

## Foreword by the Editors

Aachen! Hardly any other city in the German-speaking world is so closely associated with an early medieval centre of power. It was especially under the Carolingian rulers Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, that this originally Roman *municipium*, famous since ancient times for its hot springs, became an eminently important control centre of the Frankish Empire for business, diplomacy, knowledge and the Christian faith. Aachen had a major influence on developments in early medieval Europe and also had a lasting impact on the complex contacts and links with the North. It is therefore not surprising that Aachen was chosen as the venue for the conference »Frankish Seats of Power and the North – Centres between Diplomacy and Confrontation, Transfer of Knowledge and Economy«. The event itself took place from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 at the Centre Charlemagne in Aachen, and the mild, occasionally sunny weather invited people to take coffee breaks in front of the Centre.

The following local institutes were involved in the preparation and realisation of the conference:

- Stadtarchäologie Aachen / City Archaeology Aachen with Andreas Schaub
- Centre Charlemagne (CC) Aachen / Centre of Charlemagne Aachen with Frank Pohle
- Lehrstuhl für Mittlere Geschichte und Historisches Institut der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Technischen Hochschule (RWTH) Aachen / Chair of Medieval History and Historical Institute of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule Aachen with Harald Müller

Other institutes were also involved:

- Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz in Ingelheim am Rhein / Imperial Palace Research Centre in Ingelheim am Rhein with Matylda Gierszewska-Noszczyńska
- Leibniz-Zentrum für Archäologie (LEIZA) in Mainz with Lutz Grunwald
- Zentrum für Baltische und Skandinavische Archäologie (ZBSA) in Schleswig / Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA) in Schleswig; due to its integration into the LEIZA (with its main seat in Mainz) the ZBSA ceased to exist, but research continues in Schleswig, with Oliver Grimm
- Max-Planck-Institut für Europäische Rechtsgeschichte und Rechtstheorie in Frankfurt am Main / Max Planck Institute for European Legal History and Legal Theory in Frankfurt am Main with Caspar Ehlers

The editors of this conference volume would particularly like to thank the city archaeologist Andreas Schaub, Harald Müller (RWTH) and the host of the conference venue, Frank Pohle (CC). Not only did they ensure that the event ran smoothly and with a high level of scientific rigour, they also led guided tours of the city's archaeological and architectural sights to liven things up.

During the conference, the presentations and the lively discussions that followed showed that the topic was well chosen. The complex mutual relations between the Frankish Empire and the North have obviously not yet been thoroughly researched. This applies in particular to the centres of power of the time, which played a decisive role in the development of the overall structure of Europe in the Early Middle Ages as centres for the exercise of power and control of the economy. The site in Aachen is understood particularly from its still-standing stone architecture, archaeological investigations and written records, whereas manorial seats in the North, with their wooden architecture, have been located by the large-scale use of metal detectors and likewise large-scale settlement-archaeological investigations only in the most recent decades.

The manuscripts have undergone intensive peer review by the book's editors and additional academics. They therefore reflect the current state of research. The present publication, with its 21 contributions and an introduction that summarises important results, now presents a standard work for future research. The conference in Aachen and the conference proceedings with their view towards the North are only part one of an entire cycle on »Frankish Seats of Power«, which is organised by Matylda Gierszewska-Noszczyńska and Lutz Grunwald, while Oliver Grimm acted as assistant for the North in the present book. Three other similar conferences with a focus on the South, the East and the West are in planning or preparation. The next conference under the title »Frankish Seats of Power and the South - Transregional Contacts and Complex Influences« will take place in Ingelheim am Rhein in November 2025. We hope to achieve an overall picture that represents large parts of Europe in the Early Middle Ages, and which is based on the conference volume »Zwischen Machtzentren und Produktionsorten. Wirtschaftsaspekte von der römischen Epoche bis in das Hochmittelalter am Rhein und in seinen Nachbarregionen« (Between Centers of Power and Places of Production. Economic Aspects from the Roman Era to the High Middle Ages along the Rhine and its Neighbouring Regions) published in 2021 (RGZM - Tagungen 45).

In the case of the conference in Aachen, the interplay between the Frankish Empire and the North was so complex that »Architecture of Power« has been separated out. In addition to the event in Aachen, a conference was held in Uppsala (central Sweden) from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2023, in a Swedish-German cooperation in which Thorsten Lemm and Oliver Grimm played a major role (both are represented as authors in the present book). The Uppsala conference proceedings are expected to be printed in late 2026/early 2027, and this volume will also lay claim to being a standard work.

Books always owe their making to the co-operation of different parties. The book could only come together thanks to the meticulous work of the publishing staff at the LEIZA, and we would therefore like to thank Claudia Nickel (Mainz), Ute Klatt (Mainz), Marie Reiter (Mainz), Michael Braun (Mainz) and Nicole Viehöver (Neuwied) for their hard work. This also includes Sharon Shellock from the United Kingdom, who has been proof-reading publications from the Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology for many years.

But even the best intentions are useless if the necessary funds for printing are lacking. The editors of this book would therefore like to express their thanks to the Centre Charlemagne in Aachen and the city of Ingelheim am Rhein with its Imperial Palace Research Centre (Forschungsstelle Kaiserpfalz der Stadt Ingelheim am Rhein) which have supported this publication with considerable grants.

*Matylda Gierszewska-Noszczyńska, Lutz Grunwald and Oliver Grimm  
27<sup>th</sup> of September 2024*