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**A VISION OF CHARLES III:
A DESCRIPTION AND EDITION OF FOLIO 86V
OF GARRETT 70**

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Included in the Garrett Collection of Firestone Library of Princeton University is a manuscript of the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great (Garrett 70). Folio 86v of this manuscript records a vision attributed to the emperor Charles III. While the manuscript of the *Dialogues* contains certain glosses which have received some attention from textual scholars, the text of this vision has not been discussed. It is this text which will be our primary concern in this study.

According to the description accompanying the manuscript, it was likely written in the Irish Benedictine monastery founded in the eleventh century at Ratisbon (Regensburg). It bears significant resemblance to Vienna MS. 1247 (Theol. 287), written by Marianus Scottus (Muredach MacRobartaig), the founder of this Schottenkloster and a noted scribe. The text of Garrett 70 was probably written in the same scriptorium as this Vienna manuscript.¹ The small Irish monastic community in Regensburg first occupied the priory of Weih-Sankt-Peter, located outside the city walls, and donated by the German abbess of Obermunster. These monks, known as "Scoti," were outstanding both for their rigor and for their scribal skill, and they soon acquired great esteem. The cloister flourished to such an extent that in 1090 the new, larger monastery of St. James had to be built to accommodate the Irish monks.² Our manuscript, dated 1082, would belong to the Weih-Sankt-Peter period of the Schottenkloster. The manuscript eventually came into the possession of the Cistercian Convent of Hohenfurt, in Bohemia, where it was listed as ms. 275 (= LXXXI).³ From there it was obtained from W. M. Voynich by Robert Garrett of Baltimore, Maryland, and formed part of the collection that Garrett donated to the Princeton University Library in 1942.⁴

The vision recorded on folio 86v is attributed to the emperor Charles III. This ascription refers to Charles the Fat, who was the great grandson

of Charlemagne, the nephew of Charles II (the Bald), and the son of Louis the German. Charles III was crowned emperor by John VIII in February, 881. After the death of the sons of Charles the Bald—the Frankish kings Louis III (d. 882) and Carlomann (d. 884)—Charles III fell heir to almost the entire kingdom of Charlemagne. However, due to illness, which necessitated serious surgical intervention in 887, he became increasingly incapable of fulfilling the pressing duties of his reign. His political failures, coupled with the growing strength of the individual kingdoms, eventually led to his downfall. Charles III was deposed by his own nobles in 887. The last of the Carolingian emperors, he died in exile in January, 888, and was buried in the abbey church of Reichenau.⁵

The vision of Charles III is similar in character to the visions recorded in Gregory's *Dialogues* (e.g. Book II, 22 and 34; Book IV, 27 and 40), which comprise Garrett 70. The imagery of the vision, however, in which Charles is led into hell where he encounters the bishops of his father and uncles, bears much greater resemblance to the tours of hell depicted in certain apocryphal New Testament writings. The *Apocalypse of Paul* was the most influential of these works. It contains the most detailed description of hell, which played a profound formative role in the proliferation of such visions and other-world literature in the Middle Ages.⁶ Paul's vision of hell includes many of the same features that we find in Charles III's vision. A guide leads the way through deep, fiery valleys full of pitch and sulphur. There are angels of torment and even mention of a three-pronged hook used to inflict torture on miserable victims. Interestingly enough, this punishment is allotted to a priest who failed to properly fulfill the duties of his ministry. Further punishments are described for negligent bishops and deacons.⁷ The number of medieval redactions of the *Apocalypse of Paul* and its descendants, the interest in and praise of ascetics in this *Apocalypse*,⁸ and the fact that it was read from an early date in Irish monastic schools,⁹ support the likelihood that the monastic community in Regensburg would have possessed a copy of it. Even given the likelihood that the vision recorded on f. 86v of our manuscript represents an earlier tradition of this vision of Charles III, there is little doubt that a scribe of the late Carolingian period would have been familiar with the *Apocalypse of Paul* and may well have drawn from its vivid imagery.

The reason for the inclusion of this vision in a collection of Gregory's *Dialogues* is uncertain. The content of the vision may reflect the position of the city of Regensburg in the late eleventh century, and the rather privileged status of the Irish monastic community in which the manuscript was likely written. The missionary-oriented monks enjoyed the favor of the

nobles and wealthy burghers of the district, and their cloister was early granted independent status, making it subject to the emperor alone.¹⁰ The city of Regensburg was one of the most important points of support for the king, and Henry IV often stopped over in the city. While many bishoprics were divided and unsettled during the investiture controversy, Regensburg remained constantly loyal to the king.¹¹ Against this background, a possible reason for the transcription of the vision on f. 86v of our manuscript is discernible. A vision in which the emperor is exalted and the bishops denigrated could well serve the pro-Henrician tendencies of the city of Regensburg and the Irish monastic foundations located there.

It is intriguing that a tradition attributing such a vision to Charles III, who was generally not very highly regarded, would have endured in certain circles at least until the late eleventh century.¹² Charles III, however, did much to invigorate the city of Regensburg. He gave the religious establishments there great freedoms. Obermunster cloister, closely connected with the establishment of the Irish Benedictine monastery in which our manuscript was probably written, was given special privileges by Charles in 887.¹³ It is also noteworthy that Charles III, like the other Carolingian emperors, protected and provided for the Irish *peregrini* who settled in his states.¹⁴ The combination of these factors supports the possibility of a favorable opinion of Charles III within the Regensburg monastic milieu, which could account for the preservation of a tradition regarding his alleged vision.

Nevertheless, despite the debilitating illness of Charles III, there is no evidence that he had been subject to visions of any kind.¹⁵ No other works have been attributed to Charles III, and no other versions of this vision have been traced in other manuscripts. It is precisely the unusualness of the account of such a vision, transcribed at the end of an eleventh century manuscript of Gregory's *Dialogues*, which makes folio 86v of Garrett 70 an item worthy of further study.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT¹⁶

GENERAL FEATURES

In Latin, 86 folios, 253 x 190 mm. on vellum. 11th century: in colophon (f. 86r) manuscript dated Incarnation Sunday, 1082. Rubricated. Collation: eight 10s, plus 6. Written in Germany by a Johannes, who has added

glosses in Irish on ff. 18, 50, and 51.¹⁷ End leaves contain part of a table of contents of a 13th or 14th century theological treatise. 14th century binding of deerskin over wooden boards, with clasp.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT

Folios 1-84r: text of the *Dialogues*, one column, 35 long lines. Marked for reading aloud, with "hic" or "hinc" at beginning of each lesson. Folios 84v-86r: end matters. Table of contents of the *Dialogues*, beginning with "Incipiunt capitula dialogorum librorum quator . . ."; two columns, ending left hand column of f. 86r. Folio 86r: in upper right, text which begins "Tunc Rachel plus plangere" (9 lines), followed by definitions of history, allegory, tropology and anagogy (9 lines); later hand (14th century?). Lower half of right hand column contains colophon (14 lines), which begins "Sit nomen domini benedictum a quo. . . ." Scribe identified here as Johannes. Last two lines of colophon continue below the table of contents and are written across the whole page. Folio 86v: a vision of Charles III, incomplete. 34 lines. Written in a slightly larger, contemporary hand. Only first letter of first word of f. 86v written in red. In upper right hand corner there are about six faint letters which may form a name.

TEXT OF FOLIO 86V

Visio quam uidit Karolus de suo nomine tertius imperator. In nomine dei summi regis regum, ego Karolus gratuito dei dono rex germanorum et partricius romanorum atque imperator francorum. Sacra nocte dominici post celebratum matutinarum diuinum officium, dum irem repausationis cubitum et uellem carpere dormitionis somnum, uenit uox ad me dicens terribiliter, "Karole exiet a te modo spiritus tuus et uenies et uidebis iusta dei iudicia et tibi aliqua praesagia. Et tantum reuertetur ad te iterum spiritus tuus in hora non modica." Statimque fui raptus in Spiritu et qui me sustulit in Spiritu fuit candidissimus tenuitque in manu sua glomerem lineum clarissime emittentem iubar luminis sicut solent facere comete quando apparent, cepitque illum dissoluere et dixit ad me. "Accipe filum glomeris micantis et liga ac noda firmiter in pollice tue dextere quia per illum duceris in laborintheos¹⁸ infernorum penas." Et hoc dicto praecessit me uelociter distorquens lucifluum glomerem, duxitque me in profun-

dissimas valles et igneas que erant plene puteis ardentibus pice et sulphure plumboque et cera et adipe ubi inueni pontifices patris mei et avunculo-
rum meorum. Quos cum pauens interrogarem ob quam rem tam grauia
paterentur tormenta, responderunt michi, "fuerimus episcopi patris tui et
avunculo-
rum et dum debuimus illos et populum illorum pacem et concor-
diam ammonere et praedicare, seminauimus inter eos discordias, et incen-
tores malorum fuimus. Unde incendimur in istis tartareis suppliciis, et nos
et aliorum homicidiorum et rapinarum amatores. Huc etiam et tui epis-
copi et populi satellitum¹⁹ uenient, qui similiter amant nunc facere." Et
dum haec tremebundus auscultarem, ecce nigerrimi demones aduolantes
cum uncinis igneis, uolebant apprehendere filium glomeris quem in manu
tenebam ad se trahere, sed uerberantibus radiis illius glomeris non uale-
bant filium contingere. Deinde post tergum meum currentes uoluerunt me
aduncinare, et in ipsos puteos sulphureos praecipitare, si ductor meus qui
portabat glo. . . .

NOTES

1. See description accompanying manuscript in Firestone Library, Princeton University.

2. Georg Schwaiger, "Die benediktiner im Bistum Regensburg," *Klöster und Orden im Bistum Regensburg: Beiträge zu ihrer Geschichte*, ed. Georg Schwaiger and Paul Mai (Regensburg, 1978), 26.

3. While still in possession of the Cistercians of Hohenfurt, the manuscript was described by P. Raphael Pavel, in Xenia Bernadina, *Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Cistercienserstifte*, II (Wien, 1891), MS no. LXXXI, 194.

4. C. U. Faye and W. H. Bond, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance MSS in the U.S. and Canada* (New York, 1962), 310.

5. Emile Amann, *L'époque carolingienne*, Vol. 6 of *Histoire de l'église depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours*, ed. Augustin Fliche and Victor Martin (Paris, 1937), 427-445. Cf. Paul Kehr, "Aus den letzten Tagen Karls III.," *Deutsches Archiv für Geschichte des Mittelalters*, I (1937), 139-146.

6. Theodore Silverstein, *Visio Sancti Pauli: The History of the Apocalypse in Latin Together with Nine Texts*, Studies and Documents, 4 (London, 1935), 3-14. Cf. Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia, 1983), 16-17. See 114 for a chart of the geography of hell depicted in the various Apocalypses, which includes a number of features found in our manuscript.

7. Silverstein, 34–36, and the St. Gall Text of *Visio Sancti Pauli*, 142–3. While the language used to describe the punishments is not identical, and there are features in our manuscript which are not present in the *Visio Pauli* (e.g., wax and grease), the parallel imagery is nonetheless noteworthy.

8. These two factors are discussed by Himmelfarb, 16ff. Silverstein provides an extensive discussion of the provenance and dissemination of the various Latin redactions of the *Visio Pauli*, 20–63. He also points out that Latin redactors from at least the ninth century on reshaped and added numerous original interpolations to the text, 9.

9. Silverstein, 12.

10. Mark Dilworth, *The Scots in Franconia* (Edinburgh, 1974), 12.

11. Peter Schmid, *Regensburg: Stadt der Könige und Herzöge im Mittelalter*, Regensburger historische Forschungen, Band 6 (Kallmunz, 1977), 170–1. Cf. Georg Schwaiger, “Bayern und das Papsttum,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Bistums Regensburg*, Band 8 (Regensburg, 1974), 14–15.

12. Amann, for example, describes Charles III as “faible de caractère, craintif, irrésolu,” 443.

13. Schmid, 92–3. Cf. Christian Gottlieb Gumpelzhaimer, *Regensburgs Geschichte, Sagen und Merkwürdigkeiten* (1830–38; rpt. Regensburg, 1984), 93.

14. Louis Gougaud, *Christianity in the Celtic Lands* (London, 1932), 166–7, 177–80.

15. No mention of such a vision or clues as to its significance are given in P. Kehr, ed. *Die Urkunden der Deutschen Karolinger*, Tome 2: *Die Urkunden Karls III*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Diplomata Karlinorum (Berlin, 1937); nor in accounts of Charles III’s last years in *Annales Fuldenses*, and *Continuatio Ratisbonensis* in Friedrich Kurze, ed., *Annales Fuldenses, sive Annales Regni Francorum Orientales*, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarium ex MGH reclusi* (Hannover, 1891), 98–107 and 107–116.

16. Some of the following details are included in the 3-page description accompanying the manuscript in Firestone Library of Princeton University. Cf. Seymour De Ricci and W. J. Wilson, *Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the U.S. and Canada*, 3 vols. (1935–40; rpt. New York, 1961), 877.

17. The Irish glosses are published by Kuno Meyer, *Zeitschrift für keltische Philologie*, 8 (1912): 176–7.

18. *Lege* “laborintheas.”

19. *Lege* “sattelitium” (?).