PREFACE

We have explored the issues considered in this book by bringing together scholars with different kinds and different areas of regional expertise, working closely in a five-year research programme about the early medieval face-to-face group (adopted as an element of the ERC Advanced Grant project ‘Social Cohesion, Identity and Religion in Europe 400–1200’ led by Professor Walter Pohl, of the University of Vienna and the Austrian Academy of Sciences, a project largely concerned with the ‘broad frames of identification for large numbers of people’ at a macro-social level). Each member of the group contributed to annual meetings to discuss the major themes identified, with regional presentations on a range of agreed questions. Charles West contributed from his knowledge of local matters in the eastern Paris basin in the early Middle Ages; Nicolas Schroeder from his of southern Belgium; Miriam Czock contributed from her knowledge of the Wissembourg area in Alsace and the Middle Rhineland; Thomas Kohl from more of the Middle Rhineland and also Bavaria; Bernhard Zeller from Alpine regions and the surrounding land in modern Switzerland and south-western Germany; Marco Stoffella from northern and central Italy, with special attention to Tuscany; Wendy Davies from northern Spain and Portugal; and Francesca Tinti from England. Steffen Patzold drew primarily from his knowledge of Frankish capitularies and Carine van Rhijn from hers of Frankish priests’ manuscripts. This does not provide comprehensive coverage of western Europe, nor is it intended to do so (see figure 2.1); these are regions which are particularly well documented and also offer a wide range of different material: they make for good comparisons. While other scholars joined us for our first two books (S. Patzold and C. van Rhijn (eds), *Men in the Middle. Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016) and T. Kohl, S. Patzold and B. Zeller (eds), *Kleine Welten. Ländliche Gesellschaften im Karolingerreich* (Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2019)), one or more of the core group took overall responsibility for each topic for this, our final book, drawing the different regional perspectives together into unified thematic chapters; thereby, every member of the group has contributed to every section of this publication

and in effect every member has written 10 per cent of it. In practice, Wendy Davies and Bernhard Zeller have done the final editing and taken overall responsibility for Chapters 1 and 2, setting out the questions to pursue and providing some essential background; readers familiar with the period can skip this background on physical geography, political trends and relevant source material. Nicolas Schroeder took the lead on Chapter 3, ‘The fabric of local societies: people, land and settlement’; Miriam Czock and Charles West drew together the material for Chapter 4, ‘Making groups: collective action in rural settlements’; Francesca Tinti and Carine van Rhijn led on Chapter 5, ‘Shepherds, uncles, owners, scribes: priests as neighbours in early medieval local societies’; Thomas Kohl and Marco Stoffella drew together the material for Chapter 6, ‘Interventions in local societies: lower office holders’; Steffen Patzold that for Chapter 7, ‘Interventions and interactions’; and Wendy Davies has provided the concluding Chapter 8. All contributed to the Appendix, which provides some detail about written sources, and to the Glossary, which is a guide to the meaning of terms used in and of the early Middle Ages.

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