

## Rebel Duke and Pagan King: the variety in early Carolingian depictions of Radbod of Frisia

### Introduction

Of all the antagonists to feature in the eighth- and ninth-century sources, Radbod of Frisia is one of the most prominent, featuring heavily in both historical and hagiographical texts. Because of his prominence, though, there was no fixed vision of Radbod, and he could be different things to different authors working at different times. Presentations of Radbod can be divided into two over-arching groups: the historical sources which portray him as a rebellious duke and antagonist of the Frankish mayors Pippin II and Charles Martel, and the hagiographical ones which portray him as a pagan king whose interactions with the Frisian mission were ambivalent at best, and hostile at worst. Yet even within these groups there was variation. The historical depictions are reasonably stable, but witnessed important narrative alterations which show how authors placed Radbod in a changing vision of the recent Frankish past. The hagiographical depictions are more varied, ranging from Willibald's portrayal of Radbod as a pagan persecutor in *Vita Bonifatii* to the somewhat more human portrayal of the ruler in *Vita Vulframni*. After presenting the most important of these variations and some thoughts on them, this paper will address perhaps the most intriguing issue to emerge from them: the nature of Radbod's title, and why he was *dux* to some but *rex* to others. First, though, it is possible to piece together at least some aspects of Radbod's career, even if certain details elude us. We shall begin, then, with an overview of his life and position in the Frankish world.

### Overview of Radbod's career

Radbod became ruler of Frisia at some point in the 680s, although exactly when is uncertain. In around 692 he fought a war with the Frankish mayor Pippin II in which he was defeated

and came to terms.<sup>1</sup> Another war followed in around 697 which again saw Radbod defeated, and this brought almost twenty years of peace between Francia and Frisia.<sup>2</sup> At some point in this period of peace Radbod became intimately tied to the Frankish court through the marriage of his daughter, Theudesinda, to Pippin's son Grimoald,<sup>3</sup> and the latter's own son Theudoald was likely the offspring of this union.<sup>4</sup> The 690s also saw the arrival in Frisia of the Northumbrian missionary Willibrord, and the Christian victory over the pagans almost certainly aided his progress.<sup>5</sup>

Yet following Pippin II's death in 714 Francia was plunged into a civil war which also drew in Radbod and the Frisians, who fought on the side of the Neustrians against Pippin's wife Plectrude and Theudoald.<sup>6</sup> Given that Radbod remained the ally of the Neustrians in their subsequent struggle against Pippin's son Charles Martel, we should see the alliance in the context of a more widespread anti-Pippinid sentiment across the Frankish world at this time.<sup>7</sup> During this war Radbod inflicted on Charles the only recorded defeat the latter suffered in his life.<sup>8</sup> He also apparently instigated a persecution and exile of the Christian missionaries, which by now included Boniface,<sup>9</sup> although given his alliance with the Neustrians this may have been less a pagan persecution and more an attempt to expel Charles's supporters from the area. While several sources imply that Radbod died after being defeated by Charles,<sup>10</sup> *Vita Liudgeri* and *Vita Vulframni* reveal that towards the end of his life

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<sup>1</sup> AMP, s.a. 692.

<sup>2</sup> AMP, s.a. 697.

<sup>3</sup> LHF, 50, is the only source to name Theudesinda.

<sup>4</sup> Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 269-70. On Theudoald and his position in Charles Martel's Francia, see R. Collins, 'Deception and misrepresentation in early eighth century Frankish historiography: Two Case Studies', in J. Jarnut *et al* (eds.) *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, pp. 227-47, at 229-35.

<sup>5</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, V, 10.

<sup>6</sup> LHF, 51-2. For a historical overview of the period, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, pp. 255-8, 267-70.

<sup>7</sup> Wood, *Merovingian Kingdoms*, p. 266.

<sup>8</sup> LHF, 52.

<sup>9</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, 4.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, 5; Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 13.

Radbod suffered from a crippling illness which led to his death:<sup>11</sup> the latter also gives the year of Radbod's death as 719, a date recorded in some of the minor annals.<sup>12</sup>

Radbod's intimate involvement in the Frankish world despite his being a pagan and a non-Frank meant that he could provide a prototypical 'other' for those who wrote in the century after his death. He was a political opponent of the 'rightful' Frankish rulers and a potential antagonist to the Christian missionaries, and this dual role is reflected in the sources of the eighth and early-ninth centuries.

### Duke Radbod, a prototype of political otherness

In order to understand the historical Carolingian portrayals of Radbod we must go back to their predecessor, *Liber Historiae Francorum*,<sup>13</sup> a text written by a Neustrian in 727.<sup>14</sup> This author states that after Pippin II had established his dominance over Francia he turned his attention outwards, and "conducted many wars against the pagan Radbod and other leaders, and against the Suevi and many other peoples."<sup>15</sup> Here Radbod is just one of the many external opponents Pippin feels the need to exert his authority over, although his importance becomes clear when the author reports the marriage of Grimoald and Theudesinda.<sup>16</sup> *LHF* then gives us a basic outline of the role Radbod played in the civil war which followed Pippin's death; specifically that he was the chief ally of the Neustrian rulers against their Austrasian opponents.<sup>17</sup> In any case, the last we hear of Radbod in *LHF* is the account of his defeat of Charles Martel in 717.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Alfrid, *Vita Liudgeri*, 3. *Vita Vulframni*, 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Annales Laureshamenses, Alamannici, Nazariani*, s.a. 719.

<sup>13</sup> *Liber Historiae Francorum*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM 2* (Hanover, 1888).

<sup>14</sup> The date can be derived from the text itself, since the author says he is writing in the sixth year of Theuderic (IV), who came to the throne in 721; *LHF*, 53.

<sup>15</sup> *LHF*, 49.

<sup>16</sup> *LHF*, 50.

<sup>17</sup> *LHF*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> *LHF*, 52.

Several points of this account are worth stressing. The first is that this part of *LHF* contains some of the most explicitly religious references in the entire work;<sup>19</sup> namely that the civil war occurred at the instigation of the Devil, and that the author refers to Radbod as *gentilis* in all but one instance of mentioning him. The second is that, despite his pro-Merovingian sympathies, the author was well disposed towards Charles Martel, who appears as a sort of figurehead for the reunification of the Frankish realm and the resumption of the peace of his father's reign.<sup>20</sup> Thus it is easy to imagine that this author was hostile to Radbod, despite the Neustrian alliance, and so his account provided a convenient template for those who followed him in writing about this period, even if later authors did not share all aspects of their model's political outlook.

The most notable Carolingian historical sources which contain references to Radbod are the *Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar* and *Annales Mettenses Priores*,<sup>21</sup> both of which borrowed to a greater or lesser extent from *LHF*. The *Continuations*, written most likely during the first two decades of Charlemagne's reign,<sup>22</sup> provide an almost identical account to that found in *LHF*, but do make some notable changes to the narrative. *AMP*, written around 806,<sup>23</sup> departed further from *LHF*'s account, while still following the overall scheme.

In the *Continuations*, the change is immediately obvious. Where *LHF* had Radbod as just one of many 'leaders' against whom Pippin fought and did not specify the Frisians as a target people, the *Continuations* focus specifically on Pippin's war against Radbod and the Frisians, to the exclusion of other peoples – even the Suevi whom *LHF* had mentioned are

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<sup>19</sup> *LHF*, 51.

<sup>20</sup> R. A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987), 170-2.

<sup>21</sup> Fredegar, *Chronicon*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888); *Annales Mettenses priores*, ed. B. de Simson, *MGH SRG* 10 (Hanover, 1905).

<sup>22</sup> On the dating and authorship of the *Continuations*, see R. Collins, 'Fredegar', in P. J. Geary (ed.), *Authors of the Middle Ages*, IV, 12-13 (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 73-138, at 112-7; R. Collins, *Die Fredegar-Chroniken* (Hanover, 2007), p. 92.

<sup>23</sup> See Fouracre and Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, pp. 337-8.

absent.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, the *Continuations* follow *LHF*'s general outline more closely, and it is only small details that are changed: Grimoald's marriage to Radbod's daughter is mentioned, but she is not named;<sup>25</sup> the Neustrians turn against Theudoald after Pippin's death, and make Ragamfred their mayor;<sup>26</sup> and Radbod still defeats Charles Martel.<sup>27</sup>

The changes are even more striking in *AMP*, notorious for their greatly distorted depictions of Pippin II and Charles Martel and their accomplishments, and the denigration of the later Merovingians.<sup>28</sup> Like *LHF*, *AMP* has Pippin fight many peoples after establishing his authority in Francia, but the later author is much more specific about which peoples were fought and why. The list contains "Saxons, Frisians, Alamanni, Bavarians, Aquitanians, Basques and Bretons... who formerly were subjected to the Franks".<sup>29</sup> Where the earlier sources had not felt the need to explain why Pippin conducted these wars, *AMP* claims that they were fought to re-establish Frankish hegemony. However, the Frisians are singled out for special attention, and it is here that we learn about the two wars fought between Pippin and Radbod. In the first, dated to 692, Pippin marshals the whole Frankish army and marches against the Frisian duke, defeating him, and subjecting him to Frankish rule.<sup>30</sup> There is less detail about the second war, but the author's language suggests that Radbod had not kept to the terms of his subjection.<sup>31</sup> In 711 Grimoald marries Radbod's daughter, who again is not named.<sup>32</sup> In 715 the Neustrians make an alliance with Radbod, specifically against the Pippinids, which Ragamfred renews the following year before marching against Charles in 717, supported by Radbod and the Frisians.<sup>33</sup> This battle is the other event that is radically

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<sup>24</sup> Fredegar, cont., 6.

<sup>25</sup> Fredegar, cont., 7.

<sup>26</sup> Fredegar, cont., 8-9.

<sup>27</sup> Fredegar, cont., 9.

<sup>28</sup> P. Fouracre and R. A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester and New York, 1996), pp. 334-7, 348-9.

<sup>29</sup> *AMP*, s.a. 691.

<sup>30</sup> *AMP*, s.a. 692.

<sup>31</sup> *AMP*, s.a. 697.

<sup>32</sup> *AMP*, s.a. 711.

<sup>33</sup> *AMP*, s.a. 715-7.

altered. Instead of Radbod inflicting a crushing defeat on Charles, the author is ambiguous, and says only that great casualties were suffered on both sides.<sup>34</sup>

Both the later authors made more of Radbod than the author of *LHF* had, despite being further from the events they described, but perhaps this is why they did so. Neither author exaggerated Radbod or his achievements; they simply gave him a greater role in the narrative. We must bear in mind that both the *Continuations* and *AMP* were written at least partly to glorify Pippin II and his successors, and to emphasise that their wars were fought to re-establish Frankish hegemony over peripheral peoples. To this end, many of the peoples and figures they fight are depicted as rebels and described in language which conjures up ideas of disloyalty. In this sense Radbod provides a prototype for the relationship between Frankish mayors and their neighbours, especially in *AMP*'s version. He is subdued by Pippin in the 690s but then breaks his loyalty to Pippin by allying with his successor's enemies. The wars of the eighth century between the Carolingians and their enemies follow this general pattern, although not always in precise detail. For example, the *Continuations* and *AMP* both report that the reason for Charles Martel's war against Duke Eudo of Aquitaine was that the latter had broken his lawful treaty with the Frankish mayor.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, in the years after Charles's death both Eudo's son Hunoald and Duke Odilo of Bavaria rose in rebellion against Pippin III and Carloman, breaking the loyalty they had sworn to Charles.<sup>36</sup>

### King Radbod and the Frisian mission

Now we have placed Radbod in his political context we shall turn to the Radbod of the hagiography. The hagiographers emphasised a different side of Radbod's otherness to that of the more politically focussed texts. Whilst they placed him in the context of wars with Pippin II and Charles Martel, they concentrated not on his involvement in Frankish politics, but on

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<sup>34</sup> *AMP*, s.a. 717.

<sup>35</sup> Fredegar, cont., 12; *AMP*, s.a. 731.

<sup>36</sup> Fredegar, cont., 25-6; *AMP*, s.a. 742-3.

his impact on the Frisian mission and his interactions with the missionaries. Thus here it is Radbod's paganism that is his main trait, yet with the exception of *Vita Bonifatii* Radbod is not depicted explicitly as a pagan persecutor. It would be going too far to say that other hagiographers were sympathetic to the Frisian ruler, but even when narrating the exploits of Christian saints they could portray a pagan in somewhat human terms. Ultimately, though, they recognised that Radbod was the primary obstacle to the conversion of Frisia, and there is certainly a sense that his death was a good thing.

Again, it is worth beginning with an influential pre-Carolingian source, in this case Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, which contains a brief presentation of Willibrord's foundation of the Frisian mission. Bede clearly recognised the political relationship on which such an effort relied, and he reports that after arriving on the continent Willibrord went first to Pippin II. This was crucial: "Because Pippin had recently occupied *Frisia citerior* and driven out King Radbod, he sent Willibrord and his companions there to preach; and he assisted them with his imperial authority so that no troubles would interfere with their preaching".<sup>37</sup> This sets the scene for the missionary efforts of Willibrord and Boniface, as well as their successors: when Frisia was subdued missionary activity could go forward; when Frankish authority was weakened, so the mission would be too.

The next and most explicitly hostile reference to Radbod is in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*, composed in the 760s, around a decade after the saint's death.<sup>38</sup> Boniface arrived in Frisia in 716, over twenty years after the successful establishment of Willibrord as missionary archbishop of Frisia.<sup>39</sup> Like Bede, Willibald places the mission in its political context – the conflicts between Frisia and Francia – but as we have seen from the histories, the situation in 716 was very different to that of 692. Indeed, according to Willibald, Radbod's primary concern after Pippin II's death was the expulsion of Christians from Frisia. He explains that

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<sup>37</sup> Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, V, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRG 57* (Hanover, 1905).

<sup>39</sup> On which see Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 56-60.

at the time of Boniface's arrival in Frisia a war had broken out between Charles and King Radbod which saw "a serious invasion of the pagans," the results of which – according to Willibald at least – were of great religious significance, bringing devastation to the Church, exile for the priests, and the raising and restoration of idols and temples.<sup>40</sup> Here we see Radbod at his worst, not simply a foreign ally of the Neustrians, but an idol-worshipping, temple-building persecutor of the servants of God.

Radbod's next appearance is in *Vita Willibrordi*, composed by Alcuin around 796,<sup>41</sup> but instead of the pagan persecutor found in *Vita Bonifatii*, here we see a figure with whom Willibrord could negotiate the establishment and progress of the mission. Alcuin followed the basic thrust of Bede's account about Willibrord, having the saint and his companions arrive in Utrecht, but then travelling from there to Francia to visit Pippin II, who grants the missionary "useful places within the borders of his kingdom" from which to base the mission and from which to begin rooting out the "thorns of idolatry" and spreading the word of God.<sup>42</sup> When describing Willibrord's attempts to evangelise Frisia, Alcuin stresses that the saint "was not afraid to approach King Radbod of Frisia," but that he was unable "to soften Radbod's heart of stone to life."<sup>43</sup> Notably there is nothing in *Vita Willibrordi* about the years immediately after Pippin's death, which proved so troublesome for Boniface, but we are told that after Pippin died his son Charles Martel defeated Radbod and incorporated the Frisians into the Frankish realm.<sup>44</sup> Subsequently Willibrord was officially appointed to preach to the Frisians. Thus it seems that Alcuin saw Radbod as an obstacle to mission, even if he was not an active persecutor of Christianity, but his true significance as an obstacle was only revealed after his defeat and removal, which allowed the conversion of Frisia to proceed unopposed.

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<sup>40</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, 4.

<sup>41</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM 7* (Hanover, 1920); on the date of the text, and the possibility of an earlier, now lost *Vita*, see Wood, *Missionary Life*, p. 79-81, 85-6.

<sup>42</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 13.



Before moving on to our final text, it is worth mentioning that there was no attempt from the Christians of Frisia to rehabilitate Radbod. The Frisian Liudger composed his *Vita Gregorii Traiectensis* at the end of the eighth century, and although he dealt with Boniface's time in the region, he did not mention Radbod at all. Liudger's nephew and biographer Altfred did mention Radbod in his *Vita Liudgeri*, written in the 840s,<sup>45</sup> but the latter appears here as more of a political tyrant than a pagan persecutor.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, Altfred did borrow Alcuin's passage about the fate of Frisia after Radbod's death, showing that such a view continued to hold weight.<sup>47</sup>

The longest and most unusual depiction of Radbod comes from *Vita Vulframni*, a text associated with the monastery of St Wandrille in which the Frisian ruler is nearly as prominent as the subject himself.<sup>48</sup> The *Life*, composed between 797 and 807, seems to have been partly a response to *Vita Willibrordi*, and contains a demonstrably fraudulent account of Wulfram's role in the conversion of Frisia.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, it is still important for what it can tell us about the position of the Frisian mission in the ecclesiastical culture of the late-eighth and early-ninth centuries, as well as the interpretation of Radbod's relationship with the mission. In the narrative, the saint encounters both Radbod and Willibrord, although the latter has only a minor role, and there is no reference to him as the founder of the mission.<sup>50</sup> Radbod, on the other hand, is discussed at length. He is not depicted as opposing Wulfram's mission in any way; in fact, he allows the saint to preach to anyone who wished to hear the word of God: he allows the saint to recruit those he is able to miraculously save from being sacrificed to the gods,<sup>51</sup> and at one point even seems ready to be baptised himself.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Altfred, *Vita Liudgeri*, ed. W. Diekamp, *Die Vitae Sancti Liudgeri* (Munster, 1881).

<sup>46</sup> Altfred, *Vita Liudgeri*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Altfred, *Vita Liudgeri*, 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Vita Vulframni*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM 5* (Hanover, 1910). On the hagiography of St Wandrille see I. Wood, 'Saint-Wandrille and its Hagiography', in I. Wood and G. A. Loud (eds.), *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor* (London, 1991), pp. 1-14.

<sup>49</sup> Wood, 'Saint-Wandrille', pp. 13-4; Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 92-3.

<sup>50</sup> *Vita Vulframni*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> *Vita Vulframni*, 6-8.

Yet despite his goodwill, Radbod was unwilling to convert – the author even borrows Alcuin’s phrase about the Frisian’s ‘heart of stone’.<sup>53</sup> Two reasons for this reluctance are outlined. First, when on the verge of being baptised, Radbod declares to Wulfram that he would rather spend eternity in the company of his ancestors than in the company of a few paupers, the citizens of heaven.<sup>54</sup> The second is that Radbod had been deceived by the Devil. This is implied at various points, but made explicit when the Devil appears to Radbod in a dream and promises him a golden hall in which to spend eternity. One of Radbod’s followers and a deacon are then shown the golden hall by a demonic guide. The guide and the hall turn to dust when the deacon invokes the power of Christ, and when they return they discover Radbod has died unbaptised.<sup>55</sup>

Each of these authors presented Radbod in a way which reflected his aims and the construction of his text. Willibald’s first priority was not to present Boniface as a missionary, but rather to highlight the multi-faceted nature of his career, as well as to stress the saint’s appeal to a Frankish audience, not least because Boniface appears to have been somewhat unpopular among his peers during his lifetime.<sup>56</sup> What we see in *Vita Bonifatii*, then, is a saint who shared the enemies of the Carolingians, although Willibald put a religious slant on them, emphasising Radbod’s paganism far more than any of the historiographical sources.<sup>57</sup> Another figure to suffer from Willibald’s conspicuously pro-Carolingian version of Boniface’s career was Heden of Thuringia, whom the hagiographer accused of being a heretic and of exposing his people to the ravages of the Saxons despite the fact that he was a supporter of Willibrord’s monastic foundation at Echternach, and so perhaps also of the

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<sup>52</sup> *Vita Vulframni*, 9.

<sup>53</sup> *Vita Vulframni*, 8.

<sup>54</sup> *Vita Vulframni*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> *Vita Vulframni*, 10.

<sup>56</sup> Ewig, E. ‘Milo’.

<sup>57</sup> For example, *LHF*, ed. Krusch, 49-52.

Frisian mission.<sup>58</sup> Alcuin's purpose in *Vita Willibrordi*, meanwhile, was to produce a text which discussed the theological significance of events in the saint's life.<sup>59</sup> Part of this was to show that the most important tools in the conversion of pagans were not miracles, conquest or forced conversion, but education and preaching, which brought an understanding of the new religion.<sup>60</sup> Therefore he was keen to highlight the peaceful interaction that could take place between missionaries and pagans in order to show that cooperation was possible, although he still had to admit that military conquest could be useful. Finally, *Vita Vulframni* represents an attempt by the monastery of Saint-Wandrille to claim some of the glory associated with the Frisian mission. Not only does it show Wulfram relying heavily on miracles for conversion, he also interacts more closely with Radbod than Willibrord had, and comes close to converting and baptising the Frisian leader. He was a Neustrian bishop associated with the monastery who had been just as important in the conversion of Frisia as Willibrord and Boniface: there is much about the text that we can see as a direct reaction to the Carolingian-Austrasian account of the Frisian mission.<sup>61</sup>

#### Dux or rex: the issue of Radbod's title

Having reviewed the different ways in which Radbod was portrayed by historians and hagiographers, and some of the reasons for these differences, we can now turn to the issue of Radbod's ruling title. We will likely never know what title Radbod himself used, but the titles later authors chose to assign him are indicative of how they saw both Radbod's role in the world, and the relationship between Franks and Frisians as personified by the relationship between Radbod and his contemporary Frankish rulers.

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<sup>58</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, 6. Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 62-3. On Heden see Mordek, 'Die Hedenen'. See also Fouracre, *Charles Martel*, pp. 113-4.

<sup>59</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 81-3.

<sup>60</sup> Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 82-8.

<sup>61</sup> Wood, 'Saint-Wandrille', p. 14.

For the eighth- and ninth-century historians, Radbod was *dux*, a title carrying connotations of military leadership but representing lower status than that of *rex*. This was a perfectly appropriate title to apply for authors who saw Radbod as sub-ordinate to Frankish royal power. Writing about this sub-ordination in the period before 751 became more complex after Pippin III's usurpation, but Radbod was still seen as opposing rightful Frankish rule, even if that rule was embodied by Pippin II and Charles Martel, who exercised authority on behalf of the king. Thus, for Carolingian authors, Radbod was not simply a rebellious *dux*, he was a contrast with the loyal *duces/principes* Pippin and Charles.

But if Radbod was supposed to be a rebellious *dux*, why did hagiographers describe him as *rex* – equal of the Frankish rulers? Paganism seems to have been the central issue here. During Radbod's reign the Frisians were “still soiled by pagan rites” and “blinded in the error of faithlessness”,<sup>62</sup> whereas the Franks were a fully Christian people. While the historians had approached this issue from the perspective of a single community which owed loyalty to the *rex Francorum*, the hagiographers saw two separate communities, one Christian and the other pagan, each ruled over by its own king. For the hagiographers, then, Radbod was *rex Frisionum*, a pagan counterpart to the *rex Francorum*: he was the embodiment of Frisian paganism. This can be seen most explicitly in *Vita Bonifatii*,<sup>63</sup> but also by the central place Radbod has in the sacrificial practices portrayed by *Vitas Willibrordi* and *Vulframni*.<sup>64</sup> *Vita Vulframni* represents an exception, referring to Radbod as *dux* or *princeps*, but we should bear in mind the author's Neustrian perspective and the possibility that he remembered Radbod as an ally of Chilperic II and Ragamfred.

## Conclusion

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<sup>62</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 5; Altfrid, *Vita Liudgeri*, 1.

<sup>63</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi*, 11; *Vita Vulframni*, 6-8.

In this paper we have seen some of the ways in which early Carolingian authors could deploy an infamous figure from the recent Frankish past. Despite Radbod's undoubted hostility to mayors and missionaries, there was no single vision of him shared by all authors. Yet there was a bigger picture here: Radbod was always 'other'. He was excluded from the Christian Frankish community either because of his supposed disloyalty or his paganism, or in some cases both. Combining the various accounts and descriptions we can see that Radbod was undoubtedly a complex figure – both in his politics and his religion – who had the misfortune of desiring independence at a time of renewed Frankish expansion. He was the first victim of the Pippinid-Carolingians, and so became a model for how their historians and hagiographers would portray their enemies; rebellious, non-Christian and above all hostile to the Carolingians and their allies.