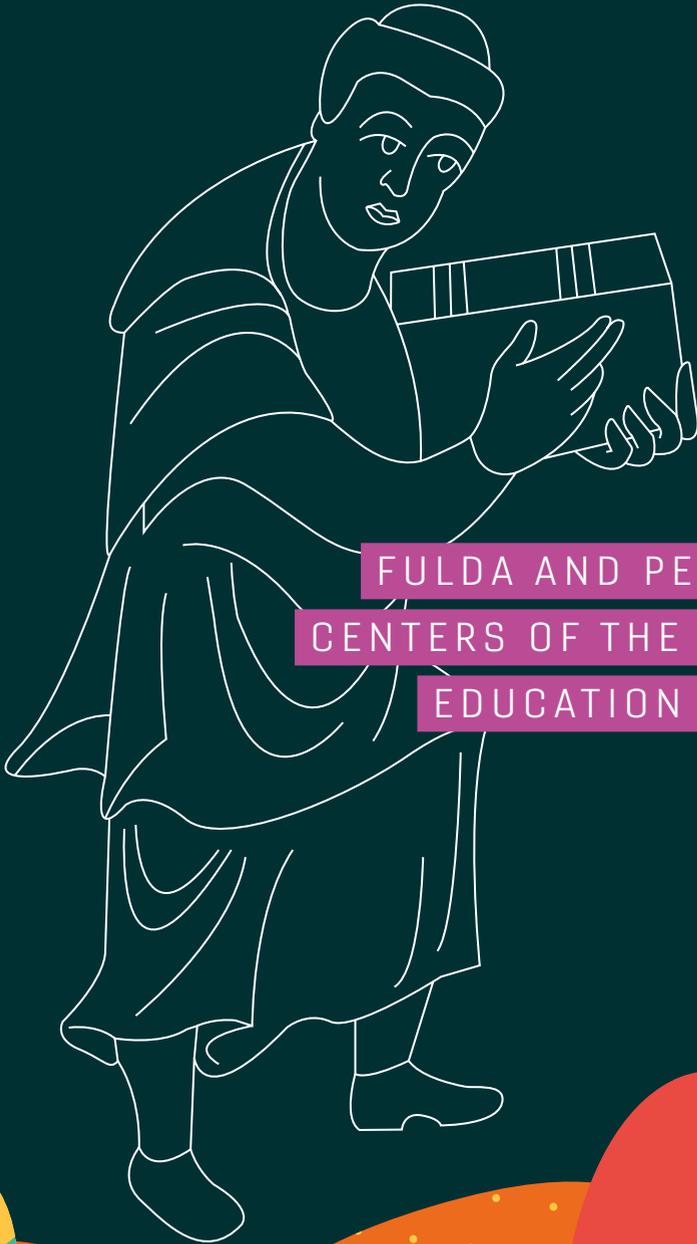




EDUCATION IN MOTION



FULDA AND PETERSBERG.  
CENTERS OF THE CAROLINGIAN  
EDUCATION REFORM





APPLICATION  
FOR THE EUROPEAN  
HERITAGE LABEL

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*Fulda and Petersberg are applying for the European Heritage Label (EHL), as their abbeys laid crucial foundations for the history of European education during the 8th and 9th centuries. This significance for the development of Europe points to the future, which is why we want our project in particular to inspire young people.*



SPANNING  
NETWORKS

*Abbot Raban of Fulda (r. 822–842) played a major role in the Carolingian education reform movement. He has therefore been chosen as the namesake of our project.*

»Raban forms the link between ancient wisdom and Medieval thought. It was he who made Fulda the place where education efforts in the 8th and 9th centuries culminated.«

*Dr. Michael Gerber,  
Bishop of Fulda*

»Raban's legacy is very much alive in Fulda and has crucially driven the city emerging as a center of schools and a major education hub in the heart of Europe.«

*Dr. Heiko Wingenfeld,  
Lord Mayor of Fulda*

»Raban is a shining example for people wanting to exchange ideas and expand their knowledge across all national and cultural boundaries.«

*Carsten Froß,  
Mayor of the District of Petersberg*

# SHAPING THE FUTURE

## The sites

European Heritage Label sites highlight key events in the development of Europe. At the same time, they are not frozen in the past but rather continue to advance their respective histories. They may have a connection with crucial European events, figures, and movements, play a cross-border role, or occupy an important position in the development of European values.

Many people will think of UNESCO World Heritage Sites when they hear about the European Heritage Label (EHL), but the EHL is focused particularly on cultural heritage with a European dimension. The 48 sites awarded the EHL label since 2013 attest to the broad range of opportunities and include built monuments, broad swathes of countryside, extensive archives, individual items, and immaterial cultural heritage such as groundbreaking legislation or music that pushes boundaries. They span a period from the beginning of civilization to the present day and embrace a geographical area stretching from Portugal in the southwest to Estonia in the northeast (see p. 9).



## The objectives

The European Commission is pursuing three main goals with this initiative: First, the shared cultural heritage is intended to strengthen the feeling among young people in particular that they belong to the EU. Second, strong recognition is provided for the national and regional specificities within Europe. And third, cross-border dialogue and interaction is fostered. To make all this possible, the EHL sites offer valuable projects that explain their European dimension and kindle identification with the cultural heritage. In doing so they open the doors to an audience that is as broad and international as possible, at the same time paying particular attention to children and young people. There are no limits to the imagination as the range of services extends from publications and information activities, tours and exhibitions, to international exchange projects, art education workshops, and interactive events online and locally. It follows from this, of course, that all the EHL sites form part of a network that brings people closer together. After all, when people meet it expands cultural horizons, fosters joy in the diversity that is Europe, and nurtures the strength for further shared developments.



## EHL sites

The 48 sites designated since 2013 demonstrate the huge breadth of possibilities:

Krapina Neanderthal Site (Croatia) | The Heart of Ancient Athens (Greece) | Archaeological Park Carnuntum (Austria) | Abbey of Cluny (France) | Olomouc Premyslid Castle and Archdiocesan Museum (Czech Republic) | Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Barcelona (Spain) | Great Guild Hall, Tallinn (Estonia) | Sagres Promontory (Portugal) | General Library of the University of Coimbra (Portugal) | The Imperial Palace, Vienna (Austria) | Union of Lublin (Poland) | Münster/Osnabrück – Sites of the Peace of Westphalia (Germany) | The May 3, 1791 Constitution, Warsaw (Poland) | Historic Ensemble of the University of Tartu, Tartu (Estonia) | Hambach Castle (Germany) | Charter of Law of Abolition of the Death Penalty, Lisbon (Portugal) | Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapest (Hungary) | Mundaneum, Mons (Belgium) | Peace Palace, The Hague (Netherlands) | Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid (Spain) | World War I Eastern Front Cemetery No. 123, Łużna-Pustki (Poland) | Kaunas of 1919–1940 (Lithuania) | Camp Westerbork (Netherlands) | Franja Partisan Hospital (Slovenia) | European District of Strasbourg (France) | Museo Casa Alcide De Gasperi, Pieve Tesino (Italy) | Robert Schuman's House, Scy-Chazelles (France) | The historic Gdańsk Shipyard (Poland) | Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park, Sopron (Hungary) | Bois du Cazier, Marcinelle (Belgium) | Former Natzweiler concentration camp and its satellite camps, Alsace-Moselle (France) and Baden-Württemberg (Germany) | Fort Cadine, Trento (Italy) | Sighet Memorial, Sighet (Romania) | Dohány Street Synagogue Complex, Budapest (Hungary) | Javorca Church, Tolmin (Slovenia) | Leipzig's Musical Heritage Sites, Leipzig (Germany) | Village of Schengen (Luxemburg) | Maastricht Treaty, Maastricht (Netherlands) | Excavation Site of Ostia Antica (Italy) | Underwater Cultural Heritage of the Azores (Portugal) | Colonies of Benevolence (Belgium, Netherlands) | Living Heritage of Szentendre (Hungary) | Kynžvart Castle – Place of diplomatic meetings (Czech Republic) | Site of Remembrance in Łambinowice (Poland) | Zdravljica – the Message of the European Spring of Nations (Slovenia) | Werkbund Estates in Europe (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Poland) | Chambon-sur-Lignon Memorial (France) | The Three Brothers, Riga (Latvia)

# SHARING KNOWLEDGE

## The roots

The monasteries of Fulda and Petersberg were crucial nuclei for major cultural developments that resonate to this day. The history on which our project is based begins with the Carolingian education reform, the impact of which continues to influence everyday life in Europe even 1,200 years later. This reform was a mammoth project launched by Emperor Charlemagne (747–814) in an attempt to unite his vast empire in peace.

After all, the Carolingian Empire, encompassed broad swathes of what is now Central Europe and many different peoples. He resolved that culture and education would form the foundation for organization and cohesion, just as they do in Europe even now.

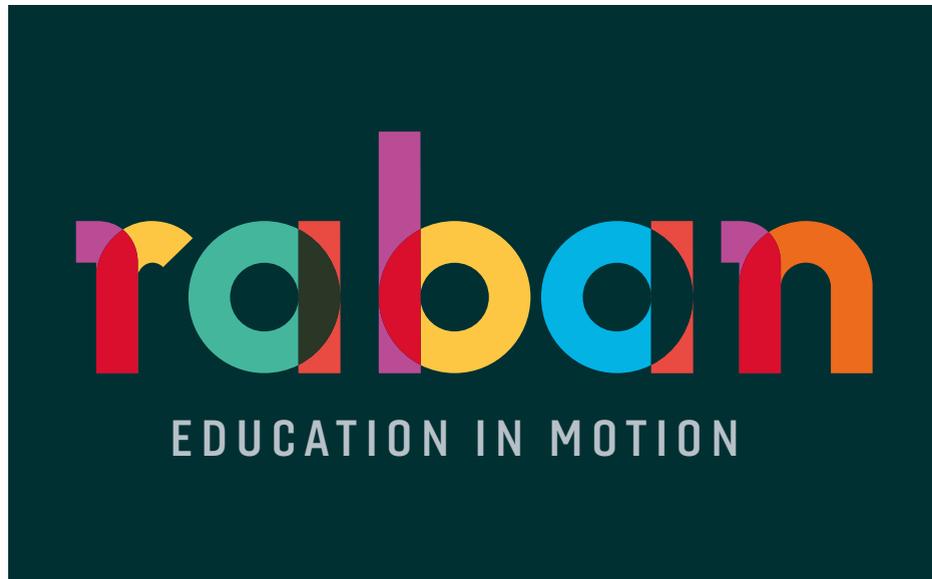
On Charlemagne's initiative, a variety of cultural traditions were merged. He gathered the brightest minds from within and outside his empire, and likewise assigned great responsibility to the monasteries. With their schools, libraries and scriptoriums, they were the most important centers of knowledge during the Middle Ages.



## Raban

Thanks to Fulda Abbey, we still have a few letters in which Charlemagne called for improvements in education. The Abbey sent its most talented students to the school at the Imperial court to study whence they could further disseminate their new knowledge. Among them was the monk Raban. He studied under the famous scholar Alcuin of Tours in what is now France and rose through the ranks to become a successful head of the Fulda monastery school. In this role and as abbot, he was to make Fulda one of the most important monastic schools of the 9th century in the area to the east of the Rhine, while at the same time attending to his social responsibilities. His works range from a comprehensive encyclopedia (a reference book), commentaries on the Bible, and poetry, to writings on clerical education, on grammar and on calculating the calendar. His goal was to bring together all the knowledge of his day; hence the Abbey's library became one of the biggest in the entire Empire, ensuring that the knowledge from ancient times and later great thinkers could be preserved, ordered, disseminated and further developed.

Raban is therefore our symbolic figure for the project "raban. Education in Motion."



## Exchange and networking

Raban's travels, the visitors to the Abbey, and his pan-European correspondence demonstrate the close connections among the high-ranking scholars of his day. They laid the foundations for the educational principles that still unite us in Europe to this day. The students of the monastery school, who travelled far and wide, can be considered the forerunners of today's exchange students and ERASMUS participants. They disseminated the knowledge obtained in Fulda and recorded it in the scriptoriums, acting as multipliers. A unified language and script forged bridges and proved seminal in the development of a shared culture.

These encounters across all borders and the traditions of dialogue and learning from one another are typical for Europe and will remain so. For this, we need people who are committed and engaged. We all have a part to play here.

# BROADENING HORIZONS

## The starting point

Even without any knowledge of the history, Fulda's tremendous resonance is evident to anyone taking a look around as they stand before the main forecourt of the city's Stadtschloss and absorb the overall picture of Medieval and Baroque architecture. The unique ensemble took shape thanks to the monastery founded at the behest of St. Boniface in 744, an official Imperial abbey and from 1752 a Prince-bishopric, which thus formed the spiritual and worldly framework for the settlement that developed around it from the 10th century onwards, later to become the city of Fulda, and its environs.

Throughout its history, Fulda has welcomed outside influences and likewise stimulated others. If you consider its outward impact in a supra-regional context, meanwhile, the influence this young monastery and its Abbot Raban had on the history of spirituality and education was its most important gift to what we now know as Europe.



## The project idea

With St. Michael's Church, the core of which dates back to the 9th century and which was consecrated in 822, Fulda boasts architectural testimony to the very earliest period of the Abbey's existence. The nearby St. Peter's Church, too, which sits on top of the Petersberg mount and was consecrated in 838 as the final resting place of Saint Lioba, forms part of the sacred world laid out around the main monastery comprising Medieval churches featuring Carolingian architecture. In the figure of the scholar Rabanus Maurus, who was head of the monastery school and abbot from 822 to 842, and who made Fulda a center of education in Europe, Fulda and Petersberg are connected in a very specific way.

In this respect, it seemed obvious to place Raban and his environment at the heart of a joint application by Fulda and Petersberg for the European Heritage Label. As "Centers of the Carolingian Education Reform", both aim to show that the cross-border exchange of knowledge and culture formed the basis for Europe's shared history.



## The application

The project idea was consolidated and fleshed out by representatives of Fulda Faculty of Theology, the Hessen State Office for the Preservation of Historic Monuments, and the City of Fulda, resulting in a preliminary concept in 2018 entitled "The Imperial Abbey of Fulda and its affiliated monastery in Petersberg. Centers of the Carolingian Education Reform." The ideas set out here were discussed with cooperation partners from the bishopric as well as education and research institutions. A steering group was formed under the leadership of the City of Fulda Dept. of Culture and involving the State Heritage Office, the Municipality of Petersberg, the Faculty of Theology and its library, the Bishopric of Fulda, the University, State and City Library, the Vonderau Museum, the Fulda State Education Authority, the Kinder-Akademie children's museum, the Bibliotheca Fuldensis Institute, the University of Applied Sciences, Frauenberg gGmbH and the cultural association Zukunft Bildung Fulda e.V. They all signed a cooperation agreement committing them to the project. Following a positive review by the Hessen Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and the Arts, the project was nominated for the Heritage Label by the Conference of Culture Ministers in October 2020. The decision on the award will be made by the European Commission.

## The objectives

The cooperation partners and others involved in the project have agreed on a host of measures to publicize the topic and in particular to get children and young people excited about it. The first point of entry is the website [raban-europa.de/en](http://raban-europa.de/en), which in future will provide information on the numerous offerings of tours, presentations, conferences, exhibitions, and workshops, as well as long-term initiatives. Alongside the existing online presentation of the old Fulda Abbey library and selected manuscripts, these will include a staged scriptorium and international school partnerships. One element is a discovery trail that school students will help to design along the “Priest’s Path” that connects the Fulda and Petersberg monasteries.

During the course of 2021, the public will already be able to take advantage of lectures and tours as well as numerous publications addressing the significance of Fulda and Petersberg in the history of European education.



*How were books produced in the Middle Ages? This is one of the questions we will address in our project.*



## The partners

These organizations are working together to realize the project:

- | St. Mary's Benedictine Abbey, Fulda
- | Library of the Episcopal Seminary
- | Bishopric of Fulda
- | Förderverein Propstei Johannesberg e.V.
- | Frauenberg gGmbH with the Frauenberg Monastery and Stiftung antonius
- | Fulda – Die Kulturstadt
- | Fuldaer Geschichtsverein e.V.
- | Municipality of Petersberg
- | Heimatverein Petersberg e.V.
- | University, State and City Library, Fulda
- | Fulda University of Applied Sciences
- | Institut Bibliotheca Fuldensis
- | Kinder-Akademie Fulda gGmbH
- | Parish of St. Lioba and Cella St. Lioba
- | Hessen State Office for the Preservation of Historic Monuments
- | Regional point of contact for EU internships and university and academic cooperation at the institute inter.research e.V
- | Fulda State Education Authority, Cultural Education Department
- | Faculty of Theology, Fulda
- | Via Regia-Arbeitskreis Fulda
- | Vonderau Museum Fulda
- | Zukunft Bildung Fulda e.V.

AACHEN

AUXERRE

BOURGES

COLOGNE

CORBIE

FERRIÈRES

FLEURY

FREISING

FRIAUL

HALBERSTADT

ISTANBUL

JERUSALEM

LE MANS

LISIEUX

LORSCH

LYON

MAINZ

METZ

MONTECASSINO

MURBACH

ORLÉANS

# RABAN'S NETWORK

PALESTINE

PRUEM

REGENSBURG

REICHENAU

REIMS

ROME

SALZBURG

SELIGENSTADT

SEVILLE

SOISSONS

STRASBOURG

ST. DENIS

ST. GALLEN

TOURS

UTRECHT

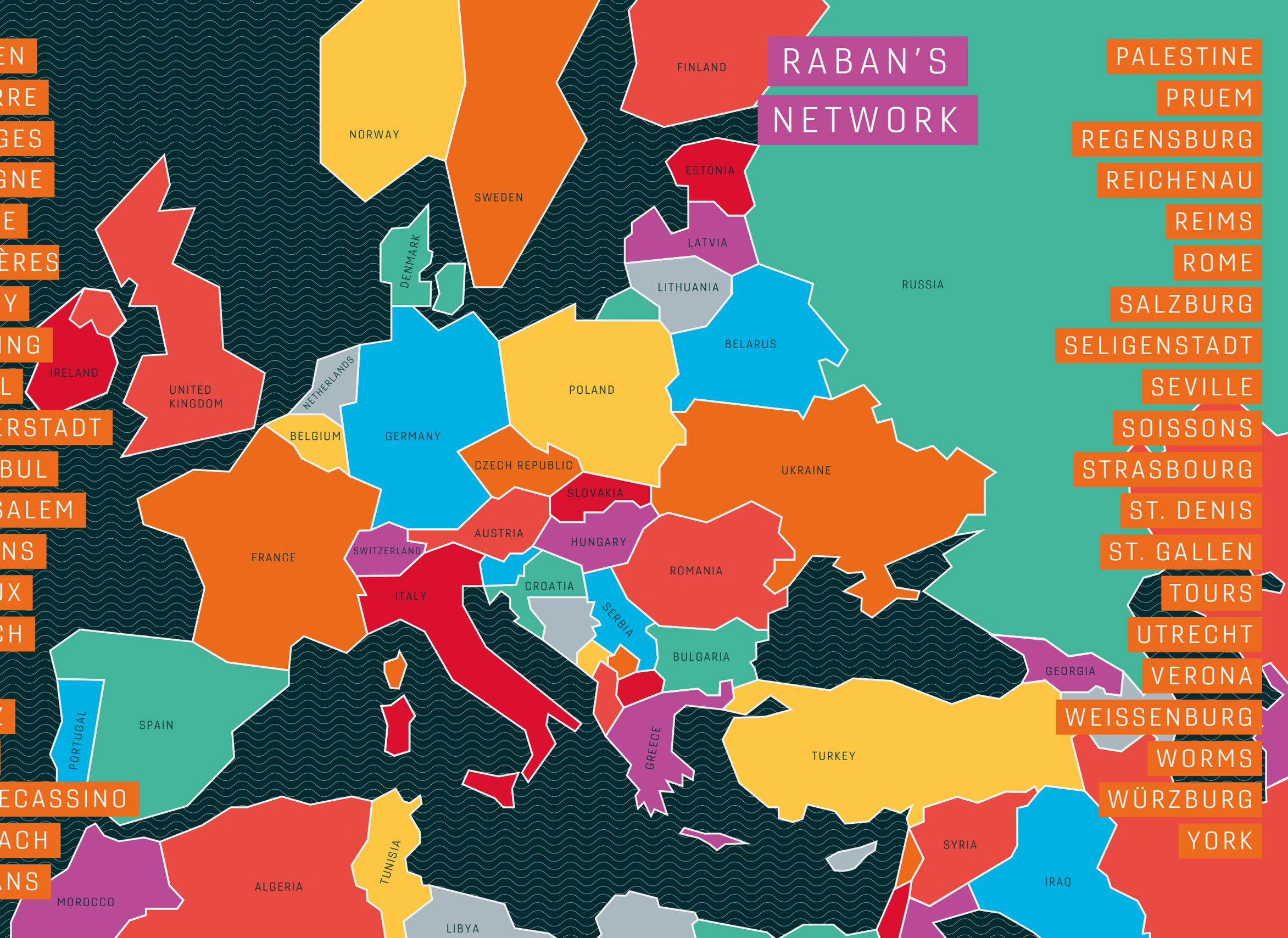
VERONA

WEISSENBURG

WORMS

WÜRZBURG

YORK



# ACTIVATING EDUCATION

## Foundation

On March 12, 744, a monk by the name of Sturmi founded the Abbey of Fulda at the behest of St. Boniface. In accordance with the latter's wishes, the monks there were to adhere strictly to the rules of St. Benedict, and the renowned missionary also designated this model monastery a place of rest and recuperation, specifying it as his eventual burial place. In a letter to Pope Zachary, St. Boniface asked that the monastery be subject only to the apostolic seat in Rome. The Pope granted it this privilege, which was ultimately crucial in the development of Fulda Abbey, since after St. Boniface's death in 754 and his burial in the abbey church, his grave became a place of worship. Pilgrims made their way to Fulda and donations were made to the monastery. Charlemagne supported the monastic community, granting it the immunity of an imperial abbey as well as the right to freely elect its abbots.



## Cultivating education

The monastery grew. Its material endowments enabled it to operate a school as well as workshops producing books and manuscripts. In interplay with each other, these helped form the basis for cultivation of knowledge-sharing and education. Following on from this, from the beginning of the 9th century the monastery became an early Medieval center of education that played an exemplary role in the Frankish Empire. Again around 800, Charlemagne had urged the Imperial monasteries not to neglect the cultivation of academic education, and the same appeal was made to Baugulf (r. 779–802), the Abbot of Fulda. Until that time, teaching had been limited to the acquisition of reading and writing skills as well as a conveying basic knowledge of Latin. Most certainly in the person of Einhard (c. 770–840), a later biographer of Charlemagne, Fulda Abbey boasted an outstanding student who was already writing the charters there at the age of 18. Einhard's high level of education meant he was sent to the school at Charlemagne's Imperial court. There, under his teacher Alcuin (735–804), he rose to become one of the leading scholars of the Carolingian Empire and one of Charlemagne's most trusted advisors.



*The dedicatory image from a copy of De laudibus sanctae crucis produced in Fulda depicts Raban presenting his work to Saint Martin with the support of Alcuin.*

*One of the calligrams in Raban's script De laudibus sanctae crucis shows cherubim and seraphim arranged in order around the cross.*



## Raban – a stroke of good fortune

Under Abbot Ratgar, Brun Candidus (d. 845) was sent to join Einhard at the Imperial Court School where he was to further his education. Having returned to Fulda, he created a literary monument in his record of the life of Abbot Eigil. Its extraordinary quality is evident in the production of two versions, one in prose and one in hexameters. The biography therefore set an important example for the "Carolingian Renaissance", which fostered the dissemination of knowledge and of ancient traditions and literature. The arrival of Raban, who was educated in the Abbey from 788, was serendipitous for Fulda. As a student of Alcuin, he was given extensive tutelage in Aachen and returned to Fulda in 801. In his time as head of the monastery school, he opened it up to science and teaching of the seven "free arts". As befits a true polymath, Raban composed a number of written works, including *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (In praise of the Holy Cross), which was widely disseminated. The 28 calligrams it contains reveal the event of salvation in relation to Christ's death on the cross. The monks produced six copies in Fulda during Raban's lifetime (d. 856), so we can assume that the school of art and writing there was capable of tremendous achievements even back then.

## Scriptorium and library

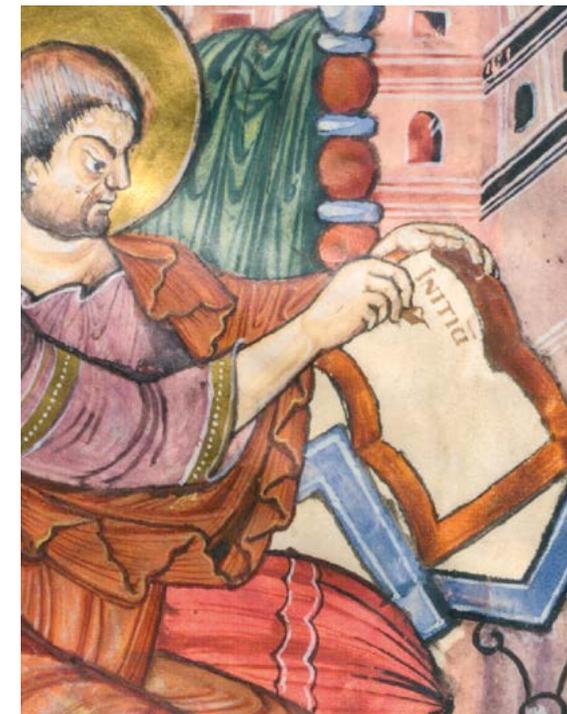
As a polymath who tried to bring together all spheres of knowledge during his time, and as an educator who tried to convey to his students the traditions of Classical Antiquity and early Christian times, Raban exerted a great influence over his contemporaries, prompting scholars from all over the Frankish Empire to move to Fulda, including Lupus of Ferrières, Otfried of Weissenburg, and Walahfrid Strabo. Raban's extensive activities as a writer and academic required a huge library, so naturally the great scholar did all he could to have as many ancient and early Christian texts as possible copied in the Fulda scriptorium. In the days before the invention of printing and the availability of paper, producing books in the form of manuscripts was a huge personal and financial feat. One single manuscript required the skin of many animals made into parchment. This meant that every new volume in the library was an expensive masterpiece. It is estimated that during the time of Raban and Rudolf, his successor at the monastery school, Fulda library held up to 2,000 books, making it one of the most important collections in the entire Carolingian Empire.

Et pastores erant in regione eadem  
uigilantes & custodientes uigilias noctis  
supra greges suos.  
& ecce angelus dñi stetit iuxta illos.

uuarun thò hirta hrtchero lant skeffi-  
uuahhante hrt bihaktante nah uuahra  
ubar ero euur,  
quam thara goterengil hrt gistuone nah in

*The version of the "Gospel Harmony" by Tatian the Syrian produced in Fulda supplements the Latin text (in the upper part of the detail) with a German translation (below). The script used by the scribes is the Carolingian minuscule, which was disseminated throughout the Empire by the school at Charlemagne's Imperial Court.*

*This illuminated detail from a Gospel produced in Fulda around 835 shows the Evangelist Mark in the process of writing.*



## The scribes' legacy

Without the efforts of the Fulda scribes, some of the most important texts of Classical Antiquity would be unknown today. The history of the German language also owes much to the Abbey. Without Fulda, we would not have known about the Hildebrandslied, the oldest preserved fragment of an epic poem in the German language. The monks wrote out the Old High German-Old Saxon text in the 830s on the outer pages of a manuscript volume with theological content, thus demonstrating their interest in secular material. Varied are the monuments of Old High German writing connected with Fulda, ranging from simple functional writings to versions of the Gospel. One great achievement in translation at Fulda was that of the "Gospel Harmony" by Tatian the Syrian (born c. 170). This history of Jesus's life compiled from the four Gospels was already available in Fulda in Latin, namely in the St. Boniface's so-called Victor Codex. The monks used this as a basis from which to make a copy and combined it with a translation into the vernacular to create a new volume.

# HUNTING FOR CLUES

## Architectural history

Historical buildings are a tangible and visible surviving cultural heritage. They allow us to experience history directly. Can buildings also vividly convey developments in intellectual history such as the Carolingian education reform?

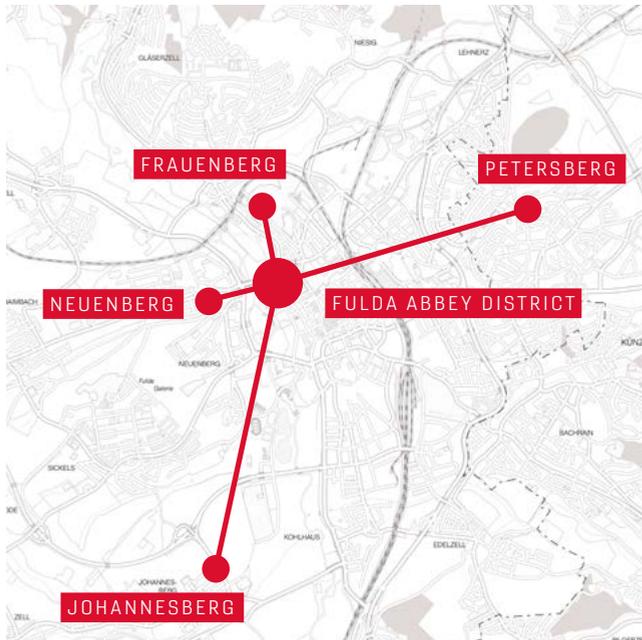
The buildings from the Carolingian period signal the start of the major epoch in medieval architectural history in Europe. Traditions from Classical Antiquity gave rise to innovative forms of art and architecture, made possible thanks to the intense interaction between the regions and the precise knowledge of models from earlier periods. The position of the Abbey and the cruciform-shaped complex of churches, the knowledge about the Ratgar Basilica, St. Michael's Church, and large parts of Petersberg's Lioba Church are testament to this exchange that spanned boundaries of space and time during the 8th and 9th centuries in Fulda. These buildings are the showcases for the history of European education and likewise its civilizing fruits.



## Formation of the landscape

Fulda Abbey developed at the intersection of important transport routes that already existed in early history. Its growth and the economic and administrative structures that had aggregated over time fostered the development of small cells and affiliated monasteries. Settlements formed around these, and their associated sacred buildings covered the landscape with a fabric of faith, shaping its appearance even to this day. The underlying idea of protection and the bond these places shared were continually renewed over the centuries with religious processions. The model and the blueprint strived for were the holy cities of Rome and Jerusalem, with the aim being to transplant them into one's own reality. The development of religious urban concepts and religious landscapes is not unique to Medieval Europe, however, but is likewise found in ancient Rome and Greece as well as in early Christian Upper Egypt in the 5th century.

The countryside around Fulda, the river valley with its surrounding hills of the Rhön and the Vogelsberg, and the aspirations and capabilities of the monastery helped to foster the formation of the ensemble of churches and their encircling sphere of influence as early as the beginning of the 9th century.



*With the four affiliated monasteries, Fulda Abbey constituted a sacred landscape in the shape of a cross as early as the Middle Ages.*

*Like those of the affiliated monasteries the church in Petersberg is elevated on a hill above the surrounding landscape.*



## Petersberg monastery

Abbot Raban founded the affiliated monastery, the church of which was consecrated in 838. It was also called the Lioba Church since the relics of St. Lioba (c. 700/710–782) were buried in its crypt. The saint came from southern England and not only led an exemplary religious life but was also a highly educated and compassionate figure. This made her an influential advisor within Charlemagne's Empire. The church devoted to her is still an important site and boasts architectural elements dating back to around 838. The building and its features vividly convey the capabilities of the Fulda monastery school in the context of the Carolingian education reform, with wall paintings contained in the crypt that are of high artistic quality and are remarkable and singular in the complex, intellectual conception of their content. The format of the church is reflected in only a few isolated examples located in northwest Spain, France and Cyprus.

Raban lived in the affiliated monastery between 842 and 847 and it was there that he completed the 22-volume encyclopedia *De rerum naturis*. This is the most important testimony to the efforts in education at that time, when knowledge from the Mediterranean realm even of late antiquity was passed on.

## The Ratgar Basilica

The local monastery church, which was consecrated in 819, is thought to have been the single largest religious building north of the Alps at that time, stretching around 95 meters in length. Today's Baroque cathedral illustrates these enormous dimensions because its somewhat shorter central axis, transept and the baroque-sheathed towers preserve remnants of the medieval architecture. As early as 791, the preceding three-nave church was expanded to include a choir on the east side, then a wide transept was added to the west based on the model of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and this incorporated the tomb of St. Boniface in a second choir complete with apse. Construction was almost completed under Abbot Ratgar (r. 802–817), whose successor Eigil (r. 818–822) completed the plans with the erection of eleven altars, each of which was devoted to several saints honored as "living stones". They included the eastern and western monastic fathers, Mary, apostles, martyrs and witnesses to the faith, popes, the Holy Cross in the center of the nave, bishops, and church teachers, and spanned a geographical picture of the entire Christian world from the Orient to Ireland – space and history, concentrated for the liturgical life of the Benedictines at Fulda.



*The now damaged composite capital from the originally Carolingian monastery church is based on ancient models.*

*The capitals on the ground level of St. Michael's Church, consecrated in 822, likewise owe their forms to ancient designs.*



## St. Michael's Church

Not far from the Ratgar Basilica, St. Michael's Church was consecrated as a cemetery chapel in 822, and its subterranean crypt has been preserved. The original design of the central structure was adopted in the renovation of the ground level in the 11th century, so the format of the Carolingian building is still visible today. The circular structure was partly in imitation of the church erected over the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem. Brun Candidus, a monk, painter and writer at the monastery who had attended Charlemagne's Imperial Court School, composed one of the loveliest architectural appraisals of the Early Middle Ages. The mighty central column in the crypt represents Christ, while the eight columns of the rotunda represent people who fulfil the Beatitudes of Christ's Sermon on the Mount and thus become pillars of the Church. Hence, St. Michael's Church is a place that encompasses time and history, origin and destiny. This is the context in which we can explain the incorporation of an archaic-seeming capital from the period around 750–765 in the pillar of the crypt. In contrast, the finely formed capitals from 822 on the ground level of the rotunda take inspiration from Roman antiquity, as is characteristic in the ideals of Carolingian reform.



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