emperor', in retreat from Zwentibold at his camp on the river Taro, South of the Po in the Apennine foothills; succeeded by his under-age son Lambert (II) as ruler of Northern Italy, with Guy's widow Adelgis of Benevento as regent.

895

BRITAIN

The Viking army in Chester breaks out into the Wirral, secures food by ravaging in Gwynedd, and then heads back quickly overland to East Anglia. A second campaign follows in Essex, this time based on a camp on Mersea Island which Alfred besieges, while more raiders attack Exeter by sea and then head to the Chichester region. The latter are defeated heavily, traditionally at Kingley Vale on the South Downs near Chichester.

?*Early autumn.* The Vikings in Essex head up the Thames valley again; the West Saxons follow them and besiege the invaders' camp on the river Lea upstream from London. Alfred protects the local harvest so the raiders

cannot damage it or take the corn for food, and builds fortified bridges across the river so they cannot bring supplies in by river. The Vikings break out to head up the Thames and on to try their luck in Western Mercia, only to be cornered and besieged again (this time at Bridgnorth).

Probable date of Alfred sending ‘ealdorman’ Aethelnoth to king Guthfrith of York to agree a treaty; by this the Vikings of York will not aid any more attacks by overseas invaders on Wessex/Mercia.

Approximate date of the death of the Northern Scots/Viking warlord ruler Thorstein ‘the Red’, son of the late king Olaf ‘the White’ (?of Dublin) and Aud ‘the Deep-Minded’, daughter of Ketil ‘Flat nose’; he is apparently ruler of Caithness and other regions North of the Moray Firth plus some of the Hebrides. He is killed in battle in Caithness, apparently by treachery by local Scots; his mother Aud takes her (substantial) possessions and followers plus Thorstein’s unmarried daughters and builds a ship to emigrate to Iceland where she joins her brothers Bjorn ‘Easterner’ and Helgi and settles at Hramm near Reykjavik. The ‘Laxdaela Saga’ (1220s–30s) has the stingy Helgi refusing to put up her large entourage so she joins the generous Bjorn instead. Apparently Caithness goes to a daughter of Thorstein and to her local husband, the ‘mormaer’ (original Pictish equivalent of ‘earl’, hereditary regional governor).

IRELAND

Death of king Dub-Lachtma of Munster after a seven-year reign; succeeded by Finguine nGecan mac Loeghaire, nephew of king Dunchad (d. 888), from the ‘Eoganacht Caisil’ dynasty. He also reigns for seven years.

EAST FRANCIA/MORAVIA/BOHEMIA

?The now adult sub-ruler of Bohemia under Moravian tutelage, Spythnef, goes to a Diet of the East Francian nobility at Regensburg without his overlord’s permission to do homage to king/Emperor Arnulf and seek his protection and use the military might of Francia against control by the Moravians; Arnulf recognises him as duke of Bohemia, to extend his influence East, though his legal tie of vassalage is later used to assert German control of Bohemia.

ITALY

Arnulf, ruler of Germany, invades Italy at instigation of Formosus and marches on Rome to oust power of Lambert of Spoleto.

November–December. Arnulf crosses the Alps successfully to Pavia, but his army suffers horrendously in bad weather as they cross the Apennines and most of their horses die in an epidemic; Lambert of Spoleto and his mother Agiltrude reoccupy Rome and block the gates.

SPAIN

Execution of Mutarrif, eldest surviving son and since 891 heir of Emir Abdallah of Cordoba, by his possibly paranoid father.

896

BRITAIN

The Scandinavian army at Bridgnorth manage to break out (late spring?) as their supplies run out, and head back to East Anglia and Northumbria. This time they do not return to Wessex; Alfred has finally succeeded in dissuading his enemies from attacking his kingdom. Alfred also has some success at sea against continuing 'hit-and-run' raids on the South coast with a new type of longship superior to enemy vessels.

ITALY

February. Arnulf's men storm the gate of St Pancratius to enter Rome; they capture the city and drive out count Lambert's partisans.

22 February. Formosus welcomes Arnulf as he enters Rome and crosses the Milvian Bridge to the Vatican; he crowns Arnulf as 'Emperor', but the latter leaves a fortnight later to attack Lambert and Agiltrude in Spoleto and (March?) is struck by paralysis during the siege. He has to leave Italy and Lambert recovers power; *4 April* Formosus dies, aged around eighty, followed by his successor Boniface VI who is elected during popular riots but dies after fifteen days; *May* Stephen VI, bishop of Anagni, now a partisan of Lambert after earlier opposing him, is elected as Pope.

Arnulf sacks Berengar as margrave of Friuli and appoints the latter's senior councillor count Waltfred of Verona to succeed him; Waltfred dies later in the year and Berengar replaces him.

Arnulf returns to Germany and leaves his illegitimate son Ratold, who is only a boy, in charge at Milan as the nominal sovereign of the 'kingdom of Italy' there; he is soon removed by the resurgent Friuli and Spoletan forces.

War between Lewis of Provence and the Arab pirates based at Fraxinetum on the Riviera, who are now pillaging the coast and robbing travellers.

October/November. Berengar and Lambert meet and agree to divide up the Lombard/Italian kingdom between them, with Berengar ruling East of the river Adda and Lambert to the West. Lambert is to marry Berengar's daughter.

897 | ITALY

January. Pope Stephen VI, encouraged by count Lambert and his mother, has Formosus exhumed and tried at the Basilica of St John in the Lateran/‘Salvatoris’ (‘the Saviour’) with the Pope leading the accusations – although he is as guilty as Formosus of illegally transferring from one diocese to another. The judges reach the required verdict with Lambert’s troops in attendance, and the late Pope is thrown in the River Tiber and all his acts annulled; Stephen’s misrule and superstitious fear at collapse of Lateran Basilica leads to a revolt *August* and he is deposed, thrown into prison, and strangled.

August. Romanus, cardinal priest of St Peter ‘in Vincula’, is elected Pope, presumably by a pro-Formosan faction; *November* after ?four months he is replaced by Formosus’ partisans with the equally obscure Theodore II. Theodore then has the ‘cadaver synod’ that posthumously tried Formosus annulled and re-buries the late Pope in St Peter’s Basilica.

898 | FRANCIA

1 January. Death at La Fere of king Eudes/Odo, aged around forty, after a reign of just under ten years; his effective co-ruler and rival Charles, later known as ‘the Simple’, succeeds him aged eighteen and the Carolingian line is restored. Eudes’ brother Robert holds onto the county of Paris and Neustria.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

January. After the death of Theodore II, Sergius bishop of Caere is elected Pope but is ejected by partisans of Lambert of Spoleto; John IX, a Benedictine monk from Tivoli/Tibur, is elected Pope, and sends legates John and Nicholas to Constantinople to attend a synod.

Death of bishop (and real secular ruler) Athanasius (II) of Naples; succeeded by his late brother and victim Sergius II’s son Gregory IV as duke.

FRANCIA

January. Death of king Eudes/Odo of Western Francia after a reign of nearly ten years, aged in his early forties; the magnates invite the last legitimate Western Francian Carolingian prince, Louis II’s son Charles (later known as ‘the Simple’), aged eighteen or nineteen, to become king.

Charles is invited to take over in Lotharingia too by some of the nobles, led by count Reginar of the Maasgau (around Maastricht) and Mons, the lay abbot of Echternach; this is defeated by the faction favouring Zwentibold, Arnulf’s illegitimate son.

ITALY

?*September*. Lambert of Spoleto attacks Berengar's half of the Lombard kingdom across the Po, and temporarily occupies the capital, Pavia.

15 *October*. Lambert of Spoleto is killed hunting after a reign of a few weeks in Pavia; Berengar of Friuli succeeds to rule of all Northern Italy.

A small first Magyar exploration campaign to NE Italy takes place, reassuring the attackers that it is worth a major attack.

SPAIN

Date of the formal conversion to Christianity and baptism of the Andalusian rebel/brigand warlord Umar ibn Hafsun of Bobastro, leading irritant of the emirate of Cordoba and leader of a mixed army of Christian 'Mozarab' and Moslem 'Muwallahad' rebels. He then builds a church at Bobastro; the move is probably a bid for support from Alfonso III of Leon/Asturias but if so this does not win any major military support and as his more devout Moslem followers start to drift away his power declines in the 900s.

Mohammed ibn Lubb, head of the 'Al Qays' dynasty of Tudela/Calahorra and the main rebel warlord of NE Spain, is killed while besieging Saragossa; his dynasty's rival, Mohammed al-Tawil of Huesca, attacks but is defeated by Mohammed ibn Lubb's son Lubb who calls on Umar ibn Hafsun for help; al-Tawil is captured and is forced to cede important castles to his two rivals.

899

ITALY

A Magyar horde from Pannonia crosses Carinthia (?with no interference from its authorities) and invades Eastern Lombardy and splits up to ravage the countryside and sack unwalled towns.

Atenulf of Capua captures pro-Arab Lombard principality of Benevento to restrict Arab raiding.

King Berengar leads an army of around 15,000 men to confront the Magyars, who reassemble into one army and retreat before him keeping carefully ahead of his army and send envoys offering to withdraw from Italy permanently to reassure him of their demoralization; he is reassured and camps at the river Brenta, across the river from their camp, during negotiations. 24 *September*. Battle of the River Brenta: the Magyars cross the river away from Berengar's camp and attack it without being spotted, then massacre the unprepared defenders; Berengar escapes ?disguised as a common soldier but most of his men (15–20,000?) are killed by a Magyar force said to be around a third of the Italian army's size. Italy is left defenceless, and the Magyars sack his capital, Pavia.

BRITAIN

26 *October*. Death of Alfred ‘the Great’, king of Wessex and overlord of Mercia, after a reign of twenty-eight years and six months; he is recorded by the ASC as ruler of all the English who were not under Viking domination and overlord of the Welsh too. He is probably aged fifty or fifty-one.

On Alfred’s death his late elder brother Aethelred I’s elder son Aethelwold (born 869/70?), passed over in 871 as an infant, is passed over again by the royal councillors (‘Witan’) in favour of the king’s own elder son, his cousin Edward who is younger (around twenty-six to twenty-eight) but is already an experienced battle-leader. Aethelwold seizes the royal manors of Wimborne (Minster) and Twynham (Christchurch) in Dorset in revolt, centering his attempt on Eastern Dorset; one or both may be his own lands, inherited from his father who was buried at Wimborne. The army rallies to Edward at nearby Badbury Rings, and the rebel is quickly besieged in Wimborne. Bragging that he will stand and die there if necessary, he is forced to flee by night. He appears to have taken his choice of wife, who had been made a nun, with him into exile or recovered her later. Aethelwold makes his way to Northumbria, and is accepted by the Danes of York and later by the Angles of Bernicia as their new ruler. The Danes are apparently leaderless; their acceptance of a West Saxon prince with no local connections is unusual but may have been due to his promises of a share in or loot from his cousin’s lands. He may already have been known to some ex-warriors from the armies that had fought Alfred in the 890s, as a capable commander. He rules over Northumbria for three years, defeating a first incursion by an exiled Danish prince called Cnut but later having to accept the latter as co-ruler; his rival was murdered a year later (900/01?).

Alfred is buried in the Old Minster cathedral at Winchester, but is soon moved to the adjoining ‘New Minster’ which his son Edward builds in the early 900s; this becomes a royal family mausoleum with his wife Ealhswith buried there too.

It is unclear if Edward has married his second, or first legitimate, wife, Elfreda, by the time he succeeds to the throne – but she is probably the ‘queen’ referred to in the coronation ordinal probably composed for his coronation. It is also uncertain if he was even married to her predecessor, Egwina, by whom he already has a son called Athelstan (born c. 894) who is old enough to be involved in a ceremonial appearance in grand clothing before Alfred dies. Possibly Edward agrees to send Athelstan off to his sister Aethelfleda’s court in Mercia c. 899 to get him away from opponents of his succeeding to the throne, who only regard Edward’s children by Elfreda as legitimate. The elder son of this marriage, Aelfweard, will be regarded as the heir to Wessex in the 910s and early 920s, while Athelstan is living in Mercia. (William of Malmesbury, writing c. 1125, suggests that Egwina was a shepherdess and only Edward’s mistress but this is unproven.)

EASTERN FRANCIA/GERMANY

29 November. Death of Emperor Arnulf, aged around forty-nine, at Regensburg, after a reign of twelve years in Eastern Francia; succeeded in his realm but not as Emperor by his son, Lewis ‘the Child’, aged six. Archbishop Hatto of Mainz acts as Lewis’ guardian and chief minister.

ITALY

December. The invading Magyars, settled in ‘Hungary’ in 896, ravage Eastern Lombardy; they sack Vercelli (13 December) and kill its fleeing archbishop, Liutward the former arch-chancellor of the kingdom of Italy.

900

ITALY

26 January. Sack of Modena by the Magyars as they ravage into the Romagna; this is followed by the sack of the abbey of Nonantula as the local ruler Berengar of Friuli is powerless to intervene. He has to pay tribute (spring?) to get the Magyars to retreat.

GERMANY

4 February. Coronation of Lewis ‘the Child’ as king of East Francia at Forcheim.

BRITAIN

Death of king Donald of Scots after an eleven-year reign; this is at Forres, probably at the hands of Viking raiders. He is succeeded by his cousin, Constantine (II) son of king Aed, who will reign for forty-two years in the longest early medieval Scots reign.

Approximate date of the youngest son of ex-’Jarl’ Rognvald of Orkney, Einar, arriving in Shetland to establish his own dominion, at the expense of his unwelcoming older brother Hallad. Later he succeeds to the Jarldom of Orkney, and earns the nickname of ‘Turf Einar’ for introducing that plant as fuel to the islanders. By this date Rognvald has supposedly been killed by his lord king Harald’s younger son Halfdan in Norway; Halfdan is later murdered and sacrificed to Odin in the ‘Blood Eagle’ ritual by Einar.

ITALY

January. Death of Pope John IX; *May/June* Benedict IV, a Roman aristocrat, is elected Pope.

FRANCIA

17 June. Archbishop Fulk of Rheims, chief minister of the young king Charles of West Francia, is assassinated by his regional rival, count Baldwin (II) of Flanders.

ITALY

29 June. Traditional date of an unsuccessful Magyar attempt to attack Venice, by sailing inflated skins as ‘boats’ over the lagoon from looted Chioggia to the Rialto; it is driven off.

GERMANY

30 August. King Zwentibold of East Francia and ‘Lotharingia’ is killed in battle near Susteren against rebels who are led by count Reginar of the Maasgau and Mons, lay abbot of Echternach and first count of Haunault; he is succeeded by Lewis ‘the Child’, his half-brother, for whom count Gebhard of the Lahngau in ‘Lotharingia’ soon comes to act as strongman in his Western dominions (in rivalry with Reginar’s victorious autonomist rebels at first) and duke Conrad of Franconia, related to Gebhard, in the East.

Lewis ‘the Child’s chief minister and regent archbishop Hatto refuses to renew the alliance with and tribute to the Magyars; in retaliation their leader Arpad invades across the Danube and overruns Pannonia (Western Hungary), bringing his frontier to the present Austria/Hungarian border and then attacking Bavaria; a major war results with Lewis and his local viceroy, duke Liutpold of Bavaria the commander of the Eastern ‘March’.

ITALY

Autumn. Lewis of Provence invades Italy to fight Berengar of Friuli, who has been unable to stem the tide of Magyar attacks on Lombardy, at the invitation of count Adalbert II of Tuscany and other nobles; he defeats Berengar in battle in Lombardy and chases him out of Pavia, where (12 October) he is crowned as king of Italy. Lewis secures Lombardy and the Romagna with Adalbert’s help.

FRANCE

10 November. Death of queen-mother Adelaide of West Francia, mother of king Charles.

IRELAND

Death of king Tadhg mac Conchobar of Connacht after a twelve-year reign; succeeded by his brother Cathal, the third son of Conchobar to hold the kingship in turn, who will reign until 925.

901 ITALY

February. Benedict IV crowns Lewis of Provence as ‘Emperor’ in Rome; however, Berengar of Friuli starts to attack his Lombard domains and he has to return North.

10 June. Reggio falls to Moslem expedition sent into Byzantine lands from Sicily.

GERMANY

Invasion of Bavaria by the Magyars.

BRITAIN

Possible date when Alfred’s biographer, the South Wales cleric Asser, becomes the bishop of Sherborne after Wulfsgie – a see which includes Brittonic-language speakers in Devon and Cornwall. (Alternatively the date may be as early as 892.)

IRELAND

Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory and king Mael Finnia mac Flannecan of Brega drive the Vikings out of Dublin and reconquer the city for the Irish.

Mael Ruanaidh, favourite son of ‘High King’ Flann Sinna and ‘designate of Ireland’ i.e. presumably his father’s intended heir, is killed (?burnt to death in an attack on a hall) by the Luigni of Connacht. If Flann is intending to break with the traditional rotation of the ‘High Kingship’ between the Northern and Southern Ui Niall the killing benefits other offended (Ui Niall) dynasts too.

902 BRITAIN

Aethelwold, claimant to Wessex and king of the Vikings in Northumbria at York, is confident enough to march South into East Anglia to secure the adherence of Eowils, the Danish king there (or early 903?).

Death of Alfred’s widow, queen/‘Lady’ Ealhswith of Wessex; she is buried at the ‘Old Minster’ in Winchester, where she has ‘dower’ lands, with her husband and is later moved to the nearby ‘New Minster’.

ITALY

March. Death of marquis Anscar of Ivrea, émigré Burgundian ally of the house of Spoleto and brother of the late archbishop Fulk of Rheims (d. 900); succeeded by his son Adalbert.

1 August. Fall of Taormina in Sicily to Arabs, and Leo condemns defeated commanders Eustathius Argyrus and Carmalus to death but persuaded by Patriarch Nicholas to pardon them.

‘Emir’ Ibrahim of Sicily is killed at Costenza, succeeded by son Abdullah.

GERMANY

Alliance between the kingdom of Eastern Francia and duke Mojmir II of Moravia; the latter faces invasion by the Magyars as a result and his lands are overrun.

ITALY

August. Berengar of Friuli defeats Lewis of Provence and makes him swear to leave Italy and never return.

IRELAND

Conquest of Dublin by king Mael Finnian mac Flannacan of Brega, leader of the Southern Ui Niall, and king Cearbhall of Leinster; this temporarily ends the Viking rule of their main East coast base, and the fleeing Scandinavians head either to Britain (where the place-names in Lancashire and Cumbria indicate contemporary settlement) or to Man and Galloway. It is presumed that the grandsons and heirs of the late king Ivarr ‘the Boneless’ of Dublin (d. 873), such as Ragnall/Ragnald, are among the exiles.

Approximate date of the allegedly treacherous killing of king Finguine nGecan of Munster, after a seven-year reign, by the ‘Eoganacht’ sub-dynasty of ‘Cenel Conaill Chaisil’; succeeded by Cormac mac Cuilennain mac Selbach of a minor branch of the ‘Eoganacht Caisil’, not descended from any kings for several hundred years and apparently a bishop of learned reputation.

903

BRITAIN

The local Danes of East Anglia join Aethelwold’s army for a major raid South across the middle Thames at Cricklade into Wessex, and in retaliation king Edward leads his army after the raiders into East Anglia. Aethelwold outpaces the West Saxon pursuit and reaches the Fenland safely, but succumbs to the temptation to attack Edward as the enemy retires back towards Wessex. The resulting battle of Holme is bloody with major losses on both sides, with Wessex losing ‘ealdormen’ Sigewulf and Sigehelm and abbot Cenwulf, but although the Danes hold the field both Aethelwold and king Eowils of East Anglia are killed along with the ‘holds’ (senior landowners) Ysopa and Oscytel. Aethelwold’s younger brother and his descendants seem to have survived as loyal subjects of their cousins within Wessex; the Scandinavian kingship of East Anglia appears to break up into local groups’ autonomous mini-states.

GERMANY

Full control of 'Lotharingia' is gained by king Lewis 'the Child's strongman Gebhard of the Lahngau with the exile of his rival, count Reginar of the Maasgau/Mons/Hainault (who regains Haunault in 907). Gebhard becomes the duke of Lotharingia/Lorraine as its effective ruler.

ITALY

August. Death of Pope Benedict IV; Leo V, a priest from a village near Ardea, is elected Pope but *September* after thirty days he is deposed and imprisoned by a faction led by the priest Christopher who becomes Pope.

904

ITALY

29 January. Papal claimant Sergius III, a rival of Christopher and 'elected' but denied office in 898, is installed in Rome by Alberic of Spoleto, and he deposes and imprisons Christopher; he later has him and Leo V murdered, and rules in alliance with 'Senator' Theophylact's noble faction; Theophylact, a landed nobleman and ruffian based at Frascati, virtually rules Rome and his daughter Marozia is supposed to be Sergius' mistress. Sergius declares Formosus a usurper and annuls all his acts and his consecration of assorted clerics, dating his own Papacy back to his first 'election' in 897, causing legal chaos.

BRITAIN

Death of Merfyn ap Rhodri, ?second son of Rhodri 'Mawr' of Gwynedd/Powys and co-ruler with his elder brother Anarawd.

Defeat, capture, and execution by drowning (a ritual killing?) of king Hyffaid ap Bledri of Dyfed in SW Wales by his daughter Elen's husband, prince Cadell ap Anarawd of Gwynedd/Powys who has ruled Ceredigion/Seisyllwg since 878; this marks the takeover of Dyfed by the dynasty of Gwynedd and its revival as a state after decades of domination by the Vikings.

IRELAND

Cellach mac Cearbhall succeeds his elder brother Diarmait as king of Osraige/Ossory.

905

BRITAIN

Peace is restored between Edward and the rulers of East Anglia and Viking Northumbria/York at Tiddington.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Flann Sinna attacks and ravages Munster to punish his challenger, king Cormac mac Cuilennain; Cormac then attacks Flann’s allies in Connacht and Leinster in retaliation.

ITALY

Lewis of Provence invades Northern Italy again at the invitation of count Adlabert of Ivrea. He drives his rival Berengar out of Pavia and goes on to Verona, but is short of men there and his foes alert Berengar; Berengar attacks Verona by surprise (21 July) and Lewis flees to the church of St Peter and is arrested, accused of breaking his oath of 902 to keep out of Italy, and blinded; he is sent back to Provence, where count Hugh of Arles, son and successor (895) of count Theobald of Arles and of Bertha the illegitimate daughter of Lothar II, becomes his cousin’s effective regent in his remaining lands and takes over his claim to rule in Italy. Hugh is soon made count of Vienne, marries Lewis’ sister Willa, and subsequently moves the capital of Provence to his own seat of government, Arles.

SPAIN

King Fortun Garces ‘the One-Eyed’ of Pamplona is deposed in a coup by his nobles, backed by king Alfonso III of Leon and the count of Aragon, in favour of his grand-daughter Toda’s husband, Sancho Garces of the rising Jimenez dynasty (son of count Garcia Jimenez); Sancho becomes king and Fortun is packed off to the monastery of Leyre where he dies in 922.

906

EAST FRANCIA/GERMANY

Duke Conrad of Franconia, main vassal-ruler of central Germany and father of king Lewis’ mother Oda of Franconia, defeats a rebellion by the Babenberg family in an armed clash over control of the Main valley; Conrad and two of the three Babenberg brothers are killed at the battle of Fritzlar which the Franconians win, and the third of the latter, Adalbert, seeks sanctuary with the kingdom’s regent archbishop Hatto in his see, Mainz, but is handed over to be executed by Conrad’s son and successor duke Conrad ‘the Younger’ (future king in 911–18).

907

SPAIN

Approximate date of a successful major raid South by king Alfonso III of Leon and Asturias’ younger son Ordono with the royal army to the vicinity of Seville, a sign of the recent decline of the military cohesiveness of the emirate of al-Andalus/Cordoba. This may lead to Ordono and his

brothers starting to demand that their ageing father, on the throne for forty years, abdicate and their stirring up noble dissent.

FRANCIA

Marriage of king Charles of West Francia to Frederunda, daughter of the obscure count Dietrich of the Hanau and sister of bishop Beuve of Chalons-sur-Marne; the marriage probably signifies his attempts to ally to the elite of ‘Lotharingia’ in the East of his realm to offset the power-bloc of his late rival Eudes/Odo’s brother count Robert in (Western) Neustria in the West.

GERMANY

King Lewis ‘the Child’, his main commander duke Liutpold of Bavaria, and archbishop Dietmar of Salzburg lead an East Francian attack on Pannonia to recover it from the Magyars; *4–6 July*. Their army of around 50–60,000 is destroyed and Liutpold and Dietmar are killed at the battle of Pressburg/Poszony (Bratislava) by the Magyars, who are probably led by their ageing ruler Arpad or his unnamed deputy commander. This opens the region to regular invasion and destroys Lewis’ military power and credibility.

Arnulf succeeds his father Liutpold as ruler of Bavaria.

IRELAND

(‘Annals of Innisfallen’, not other sources) Attack on the Ui Niall of Midhe and securing of hostages from the ‘High King’ Flann by his challenger, king Cormac mac Cuilennain of Munster, who is encouraged by his warmongering councillor abbot Flaithbertach mac Indremnain of Inis Cathiag/Scattery Island.

908

BRITAIN

Death of Denewulf, bishop of Winchester; succeeded a few months later by Frithustan.

King Constantine of Scots makes his cousin, Domnhall mac Aed, king of Strathclyde, which is probably by now seen as a Scots vassal-state.

IRELAND

13 September. Battle of Bellamoon near Castledermot, County Kildare: ‘High King’ Flann Sinna and his ally, king Cathail mac Conchobair of Connacht, defeat an attack on Flann’s son-in-law king Cearbhall of Leinster by the army of Munster, which is led by king Cormac mac Cuilennain and his ally Flaithbertach mac Indemnan, abbot of Inis

Cathaig/Scattery Island (who is accused by some sources of stirring the king up to fight and then to refuse an offer of hostages because he was not to have custody of them). One story has it that the Munster army were disheartened by Flaithbertach being thrown by his horse as a bad omen and tried to arrange mediation but he foiled this. Cormac and his ally Cellach mac Cearbhall of Osraige/Ossory are killed, and so is Flann's son-in-law king Cearbhall mac Muirecan of Leinster. Cormac is buried at Castledermot and is later regarded as a saint there.

Flaithbertach succeeds to the rule of Munster, probably after a vacancy and interregnum of some length, despite not being of the usually dominant 'Eoganacht' dynasty (his kin are of the 'Muscraige' family ruling what is later called Muskerry), and reigns until 944, but Flann is now militarily dominant across Southern and central Ireland. Cearbhall is succeeded by Augaire mac Aillela as king of Leinster, for an eight?-year reign.

909

NORTH AFRICA

Abu Abdallah's rebels storm Aghlabid capital, Qairouan, and depose 'Emir' Ziyadat Allah; 'Shi'a' leader and descendant of Ali, Saed, summoned from East and proclaimed Caliph Ubaidullah – 'Fatimid' dynasty founded.

BRITAIN

(or 910) Death of bishop Asser of Sherborne, the South Welsh biographer of king Alfred; succeeded by Aethelweard.

Eadwulf becomes the first bishop of the see of Devon (based at Crediton) in Wessex, as separated from Sherborne.

King Edward leads a major combined West Saxon and Mercian army into the territories of the 'Northern raiding-army' (ASC), i.e. presumably the ern 'Danelaw' and York, and achieves major successes. This is possibly a 'trial run' for an offensive by the two armies in combination, as will occur after 911.

Death of king Cadell of Dyfed and Ceredigion/Seisyllwg, now unified as the new kingdom known to later writers as 'Deheubarth' i.e. 'Dexter Pars' ('Right-Handed Part' of Wales as seen when looking on a map from Ireland). He is succeeded by his eldest son Hywel 'Dda' ('the Good'), who will reign until 950; his younger son Clydog becomes sub-king of Ceredigion.

SPAIN

King Alfonso III of Leon and Asturias is defeated and overthrown in a rebellion by his three sons by queen Jimena – Garcia, Ordonio and Fruela.

He is succeeded by his sons in a division of his kingdom – Garcia, the eldest, has Leon with the capital, Ordone has Galicia in the West, and Fruela has Asturias in the East.

910

BRITAIN

A major ‘Danelaw’ raid takes place West across Mercia into the Severn valley, probably a ‘probe’ to test the Mercian defences as Aethelred’s health declines. Edward is at the far end of his lands in Kent with his fleet, which the invaders know about, but sends West Saxon aid, and the raiders are heavily defeated at Tettenhall on 6 August. Aethelred is not present at the battle, where the Northumbrian/York Viking kings Halfdan (II) and Eowils, jarls Ohtar and Scurfa, and ‘holds’ Athulf and Agmund are killed.

FRANCIA

11 September. Foundation of the famous abbey of Cluny in the Auvergne by the region’s count, William ‘the Pious’ (also duke of Aquitaine). It is placed under the direct legal control of the Papacy to keep it safe from local episcopal interference, e.g. in selecting abbots. William selects the holy abbot (St) Berno of Baume abbey, an aristocratic former trainee monk at the strict Benedictine abbey of St Martin at Autun, founder of his own abbey at Gigny in the Jura mountains, and protégé of king Rudolf of Burgundy, as abbot.

GERMANY

Gebhard, duke of Lorraine, is killed in battle by the Magyars at Augsburg; he is succeeded by the former ‘strongman’ of the 890s, count Reginar of the Maasgau (around Maastricht) and Mons, who Gebhard exiled c. 900 as an enemy of king Lewis ‘the Child’ and who is the son of an unknown daughter of Emperor Lothar (d. 855).

SPAIN

20 December. Death at Zamora of king Alfonso III ‘the Great’ of Leon and Asturias, after a forty-three-year reign (longest of the medieval Spanish kings) – only titular for the previous year as his three sons have already seized power.

911

ITALY

14 April. Death of Pope Sergius III; succeeded by Anastasius III, son of Lucian and probably a nominee and ally of the Roman ‘senator’ Theophylact; he is a mild character according to the Frankish annalist Flodoard.

BRITAIN

Ealdorman Aethelred dies, probably early in 911, and Edward succeeds to the crucial border fortified towns of London and Oxford; close co-operation with his sister Aethelfleda, now sole ruler of Mercia, follows and it appears that they co-ordinate building new fortified 'burhs' to defend old (and soon new) territory and Essex submitted. The settlers and their army in Cambridge then chose Edward as their lord, and he secured full control of East Anglia.

FRANCIA

A force of Vikings led by 'Rollo' (in French sources)/Hrolf, son of Rognvald (d. c. 900), jarl of More in Norway and first jarl of Orkney and probably Hrolf 'the Walker' (said to be so-called as he was too fat to ride a horse), sails up the Seine and attacks Paris; they go on South to Chartres, where 'margrave' Robert of Neustria, younger brother of the late king Eudes/Odo, gathers an army to drive them off after an appeal from bishop Joseaume of Chartres. Duke Richard of Burgundy and count Manasses of Dijon join him, and (20 July) they defeat Rollo in the battle of Chartres.

Rollo moves back to the lower Seine, and camps at the river Epte; king Charles arrives belatedly with an army but (26 August) opens negotiations.

?*September*. Treaty of St Clair-sur-Epte: Rollo is granted the county of what becomes 'Upper Normandy', i.e. the Rouen area West of the Epte, as its count in return for defending it from attacks by other Northmen and so protecting the Seine valley from more invasions. He becomes Charles' vassal, and apparently is converted to Christianity and baptised (the usual procedure for a Viking sub-ruler/ally of a Frankish or Anglo-Saxon king) and he may marry Charles' daughter Gisela. (Elsewhere he is called the husband of Poppa, daughter of count Berengar of Rennes in Brittany.) He promises to halt local brigandage and serve as Charles' military ally, and he may be granted rights in (currently anarchic and Viking-occupied) Brittany too.

The treaty is only referenced in retrospect, by chroniclers Dudo and Flodoard, and 'Rollo' is only named as the Viking leader in retrospect too; the cession of Upper 'Normandy' to a Viking leader by Charles is first mentioned in a charter of 918. This treaty is seen in retrospect as the 'foundation of the Duchy of Normandy', or more accurately the County as Rollo only uses that title, and semi-integrates the Vikings in the region into the French legal and administrative system; but it is only the latest of a series of attempts to tie the Vikings down as loyal Francian vassals in a fixed territory, commencing in the early 840s.

EASTERN FRANCIA/GERMANY

November. Death of king Lewis ‘the Child’ after a reign of twelve years, aged eighteen; the Carolingian dynasty in the region is extinct so (10 November, diet of Forcheim) his magnates, led by the ex-regent archbishop Hatto of Mainz, choose duke Conrad of Franconia (brother of the late king’s mother Oda) as the new king. This is reluctantly accepted by the other leading sub-rulers, dukes Henry ‘the Fowler’ of Saxony and, Arnulf of Bavaria and Carinthia (who succeeded his father Leopold in 907), and Erchanger, ‘missus’ and the leading magnate of Swabia (son of a daughter of Louis II of Germany); duke Reginar of Lorraine/Lotharingia prefers the claim of king Charles of West Francia as a Carolingian and on this being defeated transfers his allegiance to Charles instead. Charles thus secures Lorraine.

‡23 *November.* The duke of ‘Alemannia’, count of Thurgau, and margrave/duke of ‘Rhaetia Secunda’ (most of Swabia), Burchard, is arrested and executed for treason at the royal court as a result of machinations by his secular rival, Erchanger, who has now allied to archbishop Hatto, and by bishop Solomon of Constance who has linked up with Erchanger; his brother Adalbert of Thurgau is executed too and his son Burchard II flees from East Francia. Erchanger becomes predominant in Swabia.

IRELAND

Death of king Domnhall mac Aed of Ailech, head of the ern ‘Ui Niall’ of Cenel nEoghan and eldest son of the late ‘High King’ Aed Finliath; succeeded by his brother Niall ‘Glundub’.

912 BYZANTIUM

January. Leo VI III with typhoid; *April* as his condition deteriorates he nominates his brother Alexander as his deputy ruler, his own son Constantine (born 905) being young and from a fourth marriage which the Church has declared illegal.

11 May. Death of Leo VI, aged forty-five; Alexander and Constantine co-rulers, but Alexander is an extravagant, lazy and feckless ruler who loathes his nephew and thinks of castrating and deposing him.

BRITAIN

1 August. Aethelfleda builds a new ‘burh’ somewhere in the West of Mercia at ‘Scergeat’, i.e. ‘Boundary Gap’; she later builds a second one at Bridg.

IRELAND

The new king Niall ‘Glundub’ mac Aed Finlaith of Ailech, as head of the ern Ui Niall of Cenel nEoghan, defeats the dynasty’s traditional enemies of the Ulaid to their East at the battles of Glarryford and Ballymena; this brings in the alarmed ‘High King’ Flann Sinna to attack him (912 or 913?).

ITALY

Revolt of governor Ahmed of Sicily against Fatimids.

Patriarch Nicholas writes to Pope Anastasius deploring his recognition of Leo VI’s fourth marriage, and strikes his name from imperial diptychs.

SPAIN

16 October. Death of emir Abdallah of Cordoba; he passes over his surviving sons and nominates his grandson Abd-ar-Rahman, the son of his executed eldest son Mohammed (d. 891) and grandson of his late wife the Pamplona Christian princess ‘Durr’ (‘Pearl’), as his successor; Abd-ar-Rahman is aged twenty-one or twenty-three (born January 889 or 891). He commences immediate and exhaustive campaigns to reassert his dynasty’s control of the Moslem lands, and forms a new slave army of Eastern European mercenaries to balance against factions within the existing army and among his governors.

FRANCIA

25 October. Death of king Rudolf I of upper Burgundy, lord of the lands N and E of Lyons; he is succeeded by his son Rudolf II. The latter’s mother or stepmother, queen Guilla ‘of Provence’, possibly daughter of the late count/king Boso and so sister of the current king Lewis ‘the Blind’, remarries to Lewis’ cousin and regent, count Hugh of Arles, as the two realms ally.

913

SPAIN

January. Emir Abd-ar-Rahman’s eunuch general Badr recovers the nearest rebel stronghold to his capital at Cordoba, Ecija.

Spring. Abd-ar-Rahman recovers the province of Jaen, S of Cordoba, from Andalusian rebels and sends cavalry to relieve the siege of Malaga by Umar ibn Hafsun’s rebel ‘state’s army. He then takes the fortress of Finana, East of Malaga near Almeria, and recovers the town of Juviles with a meticulously-planned siege in a ninety-day campaign. All defeated rebels are forced to send hostages and loot to Cordoba and return to their

allegiance to him. Ahmad ibn Hamama, lord of the ‘Banu Hayyay’ rebel dynasty of Seville, holds out against a Cordoban attack but his cousin and local rival, Mohammed ibn Ibrahim the lord of Carmona, then assists Abd-ar-Rahmana to take the city. Ibn Hafsun attempts to relieve it but is driven off.

BRITAIN

In spring, while Aethelfleda is creating new strongholds in the central Midlands at Tamworth and Stafford, the West Saxon advance begins with Edward building his first new ‘burh’ beyond the earlier English/Danish border of Watling Street, at Hertford. This protects the area North of London and threatened the Danish settlers in Essex.

In the summer (one version says around the feast of St John, i.e. 24 June) he invades Essex to set up a camp at Maldon and build a fortification at Witham, and the locals submit.

A major raid by the Danes in Northampton and Leicester on Bedfordshire reaches Hook Norton, and a second near-simultaneous one attacks Luton but is driven off.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Flann Sinna sends his son Domnhall to attack the defiant rulers of Southern Connacht, to the West of their ‘Clan Colmann’ lands in Western Midhe – possibly as likely allies for their ern Ui Niall challengers from Ailech, whose king Niall Glundub has recently been defeated by him at Crossakiel.

GERMANY

Reconciliation (abortive) between king Conrad (hereditary duke of Franconia) and his most dangerous sub-ruler, Erchanger of Swabia, who marries his sister Cunigunde, the widow of count/duke Leopold of Bavaria, to the king to secure the goodwill of both duchies.

BYZANTIUM

4 June. Emperor Alexander has a ?stroke on way to Palace ball-game, and struggle for regency for Constantine VII on his death-bed; Constantine VII sole Emperor at age of eight.

ITALY

?August. Lando, son of the Sabine ‘Count Taino’, succeeds Anastasius III as Pope.

SPAIN

December. Fall of Seville to Abd-ar-Rahman, Emir of Cordoba, marking his recovery of control of most of the South of Al-Andalus except the shrinking domains of Ibn Hafsun; the Emir's ally Mohammed ibn Ibrahim of Carmona is made 'vizier' to the new loyalist governor of Seville as a 'pay-off' for his help but is quickly arrested and deported to prison in Cordoba as suspected of plotting.

914 SPAIN

19 January. Death of king Garcia of Leon; his brother Ordone of Galicia succeeds him.

ITALY

?*April.* On death of Pope Lando after a reign of six months and eleven days, the vigorous archbishop John of Ravenna (elected 905; from Tossignano in the Romagna) is elected as Pope John (X) through the influence of 'senator' Theophylact; he is supposed to have been the former lover of Theophylact's wife Theodora. He organises recruitment of allies to fight Arab raiders, aided by Theophylact and the latter's son-in-law duke Alberic of Spoleto. Count Landulph of Capua secures the hire of a naval squadron from Constantinople to attack the Arab naval/pirate bases on the Tyrrhenian coast in 915.

Nicholas Picingli 'strategus' of Byzantine Southern Italy.

SPAIN

May–June. Malaga, Fuengirola, and Algeciras and neighbouring fortresses on the Mediterranean coast are retaken by Emir Abd-ar-Rahman in a large-scale expedition, most surrendering as outnumbered; this cuts off the Andalusian rebel leader Ibn Hafsun from the sea.

Amrus, son and recently successor of the upper Ebro valley dynast Mohammed ibn Mailk Al-Tawil of Monzon, is overthrown by the populace; end of the Al-Tawil dynasty. The rebels call in their powerful local rival Mohammed ibn Lubb to take over and fend off both Navarre and the Ummayyads.

IRELAND

Summer. A war by 'High King' Flann Sinna to punish his foes in Southern Connacht, West of his family lands of Clan Colmann in Western Midhe, escalates into major ravaging of the region by Flann; he is accused of desecrating churches.

BRITAIN

Aethelfleda builds ‘burhs’ at Eddisbury and (harvest-time, i.e. August/September) Warwick.

Edward has to deal with the arrival of a large raiding-force from Brittany (led by Ohtar and Hroald) in the Bristol Channel. The small South-East Welsh kingdoms of Gwent, probably incorporating Brycheiniog, and Gleviseg/Glywysyng are plundered, but when the invaders move into Archenfield/Ergyng (English South-Western Herefordshire) they are defeated by an English army and Hroald is killed; the survivors have to promise to leave Edward’s lands, and his fortified positions along the Southern side of the Bristol Channel keep their resulting raids to a minimum. Attacks on Watchet and Porlock are driven off and Edward ransoms captured Welsh clergy, led by bishop Cameliauc of Ergyng, who have been taken to a Viking base on the Bristol Channel Islands, building up a good reputation with their kingdoms. The Vikings are blockaded on Steepholme in the Bristol Channel until they run out of food (harvest-time) and retire via Dyfed to Ireland.

Having secured the West, Edward then proceeds to Buckingham to build strongholds both sides of the river there, and with his army threatening the East Midlands Jarl Thurcytel and the men of Bedford and Northampton submit.

August. Death of archbishop Plegmund of Canterbury after twenty-four years in office (probable date); succeeded by Aethelhelm or Athlem, uncle of the later St Dunstan and probably from Somerset, who is in office to 923.

Defeat in a naval battle off the Isle of Man of Barid, son of ‘Jarl’ Otter/Ohtere, by the Viking commanders Ragnall ‘Ua Imair’ (i.e. ‘grandson of Ivarr/Imarr, presumably Ivarr ‘the Boneless’ of Dublin who d. 873) and his ?cousin Sihtric ‘Caoch’ (‘One-Eyed’). This probably marks the conquest or successful defence of Man by the family of Ivarr and their re-emergence as major players in the Northern seas, and may lead to them acquiring a Manx/Galloway/Hebridean domain whose warriors will help them retake Dublin and Waterford in 917.

GERMANY

Erchanger of Swabia arrests and exiles his local ally turned foe, bishop Soloman of Constance, and installs a new bishop; this is an affront to the ignored king Conrad (also duke of Franconia) who invades to exile Erchanger and restore Soloman. The latter turns to his rival in Swabia, count Burchard (II) of the Thurgau, for help against Franconian domination.

IRELAND

December. Battle between Niall ‘Glundub’ of the *ern Ui Niall* of *Cenel nEoghan* and the ‘High King’ Flann Sinna’s son and heir Angus/Oengus with the Southern *Ui Niall* army of ‘Clan Colmann’, possibly resulting from the attacks by the Southern *Ui Niall* on Flann’s allies; Angus is badly wounded.

915

IRELAND

7 February. Death of Angus/Oengus, eldest son and heir of ‘High King’ Flann Sinna, of wounds after his recent battle with Niall ‘Glundub’ of the *ern Ui Niall* of *Cenel nEoghan*; his brothers Donnchad and Conchobar subsequently quarrel with and revolt against their father who has to ask Niall for help to defeat them. Niall also brings Flann and his Midhe challenger Fogartach of Brega to the negotiating table, and enforces a truce; possibly Flann has to recognise him as his heir to the ‘High Kingship’ in return for his help.

ITALY

Pope John invades Arab pirate bases in Southern Italy with forces including Theophylact of Rome, Alberic of Spoleto, and Landulf of Capua, and is joined by a Byzantine fleet; *August* after three-month siege the pirate headquarters at mouth of River Garigliano is stormed and the area is cleared.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

Death of count Reginar of Hainault/Mons/the Maasgau, the effective ruler of ‘Lotharingia’; succeeded by his son Gilbert.

Exiled count Erchanger of Swabia helps his sister’s son duke Arnulf of Bavaria on a campaign against the Magyars, along with his former Swabian rival Burchard (II) of the Thurgau; Arnulf then lends him help as he returns home with Burchard to defy his removal by king Conrad; they defeat Conrad at the battle of Wahlwies and Erchard proclaims himself duke of Swabia.

Death of duke Sptyhnev of Bohemia, a vassal of the East Francian realm and now less dependent on its shrinking former overlord Moravia; succeeded by his younger brother Vratislav.

SPAIN

Emir Abd-ar-Rahman recovers control of Valencia on the SE coast.

Sancho of Navarre attacks and besieges the Banu Qays stronghold of Tudela; its ruler Abd Allah is captured in battle, but the city is rescued

by its ruler's brother Mutarrif arriving with a relief-army; he ransoms Abd Allah and has to hand over the latter's daughter Urraca and son Fortun as hostages in a treaty; a couple of months later Abd Allah is assassinated, possibly by Navarrese agents, and is succeeded by his son Mohammed.

BRITAIN

Edward builds a new stronghold at Bedford to control the annexed area of the South-central 'Danelaw', and is at Buckingham himself to receive submissions around Martinmas (11 November); most of the Bedford/Northampton region's Scandinavian elite submit.

ITALY

December. John crowns Berengar of Friuli as Western 'Emperor' in Rome, and Papal lands are confirmed; Berengar's authority in Italy still weak.

916

BRITAIN

Edward returns to Essex to fortify Witham. Jarl Thurcytel and some of his men leave the conquered region of the 'Danelaw' for Francia with the king's agreement. All this time Mercia is also building new 'burhs' as far North as Cheshire, at Chirbury, 'Weardbyrig', and Runcorn on the river Mersey, evidently in co-ordination with Edward.

Death of king Anarawd ap Rhodri of Gwynedd/Powys after a reign of thirty-eight years; succeeded by his son Idwal (who rules to 942).

IRELAND

25 May. Death of 'High King' Flann Sinna of the Southern 'Ui Niall in county Westmeath, after a reign of thirty-six years and six months; succeeded by his predecessor Aed Finliath's son Niall 'Glundub', king of Ailech and head of the Northern 'Ui Niall' of Cenel nEoghan, as 'High King' and by his own son Conchobar as king of Brega/Midhe and head of 'Clan Colmann' of Midhe.

SPAIN

Civil war among the Banu Qays of the upper Ebro valley ends with Mohammed ibn Abd Allah of Tudela killing his uncle and rival Mutarrif in battle.

GERMANY

September. Diet/council of Hohanaltheim; king Conrad has his rebellious rival and brother-in-law duke Erchanger of Swabia, who has returned to

his duchy and seized back power after banishment, deposed for rebellion and for illegally deposing his enemy bishop Soloman of Constance; Erchanger is replaced by his local rival Burchard (II) of the Thurgau as duke and is put in a monastery, and is subsequently executed (21 January 917).

917 BRITAIN

The year sees the process of annexation of the ‘Danelaw’ move onto a new phase, preceded and possibly instigated by a retaliatory Scandinavian attack from Northampton and Leicester in breach of treaty. The raiding-army attacks Edward’s recently-built ‘burh’ at Towcester (between mid-summer and 1 August) but are held back by the townsmen until help arrives. Another raid around Aylesbury follows, and the East Anglian and Huntingdon Danes moved West to build their own fortification at Tempsford (on the upper Ouse) and raid Bedfordshire. An East Anglian attack on the English stronghold at ‘Wigingamere’ also fails, and the English storm the enemy stronghold at Tempsford and kill the local Danish king and two jarls, Toglos and Manna.

(Before Lammas, 1 August) Aethelfleda leads her army to attack and capture Derby – a very rare example of a Saxon woman leading an army – and four of her ‘thegns’ are killed in the action.

Next the Danes invade Essex to storm Colchester and besiege Maldon after the harvest (mid-September?) but are driven back, and Edward launches an autumn campaign, based at Passenham on the Roman road to Towcester, which protects the building of a new ‘burh’ at Towcester and leads to the submission of Jarl Thurferth, Northampton, and all the Danes South of the Welland. The takeover and refortification of Huntingdon and (before 11 November) Colchester follow. Many Danes in Essex and East Anglia submit, followed by the settlers in Cambridge.

IRELAND

The Viking commanders Ragnall/Ragnald Ua Imarr and (?his cousin) Sihtric ‘Caoch’ invade Ireland to reclaim the East coast ports settled by their predecessors; Sihtric lands at Cenn Fuait (‘Fuait’s Head’, apparently on the Leinster border) with one fleet while Ragnall retakes Waterford with the other. Ragnall then arrives just in time to reinforce Sihtric at the battle of Mag Femen in Tipperary, where they defeat the Ui Niall under ‘High King’ Niall; around 100 men are killed in the Viking victory, but Niall breaks out to safety.

King Augaire mac Aillela of Leinster attacks the Viking camp at Cenn Fuait at Niall’s orders, but is killed in battle at Cenn Fuait/‘Confey’ by Sihtric of Dublin; the site is unclear but has been suggested as St Mullin’s in county Carlow on the Western border of Leinster, close to the River Barrow; several other kings of the Laois region and the archbishop of

Leinster are also killed. Augaire is succeeded by Faelan mac Muiredach. The Vikings under Sihtric then sack Kildare en route to recapture Dublin.

ITALY

Approximate date (disputed) of a first, unsuccessful attack by Hugh of Arles and his local rebel allies in Northern Italy on Berengar of Friuli in an attempt to siege Lombardy; Hugh is surrounded by Berengar's forces and he is forced to surrender and leave Italy. By this point Berengar's principal feudatory and son-in-law, count Adalbert of Ivrea, has remarried to the daughter of count Adalbert of Tuscany after the death of his first wife, Gisela of Friuli.

FRANCIA

Death of queen Frederunda of West Francia, wife of king Charles, leaving several daughters but no son. Her powerful ?cousin Hagano retains great influence at court and continues to receive valuable estates to the annoyance of the leading nobles.

SPAIN

King Ordone of Leon and Galicia and his ally Sancho Garces of Navarre defeat the Moslems of Northern Spain at the battle of San Esteban de Gomez and capture that town, while the emirate of Cordoba is weak during the minority of emir Abd-ar-Rahman.

Death of the Moslem-turned-Christian warlord Umar ibn Hafsun of Bobastro in Andalucia, leading S Spanish opponent of the emirate of Cordoba but now in his seventies and shrunk in military power after 'Muwallahad' Moslem desertions.

918

BRITAIN

Some time in this year, king Ragnall/Ragnald of Dublin invades Lancashire and Cumbria to annex the Norse settlements there and set up an extension of his kingdom of Dublin; he then moves on across the Pennines to fight a drawn battle with Ealdred, the Anglian lord of Bamburgh, at Corbridge in the Tyne valley. The Dublin annexation of the region is presumably seen as a threat by Edward and hastens his advance Northwards, probably encouraged by appeals for help from Bamburgh.

In late May/early June Edward marches to Stamford and builds a new stronghold, upon which the local Danes submitted. Leicester meanwhile submits to Aethelfleda. The two armies are moving North in concert, but the campaign is halted as Aethelfleda dies just before midsummer (12/13 June?), leaving only a daughter, Egwynn. Aged around forty-eight or nine,

she is the equal of her brother as a leader and is fondly remembered in Mercian tradition.

Edward marches immediately to Tamworth to secure control of Mercia. He has probably secured control of their armies with his sister's agreement (no Mercian commanders in the recent campaigns being recorded). His niece Egwynn cannot lead armies and there is no evidence of any threat to his domination of Mercia, but he prefers to annex it outright and deny Egwynn the right to succeed; there is no known resistance except a Chester mutiny in 924. It is possible that he has promised the Mercian leadership that his eldest son Athelstan, brought up at Aethelfleda's court, will succeed him as their king. In effect, his coup is the first stage in the creation of the kingdom of England, coinciding with the takeover of the 'Danelaw'; he may have intended to divide the kingdom again among his sons rather than a permanent creation of one kingdom, leaving Wessex to his elder son by his second marriage, Aelfweard.

As full ruler of Mercia as well as Wessex, Edward now completes his military/political takeover of the 'Danelaw'. The division of the land among the separate authorities of the Danes settled in different areas, principally the 'Five Boroughs', and recent Danish losses in the unsuccessful raids on English territory aid his advance. The Mercians' Western neighbours, kings Idwal of Gwynedd/Powys and Hywel and Clydog of Dyfed, seek his alliance and according to the ASC recognise him as overlord. Later in 918 he marches to Nottingham, improves an earlier fortification, and receives the submission of the locals, which gives him control to the Humber.

SPAIN

Capture of Calahorra and Osma in NE Spain from the local breakaway emirs of Saragossa (the al-Qays dynasty) by king Ordono of Leon and Galicia and his allies in Navarre led by king Sancho. They ravage the al-Qays lands around Tudela and Najera, and the locals have to be rescued by emir Abd ar Rahman the Ummayyad who sends an army to drive the Christians back.

GERMANY

December. Death of king Conrad of Franconia; he nominates his rival duke Henry 'the Fowler' of Saxony as the next king.

BYZANTIUM

The general and new regent Romanus Lecapenus becomes co-Emperor with Constantine VII, who he eclipses in power; he later associates his own sons on the throne.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

Spring. King Rudolf II of Burgundy invades and occupies Zurich, and then attacks the Lake Constance region to occupy Constance; this attempt to annex the later Swiss lands is defeated by duke Burchard of Swabia, son-in-law of the expelled count of Zurich.

12 May. After the death of king Conrad, duke of Franconia, duke Henry ‘the Fowler’ of Saxony is chosen as king by the magnates at a Diet at Fritzlar. He rejects episcopal anointing, presumably to reduce clerical control over the kingship.

FRANCIA

Irritated by king Charles granting monastic property and other lands to his favourite adviser Hagano, a relative of his late first wife Frederund, the nobles of West Francia refuse a summons to a military assembly to join Charles’ planned expedition against raiding Magyars. In ‘Lotharingia’/Lorraine, duke Gilbert (son and successor of duke Reginar) revolts too and proclaims himself ‘princeps’ of the kingdom, rejecting Charles’ authority. He and his followers recognise the new king of East Francia, Henry ‘the Fowler’, as their king.

SPAIN

The al-Qays rivals in the upper Ebro region, Mohammed ibn Lubb and Mohammed ibn Abd Allah, join together to attack their rivals of the al-Tawil dynasty and besiege their stronghold, Barbastro; while they are away king Sancho of Navarre invades Mohammed ibn Lubb’s lands and storms and sacks Monzon, which he is unable to regain.

IRELAND

14 September. Battle of Ath Cliath/Islandbridge, near Dublin: ‘High King’ Niall Glundub leads a coalition of the Northern and Southern Ui Niall and their Ulster and Midhe allies against Viking Dublin, but is heavily defeated and killed by Sihtric ‘Caoch’. (The Irish annals date it at 919; the ASC dates it at 921.) Also killed are Niall’s nephew and heir Flaithbertach, king Conchobar mac Flann Sinna of Midhe (head of the Southern Ui Niall and of ‘Clan Colmann’), king Aed mac Eochacain of Eastern Ulster, king Mail Craibbe mac Duibsing of ‘Airghalla’ (Oriel) in Ulster, and king Mael Mithig mac Flannacan of Brega (husband of Conchobar’s sister). The independence of Viking Dublin is secured; Niall is succeeded by Flann Sinna’s most prominent surviving son Donnchad ‘Donn’ (‘Brown-Haired’), who inherits Midhe from his brother Conchobar, as ‘High King’ and by his son Muirchertach as king of the Cenel nEoghan/Ailech and head of the ern Ui Niall. Donnchad blinds his brother Aed to secure his control of Ulster. At around this time

Muirchertach, whose mother is Donnchad's sister, marries Donnchad's daughter Flann.

BRITAIN/FRANCIA

Edward moves on to Cheshire to secure the line of the Mersey with a new 'burh' at Thelwall ('late harvest' i.e. late September/early October). Manchester is then rebuilt.

Edward marries his daughter Eadgifu to king Charles of West Francia, who has only daughters by his late first wife and no male heir.

Breton tradition dates the Viking over-running of the county of Cornouaille to this year; count Mathedoi and his infant son Alan (later duke of Brittany) take refuge in England, or else Alan is born there shortly afterwards. Alan ends up as a protégé of Edward's son king Athelstan after 924.

920 SPAIN

Emir Abd ar Rahman leads his army North to the frontier of Navarre to force king Sancho to withdraw from some new fortifications which he is building; later (26 July) he defeats him and Ordono of Leon at Valdejunquera, and then advances on Sancho's capital of Pamplona which he sacks, ostentatiously pulling down the cathedral.

FRANCIA

King Charles of West Francia is seized by a coalition of angry nobles, led by count Robert of Neustria, who resent his grants to his favourite Hagano. Threats of deposition are probably made, but the Church under Charles' ally archbishop Hervey of Rheims patches up a temporary truce and heads off the revolt.

10 September. Birth of Charles' son and heir by his second wife Eadgifu of England, Louis (IV).

ITALY

Death of 'Senator' Theophylact, ruler of Rome; succeeded by daughter Marozia.

BRITAIN

Edward moves back to Nottingham before midsummer, and then fortifies Bakewell to control the Peak District. He has now methodically secured control of all of England South of the Mersey-Humber line and his joint Wessex/Mercia/Danish army has military supremacy over the North; the rulers of the region duly recognise his power.

Later that year king Ragnall of York (grandson of Ivarr ‘the Boneless’) and the kings of the Scots (Constantine II, acceded 900) and Strathclyde (Donald, acceded 908) submit to Edward – or so the ASC states. This may be no more than an alliance and the payment of gifts, ‘played up’ by the ASC. The mutual antagonism of Ragnall, who also rules in Dublin, and Constantine and Ragnall’s other concerns as overlord of Dublin probably aid the peaceful resolution of the Northern confrontations. With the Anglian lords of Bernicia also accepting Edward as their lord he is effectively, if nominally, the first king of all England.

Assassination of sub-king Clydog ap Cadell of Seissylwg/Ceredigion by a jealous brother; their sibling king Hywel of Deheubarth annexes the kingdom.

Approximate date of the death of Jarl Einar of Orkney, after a reign of around twenty years; succeeded by his elder sons, Arnkel and Erlend.

ICELAND

Traditional approximate date of the death of Aud ‘the Deep-Minded’, daughter of the Hebridan warlord Ketil ‘Flatnose’ and widow of king Olaf ‘the White’ of Dublin. She dies at the wedding-feast of her youngest son Olaf ‘Faelan’, ancestor of the compiler of the family ‘history’ the ‘Laxdaela Saga’, at her house at Hramm, probably in her seventies given her marriage pre-865.

SPAIN

The aggressive young emir Abd-ar-Rahman of Cordoba mounts his first major expedition to recover the Moslems’ position in NE Spain, and defeats the army of Leon/Galicia under king Ordone; he recovers the strategically important town of Osma. Ordone blames the local nobles of the county of Castile for not turning up for the battle, summons their leadership to a meeting, and executes them for treason.

921

BOHEMIA

13 February. Death of duke Vratislav of Bohemia; succeeded by his underage elder son Vaclav (St. Wenceslas, aka ‘Good King Wenceslas’ though he was not actually a king) under the regency of Vratislav’s Christian mother (St) Ludmila; this causes tension with a pagan faction, led by or connected to Vratislav’s widow Dragomira, a princess of the ‘Hevellian’ Slav tribe (of Eastern Brandenburg around the middle Oder, connected to the Wends) though it is not clear if she is Christian or pagan.

FRANCIA

Death of Richard ‘the Justiciar’, duke and margrave of Burgundy (that is, the lands NW of Lyons that now form Burgundy, then known as

‘Lower Burgundy’) and count of Autun, after a reign of over thirty years from c. early 888; succeeded by his eldest son Rudolf or Raoul, later king of France (923–36).

Count Robert of Paris/Neustria defeats a Viking attack on the lower Loire and agrees a treaty with the invaders, granting them land around Nantes in return for their defending it against other Vikings and so blocking the Loire to more invasions – a Loire version of the Treaty of St Clair sur’ Epte and creation of the county/duchy of Normandy (911). He does this without king Charles’ permission and this leads to tension with the king.

ITALY

A second revolt breaks out against ‘Emperor’ Berengar of Northern Italy, led by his ex-son-in-law marquis Adalbert of Ivrea, the latter’s son and Berengar’s grandson Berengar, count Gilbert of Bergamo, and archbishop Lambert of Milan; the rebels seize Pavia. The elder Berengar retreats to Verona and calls in Magyar help, gets wind of a plan by the rebels to attack him by surprise, and as they are assembling in a nearby forest by Brescia he sends his Magyar mercenaries to attack them; the rebels are ambushed and Adalbert is temporarily captured by the Magyars but swaps clothes with a low-ranking soldier and pretends to be him so he is ransomed for a small sum and can resume leadership of the rebellion.

Approximate date of the death (lynching in Rome?) of ‘senator’ Theophylact’s son-in-law, duke Alberic of Spoleto. Theophylact dies within a year or two of this, as does his wife Theodora, leaving their daughter Marozia as the main lay power in Rome.

SPAIN

Guadix and Jerez in the Andalusian interior and Cadiz on the Atlantic coast are recovered by Emir Abd-ar-Rahman.

BRITAIN

?Death of Ragnall of Dublin and York; succeeded by his kinsman Guthfrith (Godfred). His cousin Sihtric ‘Caoch’ continues as ruler of Dublin.

BOHEMIA

15 September. Assassination of the Christian regent (St) Ludmila of Bohemia at Tetin by a pagan faction linked to her daughter-in-law Dragomira, who assumes the regency for her son Vaclav/Wenceslas.

ITALY

Rudolf of Burgundy and his allies secure most of Lombardy, and Berengar is restricted to the Verona region and is powerless to stop his Magyar

mercenaries looting and pillaging at will across the region, causing more defections from his cause.

FRANCIA

Resentment of king Charles' partiality to his favourite Hagano comes to a head after he grants the latter the abbey of Chelles, a long-standing royal property now held by his paternal aunt as abbess. Count Robert of Paris/Neustria leads a major West Francian revolt, backed by the Church which feels under threat from royal capriciousness and interference, and Charles is driven into Lotharingia but retains the support of his ally count Rollo/Hrolf of Normandy.

29 June. Robert is crowned as replacement king at Rheims.

July. Death of Charles' ally archbishop Hervey of Rheims. He is succeeded by Seulf, despite the attempts of Robert's local son-in-law count Herbert of Vermandois, lay abbot of St Medard at Soissons, to secure the archbishopric for his own family; Seulf promises that Herbert can nominate his successor to buy him off.

SPAIN

Lubb ibn Mohammed, leader of the 'Al Qays' dynasty of Tudela and Calahorra that hold the NE frontier of the emirate of Cordoba in autonomy (and usually defying their authority), is killed in battle by his usual ally, king Sancho Garces of Pamplona; eclipse of the Al Qays to the benefit of the emirate although his son Mohammed ibn Lubb survives for the moment at Tudela. Their rivals the Tujibids of Saragossa also turn on them.

923

BRITAIN

January. Death of archbishop Aethelhelm of Canterbury after eight or nine years in office; succeeded by Wulfhelm, previously bishop of Wells.

FRANCIA

15 June. Charles is defeated by the rebel nobles under king Robert at a battle near Soissons; Robert is killed, aged fifty-five (born late summer 866), and Charles flees. Charles joins his cousin, also Robert's son-in-law, count Herbert of Vermandois (a descendant of Charlemagne in the female line via Bernard of Italy) the 'strongman' of NE Neustria, and asks him for help but is arrested instead; the nobles elect Robert's other son-in-law, count Raoul/Rudolf of Burgundy, as king as Robert's young son Hugh 'the Great' (new marquis of Neustria and count of Paris) refuses the throne; Raoul hands Burgundy to his younger brother Henry.

23 *July*. Coronation of king Raoul in the church of St Medard at Soissons, by the archbishop of Sens.

ITALY

29 *July*. Battle of Fiorenzuola, near Piacenza: king Rudolf of Burgundy and his allies in Lombardy, led by the young Berengar (II) of Friuli, defeat the latter's grandfather 'Emperor' Berengar; he is driven into exile and Rudolf secures the rule of Northern Italy.

SPAIN

Fall of Vigeura/Vaquera, where the garrison is massacred, and Najera, held by the Banu Qays, to Sancho of Navarre and his ally Ordono of Leon; Mohammed ibn Abd Allah, the ruler of Tudela, is captured by Sancho, deported, and later murdered.

924

SPAIN

Spring. Death of king Ordono of Leon and Galicia; he is succeeded not by his three sons but by his only surviving brother, Fruela of Asturias, in a controversial usurpation; he reunites the Northern Christian kingdoms.

Emir Abd ar Rahman of Cordoba marches North to recover the leaderless sub-state of Tudela for his realm and fend off a Navarrese attack; he hands it to his allies the Tujids of Saragossa and ravages into Navarre to punish Sancho for his 923 campaign.

ITALY

March. Assassination of the aged 'Emperor' Berengar of Friuli by plotters, aged probably over eighty.

The Magyars invade Italy again.

GERMANY

Major Magyar invasion and plundering of Saxony, which its duke, the German king Henry 'the Fowler', is unable to halt.

FRANCIA

Count Rollo of Normandy gains extra lands from king Raoul, probably the Bessin and the Hiemois.

BRITAIN

The complex events of Athelstan's accession were obscured by the careful editing of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but it appears that Athelstan was

not intended to rule Wessex after his father Edward's death despite being the eldest son. Even after the chosen heir, his younger half-brother Aelfweard, died, a strong 'rearguard' action was mounted by partisans of the latter's full brother Edwin and the infant sons of Edward's third marriage, Edmund (born 920/1) and Eadred (born 921/2). Edward had extinguished Mercian independence by a swift military coup on his sister Aethelfleda's death in 918, disinherit her daughter Egwynn and taking control of Mercia's armies which he needed for his Northern campaigns, but Athelstan was probably regarded as heir in that kingdom.

Edward dies on 17 July at Farndon-on-Dee in Western Mercia, apparently after travelling North to deal with a threatened military mutiny in the region. He is probably a few years over fifty – meaning that the leg-bones of a man aged around fifty unearthed at his post-1066 burial place in Winchester could be his or Alfred's, but Alfred is more likely as he was a little younger. He is initially buried at his foundation of the New Minster in Winchester, with his parents. Aelfweard is said to have been elected as king of Wessex by its council; the Mercian magnates elect Athelstan, presumably as per his father's wishes. His stepmother's more powerful kin may have swayed the West Saxon magnates against him.

Aelfweard dies a short time later at Oxford (2 August in the ASC, 14 August in other sources), probably en route with the late King's entourage to Winchester or to his own crowning at Kingston-on-Thames, aged somewhere around twenty-four. Athelstan claims the united throne, aged thirty (William of Malmesbury, c. 1125); it is never stated openly that Aelfweard was murdered, but if so this was logically by Athelstan's supporters to preserve the recently-imposed unity of Wessex and Mercia under their more able candidate. One later story even says that Aelfweard was a hermit at Bridgnorth on the River Severn uninterested in the throne of Wessex who was put up to his claim by Athelstan's enemies.

The Chronicle plays down the resulting 'stand-off' between rival groups of magnates which means that Athelstan is not crowned at Kingston until September 925. There is no record of warfare, and the need to preserve military strength and Edward's new kingdom against its Scandinavian and Scots vassals probably restrained both parties. But Athelstan appears to have promised that his half-brothers would succeed him, Aelfweard's full brother Edwin first, and his avoidance of marriage may have been a concession to their partisans. Edwin may have been involved in an obscure plot in Winchester in 924/5, centering around a certain Alfred, to seize and blind Athelstan. Apparently Alfred denies his guilt and is sent to Rome to swear his innocence but dies there and his lands are seized.

925

FRANCIA

Death of archbishop Seulf of Rheims; the locally powerful count Herbert of Vermandois shamelessly uses his influence to bully the clergy into electing his own younger son Hugh (aged five) as the new archbishop.

GERMANY

The Magyars continue to ravage Saxony (from 924).

SPAIN

March or July. Death of king Fruela of Leon, Asturias and Galicia, last of the sons of Alfonso III, after a reign of fourteen months made controversial by a rash of pre-emptive executions including those of the descendants of one of the last Visigothic kings, Wamba. He is succeeded by his son Alfonso ‘the Hunchback’, the new king of Galicia, but the latter is driven out of most of his realm into Eastern Asturias by the late king’s elder brother Ordono’s disinherited sons, Alfonso IV (who becomes king of Leon and Asturias), Ramiro, and Sancho (who becomes king of Galicia). Alfonso ‘the Hunchback’ survives as co-king in part of the kingdom for a year or so.

BRITAIN

Early in his reign Athelstan marries his half-sister Eadgyth to Otto, duke of Saxony and later (962) ‘Holy Roman’ Emperor. Two other sisters have been married/betrothed by his father before 924 to the rivals Charles ‘the Simple’ and duke Hugh ‘the Great’ in Francia.

ITALY

Arabs raid Southern Italy around Oria and hold ‘Strategus’ (governor) for ransom.

BRITAIN

4 September. Athelstan is crowned at Kingston-upon-Thames.

Despite disputed succession, Athelstan preserves the unity of the new kingdom and proves as successful a ruler as his father, both within Britain and in relations with his Continental peers. His generosity is noted, though it was politically wise to win over support in a Wessex where he had met substantial resistance in 924–5, and he seems to have followed a policy of dazzling his subjects as a worthy ruler with a collection of treasures including prestigious religious relics (many of which he gave away to the Church). One of his royal protégés at his court in the 920s is Haakon, a younger son of king Harald ‘Finehair’ of Norway; who is probably in exile at his father’s insistence to secure the succession for his elder? brother Erik but will return home and take the throne c. 937.

SPAIN

10 December. Death of king Sancho I Garces of Navarre/Pamplona, aged probably in his early sixties; succeeded by his younger brother Jimeno Garces, definitely with the royal title but possibly as co-ruler with his nephew Garcia (though the latter does not appear with a royal title in charters until 930). He is married to Sancha, the younger sister of his brother's wife Toda and aunt to the Ummayyad emir Abd ar Rahman.

(or 926?) War between the new king Alfonso IV of Leon (plus his brothers Sancho and Ramiro) and his deposed predecessor Alfonso 'the Hunchback', who is driven out of his kingdom of Galicia into the Eastern region of Asturias and may die in exile soon afterwards. His younger brothers Ramiro and Ordonio, titular co-rulers in Leon, may have a degree of power until Alfonso IV's deposition in 931. Galicia is given by Ramiro to his brother Sancho.

926

BRITAIN

(or autumn 925) Athelstan's sovereignty is accepted by Sihtric 'Caoch' ('One-Eyed'), the new Scandinavian king of York, with their alliance cemented on 30 January 926 by Sihtric's marriage to Athelstan's full sister Eadgyth at Tamworth, centre of the Western 'Danelaw'. But Sihtric refuses to accept baptism as required in West Saxon treaties with a pagan Scandinavian ally.

The new archbishop Wulfhelm of Canterbury journeys to Rome to collect his official 'pallium' of office from the Pope; probably a move by Athelstan to increase ties with the Holy See and legality as this has not been done in recent decades and now becomes normal practice.

At some date in the year, Athelstan receives a Francian embassy at Abingdon in Oxfordshire, led by Adelf son of count Baldwin of Flanders by Athelstan's aunt (Alfred's daughter), to arrange the marriage of Athelstan's sister Eadchild to duke Hugh of the Franks, brother-in-law of king Raoul. The latter's potential rival, Louis son of the late king Charles, is living in exile with his mother (Athelstan's sister) in England so this is evidently a move to buy him off from intervening on Louis' behalf.

FRANCIA

Death of count Roger of Laon; his neighbour count Herbert of Vermandois secures the town and its county for his own eldest son and heir, Odo/Eudes, despite the wishes of his brother-in-law king Raoul.

GERMANY

(probably winter 925–6, uncertain start date) king Henry is forced to withstand a Magyar blockade in his strongest fortress, Werla in the Harz

mountain foothills, as the Magyars roam unchecked across Saxony pillaging his subjects; he luckily manages to capture a Magyar prince and uses this to negotiate a truce. In return for his hostage and a substantial tribute the Magyars withdraw and promise to leave Saxony alone.

ITALY

Spring. Count Hugh of Provence meets Pope John at Mantua, and agrees an alliance; John crowns him as ‘king of Italy’. He becomes ruler of Lombardy at the invitation of the nobles who expel Rudolf II of Burgundy, and moves his base to Pavia; however, this and the assumption of control of Spoleto around now by Pope John’s brother Peter/Petrus annoy the ‘senatrix’ Marozia in Rome.

?Marozia, real ruler of Rome, marries count Guy of Spoleto.

ITALY/GERMANY

?29 *April.* Duke Burchard (II) of Swabia, coming to the aid of his daughter Bertha’s husband Rudolf II of Burgundy in northern Italy, is killed attacking the forces of the pro-Hugh archbishop Lambert of Milan at Novara; his under-age son Burchard (II) is not allowed to inherit Swabia by the centralising king Henry ‘the Fowler’, who appoints his own local nominee Hermann as duke instead; Hermann marries Burchard’s widow Regililda.

927

BRITAIN

(or late 926) The death of Sihtric of York months after his marriage to Athelstan’s sister ends that attempt by Athelstan to secure the adherence of an ally in York, and the late ruler’s brother Guthfrith, king of the Dublin Vikings, arrives from Dublin to stake his claim. Athelstan marches North to take York (which he enters before 12 July). Athelstan captures or receives the surrender of and evicts Guthfrith, showing him politic hospitality as he is sent back to Dublin; the English king annexes York to bring the kingdom’s borders up to Bernicia and Cumbria for the first time.

The king of England cannot be in the North to enforce obedience for more than limited periods, a weakness which claimants to York are to exploit for decades, so Athelstan has to secure stable allies there. Like Edward, he uses his army to overawe the Northern dynasts into alliance. (English sources portray these as submission to English overlordship; the Scots are more equivocal.) Athelstan summons king Constantine of the Scots (acceded 900) and his vassal-king Owain mac Domnhall of Strathclyde (acceded 925) to a ‘summit’ at Eamont Bridge in Cumbria (12 July) where they have to pledge alliance and promise not to support

Guthfrith and other Viking claimants to York; it also seems that they have to agree to suppress paganism.

Athelstan now pursues a similarly aggressive policy against the Welsh princes, a particular threat due to the rule of one family in Gwynedd (Idwal ap Anarawd) and Dyfed/Seissylwg as ‘Deheubarth’ (his cousin Hywel ‘Dda’) which leaves only small Morgannwg/Gwent in SE Wales (Owain) out of this alliance. A military demonstration similar to those in the North takes place immediately after Athelstan’s second march to York, with his court and army arriving in Hereford to meet the summoned Welsh rulers (Hywel, and Owain of Gwent) who do not dare stay away. They are forced to accept his overlordship, pay heavy tribute, and agree to his demarcation of the Southern Anglo-Welsh frontier at the Wye. Hywel in particular is to show signs of learning new methods of displaying and augmenting kingship from Athelstan’s example.

Athelstan marches South to take his army into Cornwall, with William of Malmesbury claiming that he evicts the Cornish from Exeter – if true, implying either an attack across Devon from the Tamar or a plot by extant residents there to revolt. He enters Cornwall and receives the submission of the Cornish; Cornwall is formally annexed to Wessex and a new bishopric created.

IRELAND

War between ‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Donn’, head of the Southern Ui Niall and king of Midhe, and his son-in-law Muircherach ‘Of The Leather Cloaks’, the head of the Northern Ui Niall, king of Ailech, and the most successful recent Gaelic warlord against the Vikings.

FRANCIA

Traditional date of the death of Rollo/Hrolf, first count (not duke) of Normandy, apparently after a sixteen-year reign; succeeded by his son William ‘Longsword’, probably by Poppa of Rennes rather than by the problematic ‘Gisela daughter of king Charles the Simple’. William is apparently soon granted the county of Maine as an ally by king Raoul, or so the Normans later allege.

Armed clash between king Raoul of West Francia and his wife’s sister’s husband, count Herbert of Vermandois, over Herbert seizing the county of Laon for his son Eudes; Herbert is holding the ex-king Charles prisoner at Laon and drives off Raul’s attack by threatening to release Charles and restore him to the throne as his puppet if Raoul does not ‘back off’.

BRITAIN

16 April. Three days after Easter, Athelstan is at Exeter again as attested to by charters: to keep an eye on the Cornish?

King Hywel of Deheubarth goes to Rome on pilgrimage; it may be after this that he sets up the ‘national’ shrine at Menevia/St David’s and the church of the Virgin Mary at Nevern as pilgrimage centres for those enthusiasts unable to venture abroad. (His mother Elen/Helen was possibly called after St Helena, mother of Constantine ‘the Great’, and his interest in the Holy Land may be long-standing; he apparently names sites at Nevern after ones around Jerusalem.)

SPAIN

Mohammed ibn Lubb, the formerly powerful and last surviving Al-Qays dynasty ruler in the upper Ebro region, is attacked in his surviving stronghold of Ayera by his local rival, Hashim the Tujibid of Saragossa, and is rescued by his Christian kinsman king Jimeno of Navarre.

Abd ar Rahman’s ‘vizier’ Ibn al-Mundhir besieges the Andalusian stronghold of Bobastro, once the headquarters of the late rebel Ibn Hafsun (d. 917), and blockades it into submission with a network of fortifications; Hafs, surviving son of Ibn Hafsun, surrenders after around six months and enters Ummayyad service, and Abd ar Rahman has Ibn Hafsun’s body dug up and hung at Cordoba as a warning to rebels.

ITALY

(or 923?) Marozia marries marquis Guy/Guido of Tuscany, a leading foe of the Pope’s ally Hugh of Provence the new ‘king of Italy’, and they plot to overthrow the Pope.

May. Pope John X is deposed and his brother Petrus is murdered in a revolution in Rome instigated by the leading Roman dynast Marozia, whose thugs sneak into Rome to start a riot and attack the Lateran Palace; Leo VI is made Pope and Marozia rules Rome as ‘Senatrix’.

28 June. Death of the nominal ruler of Provence, the hapless king Lewis ‘the Blind’, aged around forty-five; succeeded by his regent and his sister Willa’s husband, count Hugh of Arles. Lewis’ son Constantine (called ‘Charles’ in charters so known to modern historians as ‘Charles Constantine’) is apparently adult but is not allowed to succeed to Provence; it is unclear if this means he is illegitimate, and it is uncertain if he is the son of Lewis’ first marriage to the Byzantine princess Anna or not. Hugh now calls himself ‘king of Italy’ as Lewis’ heir, and hands over Provence (except Arles) to his ally, Lewis’ second wife’s brother king Rudolf II of upper Burgundy – who thus extends his domains from Lyons and the later ‘Franche Comte’ South down the Rhone to the Mediterranean.

December. Death of Pope Leo VI; Stephen VII, priest of St Anastasia, is made Pope as Marozia’s nominee.

SPAIN

16 January. Emir Abd ar Rahman of Cordoba assumes the title of ‘Caliph’ in defiance of both his hereditary enemies, the Abbasid Caliphs of Cordoba, and the ‘heretic’ Fatimid Caliphs of Tunisia. He thus proclaims himself the legitimate Moslem sovereign of the West and revives his Ummayyad ancestors’ universalist claims to authority.

BRITAIN/GERMANY

Embassy from king Henry ‘the Fowler’ to Athelstan, to arrange a marriage to one of Athelstan’s sisters for Henry’s son and heir Otto. One version has it that Athelstan sent two of his sisters back with the embassy for Otto to choose one and he chose Eadgyth; the new bishop Cenwald of Worcester, an ex-monk, escorts the mission and visits various monasteries to collect holy relics for the king; he is at the monastery of St Gall in Switzerland on 15 October for their patron saint’s festival.

GERMANY

Probable date of king Henry and his ally duke Arnulf of Bavaria marching on Bohemia to reassert the dormant claim of the East Francian realm to its overlordship and to secure Bohemia as an ally against the dangerous Magyars to the South; the main ducal residence and ‘capital’, the town of Prague with its fortress of Hradcany, is besieged and duke Vaclav/Wenceslas is forced to seek terms and do homage.

ITALY

Ex-Pope John X is murdered in prison, presumably at Marozia’s behest.

SPAIN

Killing in battle of Mohammed ibn Lubb, the last of the al-Qays dynasty and ruler of Ayera, by his Christian brother-in-law Raymond of Pallars; this leaves only the Tujibids of Saragossa as autonomous Moslem rulers in N Spain holding out against Cordoba (but technically its allies).

FRANCIA

7 October. Death of the imprisoned ex-king Charles (‘the Simple’, or more accurately ‘the Straightforward’) at Laon, aged fifty; his son Louis, aged nine, remains in exile with his mother in her homeland of England at her brother Athelstan’s court.

930 | BRITAIN

3 April. A fortnight before Easter, the grant of a charter to bishop Beornheah of Selsey shows that Athelstan is at Lyminster in Sussex. *29 April.* A Charter for the bishop of Crediton, Devon, shows that Athelstan is at Chippenham in Wiltshire.

Approximate date of the death of king Owain ap Hywel of Morgannwg/Gwent in SE Wales after a reign of over forty years; succeeded by his son Morgan, who reigns into the 970s.

SPAIN

Surrender of the autonomous Moslem dynast Ibn Marwan of Badajoz to Abd ar Rrahman of Cordoba; this secures the latter control of his Western borders.

931 | BRITAIN

23 March. Charters show that Athelstan is at Colchester in Essex.

FRANCIA

King Raoul finally asserts his authority over his most truculent feudatory, his wife's sister's husband count Herbert of Vermandois, by seizing Laon and Rheims (the first the county of Herbert's eldest son, the second the archbishopric of Herbert's second son) from him; Raoul has Herbert's under-age son archbishop Hugh of Rheims deposed and installs the more respectable and appropriately qualified Artald/Artaud.

ITALY

March. Death of Pope Stephen VII; Marozia, ruler of Rome, makes her illegitimate son (?by Pope Sergius III), the cardinal priest of St Maria in Trastevere who is probably in his early twenties, Pope John XI.

Arabs from Provence raid Byzantine Southern Italy, but are pursued home by Byzantine fleet which raids their base, Fraxinetum/Fréjus.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Spring. Pope John confirms the freedom from local lay control and rights to elect its own abbots of the abbey of Cluny in Burgundy, to its new abbot Odo.

SPAIN

29 May. Death of king Jimeno Garces of Navarre/Pamplona; succeeded by his nephew and probable co-ruler, his late elder brother Sancho's son

Garcia Sanchez, under the regency of his mother Toda (aunt of Caliph Abd ar Rahman of Cordoba).

King Alfonso IV of Leon, married to the late king Sancho of Navarre's daughter Oneca, is overthrown in a rebellion by his younger brother Ramiro; he is forced to abdicate after a six-year reign to become a monk at the monastery of St Julian near Leon; succeeded by Ramiro, setting aside his two under-age sons. Ramiro (II)'s wife Urraca dies; he marries Teresa, daughter of the late king Sancho of Navarre and sister of ex-queen Oneca, within a year or so to secure Navarrese help against any plots by Alfonso's faction or by his now marginalised cousins, Fruela's surviving sons Ramiro and Ordono, who around this point have their lands seized.

BRITAIN

May. The royal 'mass-priest' Beornstan succeeds Frithestan as bishop of Winchester.

Wulfstan succeeds Hrothweard as archbishop of York, presumably with Athelstan's agreement; in office to 956.

20 June. Athelstan holds a council and issues grants at King's Worthy, Hampshire; king Hywel of Deheubarth and other Welsh vassal princes are in attendance.

15 July. Athelstan issues a charter at East Wellow, Hampshire.

12 November. Athelstan holds a council at Lifton, Devon; kings Hywel of Deheubarth and Idwal of Gwynedd are required to attend.

932

SPAIN

Abd ar Rahman besieges and secures the surrender of the independent city republic of Toledo, thus restoring his dynasty's control of central Northern Moslem Spain; king Ramiro of Leon fails to lift the siege despite a march South and victory over a Cordoban force at Osma.

Ex-king Alfonso IV of Leon escapes from his monastery to revolt against his brother Ramiro, aided by his sidelined cousins Ramiro and Ordono (sons of the late king Fruela); they are defeated, captured and blinded and Alfonso is put in another monastery.

ITALY

Late summer. Marozia defies Roman opinion by marrying count Hugh of Provence, 'King of Italy' and ruler of Northern Italy, though he is her first husband Guy's half-brother so it is illegal by canon law; he comes to Rome to marry her at the chapel in her residence, Castle St Angelo; *December.* Her son by her earlier marriage to Alberic of Spoleto, Alberic (II), organises a revolt by the Roman crowds after his new stepfather

punched him in the face at a banquet for spilling water on him and besieges them in Castel St Angelo; Hugh escapes down a rope and flees to Lombardy, but Marozia is imprisoned for life and Alberic rules Rome as ‘patrician’ and senator; Pope John XI imprisoned, later released as a puppet.

BRITAIN

9 November. Royal council and charter at Exeter, Devon; *24 December.* Athelstan is at Amesbury, Wiltshire for Christmas.

Approximate date of the appointment of Athelstan ‘Half-King’ as ‘ealdorman’ (i.e. governor) of the East Midlands and East Anglia for Athelstan; he is in power for around a quarter of a century to his retirement in 956.

933

BRITAIN

12 January. Athelstan is at Wilton, South Wiltshire; *26 January.* Athelstan is at Chippenham.

Athelstan’s elder half-brother Edwin, apparently not content to wait for the throne, dies in odd circumstances while fleeing abroad; he is drowned or dies naturally at sea off the Flemish coast and is buried at the nearby monastery of St Bertin. (An account of a visit by English monks to St Bertin in 962 by chronicler Folcuin says that count Adelolf of Flanders had Edwin, drowned while fleeing after a disturbance in England, buried at St Bertin and Athelstan honoured the abbey on that account.)

A later story by William of Malmesbury (c. 1125) claims Edwin was accused of treason and was cast adrift in an open boat without any oars by Athelstan’s order – which was indeed a legal penalty for treachery. Simeon of Durham also says that Athelstan has his brother drowned. Some sort of plot seems to have existed, probably in Wessex.

GERMANY

Early. The Magyars invade Germany again after king Henry refuses to renew paying tribute; *15 March.* They are heavily defeated by him at the battle of Riade in Thuringia, and (annals of Flodoard of Rheims) around 36,000 of the Magyars are killed in the battle or drowned fleeing in the nearby river afterwards.

SPAIN

August. Death at the monastery of Sahagun of the deposed king Alfonso IV of Castile, elder brother of current king Ramiro.

FRANCIA

King Raoul hands over the bishopric of Avranches and the Cotentin peninsula to count/duke William of Normandy; this extends the duchy over 'Lower Normandy' to the Breton frontier.

934

BRITAIN

April, Easter. Date of a dubious charter for the foundation of Milton Abbey in Dorset by Athelstan, who is supposedly now at a council in nearby Dorchester. The foundation is alternatively dated at 932, and William of Malmesbury (c. 1125) claims he founded the abbey in memory of his late brother Edwin (?out of guilt at his death).

Aelfheah, a monk/priest who has been in attendance at court is in Athelstan's favour, succeeds Beornstan as bishop of Winchester.

25 May. Pentecost: Athelstan holds a council meeting in Winchester, probably while planning his Scots expedition. King Hywel of Deheubarth and other Welsh vassals (Idwal of Gwynedd, Morgan son of Owain of Morgannwg, and Tewdr of Brycheiniog/Brecon) are required to attend, i.e. to provide troops for and join his Scots expedition.

7 June. Athelstan is at Nottingham according to a charter; evidently en route to Scotland.

English relations with Scotland become fraught enough for Athelstan to undertake the first West Saxon invasion of Scotland both by land and sea; the fleet probably sails up the East coast from the Thames or Humber to the Firth of Forth. The catalyst seems to have been the Scots king Constantine marrying his daughter to Olaf Guthfrithson, king of Dublin, son of the expelled York ruler Guthfrith, and claimant to York and the Norse settlements in Lancashire/Cumbria.

Probably en route to Scotland or less likely on the way back, Athelstan visits the shrine of St Cuthbert which by this date has been established at Chester-le-Street after decades of wandering. This is presumably the occasion of his giving a valuable book to the shrine, which is portrayed in the first extant picture of an English monarch (now at Corpus Christi College Cambridge).

The English invasion is probably intended to head off a move on York by Constantine which Olaf is expected to aid. The logistics involved and the distance which Athelstan has to travel testify to Athelstan's confidence, and he probably reaches the Forth and/or Fife.

The later Simeon of Durham says that he reached Dunnottar in Angus and his fleet ravages as far as Caithness. An agreement about borders and non-interference in York is reached, and Constantine may have to do homage again and very likely to renounce his Dublin alliance.

13 September. Athelstan is back in the SE Midlands, at Buckingham.

NORWAY

Traditional approximate date of the death of the founding king and unifier of Norway, Harald ‘Finehair’, after a reign of around fifty years, aged possibly in his mid-late seventies. (In reality as opposed to sagas he may only rule Southern Norway.) He is succeeded by his oldest? son, the dynamic but reputedly tyrannical Erik ‘Bloodaxe’.

SPAIN

Abd ar Rahman invades the kingdoms of Leon and Pamplona, recovers the region of Alava from the former and forces king Ramiro of Leon to retreat back to Burgos, and reasserts his overlordship of Pamplona; he forces queen-mother Toda to retire from the regency for her son Sancho Garces.

935

FRANCIA

Uneasy peace is made between king Raoul and his rival, count Herbert of Vermandois; the king has to hand the latter’s confiscated lay abbacy of Soissons and county of Laon back to him.

BOHEMIA

(or possibly 929 as originally thought likelier) 28 *September*. Assassination of the Christian duke (St) Vaclav, aka ‘Good King Wenceslas’, at Stara Boleslav, by agents of his ambitious (pagan) brother Boleslav; he is attacked at a meeting to which his brother has lured him and cut down fleeing to a church, and Boleslav seizes power as duke – possibly more of a ‘nationalist’ revolt against Vaclav’s submission to the kings of Germany than a ‘pagan vs Christian’ clash but seen as the latter in the subsequent legend of Vaclav as the national saint. (The late duke’s remains are translated to St Vitus’ cathedral as a shrine to him in 938 as his popular cult emerges.)

GERMANY

The Diet/council of Erfurt confirms the sole succession to all of the Saxon duchy lands and the kingship of Germany by king Henry’s eldest son by his second marriage, Otto, cutting out his elder half-brother Thankmar and two younger full brothers and so preserving dynastic unity; this ends the usual Francian legal practice of dividing up a realm among all a late ruler’s sons and so aids continued unity.

BRITAIN

21 *December*. Athelstan holds a council and issues land-charters at Dorchester, Dorset. King Hywel of Deheubarth is in attendance.

ITALY

Death of Pope John XI, half-brother and puppet of Alberic of Spoleto; 3 *January* Alberic's candidate, the cardinal priest of St Sixtus, is elected Pope Leo VII. The reforming abbot Odo of Cluny is invited to Rome to reform its religious houses and to negotiate a peace-treaty between Alberic and his stepfather and enemy Hugh of Provence.

Epiphanius the 'Spatharius' leads Byzantine expedition to Southern Italy to threaten Landulf, who evacuates Apulia.

FRANCIA/BITAIN

14 or 15 *January*. Death of king Raoul/Rudolf of Francia; the nobles choose his deposed predecessor king Charles' exiled son Louis as the new king.

Athelstan sends his protégé and possible godson, count Alan of Poher, back to his native Brittany against the occupying Vikings in response to an appeal for help from the Bretons; he may send a fleet with Alan too. The expedition drives out the Vikings and installs Alan as ruler.

Duke Hugh of Francia sends an embassy to his brother-in-law Athelstan to ask for the return of the king's nephew Louis, fifteen- or sixteen-year-old son of the late king Charles, who has been chosen as the next king of Francia. According to later sources they arrive from Boulogne to find Athelstan and Louis at 'Eurich', probably York, in which case Athelstan was probably dealing with an unknown Northern crisis – possibly the death of Ealdred, lord of Bamburgh, or the threat posed by king Constantine of Scots to abandon their alliance. Athelstan agrees to send Louis home; he is escorted to Boulogne to be received by duke Hugh and the nobility, who do homage to him there as king, and then on to Laon to be consecrated king by archbishop Artald of Rheims. One Frankish account says that Athelstan's embassy that escorts Louis home is led by bishop Oda of Ramsbury, later archbishop of Canterbury.

GERMANY

2 *July*. Death of king Henry 'the Fowler' at his new palace at Quedlinburg near the Harz mountains, aged around fifty; he is succeeded as king of Germany and duke of Saxony by his eldest son by his second marriage, Otto.

7 *August*. Anointing and coronation of Otto as king of Germany at the symbolic venue of the palace chapel of Charlemagne at Aachen; the rite is carried out by archbishops Hildebert of Mainz and Wichfrid of Cologne and includes his wife Eadgyth, sister of king Athelstan of England. Dukes Gilbert of Lorraine/'Lotharingia', Eberhard of Franconia, Hermann of Swabia, and Arnulf of Bavaria then serve him food at the coronation banquet as his vassals. His younger brother Henry is not allowed to come

to Aachen and is kept at home in Saxony, probably due to resentment at not having a share of the kingdom.

Duke Eberhard of Franconia attacks the border fortress of Helmern just inside Saxony as its Saxon lord, Bruning, refuses to do homage to him, and he is fined 100 pounds of silver (payable in horses) for this by the royal court. A subsequent royal requirement that his men do the menial task of carrying dogs to the royal court stirs up resentment of Otto which Eberhard uses to help his plans.

937 **BRITAIN**

King Constantine of Scots feels roused to seek allies for a retaliatory attack on England after the 934 invasion, and creates a coalition of ‘Celtic’ and Scandinavian warlords including Olaf Guthfrithson of Dublin and probably the rulers of Man, the Hebrides (Gebeachan), and Strathclyde (Owain). However, Idwal of Gwynedd and Hywel of Deheubarth stand aside, and one or both of them join Athelstan’s army for the campaign as required as vassals – possibly fearing the ambitions of Olaf more than Athelstan. Little is known about the campaign except for Athelstan’s crushing defeat of the invaders at ‘Brunanburh’, a victory lauded with a heroic poem in the ASC. Athelstan is aided in the battle by his (mid-late teens) half-brother Edmund, now presumably his heir. Many of the invading leadership are killed, though Constantine escaped; the latter’s son Cellach is killed. The site has vanished from history but topographical clues have led to attempts to place it, most convincingly at Bromborough in the Wirral or at Brinsworth or Brinkley Wood in South Yorkshire (indicating a seaborne landing in Lancashire in one case, in the Humber estuary in the other; the later John of Worcester and Simeon of Durham both claim the invader sailed into the Humber). The victory secures the security of the English kingdom, but only for Athelstan’s lifetime.

BRITAIN/NORWAY

Possible date (later Norwegian sources) of Athelstan sending his foster-son Haakon, a younger son of the late king Harald of Norway, home in response to appeals from opponents of the current king, his tyrannical half-brother Erik ‘Bloodaxe’. Erik is overthrown in a civil war and Haakon is installed as king.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

(Or 938) Widowed duke Hugh ‘the Great’ of Neustria, count of Paris, marries Hedwig the daughter of king Henry ‘the Fowler’ and sister of king Otto; this is probably aimed at Hugh gaining German support if he challenges his sovereign Louis IV.

14 July. Death of duke Arnulf ‘the Bad’ of Bavaria, ruler since his father Leopold fell in battle against the Magyars in 907; his son Eberhard challenges king Otto; rebellion in Bavaria.

3 December. Death of count/margrave Siegfried of Merseburg, commander of the ‘march’ in South-East Saxony against the Slavs; he is the son of a female cousin of king Otto’s stepmother, the first wife of the late king Henry ‘the Fowler’, and thus Otto’s half-brother Thankmar is his distant kin. Thankmar lobbies for the succession to Merseburg and the command of the ‘mark’, but Otto chooses Siegfried’s younger brother Gero.

SPAIN

Abd ar Rahman invades the autonomous mini-state of Saragossa and forces its ruler Mohammed al-Tujib to submit and become his vassal.

938

ITALY

Byzantines assist unsuccessful revolt against Arabs in Sicily.

BRITAIN/FRANCIA

(Or 937) Death of king Athelstan’s sister Eadhilda, wife of ‘duke’ Hugh ‘the Great’ of Francia. He subsequently marries Hedwig, elder sister of king Otto of Germany, in a move probable aimed at using Otto’s dispute with king Louis IV of Francia over Lotharingia to gain Otto’s help against Louis.

GERMANY

The plotting duke Eberhard of Franconia uses Otto’s jealous half-brother Thankmar, who is angry at not being given the command of the ‘mark’ of Merseburg in the SE of Saxony to fight the Slavs instead of count Gero.

Slavs revolt against Otto and attack Saxony; they are fought off by his lieutenants there, duke Hermann Billung, new commander of the ‘Billung March’ (i.e. the Mecklenberg region and the Baltic coast) to the North and count Gero (of Merseburg, the ‘March of Gero’) to the South.

Duke Eberhard of Franconia and Otto’s half-brother Thankmar are in revolt against him; they capture Otto’s full brother Henry and imprison him at Eresburg, where Thankmar is attacked by indignant loyal citizens. He flees to the sanctuary of St Peter’s church, is arrested as he surrenders (26 July), and shortly afterwards is killed by a lance thrown through the church window by a common soldier. Eberhard surrenders and is briefly imprisoned then pardoned.

Autumn. In a second campaign of the year there, Otto overruns rebel Franconia; he evicts and banishes rebel duke Eberhard and installs the latter’s paternal uncle Berthold (d. 947) as duke instead.

939 **FRANCIA/GERMANY**

Louis of France marries Gerberga (born 914), sister of king Otto of Germany and widow of duke Gilbert of Lotharingia; this probably follows the marriage of his rival duke Hugh ‘the Great’ to Otto’s elder sister Hedwig and so tries to counter this alliance against him.

Louis of Francia attacks duke Hugh ‘the Great’ and his ally William ‘Longsword’ of Normandy; a truce is arranged until June.

Eberhard of Franconia rebels against king Otto of Germany again, this time joined by the latter’s full brother Henry and by the latter’s and Otto’s sister Gerberga’s husband, duke Gilbert of Lotharingia. Otto defeats them at Birten on the Rhine despite probably smaller numbers of troops, but they call on Louis IV for help.

ITALY

14 July. After the death of Leo VII, Stephen VIII is elected Pope as Alberic’s candidate.

SPAIN

Invasion of the Douro valley on the Southern frontier of Leon by Caliph Abd-al-Rahman and his junior ally, governor Abu Yahya of Saragoza; king Ramiro of Leon and his ally king Sancho Garces of Navarre march to intercept him, with lesser feudatories including the rising Southern Leon frontier noble count Fernan Gonzalez of Castile (Sancho’s son-in-law); *19 July–?21 July.* Battle of Simancas, during a solar eclipse. Leon and Navarre defeat the Cordovan army in an epic battle lasting several days, which secures Leon the Douro valley.

FRANCIA/GERMANY

Duke Hugh ‘the Great’ and his ally William of Normandy join Herbert (II) of Vermandois and count Arnulf of Flanders in a league against king Louis. They do homage to Otto of Germany in defiance of Louis. A low-key war follows.

Count Arnulf of Flanders attacks his rival Herluin of Ponthieu and captures his family as he takes Montreuil; they are sent as hostages to Arnulf’s cousin king Athelstan in England.

IRELAND

Attack on Midhe by an alliance of the Irish king of Cashel in Munster, Cellachan ‘Caisil’ (‘of Cashel’) mac Buadachan, and the Vikings of Waterford under ‘Mac Haakon’; they are defeated by the Ui Failge of Leinster.

GERMANY

Rebel dukes Eberhard of Franconia and Gilbert of Lotharingia attack Southwards towards the middle Rhine to ravage loyalist counties; Otto attacks rebel-held Breisach and the rebel army head across the Niederlahngau to cross the Rhine and confront him. The brother counts of Niederlahngau and Reingau follow the rebel army and ambush it during the crossing at Andernach.

2 October. Battle of Andernach: the rebels are defeated, Eberhard is killed, and his ally Gilbert is drowned in the Rhine while fleeing. The rebellion collapses and Otto's brother Henry submits.

BRITAIN

?According to later Norse sagas, Athelstan considers the exiled Norwegian king Erik 'Bloodaxe', who has taken refuge in the Orkneys as their overlord, as his new sub-ruler of York to counter the threat posed by Olaf Guthfrithson in Dublin; if so, this plan is abortive.

On 27 October 939 Athelstan dies unexpectedly at Gloucester. He is probably around forty-five, still unmarried, and leaves an adult and capable heir in the elder son of Edward's last marriage, Edmund (his fellow-commander at Brunanburh). Notably Athelstan is buried at Malmesbury Abbey in Wiltshire, the shrine of St Aldhelm (d. 705) the first bishop of Western Wessex, not in Winchester – indicating his dislike of a hostile capital which backed his half-brothers in 924–5? The news causes a revolt in York in favour of the exiled family of Sihtric and Guthfrith, which spreads to the 'Danelaw' before Edmund can halt it militarily; possibly the onset of winter delays a West Saxon response. The revolt is at least not opposed by archbishop Wulfstan, despite it being on behalf of a pagan Scandinavian – a sign of York elite autonomism and resistance to Wessex? To this extent Athelstan's achievement is ephemeral, and his kingdom is only permanently reunited in 954.

940

BRITAIN

Edmund is cautious in marching North on York, and in spring Olaf Guthfrithson marches on South from York into the Danish-settled 'Five Boroughs' of the East Midlands, probably first to Nottingham with his fleet sailing up the Trent. He has enough support, or his army's ravaging intimidates enough of the local leadership, for him to sack the main English/Mercian base at Tamworth; Edmund then arrives with his army and besieges the invaders in Leicester, a town settled heavily by the Scandinavians since the 870s. Olaf and archbishop Wulfstan escape a dangerous blockade by night as their supplies run low, and Edmund is unable to bring them to battle. A 'stand-off' ends with an agreement, negotiated by Wulfstan and archbishop Wulfhelm of Canterbury, whereby Olaf accepts baptism as Edmund's godson (the usual terms for

a West Saxon treaty with a Scandinavian warlord) but allows him to retain York and the ‘Five Boroughs’. The imbalance of the terms in Olaf’s favour suggests that Edmund fears widespread Danish desertion to the invaders; Olaf is a more experienced commander with hardened Dublin Vikings in his army but Edmund may have underestimated the mutual antipathy of Eastern England’s Danes and the invading Dubliners. His caution surrenders all that his father and brother have won since 915, and this possibly includes East Anglia too.

FRANCIA/ITALY

Archbishop Artald of Rheims has his episcopal city seized by his deposed predecessor Hugh’s father, count Herbert of Vermandois, and his ally duke Hugh ‘the Great’; he is deposed and his predecessor is restored. Pope Stephen agrees to send Hugh the ‘pallium’ of office, probably to satisfy Herbert’s main local strategic demand and so lure him away from aiding Hugh ‘the Great’ in attacking king Louis.

941 GERMANY

Easter. Abortive plot to murder Otto during the Easter celebrations at the royal palace and abbey of Quedlinburg; Otto’s brother Henry is involved and he is placed under guard.

BRITAIN

Olaf Guthfrithson is killed raiding Bernicia within eighteen months of his seizure of York; his cousin Olaf Sihtricson, son of the York ruler of the early 920s, then returns from Dublin to seize York, but he is less effective a ruler.

Probable date of the birth of Edmund’s first son, Edwy/Eadwig, by his first wife Aelfgifu/Elgiva.

Death of archbishop Wulfhelm of Canterbury; succeeded by Oda, bishop of Ramsbury, who is the son of a Danish immigrant in the 866 invasion and is possibly a ‘fighting bishop’ since some accounts have him taking part in the battle of Brunanburh.

IRELAND

Ragnall Guthfrithson, brother of and probably governor of Dublin for Olaf Guthfrithson, may succeed him in Dublin; if Olaf Sihtricson is governor of Dublin for Olaf Guthfrithson this ends with his departure for York and one of the Guthfrithson brothers succeeds him. Within a year control has passed to another brother, Blakari (‘Blacaire’ in Gaelic) Guthfrithson. The rule of the Isle of Man seems to pass to one ‘Gebeachan’ of unclear origin, possibly already Olaf’s vassal-ruler there in the 930s.

King Muirchertach ‘of the Leather Cloaks’ of Ailech, head of the Northern Ui Niall, clashes with his late wife Flann (d. 940)’s father, ‘High King’ Donnchad ‘Donn’ of the Southern Ui Niall, and marches across his kingdom of Midhe burning and looting in a prestigious ‘circuit of Ireland’ that leads him on to ravage Munster. (Normally only a ‘High King’ would be able to achieve this ‘circuit’, so it is probably an intended insult to Donnchad.) Muirchertach captures king Cellach of Cashel in Munster and deports him as a hostage, later handing him over to Donnchad as they reconcile.

ITALY

Byzantine fleet and king Hugh of Italy destroy Arab pirate base at Fréjus on Riviera, but Hugh refrains from killing survivors and signs treaty.

Magyar raiders reach the gates of Rome.

GERMANY

25 December. Official reconciliation of king Otto and his treacherous younger brother Henry, at Frankfurt.

942

BRITAIN

Spring. Edmund invades and recovers the ‘Five Boroughs’ from Olaf Sihtricson.

Death in battle of king Idwal ap Anarawd (acceded 916) of Gwynedd/Powys at the hands of Edmund, probably in an English invasion of Gwynedd to punish him for his recent alliance with Olaf Guthfrithson; his son Elisedd is also killed. He is succeeded by his cousin Hywel, already king of Deheubarth, and his sons Iago and Idwal are set aside. This effectively unifies all of Wales except Morgannwg/Gwent, which could be a threat to England, but Edmund does not respond. Possibly he trusts the pacific intentions of the ageing Hywel, his late brother Athelstan’s vassal and frequent court attendee.

Probable date (otherwise 943) of the abdication of king Constantine of Scots after a reign of forty-two years; he is aged well over seventy (his father died in 877) but this may be forced by his cousin and heir, Malcolm mac Aed, who succeeds to the throne. Constantine retires as a monk to the monastery of St Andrews in Fife, of which he is a major patron.

IRELAND

Death of king Faelan mac Muiredach of Leinster, head of the ‘Ua Dunchada’ sub-dynasty of the ‘Ui Dunlainge’, after a twenty-five-year reign; succeeded by his son Lorcan.

ITALY/FRANCIA

Pope Stephen sends bishop Damasus as Legate to Francia to order the rebel nobles and clerics to back the embattled king Louis IV.

Plot to overthrow Alberic as ruler of Rome, which is instigated or joined by Marozia and her sister Theodora; one of the latter's daughters informs the 'senator' and he has the male plotters flogged or executed.

Death of Pope Stephen VIII, reputedly after being mutilated by Alberic's men in revenge for his involvement in the recent plot; *30 October* Marinus II, cardinal priest of St Cyriacus, is elected as Alberic's candidate.

Peter Candiano becomes Doge of Venice.

FRANCIA

December. Count Arnulf of Flanders has his regional rival count/duke William 'Longsword' of Normandy assassinated at a meeting between their representatives on an island in the Somme during a truce in their 'on-off' war; William is succeeded by his son Richard I, aged around ten.

943

IRELAND

26 February. King Muirchertach 'of the Leather Cloaks', head of the Northern Ui Niall of Cenel nEoghan and king of Ailech, is killed in battle near Armagh by Blakari/Blacaire Guthfrithson, Viking ruler of Dublin, who sacks Armagh next day. This ends Muirchertach's probable expectation of succeeding his ex-father-in-law and rival Donnchad 'Donn' as 'High King'.

Death of king Lorcan mac Faelan of Leinster after a one-year reign; succeeded by a cousin from an obscure branch of their 'Ua Dunchada' dynasty, Broen mac Maelmorda, who reigns for four years.

FRANCIA

23 February. Death of count Herbert of Vermandois, principal magnate of NE Francia and a descendant in the female line of Charlemagne; succeeded by his son Hugh. This decreases the strength of Herbert's ally Hugh 'the Great's' faction against king Louis.

BRITAIN

Edmund now has the confidence to march into Northumbria, and Olaf Sihtricson submits and accepts baptism as an English ally; archbishop Wulfstan probably negotiates the compromise which reaffirms the position of Christianity in York but keeps it autonomous from Wessex. Edmund has the caution to rule York via a Scandinavian vassal rather

than attempt to do so directly as Athelstan had done, but it remains chronically unstable.

Olaf's cousin Ragnall Guthfrithson arrives from Dublin to depose him within months, backed by Wulfstan as Olaf has returned to paganism.

Probable date of the birth of Edmund's younger son Edgar, by his first wife Elgiva/Aelfgifu; Edgar may be aged thirty (the minimum canonical age to become a priest) when he is anointed as king with special priestly rites in 973.

?*Autumn*. Ragnall also reaches terms with Edmund and accepts baptism from him, sponsored by Wulfstan and at risk of invasion by Olaf who has escaped from York Northwards to hold out with allies and is at large in Strathclyde with king Donald/Domnhall.

The hagiography of St Dunstan (born c. 909 at Baltonsborough, Somerset), nephew of the late archbishop Aethelhelm/Athelm of Canterbury, who Edmund makes abbot of Glastonbury c. 943, has the king only recognising the saint's abilities belatedly and granting him the abbey out of gratitude for divine preservation when his horse bolts in the Cheddar Gorge and nearly throws him off a cliff.

944

BRITAIN

Edmund is able to take York and kill Ragnall Guthfrithson; York is annexed and the full kingdom of Athelstan in 927–39 is restored.

Possible date of the death of Edmund's first wife Aelfgifu/Elgiva, mother of his sons Edwy and Edgar; she is a major benefactor of Shaftesbury Abbey and is later popularly regarded as a saint. He then marries Aethelthryth; it is possible that Edgar's fostering by the governor of the East Midlands and East Anglia, Athelstan 'Half-King', and his wife commences now rather than after Edmund's death in 946.

IRELAND

Death of 'High King' Donnchad 'Donn'; succeeded by his sister's son Congalach 'Cnogba' (i.e. of the fortress of Cnogba) mac Mael Mitha, king of Brega in Western Midhe and head of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' – maternal grandson of 'High King' Flann Sinna and descendant in the tenth generation of sub-dynastic founder Aed Slaine. His main involvement over his twelve-year reign is warfare with Viking Dublin. His choice as 'High King' is probably due to the death in battle earlier of Donnchad's expected heir, king Muirchertach 'of the Leather Cloaks' of Ailech, head of the 'Cenel nEoghan' of Ulster who would normally have priority over the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' in the line of succession; the succession may be disputed as the 'Annals of Innisfallen' also refer to his rival Ruadhri ua Canannain, king of the 'Cenel Conaill' in Ulster (another usually sidelined sub-dynasty) and nephew of Donnchad's first wife, as 'High King' in the late 940s.

Coingalach subsequently sacks Dublin, humiliating its Viking ruler Blacaire who is deposed by his people in favour of his brother Olaf ‘Cuaran’ (of the Sandals) Sihricson, ex-ruler of York.

Flaithbertach mac Inmainen, king of Munster from c. 909 (and abbot of Slattery Island), is succeeded by the obscure prince Lorcan mac Coinligain, whose date of death or deposition is unclear but probably pre-954.

SPAIN

Dismissal and arrest of count Fernan Gonzalez of Castile by his sovereign, Ramiro of Leon, as unreliable; his lands are given to the king’s younger son Sancho.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

September. Hugh of Provence’s bastard daughter Bertha arrives at Constantinople to marry Constantine VII and Helena’s son Romanus; renamed ‘Eudocia’. Meanwhile Hugh’s rival ‘senator’ Alberic has sent his envoy Benedict of the Campagna to Constantinople in search of an imperial bride for himself, unsuccessfully.

20 December. Constantine and Stephen Lecapenus, aided by Marianus Argyrus, ‘protospatharius’ Basil Petinus and Manuel Curticius, arrest their ailing father Romanus I in apartments at Palace and send him to the island of Prote as monk; angry crowds demonstrate in favour of Constantine VII until the latter’s wife Helena Lecapena secures her brothers’ acceptance of him as senior Emperor.

945

ITALY

Berengar of Ivrea, Italian exile, returns with popular support to capture king Hugh and rule Lombardy and the Romagna in his name as chief councillor. Hugh agrees to leave Italy and retire to Provence. Among the elite defectors from Hugh’s Italian backers are the noble Lombard family of the future chronicler Liutprand of Cremona, who is at the time a chorister at Hugh’s court.

BYZANTIUM

Constantine and Stephen Lecapenus fail to lure Constantine VII to dinner-party; *27 January* escorted by Helena, the senior Emperor arrests them and sends them into exile, stopping en route at Prote where Romanus Lecapenus sarcastically welcomes them; Stephen is sent first to Proconnessus, later to Rhodes and Mytilene, and Constantine first to Thasos and then to Samothrace.

BRITAIN/IRELAND

Edmund invades Cumbria, currently under the control of Strathclyde (ruled by junior princes of the Scots kingdom) and its king Donald (Domnhall). Donald is defeated, probably at the pass of ‘Dunmail’s Rise’ between Grasmere and Thirlmere which is named after him, and Edmund occupies Northern Cumbria and Carlisle. Domnhall has to come to terms and hands over Cumbria or else is killed in the battle; Olaf Sihtricson, his ally, flees to Dublin to take over its kingship. Edmund now restores the unity of his brother’s full realm after five or six years and extends it to the Solway Firth, or possibly the later Cumberland–Westmorland county boundary if Strathclyde retains part of Cumbria.

In Dyfed, king Hywel (now ruling all of Wales except Gwent/Morgannwg) holds a ‘national’ assembly of councillors and clerics from all of his lands at Whitland near Carmarthen and issues a new law-code, collecting and clarifying and where possible co-ordinating the laws of all his kingdoms into one unified, written code. His main legal adviser is Blegyrwyd; the unusual move represents a nascent move towards administrative unity as well as easier justice for all.

In Ireland, the new ‘High King’ Congalach, ruler of Brega in Midhe, allies with Olaf ‘Cuaran’ Sihtricson of Dublin against his main Ui Niall rival, Ruadhri the king of the ‘Cenel Conaill’ in Ulster; they defeat him in battle in the territory of the minor ‘Criuthne’ sub-kingdom of the ‘Conaille Muirtheimne’ in county Lowth.

FRANCIA/GERMANY/ITALY

Duke Hugh ‘the Great’ arranges for king Louis to be seized by minor local allies and handed over to him; however, Otto of Germany has other priorities than attacking Francia as Hugh’s alternative candidate for the throne, and he joins Pope Marinus to persuade Hugh to negotiate with Louis and release him in return for a pardon. Otto then backs Louis up at his sister’s, Louis’ wife Gerberga, appeal in planning to regain control of the Picardy/Artois region from the Vermandois dynasty.

946

ITALY

Death of Pope Marinus II; *10 May* Alberic organises election of his choice as successor, Agapitus II.

BRITAIN

28 May. King Edmund is stabbed in a brawl at his hall at Pucklechurch near Bath, apparently by accident when he recognises a thief he has earlier exiled illegally attending the feast, the man resists arrest, and Edmund comes to the aid of his servants. He is probably aged twenty-four or five. His two sons, Edwy (by Aelfleda) and Edgar (by Aelgiva/ Aelfgifu), are

under-age so his surviving brother Eadred succeeds him. It is recorded that Eadred, now aged around twenty-four, suffered from a chronic stomach-condition and was only able to swallow food with difficulty, though it is unclear if this was a lifelong problem or only developed during his reign. This did not affect his ability as a vigorous warrior who preserved his half-brother Athelstan's new kingdom of England. He quickly marches North to York to secure the submission of Wulfstan and the other magnates. It appears that the distrusted Wulfstan is removed to the Thames valley and has to run his see from Dorchester-upon-Thames under control from the court in Winchester, as he witnesses documents there in future.

FRANCIA

King Louis, backed by troops led by Otto of Germany, besieges Laon unsuccessfully. They then attack Rheims and besiege the 'usurper' archbishop Hugh, of the hostile Vermandois dynasty, until he surrenders to save himself from a threat of possible mutilation. Hugh is deposed again and his predecessor Artald is re-installed in his cathedral by archbishops Robert of Trier and Frederick of Mainz, who were brought along by Otto to offer German Church backing to Louis.

947

BRITAIN

Despite their promises in 946, the magnates of York led by archbishop Wulfstan revolt in favour of the Norwegian ex-king Erik 'Bloodaxe', now living in the Orkneys as overlord of jarls Arnkel and Erlend. Erik arrives with an Orkney army to assume the throne. Eadred invades Deira; eventually the leading men surrender and Erik flees, but the region's allegiance remains insecure whenever there is no English army there to enforce it.

IRELAND

Tuathal mac Ugaire succeeds his cousin Broen mac Maelmorada of the 'Ua Dunchada' dynasty as king of Leinster; reigns for eleven years.

Raudhri ua Canannain, king of the 'Cenel Conaille' branch of the Ui Niall in Ulster, defeats his Ui Niall rival, 'High King' Congalach (also king of Brega and head of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine'), and Olaf 'Cuaran' the Viking ruler of Dublin, in battle at Slane on the banks of the River Boyne; Olaf suffers heavy losses and is subsequently replaced in Dublin by his brother and predecessor Blacaire.

FRANCIA

Ex-archbishop Hugh of Rheims and his ally Hugh 'the Great' besiege Rheims for eight days but cannot storm it and withdraw; Artald holds onto his see.

SPAIN

The disgraced count Fernan Gonzalez of Castile is restored to his lands by his sovereign king Ramiro of Leon after a three-year imprisonment; his daughter Urraca is married to the king's elder son and heir Ordonio to tie him to the dynasty.

Abdication of count Sunyer of Barcelona and Girona; his co-ruler (since 945) and son Borrell II succeeds him, with the latter's brother Miro as junior co-ruler.

GERMANY

23 *November*. Death of duke Berthold of Bavaria; king Otto, his appointer, takes over the duchy for his family.

948

FRANCIA/GERMANY

Artald of Rheims appeals to the Pope to negotiate with Hugh 'the Great' and his allies and stop the attempts to remove him in favour of Hugh of Vermandois.

Spring. Papal legate Marinus is sent to Germany; *June*. He presides over the synod of Ingelheim with king Otto and the visiting king Louis IV of France, and orders the latter's challenger duke Hugh 'the Great' to submit to and recognise Louis as king, ending his recognition of Otto instead. Archbishop Artald of Rheims attends; his expelled rival Hugh does not turn up, but sends a document 'proving' his rights to it which is condemned as a forgery; Hugh is excommunicated and his ally duke Hugh 'the Great' is told to submit to Louis or face the same threat. He ignores it and is excommunicated, whereupon he calls on Norman/Viking help to ravage the estates of the archbishopric of Rheims.

King Otto of Germany's unreliable younger brother Henry is married off to Judith, the niece and heiress of duke Berthold of Bavaria (d. 947) and daughter of his late elder brother duke Arnulf (d. 937), and succeeds as duke.

?Death of duke Hermann of Swabia; he is succeeded by his daughter Ida's husband, Otto's son (by Eadgyth of England) Liudolf.

BRITAIN/IRELAND

Archbishop Wulfstan and his faction invite back former ruler of York, Olaf Sihtricson, from Dublin – possibly as he is a Christian so Wulfstan thinks he will be more acceptable to the local Christians and to Eadred.

Eadred marches North but agrees to recognise Olaf as ruler provided that he becomes his ally and keeps out Erik.

The fact that Olaf is eager to come over from Dublin is a result of his deposition there after his defeat in 947, by his brother Blacaire; Blacaire is now killed in battle by his former ally, 'High King' Congalach the ruler of Brega in Midhe, and succeeded by their brother Gofraith/Guthfrith.

SPAIN

Count Sunifred of Urgel, uncle of count Borrell of Barcelona, dies and bequeaths his county to him.

ITALY

Death of king Hugh (of Provence) of Italy, ruler of Lombardy; succeeded by his son by his second marriage, Lothar, aged nineteen or twenty, under control of count Berengar of Ivrea.

949 FRANCIA/GERMANY

Hugh 'the Great' besieges Soissons and continues his ravaging of royal and Rheims church lands; a synod of the German bishops at Trier led by legate Marinus repeats his excommunication.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

The young Lombard diplomat and future chronicler Liutprand of Cremona is appointed as the ambassador from Berengar II of Ivrea, now rival ruler of Lombardy with Lothar II, to Constantinople. This embassy is hastily arranged by Berengar to go – cheaply – with an embassy to Emperor Constantine VII by his patron Otto of Germany, and it is Liutprand's first diplomatic post. He leaves Pavia (2 August) to join Otto's ambassador Liutpred at Venice and take ship for Constantinople; they sail (24 August) and arrive at the city (7/8 September). Liutprand is impressed by the grand ceremonial, but his stingy employer has not sent appropriate gifts to match Otto's so he presents his own gifts paid for by his stepfather instead, including weapons and cauldrons plus some eunuchs for his household.

950 FRANCIA

Early. Hugh 'the Great', abandoned by Otto of Germany, has to submit to the Church and king Louis IV and do homage as his loyal vassal; he hands over Laon to the king.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

Death of king Lothar II of Italy, ruler of Lombardy, in his mid-twenties, reputedly of poison; full local power passes to Berengar II of Ivrea who is suspected of the murder. Lothar's widow Adelaide, sister of Conrad

of Burgundy, who her biographer Odilo of Cluny says Berengar has imprisoned at Como but she escapes and hides in the local marshes and later at a nearby fortress, possibly Canossa; she goes to Germany to appeal to her brother's overlord king Otto for help.

Palm Sunday. Berengar's ambassador Liutprand attends a grand reception at the Sacred Palace in Constantinople for the annual presentation of gifts to leading officials. Liutprand shamelessly cadges a gift of cash from the Emperor then resents it was not equivalent to a huge official's present. (He describes the embassy in his later book 'Antapodosis' but breaks off at this point.) He returns to Italy after Easter, having learnt Greek to add to his usefulness as a translator in Italian/German politics.

GERMANY/DENMARK

Otto invades Jutland and forces the aged king Gorm 'the Old' and his heir Harald 'Bluetooth' to become his vassal allies and convert to Christianity. This is followed by Gorm's death within the next year or so, after a reign of up to fifty years.

BRITAIN

Death of Hywel 'Dda' ('the Good'), ruler of Dyfed/Deheubarth since 905 and of Gwynedd/Powys since 942; he is succeeded in Deheubarth by his eldest son Owain, assisted by his younger brothers and co-ruler Rhodri (d. 953) and Edwin (d. 954). The rule of Gwynedd/Powys is however seized by the sons of the late king Idwal, Iago and Idwal 'Ieuaf', who thus break up the unity of Hywel's kingdom.

SPAIN

Death of king Ramiro II of Leon; succeeded by his eldest son by his second wife Teresa of Navarre, Ordonio (III), who is probably in his mid-late teens and is married to Urraca, daughter of count Fernan Gonzalez of Castile. The latter, the most powerful feudatory of the kingdom and married to princess Sancha of Navarre (sister of king Garcia Sanchez who rules from 925–70 and widow and heiress of the count of Alava), is denied enough power by his son-in-law so he backs the latter's rebellious half-brother Sancho 'the Fat' instead in a civil war. Ordonio wins.

Count Borrell of Barcelona sends an embassy to Cordoba to reaffirm his vassalship and alliance with the Caliph to fend off raids.

GERMANY/ITALY

Otto's son duke Liudolf of Swabia invades Northern Italy to attack Berengar of Ivrea, but is lent no help by his father Otto whose own planned campaign is thus anticipated; Otto's marriage to the refugee

heiress Adelaide of Italy/Provence is seen by Liudolf as a threat to his chances of the German succession and the two are estranged. Liudolf is opposed by his uncle duke Henry of Bavaria, who also has ambitions in Italy, and as Henry's troops arrive he has to go home.

September. Otto invades Lombardy to assist Lothar II's widow Adelaide, who he has just married; he sends envoys to Pope Agapitus for the Imperial Crown but Alberic forces him to refuse it. Instead Otto is crowned as king of Italy at Pavia.

IRELAND

Killing in battle in Munster of the sub-king of Thomond (NW Munster), Kennetig mac Lorcan the father of the later 'High King' Brian Borumha, by his neighbour Cellachan 'Caisil' mac Buadachain, head of the 'Eoganacht Caisil' dynasty of Southern Munster and by this date king of all Munster with or in succession to Lorcan mac Coinligain. He is succeeded by his probably eldest surviving son Mathgamhain, two other sons already having died fighting their dynastic foe Cellachan in 944; Brian is aged around ten.

Death of king Gofraith/Guthfrith Sihtricson of Dublin of disease; inter-regnum.

952

BRITAIN

Olaf 'Cuaran' Sihtricson is expelled from York by a revolt headed by archbishop Wulfstan, who invites Erik 'Bloodaxe' back from Orkney to take over. Now or in 953/4 jarls Arnkel and Erlend of Orkney bring troops to York to help Erik resist any attacks by Eadred from the South.

IRELAND

Olaf returns to Dublin, where the throne is vacant after the death of his brother Gofraith/Guthfrith, and resumes rule there; he subsequently allies with king Domnhall ua Niall of Ailech, head of the Northern Ui Niall, against the encroaching power of Leinster and marries Domnhall's sister Dunflaith, widow of king Domnhall of the Southern Ui Niall 'Clann Colmainn'.

FRANCIA

Death of duke Hugh of Burgundy; succeeded by his sister Engelberga's husband, Gilbert.

ITALY/GERMANY

Fatimids raid Calabria again.

Summer. Berengar of Ivrea comes to Augsburg to do homage to Otto as his overlord and fend off a threat of invasion. At around this point his diplomat Liutprand defects from his service to Otto's and goes to Germany for better career prospects.

SPAIN

King Ordone III of Leon divorces his wife Urraca of Castile and marries, secondly, Elvira; this involves confrontation with her father count Fernan Gonzalez of Castile, who has been backing Ordone's rebel brother Sancho.

BRITAIN

Senior king Iago ap Idwal of Gwynedd and his younger brother Idwal attack their cousin Owain of Deheubarth's realm but are driven out.

Unsuccessful campaign by king Malcolm of Scots in Bernicia, probably trying to secure it from its Anglian rulers while the North is in turmoil with Scandinavians and Wessex fighting over York; death of his predecessor Constantine as a monk at St Andrews, aged from seventy-four (his father died in 877) to around eighty.

953

GERMANY

Feeling threatened by the possibility of his father Otto's children by his new wife Adelaide of Italy/Provence usurping his role as heir, Otto's son by his late first wife, Liudolf, plans to ambush his father near Mainz on a tour of Franconia; the plot is revealed, but Liudolf refuses to confess and betray his friends and joins them and his brother-in-law duke Conrad of Lotharingia in flight to Mainz which Otto besieges. A revolt against Otto's brother duke Henry follows in Bavaria, and when the rebels take Regensburg Liudolf flees to join them; he is besieged there by Otto, but his ally Conrad surrenders rather than be outlawed as a traitor.

Otto starves Regensburg out, and the Magyars invade which rallies the Bavarians to Otto's side; Liudolf is accused of inviting the Magyars in, and (early winter 953) comes to his father on a hunt in Thuringia after the Magyars' defeat to surrender.

954

GERMANY

Liudolf of Swabia and Conrad of Lotharinga are deprived of office but are allowed to keep their estates. Otto gives Lotharingia to his younger brother, archbishop Bruno of Cologne (appointed 953).

BRITAIN

Eadred's invasion of York is successful. York submits, and its ruler Erik flees North across the Pennines, heading for the Solway Firth. He is

ambushed and killed en route on Stainmore, in SE Cumbria, by ‘earl’ Maccus the Anglian lord of Bamburgh and ruler of Bernicia, who is made earl of Northumbria by Eadred; Erik’s allies Arnkel and Erlend also fall in the battle so the rule of their jarldom of Orkney passes to their younger brother, Thorfinn ‘Skull-Splitter’. Eadred then captures the fleeing archbishop Wulfstan of York in Lothian and deports him South, requiring him to reside in Southern Mercia under his control rather than deposing him so as to avoid resentment. This time Eadred is using the local Angles of Bernicia to keep the Anglo-Danes in York under control rather than an untrustworthy Viking ruler, and this plan works long-term as the Bamburgh dynasty occupy the earldom for generations. The kingdom of England is permanently reunited, but Eadred is unable to enjoy his status long as his health starts to decline.

King Owain of Deheubarth invades Gwynedd to punish his cousins, king Iago ap Idwal and his younger brother Idwal, but is defeated in battle at Llanwrst and has to go home; this probably ends the chance of Deheubarth restoring its rule of Gwynedd/Powys in 942–60 by force.

Death in battle of king Malcolm of Scots after a probably twelve-year reign, probably aged in his sixties; succeeded by his cousin and predecessor Constantine’s son Indulf in a rotation of the kingship between the lines of Cinaed mac Alpains’ sons. Malcolm’s son Dubh (Duff) becomes heir in turn.

IRELAND

Death of king Cellachan ‘Caisil’ of Munster, head of the ‘Eoganacht Caisil’ sub-dynasty; succeeded by Mael Fathardaig mac Flann mac Donnchad, grandson of the king who died in 888.

ITALY

31 August. Death of ‘patrician’ Alberic II of Rome of malaria, having made the nobility and clergy swear to elect his bastard son Octavian as next Pope; Octavian succeeds to temporal power in the city.

FRANCIA

30 September. Death of Louis IV of France at Rheims, after a serious injury caused by falling from his horse nearby while chasing after a wolf causes an existing condition of elephantiasis to flare up; he is thirty-four. His thirteen-year-old son Lothar succeeds under the regency of his widow Gerberga, Otto of Germany’s sister. Hugh ‘the Great’, his leading feudal vassal, recognises him as king and helps to arrange his coronation – possibly in return for a ‘trade-off’ of no interference in his plan to secure the heiress of Burgundy for his younger son Otto.

Birth of Otto's son by Adelaide, Otto (II), who is presumed to be his father's heir in place of his half-brother the disgraced Liudolf, ex-duke of Swabia.

August. The Magyars under their prince Tacsony's military lieutenant ('horka') Bulcsu invade Bavaria and besiege Augsburg; bishop Ulrich leads the defence and Otto hurries to the rescue with an army of one contingent of his own Saxons (probably reduced by the need to defend their frontier against restive Slavs and the distance for their Northern troops to travel in time for the battle), a larger? force of three contingents of Bavarians, two contingents of Swabians led by duke Burchard, one contingent of Franconians, and a force of allied Bohemians led by duke Boleslav. Each contingent is estimated at around 1,000 men and the total Ottonian army at around 8,000; Otto leads the Bavarians as their duke, his next brother Henry, is ill and Otto's disgraced son-in-law, ex-duke Conrad of Lotharingia, also comes to help him.

8 *August.* Final Magyar assault on the East gate of Augsburg, driven back by bishop Ulrich at the head of his men; 9 *August.* The Magyars pull back as the advance-guard of Otto's army arrives at Augsburg.

10 *August.* Battle of Lechfeld, on the river Lech close to Augsburg: Otto faces anywhere from around 10,000 to (less likely) 30,000 Magyars; Otto is in the centre of his troops, next to the Bavarians, with the Franconian contingent under Conrad to his right and the Swabians to his left; the Bohemians defend the baggage-train to the rear. The Magyars attack the centre but some then sweep on past Otto to the baggage-train to rout the Bohemians, while the Swabians on the German left wing are enveloped by the rest of the main Magyar attack and retreat back into the centre towards Otto. Otto calls in Conrad from the right wing to rescue the Bohemians and then take the Magyars attacking the Swabians from the rear; Otto's men defeat the Magyars, who are reliant on their archers and are pushed back as the German lines fail to break. The Magyars stage a feigned retreat, but as they turn are unable to hold the advancing Germans who are in a compact and unbreakable line; the Magyars break and flee, and are caught up and slaughtered at the nearby river-crossings over the next couple of days as they straggle back Eastwards to Hungary; Otto has had these crossings protected by timber palisades to hold up the Magyars and orders his men to press on remorselessly and kill the enemy stragglers not relax after the battle as usual. Perhaps 1,000 Magyars fall in the battle and 2–3000 more in the retreat, as the locals join in attacking them; the only significant German casualty is Conrad who is hit in the throat by an arrow after he takes his throat-protecting 'plate' off too soon.

This victory decisively ends the Magyar threat to Germany and consolidates Otto's self-declared role as the champion of Christendom and

heir to Charlemagne. He is apparently hailed as ‘Emperor’ by his men on the battlefield.

SPAIN

August. Death of king Ordone III of Leon, probably in his early twenties; his infant son by his second wife Elvira, Vermudo, is set aside in favour of his ambitious ex-rebel adult younger brother, the overweight Sancho (‘the Fat’). This briefly restores the influence of the latter’s ambitious backer count Ferman Gonzalez of Castile, semi-autonomous leading dynast among the nobles, but he and the king later quarrel.

NORWAY

Traditional date of the second major invasion of Norway by the exiled sons of the late king Erik ‘Bloodaxe’, led by Gamle and Harald ‘Grey-cloak’, to try to depose their uncle king Haakon ‘the Good’. They are defeated at the battle of Rastarkalv in the Romdal region; later sagas have Haakon win against the mixed exile/Orkney/Danish army of the invaders by a trick, placing his watch-fires scattered along a high ridge so the enemy think he has more troops than in reality and panic. The Danes retreat to their ships, and Haakon sends men ahead to float the latter off before they arrive; he then routs the disordered attackers on the beach. Gamle is probably killed, leaving Harald as the king’s main challenger.

BRITAIN

23 November. King Eadred dies at Frome, Somerset, after a nine-and-a-half-year reign, aged probably thirty-three or thirty-four. He is succeeded by his late brother Edmund’s elder son Edwy/Eadwig, who is around fourteen. According to one version of the ASC he was supposed to succeed only to Wessex and his younger brother Edgar was designated for Mercia and Northumbria, but the latter was judged too young to rule so Edwy was given the entire kingdom until Edgar’s majority. Edwy is only around fourteen and little is known of his reign; despite his youth his accession saw no renewed challenge to the kingdom’s unity. Unfortunately, our main source for the reign is the biography (c. AD 1000) of St Dunstan, who fell out with Edwy and was exiled. Their quarrel supposedly commenced at the coronation at Kingston-upon-Thames, when Edwy left the coronation banquet early and Dunstan found him in compromising circumstances in a side-chamber with an immoral lady, later identified as his fiancée Aelfgifu, and according to one account her mother (Athelgifu) too. Sulky at being forced to return to his duties by Dunstan and bishop Cynesige, once he had married Aelfgifu the spiteful teenage king later lets his wife talk him into exiling Dunstan and his partisans. In reality there may well have been political struggles at court and Aelfgifu, who has powerful kin but is vulnerable to Church attempts to

nullify her marriage as she was related to her husband, had every reason to fear the sternly moralist abbot. The exact degree of these 'cousins' relationship is unclear; the new queen had a brother called Aethelweard according to charter evidence of her later donations, and he may have been the chronicler of that name who was great-grandson of king Aethelred I (d. 871).

ITALY

Death of Pope Agapitus II; 16 *December* the debauched young Octavian, bastard son of Alberic II and probably aged under twenty, is elected Pope John XII under his late father's arrangements. He is accused by the cleric and writer Liutprand of Cremona of virtually running a brothel in the Lateran thanks to his horde of mistresses.

956

ENGLAND

Probable purge of a faction opposed to new king Edwy's marriage or to his bride's family; those deprived of their lands include Edwy's grandmother Eadgifu, a rival influence at court. The struggle may be linked to the resignation in 956 of the most powerful man in Mercia and East Anglia, ealdorman Athelstan 'Half-King', a patron of St Dunstan's; Dunstan is exiled now or in 957 to Glastonbury. Athelstan was fostering Edwy's younger brother and potential challenger, Edgar.

IRELAND

'High King' Congalach Cnogba, head of the 'Sil nAedo Slaine' sub-dynasty of the Ua Niall and hereditary king of Brega, is killed in an ambush at Dun Ailinn (Knockaulin hill) in county Kildare by a Leinster/Dublin Viking force while invading Leinster to collect tribute, after a twelve-year reign; he is succeeded by Domnhall ua Niall, son of the late king Muirchertach 'of the Cloaks' of Ailech (killed 943) and co-king of Ailech and head of the 'Cenel nEoghan' in Ulster since that date. Grandson of the great warlord 'High King' Niall 'Glundub' (killed 919), Domnhall will take on his grandfather's role in fighting the Vikings but fail to prevail and will be the last king of Ailech to be 'High King'.

FRANCIA

16 *June*. Death of duke Hugh 'the Great' of Neustria, leading feudatory and sometime rival of the kings of France; succeeded by his eldest son Hugh, subsequently known as 'Capet' ('the Cloaked'), later king of France (987), aged around sixteen. His second son Otto, aged twelve, recently married to Liutgard the daughter and heiress of duke Gilbert of Burgundy, succeeds to Burgundy on that man's death around the same time.

BRITAIN

16 November. Death of archbishop Wulfstan of York.

957

BRITAIN

The leading men of Mercia and Northumbria raise Edgar to be their king, according to the Abingdon (i.e. Wessex) but not the Worcester (Mercia) versions of the ASC: the Worcester version has him as king of Mercia from November 955. Edgar is still only fourteen, and this early and possibly forced implementation of the presumed succession-plan of 955 seems to have been carried out against Edwy's wishes. If this was so, it probably arises from resentment at the dominance at court of a hostile faction to Edgar or to Mercia. Dunstan now joins Edgar.

IRELAND

Mael Fathardaig of the 'Eoganacht Caisil' is succeeded as king of Munster by Dub da-Bairenn mac Domnhall of the obscure sub-dynasty of the 'Eoganacht Raithleann' (Rathlind), allegedly descended from a predeceasing son of Munster's C5th founder Conall Corc. He reigns for two years.

958

ITALY

Unsuccessful attack on Capua and Benevento by Pope John and his army; he has to flee as they are routed.

SPAIN

The unpopular young king Sancho of Leon is deposed after a three-year reign in a revolt by his late uncle king Alfonso IV ('the Monk')'s son, Ordone IV, and the leading noble count Fernan Gonzalez of Castile; the new king marries Fernan's daughter, Sancho's predecessor and brother Ordone III's ex-wife Sancha of Castile, to add to his supporters and legitimacy. With Navarre linked to new queen Sancha via her late mother, sister of its king Garcia, Sancho fails to get aid there from his grandmother, dowager queen Toda, and goes into exile in the Caliphate of Cordova to ask the Caliph for help; Toda joins him to 'lobby' too and fend off any attack by Abd ar Rahman on Pamplona.

BRITAIN

Archbishop Oda requires king Edwy to divorce his unpopular wife Aelfgifu due to objections over their blood relationship violating canon law; she retains considerable estates and influence. Edwy then marries a second wife, possibly in an attempt to keep his brother Edgar from succeeding to Wessex.

June. Death of archbishop Oda; succeeded by Aelfsige/Aelfheah, bishop of Winchester.

Edgar chooses Oscytel, the Danish-descended bishop of Dorchester-upon-Thames (since 949/50 as he was in Episcopal office for twenty-one or two years to his death in 971), as the new archbishop of York. This reflects his policy of using the smaller but more prosperous Thames valley see to financially ‘prop up’ the larger but poorly-endowed Northern archbishopric, most of whose estates were secularised in the Scandinavian conquest of the 860s–870s, and keeping a ‘loyal’ Southerner in the office in place of an autonomist Deiran like Wulfstan.

(or 959) Death of bishop Cenwald of Worcester, a former diplomat for king Athelstan, after a thirty-year episcopate from 928/9; succeeded by Edgar’s nominee, St Dunstan.

IRELAND

Death of king Tuathal mac Ugaire of Leinster after an eleven-year reign; succeeded by another sub-king of their ‘Ua Dunchada’ dynasty, Cellach mac Faellan, whose father was king until his death in 942.

959

ITALY

Peter Candiano becomes Doge of Venice. Marianus Argyrus ‘catepan’.

BRITAIN

?*Probably spring.* Archbishop-elect Aelfsige of Canterbury is frozen to death while crossing the Alps en route to Rome to receive his ‘pallium’ of office; Edwy chooses Beorthelm to succeed him.

Edgar makes (St) Dunstan bishop of London in succession to Beorthelm.

1 November. King Edwy dies, aged eighteen; Edgar of Mercia/Northumbria succeeds to Wessex, reuniting England. Edgar recalls Dunstan from Mercia to Wessex; he removes the archbishop-elect of Canterbury, Beorhthelm, and makes Dunstan archbishop, giving him full power over the Church for reforms. Under Dunstan’s influence Edgar makes monastic reform on Continental lines a centerpiece of his policies, bringing in current Lotharingian practices. Secular canons are ejected from monasteries in favour of fully-professed monks, who also take over the staffing of the cathedral chapters of each bishopric. New monasteries are founded and all are granted extensive lands to fund them, arousing resentment among the nobility at the diversion of lands from secular personnel. Both lands and grants of local jurisdiction build up abbots as leading conduits of royal authority, particularly in the lands most recently taken under the control of Wessex such as the Danelaw.

IRELAND

Death of king Dub da-Bairenn of Munster; succeeded by co-rule by two princes of the ‘Eoganacht Caisil’, king Cellachan (d. 951)’s son Donnchad and Fer Graid mac Clerig (d. 961). Around this date the throne is also claimed by the rising chieftain Mael Muad mac Brian of the ‘Eoganacht Raithleann’ branch, head of the ‘Ui Echach Muaman’ and of his own ‘Clan Mac Maelmuaid’, though his date of accession is unclear. He and his rivals, the ‘Dal Cais’ of Thomond to the NW, now start to overshadow the titular kings.

SPAIN

Caliph Abd ar Rahman and king Sancho Garces of Navarre lend troops to ex-king Sancho ‘the Fat’ to invade Leon and depose his replacement Ordone IV; they secure Zamora.

960

BRITAIN

Beorthelm receives the bishopric of the ‘capital’/main royal residence of Wessex and England, Winchester.

ITALY/GERMANY

Autumn. Pope John sends cardinal-deacon John and the Papal secretary Azzo to Germany to invite Otto to come and deal with the plundering Berengar II.

SPAIN

Invading ex-king Sancho ‘the Fat’ and his Cordoban and Navarrese backers take Oviedo, and Ordone IV has to flee Leon as his army approaches the capital; Sancho is restored to the throne. His backer Garcia of Navarre’s link to Ordone IV’s ‘strongman’ count Fernan of Castile has ended with the recent death of his sister, the latter’s wife.

961

ITALY

March/April. Otto crosses the Brenner Pass to Pavia to assert his power in Italy and deal with the unreliable Berengar II; among his court is Liutprand of Cremona, now his chaplain and Greek translator. Berengar dare not challenge Otto and retires to his fortress in Friuli.

Summer. Otto campaigns in Lombardy, is confirmed as king of Italy at Milan, and then sets out for Rome.

NORWAY

Traditional date of the fourth and final invasion of Norway by the surviving sons of Erik ‘Bloodaxe’, intent on overthrowing their uncle king

Haakon 'the Good'. They land by surprise in Hordaland, evading his system of coastal watches. Haakon wins the resultant battle at Fitjar, but is mortally wounded in the arm and dies later, after a reign of around twenty-five years; he ends the civil strife by inviting his rebel nephew Harald 'Greycloak' to succeed him. Harald then rules to around 970.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the birth of Edgar's son by his first wife, Aethelfleda (daughter of 'ealdorman' Ordmaer), Edward; this may be as early as 959 or as late as 964. There are later claims of doubts as to his legitimacy by partisans of Edgar's son(s) by his later wife Elfrida, possibly implying a 'civil' marriage by Danish law (in the Danelaw pre-959?) not in a church. Aethelfleda is dead by c. 964, and possibly in childbirth with Edward; Edgar then forms an association with Wulfthryth, possibly marriage.

Edgar appoints (St) Oswald, a relative (probably nephew) of archbishop Osgyth of York and trained as a monk at the prestigious Continental 'reformist' abbey of Fleury in Lorraine, as bishop of Worcester to succeed Dunstan who has taken over Canterbury. This is another of his appointments of 'reformists', who will turn the monasteries under their control (e.g. of their cathedrals) from houses of secular canons to strict Benedictine ones, to sees. Given Osgyth's lands in Leicestershire and Danish descent, Oswald is presumably a (part-Danish?) Midlander.

IRELAND

Approximate date of an alleged invasion of inland, Gaelic Munster by the Vikings of Limerick led by their ruler Ivarr (Norse) or Imhair (Gaelic) 'Ua Imhair', that is, 'grandson of Ivarr'. The heroic Gaelic story of the 'Cogad Gaedel re Gallach' ('The War of the Gaels and the Foreigners'), lauding the achievements of the kings of Thomond in defeating the Vikings, claim this was an arrival of a large Viking fleet and occupation of most of Munster by the tyrannical Ivarr, but it is unclear how historical this is; it appears that Mathgamhain of Thomond and his rival Mael Muad mac Brian of the 'Eoganacht Raithleann' militarily overshadowed the kings of Munster, Fer Graid (d. 961) and Donnchad (d. 963).

SPAIN

15 October. Death of Caliph Abd ar Rahman of Cordoba at his palace of al-Zahra at Cordoba, aged seventy, after a forty-nine-year reign (thirty-two years as Caliph); succeeded by his much more pacific son, forty-five-year-old al-Hakam, whose energies mostly go into building and learning; he is reputed to have a library of 600,000 books (now though unlikely) and his reign sees a slackening of aggression against the Christian kingdoms and more interest in securing Morocco. The main court figure is

his Basque ex-slave concubine/wife ‘Subh’, alleged only female favourite of the homosexual ruler and soon to be mother of his son Hisham.

962 ITALY

14 January. Otto’s local chaplain Liutprand is consecrated as bishop of Cremona in Lombardy.

21 January. Otto enters Rome; *2 February* Pope John XII crowns him as (Holy Roman) ‘Emperor’ in St Peter’s, and the Romans swear allegiance to him at the tomb of St Peter, but allegedly he is so distrustful of them that he has his knights on the alert for riots; *13 February* he extends the Papal state in the legal grant of ‘Ottonian Privilege’, but apparently asks the womanizing Pope to mend his ways.

After Otto leaves Rome to attack Berengar the annoyed Pope sends to the latter offering him allegiance and the Imperial Crown, and as Berengar cannot help he invites Berengar’s son Adalbert to return from hiding in exile with the Arab pirates at Fraxinetum in Provence. He also asks the Magyars to send troops, but he is betrayed to Otto who sends Liutprand to Rome to report on him.

Otto has his rival Berengar of Ivrea and his wife Willa arrested at their mountain fortress of Montefeltre, near San Marino, and deported, Willa to a nunnery; their ex-employee Liutprand subsequently takes literary revenge on them, accusing Willa of sexual promiscuity.

BRITAIN

(or 961?) Death of ‘ealdorman’ Aethelwold of East Anglia and Essex, possibly also governor of the Eastern ‘Danelaw’ counties, eldest son and successor of Athelstan ‘Half-King’; his wife is Elfrida/Aethelthryth who later marries king Edgar, and a story is recounted by William of Malmesbury (c. 1125) of how Edgar wanted to marry the latter himself but Aethelwold (his ex-foster-brother) forestalled him so Edgar had him murdered. The historicity of this is disputed. Aethelwold is succeeded in his offices in East Anglia by his brother, Aethelwine (d. 992).

Death of king Indulf of Scots after an eight-year reign; succeeded by his cousin Dubh ‘the Vehement’, son of Malcolm I (who died in 954), with Indulf’s son Cuilean (Colin) now becoming heir to the throne in a system of rotation among the families of Cinaed mac Alpin’s sons.

ITALY

1 November. Otto reoccupies Rome, as Pope John and his ally Adalbert of Ivrea flee to Tibur/Tivoli; he calls a synod for 963 to deal with the Pope.

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5 Chronology: AD 963–1066

963

IRELAND

Death of king Donnchad mac Cellachan of Munster, murdered by his brother; Munster appears to be divided between the Gaelic ruler Mael Muad mac Brian of the ‘Eoganacht Raithleann’ sub-dynasty, founder of the ‘O’Mahony’ clan, king Mathgamhain of the ‘Dal Cais’ of Thomond in the NW, and the Viking warlord Ivarr of Limerick, with the latter two in alliance in the mid-960s. This is also the approximate date of the start of a local guerilla war against the expansionist Ivarr, alleged usurping ruler in Munster and local tyrant, by Mathgamhain’s younger brother Brian in which the latter builds up his army of resistance.

ITALY

1 or 6 November. Otto holds a synod at St Peter’s to try and depose Pope John, who is accused of adultery, rape, murder, mutilations, selling offices, and assorted offences against seemingly clerical behaviour; John is summoned to attend but refuses and threatens to excommunicate the participants. Otto then has Liutprand address the synod on his behalf in Latin and all the accusers swear that they are telling the truth. Otto makes the Romans swear never to elect a Pope without his consent, and *4 December* the synod’s third session deposes John; Otto has a hastily-consecrated lay official of blameless reputation, the chief notary, elected Pope Leo VIII and consecrated two days later.

BRITAIN

29 November, first Sunday in Advent. Consecration of the new, reformist bishop of Winchester, the main royal residence of the kings of England – Edgar’s friend and court attendee (as shown by charter witnessing) (St) Aethelwold, a ‘reformist’ Benedictine monk and former pupil of St Dunstan at Glastonbury Abbey. Now in his early fifties, Aethelwold has been abbot of Abingdon and transforming the latter into a model Benedictine monastery since c. 956; he now enacts similar reforms at the Winchester cathedral monastery too.

964 | ITALY

3 January. Otto has to put down a revolt at Rome in favour of John XII, organised by the sacked city ‘strongman’ magnate Octavian; he then decides to pursue the refugee Adalbert of Ivrea to Spoleto.

February. After Otto’s departure with the army, the Roman populace restores John XII and Leo flees to Otto’s court; John is restored by a small synod of compliant clerics (28 February) and mutilates his accusers, but as Otto is marching back he has to flee and *14 May* he dies, allegedly after being assaulted by an outraged husband while committing adultery.

The Romans elect the reforming deacon Benedict V; *22 May* an appeal to Otto, at Rieti, to allow his election is ignored; Otto besieges Rome, and *23 June* after the city’s surrender Otto and the restored Leo VIII hold a synod in Lateran and depose and exile Benedict, who is sent to Hamburg.

The new Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas’ nephew Manuel is killed invading Arab Sicily despite taking Syracuse.

BRITAIN

The new bishop Aethelwold of Winchester evicts the secular canons from the monastery attached to the New Minster at that city, thus going beyond the usual methods of the more emollient (St) Dunstan who allows these to remain when strictly Benedictine monks are installed in a ‘reformed’ monastery. The new abbot is Aethelwold’s protégé Aethelgar, formerly a monk under him (and prior?) at his Abingdon monastery. Aethelwold also sets up a new nunnery at Winchester (St Mary’s, close to the palace and New Minster) and obtains Edgar’s permission to restore various former monasteries that were abandoned and secularised in the Scandinavian conquests of the 870s. The most notable of these in the East Anglian region are the former nunnery of Ely, burial-place of St Aetheldreda/Audrey, and the nearby Peterborough abbey, which he restores as monasteries on a subsequent tour with Byrthmoth and Ealdwulf as abbots. But restoring their old estates alienates evicted or now tenant current landholders. Probably Edgar regards monastic landowners, who cannot pass on their land to their heirs and will have successors chosen by the king, as more controllable than secular ones.

Edgar also evicts the secular canons from and installs Benedictine monks at Chertsey (Surrey) and Milton (Abbas, Dorset) abbeys.

965 | BRITAIN

Date (ASC) of the marriage of king Edgar and his second or third wife, Elfrida/Aethelthryth, the daughter of ‘ealdorman’ Ordgar (probably of Devon) and widow of ‘ealdorman’ Aethelwold of East Anglia. By this date Edgar has separated from his mistress or second wife Wulfthryth,

whose daughter by him, (St) Edith, later becomes abbess of Wilton in Wiltshire.

ITALY

1 March. Death of Pope Leo VIII; the Romans vainly send bishop Marinus and the notary Azzo to try to get Otto, who is back in Saxony, to restore Benedict V. Otto tells them to install John Episcopus, bishop of Narni in upper Latium, as Pope.

FRANCE

28 March. Death of count Arnulf I of Flanders, (acceded 919), son of count Baldwin II and Aelfthryth, daughter of king Alfred of Wessex; his son Baldwin III had died (962, above) so the latter's four-year-old son by Mathilde of Saxony, Arnulf II, succeeds him. Arnulf I has nominated his overlord king Lothar of France as Arnulf II's guardian and promised him part of Artois to win his backing, but Lothar proposes to take over all Flanders and is opposed by the regent, Baldwin. Lothar invades Picardy and takes most of it, giving it to his leading vassal and military lieutenant in the war Hugh 'Capet'; he overruns Douai in Artois but is driven back in central Flanders and has to content himself with the West.

ITALY

1 October. John XIII, current bishop of Narni, elected Pope in Rome with agreement of Otto's representatives; he is resented as high-handed and German nominee and is accused of trying to sideline the city's clan 'bosses' (account of chronicler Benedict of Mount Soracte) *December.* John is imprisoned in a revolt, then flees to Campania. He is protected there by count Pandulf 'Ironhead' of Capua (accession 961), who is seeking Otto's support against the Byzantines and Arabs.

966

BRITAIN

Oslac becomes earl of Northumbria.

July. (Andrew of Wyntoun version) Death in battle of king Dubh 'the Vehement' of Scots at Forres, fighting rebels; succeeded by his cousin Cuilean (Colin) 'Ring', son of his predecessor Indulf. Now or later Dubh's family are 'bought off' with the 'mormaership' (hereditary governorship) of Fife and excluded from the throne but have the right to crown the new kings.

IRELAND

Death of king Cellach mac Faelan of Leinster after an eight-year reign; succeeded by a cousin from their 'Ua Dunchada' dynasty, Murchad mac Finn, head of the 'Ui Faelan' sept, who reigns for six years.

ITALY

14 November. Rome surrenders to Pope John XIII; *December.* Otto arrives on a visit. He has twelve leaders of the earlier revolt hung and others exiled as a warning.

SPAIN

December. Death of king Sancho ‘the Fat’ of Leon; succeeded by his infant son by queen Sancha, Ramiro III, with Sancha as regent.

967

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the birth of Edgar’s and Elfrida’s second son, Aethelred (later king, died 1016). There is an older son, Edmund, who appears in charters but dies c. 971/2. It is unclear from the written evidence if Edmund and later Aethelred are seen legally as Edgar’s heirs – subject to confirmation by election by the council, the ‘Witan’ – as this marriage, unlike Edgar’s earlier one(s), is fully legal by Church rules.

IRELAND (OR 968)

Brian, younger brother of king Mathgamhain of Thomond in NW Munster, leads his guerrillas and allied chiefs, probably with his brother’s army too, to defeat Viking ruler Ivarr of Limerick at the battle of Sulcoit, near Soloheadbeg NW of Tipperary. According to the literary accounts the Vikings are caught in an ambush on a wooded hill and cannot form up the usual ‘shield wall’ due to thick trees; they are routed and next day Brian storms and sacks Limerick itself. This major success breaks the military power of the Vikings of Limerick and allegedly ends Ivarr’s ‘tyranny’ over Munster, leaving the ‘Dal Cais’ sub-kings of Thomond as the main rivals to the eclipsed king Mael Muad mac Brian and his ‘Eoganacht Raithleann’ dynasty.

Muiredach mac Faelan, a prince of the ruling ‘Ua Dunchada’ kindred of Leinster and abbot of Kildare, is killed in a raid by the Viking ruler Olaf ‘Cuaran’ Sihtricson of Dublin and his local ally Cerbhall mac Lorcan.

FRANCE/SPAIN

The famous scholar Gerbert, a monk of Aurillac (Massif Central monastery), joins the visiting magnate Borell (II), heir of the count of Barcelona, who is in the region meeting his local fiancée Letgarda, to journey to Catalonia – start of his search for Moslem (and Greek) scholarship in Spain which he brings to Christian Europe. He spends four years in Catalonia, mainly at the town of Vic where he attends the cathedral school under bishop Atto; he also comes into contact with scholars from Cordoba, especially the learned Jewish doctor Hasdai ibn

Shaprut (who earlier cured Sancho ‘the Fat’ of Leon, d. 966, of his obesity) but it is unclear if he studies in Cordoba himself.

ITALY

25 December. Otto’s son Otto (II) is crowned as co-Emperor in Rome.

968

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

Spring. Otto invades Apulia with his ally, count Pandulf of Capua, and attacks but cannot capture the Byzantine provincial capital, Bari; he decides to negotiate with the Empire instead.

Summer. Otto I sends bishop Liutprand of Cremona to Constantinople to arrange a marriage between his son Otto and a Byzantine princess, probably the ‘usurping’ Emperor Nicephorus II Phocas’ stepdaughter Anna, daughter of his wife Empress Theophano and her late husband the legitimate Emperor Othman II (d. 963).

4 June. Liutprand arrives at the capital and sulks at being kept waiting at the Charisius Gate in heavy rain. He is kept in isolation at the poorly-furnished Marble Palace, and according to Liutprand, at the imperial audience (7 June, Pentecost Sunday) Emperor Nicephorus II treats him with contempt and calls Otto a barbarian whose ancestors lived in swamps; Liutprand in reply ‘writes up’ the mission describing the Emperor as a foul-smelling hunchbacked dwarf. Liutprand is kept waiting for a reply for weeks as a presumed sign of Nicephorus’ disdain for the German ruler, and is belatedly received by Nicephorus’ brother Leo Phocas coolly. The marriage-proposal is refused, and Nicephorus is furious when a Papal embassy arrives (15 August, Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin) with a letter addressed to him as ‘Emperor of the Greeks’ – the Eastern Emperors insist that they are the only true ‘Emperors of the Romans’. Liutprand is then received by the eunuch chamberlain Christopher (17 September) with complaints that Otto and the Pope fail to appreciate that all ‘Imperial’ authority has long since left Rome for the East. When Liutprand is allowed to leave (2 October) his goods are searched by Byzantine customs-men and presents are confiscated.

IRELAND

Unsuccessful two-month siege of Dublin by ‘High King’ Domnall, head of the Northern Ui Niall of ‘Cenel nEoghan’ in Ulster.

969

ITALY

February. Liutprand arrives back in Cremona, and subsequently ‘bad-mouths’ the Eastern Empire to Otto; but negotiations continue.

During this winter, the Byzantines in Apulia reassert their power in Campania and arrest and deport Pandulf of Capua, Otto's ally, with the help of his Neapolitan foes; a few months later Otto returns to attack Naples.

BRITAIN

Edgar orders the isle of Thanet in Kent to be ravaged as punishment for an assault on some visiting merchants from York, possibly Danes.

Years of sporadic strife between king Iago ap Idwal of Gwynedd/Powys and his younger brother Idwal 'Ieuaf' ends when the latter is killed in battle during a revolt; his claim to the throne is inherited by his equally ambitious son Hywel who soon calls in Viking mercenaries from Ireland to help him.

BYZANTIUM

Empress Theophano, Nicephorus' wife and widow of Romanus II (whose sons Basil II and Constantine VIII are titular co-rulers with her husband), plots with her new lover, ambitious Armenian general John Tzimiskes, against Nicephorus; Nicephorus takes up residence in secure Boucoleon Palace next to the Sacred Palace harbour, but *10 December* Theophano smuggles some of plotters into her apartments; that night, in the snow, a pulley lowers basket from Theophano's window to the sea and Tzimiskes and others arrive in boat to be pulled up; the conspirators enter Emperor's bedchamber, which Theophano asked him to leave unlocked, and attack him; he is mortally wounded, dragged before Tzimiskes and abused, and finished off, aged ?56; his head is waved out of window to advancing guards; *11 December* Tzimiskes acclaimed as Emperor John I, but Patriarch forces him to banish Theophano.

970

IRELAND

Probable approximate date of Mathgamhain of Thomond in Munster, brother of the victorious war-leader Brian who has recently conquered Viking Limerick, replacing Mael Muad of the 'Eoganacht Raithleann' as king of Munster. He is the first of his dynasty to rule all Munster, and not even of certain and accepted descent from the founding dynasts as is normal. His humiliated predecessor Mael Muad is from now to c. 976 only called 'king of Desmond' i.e. of his own region. The attitude of the other rising Munster sub-ruler, Donnubán (Donovan) of the 'Ui Fidgenti' in the North, is uncertain. At some point around now Ivarr recovers control of Limerick.

'High King' Domnall ua Niall, head of the Northern Ui Niall and king of Ailech, and his allies from the 'Ulaid' in Ulster attack the kingdom of

Brega in Western Midhe, ruled by Domnhall son of the previous 'High King' Congalach; the latter marries the daughter of Viking ruler Olaf 'Cuaran' of Dublin around this date, possibly a reason for the war, and Olaf brings troops to aid his allies. They defeat the 'High King' at Kilmona in county Westmeath and Ardgall mac Matudain, king of the 'Ulaid', and king Cinaed of the Ulaid sub-kingdom of 'Conaille Muirthemne' in Co. Lowth are killed. But Domnhall ua Niall has enough military strength left to sack the churches of Monasterboice and Dunleer in retaliation for his defeat.

SPAIN

Death of king Garcia Sanchez of Pamplona after a forty-five year reign, aged a little over fifty; he is succeeded in Pamplona by his son by his first marriage (dissolved c. 941), to heiress Andregoto Galindez the daughter of count Galindo of Aragon, namely Sancho II. The latter also rules Aragon, which now enters a 'union of crowns' with Pamplona, and has been married since 962 to Sancha of Castile, widow of king Ordonio IV of Leon. Garcia's son by his second marriage, to Teresa of Leon (daughter of king Ramiro II), Ramiro, succeeds to his own sub-kingdom of Viguera, a region of La Rioja, but dies in 981 ending that mini-state.

ITALY/BYZANTINE EMPIRE/GERMANY

The new Byzantine Emperor John Tzimiskes sends Pandulf home to Capua as a goodwill gesture and reopens talks with Otto.

DENMARK/NORWAY

Approximate date of the conquest of Norway by king Harald 'Bluetooth' of Denmark, following the death of its king Harald 'Greycloak'. This may involve the use of a newly 'regimented' and efficiently organised Danish army which Harald has trained at the (excavated in modern times) barracks camp at Trelleborg, but the date of this and the army's creation is unclear. Harald overruns Southern and central Norway and installs Jarl Haakon Sigurdsson of Trondelag (Trondjheim region), known as 'Haakon Jarl', as its viceroy – his father was killed by Harald 'Greycloak' so he can be relied on to oppose the late king's kin.

971

BRITAIN

Death of archbishop Osmund of York, who is also bishop of Dorchester-upon-Thames, at Thame in Oxfordshire; he is buried at his former abbey of Bedford by his kinsman abbot Thurcytel and is succeeded by Edwald. (or 970) Death of Edgar's elder son by Elfrida, Edmund, aged probably no more than five.

Mon/Anglesey in Gwynedd is raided and Penmon is sacked by an Irish Sea Viking warlord called ‘Maccus’, probably Magnus/Maccus ‘Mac Arailt’ or Haraldsen, ruler of the Isle of Man, who the Irish sources call a son of Arailt/Harald the (probable) 940s Viking king of Limerick. Magnus and his brother Gofraith/Guthfrith are possibly also descendants of Ivarr ‘the Boneless’ (d. 873) and thus linked to the rulers of Dublin.

King Cuilean (Colin) of Scots is killed in battle in Strathclyde, traditionally in a feud by the local prince Amdarch; succeeded by his cousin and heir Kenneth (Cinaed) II, son of Malcolm I.

IRELAND

Two successive attacks on the territory of the Southern Ui Niall kingdoms of the ‘Clan Colmann’ by ‘High King’ Domnhall, their rival from the Northern Ui Niall; he goes on to raid the territory of Dublin and to plunder across Eastern Midhe into Leinster, probably securing local military supremacy for around half a decade.

GERMANY/ITALY/BYZANTIUM

Third embassy of Liutprand of Cremona to Constantinople, this time assisting archbishop Gero of Cologne who Otto sends to the new Emperor John Tzimiskēs; this mission is successful and a Byzantine bride is promised for Otto’s heir Otto (II), but it turns out to be John’s niece and Nicephorus II’s great-niece Theophano (born before they became Emperors and not of imperial blood), daughter of Constantine Sclerus, not princess Anna.

Autumn? Theophano, probably aged around fifteen, accompanies Gero’s embassy on their return journey to Otranto and Rome; at the latter she meets her future husband, Otto II.

Gerbert of Aurillac arrives in Italy from Catalonia and becomes tutor to Otto II (for a year or so to his marriage).

972 HUNGARY

Death of king Taksóny, succeeded by son Géza I.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM/FRANCE

14 April. John Tzimiskēs’ niece Theophano marries Otto ‘the Great’s son Otto, aged seventeen, at St Peter’s Basilica in Rome, despite some German dismay that the ‘princess’ is not a ‘porphyrogenita’ (‘born in the purple’) so John has ‘cheated’ them; the Byzantine-German alliance is sealed, but is soon strained as with Otto’s support Pope John XIII raises Benevento and Capua to archbishoprics that can claim allegiance of towns in Byzantine dominions; Patriarchate of Constantinople makes Taranto an archbishopric in reply.

Otto and his family return to Germany, which he has not seen since 965.

Gerbert of Aurillac meets the scholar archdeacon Gerannus of Rheims in Rome during the celebrations and agrees to join him in Rheims and teach at the cathedral school; he brings his Cordoban/Catalan scientific discoveries to Francia.

BRITAIN

Resignation for reasons unknown of the new archbishop Edwald of York; succeeded by bishop (St) Oswald, who is already bishop of Worcester (from 961). As a Fleury-trained Benedictine ‘reformist’ Oswald will impose strict Benedictine rules on the see’s monasteries; and as bishop of Worcester he has already substantial landed and monetary resources to help fund the impoverished Northern see without seizing secular lands that the latter owned pre-860s (and so annoying the local nobles).

IRELAND

King Murchad mac Finn of Leinster, head of the ‘Ui Faelan’ branch of the ruling ‘Ua Dunchada’ dynasty, is killed in battle after a six-year reign by Domnhall ‘Claen’ (‘the Squinting’) mac Lorcan mac Faelan, grandson of the king who died in 942 and son of the king who died in 943; he is succeeded by Ugaire mac Tuathal, son of the king who died in 958.

Official banishment of the officials of the former Viking overlordship of Munster (by Ivarr of Limerick) from Munster by order of its king Mathgamhain (ruler of Thomond and head of the ‘Dal Cais’ dynasty) and his brother Brian.

973

ITALY/GERMANY

19 *January*. Benedict VI elected Pope.

7 *May*. Death of Otto I at Memleben, near Weimar in Saxony, aged sixty-one, after thirty-seven years ruling Germany; succeeded by eighteen-year-old son Otto II. The latter is faced with plots by his ambitious cousin duke Henry ‘the Wrangler/Quarreller’ of Saxony, and his mother Adelaide soon leaves his court to return to her homeland of Burgundy.

BRITAIN

Edgar stages a special coronation at Bath, probably chosen for its impressive Roman ruins as a sign of past glories which he wishes to revive – a local equivalent to Charles’ 800 coronation in Rome. He has already been crowned like his ancestors at Kingston-on-Thames at his accession; he is now specifically crowned as ‘King of the English’ rather than just

Wessex. The second coronation may have been chosen as he is now thirty and eligible to conduct priestly rites, giving an extra sacral element to his kingship. The ceremony is masterminded by Dunstan, who probably draws up a new and more sacramental coronation rubric (the ‘Second Recension’) using C9th Frankish practice. Edgar then proceeds to march his army to Chester, the headquarters for the Irish Sea fleet which undertakes a similarly impressive demonstration of force at sea. Six (the ASC) or eight (Aelfric and John of Worcester) kings of the ‘Celtic’ and Scandinavian realms of Northern and Western Britain attend on him at Chester, summoned en masse to recognise his authority and encouraged to obey by the demonstration of his military strength.

They include the rulers of Gwynedd (Iago ap Idwal), Deheubarth (Owain ap Hywel), and Strathclyde and Cumbria (Malcolm mac Donald). The fact that the kings of Scots (Kenneth II) and probably the Isle of Man (Maccus/Magnus) attend reflects on the reach of Edgar’s power; Edgar now formally recognises the earlier occupation of Lothian, a former part of Northumbria, by the Scots rather than fight. Kenneth does a form of homage for it. According to later legend the kings are required to row Edgar in a barge on the Dee as a sign of their submission to the new kingdom of England. This may be a garbled interpretation of a ceremonial voyage which the sovereigns at the ‘summit’ take on the river which showed off Edgar’s superiority. In practical terms, the location of the visitors’ lands suggest agreement to enforce peace in the Irish Sea area. According to Aelfric (c. 1000) Edgar had a large Irish Sea fleet; by the C12th the reputed size of this had grown to 3,600 or 4,000 ships. He probably institutes a system whereby each 300 ‘hides’ of land in his kingdom paid for a warship.

974

GERMANY/DENMARK

With his late overlord Emperor Otto I dead, king Harald ‘Greycloak’ of Denmark invades and ravages Schleswig. Otto II arrives with an army and Harald retreats into Jutland beyond the ‘Danevirke’ (‘Danish Dyke’) rampart and dyke across the narrowest part of the peninsula. Otto is unable to storm it, but summons a fleet to transport his army round it and lands in Jutland to ravage; Harald is forced to sue for peace and accept him as his overlord. According to (C13th?) saga, among Otto’s local mercenary captains is a future king of Norway, Olaf Tryggvason, possibly a relative of the late king Harald ‘Greycloak’ (some modern scholars think this a subsequent invention to boost his legitimacy) and exiled as a boy from Norway. The saga version has Olaf as enslaved by local Scandinavian settlers in Estonia as a teenager and then rising to prominence as a captain in the principality of Russia at Novgorod; now he serves Otto and learns large-scale warfare.

ITALY

June. Pope Benedict VI is arrested and imprisoned in Castel St Angelo by ‘Consul’ Crescentius’ faction who want to control the Papacy while Otto II is preoccupied in Germany; Benedict is tried and deposed and deacon Franco is made Pope Boniface VII; *July* Otto’s envoy count Sicco of Spoleto arrives to demand Benedict’s release, but the ex-Pope is murdered; a revolt in city is aided by Sicco, and Boniface flees to Byzantine Southern Italy.

GERMANY

4 July. Death of the highly prestigious and effective (St) Ulrich, bishop of Augsburg since 923, son of the count of Dillingen, and a major regional administrator and educator; Emperor Otto’s locally powerful cousin Henry ‘the Wrangler’, duke of Bavaria, demands that Otto name his own candidate and relative, Henry (related maternally to the dukes of Swabia), as bishop though the see is technically within Swabia and its duke Burchard III, ‘duke Henry’s brother-in-law and rival, opposes this; (September) Otto gives way to avoid a revolt by Henry.

ITALY

October. Pro-German faction in Rome, under Sicco’s patronage, elects the bishop of Sutri as Pope Benedict VII.

BRITAIN

King Iago ap Idwal of Gwynedd/Powys is temporarily expelled by his rebel nephew Hywel, but hires Viking mercenaries to help return to power.

(or 973?) Death of king Morgan ‘Hen’ (‘the Old’) of Morgannwg (which is called after him) and Gwent in SE Wales, who acceded c. 940; succeeded by a joint rule by his sons, with Owain of Glywysng (around Cardiff) as the senior.

IRELAND

Ivarr, restored Viking king of Limerick, is captured at Scatterry Island by the roving Irish Sea warlord Maccus/Magnus ‘Mac Araitl’, probably the king of Man and son of a former king of Limerick; this may be an attempt to add Limerick to Maccus’ Irish Sea lordship but if so Ivarr’s later escape foils it.

GERMANY

12 October. Death without heirs of duke Burchard III of Swabia; Otto chooses his own half-brother Liudolf’s son Otto, grandson of Emperor Otto I by Eadgyth of England, as the new duke. Henry ‘the Wrangler’ of Bavaria is furious as Otto is a local rival.

Duke Henry ‘the Wrangler’ of Bavaria links up with his cousin Otto II’s resentful vassals, dukes Mieszko of Poland and Boleslav II of Bohemia, in a conspiracy of unknown intentions, aided by bishop Abraham of Freising; the local imperial administrative ‘strongman’ bishop Poppo of Wurzburg demands that Henry abandon his plans and submit to the Emperor to avoid Church censure for stirring up rebellion, and Henry agrees to do so; Otto arrests and deports him to Ingelheim.

975

BRITAIN

8 July. Edgar dies suddenly at an early age, probably only thirty-two, at Winchester. There are no hints of earlier ill-health, but he may have shared the weak constitutions of his male ancestors which produced so many early deaths. At the most his elder surviving son Edward is around fourteen or fifteen, and the resulting succession-dispute, regicide, and Viking attacks that trouble England made Edgar’s reign seem a golden age. The eulogies seem deserved, apart from a note of caution about his alienation of many landowners over the extent of his grants of land to the Church; he is also accused in retrospect of bringing in too many Danes and Flemings (traders or mercenaries?).

Edgar has left one survivor of two sons by his second wife, the reputedly ambitious Elfrida (Aethelthryth), Aethelred. He is only aged around seven or eight, but is a serious candidate for the throne. It is possible that there was some question-mark over Edgar’s first marriage, with Aethelred being preferred by some as ‘born in the purple’ (after his father’s accession) in which case Edward may have been born before his father succeeded to Wessex late in 959. The current political dispute over the ‘excessive’ grants of land made by Edgar to the Church leads to frustrated would-be grantees, keen to see this policy halted, opposing the Church (led by archbishop Dunstan) and its candidate Edward.

However, one of Dunstan’s main allies, the bishop of the capital at Winchester, (St) Aethelwold, supports Aethelred’s claims so the Church is not all on Edward’s side – probably ‘political’ reasons lead Aethelwold to back his court patron, queen Elfrida, who he has been building up as a patroness of ‘reformed’ nunneries. Led by earl Aelfhere of Mercia, the enemies of Dunstan rally to Aethelred’s cause – possibly due to Anglo-Danish ‘Danelaw’ landowners resenting Edgar giving much secularised land in that area to the newly-restored bishoprics and monasteries to bolster their power. Aethelred is young enough to be controlled by a regency; Edward is at least in his mid-teens and so less easily influenced. He was also later accused of having a reputation for bad temper and hasty, violent action, even at this young age though West Saxon royal males reached maturity early; as this charge survived his sanctification he was clearly not able to be portrayed realistically as a passive, godly youth in the usual manner of hagiographers.

Edward is crowned on 18 July, but there appears to have been strong antagonism to his Church allies and outbreaks of violence against Church-granted lands on his accession. Famine follows, implying divine displeasure and probably bringing hungry and superstitious recruits to the ranks of those determined to upset Edgar's grants. Assorted monasteries were pillaged and monks expelled in violence supported by aggrieved lay personnel; the Chronicle accuses Aelfhere of co-ordinating or instigating it. The new king and his ministers were unable to control it; possibly it centres in Aelfhere's Mercia and Edward dare not leave Wessex.

FRANCE

Death of Theobald 'the Trickster', son of count Herbert (II) of Vermandois and first ruling count of Tours, Blois and Chartres (and Chateaudun) as the nucleus of the future County of Blois; succeeded by his son Odo/Eudes I (d. 996). Either his younger brother Robert or the latter's son Herbert 'the Young' is by now count of Troyes, the other half of the family lands.

ITALY

October. Benedict VII elected Pope under German imperial auspices, but ex-Pope Boniface holds out in Southern Italy with Byzantine encouragement.

976

BYZANTIUM

10 January. Death of John Tzimiskes, possibly of poison; eighteen-year-old Basil II and fifteen-year-old Constantine VIII sole rulers, but due to their age and laziness Basil the 'paracoemomenus' (Great Chamberlain), their eunuch uncle, retains control of government and amasses a fortune.

BRITAIN

Anti-monastic violence and pillaging of Church estates continues, probably mainly in Eastern Mercia where the Church was eclipsed and its lands secularised by the Scandinavian settlers in the 870s so its new power is resented.

Banishment of earl Oslac of Northumbria.

IRELAND

Treacherous capture of Mathgamhain, king of Munster since c. 970 and head of the 'Dal Cais' sub-dynasty of Thomond, by his rival Donnoban of the 'Ui Fidgenti' (N Munster), apparently in violation of a safe-conduct

while visiting the latter for talks. Donnoban hands him over to his predecessor and enemy Mael Muad mac Brian, head of the 'Eoganacht Raithlind', who executes him and reclaims the kingship of Munster. War follows between Mathgamhain's brother and successor Brian (later 'High King' and nicknamed 'Borumha', 'Of The Tributes') and Donnoban and his ally and possible father-in-law, the Viking king Ivarr of Limerick.

King Ugaire of Leinster is defeated and captured by the Vikings of Dublin under Olaf 'Cuaran'.

GERMANY

Back in control of Bavaria after an absence in imperial custody of around eighteen months (released or escaped?), duke Henry 'the Wrangler' of Bavaria revolts against Otto I aided by Boheslav of Bohemia. Otto invades Bavaria, besieges the city of Magdeburg as Henry flees to Bohemia, and (July) confiscates the duchy. He hands it to his nephew Otto, duke of Swabia, and reduces its size by breaking off Carinthia in the South which he gives to the dispossessed Bavarian ducal family cadet Henry, son of the former duke Burchard (d. 947) and cousin of Henry 'the Wrangler's mother Judith. Otto II then invades Bohemia unsuccessfully.

ITALY

August. Peter Orseolo succeeds Peter Candiano as Doge of Venice.

FRANCE/GERMANY

King Lothar's younger brother Charles accuses his queen Emma of Italy of adultery with bishop Adalbero of Laon, possibly hoping to get Lothar's son Louis V declared illegitimate and claim the throne; they are cleared by an investigatory enquiry by a Church Council at Fismes, but Charles refuses to accept this and flees to Germany to transfer his allegiance to Otto II at Aachen; Otto makes him duke of Lower Lorraine for which he does homage, infuriating Lothar who fears they will invade next.

SPAIN

16 October. Death of the learned and mostly pacific Caliph al-Hakam of Cordoba, aged sixty, after a reign of fifteen years and one day, following a stroke; succeeded by his ten-year-old son Hisham II, with the boy's mother Subh securing his accession in preference to a half-brother. She and the minister Jaafar become regents, with Ghalib as the chief general; also rising to prominence soon is the superintendent of Hisham's estates, the young Arab aristocrat Mohammed ibn Abi Amir from Medinaceli, who the impressed Subh makes director of her 'privy purse'/treasury. He becomes chief minister in 981, and is known from his success

from 978 in directing aggressive campaigns against the Christian kingdoms as ‘Al Mansur’ (‘the Victorious’) aka ‘Almanzor’.

977

BRITAIN

Olaf, the Scandinavian-named brother and presumed family heir of the late king Cuilean (Colin) who died in 971, is killed by the incumbent king Kenneth II – possibly in or to pre-empt a revolt.

Approximate date of the death of Jarl Thorfinn ‘Skull-Splitter’ of Orkney after a reign of around twenty-three years; succeeded by the eldest of his four or five sons, Arnfinn, who is married to the ferocious Ragnhild, daughter of his family’s late overlord Erik ‘Bloodaxe’ of Norway.

IRELAND

Congalach and Muirchertach, sons of the ‘High King’ Domnhall ua Niall of the Northern Ui Niall (king of Ailech), are killed, possibly as a result of action by Olaf ‘Cuaran’ of Dublin; this probably undermines their warlord father whose grip on the Southern Ui Niall and Midhe subsequently slips, with the recent death of king Domnhall mac Congalach of Brega also aiding the rise of the new (975) king of ‘Clann Colmann’ Mael Sechnaill mac Domnhall as leader of the Southern Ui Niall. Possibly the latter and his stepfather Olaf ‘Cuaran’ are working together.

Ivarr of Limerick is expelled and Limerick is conquered by Brian, the new king of Thomond and rising warlord of NW Munster; end of this major Viking mini-state in Western Ireland. Ivarr and his family take refuge on Scattery Island at the monastery and seek sanctuary, but Brian pursues them there and drags Ivarr out for execution.

GERMANY

August. Otto II’s second invasion of Bohemia; in his absence bishop Henry of Augsburg leads a rebellion against the Emperor’s nephew Otto in Bavaria, and surprisingly the new duke Henry of Carinthia joins in; Henry ‘the Wrangler’ joins the rebels; Otto II has to return with difficulty from Bohemia and link up with Otto of Bavaria to besiege the three rebel leaders at Passau on the Danube; they are forced to come to terms and submit.

978

GERMANY

31 March. Diet of Quedlinburg. Otto II receives and pardons the rebel duke Boheslav of Bohemia, along with his fellow-ally of Henry ‘the Wrangler’ duke Mieszko of Poland. Henry ‘the Wrangler’ is confirmed as being deposed from Bavaria and is exiled to Utrecht in the custody of

its bishop. Duke Henry of Carinthia is deposed for joining the 977 rebellion too, and is replaced by Otto II's half-sister Liutgarde's son by duke Conrad of Lotharingia, Otto of Worms.

BRITAIN

There is a disastrous accident at a royal council-meeting at Calne (Wiltshire); the floor of an upper-story chamber falls in and assorted people are killed or injured; archbishop Dunstan, the chief minister and leader of the 'Church party', narrowly escapes as the beam he is standing on was not affected.

18 March. Edward is murdered in Dorset, at 'Corfe gate' (probably the gate of the royal manor at what is now Corfe Castle, or Corfe as the 'gate' in the Purbeck Hills, but possibly Corfe Mullen). His legend says that he was visiting his stepmother Elfrida at her manor when her attendants – or even Elfrida in person – stabbed him, probably as he reached down from his horse to take a goblet. In fact Corfe was a manor of the abbesses of Shaftesbury. The life of St Oswald, the earliest account c. 995, blames the attendants at Corfe without mentioning the queen and implies that Edward turned up on impulse for refreshment or a night's stay after hunting nearby. His horse gallops away carrying him, probably with a broken arm after being twisted round in his saddle during the stabbing, and he falls to his death; he either bleeds to death or breaks his neck. His body is found at nearby Norden by tradition. He is at most eighteen or nineteen. He is hastily buried at nearby Wareham without royal honours and Aethelred succeeds to the throne, aged around ten or eleven, but embarrassingly the locals are soon claiming that Edward's body is performing miracles and regarding him as a saint.

The Church encourages, if not instigating, the campaign. As 'king and martyr', the first of two royal Edwards of England to be sanctified, he is the only post-Alfredian king to have a church – which still survives – dedicated to him, at Corfe Castle.

Elfrida and Aelfhere of Mercia lead the regency, which rules England for Aethelred into the early-mid 980s. Archbishop Dunstan and his allies, such as bishop Aethelwold of Winchester, may resist the coup at first.

'Low Sunday', May. Coronation of Aethelred as king of England – at the usual site of Kingston-upon-Thames, not Edgar's special one of Bath. According to the hagiography of St Dunstan, the latter harangues the king at the coronation on his irregular accession and afterwards withdraws from court to his episcopal see at Canterbury to reform the monastery of St Augustine there; possibly this leaves the queen's ally bishop Aethelwold of Winchester dominant at court and the regime has to promise the late king's honourable re-burial to appease Dunstan and his allies.

IRELAND

In Munster, sub-king Brian of Thomond, head of the ‘Dal Cais’, defeats and kills his enemy and his brother’s murderer, king Mael Muad, head of the ‘Eoganacht Raithleann’, at the battle of Bleach Lachta. Brian takes the kingship of Munster and this marks the accession of the ‘Dal Cais’ to seniority in that kingdom despite their lack of a recognised ancient lineage. Brian then pursues Mael Muad’s collaborator Donnoban to his fortress of Cathair Cuan, storms it and kills him and his brother-in-law and ally, Ivarr of Limerick’s surviving son Arailt (Harald), too, removing his last major military challengers.

King Ugaire mac Tuathal of Leinster is killed after a six-year reign at the battle of Belan by the Vikings of Dublin, who are led by king Olaf ‘Cuaran’; succeeded by his cousin Domnhall ‘Claen’ (‘the Squinting’), son of king Lorcan who died in 943. He allies with the Vikings of Waterford, led by Ivarr, against the encroaching power of the ‘High Kings’ in Midhe.

FRANCE/GERMANY

War between Lothar of France and Emperor Otto II over Lotharingia, particularly Otto’s giving Lower Lotharingia to Lothar’s refugee brother Charles; Lothar invades Lotharingia to confront them, and Otto and Charles flee as he crosses the Meuse and evacuate Aachen which Lothar burns. Lothar symbolically turns the gilded eagle on top of Charlemagne’s palace at Aachen to face East not West, i.e. asserting that France not Germany is his heir.

After Lothar withdraws, Otto marches on Paris via the royal residence Laon, where he crowns Charles as ‘king of Francia’ in a plan to replace Lothar by his loyal ally; he takes Rheims and Soissons, where he pays his devotions at the cathedrals; he besieges Paris but (30 November) has to retreat as Hugh ‘Capet’ arrives to relieve it; Hugh marches in pursuit; Otto’s rearguard is defeated by the pursuing Lothar in person as it crosses the River Aisne.

978/9 BRITAIN

A year after the regicide, king Edward is reburied at Shaftesbury abbey church amidst more appropriate splendour with the royal family and nobles in attendance. The shrine remains a centre of pilgrimage for centuries.

King Iago ap Idwal of Gwynedd/Powys is killed by his nephew Hywel ap Idwal, who takes his throne; the late ruler’s son Custennin (Constantine) is later killed too by Hywel at Hirwath, in another round of dynastic feuding as he invades with the assistance of Guthfrith/Gofraith, brother of the Viking warlord Maccus/Magnus of Man.

IRELAND

King Domnhall ‘Claen’ of Leinster, as an ally of the Vikings of Waterford, is defeated and captured by their regional rivals, the Dublin Vikings led by king Olaf ‘Cuaran’; he is released some months later.

FRANCE

June. Lothar of France has his son Louis (V), aged around eleven, crowned as co-ruler and his heir, at Rheims. This is a riposte to his brother Charles’ intrigues for the throne.

ITALY

Summer. Ex-Pope Boniface, supported by Byzantium, briefly drives Benedict VII out of Rome.

October. Death of Doge Vitale Candiano of Venice; *December.* Tribunio Meno Doge.

980

BRITAIN

Sack of Southampton by a small raiding fleet of seven Scandinavian ships – probably a ‘test’ by loot-hungry captains to see if Edgar’s death and the civil strife has made England an easier target. If so, it is successful as more attacks follow.

Ravaging of Dyfed and Mon/Anglesey by Vikings led by Guthfrith/ Godfraith of Man.

?Assassination of Jarl Arnfinn of Orkney at Murkle, Caithness, blamed by the sagas on his estranged wife princess Ragnhild of Norway. She then marries his brother and successor, Havard ‘Harvest-Happy’ (so-called from the good harvests in his reign) but according to the ‘Orkneyinga Saga’ is already flirting with his ambitious nephew Einar ‘Oily-Tongue’ as her next partner in crime at the wedding-feast.

IRELAND

Abdication of ‘High King’ Domnhall, head of the Northern Ui Niall and king of Ailech, after a twenty-four-year reign. He retires to a monastery and is succeeded by his Southern Ui Niall rival, Mael Sechnaill mac Domnhall of the ‘Clann Colmann’ (grandson of ‘High King’ Donchad ‘Donn’. If the latter and his stepfather Olaf ‘Cuaran’ of Dublin are allies this soon ends, as Olaf summons aid from the Vikings of the Hebrides and the Isle of Man and attacks Midhe; Mael Sechnaill defeats him in a major battle at the ‘Hill of Tara’, the ancient seat of the ‘High Kings’, where the Dublin army is decimated and Olaf’s son and heir Ragnald/

Rognvald is killed. Mael Sechnaill marches on Dublin and after a three-day siege takes and sacks it; the inhabitants are forced to pay tribute and the slaves are freed.

Olaf 'Cuaran' either abdicates or is forced to abdicate by his angry subjects, and retires to the monastery of Iona; he is succeeded by his younger son Gluniarn ('Iron-Knee' in Norse), half-brother of Mael Sechnaill.

FRANCE/GERMANY

Treaty of Margut-sur-Chiers (Ardennes) restores peace between Lothar of France and Otto II on the basis of the 'status quo', with Lothar abandoning his claims to Lotharingia. This puts Lothar at odds with his greatest vassal Hugh 'Capet', who takes the disputed town of Montreuil in retaliation.

ITALY

Pope Benedict is driven out of Rome in a revolt inspired by ex-Pope Boniface, who returns from Byzantine Southern Italy.

Autumn. Otto II and his entourage arrive in Pavia for an expedition to Rome. Gerbert of Aurillac arrives in Rome from Rheims with archbishop Adalbero for a synod; he joins his old pupil Otto II at Ravenna for Christmas and is invited by him to debate with the leading German scholar Otric, head of the imperial school at Magdeburg; Otto decides to employ Gerbert in the Church.

981

ITALY

Spring. Otto II in central Italy for a prolonged stay; (Easter Sunday) he and Theophano enter Rome. He reasserts German power in Southern Italy, and organises establishment of archbishopric of Salerno as independent of Byzantine Bari; ex-Pope Boniface flees to Bari. Otto also reinvigorates Italian monasticism, aided by abbot Maiolus of Cluny.

BRITAIN

A Viking fleet sacks Padstow in Cornwall and raids along the coasts of Cornwall and Devon.

IRELAND/BRITAIN

Death at Iona of the ex-king Olaf 'Cuaran' Sihtricson of Dublin, former ruler of York; he is probably aged over seventy.

SPAIN

Civil war in the Caliphate of Cordoba between the co-regent Ghalib and his more aggressively anti-Christian rival, the treasurer Mohammed ibn Abi Amir ('Al Mansur'/Almanzor); Ghalib calls on his allies, king Ramiro of Vigeura (part of Pamplona/Aragon), half-brother of king Sancho II of Pamplona/Aragon, and count Garcia Fernandez of Castile for help and is attacked by Al Mansur with a force of tough Berber mercenaries. The latter advance on Ghalib and his allies, and catch them at the castle of San Vicente, identified as that at Torrivicente; (Saturday 8 July) Al Mansur wins a crushing victory over the enemy, killing Ramiro, and Ghalib is killed or commits suicide; Almanzor secures control of the regency and proceeds to sideline the young Caliph, continuing this into his adulthood.

The disaster shakes the rule of the autocratic and centralising king Ramiro in Leon; the nobles of Galicia, led by count Gonzalo Menendez of Portugal, revolt in the name of his cousin Vermudo (II), son of the late king Ordone (III or IV?).

ITALY

Otto II grants the prestigious abbacy of Bobbio in the Apennines, founded by St Columbanus, to his ex-tutor Gerbert of Aurillac; the latter finds the monastery's lands and other resources being 'asset-stripped' by the prior, connected to a local landowning family, and other abuses and complains to Otto and his family of gross inefficiency and corruption.

982

ITALY

Otto II overruns the Lombard principalities and (March) takes Taranto; he defeats the local Arabs (13 July) but the Byzantines ally with them to drive him out.

Emir Al-Qasim of Sicily defeats Otto II's army in battle near Stilo near Croton in Calabria; the emir is killed, but around 4,000 Germans are killed as the Arabs rally and Otto is trapped on nearby seashore and has to swim to a Byzantine ship to escape; his health deteriorates hastening the end of the campaign. News of a Slav revolt in Germany makes him decide to leave Italy.

BRITAIN

Seven Viking ships raid Portland in Dorset. Attack up the Thames and sack of London by a Viking fleet.

Deaths of ealdormen Aethelmaer of Hampshire and Edwin of Sussex, and of abbesses Herelufu of Shaftesbury and Wulfwynn of Wareham (both Dorset).

Hywel of Gwynedd is apparently an ally of earl Aelfhere of Mercia in a subsequent joint war against his cousin Owain of Deheubarth, possibly intending to restore a joint kingdom with his help. Aelfhere ravages Breichiniog and then Owain's son Einion's lands, which probably adjoin the latter's sporadic target of Gower/Gwyr.

IRELAND

King Domnall of Leinster and his Viking ally Ivarr of Waterford are defeated by 'High King' Mael Sechnaill, ruler of Midhe.

'Prestige' raid by 'High King' Mael Sechnaill, ruler of Midhe and head of 'Clann Colmann' (the Southern Ui Niall), into Munster to remind its new ruler Brian of the power of the Ui Niall and 'warn off' any attack on Midhe. The raiders symbolically chop down the sacred tree of Mag Adair at the coronation-place of the kings of Munster as an insult.

NORWAY

Traditional date (sagas) of the future king Olaf Tryggvason, possibly a cousin of the late king Harald 'Greycloak', now a Baltic adventurer, marrying queen Geira of the Wends (Pomeranian coast), daughter of king Borislav, and becoming her consort for the next few years until her death; he thus builds up a Viking-Wendish force to help him contend for the Norse throne in the early 990s.

FRANCE

King Lothar reasserts the monarchy's interest in South-West France, by marrying off his son Louis (aged around fifteen) to the much older Adelaide-Blanche of Anjou, sister of count Geoffrey 'Greymantle' and widow of (1) the late count Stephen of Gevaudan and Forez, for whose sons (and now grandson) she is regent of that territory (2) count William of Toulouse. Louis and Adelaide-Blanche are crowned as 'King and Queen of Aquitaine' at Brioude by the latter's brother Guy, bishop of Le Puy, but the marriage soon breaks down.

SPAIN

15 October. Coronation at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela of the rebel king Vermudo II of Galicia, as challenger to his cousin Ramiro III of Leon; masterminded by his patron and possible uncle, count Gonzalo Menendez of Portugal.

BRITAIN

Death of ealdorman Aelfhere of Mercia, probable 'strongman' of the teenage king Aethelred's government; succeeded by Aelfric.

Approximate date of the murder at Stromness, Orkney of Jarl Havard, by his nephew Einar ‘Oily-Tongue’ – allegedly put up to it by his lover, the Jarl’s wife Ragnhild. She then abandons him and his hopes of power to marry Havard’s next brother, Liot.

FRANCE

Collapse of the marriage of co-king Louis (V) of France, heir of Lothar, and Adelaide-Blanche of Anjou, dowager countess of Gevaudan and Toulouse; they are divorced at her insistence and Lothar plans to seize her to stop her marrying anyone hostile to him, but count William of Provence assists her in escaping to his lands and marries her.

ITALY/GERMANY

May. Otto II, back in Lombardy, makes his two-year-old son Otto III co-ruler of Italy at a Diet at Verona. He also restores the disgraced ex-duke Henry of Carinthia to his duchy, replacing his own nephew Otto of Worms. Otto III then leaves for Aachen to be crowned as co-Emperor.

10 July. Death of Pope Benedict VII; *December* Peter Canepanova, bishop of Pavia, arch-chancellor of Italy, is elected as Otto II’s candidate as abbot Maiolus of Cluny turns the offer of the Papacy down, and takes the title of John XIV.

7 December. Death of Otto II at Rome from malaria, aged twenty-eight; Empress-mother Theophano regent for two-year-old son Otto III, who is in Aachen for his coronation, and takes the court back to Germany.

25 December. Coronation of Otto III at Aachen – as king of both Germany (by archbishop Willigis of Mainz) and Italy (by archbishop John of Ravenna) in one ceremony, implying their effective union.

984 ITALY/?FRANCIA/GERMANY

Lothar of France allies with Otto II’s ambitious cousin duke Henry of Bavaria, who has been put under arrest by Otto but has just been released on Otto’s death by his captor bishop Folkmar of Utrecht, against the regency for Otto III.

Henry issues propaganda claiming his right to the regency as Otto III’s closest male kinsman and able to lead in war unlike Theophano; he persuades archbishop Warin of Cologne to hand Otto III over and takes him off to Saxony.

April. Boniface VII, supplied with Byzantine funds, returns to Rome; ‘patrician’ John Crescentius deposes and imprisons Pope John XIV and restores him.

With his patron Otto II dead and the local nobles out to target him for his exposing their ‘rackets’ to the imperial government, Gerbert of Aurillac flees Bobbio monastery to the imperial court at Pavia; he joins Theophano as she heads back to Germany and goes on to Rheims to resume teaching there. He and his archbishop Adalbero then come up with a plan to lure king Lothar of Francia into helping Theophano defeat Henry ‘the Wrangler’ by offering Lothar the guardianship of Otto III.

Easter. Henry ‘the Wrangler’ holds court at Quedlinburg, the Ottonian family residence/imperial monastery, but alienates magnates and bishops by his arrogance and vindictive treatment of ex-foes; he faces desertions and negotiates with Theophano and her mother-in-law Dowager Empress Adelaide at Rohr in Thuringia. Later in the year he agrees to hand over Otto III to Theophano in return for concessions such as full ducal rank.

SPAIN

Deposition and exile of king Ramiro III of Leon, in an invasion from Galicia by his rebel cousin Vermudo II and the latter’s noble backers led by count Gonzalo Menendez of Portugal which Almanzor backs.

BRITAIN

1 August. Death of (St) Aethelwold, bishop of Winchester and probable ecclesiastical mainstay of the regency for king Aethelred as an ally of his mother Elfrida; possibly this leaves archbishop/St Dunstan and the remaining ‘Church party’ in a weaker position at court as foes of the king’s accession in 978.

IRELAND

King Domnhall ‘Claen’ of Leinster, head of the ‘Ua Dunchada’ branch of the long-ruling ‘Ua Dunlainge’ dynasty, is killed by the latter’s old rivals for predominance in Leinster, the ‘Ui Cennsalaig’ dynasty; he is succeeded by his son Donnchad.

ITALY

20 August. Death of John XIV.

BRITAIN

October. Appointment of the new bishop of Winchester – Aelfheah, later archbishop of Canterbury (and martyr), abbot of Bath and probably originally a hermit, allegedly from Weston near Bath.

985 | GERMANY

Henry ‘the Wrangler’ does homage to Otto III at Frankfurt as the reconciled factions meet for a royal assembly to confirm their agreement. The government is headed by Theophano as regent and by archbishop Willigis of Mainz as arch-chancellor.

Traditional approximate date of the death of queen Geira of the Wends (Pomerania), three years after marrying the Norse adventurer Olaf Tryggvason; some time in the next few years Olaf leaves the Baltic for the Hebrides.

SPAIN/FRANCE

June. Death in exile of the deposed ex-king Ramiro III of Leon, aged twenty-four; his son Ordono is excluded from the succession by his cousin and successor Vermudo II.

Almanzor invades Catalonia and sacks Barcelona, which joins Leon as a fearful dependent ally of the Caliphate. Count Borrell of Barcelona sends in vain to his overlord king Lothar of France, currently at Verdun, for help; Lothar’s failure leads to Barcelona turning away from its Francian links and to archbishop Adalbero of Rheims, who was nominated to that see by Otto I and is suspected of German links, quarrelling with Lothar and intriguing with his rival Emperor Otto II.

ITALY

July. ‘Pope’ Boniface VII dies; *August* John Crescentius organises election of his candidate as Pope John XV.

BRITAIN

Earl Aelfric of Mercia is sacked and exiled for unknown reasons, possibly a first sign of (erratic) initiative and suspicion of his magnates by king Aethelred.

Death in battle of king Hywel of Gwynedd/Powys against the English of Mercia; succeeded by his brother Cadwaladr.

Approximate date of the execution of the husband-murdering princess Ragnhild of Norway by her third husband and intended next victim, Jarl Liot of Orkney (later ‘Orkneyinga Saga’ version of events). Having presumably alienated her kin in Norway by this act, he has to come to an accommodation with his predatory neighbour king Kenneth II of Scots and accept his nominee, Liot’s younger brother Skuli, as his deputy in his mainland domains, Caithness, but later kills him.

GERMANY

(Into 986) War between the German regency and the Slav tribe of the Liutzi, East of the Elbe, who have been in revolt since Otto II's death in 983; Theophano brings in duke Mieszko of Poland to attack them in the rear.

986

FRANCE

February. Archbishop Adalbero of Rheims is charged with treason by king Lothar due to his intriguing with Otto II; he is summoned to his surprise to an assembly at Compiègne and put on trial, but the meeting breaks up as his ally Hugh 'Capet' advances on the town with an army to rescue him.

2 March. Death of king Lothar at Laon, aged around forty-five, after a thirty-two-year reign, with the possibility of poisoning due to violent stomach cramps; succeeded by his son by Emma of Italy (daughter of Lothar II), Louis V, aged around nineteen. She is the daughter of the German Empress Adelaide by her first, Italian marriage and her ally Gerbert of Aurillac writes to Adelaide assuring that the talk of her affair with Adalbero's nephew the bishop of Laon is false.

Louis V reconciles with Adalbero of Rheims, but only temporarily.

GERMANY/POLAND

Duke Mieszko of Poland follows up his help to the imperial regency in defeating the Liutzi tribe by coming to the imperial court at Quedlinburg for the Easter ceremonies; he does homage to Otto III and presents him with a camel.

BRITAIN

A dispute between king Aethelred and the Church leads to him ravaging the lands of the bishopric of Rochester, apparently to punish the see for opposing him. This may be an indication of his continuing the 'anti-monastic' stand (in the form of opposing the large-scale grants of secular lands to the Church) of his mother and her ally Aelfhere of Mercia in the mid-late 970s, or of a decline in Church influence on him after the death of his mother's ally St/bishop Aethelwold of Winchester. St Dunstan pays king Aethelred 100 pounds of silver to end his dispute with and intimidation of the bishopric of Rochester.

Abdication of king Owain of Deheubarth after a reign of thirty-six years; succeeded by his elder son, Maredudd, who attacks and kills his rival, king Cadwaladr of Gwynedd, to restore the union of all Wales (except Gwent/Morgannwg). The outcome suggests that he buys off Cadwaladr's

nephew Cynan ap Hywel by promising him the succession, ‘cutting out’ his own nephews.

Approximate date of Jarl Liot’s invasion of mainland Orkney after killing its ‘mormaer’, his brother Skuli; he is killed in battle attacking Ross by the ‘mormaer’ of Moray to the South, Maelbrigde, at Skidmore. His surviving brother Hlodvir succeeds him.

987

BRITAIN

Devastation of Mon, whose surviving inhabitants are evacuated by king Maredudd, by Guthfrith’s Viking invaders. Guthfrith and his ‘Black Host’ (Welsh annals description) subsequently attack assorted Welsh shrines from Llanbadarn in Dyfed to Llanilltud Fawr in Morgannwg over the next year.

FRANCE

Louis V reopens the investigation into archbishop Adalbero of Rheims for plotting with the Ottonians, but (21 March) is killed hunting near Senlis before trial can proceed, aged around twenty.

The end of Carolingian rule in West Francia is the result, but this does not seem inevitable at the time as the family have lost the throne and regained it before; an election meeting council is held at Senlis, as described by monk chronicler Richer of St Remi (Rheims), a protégé of anti-Carolingian participant Gerbert of Aurillac so possibly untrustworthy on details. Louis’ uncle Charles of lower Lotharingia, a vassal of the kingdom’s foe Otto II, is excluded as archbishop Adalbero of Rheims denounces him for a lack of honour, for marrying a woman of lower rank, and defecting to take allegiance to the Ottonians. He and the learned bishop Gerbert of Aurillac, the leading figures in the Church, successfully persuade the council to elect Hugh ‘Capet’ as king instead as he has the greatest resources in the kingdom and nobility and vigour are needed more than a blood relationship. Bretons, Normans, Aquitanians and Goths (i.e. Septimanians)/Spaniards (Barcelona?) also involved and recognise Hugh.

3 July. Election and coronation at Laon of Hugh (aged around forty-seven) as king of Francia. Hugh presses for his son Robert to be made co-ruler on the grounds that it will add to stability and provide for a smooth succession if he dies on his planned expedition to Barcelona to aid the hard-pressed count Borrell against the Cordoban armies; Adalbero opposes it but has to give way. Hugh and Adalbero send Gerbert of Aurillac to Theophano in Germany to win her backing for the change of dynasty; she agrees provided that Verdun is handed over.

25 December. Robert (II) is crowned as co-ruler of Francia, aged around twenty-seven.

988

FRANCE/GERMANY

May. Charles of Lower Lotharingia/Lorraine, as the excluded Carolingian heir, invades Francia to seize the major royal residence town of Laon from the new king Hugh, capturing Louis V's mother Emma of France and her alleged paramour bishop Asclein there; he is aided by Louis V's illegitimate half-brother Arnulf, a cleric; this prevents Hugh from marching to aid count Borrell of Barcelona. Hugh calls a Church Council and has Charles excommunicated.

?March/April. Hugh marries off his son and co-ruler Robert to Rozala (aka Susanna), daughter of the late king Berengar II of Italy (d. 966) and recently widowed wife of the late count Arnulf II of Flanders; she is regent of Flanders for her son so this brings Flanders into Hugh's sphere of influence. Possibly Ponthieu is her dowry and goes to Robert.

Hugh fails to recapture Laon.

BRITAIN

A Viking raid up the Bristol Channel on Watchet, Somerset; the Devon 'thegn' Goda is killed and his force is defeated.

19 May. Death of St Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, at Canterbury, on the Saturday of the Feast of the Ascension, aged around seventy-nine. He is succeeded by bishop Aethelgar of Selsey, protégé of the former bishop/St Aethelwold of Winchester and well-known to the king as abbot of the New Minster at the city (which he possibly still is at this point). His consecration is probably November or December, as it is thirteen months before he dies in February 990.

IRELAND/?BRITAIN

Approximate date (C12th sagas tradition) of the future king of Norway, Olaf Tryggvason, arriving in Dublin or Viking lands in 'Britain' (?Norse settlements in Cumbria or Lancashire) to marry the sister of the late king Olaf 'Cuaran' of Dublin, defeating a rival warlord in a ritual 'holmgang' i.e. 'duel of the champions'.

SPAIN

Almanzor invades Leon and sacks the eponymous capital as a major propaganda triumph for the Caliphate of Cordoba.

989

FRANCIA

King Hugh buys off Arnulf with the archbishopric of Rheims after (23 January) the veteran intriguer archbishop Adalbero dies, annoying

Gerbert of Aurillac who expected to win the see and is beaten to it by his own ex-student; empress-mother Theophano of Germany mediates.

BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of Jarl Hlodvir, last son of Thorfinn ‘Skull-Splitter’, and accession of his son Sigurd ‘the Stout’ who soon regains control of rebel Caithness from the local lords who killed his father’s governor earlier.

IRELAND

Death of king Gluniarn, Viking ruler of Dublin; succeeded by his half-brother Sihtric ‘Silkenbeard’, son of Olaf ‘Cuaran’ (d. 981) and the Leinster princess Gormflaith who has now remarried to ‘High King’ Mael Sechnaill. In effect Sihtric is a junior ally of his stepfather.

FRANCE/GERMANY

New archbishop Arnulf of Rheims defects from Hugh ‘Capet’ to his own uncle Charles of Lower Lorraine and (September) hands over Rheims to him; duke Conrad of Burgundy and count Odo of Blois (a descendant of Charlemagne too, via an illegitimate line) also recognise Charles as rightful king of France. Gerbert of Aurillac supports Charles for the moment, but is soon condemning his partisan Arnulf as a brigand and complaining of him to the Pope.

ITALY

December. Empress-mother and regent Theophano visits Rome for the anniversary of Otto II’s death; apparently on this visit she becomes influenced by a new court adviser, the ambitious archbishop John (Philagethus) of Piacenza the future Pope, who turns her against her mother-in-law Adelaide.

990

BRITAIN

13 February. Death of archbishop Aethelgar of Canterbury. He is succeeded by Sigeric ‘Serio’ (‘the Serious?’), a former Glastonbury abbey monk and abbot of St Augustine’s, Canterbury (probably a protégé of St Dunstan at both places) and current bishop of Ramsbury, Wiltshire. The latter see now goes to his eventual successor as archbishop, Aelfric (a monk of Abingdon and abbot of St Albans).

Attack on coastal Southern Dyfed by the exiled Deheubarth prince Edwin ap Einion, nephew of king Maredudd, and his English allies; their fleet goes on to ravage Mon/Anglesey.

FRANCE

May. Hugh holds a synod at Senlis to condemn Arnulf of Rheims, and Gerbert of Aurillac flees secretly from Rheims to join in; they ask the Pope to depose Arnulf to no avail.

Hugh rebuilds his army and attacks Laon, but cautiously avoids battle as Charles advances with a larger army; mediation resumes but Odo of Blois defects from Charles to Hugh.

ITALY

Death of margrave Conrad of Ivrea, son of Berengar II and imperial governor of NE Italy and the Hungarian frontier; succeeded by his kinsman Arduin, great-nephew of Berengar II.

991

ITALY

Death of Empress-mother and regent Theophano of Germany, niece of John Tzimiskes.

Peter Orseolo becomes Doge of Venice; an ambitious ruler, determined to establish dynasty in defiance of oligarchic tradition of city.

FRANCE

Bishop Ascelin of Laon, supposedly mediating between Hugh and Charles in the Francian succession dispute, visits his town of Laon to hold talks with Charles and Arnulf there but ends up arresting them; he holds them hostage and neutralises their army, which aids Hugh.

Arnulf is released as proper for a cleric, but the Northern Francian magnates and bishops backing Charles now turn in Hugh's favour as Charles is now a prisoner of Hugh's. Odo of Blois however offers no military help despite a promise in return for which he received Dreux, and seizes Melun too; Hugh evicts him by force.

June. Hugh has Arnulf put on trial for treason at the council of St Basle-de-Vierzy; the respected abbot of Fleury argues for the Pope's right to conduct such a trial as Arnulf is his not Hugh's vassal, but bishop Arnulf of Orleans attacks the corrupt and unreliable Papacy and the bishops agree to depose Arnulf; he is replaced by the more holy, learned, and respectable Gerbert of Aurillac. The Pope protests to no avail.

BRITAIN

Commencement of the major Viking attacks on Britain – possibly encouraged by the cash-strapped Aethelred reducing or abolishing his father's navy. How much of Aethelred's subsequent military failure was due to a loss of nerve, as opposed to excessive caution, is open to question,

but the raiders grow in boldness year by year. The Scandinavian attacks commence with a descent on South-East England, attack on Folkestone in Kent, and landing in the Thames estuary by an uncertain commander, probably (as said by the Corpus Christi College Cambridge version of the ASC) the roving Norwegian jarl/prince and potential king Olaf Tryggvason or (less likely) the current king Swein ‘Forkbeard’ of Denmark.

Ealdorman Byrtnoth of Essex mounts a strong military resistance and advances on the Vikings who are encamped on Mersea Island; he camps across the causeway from it on the mainland at Maldon. The contemporary ‘Song of Maldon’ describes the battle in detail, but may have exaggerated some facts to suit its epic tone; the Vikings allegedly refuse to fight unless they are allowed to cross the causeway to the mainland and Byrtnoth accepts (to prevent them sailing off before he can attack and ravaging elsewhere?). The Vikings cross the causeway unmolested and form up, and Byrtnoth attacks but is overwhelmed and killed; most of his bodyguard fall loyally with him.

The Vikings ravage Essex; Aethelred chooses to pay their commander (Olaf?) a large ransom (10,000 pounds) rather than to meet him in battle, allegedly on the advice of archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury. Olaf? moves on from Essex to ravage elsewhere; the coasts are terrorised over the next year or so as more Vikings join in the attacks.

GERMANY/ITALY

15 June. Death of Otto III’s mother and regent Theophano, at Nijmegen; buried at Cologne. She is succeeded as regent by her mother-in-law Adelaide.

SPAIN

November. King Vermudo II of Leon is temporarily deposed (restored autumn 992) by a rebellion led by counts Pelayo Vermudez and Munio Fernandez, showing the current weakness of the monarchy after repeated attacks by Almanzor’s armies.

992

BRITAIN

29 February. Death of archbishop Oswald of York, who is also bishop of Worcester; succeeded after a long vacancy by Ealdwulf, abbot of Peterborough, whose abbacy passes to Cenwulf.

Death of ealdorman Aethelwine of East Anglia, son of the late Athelstan ‘Half-King’, former brother-in-law of Aethelred’s mother Elfrida, and last of that dynasty to hold great power in Eastern England.

Aethelred brings together a large fleet at London, probably to deal with an attack on the Thames estuary and Kent. Ealdorman Aelfric of Hampshire and earl Thored of Northumbria are in command and a plan is drawn up to trap the Viking fleet. Ealdorman Aelfric warns the Vikings ahead of the subsequent confrontation, enabling them to evade a trap, and then himself abandons his position the night before battle; the Vikings later defeat a force of ships from East Anglia and London and capture the commander's warship. This mixture of timidity and treachery among Aethelred's senior advisers is to become endemic.

In Scotland, approximate date of the second battle of Skidmore in the far North: 'Mormaer' Findlaech of Moray, father of the later king Macbeth, recovers control of Caithness from the Vikings of Orkney.

FRANCE/ITALY

December. Pope John refuses an invitation from Hugh to come to France and sort out the question of who is rightful archbishop of Rheims, hopefully Gerbert, and continues to back Arnulf instead as advised by Abbo of Fleury.

993

BRITAIN

The Vikings ravage Northumbria, sacking Bamburgh and then moving on to the Humber estuary to raid Yorkshire and Lindsey; the English commanders flee from the subsequent battle and their troops are defeated. Aethelred has Aelfgar, son of ealdorman Aelfric, blinded.

FRANCE/SPAIN

Death of count Borrell II of Barcelona, aged probably in his mid to late sixties; succeeded by his son, Ramon Borrell, aged twenty-one, who marries Ermesinde of Carcassonne.

The synod of Chelles defies Papal authority, e.g. in the case of sacked archbishop Arnulf of Rheims, and agrees that if the Pope contradicts Scripture his decisions are invalid.

Death in prison at Orleans of Charles of Lower Lotharingia/Lorraine, uncle of Louis V and challenger to king Hugh; succeeded in his duchy by his son Otto, as a German vassal.

Alliance of the ambitious count Odo of Blois, who is suspected of wanting to hand Francia over to Otto III in return for a promise of a role as his 'duke of the Franks' i.e. deputy, and dukes Richard II of Normandy and William of Aquitaine, against king Hugh and his ally count Fulk 'Nerra' of Anjou.

994 | BRITAIN

Olaf Tryggvason links up with king Swein ‘Forkbeard’ of Denmark to lead a large fleet up the Thames estuary. They fail in an attack on London (8 September) but ravage Kent where archbishop Sigeric pays them a ransom to leave Canterbury alone. They then ravage the coasts from East Anglia round Kent and Sussex West to Hampshire, and take horses to plunder inland.

Faced with the enemy encamped at Southampton for the winter, Aethelred pays them 16,000 pounds to leave and endeavours to bind their commander as an ally like Alfred had done with Guthrum. A treaty is agreed; Aethelred requires Olaf to come to his camp at Andover inland to be baptised (or re-baptised if he is already a Christian) and swear to leave his kingdom alone. Olaf leaves and heads to ?Ireland in pursuit of more land, treasure, and followers, but more loot-hungry Viking captains start to follow his precedent to ravage England until they are paid off.

28 October. Death of archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury.

FRANCIA

Count Odo of Blois agrees peace with king Hugh.

ITALY/GERMANY

Bishop John (Philagathus) of Piacenza in Lombardy, a Calabrian (i.e. Byzantine subject) and Otto III’s tutor, also abbot of Nomentana, is sent by the German government to Constantinople to open talks concerning an imperial bride for Otto III. As senior Emperor Basil II is unmarried this will mean one of his brother Constantine (VIII)’s daughters, now in their teens.

995 | BRITAIN

21 April. A royal council at Amesbury, Wiltshire agrees to the appointment of Aelfric of Abingdon, bishop of Ramsbury, as archbishop of Canterbury; he also continues to hold the see of Ramsbury.

King Kenneth II of Scots dies; accession of Constantine III, son of his predecessor Cuilean (Colin). He is called ‘the Bald’ by later writer Andrew of Fordun.

Olaf Tryggvason, en route from Ireland to Norway with his Dublin Viking recruits to claim the kingship and Christianise the kingdom by force, calls in at Orkney – allegedly a former dependency of the kingdom of Norway – to enforce vassalage on Jarl Sigurd. He summons Sigurd to his warship and tells him to become a Christian (which he does) or be executed.

NORWAY

Olaf Tryggvason conquers the kingdom, traditionally killing its principal regional ruler 'Jarl' Haakon; he starts to convert it to Christianity.

ITALY

Spring. Pope John XV flees Rome due to the aggression of the Crescentii family; he appeals to Otto.

FRANCIA

2 June. Synod of Meuzon on the question of the archbishopric of Rheims; legate Abbot Leo of the monastery of St Alessio (Rome) presides for the Pope, and king Hugh and the French bishops do not attend as it is in German territory – apparently as Hugh fears a kidnapping and his subsequent deposition by the German/Blois alliance. Gerbert defends himself as his predecessor Adalbero's choice and accuses Arnulf of simony, but is declared deposed; he and the French bishops refuse to accept this so he is excommunicated and an impasse follows.

996

FRANCE/GERMANY/ITALY

February. Otto III, now acting as an adult sovereign aged fifteen, holds a synod at Ingelheim as the overlord of Lotharingia/Lorraine to sort out the Rheims archbishopric dispute; no success. Otto leaves Regensburg to visit Italy and deal with Crescentius in Rome.

Crescentius invites Pope John back to satisfy Otto and save his position, but the Pope dies (March) soon after his arrival in Rome, as Otto arrives in Pavia. A delegation of Roman clerics goes to Otto at Ravenna to ask for his choice of Pope.

Otto insists on his own cousin Bruno, son of the duke of Carinthia and aged twenty-four, being elected as Pope, the first from North of the Alps; the latter goes to Rome with archbishop Willigis of Mainz and bishop Hildibald of Worms and (3 May) is duly elected; he takes the style of 'Gregory V'.

Otto arrives in Rome; (Feast of the Ascension, 21 May) he is crowned Emperor by the Pope, with Gerbert of Aurillac in attendance. The latter becomes Otto's secretary, but Gregory refuses to accept him as archbishop of Rheims and backs Arnulf. Otto refuses to return the 'Pentapolis' towns of the Romagna to the Papacy, and when he banishes Crescentius, Gregory pardons the latter.

August. Otto returns to Pavia and thence to Germany, refusing Gregory's plea for military help.

FRANCIA

Death of the unreliable count Odo I of Blois, challenger to Hugh ‘Capet’; succeeded by his under-age sons Odo II and Theobald so this ends the Blois threat, but to Hugh’s embarrassment his own son Robert is involved with Odo I’s wife/widow Bertha.

24 October. Death of king Hugh ‘Capet’ after a reign of nine years and three months, aged around fifty-six; succeeded by his son Robert II, aged probably thirty-six. Robert, separated from his wife Rozala of Italy/Flanders, tries to divorce her to marry his mistress Bertha of Blois.

ITALY

October. Crescentius drives Gregory out of Rome; he flees to the duchy of Spoleto, as Otto told him to seek help there if needed, but cannot get troops so he goes on to Lombardy.

997

ITALY/FRANCE

February. While the exiled Gregory V holds a synod at Pavia and excommunicates Crescentius, bishop John Philagathus of Piacenza (in office from 988), a Calabrian and former tutor of Otto III who has recently returned from his 994–6 embassy to Constantinople, goes from Lombardy to Rome with Eastern Emperor Basil II’s support.

John is elected Pope John XVI, aided by Crescentius; the Byzantine ambassador bishop Leo of Synnada, who accompanies John to Italy, writes confidently to Basil of separating Rome from Germany, but Otto prepares an invasion to restore Gregory.

POLAND

23 April. Martyrdom in East Prussia of the German (Bohemian by birth) missionary bishop (St) Adalbert of Gneszno, a close colleague of Otto III and invited by him to evangelise the local Slavs; he is killed by pagan Poles while saying Mass in a sacred grove and is regarded as a martyr, which is backed by the local duke Boleslaw (I) of Poland who retrieves his body for a shrine.

NORWAY

Traditional date of the founding of Trondjheim as the new main administrative seat of the kings of Norway, by Olaf Tryggvason.

ITALY/GERMANY

May. Gregory declares Arnulf the legitimate archbishop of Rheims.

June. Having failed to win any support in Rome, Gerbert joins Otto III at Magdeburg and is later invited to stay on as his teacher.

SPAIN

Almanzor stages a major propaganda success for the Caliphate by marching his army into Galicia (part of the kingdom of Leon) and sacking the great Christian shrine of Santiago de Compostela; he carries off the cathedral's bells as trophies to be recast as lanterns and used in the great mosque of Cordoba.

FRANCE

King Robert marries Bertha of Blois, with archbishop Archimbaud of Orleans performing the ceremony; as they are third cousins Pope Gregory refuses permission and excommunicates him, condemning the majority of the French Church for allowing the marriage.

HUNGARY

Death of king Géza; succeeded by son (St) Stephen, who converts Hungary to Christianity.

BRITAIN

The Vikings raid up the Bristol Channel, along the coasts of Devon as far as Watchet and in South Wales opposite; then they head back into the English Channel via Penwith to sail up the Tamar and sack Lydford. They then burn the monastery at Tavistock.

After an eighteen-month reign, king Constantine III of Scots is killed in a revolt by an obscure 'Cinaed (Kenneth) mac Malcolm'. The throne is seized by Kenneth III, son of king Dubh, who later associates his own son Giric as co-ruler in a breach of the normal practice of naming a cousin as heir to appease rival branches of the royal family.

IRELAND

Meeting near Clonfert between Brian 'Borumha' of Munster and the other principal military power in Ireland, 'High King' Mael Sechnaill. They agree a division of Ireland into two spheres of influence, the North (historically 'Conn's Half' of Ireland by a traditional story of an earlier division) for Mael Sechnaill and the South ('Mog's Half') for Brian. Brian hands over his hostages from Connacht to its overlord Mael Sechnaill, and the latter hands over his hostages from Leinster and Dublin to Brian. Mael Morda of Leinster is thus abandoned by Midhe to control by Leinster's long-term foe Munster, and probably now starts to plot retaliation.

ITALY/GERMANY

Summer. Too busy in Germany to invade Italy yet, Otto writes angrily to his ex-tutor ‘Pope’ John denouncing his treachery and ambition and being a puppet of Crescentius; John prevents his ambassadors leaving but promises to submit.

998 ITALY/FRANCE

February. Otto III and army enter Rome and re-install Pope Gregory V as John XVI flees; John is captured at an isolated fortress by count Berthold of Breisgau, taken to a monastery, blinded and mutilated, and *May* formally deposed by a synod. Crescentius holds out in the fortress of Castle St Angelo in Rome and on its surrender is beheaded on the battlements.

Gregory suspends the French bishops who defied him by consecrating Gerbert as archbishop of Rheims; (22 April) Otto persuades Gregory to compensate Gerbert with the archbishopric of Ravenna.

BRITAIN

The Vikings raid up the River Frome in Dorset and then into Hampshire and Sussex, i.e. moving East along the South coast from their attacks on Devon in 997. They use the Isle of Wight as a base.

999 ITALY

18 February. Death of Pope Gregory XV, of malaria; Otto III secures election of his tutor Gerbert of Aurillac (2 April), who takes title of Sylvester II in emulation of Constantine I’s Pope.

BRITAIN

The Vikings sail round Kent to raid up the Medway to Rochester. The locals resist but are outnumbered due to lack of outside help and lose the subsequent battle.

Death of king Maredudd ap Owain of Deheubarth and Gwynedd/Powys after a thirteen-year reign; succeeded to all these kingdoms by the heir of Gwynedd/Powys, Cynan ap Hywel, not by his own Deheubarth kin (his nephews Edwin and Cadell ap Einion) who he presumably disinherits in a family feud.

SPAIN

Death of king Vermudo II of Leon (accession 982/4) after a decline due to gout which kept him from riding and made him travel by litter in his last months; he dies at Villanueva del Bierzo and is buried at his own

monastery of Carracedo, founded by him to protect pilgrims on the pilgrimage trail to Santiago and sacked by Almanzor in 997; succeeded by Alfonso V, his son by his second wife Elvira (daughter of the count of Castile). Alfonso is only five, so his tutor/guardian, count Meendo Gonzalez of Portugal, is regent with Elvira, possibly soon eclipsing and exiling the latter from court.

GERMANY

December. Death of Otto III's grandmother and ex-regent and Otto I's second wife, Empress Adelaide.

IRELAND

Rebellion of king Mael Morda against his unwanted overlord and his sister Gormflaith's current husband, Brian of Munster; he is joined by his neighbour, Gormflaith's son by her first marriage, the Viking king Sihtric 'Silkenbeard' of Dublin. The Leinster-Dublin coalition marches into County Kildare and faces Brian and his ally, 'High King' Mael Sechnaill (ruler of Midhe).

Thursday 30 December. Battle of Glenmama ('Gleann Mama', 'Glen of the Gap'), identified as probably Lyons Hill near Ardcrough on the County Dublin/Kildare border. Brian and Mael Sechlainn defeat the combined army of Mael Morda of Leinster and Sihtric of Dublin, who suffer heavy casualties, and then Brian advances on Dublin.

31 December. Brian's army arrives outside Dublin.

1000 IRELAND

1 January. Sack of Dublin by Brian's Munster army; the town and the wood North of the Liffey are set afire, and the Viking kingdom of Dublin is reduced to a subordinate ally of Munster. Brian then leaves Dublin for home (either 5 January or 1 February).

ITALY/GERMANY/POLAND

January. Crossing the Brenner Pass in midwinter, Otto heads across Germany to Poland for a ceremonial barefoot visit to the shrine of his late ally bishop (St) Adalbert at Gneszno; he is joined by local duke Boleslaw, who then accompanies him back to Germany to become his vassal and ally.

May. Pope Sylvester has to flee from the town of Orte back to Rome after a riot, instigated by the Crescentii family, breaks out during a Papal Mass.

June. Otto returns to Italy.

‘Doge’ Peter Orseolo of Venice leads fleet down Dalmatian coast to assert authority over former Byzantine ports there, now threatened by Samuel of Bulgaria, by agreement with Basil.

Otto III sets up residence in Rome as self-conscious emulator of Roman Emperors, but is not popular with citizens.

BRITAIN

The main Viking fleet crosses the Channel to Normandy where duke Richard II apparently allows them to stay.

Aethelred’s only recorded major personal contribution to the current crises in frequently-raided England – a large-scale land and naval campaign in Cumbria. This is evidently to secure or regain control of it from Scotland or Strathclyde. Even then his fleet, based at Chester, does not operate adequately in this campaign but manages to raid the Isle of Man. Possibly he is building up their confidence ahead of a Viking war.

NORWAY/DENMARK

September. (or 999?) Battle of Svolder: king Olaf Tryggvason is ambushed at sea off the island of Oresund while returning from an expedition to the land of the Wends in Pomerania, whose ex-queen Thyra (sister of king Swein ‘Forkbeard’ of Denmark) he has married. Her ex-husband, a local king, confiscated her lands after she fled his court, so Olaf is trying to reconquer them; he is ambushed by Swein, who arranged his sister’s Wendish marriage and did not want it to end, and the vengeful Norwegian jarl Erik of Lade (later Swein’s son Cnut’s governor of Northumbria in England) whose father Haakon was killed by Olaf. Olaf is defeated by a large fleet, and traditionally jumps overboard from his flagship the ‘Long Serpent’ to evade capture; he is presumed dead and Swein takes over Norway, installing Erik as his governor.

1001 ITALY

January. Otto III hands over the eight counties of ‘Pentapolis’ to Pope Sylvester to expand Papal states, while making it clear that he does not accept ‘Donation of Constantine’.

February. Otto is besieged on the Aventine by rioting Romans, apparently inspired by his nominal ‘admiral’ Gregory of Tsuculum, and with most of his troops away with duke Henry of Bavaria he has to lead a successful defence; when the rioters clam down he reproaches them for their unworthiness of their Roman heritage. He leaves the city to go on a ‘low-key’ personal visit to Venice, and to summon a new army from Germany; Sylvester accompanies him.

Sylvester sends a royal crown to king Stephen I of Hungary.

BRITAIN

The Hampshire county levies are defeated coming to the aid of their neighbours in West Sussex, and the Vikings raid inland to ‘Athelings’ Valley’ at West Dean North of Chichester. They lose more men than the English in the subsequent battle (traditionally remembered as being at Kingley Vale) but the English lose eighty-one men and their main commanders – the king’s ‘high-reeves’ Aethelwine and Leofwin, and Godwin of Worthy – and have to retreat. The Vikings then sail West to attack Devon again. One of Aethelred’s commanders, his Danish recruit and brother-in-law Pallig, treats him with disdain in defecting and assists the Viking attack on Kingsteignton; the locals then buy them off and they head up the Exe to Exeter, which holds out so they ravage the countryside. The king’s commanders, Kola and Eadsige, attack them at Pinhoe near Exeter but are routed; the invaders sack Pinhoe and Clyst and return to the Isle of Wight, their base for a raid across the Solent on (Bishop’s) Waltham. The Vikings are then paid off by the locals.

ITALY/BYZANTIUM

Autumn. Basil negotiates with Otto III’s ambassadors; an agreement is reached for marital alliance between Western and Eastern Empires, and Otto is betrothed to co-Emperor Constantine VIII’s daughter Zoe (it is not known if Zoe was yet regarded as ultimate heir to Byzantine throne as elder sister Eudocia disfigured by smallpox and in nunnery).

Autumn/Winter. Archbishop Arnulf of Milan arrives in Constantinople to escort Zoe to Italy to marry Otto III.

1002 ITALY/GERMANY

23 *January.* Emperor Otto III, en route to Rome with troops, dies of malaria at Paterno, aged twenty-two; his fiancée Zoe arrives in Italy to learn of his death at Bari and returns to Constantinople.

Pope Sylvester returns to Rome; margrave Arduin of Ivrea seizes the rule of Northern Italy as ‘King of Italy’, being elected as such by the magnates at Pavia and crowned by archbishop Arnulf of Milan. The latter escorts him around Lombardy, but archbishop Frederick of Milan complains to the Pope that Arduin is still excommunicate for his 997 murder of the bishop of Vercelli.

Venetian fleet sent by Doge Peter Orseolo saves Bari from Moslem pirate attack from Sicily.

Otto III’s cousin Henry of Bavaria claims to be his rightful successor as nearest blood kin, but is opposed by duke Hermann II of Swabia (acceded 997, son of duke Conrad), whose mother may be Reglind the daughter of Otto I’s eldest son Liudolf, and by margrave Eckard of Meissen in

Saxony. Henry intercepts Otto's cortege en route to Aachen at Polling in Austria, and fails to persuade archbishop Heribert of Cologne to hand over the imperial regalia to him so he arrests the latter.

April. Imperial election meeting of a majority of magnates at Aachen led by archbishop Heribert of Cologne, which backs Hermann; Eckard of Meissen is assassinated in Saxony by his enemies. Henry ignores the meeting as he cannot win their backing and heads for Mainz with the support of its archbishop Willigis; Hermann fails to intercept him.

BRITAIN/FRANCE

Aethelred receives Pallig back unpunished but still cannot trust him.

Aethelred makes the decision to buy off the endemic raiding with a huge sum of 24,000 pounds, leading to their main fleet temporarily leaving. He takes a major diplomatic initiative to deny the raiders a safe haven across the Channel for their descents, allying with duke Richard II of Normandy.

Spring. By now widowed with at least five sons, the eldest being Athelstan and the second Edmund (born late 980s?), Aethelred marries Richard's sister Emma (born probably c. 990, as she is allegedly too young for marital relations at first). In return Richard agrees to ban the raiders from using his harbours.

6 May. Death of archbishop Ealdwulf of York, also bishop of Worcester; succeeded in both offices by Wulfstan (I).

GERMANY

9 July. Archbishop Willigis crowns Henry (II) as 'King of the Romans', i.e. of Germany, at Mainz: first German coronation not in Aachen.

Hermann of Swabia refuses to accept this and attacks pro-Henry Strasbourg. Henry goes to Saxony and wins over its duke Bernard with a promise of supporting his autonomous rule of that duchy.

SPAIN

8 August. Death of the chief minister ('hajib') and real ruler of the Caliphate of Cordoba, Almanzor, aged probably in his sixties; succeeded by his elder son, Al-Muzaffar.

GERMANY

10 August. Coronation of Henry's wife Cunigunde at Paderborn, Saxony.
October. Submission of duke Hermann of Swabia to Henry.

FRANCE

Death of duke Henry of Burgundy, uncle of king Robert; the latter proposes to take Burgundy for himself (and in due course his sons) but Henry's own preferred heir, his stepson Odo-William (count of Macon), objects and Robert invades to evict him; civil war follows which Robert wins after some years.

BRITAIN

Aethelred endeavours to rid himself of one supposed threat, that of the Danes resident in England linking up with the unchecked Scandinavian army. He orders the notorious 'St Brices' Day Massacre' (13 November), allegedly of all the Danes in England and presented in retrospect as a concerted effort to wipe the Danes out by simultaneous massacre which predictably failed to kill all its intended victims and only led to a heightening of hostility between English and Danes. The main victim is Pallig. It may not have been as wide-ranging as later believed, as the only recorded massacre is in Oxford; it is probable that many of the Danish-descended settlers in the 'Danelaw' would protect Danish friends and relatives and/or refuse to carry out his orders anyway. The survivors escape demanding vengeance and call in Swein 'Forkbeard' from Denmark.

IRELAND

Joined by his vassals from Leinster and Dublin, Brian and his Munstermen march into Connacht to force the kingdom to hand over hostages to him – thus provocatively taking control of its overlordship from 'High King' Mael Sechnaill, hereditary ruler of the nearby Western Midhe 'Clann Colmann' lands. The Connachtmen have to attend a 'summit' at Athlone to do homage, and Mael Sechnaill and his Midhe vassals are forced to attend too; Mael Sechnaill, outnumbered, obeys and has to abdicate as 'High King' in favour of Brian. The latter thus becomes the first 'High King' from Munster and not from the 'Ui Niall' kindred for over 600 years.

1003

ITALY

12 May. Death of Pope Sylvester (Gerbert of Aurillac), aged around sixty.

John Crescentius, son of the noble executed by Otto III, seizes control of Rome as 'patrician' (to 1012) and nominates Popes, commencing with 16 May John XVII (John Sicco).

Conrad of Carinthia carries out orders from Henry II to invade Lombardy and drive Arduin out as a usurper, defeating him at Fabrica.

BRITAIN

Swein ‘Forkbeard’ arrives from Denmark with a large army to destroy opposition province by province. Swein lands in Devon, far from the royal army, and sacks Exeter; ealdorman Aelfric, commander of the army sent to oppose Swein, pretends to be ill as the battle is about to start so the army avoids battle. Swein then marches East into Wiltshire, where he sacks Wilton, and Hampshire.

IRELAND

The new ‘High King’ Brian invades Ulster with his vassals and forces the ‘Ulaid’ kingdoms to hand over hostages and recognise him as their overlord.

ITALY

6 November. Death of Pope John XVII; *25 December.* Election of the Crescentius nominee, John XVIII (John ‘Fasanus’, i.e. ‘Cock’).

1004 BYZANTIUM/ITALY/GERMANY

Doge Peter Orseolo of Venice sends embassy to Constantinople led by son John; John is married to Basil’s cousin Maria Argyra, descendant of Romanus I Lecapenus, and Basil and brother Constantine act as ‘grooms-men’ at wedding.

May. Henry II is crowned as ‘King of Italy’ at Pavia after invading Lombardy and winning over most of the magnates who join him at Verona, abandoning his rival Arduin of Ivrea; Arduin flees but attacks again once Henry goes home.

Henry gives the duchy of Bavaria to his brother-in-law, count (998) Henry of Luxembourg, who rules as duke Henry V.

BRITAIN

Ulfcytel ‘Snelling’ (‘the Bold’), possibly a son-in-law of king Aethelred and from his name of Scandinavian descent, becomes ealdorman of East Anglia.

Swein attacks East Anglia; his army is apparently under the command of his elder or second son Cnut as it attacks Norwich, which probably means that the latter (future king of England) is in his early teens by this date. Ulfcytel decides to make a truce as his army is not ready to fight, and Swein uses this to head off quickly to Thetford while Ulfcytel fails in his plan to attack the under-protected Viking fleet in Swein’s absence. Thetford is sacked three weeks after Norwich; the Vikings head to Hertford and Ulfcytel brings up his now prepared army to fight them,

but the battle is drawn as he does not have enough support to win. Swein's army gets back safely to their ships.

Probable date for the birth of the elder son of king Aethelred and his new queen Emma, Edward (later king of England). He first witnesses charters in 1005. His hagiography claims that the terms of his parents' marriage-treaty in 1002 make him Aethelred's heir, but it seems unlikely that Aethelred would pass over his five sons by his first marriage or that the 'Witan' would accept this; at least the elder two of them are old enough to succeed to the throne if needed.

IRELAND

Death of king Aed mac Domnhall of the Cenel nEoghan, the Northern Ui Niall kingship in Ulster; succeeded by his nephew Flaithbertach mac Muirchetarch (born c. 977), whose aggressiveness will challenge the recent rise of Brian's Munster to control of the North.

FRANCE

Approximate date of king Robert II abandoning his 'illegal' second wife Bertha of Blois to marry Constance of Arles, daughter of count William and of Adela of Anjou (cousin of count Fulk 'Nerra'); chronicler Rudolf Glaber has the partisans of Robert's two wives subsequently feuding at court, with a 'Blois' versus an 'Anjou' faction.

ITALY/GERMANY

Death of Otto III's cousin, duke Otto of Carinthia, one of the claimants for the throne in 1002; succeeded by his son Conrad (I), who is married to the daughter of his rival claimant duke Hermann of Swabia.

SPAIN

Following a treaty between chief minister al-Muzaffar of Cordoba and regent count Menendo Gonzalez of Leon, the Leonese-Castilian army aids the Cordobans in an attack on Catalonia.

1005 BRITAIN

A respite from Viking attack on England as the kingdom suffers from famine.

Death of king Cynan ap Hywel of Gwynedd/Powys and of Deheubarth; his realm splits up as his kinsman Llewelyn ap Seissyl, son of the daughter (Angharad) of the late king Maredudd of Deheubarth who died in 999, takes Gwynedd and Maredudd's nephews Edwin and Cadell ap Einion take Deheubarth.

King Kenneth III and his elder son Giric are killed at Monzievaird, probably by or on behalf of his cousin Malcolm II (born c. 954), son of king Kenneth II, who seizes the throne. This probably represents a revolt by the other lines of the royal family who Kenneth II has tried to exclude from the succession; the late king's younger son Boite is set aside. Malcolm is probably by this point king of Strathclyde, a dependency of the royal house of Scots since the 900s, and now hands that on to his cousin Owain 'the Bald' (killed 1018).

IRELAND

The new king of the 'Cenel nEoghan', the Northern Ui Niall, Flaithbertach mac Muirchertach (son of the king killed by Olaf 'Cuaran' in 977 and grandson of 'High King' Domnall who died in 980), attacks the small Eastern Ulster kingdom of 'Leath Cathail'/Lecale ('Cathail's Half') in County Down, and kills king Aed mac Tommaltaig; Brian invades his kingdom and marches a large army to Armagh to force him to submit. Flaithbertach is probably trying to build up his power as a future challenger to Brian as 'High King' on his dynasty's behalf.

BRITAIN

16 November. Death of archbishop Aelfric of Canterbury.

1006 BRITAIN

?*Spring.* Appointment of (St) Aelfheah, the abbot of Bath, later martyred, as archbishop of Canterbury.

Aethelred kills ealdorman/earl Aelfhelm of Southern Northumbria (South of the Tees) and blinds his sons Wulfheah and Ufegeat; he gives all Northumbria to the ruler of the lands North of the Tees, hereditary lord Uhtred of Bamburgh.

Renewed Viking invasion. Aethelred calls out his full forces and they spend the harvest-season in the field, but never manage to catch or fight the invaders. They return home before winter, and around Martinmas (11 November) the invaders move back to their base on the Isle of Wight. They re-provision and then head North across Hampshire to Reading and West to Wallingford, burning en route; the ASC (Peterborough version) has this midwinter campaign seeing the invaders insolently march across the Berkshire and Wiltshire Downs to Cuckhamsley Knob to show up a prophecy that if they reached that place (far inland) they would never get back to the sea. They loot, steal provisions, and defeat the intercepting English army at the river Kennet before heading back past the gates of Winchester to their ships.

1007 BRITAIN

Aethelred spends the winter secure in Shropshire far from the Viking attackers, and offers them peace and sends them provisions and tax-money as a sign of his goodwill.

ITALY

Death of Doge Orseolo of Venice's son John and his wife Maria Argyra.

BRITAIN

Aethelred buys off the Vikings with a large payment of 30,000 pounds, then uses the respite to build a large new navy. He appoints Eadric, later nicknamed 'Streona', as earl of Mercia, which will turn out disastrously.

IRELAND

King Flaithbertach of Cenel nEoghan, the Northern Ui Niall, attacks Leath Cathail in Co. Down again and kills its new king, Cu Culad; Brian invades Ulster again to force him to submit and apparently hijacks his local hostages from his kingdom's vassals, taking them off to his own court to show that he is the real overlord of the region.

1008 FRANCE

Scandal at court as Hugh of Beauvais, king Robert's ex-wife Bertha's son by her first marriage and a royal favourite, is murdered on a royal hunt by the king's current wife's cousin count Fulk 'Nerra' of Anjou; Fulk leaves in a hurry for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

SPAIN

8 October. Death of the regent of Leon, count Meendo Gonzalez; probable majority of his ward and son-in-law, king Alfonso V aged fourteen.

20 October. Death of the chief minister and effective ruler of the Caliphate, Almanzor's son Al-Muzaffar; succeeded by his brother Abd ar-Rahman, less popular partly on account of his large army of Berber mercenaries.

1009 SPAIN

February. While chief minister Abd-ar-Rahman is away with his army on campaign against Leon, a popular uprising breaks out in Cordoba led by the titular Caliph Hisham's cousin Muhammed (II). The latter proclaims himself as Caliph, and deposes nominal 'Caliph' Hisham II, aged fifty-four, after a nominal reign of thirty-three years.

Abd-ar-Rahman is declared deposed too and his father's grand family palace of 'Al-Madinat al-Zahira' outside Cordoba is destroyed.

Returning to Cordoba trying to regain control but deserted by his troops, Abd-ar-Rahman is arrested and (6 March) executed by the Ummayyad usurper Muhammed.

ITALY

Lombard prince Melo of Bari rebels against Byzantium.

Death of Doge Orseolo of Venice, succeeded by son Otto.

June or July. Death of Pope John XVIII; *31 July.* Election of the Crescentius nominee, Pope Sergius IV, bishop Peter of Albano (son of a Rome shoemaker).

BRITAIN

Aethelred bases his new fleet at Sandwich in Eastern Kent for the 1009 raiding-season. Disaster follows as usual, this time due to accusations of treason against one of the fleet-commanders – Wulfnoth, a Sussex 'thegn' (probably father of the later earl Godwin) – by his fellow-commander, Beorhtric, brother of the new earl Eadric of Mercia.

Wulfnoth faces arrest, but flees and turned pirate; Beorhtric sets out after him with eighty ships but his fleet is broken up in a storm; after his defeat the fleet is left inactive and disperses early as Aethelred gives up and goes home. The feuding among Aethelred's councillors now centres on Eadric who is widely regarded as a disastrous choice of adviser and will have a murderous career of repeated treachery to all sides. The ASC is especially scathing about him.

August. The Viking fleet lands at Sandwich in Kent, and is bought off by the locals with 3,000 pounds. They proceed West to ravage Sussex and Hampshire and inland into Berkshire instead; the royal army is called up to its full strength, but although Aethelred manages to trap the invaders and block their route to their ships he apparently (ASC) shirks battle and lets them escape with Eadric involved in this failure.

November. Around Martinmas the Vikings head back East to Kent, and set up winter-quarters in the Thames estuary provisioned by the intimidated locals.

IRELAND

King Flaithbertach mac Muirchertach of Cenel nEoghan, the Northern Ui Niall, attacks and defeats his Ulster rivals of 'Cenel Connaill', capturing and blinding their king – an implicit challenge to 'High King' Brian's local power despite Brian and Cenel Connaill being foes.

SPAIN

Muhammed II is challenged by his cousin Sulaiman ibn al-Hakam, who has taken control of the unpopular army of 7,000 Berbers which Muhammed has dismissed. Sulaiman gains more military help from count Sancho of Castile.

1 November. Sulaiman defeats Muhammed at Alcolea; the latter flees to Toledo and Sulaiman storms Cordoba, letting his Berber and Castilian troops sack it. *5 November.* Sulaiman becomes Caliph after a temporary restoration of the ‘puppet’ Hisham II, and reigns for around six months.

1010 ITALY

Basil Argyrus, brother of future Emperor Romanus III, appointed ‘Catepan’.

BRITAIN

After midwinter, the Vikings head up the Thames valley across the Chilterns to sack Oxford, and evade the English army waiting at Staines on their return journey.

(After Easter) The Vikings invade East Anglia and head to Thetford to confront Ulfcytel’s army. Landing of a new Viking army on the Orwell in Suffolk, either independently of Swein’s attackers or as invited to assist them by him.

This is a force of the formidable, regimentally-trained and disciplined ‘Jomsvikings’ (so-called from their original autonomous base at Jomsburg on the Baltic), led by the experienced commander Thorkell ‘the Tall’. They are subsequently paid tribute by the locals.

(5 May according to Florence of Worcester, 18 May according to others) The Vikings defeat the regional levies of East Anglia at the battle of Ringmere near Thetford, a rare example of an open battle and a large and determined English army in this war. Many of the English commanders are killed, including Athelstan the king’s son-in-law, Oswy, Wulfric, and Leofric, and Thurcytel ‘Mare’s Tail’ leads the flight.

SPAIN

?*May/June.* ‘Caliph’ Sulaiman is deposed after a reign of around six months in a Cordoba coup and Hisham II is restored.

IRELAND

‘High King’ Brian attacks the growing power of the Northern Ui Niall kingdom of ‘Cenel nEoghan’, and forces its ruler Flaithbertach to submit and hand over hostages who are deported to Brian’s headquarters at Kincora on the Shannon.

BRITAIN

The Vikings ravage East Anglia for three months, and then head into the Thames valley to ravage Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire to Tempsford; they then take their loot back to their ships.

The ASC laments that the English army was rarely in the right place to catch them and when it had a chance to do so it failed to act.

(Around 30 November) The Vikings sack Northampton, and then head across the Thames for another attack on Northern Wessex before taking their loot back to their ships.

FRANCE

Birth of king Robert’s second son and eventual successor, Henry (I); the king tries to divorce his wife Constance but the Pope prevents this.

1011 BRITAIN

Aethelred’s latest attempt to buy the invaders off with another huge tax is accepted but they contemptuously fail to keep their word once they have the money and start pillaging again later.

ITALY

June. Argyrus defeats Lombard revolt and retakes Bari.

IRELAND

King Flaithbertach of the Cenel nEoghan in Ulster assists ‘High King’ Brian, whose daughter Be Binn he has probably married by now, in an attack on his Ulster rivals of ‘Cenel Connaill’. Later that year Brian leads a second invasion of the latter and secures hostages which king Mael Ruanaidh has to hand over to be taken to Kincora. Once Brian has gone home Flaithbertach resumes his old expansionism again by attacking Du Echdach (Duneght) near Lisburn. He forces local Ulster ruler Niall mac Duib Tuimme to submit to him.

BRITAIN

(Between 8 and 29 September) The Vikings land in Kent; their subsequent attack on Canterbury leaves archbishop Aelfheah and his senior clergy prisoners in the Viking camp as they move on into the Thames estuary and set up their headquarters at Greenwich to menace London. Aethelred agrees to raise a new tax to pay off the invaders and ransom the prisoners.

ITALY

December. Death of duke Conrad of Carinthia, cousin of the German imperial line; his under-age son by Matilda of Swabia, Conrad, is set aside in favour of the adult Adalbero of Eppenstein, margrave of Styria (to the North of Carinthia), who also becomes ruler of Verona as ‘strongman’ of Northern Italy and may be married to Matilda’s sister; Conrad inherits his father’s German county of Worms.

1012 BRITAIN

The tax to pay off the Vikings is levied, with the king’s council led by Eadric in London to receive it and then pass it on to the Viking camp at Greenwich; it is due to be paid by Easter (8 April) but not all of it arrives on time and the Vikings are angry; Aelfheah refuses to call for extra money to be collected from his impoverished parishioners to ransom him.

When Aelfheah’s ransom fails to arrive he is murdered by drunken Vikings at a feast, traditionally being pelted with animal-bones (Octave of Easter, 19 April). He is subsequently canonised as a martyr. That atrocity leads to a competent commander, Thorkell ‘the Tall’, deserting to Aethelred with forty ships, giving him a stronger army led by a man used to Viking tactics; but by then the enemy are too numerous and spread out over England for it to make much difference.

‘High King’ Brian raids the small kingdom of ‘Mag Muirthemne’ in county Lowth and carries off hostages.

ITALY

12 May. Death of Pope Sergius IV; *17 May.* the new ruling family of Tusculum, having defeated the Crescentii in street-riots that week (John Crescentius dies on 18 May, possibly violently), organises election of their count Gregory’s son Theophylact as Pope Benedict VIII in defiance of the Crescentii; the latter set up a rival Pope Gregory (VI); *Summer* the Crescentii are defeated and driven out of local fortresses, Sergius’ brother Romanus takes over the civil governance of Rome, and Gregory flees to unsuccessfully seek the support of Emperor Henry II in Germany.

GERMANY

24 December. Unsuccessful appearance of Gregory at Henry's Christmas court at Pohlde; Henry promises to sort out the Papal election when he visits Rome.

1013 BRITAIN

Aethelred makes Lyfing archbishop of Canterbury.

IRELAND

Flaithbertach Ua Niall, king of Cenel nEoghan, raids Mael Sechnaill of Midhe's lands; Mael Sechnaill confronts him militarily near Kells but shuns battle, which his enemies note. Mael Sechnaill's foe Mael Morda of Leinster then attacks his lands in turn, leading to a later retaliatory invasion of Leinster and its ally Dublin (whose king, Sihtric, is Mael Morda's nephew) by Mael Sechnaill and his son Flann. Flann is killed and so are 200 men at Draigne, in a raid on Howth near Dublin; Mael Sechnaill calls on 'High King' Brian for support against Dublin and its ally Leinster.

SPAIN

?*May.* Death of 'Caliph' Hisham II, aged fifty-seven, after a thirty-six year reign (including deposition); his cousin the usurper Sulaiman is restored for a three-year reign.

BRITAIN

(Before August, ASC account) Swein returns to Eastern England with a new army, landing initially at Sandwich. He then heads North and bases himself on the Humber, and sails up the Trent to establish a camp at Gainsborough (i.e. in the heartland of the Scandinavian-settled 'Danelaw' but with river-access back to the coast). He secures the submission of the 'Danelaw', and earl Uhtred of Northumbria comes to surrender on behalf of his earldom. Swein receives hostages and provisions from each shire; he leaves the former and his ships with his son Cnut before marching South to the Thames to enter Wessex again. Outright conquest is now his aim, and as he secures the surrender of Wessex at Winchester Aethelred shuts himself in London; Swein attacks but is driven off by a determined English military effort assisted by Thorkell 'the Tall'.

Swein moves West via Wallingford to Bath, where ealdorman Aethelmaer of the Western Wessex provinces submits. He then heads North back to his ships on the Trent. Deserted by more and more of his abandoned subjects, Aethelred temporarily holds out with his fleet in the Thames as even London dispatches emissaries to Swein in the North to negotiate.

Based at Greenwich, Aethelred's 'ally' Thorkell demands money and provisions for his army from the English too.

Autumn. Aethelred sends his wife Emma to Normandy with abbot Aelfsige of Peterborough, presumably for military help which does not come. As his position deteriorates he sends bishop Aelfhun with his sons by Emma, Edward and Alfred, to Normandy for safety. He retires to the Isle of Wight, and in midwinter flees to Normandy. All England now submits to Swein. Probably Aethelred's adult sons by his first wife, Athelstan and Edmund, remain in England.

IRELAND/BITAIN

Sihtric 'Silkenbeard' of Dublin sends his fleet to raid Cork in Brian's kingdom of Munster, thus widening the 'Dublin/Leinster vs Midhe' conflict to bring Brian in; this is supposed by saga to be at the instigation of his vengeful mother Gormflaith, Brian's estranged ex-wife. Brian's son Murchad raids Dublin's ally Leinster.

According to the 'Orkneying Saga' (non-contemporary, probably later C12th) Jarl Sigurd of Orkney is apparently lured into a war in Ireland to help the Dublin Scandinavians under Sihtric and Mael Morda of Leinster and his sister, Brian's ex-wife queen Gormflaith, former consort to Olaf 'Cuaran' (the late king of Dublin), to attack Brian. She sends her son king Sihtric of Dublin to Orkney to win Sigurd over as (September) Brian attacks and blockades Dublin. (Sigurd's mother Edna was Irish, daughter of an obscure local king.)

According to the Icelandic 'Njal's Saga' Sihtric is invited to join Sigurd and his brother-in-law, Jarl Gilli of the 'Sudreys', at their high table in Sigurd's hall for the Christmas feast of 1013 and invites Sigurd to join in the war, promising him the kingship of all Ireland if Brian was killed.

Sigurd's nobles think the war none of their business, but Sigurd agrees to intervene and to bring his fleet to Dublin by Easter Day 1014 – unaware that Sihtric is also promising the High Kingship to another putative ally, the Man warlord Brodar.

SPAIN

Establishment of the new kingdom/emirate of Granada (Ghnanata), in revolt against the Umayyads of Cordoba, in the Andalucian mountains by the expatriate Berber tribal commander Zawi ben Ziri, leader of the 'Sanhaja' tribe, who has been in control of the Elvira region since c. 1010. The inhabitants of Elvira are removed to the rebuilt town of Granada.

1014 | BRITAIN

Death of Aethelred's eldest son Athelstan of unknown causes; he leaves his sword to his next brother Edmund, who will take on the fight against the invaders. 2 *February*. Swein 'Forkbeard' dies suddenly at Gainsborough in the 'Danelaw' before he can march South to be crowned king of England, probably aged in his early fifties. His son Harald succeeds to Denmark, but it is not clear if he is the elder of Swein's two sons or if he is only the younger and regent for Swein's other son Cnut who is with his father in England and is recognised as its king by the Danish army and fleet.

Aethelred has an unexpected second chance. The councillors who had gone over to Swein agree to have their 'natural lord' Aethelred as king rather than Swein's son Cnut, and send envoys inviting him back from Normandy 'if only he would govern them more justly than before' as the ASC tellingly puts it. He is recalled, and he sends his elder son by Emma, Edward, with his promises to forgive all who deserted him; he is duly re-elected king and arrives.

IRELAND

The forces of Brian's Munster and its allies (including Brian's predecessor as High King, Mael Sechnaill of the 'Ui Niall' dynasty, with the Midhe troops) outnumber the Dublin Viking/Hebrides/Man/Leinster coalition by around 7,000 to 6,000. According to the main Irish account of the battle, the 'Cogad Gaedel na Gallaibh' ('War of the Gaels and the Foreigners'), Sigurd and his fleet arrive in Dublin Bay with Brodar's Manxmen in the early hours of Good Friday. The Dubliners and Leinstermen (under king Mael Morda of Leinster, Gormflaith's brother and Sihtric's uncle) march out to join them on the shore; Sihtric stays in charge of the garrison of Dublin.

23 *April*. Battle of Clontarf. The Orkney men and Manxmen hold the first line of their army, with the Dubliners behind them and the Leinstermen in the rearguard; the Vikings would have been the better-armed. But Brian and his son Murchad, with or without Mael Sechnaill's help, win the day after a fight lasting all day until the evening high tide, and Brodar's wing of the enemy force (i.e. the Manx) is the first to collapse. The Vikings and Leinstermen are defeated, Mael Morda is killed, and as the Vikings flee to their ships they find that the tide is higher than expected and is carrying some vessels out to sea. The battle ends with a clash in the sea as the losing side wade out to board their vessels and the Irishmen chase them. Sigurd is killed, but Murchad (heir to Brian's kingdom) and his nephew Toirrdelbach fall too; Brian is also slain, aged around seventy-three – away from the battlefield, in his tent in an opportunistic attack by the retreating Manx captain Brodar. Other losses in the battle include several local Irish kings in Brian's army, including Tadhg Ua Cellaigh (O'Kelly) of 'Ui Maine' in Connacht. The 'Annals of Ulster' counts the

killed at 6,000; Brian and his son Murchad are buried at Armagh by archbishop Mael Muir.

The kingdom of Dublin is preserved for Sihtric, but his losses of manpower are severe; the 'Ui Niall' regain the 'High Kingship' of Ireland as Mael Sechnaill claims it back with the support of Flaithbertach, king of 'Cenel nEoghan' (the Northern Ui Niall). Brian's family hold onto Thomond in Munster, to which his son by Gormflaith, Donnchad, succeeds, but the 'Eoganacht Caisil' ruler Dungal Ua Donnchada of the main ruling line of Munster reclaims the throne of Munster.

Dunlaing mac Tuathal, younger brother of the king of Leinster who died in 978 and head of the 'Sil Muiredaig' branch of the 'Ui Dunlaing' dynasty, succeeds briefly to Leinster (he is probably already elderly); he is succeeded by his son Duncan.

BRITAIN

Easter. As Cnut prepares his troops at Gainsborough with offers of help from the people of local Lindsey, Aethelred leads his army against Cnut before the latter is ready to fight.

The resulting campaign in Lindsey ends with Cnut deserted by many of his East Midlands allies and in retreat by sea to Sandwich; he mutilates the hostages given to him before he leaves in revenge and heads back to Denmark. But Aethelred's recovery of his kingdom is short-lived.

28 *September.* (St Michael's Eve) Great flood in the Bristol Channel, especially in the Somerset Levels and opposite in Gwent; seen by some modern commentators as a tsunami from a submarine landslip.

In Orkney, Jarl Sigurd is succeeded by his three adult older sons – Somerled, Einar, and Brusi – with a third of the territory each. His youngest son, the only one by his second wife Bethoc of Scotland (daughter of king Malcolm II), Thorfinn, is under ten and may be set up in Caithness as a nominee of his grandfather.

1015 BRITAIN

The crucial East Midlands Anglo-Danes are alienated by the shocking murder of two of their leading figures, Siferth and Morcar, at court at Oxford after accusations (of treason?) by earl Eadric; the king supports him and sends Siferth's widow Eadgyth/Edith captive to Malmesbury. She is carried off and married by his estranged eldest surviving son, Edmund. The East Midlands then transfer their allegiance to Edmund as he takes his wife there (between the Feast of the Assumption and the Nativity of St Mary, 15 August–8 September, according to Florence of Worcester). He is a vigorous and inspiring commander in the renewed war for England, nicknamed 'Ironside', as Cnut returns to attack Wessex.

Aethelred lies ill at Cosham (a naval base on Portsmouth harbour, close to the site of later Portsmouth) with his army inactive and his chosen deputy, Eadric, is ordered to bring his troops to join Edmund but quarrels with instead of joining him and then deserts to Cnut with forty ships. Wessex submits to Cnut as he brings 160 ships there; he and Eadric march North to cross the Thames at Cricklade and enter Warwickshire (mid-winter).

1016 **BRITAIN**

January. The reinforced Cnut and Eadric occupy Mercia, while a full assembly of the English levies in London to fight for Aethelred is called for after Epiphany (6 January). At his men's request Aethelred himself leads his troops North but soon abandons the campaign amidst the usual rumours of treachery. He is probably already ill given the outcome.

Edmund, outnumbered without Eadric's army, evades the Danes and marches North into Northumbria where he achieves the support of earl Uhtred, and they move South into Staffordshire via Chester to Shrewsbury in Shropshire but avoid an open battle. Cnut, doing likewise, moves across the North Midlands from Buckinghamshire via Lincolnshire up towards York, and Uhtred has to return home to protect his own lands. He then submits to Cnut, leaving Edmund to return to London.

23 April. Aethelred dies in London as Edmund is moving back South to link up with his army for the expected confrontation with Cnut (also heading for London). He is probably a year or two under fifty, and has ruled for thirty-eight years amidst unprecedented misfortunes which his own failings (especially as a warlord) and misjudgments (mainly of who to employ) have made worse. His incompetence may have been over-estimated, and his lack of skill or commitment as a military commander at a time of crisis was his most crucial failing; he could not choose or inspire competent subordinates and trusted people who aroused antagonism and were liable to betray him. Later writers lamented him as the originator of foreign conquest and high taxation.

Edmund arrives in London and is elected king by the 'Witan'. Cnut has now secured Northumbria and is sailing South to the Thames estuary, and Edmund chooses to avoid being penned up in London and retires West into Wessex to raise an army. The Danes arrive at Greenwich, and the Londoners hold their fleet back at London Bridge but (7–9 May, Rogation Days) are outmanoeuvred as Cnut digs a ditch around the Southwark end of the bridge and hauls his ships across. London withstands a siege, and a Danish army pursues Edmund into Wessex but is defeated by him at Penselwood in SW Wiltshire near Gillingham. The men of Wessex have rallied to Edmund as they did not to his father, and a second success follows for him in a two-day battle in midsummer at Sherston (Wiltshire or Hwicce?).

Cnut returns to London, abandoning the Wessex campaign, and Edmund follows with the third army he has managed to raise in a year (a sign of his charisma to his exhausted subjects). The besiegers retreat to Greenwich, and two days later Edmund wins a third victory at Brentford which is marred by numbers of the English being drowned in the Thames through carelessness. When Edmund returns to Wessex to raise more men the Danes make a second assault on London, but this is beaten off and they retire by sea to land on the Orwell in Suffolk and head into Eastern Mercia.

SPAIN

Ali ibn Hamud al-Nasir ('the Victorious'), governor of Ceuta since 1013 as founder of the 'Hammudid' dynasty and recently successful in a Moroccan war where he took Tangiers, rebels against the crumbling Caliphate and advances via Malaga on Cordoba.

Fall of Cordoba; 28 *June*. Execution of Caliph Sulaiman; succeeded (1 July) by Ali ibn Hammud as the first non-Ummayyad Caliph in Spain.

BRITAIN

Edmund now returns to the Thames valley, and drives a Danish raiding-army that has attacked Kent back from the Medway onto Sheppey and thence onto their ships. Sensing which side is winning, earl Eadric surrenders his Mercian army to Edmund at Aylesford and is received back – a decision which the ASC calls the worst ever made for the English nation. At the time Edmund probably needed Eadric's men and dared not execute him like the wiser Cnut did later. The Danes retire into Mercia, and Edmund follows; they eventually meet in a crucial battle at 'Assendon', probably Ashingdon, Essex, on 18 October.

Edmund has raised five armies in a year and revitalised his war-weary people, but in the battle that follows Eadric and his Mercians flee, with the men of Hwicce allegedly raising an inaccurate shout that Edmund has been killed which causes panic. This is seen as deliberate and possibly arranged with Cnut, but may have been a genuine mistake that Eadric quickly exploited and he told Cnut afterwards that he had thus won the battle for him. The English fight a dogged rearguard action rather than flee and many of the elite are killed (including bishop Eadnoth of Dorchester-upon-Thames, abbot Wulfsgie of Ramsey in the Fens, and ealdormen Aelfric and Godwin plus Ulfcytel of East Anglia) suggesting an attempt to save the day to no avail; their serious losses make Cnut's next advance unstoppable.

This decisive reverse forces Edmund, possibly wounded and certainly outnumbered, to retreat into Western Mercia; Cnut, joined by Eadric, follows him to Gloucestershire and on Eadric's advice the two leaders meet at a safe site in the middle of the Severn ('Ola's Island') to negotiate

terms. Cnut is either too cautious or has lost too many men to force another battle yet, and the treaty gives Edmund rule of Wessex and Cnut Mercia and Northumbria. Cnut returns to London.

30 November. Around a month after the treaty, Edmund dies at Oxford, aged probably in his late twenties. Later stories have it that Cnut had treacherously had him assassinated, possibly by a poisoned statue with a spring or by sending someone (a son of Eadric?) to stab him on the privy, but he may have died of a wound from Ashingdon. The lack of an adult English leader gives Edmund's surviving full brother Eadwig/Edwy no chance against Cnut, and Edmund's councillors recognise Cnut as king of all England; Edmund's widow Edith and infant sons Edward and Edmund flee to Scandinavia, or else Cnut exiles them there with a private message to their host asking him to kill them which is ignored; the boys later end up at the court of Yaroslav 'the Wise' in Russia.

Cnut gives Eadric the earldom of Mercia as a reward, but is unable to trust him and soon executes him (now or early 1017).

IRELAND

Bran, son of the late king Mael Morda (k. 1014), reclaims Leinster for his kin from the re-assertive, predominant 'Ui Dunlainge' dynasty; however, his family's vassals' losses at Clontarf in 1014 mean that he can only hold the kingship against the latter for two years.

NORWAY

Conquest of the previously divided kingdom by Olaf Haraldssen ('the Stout', later known as 'St Olaf'), the exiled son of the noble Harald Grenske, according to later sagas a descendant of founding king Harald 'Finehair', by Asta. He defeats the current ruling jarl of the Trondelag and More, Swein of Lade – the son of Jarl Haakon and brother of Cnut's officer Jarl Eric – and is supposed to have reunited the kingdom, presumably reconquering the Oslo region from the Danes. He also 'steps up' Christianization.

ITALY

Melo, a Lombard lord, meets Norman pilgrims at shrine on Monte Gargano in Apulia and arranges for them to bring recruits from Normandy to aid planned revolt; start of the Norman involvement in Southern Italy.

Contoleon Tornicius succeeds Basil Argyrus as 'Catepan' of Southern Italy; the general Passianus fights drawn battle against Lombard rebels at Arenula, Tornicius defeated in battle at Vaccaritza.

1017 | **BRITAIN**

Cnut's reliance on a mixed Anglo-Danish elite, headed mostly by Danes (and Anglo-Danes?) for provincial governors, and English administration/law but on a mainly foreign army (and fleet?) anticipates the position of the next foreign conqueror William in 1066. There is substantial unrest at first, with the ASC noting successive executions (including earldorman Eadric, Northman son of earldorman Leofwine, Aethelweard son of Aethelwine, and Beohtric of Devon) and exiles among the nobility. Probably in 1017, there is a 'low-level' revolt headed by Eadwig, 'the ceorls' king', possibly a 'nationalist' guerrilla leader like Hereward in 1070. Cnut relies on a large standing army and fleet, his bodyguard is the nucleus of the later 'housecarls' who fight for Harold II.

But there are fewer confiscations of land than under William, and much of the senior landholding class survives; there are a number of native ealdormen such as Leofwine, father of the later earl Leofric, in South- West Mercia. Cnut relies on a narrow basis of support for senior provincial governors, giving a few well-endowed earldoms to trusted deputies rather than spreading out power. Arguably, this policy weakens the monarchy by making the earls more powerful locally than an absent king and extending this from the Northern provinces, often trusted to a few men under Edgar and Aethelred, to Wessex. He initially keeps Wessex for himself, divides up Mercia, and gives Northumbria to Eric of Lade (brought in from Norway) and East Anglia to Thorkell 'the Tall'. Part of Wessex is given a few years after 1017 to a Saxon (probably from Bosham in West Sussex), Godwin. Cnut thus sets up the Godwin dynasty which dominates national life under his successors, and the earl marries Cnut's sister-in-law Goda, sister of the Danish Jarl Ulf (son of Thorgils Sprakalegg) whose wife is Cnut's sister Estrith.

Cnut sets aside his first 'wife' Aelfgifu of Northampton, who may have married him under Anglo-Danish 'common law' and not in a church as she is later claimed by her sons' enemies to be just a mistress; their relationship may date to his time in the Danelaw in 1013–14 and they have two sons, Harold and Swein (by 1017?). He invites Aethelred's widow Emma to return from Normandy, where she has fled with her sons by Aethelred (who remain exiled) and secures her as his new wife; this is logically both an alliance with her kin to keep Normandy friendly and a 'legitimist' move to conciliate the English elite. She returns before 1 August. Emma's experience and political ability are invaluable as Cnut presents his regime as a continuation of traditional English kingship, reissuing the old law-codes in consultation with the Church (and later using them in Denmark). He works closely with the Church as a Christian sovereign, as a generous patron mindful of his duty; laws are enforced and the king rules in accordance with tradition, though dependent ultimately on military force.

1018 | SPAIN

March. Assassination of Ali ibn Hammud in a revolt in Cordoba, led by a ‘legitimate’ Ummayyad pretender, Abd-ar-Rahman IV, who the populace elect Caliph; he is overthrown months later as his troops desert him when Al-Qasim al-Mamun, Ali’s brother and Hammudid successor in Malaga and Ceuta/Tangier, advances on Cordoba. Abd-ar-Rahman is assassinated at Cadiz; Al-Mansur seizes Cordoba and the Caliphate.

ITALY

Basil recalls Tornicius and Passianus and sends Basil Boiannes as ‘catepan’; Boiannes defeats Melo’s Lombard rebels at Cannae (September) and founds fortress of Troia.

Approximate date of the arrival of a force of Norman mercenaries in the principality of Salerno to help ruler Gaimar III or IV (date from chronicler William of Apulia; this is alternately dated at 996 but 1018 is the only proven date of an Arab naval attack which it is agreed the Normans helped fight off.

BRITAIN/DENMARK

Cnut raises a huge tax of 72,000 pounds in England to pay for his army and navy. Part of the army is sent back to Denmark plus all but forty ships, presumably in Cnut’s expedition there as below.

Harald of Denmark dies childless, leading to Cnut’s departure for his homeland as either the new king or to preserve his position there if he is already nominal co-ruler. He uses his English troops and finance to secure Denmark and extend his power in Scandinavia, with his son by Emma, Harthacnut (probably born in 1018), being made titular governor of Denmark as heir.

The obscure local noble Aeddan ap Blegyrwyd, probably not linked to the ruling family, deposes co-rulers Edwin and Cadell ap Einion (accession 1005) of Deheubarth in SW Wales; he is killed in an invasion by Llewelyn ap Seisyll, king of Gwynedd/Powys, who has a claim on the kingdom via his marriage. Llewelyn thus reunites the kingdoms of Wales, except for Morgannwg/Gwent.

Likeliest date of the battle of Carham, between the expansionist king Malcolm II of Scots and the current earl of Northumbria – the latter is however said by some sources to be Uhtred, who in fact died in 1016 (so 1016 is an alternative date for the battle). The result is unclear but Scots expansion South is halted.

Approximate date of the death of the eldest co-Jarl of Orkney, Somerled Sigurdsson; his full brothers Einar and Brusi divide up his lands, most going to the grasping Einar. Their half-brother Thorfinn claims a third

of it, and Brusi successfully backs him to Einar's annoyance (traditional story in the early C13th 'Orkneyinga Saga').

IRELAND

King Bran mac Mael Morda of Leinster is overthrown by the 'Ui Dunlainge' dynasty, his family's rivals, after a two-year reign; the late king Duncan's younger brother Augaire mac Dunlaing takes the throne (to 1024).

1019 DENMARK

Cnut in Denmark.

ITALY

Nicephorus Comnenus appointed 'catepan'.

Death of Emir Ja'far of Sicily.

1020 BRITAIN/DENMARK

Cnut returns to England; (Easter) ran assembly is held at Cirencester and ealdorman Aethelweard is outlawed, possibly for suspicious activities in Cnut's absence.

Cnut attends the dedication of a church on the site of his crucial victory at Ashingdon in Essex, an act to reconcile both English and Danes but with a 'narrative' of his own permanent triumph.

Death of archbishop Lyfing of Canterbury; succeeded by Aethelnoth, dean of Christ Church Canterbury.

King Llewelyn ap Seissyll of Gwynedd/Deheubarth defeats an invasion by a Scots noble called Rhain who is claiming to be the son of late king Maredudd; the attack is ended at the battle of Abergwili.

Overthrow and killing of 'mromaer' Findlaech of Moray, the main ruler of Northern Scotland, by his rebel cousins Malcolm and Gillecomgain; his disinherited son (probably by a daughter of king Malcolm II but only stated by later sources), Macbeth, will later overthrow them in turn.

?*Autumn*. Murder of co-Jarl Einar of Orkney, apparently unpopular as a vindictive tyrant according to the 'Orkneyinga Saga' (early C13th extant version) which has him planning to kill his half-brother Thorfinn first but his honest noble Thorkell 'tipping off' his victim. Einar traditionally plans to halt an uneasy reconciliation of the brothers by a second plan to murder Thorfinn, and Thorkell attacks his hall to prevent this; Thorfinn takes Einar's lands.

GERMANY/ITALY

Pope Benedict visits Emperor Henry II to win his support against his enemies in Rome, the Lombard princes, and the Byzantines; he is joined at a 'summit' at Bamberg by the Apulian noble Melus, who Henry makes 'Duke of Apulia' as his nominee to drive out the Byzantines but dies within weeks (May).

1021 ITALY

June. Basil Boiannes' army takes Melo's castle on River Garigliano.

SPAIN

Yahya ibn Ali, son of the late Hammudid ruler and Caliph Ali (d. 1018), rebels, seizes Malaga, and defeats his uncle Al-Qasim who flees into exile; Yahya becomes Caliph in Cordoba. Abd-al-Aziz ibn Mansur secures independent control of Valencia.

BRITAIN/DENMARK

Martinmas, i.e. 11 November. Cnut deposes his powerful but suspected lieutenant, Thorkell 'the Tall', from his rule of East Anglia and exiles him to Denmark.

1022 ITALY

February. Emperor Henry II arrives with a large army in Northern Italy, and joins his advance-force under local Patriarch Poppo of Aquileia to head South down the Adriatic coast; another force under archbishop Pilgrim of Cologne heads SW for Campania.

BRITAIN/NORWAY

Cnut assembles his fleet off the Isle of Wight; archbishop Aethelnoth goes to Rome to collect his 'pallium' of office.

?Expedition of king Olaf of Norway to Orkney to assert his rights as overlord; he takes a third of the territory and gives a third each to Brusi and Thorfinn.

ITALY

Henry II invades Southern Italy and meets the Pope at Benevento; the 'suspect' abbot Atenulf of Monte Cassino, brother of the thuggish Pandulf IV of Capua, abandons his abbey and (30 March) is drowned while trying to flee to Constantinople; Pandulf IV surrenders Capua to an army led

by archbishop Pilgrim of Cologne, but his brother-in-law Gaimar (III or IV) of Capua and his Norman mercenaries hold out in Salerno until Pilgrim cannot wait any longer and agrees to a truce; *April–July*. Henry invades Byzantine Apulia but fails in a siege of Troia as his army runs short of food and epidemics start; with his army wilting in the summer he has to retreat, and he replaces Pandulf (who Pilgrim persuades him not to execute for treachery) by the loyal Pandulf IV.

SPAIN

Abdullah al-Mansur, founder of the Aflasid dynasty of Badajoz, revolts from the Caliph's authority.

IRELAND

9 *September*. Death of 'High King' and king of Midhe Mael Sechnaill, rival and predecessor/successor of Brian 'Borumha'; succeeded in his kingship of the 'Clann Colmann' branch of the Ui Niall in Midhe by his son Mael Sechnaill. The High Kingship does not appear to have had a recognised or universally acceptable holder, with Flaithbertach of the Northern Ui Niall and rivals Dungal of Munster and Donnchad (son of Brian) of Thomond locally prominent.

1023 DENMARK

Cnut visits Denmark and comes to an agreement with his exiled commander Thorkell 'the Tall', who is made regent of Denmark for Harthacnut but has to hand over his son to Cnut as a hostage; Cnut returns to England.

BRITAIN

June. Ceremonial reburial of the martyred late archbishop Aelfheh at Canterbury by permission of Cnut, whose family escorts his cortege from St Paul's Cathedral London (8 June) via Rochester to Canterbury (15 June).

Aelfric succeeds Wulfstan (II) as archbishop of York.

Death of Llewelyn ap Seissyll, ruler of Gwynedd/Powys since 1005 and of Deheubarth since 1018; succeeded in Gwynedd/Powys by Iago ap Idwal, a descendant of king Anarawd (d. 916), and in Deheubarth by a distant cousin, Rhydderch ap Iestyn. The latter rules part of Morgannwg/Gwent from c. 1015, and is of uncertain descent as his father Iestyn ap Owain may be son of king Owain of Deheubarth (ruled 950–86, d.988) or of Owain of Morgannwg. The latter's son Hywel ap Owain is currently ruler of most of Morgannwg.

IRELAND

Assassination of Brian ‘Borumha’s son Tadhg, one of the rival kings in Munster; the Irish annals imply involvement by his half-brother and rival for their dynasty’s sub-kingdom of Thomond, Donnchadh, who now presumably reunites Thomond.

ITALY

November. Exiled Lombard rebel leader Pandulf of Salerno returns to Southern Italy to besiege Capua.

SPAIN

Abu al-Qasim Mohammed ibn Ismail, local ‘qadi’ and founder of the Abbasid dynasty, takes power in Seville.

Calph Yahya ibn Ali the Hammudid is driven out of Cordoba by his uncle and predecessor Al-Mansur.

December. Al-Mansur is overthrown by an Ummayyad pretender, Abd ar-Rahman V, who is installed as Caliph in a popular uprising.

1024 SPAIN

Caliph Abd-ar-Rahman V is overthrown and murdered in another uprising in chaotic Cordoba, led by his cousin Muhammed III.

ITALY

9 April. Death of Pope Benedict VIII; *19 April.* His brother the ‘senator’ Romanus, ‘strongman’ of Rome for their Tusculum dynasty, is elected John XIX despite previously being a layman and having to take holy orders quickly.

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Basil and Patriarch Eustathius suggest a compromise over Papal claims to ecclesiastical supremacy in embassy to Pope John XIX; Byzantine Patriarchate to have supremacy in the East and Papacy to have supremacy in West; John rejects it after protests within the Western Church, led by the Cluniac monks of Cluny and Dijon (an unconfirmed story by chronicler Rudolf of Glaber).

GERMANY/ITALY

13 July. Death of Emperor Henry II at Gottingen, aged fifty-one; buried at Bamberg. His distant cousin Conrad, descendant of the eldest son of Otto I (Liudolf), succeeds him by election. He is persuaded to release the

deposed Pandulf IV of Capua, who returns to power in Campania but is refused admission to Capua by Pandulf V and his Papal troops. Conrad's wife Gisela is the widow of duke Ernest of Swabia (d. 1015) so his young stepson duke Ernest II is under his dominance, but the latter clashes with Conrad as his mother's being childless king Rudolf III of Burgundy's niece gives Ernest hopes of inheriting Burgundy and Conrad wants it for himself.

8 September. Coronation of Conrad as king of Germany at Mainz. However, in Italy his rival count Ulrich Manfred of Turin/Susa, main lord of Piedmont, proceeds to France in a failed mission to get the pious and cultured duke William V of Aquitaine to lead a revolt.

1025 FRANCE

September. Death of king Robert's eldest son and (1017) nominal co-ruler, Hugh, during a rebellion against his father; his brother Henry is next heir but their mother Constance tries to disinherit him in favour of his younger brother Robert.

SPAIN

Death of nominal Caliph Abd-ar-Rahman V; replaced by Mohammed.

GERMANY

Revolt and defeat of the new king (Emperor-elect) Conrad's stepson, duke Ernest II of Swabia, who is forced to surrender and interned at court.

IRELAND

Death of king Dungal of Munster, head of the 'Eoganacht Caisil' sub-dynasty, after an eleven-year reign since the battle of Clontarf; he is probably replaced by Brian's son Donnchadh, king of Thomond.

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Basil II sends the general Basil Boiannes as 'Catepan' to Southern Italy with a large force to prepare for invasion of Sicily and gathers reinforcements in Constantinople; Boiannes crosses the Straits and takes Messina.

15 December. Death of Basil II in Constantinople, shortly before planned departure for Sicily, aged sixty-seven; his rule of forty-nine years' effective rule and sixty-two titular is longest in Byzantine history. He is succeeded by his brother Constantine VIII, already aged sixty-four and titular co-ruler throughout his reign; Constantine is lazy and extravagant and prefers horse-racing in Hippodrome and gambling to affairs of State, relying heavily on eunuchs, and Sicilian expedition is abandoned.

1026 ITALY

‘Catepan’ Boiannes uses his army to assist Pandulf IV of Capua, ‘the Wolf of the Abruzzi’, with regaining Capua from pro-Papal troops, and *May* negotiates the city’s surrender in return for the garrison leaving unmolested; Pandulf terrorises the citizens and turns attention to Naples where Boiannes has arranged for duke Sergius IV to give the count of Teano refuge.

Death of ‘Doge’ Otto Orseolo of Venice; end of rule of Orseolo dynasty.

FRANCE

August. Death of duke Richard II of Normandy, after a thirty-year reign; succeeded by his elder son Richard III. The younger son, Robert, is given the county of Hiemois.

BRITAIN/SCANDINAVIA

Revolt against Cnut in Denmark, apparently involving his current deputy there, his brother-in-law Jarl Ulf (regent from c. 1024) who possibly tries to proclaim the boy Harthacnut as king with himself as the real ruler, calling on king Anund Jacob of Sweden for help.

Sweden backs the rebellion and invades Denmark, as does king Olaf of Norway. Ulf defects back to Cnut, possibly after the two rulers decide to remove Harthacnut in their own favour and so sideline him. Cnut takes his army and fleet from England to Denmark where Ulf joins him; his attack on Southern Sweden via Scania is repulsed by the Swedish and Norwegian fleets at the battle of the Helgea/‘Holy River’, where many of Cnut’s men are killed by a bursting or sabotaged dam (or collapsed bridge?). The ASC has both rebel Danish jarl Eilaf and Ulf fighting for Sweden here; it is not clear who wins but Cnut is able to secure Denmark and in 1028 to attack Norway without Swedish interference.

The ex-rebel Ulf, now seen as unreliable, is invited by Cnut to a banquet at Roskilde and murdered to neutralise him. However, his eldest son by Cnut’s sister Estrith, Swein, will later found the still-extant royal house of Denmark (1042).

GERMANY/ITALY

King (Emperor-elect) Conrad proceeds to Lombardy with his wife Gisela of Swabia, en route to Rome for his coronation; his regent in Germany is his predecessor Henry II’s younger brother, bishop Bruno of Augsburg, who faces a magnate revolt; after Bruno is defeated Conrad sends his stepson Ernest II of Swabia home to tackle the rebels, but he defects to them.

SPAIN

Cordoba is seized again by the Hammudids of Malaga, led by ex-Caliph Yahya ben Ali, whose authority is not recognised by most of the now virtually autonomous local emirates (the ‘taifas’, ‘party kings’). He holds the city to 1029, but soon faces a rival Caliph backed by his enemies, the Ummayyad Hisham III.

1027 ITALY

Death of Gaimar III, prince of Salerno; widow, Pandulf IV’s sister, regent for sixteen-year-old son.

BRITAIN/GERMANY/ITALY

Conrad’s expedition to Italy continues, aided by his ally king Rudolf of Burgundy (who he is trying to persuade to leave his kingdom to him); Conrad is crowned ‘King of Italy’ in Pavia and goes on to Rome; 26 *March*. Pope John crowns him as Emperor in Rome, in the presence of his allies kings Cnut of England/Denmark and Rudolf of Burgundy. Conrad then goes on to Naples, Salerno and Benevento to receive homage from their princes.

Cnut goes on pilgrimage to Rome, and is treated as an equal there by Emperor Conrad with whom he holds talks; Conrad’s son Henry duly marries Cnut’s daughter by Emma, Gunnhilde.

GERMANY

Returning home to Germany to take over Bavaria after the death (late 1026) of childless duke Henry V, Conrad occupies it and (24 June) at a council at Regensburg invests his own under-age son and heir Henry as its new duke – thus snubbing the various relatives of its past dukes and the usual principle of inheritance by taking it for his own, non-related family. He then goes on to Swabia to put down the revolt of his stepson duke Ernest II, whose co-plotters count Welf and Conrad of Carinthia agree to join him in surrendering after they fail to attract much support and after the intercession of Ernest’s mother Empress Gisela (9 September). The rebel leaders surrender to Conrad at Worms, and Ernest is imprisoned but retains his title (until 1030) with Gisela ruling on his behalf.

FRANCE

6 *August*. Death of duke Richard III of Normandy, shortly after suppressing a revolt by his younger brother count Robert of Hiemois who is captured and forced to do homage. He leaves a small son, who is disinherited as the nobles prefer an adult warrior leader; Richard’s

younger brother Robert ('the Magnificent' or 'the Devil') succeeds; his widow Adela of France, daughter of king Robert, remarries to Baldwin (V) of Flanders, son and heir of ageing count Baldwin IV. Some time early in his reign Robert attacks his uncle archbishop Robert of Rouen, presumably as an ally of Richard against him in 1026–7, who is expelled from Normandy and in retaliation obtains Church backing. Normandy is put under an interdict until the archbishop is restored.

1028 BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Early. After siege in winter, Pandulf of Capua seizes Naples by treachery; duke Sergius flees into hiding, and he and the maritime republic of Amalfi call on Norman mercenary captain Rainulf to raise an army to fight Pandulf.

BRITAIN/NORWAY

Cnut invades Norway with fifty ships, and expels its king (St) Olaf whose forcible Christianization (and probably centralisation too) has aroused discontent among the nobility. He takes over Norway for himself, and may name his younger son by Aelfgifu, Swein, as his co-ruler or heir there (see 1030 entry). Jarl Haakon, of the Lade dynasty, is governor for Cnut. Olaf goes into exile in Russia but later returns to Sweden to gain troops for an invasion of Norway.

FRANCE

Likeliest date of the birth of duke Robert of Normandy's son by his mistress Herleve, daughter of tanner Fulbert at the town of Falaise – William, later duke and conqueror of England. (The affair is said to have commenced when Robert was already duke and saw Herleve washing clothes in the river near his castle at Falaise.)

Duke Robert's late brother's widow Adela of France is sued by her father king Robert to stir up her new husband, Baldwin (V) the heir of Flanders, to revolt against his father Baldwin IV.

SPAIN

?4 *August.* Death of king Alfonso V of Leon at the siege of Viseu in Portugal, from an arrow-wound, aged probably thirty-four; succeeded by his son Vermudo III.

BYZANTIUM

Constantine VIII decides on a husband for his daughter/heiress Zoe; he chooses Romanus Argyrus, a respectable civilian senator of around sixty

who is great-grandson in female line of Romanus I Lecapenus and so his own distant cousin.

9 November. With Constantine's health suddenly deteriorating, Zoe is persuaded into quick marriage with Romanus who is crowned; *12 November.* Constantine dies aged sixty-seven, after a titular rule from 963 but effectively only three years.

1029 ITALY

Capuans expelled from Naples and Sergius restored, thanks to military campaign by Norman captain Rainulf in alliance with Amalfi.

SPAIN

Count Garcia Sanchez of Castile, probably in his early twenties at most as under-age at his accession in 1017, is assassinated at the royal palace at Leon while visiting his overlord and ally king Vermudo III, to whose sister Sancha he is engaged. The murderers are Varela brothers Rodrigo and Iniga, exiled Castilian nobles with a grudge. He is childless, but his sister Muniadora (known as 'Mayor', 'the oldest' in Navarre), is married to king Sancho 'the Great' of Navarre and Sancho claims the heirship to Castile through her. Sancho occupies Castile and gives it to his younger son by Muniadora, Ferdinand, who will later become first king of Castile as well as Leon and start the expansion of the kingdom into the kingdom of 'Spain'.

1030 FRANCE

31 January. Death of the religious and cultural patron duke William V 'the Great' of Aquitaine; succeeded by his son by his first marriage, William VI. His widow Agnes of Burgundy, opposing the succession on her sons' behalf, marries the duchy's predatory neighbour Geoffrey, heir of Fulk of Anjou, who soon attacks Saintonge.

ITALY

Early. Sergius of Naples grants Rainulf the fief of Aversa, the first Norman dominion in Italy, and the hand of his sister, the regent of Gaeta.

NORWAY/BRITAIN

Norway's expelled monarch St Olaf returns at the invitation of rebels to challenge Cnut's rule, probably after the drowning of Cnut's regent Jarl Haakon. He invades the Trondjheim region from Sweden. The sagas, e.g. the Icelandic 'Heimskringla' (early C13th), give a possibly fictionalised account of personal feuds involved in the war, particularly the desertion of Olaf's cause by his ex-supporters from the 1010s, the leading

Hordaland noble Thorir who now fights for Cnut along with his sons-in-law Harek of Tjotta and Kalf Arnason. Traditionally a local army of farmers and peasants opposing Olaf are the mainstay of Cnut's forces; Olaf is defeated and killed at the battle of Stiklestad. His half-brother Harald 'Hardardi' also fights in the battle, aged around fifteen, and afterwards is evacuated by loyal officers to exile at the court of prince Yaroslav in Russia.

Cnut's younger son by Aelgifu of Northampton, Swein (born 1016/17?), now rules Norway with his mother as regent; she is remembered as an unpopular tyrant by popular myth. Cnut thus creates a family 'federation' of monarchies in Scandinavia with one son in Denmark and one in Norway, becoming the most powerful king of England or Denmark to date.

FRANCE

20 July. Death of king Robert II at Melun, aged probably seventy or seventy-one, during a campaign against his rebel son Henry. The latter succeeds to the throne, but his mother Constance prefers his brother Robert and seizes Senlis, Sens, Dammartin, Le Puiset, Melun and Poissy for him; she hands half of the county of Sens to count Odo of Blois for his support, but Henry flees to Normandy and gets duke Robert to invade in his favour. His mother's cousin Fulk 'Nerra' of Anjou also helps, and he secures the throne – probably buying off his brother Robert with the duchy of Burgundy and possibly giving the Vexin to Normandy.

The death of Robert II deprives the rebel heir of Flanders, Baldwin (V), of aid against his father Baldwin IV; he is temporarily helped by duke Robert of Normandy but later comes to an agreement with his father.

GERMANY

Duke Ernest of Swabia (imprisoned 1027–8 for rebellion) is deposed by his stepfather Emperor Conrad for refusing to help put down rebel lords; he revolts but is killed while attacking the bishop of Constance's lands.

1031 BRITAIN

(The Peterborough version of the ASC confusingly dates Cnut's pilgrimage to Rome as the same year as his Scots campaign, i.e. 1031, but this is unlikely.)

Cnut uses his military power to mount a major invasion of Scotland, making up for long neglect of his Northern border; this is the most serious English military demonstration since Athelstan's in 934 and probably involves both an army and a fleet. Malcolm II probably avoids engagement due to military inferiority, and the two kings come to terms, prob-

ably in Fife. The English sources claim that Malcolm accepts Cnut as his overlord, and two other rulers – Macbeth mac Findlaech, sub-king/‘mormaer’ of Moray, and the Viking ruler Margad Ragnallson of Man – probably also agree treaties and do homage.

SPAIN

Expulsion from Cordoba of Caliph Hisham III, nominal ruler since 1029; end of the Ummayyad Caliphate. Cordoba becomes a republic led by the elected citizen governor Abu’l Hamza Jawhar. Seville under the Abbadids refuses to recognise his authority, and the collapsing ‘state’ of Cordoba becomes one of a number of small kingdoms.

1031/ 2 BRITAIN

Approximate date of the death of co-Jarl Brusi of Orkney; his half-brother Thorfinn ‘Raven-Feeder’ takes his lands to reunite the jarldom.

1032 BRITAIN

Killing of ‘mormaer’ Gillacomgain of Moray by his cousin, Macbeth mac Findlaech, who takes the province and also marries his widow, Gruoch the grand-daughter of the late Scots king Kenneth III (d. 1005). It is not clear if the coup benefits Macbeth’s probable grandfather, king Malcolm II, or annoys him as building up Macbeth as a threat to his other grandson and heir, king Duncan of Strathclyde.

SPAIN

King Sancho of Navarre marries off his younger son Ferdinand to Sancha of Leon, sister and heiress of his neighbour king Vermudo III of Leon, probably with predatory intent towards that weakening state.

FRANCE/GERMANY

6 September. Death of the childless king Rudolf III of Burgundy/Arles, ruler of the Rhone valley/Franche-Comte region ‘Kingdom of Burgundy’, aged sixty-one. He bequeaths his kingdom at the latter’s request to Emperor Conrad II, who thus unites the Burgundy realm with the Empire. This is defied by claimant count Odo/Eudes of Blois, who as Conrad is busy fighting in Poland invades Burgundy via his adjacent lands in Troyes and occupies part of it.

October. Death without children of duke Sancho VI of Gascony (accession 1009); his lands go to his sister Brisca’s son by duke William V of Aquitaine, Odo (heir of Aquitaine).

1033 | FRANCE/GERMANY

February. Having returned from Poland, Emperor Conrad invades Burgundy (Arles/Franche Comte section) to drive out his rival count Odo of Blois; he cannot make much headway and has to return in the summer for a second expedition.

BRITAIN

Death of king Rhydderch ap Iestyn of Deheubarth/Morgannwg; succeeded by Hywel, son of the earlier king Edwin ap Einion (ruled 1005–18).

ITALY

December. (or 1034) Death without a son of count Ulrich Manfred of Turin/Susa, main lord of Piedmont; his daughter/main heiress Adelaide will be married off by the Emperor to his stepson Hermann (c. 1037).

1034 | BYZANTIUM

Romanus III becomes seriously ill, allegedly due to poisoning by Zoe; (Holy Thursday or Good Friday) *11 or 12 April* the Emperor is held underwater in his bath at the Mangana Palace on Zoe's orders and on belated removal he collapses dying and Zoe forces the ministers to accept her younger lover Michael 'the Paphlagonian' as his successor. Michael is proclaimed Emperor Michael IV.

Michael increasingly neglects Zoe out of growing remorse at regicide, and his brother and chief minister John 'the Orphanotropus' (administers imperial orphanages) has her watched in case she starts to plot against him.

ITALY

Death of the wife of count Rainulf of Aversa; the Norman leader marries the niece of Pandulf of Capua, deserting his alliance with duke Sergius of Naples; Sergius soon abdicates and dies as a monk.

SPAIN

King Sancho of Navarre invades Leon in force, having already taken the frontier including Zamora, to seize the capital from king Vermudo III and depose him, crowning himself as king and installing his own son, Vermudo's sister's husband, as the next king; this shows his 'imperial' intentions for uniting the Christian kingdoms. Vermudo flees West into Galicia.

GERMANY/FRANCE

Summer. Conrad finally secures Burgundy from his rival count Odo of Blois.

September. Duke William VI of Aquitaine is captured at the battle of Moncontour by his predatory stepfather Geoffrey, heir to Anjou; the latter subsequently secures Saintonge from him as ransom (1036).

BRITAIN

November. Death of the aged king Malcolm II of Scots, possibly aged eighty, at Glamis after a twenty-eight-year reign – by violence according to some sources. He is succeeded by his elder (?) daughter Bethoc's son by 'thegn' Crinan of Dunkeld, Duncan, who is already king of Strathclyde; this probably results in a union of the two kingdoms. The diversion of the throne to Malcolm's family from its usual rotation among rival lines possibly leads to resentment by his kin, including in Moray by his predecessor Kenneth III's grand-daughter Gruoch (aka 'Lady Macbeth') and her husband 'mormaer' Macbeth.

1035 NORWAY/Britain

(or late 1034?) Cnut's domination of Norway has never been fully accepted by the inhabitants, and now his son Swein and ex-wife Aelgifu are driven out by a revolt led nominally by St Olaf's teenage son Magnus. The latter is recalled from exile in Russia by a group of rebel nobles, according to the 'Orkneyinga Saga' including the Orkney dynasty's cadet Rognvald, son of the late Jarl Brusi, who is sent as he helped to evacuate Magnus to safety in Russia in 1030 so the latter will trust that he is loyal not a secret agent of Cnut sent to lure Magnus back to be killed.

Cnut fails to respond quickly to the revolt – due to ill-health?

FRANCE

30 May. Death of count Baldwin IV of Flanders after a forty-eight-year reign; succeeded by his son Baldwin V.

Duke Robert of Normandy goes on pilgrimage to Jerusalem but (3 July) dies at Nicaea in Anatolia on the return journey; he is succeeded by his only, illegitimate son, William, aged probably eight, probably with Robert's uncle archbishop Robert of Rouen as regent. Neighbouring duke Alan (III) of Brittany is William's guardian, and king Henry also backs his succession. Some nobles refuse to accept this and/or make use of the lack of an adult ruler to pillage; increasing anarchy follows though it is unclear when exactly it started (1035 or 1037/40?). The main dynastic challenge apparently comes from Robert's half-brother William, to whom the new duke has to give the county of Talou to buy him off.

ITALY

‘Emir’ Al-Akhal of Sicily faces dangerous rebellion from his brother Abu Hafs, and the Zirids of Tunisia send their Caliph’s son Abdullah and 6,000 men to assist them; he appeals to Michael IV for assistance.

?William, Drogo, and Humphrey, elder sons of Norman knight Tancred of Hauteville, come out to Aversa to join count Rainulf’s army; later become rulers of Apulia.

‘Margrave’ Adalbero of Verona and Styria, count of Carinthia and ruler of Northern Italy for the Emperor Conrad, is sacked after a rebellion; succeeded by his predecessor (Carinthia)’s sidelined son and dynastic rival, Conrad of Worms (d. 1039).

SPAIN

October. Assassination of the expansionist ruler Sancho ‘the Great’ of Navarre, conqueror of Castile (1029) and Leon (1033). His eldest son by Muniadora of Castile, Garcia Sanchez, succeeds to Navarre and his second son, Ferdinand, to Castile and Leon, though the latter’s exiled king Vermudo now returns from Galicia to reconquer the West; Sancho’s eldest but illegitimate son, Ramiro, inherits Aragon/Western Catalonia.

BRITAIN

12 November. Cnut dies at Shaftesbury in Dorset, aged somewhere from forty to around forty-seven, usually assumed to be the former. (One source says ‘fifty-seven’ but this is unlikely.) The event is sudden enough for Cnut or Emma not to have brought his intended heir to England, Harthacnut, only around seventeen and with a half-brother (Harold, son of Aelgifu) in England ready to challenge his accession, from Denmark to England first. The succession is thus disputed; apparently most of the nobles of the midlands (led by this point by Leofric, earl of the Western shires) and Northumbria (led by the Anglo-Danish earl Siward) back the succession of Harold who may be older, aged around twenty. Emma’s faction now claim Harold is a bastard and not even Cnut’s son.

Cnut is buried at Winchester; his widow Emma takes up residence there with its treasury and Cnut’s ‘housecarls’ (it is the usual ‘dower-city’ of the queens of England).

A meeting of the leading elite at Oxford sees the nobles North of the Thames, led by earl Leofric, and the fleet at London choose Harold as king but those of Wessex, led by earl Godwin, choose Harthacnut; Emma and Godwin hold out in Wessex as Harold takes over the rest of the country.

1036 | ITALY

Galmar V of Salerno, now adult, leads a widespread revolt of vassals against the tyranny of Pandulf of Capua who has now pillaged the monastery of Monte Cassino and given its lands to his mercenaries; Rainulf of Aversa joins the rebels and Pandulf asks Michael IV and German Emperor Conrad II for aid.

BRITAIN/DENMARK/NORWAY

Harthacnut's continued absence in Denmark, where he is fighting king Magnus of Norway, damages his cause though it helps to prevent war in England. Emma and Godwin hold out at Winchester; but when Emma's younger son by Aethelred, Alfred, arrives in Kent en route to visit his mother, he is intercepted by Godwin and offered an 'escort' (probably along the North Downs Way). He is treacherously seized by surprise in his lodgings at Guildford by Godwin, who massacres or enslaves his companions – probably mostly Norman. Godwin hands him over to Harold who fatally blinds Alfred and sends him to die at Ely monastery.

Godwin is protecting his future as earl with Harold who he presumably sees as the inevitable winner in England; the blinding and its deliberate brutality are Harold's responsibility but probably cause resentment from Alfred's brother Edward (the future king) given the outcome in 1042–53.

Edward apparently lands with an armed force (of Normans?) at Southampton at around the time of Alfred's landing, but is refused admission and driven back by the local militia so he returns to Normandy. One version has it that he was lured by a forged letter sent in Emma's name, presumably by Harold in an attempt to trap him. Emma's part in refusing him help is unclear.

IRELAND

Expulsion of Sihtric 'Silkenbeard', ruler of Dublin, after a reign of probably forty-one years; succeeded by the obscure warlord Margad/Echmarcach Ragnallson.

1037 | ENGLAND

Harthacnut and his Danish fleet having failed to invade, Wessex accepts Harold as king and Emma flees to the Continent; Godwin stays as earl.

Emma sets up her base at Bruges and subsequently hires a fleet to invade England, presumably with Cnut's treasure.

FRANCE

March. Death of archbishop Robert of Rouen, ‘strongman’/regent for the young duke William; this possibly sparks off the subsequent anarchy.

Duke Alan of Brittany, as William’s guardian, may shore up the government to 1039/40. The new archbishop of Rouen is duke William’s half-uncle Mauger, son of duke Richard II by his second marriage, a young and apparently secular-minded/political cleric.

ITALY

Michael IV sends force to assist Akhal in Sicily against Abu Hafs; Akhal’s assassination ends the alliance.

Michael’s brother-in-law Stephen, a former ship-caulker now made his admiral, transports a large Byzantine army under the successful and very tall general George Maniaces to Sicily; among the ‘Varangian Guard’ of Viking mercenaries is Harald, brother of ex-King (St) Olaf of Norway and later king of Norway (reign 1047–66; killed at Stamford Bridge near York in England by Harold II).

Maniaces’ army takes Messina.

SPAIN

4 September. King Vermudo III of Leon, fighting to reconquer his kingdom from his brother-in-law Ferdinand of Castile, is killed in battle with the latter; end of civil war and of the old dynasty of Leon.

1038 FRANCE

March. Death of the luckless duke William VI of Aquitaine; succeeded by his half-brother Odo, ruler since 1032 of Gascony, who their step-mother Agnes of Burgundy still opposes.

BRITAIN/NORWAY

October. Death of archbishop Aethelnoth of Canterbury; succeeded by Eadsige.

Jarl Thorfinn is forced to share the rule of Orkneys with his nephew Rognvald, son of Brusi, as the latter gets king Magnus’ support to regain his late father’s third of Orkney.

IRELAND

Margad/Echmarach Ragnallson of Dublin is expelled by his predecessor Sihtric’s nephew Ivarr Haraldsen/‘Mac Arailt’; he probably retreats to his

other base, the Isle of Man, which he has ruled since pre-1031 (assuming that he did homage to Cnut in 1031 for Man).

1039 FRANCE

10 March. During war between the new duke Odo of Aquitaine and his half-brother William (born ‘Peter’) and the latter’s mother Agnes, married to Geoffrey the heir of Anjou, Odo is killed attacking Mauze; William (VII) succeeds.

BRITAIN/DENMARK/NORWAY

Harthacnut comes to an agreement with Magnus of Norway to end their war, and they meet to recognise each as ruler of what they currently hold. Each apparently recognises the other as his successor in their lands, both being unmarried – but it is not clear if Harthacnut means this to include England if he conquers it. Magnus later claims this.

Emma’s elder and surviving son by Aethelred, Edward, comes from Normandy to join her at Bruges; she reconciles him with his half-brother Harthacnut who he probably has never met.

Death of king Iago ap Idwal of Gwynedd/Powys; the throne is seized by the dynamic warlord Gruffydd ap Llewelyn ap Seissyl, son of the man who ruled there in 1005–23 – and as his father ruled Deheubarth too in 1018–23 he claims that too and fights king Hywel ap Edwin over it. Gruffydd secures the Northern Deheubarth region of Ceredigion.

Gruffydd defeats the English army of the earldom of Mercia at Rhyd-ar-Groes near Welshpool (upper Severn valley), and kills earl Leofric’s brother Edwin.

?Unsuccessful attack on Durham by king Duncan of Scots, which is driven off by the local earl Ealdred of Bamburgh (C12th Durham chronicle); this may precede another defeat for Duncan, at sea in the Moray Firth by Jarl Thorfinn of Orkney, if he is the ‘king Karl Hundason’ (‘Churl, Son of a Dog’) defeated around 1039 at Deerness according to the ‘Orkneyinga Saga’.

GERMANY/ITALY

4 June. Death of Emperor Conrad II, aged probably around fifty; succeeded by his son, Henry III.

1040 BRITAIN

17 March. King Harold, nicknamed ‘Harefoot’, dies at London, probably in his early/mid-twenties and forestalling a civil war with Harthacnut (and Emma) whose fleet in Flanders is ready to invade. He is buried at St Peter’s

Abbey at Westminster, temporarily, as when Harthacnut arrives he has Harold's body dug up and thrown in a marsh. It is retrieved and buried properly in London in secret.

Harthacnut and Emma land in Kent with no opposition, and he is recognised as king. He is crowned on 18 June at Canterbury; Harthacnut pursues the building of a large fleet to protect his far-flung double realm and like Cnut used England as a 'milch-cow' for his ambitions.

In Scotland, Duncan apparently invades Moray to tackle his Northern challenger, 'mormaer' Macbeth of Moray who is married to his family's dynastic rival Gruoch, grand-daughter of Kenneth III; he is killed in battle at Pitgaveny near Elgin. Contrary to Shakespeare, he is probably under forty and this is in open battle; Macbeth, probably his cousin and another grandson of Malcolm II, takes the throne. Duncan's young sons Malcolm (III) and Donald 'Ban' flee to their mother's kin in England according to later chronicles, but their father's father 'thegn' Crinan of Atholl survives as a potential challenger within Scotland.

FRANCE

June. Death of count Fulk 'Nerra' ('the Black'), first great ruler of Anjou and its warlord for fifty-three years, aged seventy; succeeded by his son Geoffrey 'Martel' ('the Hammer'), count of Saintogne.

ITALY

Maniaces besieges Syracuse and William de Hauteville kills its 'Emir' in a sortie; he drives off Abdullah the Zirid's relief-force at battle of Troina, and the garrison surrenders; the city returns to Byzantine rule, but Maniaces is furious that Abdullah has escaped naval blockade to return to Africa for reinforcements, accuses Stephen of incompetence, and assaults him and Stephen reports it to his brother-in-law the Emperor.

Maniaces is recalled, and replaced by incompetent eunuch Basil; meanwhile the Norman mercenaries have had a dispute with Maniaces over insufficient share of loot and leave campaign along with Salernitans.

Maniaces is imprisoned by John the 'Orphanotropus'; a revolt has broken out in Apulia led by Argyros, son of earlier rebel Melos, and with Lombards murdering Greek officials Michael IV sends out Michael Duceianus as new 'Catepan'; Michael brings the rebellion under control.

Michael IV's epilepsy becomes worse; John persuades Michael to adopt his nephew, the admiral Stephen's son, Michael 'Caliphates' ('the Ship-Caulker') as his son and 'Caesar'. Zoe agrees to adopt Michael Caliphates as her son to bring him into Macedonian dynasty.

FRANCE

?*October*. Death of duke Alan III of Brittany; end of comparatively centralised rule in Brittany as his vassals break away from his weaker son Conan's regime, and also probably increased anarchy in Normandy. Alan's guardianship of its young duke William is transferred to count Gilbert of Brionne, who dies a year or two later.

1041 ITALY

Early. Arduin, the former Salernitan commander in Sicily and now Michael Duceianus' governor of near-impregnable town of Melfi, plots revolt in alliance with Rainulf of Aversa; *March* Rainulf's men arrive at Melfi to join Arduin in revolt, which rapidly spreads; *17 March* Rainulf's Normans rout the Byzantine army on banks of the River Olivento near Venosa, and Duceianus withdraws to Bari.

May. Duceianus attacks rebels again, but is routed at Monte-Maggiore on the River Ofanto; the Byzantine government withdraws him to Sicily and installs Boiannes' son, Basil Boiannes, as 'Catepan'.

BRITAIN

Harthacnut's taxation leads to riots in Worcester and the murder of his tax-collectors, to which he replies by ordering his men to lay the county waste. Such collective punishment for killing the king's men is perfectly legal and other kings order this, but it is subsequently cited against him.

Harthacnut orders the killing of earl Eadwulf of Northern Northumbria, who is replaced by Siward the current earl of Yorkshire to rule all of Northumbria. This is also logical, as this head of the Bamburgh dynasty has more local support than the distant king and is a potential threat.

Gruffydd ap Llewelyn of Gwynedd/Powys/Ceredigion invades Deheubarth again and defeats king Hywel, capturing his wife.

ITALY

3 September. Basil Boiannes defeated and captured by Normans at battle of Monte Siricolo; handed over to Alenulf, brother of prince of Benevento and titular leader of rebellion. Bari deserts to rebels.

Lombard faction, led by Gaimar of Salerno and Capua, resents the leadership of Atenulf, particularly after he ransoms Boiannes back to Empire and keeps proceeds; the Norman garrison at Troia joins them in transferring loyalty to Argyrus.

ENGLAND

Emma's son Edward returns to England after twenty-six years in exile, probably intended as Harthacnut's heir until he has children.

HUNGARY

King Peter deposed by brother-in-law, noble Samuel Aba.

BYZANTIUM

10 December. Michael IV dies in the presence of his brothers and nephew at monastery, and Michael Calaphates is escorted to Constantinople by his relatives and installed in 'Sacred Palace' as Emperor Michael V; Zoe agrees to his accession.

1042 ITALY

February. Lombard and Norman rebel leaders swear allegiance to Argyrus in the church of St Apollinare in Bari.

BYZANTIUM

18 April. Michael V arrests Zoe for allegedly plotting to poison him; she is dressed in a nun's habit to disqualify her from throne and deported to island of Prinkipo; *19 April.* The city mob riots and Michael has to face a popular revolution. Zoe is brought back to Constantinople and paraded in imperial box at Hippodrome to reassure crowds that she is safe, but the enemies of Michael V's family proceed to the monastery of Petrion to take the other remaining imperial princess, Theodora; they escort her to Hagia Sophia as their candidate for throne and fighting resumes.

20 April. Michael and Constantine flee the Palace by boat, and land to take sanctuary in the church of St John of Studius, centre of the eponymous monastery; they are dragged away, blinded on the spot, and removed to remote monasteries.

Zoe and Theodora are proclaimed joint Empresses; Maniaces is appointed 'Catepan' and sent to Southern Italy to fight rebels, but his enemies in the capital undermine him in his absence.

BYZANTIUM/NORWAY

The rebellion and coup probably involves the Norwegian Viking 'Varangian Guard' officer Harald 'Hardradi', who afterwards flees Constantinople by sea to Russia in unclear circumstances, probably to avoid arrest by the new regime; he returns via Kiev to Norway to assist his nephew king Magnus within the next year and may not be entirely welcome.

BYZANTIUM

Zoe chooses the distinguished exiled noble Constantine Monomachus, a foe of the Paphlagonians, as her next husband and co-ruler; *11 June* the priest Stytes marries him to Zoe; *12 June* the Patriarch crowns him Emperor Constantine IX.

BRITAIN

8 June. Harthacnut collapses and dies while drinking at the wedding-banquet of the prominent thegn Osgod Clapa at Lambeth, aged around twenty-four. An alcoholic, epileptic, or diabetic fit or poison have been suggested as causes. He is succeeded by his half-brother Edward, aged probably thirty-eight or nine, who earl Godwin proposes as king.

Harthacnut has generally been written off as a rash and vindictive wastrel like his half-brother Harold; a more positive reference attests to his generosity and free spending – which possibly included on alcohol.

Godwin apparently pays Edward compensation ('weregild') for the betrayal and death of his brother Alfred in 1036, in the form of a magnificent warship.

FRANCE

?Height of the anarchy in Normandy, as described (or exaggerated?) by Orderic Vitalis later in the century; this period sees the murder of young duke William's steward and guardian Osbern in front of him at a castle by brigand nobles. William's authority is probably upheld precariously by later allies such as lords Roger de Beaumont, Roger of Montgomery, and at a lower social level his mother Herleve's second husband Herluin de Conteville.

ITALY

Summer. Maniaces restores Byzantine rule in Apulia with campaign of brutality; *September* Argyrus abandons siege of loyalist Trani and surrenders himself and Bari to Byzantium.

October. At instigation of Maniaces' rival Romanus Sclerus, his sister Maria Sclerena persuades her lover Constantine IX to recall Maniaces; when he hears he refuses to obey and allows his troops to proclaim him Emperor.

Deserted by Argyrus, the Normans in Apulia elect William de Hauteville as their 'Count'; later he is acclaimed as 'Duke of Apulia and Calabria' at Melfi, accepting the sovereignty of duke Gaimar of Salerno and Capua and his niece in marriage; Gaimar gives twelve fiefs to other Norman leaders, and William rules Ascoli, his brother Drogo Venosa, and Rainulf of Aversa Siponto.

Pandulf returns to Italy to fight for Byzantium against rebels, principally Gaimar.

1043 BYZANTIUM

February. Maniaces lands at Dyrrachium with rebel army, and recruits flock to his standard; ex-rebel Bulgarians and Serbs join him, and he marches along Via Egnatia into Macedonia to confront Constantine IX's Western army; the imperial troops are defeated at battle of Ostrovo, but Maniaces is struck in side with arrow and falls dead off his horse in hour of victory; his troops surrender and Constantine celebrates a triumph with Maniaces' head carried on a spear in procession.

ITALY

Argyrus appointed Byzantine 'Catepan' to fight rebels.

BRITAIN

Easter. King Edward rides with his earls to Winchester to arrest his mother Emma, who holds the town as her 'morning-gift' i.e. marriage-grant as queen, and deprives her of all her treasure and lands. She is apparently accused of plotting to put king Magnus of Norway – with whom Harthacnut had had a mutual succession pact, neither having sons – on the English throne. She is later exonerated and her property returned. It would seem unlikely that she would turn against her own son in favour of a Scandinavian prince she had probably never met, an enemy of Cnut, but at least it was considered plausible by contemporaries. Probably the insecure Edward's main concern was to confiscate her extensive property on an excuse, ?as revenge for her ignoring him in 1017–35. A more unlikely story had her accused of adultery with the bishop of Winchester, Cnut's protégé Aelfwine (or his successor-to-be Stigand?), and forced to undergo trial by ordeal which miraculously proved her innocence; this derives from the cult of local St Swithun to whom she is shown as praying successfully. Edward promotes new earls – earl Godwin's elder two sons, Swein, born c. 1018/20 (Western and Southern Mercia) and Harold, born c. 1022 (East Anglia), and nephew Beorn Esrithson (the North-Eastern and South-Eastern 'Danelaw'). Beorn is younger brother to the embattled king Swein of Denmark. The monopoly of new earldoms in one family heightens his reliance on the Godwins, but Swein's main use seems to have been as a warrior capable of taking on the Welsh across his frontier in Herefordshire.

Gruffydd ap Llewelyn of Gwynedd/Powys/Ceredigion expels his rival, king Hywel of Deheubarth, and unites Wales by force.

1044 | FRANCE

21 August. Battle of Nouy: count Geoffrey of Anjou defeats and captures his rival, count Theobald of Blois, and forces him to surrender Tours and Chinon.

ITALY

September. Rebellion drives Pope Benedict IX out of Rome.

HUNGARY

Emperor Henry III restores Peter to the throne; Samuel Aba defeated and killed.

BRITAIN

Exiled king Hywel ap Edwin of Deheubarth invades (probably with Irish mercenaries) to expel his supplanter Gruffydd ap Llewelyn of Gwynedd/Powys, but is killed in battle at the mouth of the river Teifi.

King Macbeth of Scots defeats and kills his challenger ‘thegn’ Crinan of Atholl, lord of Dunkeld and father of the late king Duncan, in a possible failed attempt to put Duncan’s sons on the throne.

?Civil war in Orkneys: Jarl Thorfinn defeats his nephew Rognvald in naval clash in the Pentland Firth, and the latter flees to his friend king Magnus of Norway to borrow ships for an invasion.

1045 | ITALY

20 January. Pope Benedict IX deposed in Rome; Sylvester II elected.

Widowed Countess Adelaide of Turin/Susa marries Humbert, heir to the County of Savoy (its ruler from 1051) – union of Turin and Savoy follows.

BRITAIN

23 January. King Edward, aged around forty-one, marries Godwin’s daughter Edith, who is probably in her mid-late teens. There have been questions as to its wisdom and over whether Edward was unwillingly bullied into it. He rid himself of the entire family, Edith included, in 1051, so was he forced to make the concessions – and did his childlessness imply that he deliberately avoided sexual relations with Edith to prevent Godwin, an unwanted chief minister, dominating his own grandchildren, the next rulers? Later C11th and C12th stories claimed Edward remained celibate as an act of holiness, but this may have been subsequent guesswork and appropriate behaviour for a potential saint.

Modern writers have claimed that Edward was homosexual, or that he had a difficult relationship with all women due to his neglect by Emma.

ITALY

10 March. Benedict restored to Rome.

BRITAIN/NORWAY

22 April. Death of bishop Beortwald of Ramsey and Sherborne (i.e. Wiltshire/Dorset); succeeded by Heremann.

Edward assembles his fleet at Sandwich against a threat of invasion, probably from Magnus of Norway.

ITALY

May. Benedict resigns Papacy in favour of godfather Gregory VI.

June. Death of count Rainulf of Aversa, succeeded by his nephew Asclettin; *Autumn* death of Asclettin, succeeded by cousin Rainulf II Trincanocite but Salerno disputes the succession so Rainulf reconciles with Pandulf.

1046 BRITAIN

10 March. Death of bishop Lyfing of Devon and Cornwall (based at Crediton) and of Worcester; succeeded by Leofric in Devon/Cornwall and by the royal administrator/diplomat Ealdred in Worcester.

Edward authorises earl Swein of SW Mercia/Herefordshire/Gloucestershire to attack Deheubarth in alliance with king Gruffydd ap Llewelyn of Gwynedd/Powys, to drive out the contender Gruffydd ap Rhydderch. The joint campaign is successful with the Gruffydd ap Rhydderch's lands ravaged, but on the return journey Swein abducts the abbess of Leominster as his mistress – the ASC says he commanded her to be brought to him, but she may have been an accomplice. This scandalises the Church.

'Before midwinter'. Outlawing of the leading 'thegn' Osgod Clapa, possibly for plotting against the king (?on behalf of a rival, e.g. Magnus of Norway).

IRELAND

Margad/Echmarcach Ragnallson of Man returns to his ex-kingdom of Dublin to expel his replacement, Ivarr Haraldsen.

FRANCE

?*Autumn*. Presumed date of the beginning of a major revolt against duke William (embellished by later stories, e.g. in Orderic Vitalis' account?), led by his cousin Guy of Brionne – son of his father duke Robert's sister Alice by the count of Burgundy (the 'Franche-Comte' section of it in the Empire). Presumably Guy, a second son, is after the succession; he is aided by Nigel of the Cotentin, Ranulf de Bressin, and Ralph Tessin. The later account of the war has them failing in an ambush of William at Valognes, but he has to flee to his overlord king Henry's court at Poissy to seek help and the king promises to bring an army to help.

ITALY

Death of William of Hauteville, count of Apulia; succeeded by brother Drogo, who is invested by Gaimar of Salerno and marries his daughter; Drogo mediates between Salerno and Rainulf II of Aversa.

Autumn. German Emperor Henry III arrives in Italy for coronation, and mediates between rival Popes, Benedict IX, Gregory VI, and Sylvester II; *20 December*. All three rivals are required to attend Henry's synod at Sutri, but Benedict fails to turn up so Henry deposes the other two and *24 December* a compliant synod at Rome deposes Benedict too; Henry has Suidger of Bamberg (Bavaria) elected Pope Clement II as respectable reformer and *25 December* he crowns Henry.

BRITAIN

Around *20–25 December*? A few days before Christmas, the Orkney civil war ends with the murder of co-Jarl Rognvald by his uncle Thorfinn; the (early C13th) 'Orkneyinga Saga' has Rognvald burn down Thorfinn's house in a surprise attack, which Thorfinn flees with his wife, but Thorfinn has more success when he attacks Rognvald in his house on Papa Stronsay on a visit to gather malt for brewing ahead of the feast.

1047 BRITAIN

Severe winter noted by ASC.

ITALY

February. Henry restores Pandulf to Capua, and confirms Drogo and Rainulf's lands.

FRANCE

Summer. King Henry brings an army to aid duke William in Normandy against Guy de Brionne's coalition of rebel lords; the latter, abandoned

by the defecting Ralph Tessin, are defeated at the crucial battle of Val-es-Dunes near Conteville (home of William's stepfather Herluin). The French royal army is the main reason for the victory, and despite the battle being seen in retrospect as restoring ducal power under the impressively ruthless William it is a start rather than a finale; Guy holds out at his castle of Brionne for over two years into 1050.

BRITAIN/DENMARK/NORWAY

King Swein of Denmark appeals for fifty ships to be sent by England, presumably supported by his aunt's husband earl Godwin there; Edward refuses.

Deaths of bishop Grimcytel of Selsey (i.e. Sussex), succeeded by Heca, and (29 August) bishop Aelfwine of Winchester, succeeded by the Godwin family 'client' Stigand who is currently bishop of North Elmham/Norfolk in Godwin's son Harold's earldom.

Magnus invades Jutland and defeats and expels Swein; he is acclaimed as king in Denmark but soon dies, according to the more reliable accounts of sickness. He is aged in his late twenties at most, and is succeeded by his uncle Harald 'Hardradi'. (According to the early C12th hagiographies of king Edward the latter had a vision of Magnus' death at the time.) The planned invasion of England is abandoned, and Harald fights Swein Estrithson who returns to Denmark to resume his rule.

Edward sacks and banishes earl Swein of SW Mercia for his abduction of the abbess of Leominster; he joins the Godwin family ally count Baldwin of Flanders. Part of Swein's earldom goes to his neighbour earl Leofric of Mercia; Herefordshire may now go to Edward's full sister Goda's half-French son by count Drogo of Mantes, earl Ralph of the Vexin, or else to earl Harold.

With Swein in exile, his ally Gruffydd ap Llewelyn is driven out of Deheubarth by its claimant, Gruffydd ap Rhydderch (who rules to 1055).

HUNGARY

King Peter deposed and killed in battle by cousin Andrew, assisted by Russians and by prince Edward 'Atheling', exiled son of king Edmund 'Ironside' (d. 1016) of England; Andrew makes his younger brother Bela 'Duke' and governor of Transylvania.

FRANCE

October. The still-rebellious lords in Normandy are forced by the Church to join duke William's loyalists in accepting the 'Truce of God', i.e. Church-sponsored ban on warfare from Wednesday evening to Monday morning every week and no attacks on civilians on pain of excommunication, to reduce bloodshed.

ITALY

9 *October*. Death of Pope Clement II at Abbey of St Tommaso near Pesaro; 8 *November*. Benedict IX restored as Pope by popular acclaim and bribery.

1048 ITALY

Byzantine ‘Catepan’ Palatinus captured by rebels at battle of Taranto and is ransomed; later on he is held prisoner by the rebellious citizens of Bari and only released in exchange for admission of the city’s independence.

16 *July*. Pope Benedict evicted from Rome by reluctant count Boniface of Tuscany on Henry’s orders but holds out at native Tusculum still claiming to be Pope; 17 *July*. Boniface organises election of Henry’s new choice, bishop Poppo of Brixen (Bavaria) as Pope Damasus II.

BRITAIN

Attacks on Sandwich and the Isle of Wight by pirate ships, apparently based in Flanders; Edward and the earls go after them by sea to no avail.

?*Late August*. Retirement to Abingdon abbey of the ‘suffragan’ (i.e. assistant) bishop Siward of Canterbury, deputy to the elderly archbishop Eadsige; he dies eight weeks later (23 October).

ITALY

9 *August*. Sudden death of Damasus at Palestrina; Roman representatives go to Germany to seek Henry’s choice as successor rather than Benedict, and *December* at Worms Henry nominates a zealous reformer, bishop Bruno of Toul, who sets out for Italy.

Robert, soon known as ‘Guiscard’ (‘the Cunning’), son of Tancred of Hauteville by second wife and half-brother to count Drogo, abandons his niggardly brother’s service in Apulia and fights for Pandulf of Capua.

1049 ITALY

12 *February*. Reaching Rome, Bruno is elected and crowned Pope and takes title of ‘Leo IX’ as symbol of restoring Papal prestige; initiates reforms, denounces simony, and gathers a court of talented and dynamic lieutenants including Hildebrand (later Gregory VII), Frederick of Lorraine, and Humbert of Moyenmoutier.

19 *February*. Death of Pandulf of Capua, ageing ‘Wolf of the Abruzzi’; either before or soon after Robert ‘Guiscard’ returns to Drogo and is granted isolated castle of Scribla near Cosenza, whence, he builds up brigand fiefdom in Calabria.

Pope Leo starts to tour Italian dominions and receives complaints of Norman brutality, especially from former Papal fief of Benevento whose lordship Henry III gave to Normans in 1046.

BRITAIN/GERMANY

After count Baldwin of Flanders sacks the imperial palace at Nijmegen in Holland, Emperor Henry launches a campaign by land and a sea blockade to force him to submit; he asks king Edward for help and the latter bases himself at Sandwich while his fleet helps the blockade. Baldwin is assisted in his resistance by the exiled English 'thegn' Osgod Clapa.

During the naval campaign in the Channel, exiled earl Swein comes to his family home at Bosham under a safe-conduct to negotiate with his uncle earl Godwin about his recall. His brother Harold and cousin Beorn however refuse to hand back lands of his which they have been given, and he leaves in a rage. The royal headquarters at Sandwich is informed that Osgod and others are raiding West of them in the Channel; Godwin takes a force West, aided by Harold and Beorn, and at Pevensey Swein intercepts them. He asks Beorn to accompany him to Sandwich to see the king, but once Beorn is aboard his ship he seizes him and heads off West; later Beorn's headless body is dumped ashore at Dartmouth in Devon, murdered by Swein.

Swein is outlawed for this murder; he flees to the Continent. This may be the date when Edward gives his Herefordshire to his own nephew Ralph, if not 1047 (see that entry).

FRANCE

October. Church Council of Rheims, as called by Pope Leo who has agreed to come to Rheims for the consecration of the new Basilica of St Remi there; he journeys from Italy to attend despite king Henry being furious at not being informed beforehand and summoning all his vassals (i.e. church as well as lay magnates) to a simultaneous assembly on the same day to wreck the council. The Pope makes it clear that the clerics must obey him and come to his council or they will be excommunicated, and most obey. At the council, Leo issues ordinances for Church reform especially banning purchase of benefices as 'simony', affecting lay interference in appointments. The recent engagement of duke William of Normandy and count Baldwin of Flanders' sister Matilda (descended from king Alfred of Wessex so a hint of William's interest in England?) is declared illegal by Pope Leo on account of consanguinity; they go ahead with the marriage in defiance of this, some time over the next couple of years. Also banned is the recent marriage of the heir to count Hugh of Ponthieu (d. 1052), Enguerrand, and William's paternal aunt, Adelaide of Normandy; Enguerrand is excommunicated and has to divorce his wife

but she keeps the county of Aumale (his mother's inheritance) which he has given her as a dower.

Duke William is deserted in a clash with rebel nobles backing his cousin Guy de Brionne at Domfront by his father's half-brother count William, who he has given the district of Arques where he is building a castle – start of conflict between the two Williams results, with the count's brother archbishop Mauger of Rouen ending up (by 1052?) in revolt too.

1050 BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Death of Empress Zoe, aged probably seventy or seventy-one.

FRANCE

Duke William of Normandy finally secures the surrender of rebel Brionne; its lord Guy, his cousin, is driven into exile in his father's Burgundy (Franche-Comte section).

BRITAIN

Pilgrimage of king Macbeth of Scotland to Rome, according to one version with his half-brother Jarl Thorfinn of Orkney; the king wins plaudits for his generous alms to the people there.

Earl Swein is pardoned by Edward and restored to his earldom, presumably replacing Ralph of the Vexin.

29 *October*. Death of archbishop Eadsige of Canterbury.

1051 BRITAIN

22 *January*. Death of archbishop Aelfric of York; succeeded by Cynesige.

March. A council meeting in mid-Lent sees king Edward promote his Norman protégé bishop Robert of London to the arch-see of Canterbury; London is given to abbot Spearhavoc/'Sparrowhawk' of Abingdon, whose abbey goes to the king's kinsman Radulf, ex-bishop of Norway.

Robert returns from collecting his 'pallium' and (29 June) is enthroned at Canterbury. He refuses to accept Spearhavoc as bishop of London as the Pope has forbidden it, and the latter appeals to the king and council and occupies the see during the subsequent dispute; the Godwins back their client Spearhavoc against the Norman archbishop.

FRANCE

Death of count Hugh IV of Maine; his predatory Southern neighbour and current overlord duke Geoffrey of Anjou claims the territory and invades

it, taking Le Mans, but is opposed by his Northern neighbour duke William of Normandy who king Henry backs to reduce Geoffrey's power.

The situation is complicated by Geoffrey's backing for William's refugee rebel cousin Guy de Brionne. William besieges Angevin-held Domfront.

19 May. Marriage of the widowed king Henry, who has no son and heir, to princess Anna of Kiev, daughter of the Russian ruler Yaroslav 'the Wise', at Rheims.

ITALY

July. Pope Leo arrives in Benevento at invitation of citizens, who have expelled pro-Norman rulers; he summons Drogo and Gaimar and reaches agreement with them and confirms their current lordships, but Drogo's promise to halt Norman attacks on Benevento are ignored by his vassals.

10 August. Drogo murdered in chapel of Monte Ilaro castle by Risus, apparently as part of a synchronised attack on various Norman lords by local conspirators; he is succeeded by his full brother Humphrey.

Argyros returns from conferring with Constantine to prepare a new war against Normans and other Byzantine enemies, and Leo starts to raise army too; Argyros organises Byzantine-Papal alliance, but Gaimar refuses to join it.

BRITAIN

Autumn. The question of the English succession may be connected to the visit to Edward's court by his sister Goda's second husband, count Eustace of Boulogne. The count's entourage has an affray with townsmen in Dover on his return journey over lodgings, and Edward orders their lord, Godwin, to punish them; he refuses and raises his and his elder sons' earldoms' (Herefordshire and East Anglia) armies in revolt. They demand the surrender of archbishop Robert and of some French/Norman knights in the king's service, apparently (later story by Florence of Worcester) established at Dover Castle. Possibly by this time earl Ralph has also installed a few Norman castellans in Herefordshire, e.g. Richard FitzScrob at Richard's castle, to use their cavalry against the Welsh, but this may be later in the 1050s.

1 September. Godwin and his sons, based at Beverstone on the Cotswold ridge, confront Edward's court at Gloucester, but Leofric and Siward join the king; they are outnumbered and dubious of fighting but Godwin agrees to a peace-conference at London. His military support seems to have ebbed, as when the court and the extra armies summoned from Mercia and Northumbria arrived in London the king, in the city with

Leofric and Siward, is able to face down the Godwins at Southwark. The entire family is exiled, evidently with the other earls' backing; a later account says Edward brought up the issue of Godwin's betrayal of his brother Alfred in 1036. The first literary account of the crisis, the king's 'Vita' of c. 1067 (written for his widow Edith), claims that Edward was persuaded to exile the evil counselors led by archbishop Robert. The confrontation could be said to have given control of England to Edward for the first time, and he proceeds to split up the Godwin earldoms among his own supporters – Leofric's son Aelfgar receives East Anglia, and Ralph receives Hereford again. A few more Norman clerics are promoted, such as the new bishop William of London, and the queen is sent to a nunnery – either to Wilton, a royal residence and school, or to the stricter Wherwell. This is possibly the first step in a divorce as allegedly urged by archbishop Robert (who thus wants the king to have a son, not for his fellow-Norman William to succeed).

Godwin and most of his family flee to Flanders, where count Baldwin's daughter Judith has recently married his third son Tostig; Harold and the fifth son, Leofwine, flee to Ireland to hire mercenaries in Viking Dublin.

The events of 1066 cloud our knowledge of the supposed visit to court in 1051/2 by duke William, Edward's kinsman (Emma's great-nephew) and already apparent as a vigorous and talented ruler; did Edward promise him the heirship as William's writers later claimed? Did the visit, not recorded in the ASC, take place at all? Edward needs Norman support to offset naval attack from the Godwins in Flanders.

1052 BRITAIN

6 March. Death of king Edward's mother Emma, probably aged in her early-mid sixties; buried with Cnut in the Old Minster, Winchester.

Attack on Herefordshire and victory over an Anglo-Norman army near Leominster by Gruffydd ap Llewelyn, on the anniversary of the battle of Rhyd-ar-Groes in 1039.

FRANCE

Fall of Domfront to William; William is aided by Henry to defeat and expel Geoffrey, and secures control of the Northern border district of Belleme. The turbulent Belleme family, later warlords in Norman England, thus enter Norman service.

King Henry switches sides in the war between Normandy (William) and Anjou (Geoffrey) over the county of Maine, to back Anjou and reduce his ex-protégé William's power; he also backs rebel barons in Normandy.

23 May. Birth of Henry's son and heir Philip, by Anna of Kiev/Russia.

ITALY

2 *June*. Gaimar, currently facing revolt from pro-Byzantine faction in control of Amalfi, is murdered at Salerno by his brothers-in-law, sons of the count of Teano, who seize city with the eldest of them as successor; his brother Guy of Sorrento flees to Norman army and 6 *June* they besiege Salerno; the conspirators have to surrender to save captive families and Gaimar's son Gisulf installed as ruler but Normans break promise to let murderers go and kill them; Pope Leo goes to Germany to seek Henry's assistance against Normans.

BRITAIN

Edward bases his fleet at Sandwich against Godwin; earls Ralph and Odda are in command but are poor leaders lacking support.

Godwin crosses with his fleet from Flanders via the Yser to the South coast to raid, landing (23 *June*) near Romney in Kent; he then goes on to the Isle of Wight and Harold brings another fleet from Dublin, raiding Somerset en route and being defeated by the local militia in battle at the mouth of the river Parrett. Harold joins his father off the Isle of Wight, and they sail East; the royal fleet is outmatched and Edward seems to have suffered (like his father) from poor morale, poor commanders and defections.

The Godwin fleet sails into the Thames unhindered; the Godwins land at Southwark with apparent reinforcements from within Wessex, and when earls Leofric and Siward join Edward in London they persuade – or force – him to pardon the Godwin family and return their earldoms.

(Swein is on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and soon dies in Anatolia so Ralph keeps Hereford.) The Norman clerics flee from London, apparently with some Normans given lands in Herefordshire and other Frenchmen at court. Archbishop Robert apparently takes Godwin's youngest son Wulfnoth and grandson Haakon (son of Swein), in Edward's hands since 1051, as hostages back to Normandy and hands them over to duke William – or they have already been sent there by him or the king.

Archbishop Robert is illegally sacked and replaced by a Godwin candidate, bishop Stigand of Winchester, who also continues to hold that see; however, William is allowed to keep London.

Edward has to adhere to Godwin's demands and accept Edith back as queen. Possibly some of the king's fleeing Norman knights end up in Scotland serving Macbeth, but others remain in Herefordshire with earl Ralph.

1053 **BRITAIN**

April. Sudden death of earl Godwin, apparently collapsing at a royal feast, probably aged around sixty. The extent of Edward's grudge against

Godwin over his brother Alfred's death (they were supposedly quarrelling over it when Godwin had a stroke according to the king's later hagiography) and desire to seek revenge has been muddled by later legend. But Edward's relationship with Harold, who succeeds to Wessex and becomes chief minister and commander-in-chief, is clearly better and the government from 1053–66 is more harmonious. The king takes no more part in warfare.

Leofric's son Aelfgar is restored to the earldom of East Anglia, which he held in 1051–2.

Leofwine becomes bishop of Lichfield and Wulfwig succeeds Ulf as bishop of Dorchester-upon-Thames; as the Pope does not recognise Stignad as archbishop of Canterbury and Cynesige has not yet been consecrated in York they go abroad to be consecrated by Papally-accepted archbishops.

ITALY

Spring. Pope Leo returns to Italy with an army of Swabian mercenaries, and summons all loyal vassals to join him against Normans; *June.* He arrives at Benevento with duke of Gaeta, count of Teano, and a substantial Apulian contingent.

Leo arranges rendezvous with Argyros and Byzantine army at Siponto in Apulia, but Norman-held Troia and Bovino block direct route; he marches circuitously via Monte Gargano, and is confronted by Humphrey de Hauteville, Robert Guiscard, Rainulf of Aversa, and full Norman strength at Civitate.

18 June, Battle of Civitate: Normans on right wing under Rainulf rout poorly-armed Lombards and Apulians, but Humphrey in centre is held by Swabians and on the left Robert Guiscard comes to his assistance; Swabians cut down as Rainulf returns and Pope Leo is surrounded in nearby Civitate town as citizens refuse to shut Normans out; the Norman leaders respectfully fall on knees and pledge allegiance, but despite their apologies they require him to accompany their army in march on Benevento. Benevento surrenders: Leo allowed to contact Henry and Constantine IX.

BYZANTIUM/ITALY

Summer. At Patriarch Michael Cerularius' instigation, a letter from Archbishop Leo of Ochrid is sent to the Italian bishop John of Trani which condemns specific Western Church practices, e.g. use of unleavened bread in Mass, as sinful and Judaistic.

Bishop John hands the letter to passing Cardinal Humbert, on his way to join the captive Pope, and he takes letter to Leo who is furious; he commissions Humbert to write a letter to Cerularius and Leo defending

Western usages and setting out arguments for Papal supremacy, which is insultingly addressed to them as just ‘bishops’.

Pope Leo agrees to send legates to Constantinople to sort out the disputed matters of rites and usages and drafts two letters for Humbert to take with them – (i) to Cerularius, disputing his right to interfere in matters of usages, reprimanding him for his pretensions to ecumenical authority (probably result of misunderstanding of Patriarch’s title as ‘oecumenical’, which to Byzantines means within the Byzantine world i.e. Empire not worldwide), and questioning legality of his election; (ii) to Constantine, encouraging one more war against Normans but complaining at Patriarch’s intolerable presumptions and hoping for his repentance.

FRANCE

Rebellion against duke William of Normandy by his half-uncle, count William of Talou (probably in open defiance of him since 1049) the lord of Arques, who rudely left the siege of Domfront without permission so is suspect, and assorted nobles; also involved is the count’s full brother, archbishop Mauger of Rouen, who duke William deprives of his lands and power and seeks to have deposed as a traitor, and the Count’s brother-in-law and neighbour count Enguerrand of Ponthieu. The duke besieges count William in his castle of Arques; the latter flees to get help from king Henry, who is keen to cut the duke’s power, but (25 October) the duke defeats them and Enguerrand in battle using a feigned flight to lure their men into a trap; Enguerrand is killed. Arques surrenders and the count is banished.

1054 FRANCE

February. Double-pronged invasion of Normandy by king Henry of France; he leads one expedition South of the River Seine into the county of Evreux, while his younger brother Odo/Eudes, count Reginald of Clermont, and Normandy’s predatory North-Eastern neighbour count Guy of Ponthieu, successor of William’s foe duke Enguerrand (k. 1052), invade North of the river; William leads one army to oppose the king, while the other invasion is met by his vassals count Robert of Eu, Roger Giffard, Roger ‘son of the bishop’ (subsequently called ‘de Mortemer’) the founder of the later Mortimer dynasty, and his nephew William de Warenne.

Battle of Mortemer: the Northern invasion-force is routed by William’s barons, on news of which king Henry withdraws. This secures William full control of Normandy and virtually ends resistance to him, but Roger de Mortemer, the main victor, is soon deprived of the eponymous castle as a punishment for rescuing his captured father-in-law count Ralph and smuggling him to safety after the battle not handing him over to the duke.

?Church Council of Lisieux (Normandy): duke William has his half-uncle archbishop Mauger of Rouen deposed for rebellion and violating canon law by his secular activities.

ITALY

Early spring. Humbert, Frederick of Lorraine, and Peter of Amalfi leave Benevento as legates en route to Constantinople; *12 March.* Humphrey de Hauteville escorts Pope Leo as he is allowed to leave Benevento and return to Rome, presumably having recognised Norman control of Southern Italy but allowed to retain lordship of Benevento.

BYZANTIUM

Early April. Legates arrive at Constantinople; they call on Patriarch Michael Cerularius but take offence at the manner of reception and leave abruptly; they publish the Papal letter to Cerularius in Greek translation with a memorandum on disputed usages to make Rome's position clear.

Cerularius claims that the seals of a Papal letter, delivered to him at a reception, have been tampered with en route to Constantinople and that it has been altered to make it more offensive, supposedly by Argyrus in Italy, and is not the Pope's words verbatim; he refuses to recognise legates' authority or negotiate.

Hostile orthodox reply to the published 1053 letters is delivered by Nicetas Stethatus, a learned monk of the Studius monastery, respectful in language but denouncing Western usages.

ITALY

19 April. Death of Pope Leo in Rome, broken by his defeat and humiliating captivity; this technically ends legates' authority in Constantinople. Hildebrand leads Roman mission to Henry III to seek guidance on successor.

BYZANTIUM

May/June. News of Leo's death reaches Constantinople, but the confrontation between legates and Cerularius continues. Constantine allows legates to attend Stethatus' enforced public apology to calm them down after Humbert denounced Stethatus as a pimp and a Moslem and implied he belongs to a theatre or brothel not a monastery.

Humbert raises the 'filioque' with Constantine; however, Cerularius refuses to have anything to do with the legates. *Saturday 16 July.* The legates interrupt service at Hagia Sophia to lay 'bull' of excommunication against Cerularius and his supporters on the High Altar and ceremonially shake dust from feet on way out – it accuses them of simony, insisting

on re-baptising Westerners into their Church, letting priests marry, jettisoning Mosaic law, refusing communion to men who shave beards, and leaving a clause out of Creed. Apart from many inaccuracies, the bull is illegal as legates' authority has lapsed.

18 July. Legates leave for Rome; the Emperor's envoys catch them up at Selymbria to check that the extraordinary language of the bull was not a mistake.

24 July. Cerularius' synod excommunicates and anathematises the legates and burns copy of the bull; the technical 'Schism' between Eastern and Western churches commences from this double excommunication, though significance not realised at the time. Translators of the Papal bull into Greek and Argyrus' relatives in Byzantine capital made scapegoats and punished by synod.

BRITAIN

Invasion of Scotland by earl Siward of Northumbria to restore Malcolm, son of king Duncan, to the throne in place of Macbeth; the involvement of king Edward is unclear but one tradition says Malcolm had been brought up at his court.

27 July. Siward wins a major battle at ?Dunsinane near Dunkeld against Macbeth and the latter's Norman cavalry, although many men including his elder son and heir Osbern and nephew Siward are killed. The invasion is probably aimed up the Tay valley to head for Malcolm's late grandfather's base in Atholl. Macbeth escapes to Moray, and it is unclear how much of Scotland Malcolm gains – probably Lothian, possibly Fife, and Strathclyde if he is the 'king Mael Coluim son of Donnchad' installed there this year as noted in the Irish annals.

Bishop Ealdred of Worcester goes on a diplomatic mission from the king to Cologne and Saxony; apparently connected to the king's search for his missing nephew Edward 'the Exile', son of Edmund 'Ironside', as a potential heir.

ITALY

November. Henry III's choice of next Pope, to Hildebrand's mission at Mainz, revealed as the Swabian bishop Gebhard of Eichstätt, whose unwillingness to serve delays departure for Italy.

1055 BYZANTIUM

Constantine IX catches a chill and *7/11 January* dies, aged around sixty.

Theodora, daughter of Constantine VIII, becomes Empress again aged over seventy.

BRITAIN

March. Following the death of earl Siward of Northumbria, a council is held to decide on his successor. His surviving son Waltheof is a boy, and apparently the Godwinsons led by Harold arrange for the exile of earl Aelfgar of East Anglia for ‘treason’ on dubious grounds – presumably for opposing the candidacy of Harold’s brother Tostig for Northumbria. Tostig is appointed, and Aelfgar goes to Wales to seek help from king Gruffydd ap Llewelyn plus a cruising Viking fleet ?from Dublin.

Gruffydd ap Llewelyn defeats and kills his rival, Gruffydd ap Rhydderch of Deheubarth, and reunites Wales.

ITALY

13 April. Bishop Gebhard enthroned in Rome as Pope Victor II.

June. Papal synod at Florence, attended by Emperor Henry who forces duke Godfrey of Lorraine to flee his wife’s Duchy of Tuscany and takes her and her daughter Matilda hostage.

BRITAIN

September/October. Gruffydd invades Herefordshire to restore Aelfgar to power; he defeats earl Ralph’s levies in battle outside Hereford, apparently with the English trying to fight on horseback for the first time (as instructed by the Normans) but running away; *14 October.* Hereford is brutally sacked and the cathedral set on fire. Harold, as commander-in-chief, brings his troops to Herefordshire to help Ralph, and negotiations at Billingsley end with Aelfgar restored to his earldom – possibly his father Leofric forces Harold to compromise by refusing to let his Mercians fight.

The subsequent treaty grants Gruffydd the lands of ‘Archenfield’ (English)/ ‘Ergyng’ (Welsh), i.e. SW Herefordshire, which the English have held for centuries – a rare Welsh frontier advance – and accepts him as king of Wales, i.e. an equal not vassal of Edward.

1056

BYZANTIUM

Elderly bureaucrat Michael Stratoticus succeeds Theodora, as Emperor Michael VI; the generals are discontented as he is a weak ruler and gives offices to civilian favourites.

BRITAIN

March. Death of bishop Athelstan of Hereford; succeeded by earl Harold’s ‘mass-priest’ and protégé Leofgar, a fighting man not a conventional cleric; Harold has chosen him to rebuild the shattered regional

army, but after an episcopate of eleven weeks he is killed in battle (week before Midsummer Day) by Gruffydd ap Llewelyn and the Welsh at Glasbury near Hay-on-Wye. Sheriff Aelfnoth of Herefordshire is also killed.

Ealdred of Worcester becomes bishop of Hereford too. King Edward arranges with German help for his nephew Edward ‘the Exile’, son of Edmund ‘Ironside’ and married to a kinswoman of German Emperor Henry (Agatha), to be invited home to England from his estates in Hungary; his nephew accepts.

ITALY

Autumn. Pope Victor visits Germany, where on the death of Henry III at Bozfeld in the Harz mountains on 5 *October* he manages succession of son Henry IV (aged five, born November 1050) under regency of mother Agnes of Poitou, Henry III’s second wife (daughter of duke William V of Aquitaine who d. 1030).

1057 BRITAIN

Arrival in London and, soon afterwards, death of Edward’s nephew Edward ‘the Exile’. The latter is aged around forty, and the removal of the likely heir to England leaves only his small son Edgar ‘Atheling’ (born c. 1052/4 as he is a contemporary of William of Normandy’s eldest son Robert) as claimant. The ASC (Worcester version) laments ‘we do not know for what reason he was not allowed to see his relative king Edward’, which some interpret as a hint at foul play on behalf of a rival claimant – earl Harold or duke William? A comment on unjust Fate is more likely.

ITALY

Spring. Death of Humphrey de Hauteville, appointing Robert Guiscard as guardian to young son Abelard; Guiscard seizes Abelard’s inheritance and secures his own election as ruler of Norman principality.

Richard of Aversa besieges Salerno and on surrender deposes and evicts young ruler, Pandulf’s son Pandulf.

BYZANTIUM

The generals commanding in Asia Minor, annoyed at the Emperor for a lack of help against raiding Turks, choose one of their group – Isaac Comnenus – as their nominee for Emperor in revolt; the ‘Frankish’ (Western) mercenary commander Hervé Francopulus is insulted by the Emperor so he deserts to the Turks and starts plundering countryside.

8 *June.* The generals proclaim Isaac as Emperor Isaac I.

ITALY

28 July. Death of Pope Victor II at Arezzo; *2 August.* Frederick of Lorraine, abbot of Monte Cassino and brother duke Godfrey, elected Pope and takes title of Stephen IX.

August. Norman assembly at Melfi endorses Robert Guiscard as new Norman ruler of Apulia and Calabria.

BRITAIN

15 August. Battle of Lumphanan, in Mar (Aberdeenshire): Macbeth is killed after a reign of seventeen years by his challenger Malcolm III, who is probably already king of Lothian/Strathclyde and Fife. However, Malcolm's invasion of Moray is not that successful, as Macbeth's stepson Lulach, son of 'mormaer' Gillacomgain and Gruoch, is able to secure Moray and is soon (?9 September) crowned as king at Scone.

FRANCE

August. King Henry invades Normandy to diminish the power of his ex-protégé duke William; his army is ambushed by the latter as it is crossing the River Dives near Varaville and reputedly cut to pieces by an attack on the rearguard while the vanguard is across the river unable to help; end of the main conflict between the two rivals in William's favour, but border skirmishes continue.

BYZANTIUM

30 August. Michael VI is forced to abdicate by a pro-military revolt in the capital, in which crucial support is lent by the Patriarch. *?31 August.* Isaac enters Constantinople; *1 September* Patriarch Cerularius crowns him Emperor at Hagia Sophia.

BRITAIN

31 August (Florence of Worcester) or *30 October* (ASC, Worcester version). Death of earl Leofric, at Bromley; buried at Coventry, whose abbey he and his wife Godgifu ('Lady Godiva') patronised. His son Aelfgar succeeds him; East Anglia is transferred to Harold's younger brother Gyrth.

21 December. Death of king Edward's nephew and potential heir, earl Ralph of Herefordshire, who leaves a son (under-age?) but is succeeded in his earldom by Harold of Wessex. This is presumably due to the seriousness of the military threat from Gruffydd and the size of Harold's army to meet that.

Aethelric succeeds Heca as bishop of Selsey/Sussex.

ITALY

Autumn. Roger, youngest of the sons of Tancred de Hauteville, joins his full brother Robert Guiscard in Apulla.

1058 BRITAIN

17 March. King Malcolm III kills his rival Lulach at Essie in Strathbogie, presumably in a second invasion of Moray; the latter is probably in his mid-late twenties. Malcolm secures all of Scotland as king, but Lulach's son Maelsnechtai is able to hold onto Moray as 'mormaer'.

ITALY

Pope Stephen proposes a new military alliance with Byzantium against Normans, but *29 March* dies in Tuscany while consulting duke Godfrey about his assistance; most of the Roman clergy keep to their oath not to elect successor until Cardinal Hildebrand has consulted Henry III and returned, but *5 April* a minority elect bishop John of Velletri, a member of dynasty of Tusculum but respected reformer; the majority flee to seek Henry's assistance and John (Pope Benedict X) not generally recognised.

Robert Guiscard abandons wife Alberada, mother of son Behemund, for Sichelgaita, sister and heiress of Gisulf of Salerno, claiming he and Alberada were illegally married as too close cousins; in return, Guiscard helps Gisulf against his raiding half-brother William of Hauteville.

BRITAIN

Exile of earl Aelfgar of Mercia, which the ASC barely mentions but which probably represents a plan by Harold and his kin to crush the influence of the rival dynasty of Leofric. Aelfgar flees to Gwynedd to get help from his ally Gruffydd ap Llewelyn, as in 1055, which may mark or result from his marriage of his daughter Eadgyth/Edith to the latter. He also has help from a cruising Norwegian fleet in the Irish Sea. The combined army probably invades Mercia, and certainly Aelfgar secures his restoration to power – the third time in the decade that an exiled earl has forced the king to restore him.

?Archbishop Stigand is persuaded to go to Rome and seek the 'pallium' as legal archbishop, possibly on the death of his exiled predecessor Robert; he accompanies a pilgrimage by earl Harold. 'Pope' Benedict grants him the 'pallium' – but this will be cancelled when he is overthrown.

ITALY

?*Autumn*?. Severe famine in Calabria leads to large native rebellion against Normans; Guiscard promises his alienated brother Roger half of the land he reconquers and all South Calabria in Byzantine hands if he will assist him which he does.

6 *December*. Benedict X's enemies among cardinals elect Gerard of Lorraine, bishop of Florence, as rival Pope (Nicholas II) at Siena with duke Godfrey's support.

1059 ITALY

Nicholas anathematises Benedict and accompanies Godfrey's army to Rome; 24 *January*. He is installed in Vatican and Benedict flees; *February* Cardinal Hildebrand persuades Richard of Capua to arrest Benedict at Galeria; *April*. Vatican synod formalises restriction of future Papal elections to Cardinals.

FRANCE

23 *May*. Coronation as co-ruler of king Henry's son Philip, on his seventh birthday, at Rheims.

ITALY

Late July. Pope Nicholas consecrates Cathedral of Venosa, burial-place of Hauteville dynasty, during a Southern Italian tour in reconciliatory gesture to the Normans; *late August*. Nicholas receives the Norman leaders at synod of Melfi and confirms Richard as prince of Capua, then invests Robert Guiscard as duke of Apulia and (unconquered) Sicily; in return Norman leaders swear loyalty and promise not to harm Papal possessions including Benevento. End of hopes of Byzantine-Papal alliance to reconquer Southern Italy.

BYZANTIUM

November. Isaac catches chill during hunting and falls seriously ill; during intrigues at his bedside his brother John rejects the throne to annoyance of his ambitious wife Anna Dalassena, and the civilian ministers led by Psellus persuade Isaac to nominate Constantine Ducas; he retires to Monastery of Studius, aged around fifty-seven, and wife Catherine/Helena and daughter retire to nunneries.

23 *November*. Accession of Constantine X Ducas, with his young son Michael (VII) as nominal co-Emperor; Psellus is chief minister, and becomes Michael's tutor; the pacifically-inclined Constantine neglects the army and does not launch retaliation against Turkish raids, preferring civilian projects.

1060 | ITALY

Early. Fall of Byzantine-held Taranto and Brindisi; Robert Guiscard and Roger use Byzantine-style artillery catapults to force Reggio, capital of Byzantine Calabria to surrender, but garrison holds out in castle on rock of Scilla (c.f. Homer's 'Odyssey') until *Summer* they flee to Byzantium.

Late summer. Robert Guiscard and Roger launch invasion of Sicily, now divided between 'Emirs' Ibn at Timnah of Syracuse, Ibn Haukal of Trapani, and Ibn al-Hawwas of Enna; unsuccessful attack on Messina.

FRANCE

4 August. Death of king Henry, aged fifty-two, at Vitry; succeeded by his eight-year-old son Philip I, under regency of his widow Anne of Kiev/Russia.

HUNGARY

Death of king Andrew; his brother Bela drives out Andrew's son Soloman, who obtains German help for invasion.

FRANCE

15 November. Death of count Geoffrey of Anjou, foe of Normandy; as he has no son by his three marriages, his elder nephew (his sister's son by count Geoffrey of Gatinais), Geoffrey 'the Bearded', succeeds him.

BRITAIN

22 December. Death of archbishop Cynesige of York; succeeded by the veteran diplomat bishop Ealdred of Worcester and Hereford. The latter gives up his see of Hereford to one of the king's French clerical staff, Walter.

Death of bishop Duduc of Wells (Somerset); succeeded by a Lotharingian, Giso. This and Walter's appointment are usually seen as the king's attempt to bring in 'modern' and 'reformed' churchmen with overseas administrative and spiritual experience to improve Church standards.

1061 | ITALY

February. Roger has to rejoin Robert Guiscard in Southern Italy against Byzantines, but returns to Sicily on appeal from Ibn al-Timnah who is in dispute with his brother-in-law Ibn al-Hawwas; Roger's army under nephew Serlo invades North coast of Sicily to raid Ibn al-Hawwas' territory but fails to take Messina.

Spring. Brindisi recaptured by Guiscard, and Byzantines retreat to Bari;
May. Roger captures Messina in second attack, and Guiscard joins him for attack on Enna in company with Ibn al-Tinnah.

Guiscard and Roger defeat Ibn al-Hawwas' vastly superior army outside Enna, but cannot force citadel to surrender.

BRITAIN

Pilgrimage of earl Tostig of Northumbria, Harold's brother, and his wife Judith to Rome, with new archbishop Ealdred; Pope Nicholas requires the latter to give up bishopric of Worcester.

ITALY

19/26 July. Death of Pope Nicholas II.

30 September. Anselm of Baggio, bishop of Lucca, elected Pope in Rome by reform-minded cardinals under Hildebrand's direction and takes title of Alexander II; a rival group of Roman nobles goes to German court to denounce him to the regency and succeeds in having (28 October) Cadalus of Parma set up as rival, Honorius II.

1062

GERMANY

April. 'Coup of Kaisersworth': Emperor Henry IV is seized by the agents of archbishop Anno of Cologne and other clerics and nobles opposed to the 'overbearing' rule of his mother, the regent Agnes of Poitou, and her deputy bishop Henry of Augsburg. On a visit to that Rhineside town he is lured onto Anno's ship and carried off, and the kidnappers force Agnes to hand over the regalia and retire; Anno becomes regent.

ITALY

April. 'Pope' Honorius installs himself in Rome; *May.* Duke Godfrey of Lorraine and Tuscany enters the city to order both Popes to withdraw to dioceses and await German-backed synod's arbitration; they do so but excommunicate each other; Constantine X sends envoys to the subsequent synod to attempt to influence the result.

Robert Guiscard refuses to hand over promised lands in Calabria to his brother Roger, including intended marriage-gift to Roger's bride Judith of Evreux; Sicilian campaign is halted while they fight each other, and Roger is besieged at Mileto; in the absence of Roger, Ibn al-Tinnah is ambushed and killed.

Guiscard is captured by citizens of Gerace while visiting a friend, and is surrendered to Roger who reconciles with him in return for promise of the lands at dispute.

Autumn. Returning to Sicily, Roger reinforces Troina near Messina but is faced with revolt of Greek citizens who call in Arabs and is besieged.

BRITAIN

September. Consecration of new bishop of Worcester – the devout reformer (St) Wulfstan, prior of the cathedral monastery.

1063 BRITAIN

New Year. Harold launches a midwinter surprise attack on Gruffydd's court at Rhuddlan on the Gwynedd coast. The ruler escapes inland, but the sack of his palace is a humiliation and this precedes a full-scale attack later. The fact of Harold attacking his rival Aelfgar of Mercia's ally unchallenged may imply that Aelfgar has died recently; if so Aelfgar is succeeded by his elder son Edwin, inexperienced and probably in his twenties. The latter is earl of Mercia by 1064 – and is too weak to stand in Harold's way as he aims for the throne.

ITALY

January. After four months, Roger breaks siege of Troina and executes rebel citizens.

May. Honorius briefly seizes the Castel St Angelo in Rome in attempt to win control of Papacy; driven out a few months later.

Spring. Roger fights Ayub and Ali, sons of the Zirid 'Emir' Temim of Tunisia, who their father has sent to Palermo and Agrigento with armies; he wins a crushing victory at Cerami West of Troina, and sends camels as a gift to Pope Alexander who sends him consecrated Papal banner.

BRITAIN

Mid-late May. Harold starts to ravage the Welsh coasts by sea and probably also has an army operating by land from Chester or Hereford; Tostig marches into Gwynedd by land with his Northumbrians. Gruffydd flees into the mountains as his lands are ravaged, and the defenders are worn down until in desperation some of Gruffydd's men kill him to secure peace and send his head to Harold. Harold puts his foe's head on the prow of his warship as he sails up the Severn to the royal court at Gloucester.

Gruffydd's half-brothers (Bleddyn and Rhiwallon ap Cynfyn) succeed to the North of Wales as Harold's vassals, while the local dynasts return to Deheubarth (Caradoc ap Gruffydd ap Rhydderch, son of the ruler killed in 1055) and Morgannwg. All Gruffydd's gains of 1055/6 from England are returned. This major success establishes Harold's military reputation and gives England the dominance which the Norman barons are able to use to annex new lands in Wales after 1066.

ITALY

August. Pisan fleet joins Roger for unsuccessful attack on Taranto.

1064

ITALY

May. German-sponsored synod of Mantua meets to decide on rightful Pope; Honorius refuses to turn up unless he is invited to preside, but Alexander comes and is chosen to preside and approved as rightful Pope.

Robert Guiscard and Roger fail to take Palermo thanks to plague of tarantula spiders in camp; Guiscard faces revolt from disinherited nephew Abelard.

BRITAIN

The question of the succession dominates interpretations of Harold's behaviour in 1064–5; different interpretations have been suggested for the visit Harold made at this time to Normandy which opens the Bayeux Tapestry, some writers suggesting it never took place as the ASC does not mention it. Harold sails from his family home at Bosham on Chichester Harbour over the Channel after a meeting with king Edward, and is blown ashore in Ponthieu where the piratical count Guy arrests him and holds him hostage; the latter is forced to hand him over by his overlord duke William and Harold is escorted to William's court. Harold may have been driven across the Channel by a gale while fishing or been blown off his intended route, but it is likely that he intended to go to Normandy (though not on a mission to confirm Edward's grant of the succession to duke William as Norman writers, e.g. William of Poitiers, say). He may have been negotiating to free his youngest brother Wulfnoth and his nephew, Swein's son Haakon, left behind on the family's exile in 1051 and handed over to William as hostages, as English chronicler Eadmer says – and he may have ignored Edward's request not to go.

Harold accompanies William on an expedition into Brittany against duke Conan, who is attacking the fortress of the rebel Rhiwallon at Dol. William forces Conan to fall back to Dinan, which is besieged though he escapes; Harold earns distinction for his bravery, saving soldiers from quicksands at Mont-St-Michel. William knights him, which in terms of Norman custom makes him his 'man' and vassal, and before he allows Harold to return home he persuades him to swear an oath to support and assist his succession, probably at Rouen. (Orderic Vitalis says Rouen, the Bayeux Tapestry says Bayeux, and William of Poitiers says Bonneville-sur-Toques.) The latter also has Harold agreeing to hand over Dover Castle to William to aid his accession and being engaged to his daughter 'Agatha' (non-existent?). The uncertainty over the site and circumstances argues that the oath was in private, and it was subsequently

alleged that Harold had not realized that there were holy relics under the table on which he was taking the oath until shown them afterwards. His breach of the oath was portrayed by the Normans as blasphemy as well as perjury.

Christmas. At the royal court, a cadet of the dynasty of Bamburgh and potential future earl of Northumbria, Gospatrick, is found murdered – possibly put out of the way by Tostig or by his ally, queen Edith. This may stir up local anger and aid the subsequent revolt.

1065 **BRITAIN**

24 August. Earl Harold's new Gwent hunting-lodge at Portskewett near Chepstow, built to accommodate the king on a future visit, is sacked by local prince Caradoc ap Gruffydd in an insult to the English; the subsequent crises avert war.

Likeliest date (or 1064?) for death of Jarl Thorfinn 'Raven-Feeder' of Orkney, which was late in Edward's reign according to the Norse sagas but is undated; he is probably in his late fifties. Succeeded by his sons Paul and Erlend; his widow (or daughter??) Ingebiorg marries king Malcolm III of Scots.

August. Revolt in Northumbria, centred on Yorkshire and led by local 'thegns'; the unpopular Tostig is deposed in his absence while hunting with the king in Wiltshire and the rebels storm York, killing his 'housecarls'.

The rebels march into Mercia, winning over the new earl (Aelfgar's son Edwin) by making his brother Morcar their new earl, and are joined by the Welsh; they ravage around Northampton. Harold confronts their representatives at a council at Oxford but (28 October) accepts their demands to sack Tostig and makes an agreement with them at Northampton. Tostig is exiled and sails for Flanders, the 'climbdown' apparently infuriating the ageing king who falls ill as a result. The possibility has been raised that Tostig (a favourite of Harold's sister queen Edith) was a potential rival not supporter of Harold for the succession and he was glad to be rid of him, or that Harold just wanted to avoid a civil war aiding invaders (William?).

28 December. Edward is too ill to attend the dedication of his main architectural legacy and building-project of his later years, Westminster Abbey (dedicated to St Peter, on the then 'Thorney Island' by the Thames) though he is only a few hundred yards away in his palace. He probably has a stroke some time before this.

1066 | **BRITAIN**

4 January. Edward dies after a short illness, aged probably sixty or sixty-one; the ‘Vita’ written for his widow c. 1075 and later hagiographies say he raved about forthcoming destruction for his people in his final delirium, and recovered enough to bequeath the protection of his kingdom to Harold who is in attendance with Edith (addressed by the king as his daughter not wife, implying a non-sexual relationship?) and Stigand. This is interpreted as nominating Harold as heir, and Harold thus takes it.

5 January. Edward is buried in Westminster Abbey.

6 January. Harold is crowned – by archbishop Ealdred of York as he is accepted by the Pope, not Stigand. (The Bayeux tapestry and other ‘Norman’ sources falsely say Stigand crowned him to show his reign’s illegality.) In practical terms, Tostig, possibly Harald ‘Hardradi’ of Norway, and duke William can all be expected to invade in 1066 and Harold’s ‘legitimate’ rival, Edgar Atheling (son of Edward the ‘Exile’), is at most around fourteen; the kingdom needs a proven adult war-leader.

Edward probably (but not certainly) meant Harold as king rather than regent for Edgar.

Harold hands over the earldom of Wessex to his brother Gyrth, and the latter is replaced by their next brother Leofwine in East Anglia (with Kent, Middlesex and Surrey). Harold may also now marry Eadgyth/Edith, daughter of his late hereditary rival earl Aelfgar of Mercia, sister of current earl Edwin, and widow of Gruffydd ap Llewelyn who Harold killed in 1063. Alternatively, he may have done this in 1064/5 to secure Edwin’s agreement for his succession; he has set aside his long-term mistress or ‘common-law’ wife (not married in church?), Edith ‘Swan-Neck’, mother of his semi-adult sons Godwin and Magnus.

Easter. Harold returns to London from a visit to York – possibly but not definitely for his marriage, and presumably for a ‘summit’ with the potentially hostile earl Morcar (now his brother-in-law). This is followed by (week of 24 April) the appearance of Halley’s Comet in the skies, which is seen (at least in retrospect) as a portent of doom and is put in the Bayeux Tapestry.

BRITAIN/FRANCE/NORWAY

Both William and Harald ‘Hardradi’ threaten invasion; William is allegedly furious at the betrayal of the ‘promise’ of the throne (Norman sources) and builds a new fleet at the Dives estuary, summoning his Breton vassals and other allies to his army and sending to the Pope for backing against the ‘usurper’ and for a consecrated banner with a probable promise to expel the illegal archbishop Stigand.

Harald ‘Hardradi’ sails an expedition to the Orkneys, and compels the new jarls Paul and Erlend to submit to his overlordship and join his expedition – not yet aimed definitely at England.

The exile Tostig – William’s brother-in-law and possibly backed by him as well as Flanders – raids the South coast of England, landing at the Isle of Wight as his father did in 1051. He then heads East to Sandwich, presumably seeking local support in Sussex and Kent without much effect. Harold has been collecting his army, and marches on Sandwich; Tostig sails North via East Anglia to Lindsey, off which Edwin and Morcar drive him to show he will get no help from them.

Harold sets up his army and fleet at Sandwich and patrols the South coast; Tostig heads to Scotland to link up with his old ally king Malcolm III but has no aid for an invasion. Instead he joins Harald’s invading Norwegian armada in the Orkneys, possibly at Malcolm’s suggestion.

The contrary North winds keep duke William’s fleet in Normandy that summer while Harald sails South with 300 ships (ASC) and invades the Humber (early to mid-September).

Harold keeps watch with a large fleet and the county levies on the South coast but (8 September) has to send his men home to take in the harvest; the Norwegians and Tostig land on the lower Ouse near York (probably at Riccall) and march on York up the Roman road. They defeat the inexperienced Edwin and Morcar at the battle of Gate Fulford, and take York.

Harold and his ‘standing army’ of housecarls, the veterans of the Welsh campaigns, march North from London and take the invaders by surprise.

Having secured the submission of Edwin and Morcar, king Harald of Norway and Tostig have moved on East to receive other submissions in Eastern Yorkshire, and the later saga of king Harald has them caught unawares on the banks of the Derwent at Stamford Bridge.

25 September. Battle of Stamford Bridge. As recounted in Harald’s saga, the Norse have to run across the bridge to the East bank and there scramble to get armed and form in line while a solitary warrior defends the bridge to hold up the attackers. He is then stabbed from under the bridge and the English cross to form up. The resulting battle is a conclusive English victory, with thousands of invaders killed, among them both Harald and Tostig (the latter traditionally in combat with his brother). Harald is aged a year or two over fifty. Having pulled off as swift an advance as at Degannwy with a far larger army, Harold and his men now destroy the main Scandinavian ‘fighting-machine’ under the era’s premier warlord and end the Norwegian claim to rule York permanently. The survivors under Harald’s sons Magnus (nicknamed ‘Barefoot’ for fleeing without his shoes) and Olaf, fleeing to their ships at Riccall, were allowed to leave for home but only fill about a dozen out of Harald’s 300 ships.

28 September. The North winds that aids the Norwegian flight brings duke William's fleet across the Channel into Pevensey Bay, and the Roman fortress there is occupied followed by nearby Hastings where William builds a castle to defend his men. He sets about ravaging his rival's home county, Sussex, to lure him back for battle. Given the contemporary geography of Eastern Sussex, it would seem that he chose to occupy the Hastings peninsula (protected by Pevensey Bay to the West and river-valleys to the North and East) as it was easy to seal off, with only one road into it from London along a narrow ridge between two valleys; the resulting battle duly takes place on this ridge.

Harold hastens South, gathers as many men as possible in London in a brief halt, and presses on to Sussex to halt more ravaging; critics have argued that he should have rested his exhausted men longer but in that case William might have broken out into Kent. The recent English losses in battle and exhaustion from the march give William an advantage, and when (13 October) the main English army and their local reinforcements reach the rendezvous at the 'Hoar Apple Tree' (probably on Caldbec Hill, North of Battle) he launches a quick attack and forces battle.

14 October. Battle of 'Hastings' (actually seven miles from that town; known to some writers a generation later as 'Senlac' i.e. 'Sand Lake', but the use of that name then is unclear). Harold has a defensive position on a narrow ridge above/North of a marshy valley – traditionally the hill on which Battle Abbey was built in the 1070s, though the top of that was levelled and the site is not as steep as the Tapestry implies. A few writers claim the battle was fought to the NNE, on steeper Caldbec Hill itself. The armies seem to have been well-matched in numbers, around 6–7,000 each – the English on foot, defending a 'shield-wall' on the hilltop, and the Norman cavalry attacking uphill aided by their archers. The battle lasts for around six to eight hours or so, and it is a tribute to the English and their general that they nearly win despite having fought one major battle a fortnight earlier and having their ranks showered with arrows and reduced by one wing charging downhill after 'retreating' Normans and being trapped by a cavalry counter-charge and wiped out. William is rumoured dead as a charge falters, and the Tapestry shows him raising his visor to show his men he is alive.

Harold's infantry 'shield-wall' holds out on a steep ridge against repeated cavalry charges and showers of arrows, and the sun is waning when the Normans finally break through. Harold is killed in the final attack late in the day, aged around forty-four, probably following the deaths of Gyrth and Leofwine, and this either accompanies or leads to the flight of his remaining men. There is a dispute over whether the famous picture in the Tapestry showing a warrior with an arrow in his eye refers to him or if the king is the man next to him being cut down by a cavalryman. Four Norman knights, led by his predecessor's brother-in-law Count Eustace of Boulogne, have apparently sworn to kill him and he is almost

hacked to pieces as he lies injured, whether already fatally shot in the eye or not.

His body has to be identified by his ex-mistress/wife Edith ‘Swan-Neck’ as his face is unrecognizable, and he is buried quietly at his foundation, Waltham Abbey (or on the cliffs at Dover). A Chester abbey story c. 1120 alleges that he survived and lived as a holy hermit into Henry I’s reign; as the last Saxon king of England, he becomes a figure of heroic myth. His (twin?) sons by Edith of Mercia are born posthumously at Chester; his illegitimate sons later to invade England from Dublin in 1068. One daughter, Gunnhilde, ends up in Wilton nunnery; the other, Gytha, joins her grandmother Gytha in exile in Denmark with the latter’s kin and ends up marrying the Russian ruler Vladimir ‘Monomakh’ of Kiev. Through her the later English sovereigns are descended from Harold as well as William.

The Normans have suffered losses in charging recklessly downhill into woodland after the fleeing English after the battle and stumbling into the ‘Malfosse’ ditch; William waits at the battlefield for a day or so then marches on East to sack New Romney and proceed to Canterbury. He advances on London, where Edwin and Morcar have arrived with reinforcements and a council meeting recognises Edgar ‘Atheling’ as king. William reaches Southwark, but is repelled attacking London Bridge; unable to cross the Thames, he goes on West to secure Winchester which king Edward’s widow Edith surrenders. ?More Normans land in Hampshire to reinforce him.

William crosses the Thames at Wallingford and advances on London; the nobles and Edgar, Edwin, and Morcar surrender at Berkhamsted and recognise William as king. He enters London.

25 *December*. Coronation of William by archbishop Ealdred at Westminster Abbey. The shouts of the crowd outside acclaiming him alarm the Normans who think it is a riot and attack them and set nearby houses afire; eventually order is restored.

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