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‘Not rendering unto Caesar’: challenges to early medieval rulers

I.

To examine the limits of authority, rebellion against it and challenges to it is not simply to reveal the weakness of public authority in the early medieval west. As Janet L. Nelson has shown, “working with negatives can be a useful pedagogic device in highlighting positives”[1]. So, in this article, the challenges to their authority faced by rulers and political actors should certainly be understood as challenges, but my focus on them is also a heuristic device to explore aspects of ‘Staatlichkeit’; to examine such features is a way of charting a profile, a silhouette, of authority. Problems and challenges are the flashes of dialectical lightning by which we can see structures. Systems can best be understood through exploring tensions within them, rather than trying to render them as smoothly coherent. Here Theodor Adorno’s pregnant formulation remains true: “the whole is the false.”[2] We shall focus here on two challenges: rebellion and the clashes between rulers and bishops or holy men. These are weighty topics and can only be treated briefly within the confines of this article which should be seen as very much a preliminary study.

We begin with rebellion. For our concerns here, some of the most interesting recent work has been Chris Wickham’s survey of peasant rebellions. For him, the relative lack of “large-scale armed peasant revolt” in the early Middle Ages is a sure sign of weak state power. After all, the great revolts of the later Middle Ages were “reactions to taxation and other manifestations of state power”. So lack of state power equals no big peasant rebellions. Chris Wickham goes on to provide a comprehensive survey and typology of early medieval peasant revolt (from the Bacaudae to the Stellinga and beyond) which also sheds much light on aristocratic power, class struggle, etc.[3] One of the merits of Chris Wickham’s survey is that it is founded on a clear definition of state power (to which we shall return), but it is tempting to push his essentially institutional definition a bit further and to add to his list the upheavals of 1074 in the Harzburg when peasants desecrated the royal tombs there. Contemporaries were deeply shocked by this; they grasped that this struck at the roots of authority, at the entire cultural and social order.[4]

But perhaps that order is too general to be understood as the state in a helpful sense. Anyway, the assault on the Harzburg was not a peasant revolt, but part of the general political upheaval against Henry IV, and this takes us into the world of political, i.e., aristocratic, rebellion. A survey and typology of such rebellions, such as Chris Wickham has given us for peasants, would be very welcome.[5]

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[1] Janet L. Nelson, Bad kingship in the earlier Middle Ages, in: Haskins Society Journal 8 (1996) 1–26.

[2] Theodor Adorno, Minima Moralia. Reflections on a Damaged Life, trans. Edmund F.N. Jephcott (London 1974) 50. For light shed on early medieval structures of power and authority by study of crisis and challenge see, in addition to Nelson, n. 1, ead., Bad kingship, in: Les élites au haut Moyen Âge. Crises et renouvellements, ed. François Bougard/Laurent Feller/Régine Le Jan (Collection Haut Moyen Âge 1, Turnhout 2006); and the valuable reflections in Timothy Reuter, Unruhestiftung, Fehde, Rebellion, Widerstand: Gewalt und Frieden in der Politik der Salierzeit, in: Die Salier und das Reich 3: Gesellschaftlicher und ideengeschichtlicher Wandel im Reich der Salier, ed. Stefan Weinfurter (Sigmaringen 1991) 297–325, engl.: Timothy Reuter, Peace-breaking, feud, rebellion, resistance. Violence and peace in the politics of the Salian era, in: id., Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities, ed. Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge 2006) 355–387.

[3] Chris Wickham, Space and society in early medieval peasant conflicts, in: Uomo e spazio nell’alto Medioevo 2/2 (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo 50, Spoleto 2003) 551–585, at 558; id., Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800 (Oxford 2005) 578–588.

[4] Reuter, Medieval polities 355–357; this event is outside the chronological bounds of Wickham’s survey.

[5] The insights of Karl Leyser remain vital here, see id., Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society. Ottonian Saxony (London 1979). Gerd Althoff, Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter. Kommunikation in Friede und Fehde (Darmstadt

But I can only offer a few brief comments here. First, such rebellions do not look subversive. Aristocrats did not want to depose kings and set up a republic of nobles. The temporary disappearance of Lombard kingship in 574 is indeed an interesting episode but it was only an episode as kings returned after a decade and the Lombard kings then remained central to the political structures and identity of that kingdom.[6] Nonetheless, the late Timothy Reuter was right to warn us against assuming that the oligarchic consensus between kings and aristocracies was always cosy.[7] Secondly, the different patterns in aristocratic rebellion across the west reveal the essence of particular political structures. Thus Gregory of Tours noted that the Visigoths "had adopted the reprehensible habit of killing out of hand any king who displeased them and replacing him on the throne by some-one whom they preferred". Gregory here highlights a distinctive feature of the Visigothic polity, and the same view was taken by Fredegar who saw political instability in ethnic terms, as a feature of Gothic identity, a *morbus Gothorum* that showed that the Goths needed the smack of firm government. All this is described by Roger Collins in pretty much the same terms as Gregory: "an oligarchy of wealthy families … trying to manipulate a monarchical system in such a way as to produce effective but non-hereditary kings while maintaining a balance of power among their own membership."[8] The Frankish kingdom was not like Spain; for the Franks, hereditary kingship was a potent badge of ethnic and political identity, and they cited Gregory the Great's testimony to this effect; dynastic sentiment was so strong that even child kings were acceptable.[9] In such a polity the pattern of rebellion was, generally speaking, rather different. But Frankish hereditary kingship did not necessarily succeed in canalizing all rebellions in the direction of the dynasty, whether Merovingian or Carolingian. Ian Wood has shown how some seemingly Merovingian figures may have been manufactured by members of the aristocracy while the claims of possibly genuine ones could be denied.[10] And while in the period after the conspiracy of Hardrad in 785 up until the usurpation of Boso in 879, all revolts were led, or fronted, by members of the royal Carolingian kin, members of the aristocracy may have been less mesmerised by that kin than

1997) is also fundamental. But it is important to remember the distinctiveness of the Ottonian and Salian Reich and to be cautious in seeing the work of even scholars such as Leyser and Althoff as easily applicable to all early medieval kingdoms; aspects of Althoff's work are put in broad historiographical context in Walter Pohl, Staat und Herrschaft im Frühmittelalter: Überlegungen zum Forschungsstand, in: Staat im frühen Mittelalter, ed. Stuart Airlie/Walter Pohl/Helmut Reimitz (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 11, Wien 2006) 9–38, at 16–27; and see also Timothy Reuter, Könige, Adelige, Andere: 'Basis' und 'Überbau' in ottonischer Zeit, in: Ottonische Neuanfänge, ed. Bernd Schneidmüller/Stefan Weinfurter (Mainz 2001) 127–150, engl. in: Timothy Reuter, Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities, ed. Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge 2006) 300–324. For a survey of challenges to rulers, see Konrad Bund, Thronsturz und Herrscherabsetzung im Frühmittelalter (Bonner Historische Forschungen 44, Bonn 1979).

[6] Paulus Diaconus, Historia Langobardorum II, 32 (ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [48], Hannover 1878) 108–109; Wickham, Early Middle Ages 34–35, 115–120; Walter Pohl, The empire and the Lombards: treaties and negotiations in the sixth century, in: Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity (The Transformation of the Roman World 1, Leiden/New York/Köln 1997) 75–133, at 98–131.

[7] Timothy Reuter, The medieval nobility in twentieth-century historiography, in: Companion to Historiography, ed. Michael Bentley (London 1997) 177–202, at 183; but see Pohl, Staat und Herrschaft 33–35.

[8] Gregory of Tours, Historiae III, 30 (ed. Bruno Krusch/Wilhelm Levison, MGH SS rer. Merov. 1, 1, Hannover 1951) 126; engl. in: Gregory of Tours, History of the Franks, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth 1974) 187; Fredegar, The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar 82 (ed. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, London 1960) 69–70. Also Roger Collins, Visigothic Spain 409–711. A History of Spain (Oxford 2004) 115–116; but see also Céline Martin, Des fins de règne incertaines. Répression et amnistie des groupes aristocratiques dans le royaume de Tolède, deuxième moitié du VIIe siècle, in: Les élites au haut Moyen Âge. Crises et renouvellement, ed. François Bougard/Laurent Feller/Régine Le Jan (Collection Haut Moyen Âge 1, Turnhout 2006) 207–223, esp. 222–223.

[9] Libellus proclamationis adversus Wenilonem (859 June 14) (ed. Alfred Boretius/Viktor Krause, MGH LL Capitularia regum Francorum 2, Hannover 1890–1897/repr. 2001) 450–453, at 450; Stuart Airlie, Les élites en 888 et après, ou comment pense-t-on la crise carolingienne, in: Les élites au haut Moyen Âge. Crises et renouvellement, ed. François Bougard/Laurent Feller/Régine Le Jan (Collection Haut Moyen Âge 1, Turnhout 2006) 425–437, at 425 and 428; Paul Fouracre, The long shadow of the Merovingians, in: Charlemagne. Empire and Society, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester/New York 2005) 5–21.

[10] Ian N. Wood, Usurpers and Merovingian kingship, in: Der Dynastiewechsel von 751. Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung, ed. Matthias Becher/Jörg Jarnut (Münster 2004) 15–31.

some historians have thought.[11] Those west Frankish magnates who rose up against Charles the Bald in the 850s did hope that Louis the German would back them but they stuck to their guns when his backing evaporated; they were themselves a *societas*; it turned out that they did not need a king to lead them or give them continuing cohesion.[12] And that leads us to a final point here. Aristocratic rebellion need not always be the result of factional politics but could certainly be a way of criticising bad kingship. The aristocracy's articulation of discontent over aspects of royal rule points to political self-consciousness and an awareness that the *regnum* was bigger than the ruler; thus we can indeed sometimes see "fürstliche Opposition … als Gestalterin mittelalterlicher Staatlichkeit", to cite the title of Monika Suchan's article.[13]

Where can we find real challenge to the established order as such? One place to look for this might be in the Arian kingdoms of the west. On the eve of the take-off of early medieval studies in the English-speaking academy Peter Brown proclaimed that the tensions between Arian barbarians and orthodox Romans was precisely what permitted the existence of barbarian kingdoms: "The barbarian … was also a heretic… (the barbarians) were encapsulated by a wall of dumb hatred…. (They) ruled effectively as heretical kingdoms precisely because they were well hated". Our views have changed in the decades since that was written, thanks not least to work produced and inspired by Peter Brown himself.[14] A comprehensive view of the political significance of Arianism would be welcome but we can say that the relationship of religious identity to political attitudes in kingdoms ruled by Arians was not a simple one.[15] How could Catholics tolerate the rule of heretical kings? Surely they would want such polities to be overthrown. The evidence suggests not. Gregory of Tours' picture of Quintianus, bishop of Rodez, as a leading member of an anti-Arian front in Visigothic Aquitaine is not an accurate one.[16] The rebellion of Hermenigild against his father Leovigild was not a Catholic rising against Arian tyranny. And even Gregory of Tours, who interpreted the rebellion in these terms, could not approve of this son rising against a heretical father.[17] For Gregory the Great, Hermenigild was 'king and martyr' in a sequence of stories about Arian persecution in Spain, Africa and Italy but as such he was responsible for the conversion of the Visigoths to the true faith, not for the downfall of their kingdom.[18]

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[11] See for instance Stuart Airlie, Charlemagne and the aristocracy: captains and kings, in: Charlemagne – Empire and Society, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester/New York 2005) 90–102, at 99. Comprehensive treatment in Karl Brunner, Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich (VIÖG 25, Wien/München 1979); for a fresh perspective on a particular case, see Rosamond McKitterick, Histoire et mémoire de la crise d'une élite carolingienne: l'année 785 et les Annales regni Francorum, in: Les élites au haut Moyen Âge. Crises et renouvellement, ed. François Bougard/Laurent Feller/Régine Le Jan (Collection Haut Moyen Âge 1, Turnhout 2006) 267–282.

[12] See the letter sent to them by the bishops assembled at Savonnière, Council of Savonnières (14. Juni 859) (ed. Wilfried Hartmann, MGH LL Concilia 3, Hannover 1984) 447–489, at 482–485, esp. 482–483; Régine Le Jan, Élites et révoltes à l'époque carolingienne: crises des élites ou crise des modèles?, in: Les élites au haut Moyen Âge. Crises et renouvellement, ed. François Bougard/Laurent Feller/Régine Le Jan (Collection Haut Moyen Âge 1, Turnhout 2006) 403–423, at 411–417.

[13] Monika Suchan, Fürstliche Opposition gegen das Königtum im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert als Gestalterin mittelalterlicher Staatlichkeit, in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 37 (2003) 141–165.

[14] Peter Brown, The World of Late Antiquity (London 1971) 124–125; Brown's views have not remained static: Peter Brown, The Rise of Western Christendom (Oxford [2]2003) 105–106.

[15] Much food for thought in Patrick Amory, People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554 (Cambridge 1997) 195–276; and see now Walter Pohl, Heresy in Secundus and Paul the Deacon, in: Crisis of the Oikoumene. The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean, ed. Celia Chazelle/Catherine Cubitt (Turnhout 2006) 243–264.

[16] Gregory of Tours, Historiae II, 36, ed. Krusch/Levison 84–85; Ian N. Wood, The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751 (London/New York 1994) 46–47; on Gregory's strongly anti-Arian narratives in Book II, Ian N. Wood, Gregory of Tours (Bangor 1994) 34–35.

[17] Gregory of Tours, Historiae V, 38 and VI, 43, ed. Krusch/Levison 243–245 and 314–316; Roger Collins, Merida and Toledo 550–585, in: Visigothic Spain: New Approaches, ed. Edward James (Oxford 1980) 189–219, at 215–218.

[18] Gregory the Great, Dialogues III, 3 (ed. Umberto Moricca, Dialogi Libri IV, Rome 1924) 204–207; Roger Collins, Visigothic Spain 57–58. For Gregory on the martyrdom of Christians in his own time at the hands of pagan Lombards, Carole Straw, Martyrdom and Christian identity. Gregory the Great, Augustine and tradition, in: The Limits of Ancient Christianity. Essays in Honor of Robert A. Markus, ed. William Klingshirn/Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor 1999) 250–266, at 254.

But there are some signs of resistance to Arian rulers that suggest a fundamental critique of their rule. The grim fate of Boethius, Symmachus and pope John in Ostrogothic Italy was the outcome of power politics, though religious politics played a role. The Anonymous Valesianus is explicit on the occurrence of miracles at the pope's funeral and this text's vision of Arian persecutors, Catholic victims and the death of Theodoric makes it very like a martyr text, as Phoebe Robinson has recently claimed.[19] Over time, Boethius and Symmachus were seen to have died *pro catholica pietate* at the hands of Theodoric; Boethius came to be seen as a martyr and all this cast a shadow on the representation of rule of Theodoric, seen as one Arian ruler amongst many in the past.[20] In Africa, the Vandal kings were very nervous about Catholic sermons. Victor of Vita tells us that if catholic bishops mentioned the names of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar or Holofernes, they were accused "of having said such things against the person of the king" (*quod in persona regis ista dixissent*) and immediately exiled.[21]

II.

But while there may have been an anti-Arian edge to such sermons in Vandal Africa, the dark examples of bad Biblical rulers, from Pharaoh along with the disappointing kings of Israel and the arrogant rulers denounced in the Psalms right through to Herod, were of course among the dramatis personae of the Catholic polities too. Gregory of Tours' comparison of Chilperic to Herod is perhaps the best known example.[22] And here we come to this article's central concern. Christian thinking, despite its overwhelming stress on the need for obedience to the powers that be, and despite its central role in legitimating kingship, etc., still posed some very sharp challenges to the holders of power and authority in this world. To some extent, these challenges and tensions were present on the level of values. As Janet L. Nelson and Patrick Wormald have argued, the 'Angst', the crises of confidence in secular values experienced by such figures as Charles the Fat, Alfred of Wessex and Gerbert of Aurillac show the disturbing impact on the lay elite of the "essentially monastic spirituality preached by the leaders of the Carolingian reform"[23]. But there were also fundamental tensions built into the structures of Christian kingdoms. The Bible, Augustine and Gregory did not all speak with one voice. In his magisterial survey of the political thought of the western Fathers Robert A. Markus contrasts Augustine's vision of conflict and tension within temporal societies that must remain "radically ambiguous" with

[19] Anonymous Valesianus XV, 88–93 and XVI, 94–95 (ed. Ingemar König, Aus der Zeit Theoderichs des Großen. Einleitung, Text und Kommentar einer anonymen Quelle, Darmstadt 1997) 92–94 with commentary at 201–207 and discussion of the ninth-century manuscript at 1–2; Phoebe Robinson, Dead Boethius: sixth-century accounts of a future martyr, in: Viator 35 (2004) 1–19, at 10–13.

[20] Ado of Vienne, Chronicon in aetatis sex divisum, PL 123, 105 and 107; Rosamond McKitterick, Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages (Notre Dame 2006) 29.

[21] Victor of Vita, Historia Persecutionis Vandalorum I, 22 (ed. Serge Lancel, Histoire de la Persécution Vandale en Afrique, Paris 2002) 106–107, engl. in: Victor of Vita, History of the Vandal Persecution (trans. John Moorhead, Liverpool 1992) 11; note that one of St Martin's snobbish episcopal opponents was publicly discomfited by a *lectio prophetica*: Sulpicius Severus, Vita Martini 9, 4–7 (ed. Jacques Fontaine, Sulpice Sévère, Vie de Saint Martin, 3 vols., Paris 1967–1969) 1, 272. On tensions in Vandal Africa, Anette Hettinger, Migration und Integration. Zu den Beziehungen von Vandalen und Romanen im Norden Afrikas, in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 35 (2001) 121–143, at 130–134 and 142–143; to be contrasted with the views in Vandals, Romans and Berbers. New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa, ed. Andrew H. Merrills (Aldershot/Burlington-Vermont 2004); on these tensions, surely Homer nods in Wickham, Early Middle Ages 88–89.

[22] Gregory of Tours, Historiae VI, 46, ed. Krusch/Levison 319; for the figure of Herod in Gregory, see Martin Heinzelmann, Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century (Cambridge 2001) 130; see also the stimulating comments on Gregory's criticisms of rulers in Guy Halsall, The preface to book V of Gregory of Tours' Histories. Its form, context and significance, in: English Historical Review 122 (2007) 297–317; and in general, Nelson, Bad Kingship.

[23] Janet L. Nelson, A tale of two princes: politics, text and ideology in a Carolingian annal, in: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History 10 (1988) 105–141, at 132, repr. in: ead., Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe (Variorum Collected Studies Series 657, Aldershot/Brookfield 1999) 105–141, at 132; ead., Monks, secular men and masculinity c. 900, in: Masculinity in Medieval Europe, ed. Dawn M. Hadley (London 1999) 121–142; Patrick Wormald, The Times of Bede. Studies in Early English Christian Society, ed. Stephen Baxter (Oxford 2006) 169–207; see also Martin Heinzelmann, 'Adel' und 'Societas sanctorum': Soziale Ordnungen und christliches Weltbild von Augustinus bis zu Gregor von Tours, in: Nobilitas. Funktionen und Repräsentation des Adels in Alteuropa, ed. Otto Gerhard Oexle/Werner Paravicini (Göttingen 1997) 216–256.

Gregory's world of the *rector* where "no radical distinction is to be drawn between ruling in the two spheres"[24]. But if we can generalise and say that the political world that was built in the early medieval west was one where the ruler was a *rector* and where the *ecclesia* mapped on to the *regnum* this did not cause all tensions inherent in Christian rulership to dissolve. What this meant, in ideal terms, for a kingdom such as the Carolingian realm, which will be our concern here, has been helpfully expressed by Nikolaus Staubach: "there was no area of legitimate statehood ('Staatlichkeit') independent of the church and no secular purpose of the state, but merely a division of ecclesiastical and secular offices and functions which were bound in close co-operation."[25] Looking back on this period, Otto of Freising saw, with Augustine, not two cities but one: *civitas permixta*.[26] But in this world of overlapping spheres there could be tensions and clashes as well as co-operation between office-holders. Some of these tensions turned on the forms of institutionalisation of Christianity in the west though we should not seek to apply here a caricature of Gelasius' famous formulation.[27] Examining these tensions can help us understand the nature of the Carolingian state as they reveal much about the "specialization of governmental roles", "the concept of public power" and the "resources for rulers", to cite some of Chris Wickham's parameters for state definition. But they can also reveal some of the fundamental tensions and contradictions within a system of Christian power and authority that can seem all too coherent in, say, the pronouncements of the capitularies and synodal proceedings.[28]

A good way of looking at all this is to consider clashes between rulers and bishops. Bishops and rulers experienced some tensions even as the church settled into the institutions of the Roman Empire, and there is an exciting series of clashes from Ambrose to Gregory VII and indeed beyond, but here I can only focus on some Carolingian bishops in trouble as a preliminary sketch for a larger study.[29] Bishops regularly got into trouble with Frankish rulers, as seen in some spectacular cases from Gregory of Tours' time and later. As Paul Fouracre has shown, the grisly fate of some 18 bishops in the period 580–754, murdered or executed, was not repeated in the Carolingian world where rulers had now "introduced a taboo where before there had not been one" and these rulers became "bound by their own rules and … a genuine sense of rhetoric that they had helped to foster"[30]. This means, incidentally, that the killing of Fulk of Reims in 900 was certainly a sign that the whole political order was in crisis.[31] If Carolingian rulers did not have bishops killed they still clashed with them. Some ten

[24] Robert A. Markus, The Latin Fathers, in: Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c. 350–c. 1450, ed. James H. Burns (Cambridge 1988) 92–122, at 106, 120, repr. with same pagination in: Robert A. Markus, Sacred and Secular. Studies on Augustine and Latin Christianity (Aldershot/Brookfield 1994); see his equally invaluable Saeculum. History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine (Cambridge [2]1988).

[25] Nikolaus Staubach, Der König als membrum diaboli? Augustinrezeption in der Publizistik des Investiturstreits, in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 33 (1999) 108–124, at 109–110.

[26] Otto of Freising, Chronica sive historia de duabus civitatibus, Prologue V and Prologue VII (ed. Adolf Hofmeister, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [45], Hannover/Leipzig 1912) 228, 308–310; Augustine, De civitate Dei I, 35 (ed. Bernard Dombert/Alphons Kalb, CC SL 47, Turnhout 1955) 33–34; Staubach, König 120–124; Markus, Latin Fathers 106.

[27] Markus, Latin Fathers 102, for Gelasius in late Roman context. For Carolingian understanding of Gelasius, Mayke de Jong, Ecclesia and the early medieval polity, in: Staat im frühen Mittelalter, ed. Stuart Airlie/Walter Pohl/Helmut Reimitz (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 11, Wien 2006) 113–132, at 129–130; and Steffen Patzold, Die Bischöfe im karolingischen Staat, in: Staat im frühen Mittelalter, ed. Stuart Airlie/Walter Pohl/Helmut Reimitz (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 11, Wien 2006) 133–162, at 142–143.

[28] Wickham, Early Middle Ages 57; for thoughtful recent consideration of 'church' and 'state' see De Jong, Ecclesia and the early medieval polity.

[29] On bishops, holy men and parrhesia in the later Roman Empire, Claudia Rapp, Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London 2005) 260–273; on bishops, rulers and penance; Rudolf Schieffer, Von Mailand nach Canossa. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der christlichen Herrscherbuße von Theodosius d. Gr. bis zu Heinrich IV., in: Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters 28 (1972) 330–370; Mayke de Jong, The Penitential State. Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840 (Cambridge 2009), will shed a flood of light on this subject. On the Carolingian episcopate, Patzold, Bischöfe, and De Jong, Ecclesia.

[30] Paul Fouracre, Why were so many bishops killed in Merovingian Francia?, in: Bischofsmord im Mittelalter. Murder of Bishops, ed. Natalie Fryde/Dirk Reitz (Veröffentlichungen des Max-Planck-Instituts für Geschichte 191, Göttingen 2003) 13–35, at 33; Heinzelmann, Gregory of Tours 45–48, 181–191.

[31] Airlie, Élites 428–229; on the killing of bishops as symptomatic of deepening crisis in the Salian Reich, Reuter, Medieval Polities 370.

bishops suffered exile or loss of office in the reign of Louis the Pious, so we have plenty of cases to work on.[32]

Rulers did not always have to go through the process of having a bishop deposed in order to punish him. We know that in the 790s the bishop of Verdun lost *honores* and Charlemagne's favour, but he does not seem to have lost his office as bishop. It was the king alone who restored *honores* and *honor* to the bishop at Frankfurt in 794.[33] The bishop of Troyes was driven into exile in the 830s, but he may not have been deprived of his office.[34]

But the surest way to get rid of a bishop was to have him deposed. The ruler could not do this on his own any more than he could get rid of secular aristocrats on his own. For them the ruler needed an assembly and the collective judgement of the Franks. But bishops were deposed by the "just judgement of bishops", as Thegan of Trier put it.[35] Thus Theodulf of Orleans was deposed "by synodal decree" in 818, and when Charles the Bald wanted to punish the archbishop of Sens in 859, his bishops were happy to fall in line behind the king but they were also keen to see that proper procedure was followed, and that procedure was to be their business.[36] In 885, when Charles the Fat rashly planned "to depose certain bishops" on his own initiative, a chronicler judged him to be acting "unreasonably" (*inrationabiliter*). Kings could not get at bishops directly, a point emphasised in Pseudo-Isidore.[37]

But the barriers surrounding bishops were not watertight. Nor was it simply political circumstances or power politics that gave rulers leverage over bishops. Of course such factors were important and it was probably a recognition of hard political realities that lay behind pope Sergius' refusal to support either Ebbo or the former archbishop of Narbonne in their attempts to regain office. (The fact that we know almost nothing of the circumstances of the deposition of the archbishop of Narbonne is a sharp reminder of the limitations of our evidence).[38] Procedures for investigating and judging bishops were not entirely under the control of bishops (or popes) alone. Charles the Bald's fulminations against the disloyal archbishop of Sens were unleashed at a synod held in Savonnières in 859 where the assembled bishops of twelve provinces all worried about this case as part of their general concern to restore "the episcopal order". But their concerns over the archbishop evaporated when he made his own peace with the king later that year: "Wenilo of Sens was reconciled to the king without any episcopal hearing", wrote the bishop of Troyes and this meant that the case was dropped.[39]

Nor were procedures absolutely clear-cut. Louis the Pious' fury against Archbishop Agobard of Lyon was not to be thwarted by the fact that Agobard shrewdly failed to turn up at the assembly of Thionville in 835 where he had been scheduled to take his punishment. Agobard was absent but was

[32] Agobard of Lyon, Bartholomew of Narbonne, Barnard of Vienne, Ebbo of Reims, Elias of Troyes, Herbold of Auxerre, Hildemann of Beauvais, Jesse of Amiens, on whom see Egon Boshof, Erzbischof Agobard von Lyon (Köln 1969) 256–257, 260–263; and for Anselm of Milan, Theodulf of Orleans and Wolfold of Cremona, see Annales regni Francorum aa. 817, 818 (ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [6], Hannover 1895) 148.

[33] Synodus Franconofurtensis 9 (ed. Alfred Boretius, MGH LL Capitularia regum Francorum 1, Hannover 1883/repr. 1984) 73–78, at 75.

[34] The Astronomer simply calls him bishop while referring to Jesse of Amiens as 'former (*olim*) bishop', Astronomer, Vita Hludowici imperatoris 56 (ed. Ernst Tremp, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. 64, Hannover 1995) 53–155, 279–555, at 512; on Jesse's ups and downs, Philippe Depreux, Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux, 781–840 (Sigmaringen 1997) 408.

[35] Thegan, Gesta Hludowici 37 (ed. Ernst Tremp, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [54], Hannover 1995) 1–52, 168–277, at 236; on assemblies and synods, see below.

[36] Annales regni Francorum a. 818, ed. Kurze 148; for the procedure of 859, see the proceedings of the Council of Savonnières, ed. Hartmann 447–489.

[37] Annales Fuldenses a. 885 (ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [7], Hannover 1891) 103; Simon MacLean, Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century. Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire (Cambridge 2003) 211. On Pseudo-Isidore's connections with the storms experienced by bishops under Louis the Pious, see Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, Auf Pseudoisidors Spur oder: Versuch, einen dichten Schleier zu lüften, in: Fortschritt durch Fälschungen? Ursprung, Gestalt und Wirkungen der pseudoisidorischen Fälschungen, ed. Wilfried Hartmann/Gerhard Schmitz (MGH Studien und Texte 31, Hannover 2002) 1–28. For Pseudo-Isidore see now the invaluable collection of material and information at http://www.pseudoisidor.mgh.de (30th June 2009).

[38] Boshof, Erzbischof Agobard 261.

[39] Council of Savonnières, ed. Hartmann 469; Annales Bertiniani a. 859 (ed. Félix Grat/Jeanne Vieillard/Suzanne Clémencet, Paris 1964) 82; Annals of St-Bertin (trans. Janet L. Nelson, Manchester/New York 1991) 91, my emphasis.

duly removed from office: *ab ecclesie semotus est praesulatu*.[40] But even after this, the Agobard case, together with that of the archbishop of Vienne, stubbornly remained on Louis' agenda as unfinished business to be dealt with at another assembly later that year and this time, because the two prelates were absent, the case seems to have been shelved: *res inperfecta remansit propter absentiam ... episcoporum*. Agobard was certainly in trouble, but the majestic machinery of ecclesiastical justice was not emitting clear signals here. This was probably because Louis the Pious was keen to find some wiggle room, i.e. not to burn all bridges with Lothar, Agobard's erstwhile patron.[41] But what is also obvious in the Agobard case is that ecclesiastical verdicts and procedures could be unclear. This being so, some contemporaries could understand that the will and action of the ruler were not merely *force majeure* but a positive aspect of rulership. It is a later archbishop of Vienne (Ado) who tells us that these archbishops returned to their sees "due to the actions of the pious emperors" (*piis imperatoribus agentibus ... Agobardus sedem recepit*).[42] It is the emperors who restore bishops and their action thus appears here in the representation of good rulership but the same could also be said, at times, of the ruler's actions in deposing bishops. Let us return to the deposition of Theodulf of Orléans. The Annales regni Francorum say that he was deposed "by synodal decree". But this phrase appears within a bloc of text where the active figure is the emperor. Rebellious magnates are "condemned by the judgement of the Franks" but it is the emperor who orders their blinding; bishops such as Theodulf are "deposed by synodal decree" but it is the emperor who orders them to be handed over to monasteries just as he commands others to be exiled or tonsured. It is the emperor who directs the purge.[43] It may not be all that great a step from this to the surprisingly explicit proclamation of a good ruler's authority to strike down a manifestly bad bishop. We find this in East Francia in the 880s, in Notker's Gesta Karoli, where Charlemagne, disappointed by a bishop's party animal behaviour, abruptly dismisses him from office: *divino et meo iudicio careat episcopatu*. Simon MacLean has rightly concluded that not all of Charles the Fat's contemporaries thought that his plans to depose bishops in 885 were "unreasonable"[44].

All this does not mean that Carolingian kings were trying to control 'the Church'. Rather, as Mayke de Jong has put it recently, the Carolingian *ecclesia*, in its broad sense of the Christian people led by Carolingian kings, "yielded clear channels of command which in turn enabled the king to gain access to the resources of the sacred". But such channels, as we have just seen, were not always clear; that is to say, there were changes, shifts and clashes over them during the Carolingian period. Mayke de Jong herself contrasts Paulinus of Aquileia's view of Charlemagne as *rex et sacerdos*, that is, "the ascribing of episcopal qualities to the anointed ruler", with the later view of Hincmar of Reims that "only Christ himself was both king and priest"[45]. When Carolingian kings moved in on episcopal privilege this was not necessarily because they wished to control bishops. Matters were not always heated. After all, it was the king's responsibility for the spiritual and moral welfare of his people that led Charles the Bald, in a case spotted by Janet L. Nelson, to remove "a bad [i.e., mentally ill] bishop by royal administrative action" in the 850s.[46]

But clashes between kings and bishops can reveal the formers' perception of bishops' place in a greater whole, the right order in the *regnum*. Here we may return for a moment to Charles the Bald's 859 charges against the archbishop of Sens. One striking feature of this tirade is the explicit, and casual, reference to the fact that he, Charles, had appointed Wenilo ("I committed it to Wenilo who was then serving as my clerk in my chapel"); Charles was probably about 15 when he did so.[47] Bishops

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40 Astronomer, Vita Hludowici imperatoris 54, ed Tremp 502; Boshof, Erzbischof Agobard 261ff.

41 Astronomer, Vita Hludowici imperatoris 57, ed. Tremp 518; Boshof, Erzbischof Agobard 265.

42 Ado of Vienne, Chronicon 135; Boshof, Erzbischof Agobard 304–305.

43 Annales regni Francorum a. 818, ed. Kurze 148.

44 Notker Balbulus, Gesta Karoli magni I, 5 (ed. Hans F. Haefele, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. NS 12, Berlin 1959) 9; MacLean, Kingship 210–212.

45 Mayke de Jong, Charlemagne's church, in: Charlemagne. Empire and Society, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester/New York 2005) 103–135, at 111. Charlemagne. Empire and Society, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester/New York 2005).

46 Nelson, Bad Kingship 21.

47 Council of Savonnières, ed. Hartmann 464; Janet L. Nelson, Charles the Bald (Harlow 1992) 96.

were not born such and this was a key aspect of ninth-century episcopal self-perception.[48] Charles' own bishops agreed with him that Wenilo had sworn oaths to him but Charles was also angry that Wenilo, during his period of defection, had trespassed on the royal sphere. He had plundered the walls of Melun as a source for stone; this sort of quarrying was *ius regia*.[49] Furthermore, Wenilo had dared to "celebrate public masses for Louis [the German] in my palace of Attigny" (He had thus celebrated mass in another archbishop's province). Interestingly, Charles' bishops don't seem to have made much of this accusation but it obviously mattered to Charles. Wenilo had hardly matched the outrages committed by rebels on the palace at Pavia in 1024 but, as a palace, Attigny functioned as a symbol and instrument of Charles' authority. It was a sensitive organ and damage done to it alerted kings, and others, that authority was being challenged.[50]

If clashes between kings and bishops generated heat for contemporaries, they can generate light for us, by illuminating the structures and apparatus of rule, the skeleton of the public world and also its fractures. In this light, we can see that the palace could cast a shadow over troubled bishops such as Hincmar of Laon in the 860s and 870s as he attempted to assert what he saw as his rights in the face of pressure from his king and his archbishop. For him, the palace could be a rather sinister place precisely because it was such a potent venue of royal authority: *per bannum regium omnes mei homines in palatio retenti fuerant*.[51] No wonder that Hincmar of Laon himself fled the palace of Attigny by night, but this simply served to bring down the royal wrath upon his head. To flee the palace, where, as the king pointed out in his accusation, the bishops of ten provinces were gathered, was to improperly abandon the site where public authority was being collectively performed.[52]

In the increasingly bitter disputes between the king and the bishop of Laon, disputes that went beyond arguments over church property and erupted in treason charges against the bishop, the collectivity of bishops gathered at Douzy in 871 basically agreed with Charles the Bald. They shared his outrage that the bishop of Laon had not kept his oath to the king and they went on to refer to the perjury of Herod as well as to Roman law's penalties for *seditio*. Harping on about the bishop's oath to the king, they spelled out that paying *tributum* to Caesar was right and proper and that Christ had taught bishops by his example to honour and obey the king; "every soul is to be subject to the higher powers".[53]

Hincmar of Laon paid a heavy price for his political miscalculations and for provoking the king's anger: he was deposed and eventually blinded by one of the king's most trusted followers. But it turned out to be difficult for even the most determined ruler to make a bishop disappear entirely. Hincmar of Laon still had supporters who argued that his deposition had been unlawful and, after Charles' death, he was eventually permitted to make an appearance, as the ghost of his own episcopal career, at the synod of Troyes in 878 and there to pronounce a public benediction.[54] Hincmar's sheer survival

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[48] Steffen Patzold, Redéfinir l'office Épiscopal: les évêques francs face à la crise des années 820–830, in: Les élites au haut Moyen Âge. Crises et renouvellements, ed. François Bougard/Laurent Feller/Régine Le Jan (Collection Haut Moyen Âge 1, Turnhout 2006) 337–359, at 347–358.

[49] Council of Savonnières, ed. Hartmann 467, 469.

[50] Council of Savonnières, ed. Hartmann 466; on Attigny, see Josiane Barbier, Palais et fisc à l'époque carolingienne: Attigny, in: Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes 140 (1982) 133–162; on the palace's place in the system of Carolingian authority, Stuart Airlie, The palace of memory: the Carolingian court as political centre, in: Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe, ed. Sarah Rees Jones/Richard Marks/Alastair J. Minnis (York 2000) 1–20.

[51] Hincmar of Laon, Rotulus Prolixus (ed. Rudolf Schieffer, MGH LL Concilia 4, 2, Hannover 2003) 368; Peter R. McKeon, Hincmar of Laon and Carolingian Politics (Urbana/Chicago/London 1978), remains valuable but a flood of new light is shed on Hincmar of Laon's case in Charles West, Upper Lotharingia and Champagne c. 850 to c. 1000 (PhD thesis Cambridge 2007).

[52] Synod of Douzy 5 (871 August 5–September 6) (ed. Wilfried Hartmann, MGH LL Concilia 4, Hannover 1998) 418–419.

[53] Synod of Douzy 2, 3 and 10, ed. Hartmann 488, 489 and 498–99; for the king's own view of his authority here, Janet L. Nelson, 'Not bishops' bailiffs but lords of the earth': Charles the Bald and the problem of sovereignty, in: The Church and Sovereignity. Essays in Honour of Michael Wilks, ed. Diana Wood (Oxford 1991) 23–34.

[54] Annales Vedastini a. 878 (ed. Bernhard von Simson, MGH SS. rer. Germ. in us. schol. [12], Hannover/Leipzig 1909) 40–82, at 43; Annales Bertiniani a. 878, ed. Grat/Vieillard/Clémencet 229; for Hincmar of Laon's own vivid account of the pressures piled on him at Douzy by the king and the archbishop of Reims and his subsequent exile, experienced by him as imprisonment, not penance, see his letter for Pope John VIII, edited as 101 of John's letters, in: Registrum Iohannis

made his case more complicated for his opponents. In some cases bishops who had fallen foul of the ruler simply ran out of time. Jesse of Amiens and Elias of Troyes, punished in 834 for their role in the revolt against Louis the Pious, died in exile in 836 and thus had no chance of inconveniencing their successors as Hincmar of Laon was to do.[55] But the bishop whose fall from grace was the most spectacular one of the entire ninth century managed to outlive his persecutor and to stage a return to office with the claim that his identity as bishop had only been suspended, not extinguished. This was the case of archbishop Ebbo of Reims. Ebbo's case is a complex one, not least because the dossier of evidence on his career has problematic aspects.[56]

This case deserves extended comment, but here I can only use it to shed some suggestive light on the fault-lines of kingly and episcopal authority in the crisis years of the 830s and early 840s. Ebbo's career and fate are well known: a close associate of the emperor, but he turned against him in 833 and then had the misfortune to be caught by Louis' supporters as the tide turned back in Louis' favour, Ebbo was the fall guy as other former rebels distanced themselves from their actions. His trial took place in 835 at a synod held, interestingly enough, at a palace (Thionville) but, as Mayke de Jong has reminded us, gatherings convened by kings could be seen as synods rather than mere assemblies, while synods had a regnal character and Louis' palaces were of course sacred.[57] The accusations against Ebbo were made by the emperor himself and they focused on his unjust deposition of Louis in 833.[58] Looking back from the tenth century, Flodoard summed it all up as simple *infidelitas*.[59] There was, however, a discrepancy, a disjuncture, between these accusations and the substance of Ebbo's admission of his own guilt at Thionville; at this stage the ground became purely episcopal and pastoral as it was an un-named sin that made Ebbo unworthy to hold office.[60] But even with Ebbo's resignation of Reims as an episcopal matter, the emperor had to be satisfied and informed: the bishops relayed Ebbo's self-condemnation to Louis.[61] Further, Louis the Pious continued to keep Ebbo subject to chilly scrutiny; he sent one of his hard men, count Adalbert of Metz, to check that Ebbo was under sufficiently close watch at Fulda, and then he moved Ebbo further west to ever more secure locations, into what was planned to be the kingdom for his son Charles far from any potential sphere of influence of Lothar or other supporters of Ebbo. Louis was in charge throughout and he meant for Ebbo to disappear.[62]

VIII. papae 101 (ed. Erich Casper, MGH EE Karolini aevi 5, Berlin 1928) 1–272, at 94–95; McKeon, Hincmar of Laon 156–164 .

55 Astronomer, Vita Hludowici imperatoris 56, ed. Tremp 512.

56 There is a lucid brief account of Ebbo's career in Hans Goetting, Die Hildesheimer Bischöfe von 815 bis 1221/1227 (Germania Sacra, NF 20, Bistum Hildesheim 3, Berlin/New York 1984) 56–84; see also Depreux, Prosopographie 169–174. Some sense of the problems of diverse sources, echoes of lost sources etc. for Ebbo's deposition and restoration can be caught in contemplating the full account of events composed in the tenth century by Flodoard of Reims, Historia Remensis Ecclesiae II, 20 (ed. Martina Stratmann, MGH SS 36, Hannover 1998) 183–189; Michel Sot, Un historien et son église. Flodoard de Reims (Paris 1993) 478–84. I hope to return to Ebbo's case more fully elsewhere.

57 Annales Bertiniani a. 835, ed. Grat/Vieillard/Clémencet 15–17; De Jong, Ecclesia 124–129. On the significance of the date chosen for the assembly's opening, the feast of the purification of the Virgin (2nd February), see Daniel Eichler, Fränkische Reichsversammlungen unter Ludwig dem Frommen (MGH Studien und Texte 45, Hannover 2007) 72.

58 Louis' key role in not only summoning the assembly but launching the accusations against Ebbo is depicted very clearly in Astronomer, Vita Hludowici imperatoris 54, ed. Tremp 500, regarded by Tremp as an eye-witness, see his introduction ibid. 65 n. 197; see also Annales Bertiniani a. 835 ed. Grat/Vieillard/Clémencet 15; later sources vividly evoke an atmosphere of pressure and fear at the assembly; see the material gathered together as Concilium ad Theodonis-Villam congregatum (ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH LL Concilia 2, 2, Hannover/Leipzig 1906) 696–703, and see below.

59 Flodoard of Reims, Historia Remensis Ecclesiae II, 20, ed. Stratmann 183.

60 This comes from the later testimony of bishop Thierry/Theodericus of Cambrai, transmitted in a text of Hincmar of Reims, see appendix to the 853 council of Soissons, Libellus Theoderici Cameracensis (ed. Wilfried Hartmann, MGH LL Concilia 3, Hannover 1984) 290–293; Jean Devisse, Hincmar, archevêque de Reims 845–882, 3 vols. (Genève 1976) 1, 75–76. Earlier testimony is less explicit but points in the same direction, Annales Bertiniani a. 835, ed. Grat/Vieillard/Clémencet 17; and Astronomer, Vita Hludowici imperatoris 54, ed. Tremp 502.

61 Astronomer, Vita Hludowici imperatoris 54, ed. Tremp 502: *quod et episcopis et per eos imperatori contradidit.*

62 Adalbert's visit to Fulda: Epistolarum Fuldensium fragmenta 13 (ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH EE 5, Berlin 1928) 517–533, at 520; on this and Ebbo's journey into the west, Goetting, Hildesheimer Bischöfe 68.

But Louis was not simply vindictive here; he was nervous. Ebbo had not been sent to a state prison and this was not just because, since there were no such prisons at this period, there was an institutional gap in the ruler's arsenal. There was also a conceptual gap as people could see figures such as Ebbo as undergoing penance, not simple imprisonment.[63] And this was something that Louis could not fully control. Even some of Ebbo's 'jailers' seem to have been lobbying for an end to his punishment/penance.[64] When the political circumstances changed with Louis' death in 840, Ebbo and his supporters could use the concept of penance as a wedge to be driven into the case against him and to split it apart. This was done at an assembly at Ingelheim and presided over by Lothar, the new emperor and a supporter of Ebbo. First of all, as Lothar said, the angels were known to rejoice over penitent sinners and Christ did not say that everyone who humbles himself will be condemned; rather, they will be exalted.[65] Secondly, the old emperor had misused his power. Ebbo now claimed that he had been *compulsus ad tribunal palatium, non ad synodalem sanctorum conventum*, a charge still echoed by his supporters years later. He and his supporters also evoked the terrifying atmosphere generated by Louis' anger *(raptus a propria sede principum indignatione violenti; diu nimiis terroribus maceratus*). Lay people of both sexes had been forced into monastic penance by merely the *moderna … auctoritas palatina*.[66] But Ebbo and his supporters were not against the role of emperors and palaces as such. It was the emperor Lothar who restored Ebbo to Reims *per edictum imperiale* and he did so at a synod, summoned by proper authority, held – where else? – at Ingelheim, *palatium publicum*.[67]

Mayke de Jong's wonderfully appropriate and evocative label for all this is "the penitential state". But, as we have seen, such a structure was shot through with all sorts of tensions and unresolved disputes. These ninth-century cases were not simple examples of *regnum* versus *sacerdotium* but they highlighted the extents and limits of the authority and status of royal and episcopal office-holders in the Carolingian world and this, as well as the urgent agenda of power politics, troubled contemporaries. This ninth-century picture was one of complexities and tensions. It is instructive to observe how that picture was later simplified, its complexities flattened out from the distant perspective of the late tenth century. The trial of archbishop Arnulf of Reims in 991 took place in a post-Carolingian world, in every sense. In 989 the archbishop had handed over his city of Reims to his Carolingian kinsman Charles of Lorraine, in defiance of his oath to the king, Hugh Capet. All this was part of the final drama of the extinguishing of Carolingian kingship. This last flickering of the Carolingian line was soon snuffed out; the new Capetian dynasty prevailed and the archbishop of Reims was to pay the price. A council was held in 991 at the abbey of Saint-Basle, attended by the bishops of the realm and by Hugh Capet and his son. For the bishop of Orléans, acting as chief prosecutor, the Arnulf case was very clear: he was accused of being a *proditor*, of *crimen regiae maiestatis*; the bishop of Orleans claimed that these were the very things that had cost two previous archbishops of Reims their office: Egidius (under Chilperic) and Ebbo.[68] But, as we have seen, the Ebbo case had been more complex than that (and indeed the case of Arnulf of Reims turned out to be not so simple). The ninth-century clashes between kings and bishops did not produce clear definitions of authority and we might recall that even the great high medieval conflicts between *sacerdotium* and *regnum* did not always produce formulae

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63 Mayke de Jong, Monastic prisoners or opting out? Political coercion in the Frankish kingdom, in: Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages, ed. ead./Frans Theuws/Carine van Rhijn (The Transformation of the Roman World 6, Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001) 291–328.

64 Epistolarum Fuldensium Fragmenta 13 and 14, ed. Dümmler 520–521; Goetting, Hildesheimer Bischöfe 68.

65 Concilium Ingelheimense (ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH LL Concilia 2, 2, Hannover 1908) 792.

66 See Ebbo's Apologeticum, edited as an appendix to the proceedings of Ingelheim, Concilium Ingelheimense, ed. Werminghoff 795, 798; and the Narratio clericorum Remensium (ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH LL Concilia 2, 2, Hannover 1908) 807–808; Goetting, Hildesheimer Bischöfe 68.

67 Concilium Ingelheimense, ed. Werminghoff 792. But some people thought that bishops such as Ebbo spent too much of their time at the palace, Flodoard of Reims, Historia Remensis Ecclesiae II, 19, ed. Stratmann 182–183.

68 The council's debates were written up by Gerbertus, Acta Concilii Remensis ad sanctum Basolum 2 and 28 (ed. Georg Pertz, MGH SS 3, Hannover 1839) 658–686, at 660 and 675; Pierre Riché, Gerbert d'Aurillac. Le pape de l'an mil (Paris 1987) 126–136; Geoffrey Koziol, Begging Pardon and Favor. Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France (Ithaca/London 1992) 1–4; Jason Glenn, Politics and History in the Tenth Century. The World and Work of Richer of Rheims (Cambridge 2004) 89–109. The dynastic conflict angle is highlighted by Volkhard Huth, Erzbischof Arnulf von Reims und der Kampf um das Königtum im Westfrankenreich, in: Francia 21/1 (1994) 85–124.

that isolated state features as such. But, in their settings – palaces, monastic prisons, assemblies – and in their performance, including their generation of copious documentation, these ninth-century cases help us to chart a clear profile of public authority of the period, even if aspects of that authority appear more riven by tensions than has been thought by historians or was welcome to contemporaries.

III.

We have looked at some clashes between Carolingian rulers and bishops and we have done so mainly from the perspective of the ruler. But was there a perspective in which the ruler's earthly powers looked all too disturbing? For the late Antique and early medieval period such an angle might be provided by the holy man (or woman). But in the early medieval west there was not much room for mavericks. The Carolingian system of institutionalised holiness seems to have been particularly tightly bound.[69] It is hard to imagine a Carolingian parallel to the encounter between Otto III and Saint Nilus.[70] Carolingian rulers, and their bishops, did not look upon unlicensed holy men with any favour; Boniface was not alone in his suspicious condemnation of Aldebert in the 740s.[71] But one might be tempted to think of Boniface, with his criticisms of the Frankish episcopate and above all in his unease about the palace, as a bit of a holy man himself. This, however, should be resisted; encounters of 'establishment' holy men and women with the Carolingian court could in fact result in the articulation of support for, the acceptance of the public order.[72] Texts were certainly written in the Carolingian period about the clashes between rulers and holy men but they looked back to an older period. They can, however, highlight and reveal features of contemporary state apparatus and conceptualisation of authority. Hincmar's Vita Remigii, for example, has much to say on the arrogance of royal servants and administrators such as foresters of Louis the Pious.[73] Were such clashes always in the past? More specifically, did hagiographers feel no twinges of unease at the contact between holy abbot and pious ruler?

I take three examples from texts whose richness can only be hinted at here, texts all written around roughly the same time (the 820s) and dealing with the same sort of (unusual) figure: a holy man at court: Alcuin, Benedict of Aniane and Adalhard of Corbie. These texts thus stem from the reign of Louis the Pious but they were written before the great crisis of his reign. They tell the story of holy men who had regular encounters with the ruler; none of these men were a bishop. How did the authors of these texts think through their heroes' encounter with Carolingian rulers?[74] All three texts take a positive view of the public order. They signal clearly that that order has an ethnic dimension. The Vita Alcuini celebrates Francia as a kingdom upon which God has showered earthly and spiritual glories;

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[69] Paul Fouracre, The origins of the Carolingian attempt to regulate the cult of saints, in: The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. Essays on the Contribution of Peter Brown, ed. James Howard-Johnston/Paul Antony Hayward (Oxford 1999) 143–165, at 163–164.

[70] Jean-Marie Sansterre, Otton III et les saints ascètes de son temps, in: Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia 43 (1989) 377–412, at 390–395.

[71] Brown, Western Christendom 412–423; Patrick J. Geary, Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages (Ithaca/London 1994) 180–181.

[72] Stuart Airlie, The Frankish aristocracy as supporters and opponents of Boniface, in: Bonifatius – Leben und Nachwirken. Die Gestaltung des christlichen Europa im Frühmittelalter, ed. Franz J. Felten/Jörg Jarnut/Lutz von Padberg (Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Mittelrheinischen Kirchengeschichte 121, Mainz 2007) 255–269, at 260–266; one can also see Leoba's career from this angle.

[73] Hincmar of Reims, Vita Remigii 27 (ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov. 3, Hannnover 1896) 239–341, at 323.

[74] Connections among these figures and their Vitae have been noted before this. Vita Alcuini (ed. Wilhelm Arndt, MGH SS 15, 1, Hannover 1887) 182–197, written by Sigulf of Ferrières between 821 and 829; see Donald Bullough, Alcuin. Achievement and Reputation (Leiden/Boston 2004) 21–22, 27–33. Ardo, Vita Benedicti abbatis Anianensis et Indensis (ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS 15, 1, Hannover 1887) 198–220; on dating and authorship, Pierre Bonnerue's introduction to Ardon, Vie de Benoît d'Aniane (Bégrolles en Mauge 2001) 17–43. Paschasius Radbertus, Vita Sancti Adalhardi Corbiensis Abbatis, PL 120, 1507–1556, with an English translation by Allen Cabaniss, Charlemagne's Cousins (Syracuse 1967); Brigitte Kasten, Adalhard von Corbie (Düsseldorf 1986); on Radbertus' creative use of models and his text's stylistic contrast with the lives of Alcuin and Benedict, see David Ganz, Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance (Sigmaringen 1990) 103–112. On the court that these holy men experienced see the contributions to Court Culture in the Early Middle Ages, ed. Catherine Cubitt (Turnhout 2003); Depreux, Prosopographie, is also relevant.

the Vita Benedicti highlights its hero's role as an example for Francia, above all in his restoring the Rule of Benedict in the *regnum Francorum*.[75] Radbertus, in his Vita Adalhardi, is thrilled to describe Adalhard as one of the most morally eminent Franks and heralds his role in the moral-political health of the kingdom: *videtur demum novus renasci Francorum ordo*.[76] After all, Adalhard's own family had helped Charlemagne rule the *Francorum imperium* and he was himself related to kings, a point Paschasius stresses almost obsessively.[77] The hereditary dynastic nature of Frankish kingship, a key aspect of Carolingian rule, also appears in all three Vitae.[78] Further, something of the institutional nature of government surfaces in the narratives of the saint's lives: they inhabit a landscape patrolled by royal agents, whose arrival they can predict, and one where news, whether of heresy or of holy deeds, cannot be hidden from the king's ears and where royal orders are issued and obeyed on a regular basis.[79] These holy men attend assemblies, deal with royal documents (even if absent-mindedly in Benedict's case), send texts of spiritual advice to members of the royal family and, in Adalhard's case, administer whole provinces of the empire.[80]

A key site in these texts is the palace. It makes only a brief, though telling, appearance in the Vita Alcuini, as the location where Charlemagne holds a synod to crush heresy, but it is a dominant presence in the other two lives.[81] Both Benedict and Adalhard are brought up at the royal palace; Adalhard's sister lives at the palace; Benedict's monastery is deliberately built as near to the palace as possible.[82] Indeed Ardo, in his preface to the text, says that he will have to polish his literary style since his (monastic) audience lives near the "sacred hall of the palace"[83]. Benedict even starts dying at the palace; his death scene is split between the worlds of the palace, crowded with dignitaries, where he had his own apartment (*mansio*), and of the monastery.[84] And yet not all the aura of the palace is positive. Ardo knows that he has to justify his hero's stays at the palace, which is also seen as a place of tumult and distraction.[85] For Adalhard, the palace's values had at times to be opposed (e.g. when Charlemagne abandoned his marriage to the Lombard princess) as these were the values of 'Pharaoh's kingdom' which he had to resist as John the Baptist had done.[86] For his sister, the palace was a place of carnal temptations, and even her admirable resistance to them could not save her from expulsion from the palace for it was a place of envy and instability.[87] Even Alcuin was disturbed by the ostentatious pride of the royal family, though this was on a visit to his monastery, and proclaimed that "whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself will be exalted". The Bible meant what it said (even if one Carolingian commentary on this passage pointed out that this change in status wouldn't be happening any time soon).[88] Radbertus certainly understood that the representation

[75] Vita Alcuini 8 and 15, ed. Arndt 189–190 and 192–193; Vita Benedicti 36 and 42, ed. Waitz 215–216 and 218–219.

[76] Vita Adalhardi 17, 38 and 52, PL 120, 1517, 1529 and 1535.

[77] Vita Adalhardi 7, 11, 13, 32, 41 and 61, PL 120, 1511–1512, 1514, 1515, 1525–1526, 1530 and 1539.

[78] Vita Alcuini 15, ed. Arndt 193; Vita Benedicti 35, ed. Waitz 215; Vita Adalhardi 30, PL 120, 1523.

[79] Vita Alcuini 10, 14, ed. Arndt 190, 192; Vita Benedicti 18, ed. Waitz 206–208; Vita Adalhardi 12, 13, PL 120, 1515.

[80] Vita Alcuini 10, 21, ed. Arndt 190, 194; Vita Benedicti 18, 35, 36, 39 and 40, ed. Waitz 206–208, 215–216 and 217–218; and see Christina Pössel, Authors and recipients of Carolingian capitularies, 779–829, in: Texts and Identities in the Early Middle Ages, ed. Richard Corradini/Rob Meens/Christina Pössel/Philip Shaw (Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 12, Wien 2006) 253–274, at 267. Vita Adalhardi, 16, 18 and 29, PL 120, 1517, 1518 and 1522; Kasten, Adalhard von Corbie 43–47.

[81] Vita Alcuini 10, ed. Arndt 190.

[82] Vita Benedicti 1, 35, ed. Waitz 215; compare and contrast Ermoldus, Poème sur Louis le Pieux l. 1196–1253 (ed. Edmond Faral, Paris 1932) 94–96. Vita Adalhardi 7, PL 120, 1511, where Adlahard is described as *tiro palatii* while his brother Wala is described later as being a *tiro Christi*, Vita Adalhardi 35, PL 120, 1527; on the sisters, Vita Adalhardi 33, PL 120, 1526–1527.

[83] Vita Benedicti, ed. Waitz 200: *praesertim cum noverim, vos sacrae aulae palacii adsistere foribus*.

[84] Vita Benedicti 42, ed. Waitz 218–219.

[85] Vita Benedicti 35, ed. Waitz 215.

[86] Vita Adalhardi 7, 8, PL 120, 1511–1512; Kasten, Adalhard 24f.

[87] Vita Adalhardi 33, PL 120, 1526–1527; Janet L. Nelson, Gendering courts in the early medieval west, in: Gender in the Early Medieval World. East and West, 300–900, ed. Leslie Brubaker/Julia M.H. Smith (Cambridge 2004) 185–197, at 191.

[88] Vita Alcuini 15, ed. Waitz 193; note Lothar's deployment of this, above n. 65.

of Christian asceticism could include criticism of the ruler and the apparatus and settings of authority.[89]

Of course, such criticism was rare and perhaps it was not all that radical in its critique. After all, the martyrs, who had suffered under really bad rulers, were now the foundations on which the kingdom of the Franks rested, as the brassy fanfares of the Carolingian prologue to Lex Salica proclaimed.[90] And the Frankish kingdom was not alone in having such supports. Even the heretical Lombards could rely on their kingdom being enfolded in the protection of John the Baptist.[91] But, in contemplating the careers of heroic churchmen who had suffered under bad rulers, Carolingian thinkers could see disturbing lessons for their own times (especially under Louis the Pious!). Writing his Life of St Maximin of Trier at the end of the 830s, Lupus marvelled at the way the saint had stood up to the emperors and he contrasted this with the “degenerate behaviour of our own age. Who would now dare to reveal the righteous sternness of the divine commandments to the emperors? Who would reveal their danger to them?”[92] Not everything worked to the glorification of rulers and their world. But in the trials of bishops, the careers of ascetics and the memorialising of the martyrs we can hear a faint music that undercuts the endless melody of the state, something discordant and questioning. We may, if we choose, hear and understand this music as Theodor Adorno, in his austere view of our own culture, understood modern music, that is, “the shocks of incomprehension, emitted by artistic technique in the age of its meaninglessness, undergo a sudden change. They illuminate the meaningless world. … [this music] has taken upon itself all the darkness and guilt of the world. Its fortune lies in the perception of misfortune; all of its beauty lies in denying itself the illusion of beauty. … [this music] is the surviving message of despair from the shipwrecked.”[93]

[89] Vita Adalhardi 36, PL 120, 1528; for Radbertus’ more outspoken criticisms of the palace, etc., in his life of Wala, see David Ganz, The Epitaphium Arsenii and opposition to Louis the Pious, in: Charlemagne’s Heir, ed. Peter Godman/Roger Collins (Oxford 1990) 537–550.

[90] See the D version of the Lex Salica prologue, Lex Salica (ed. Karl August Eckhardt, MGH LL nat. Germ. 4, 2, Hannover 1969) 2–8; but see Mary Garrison, The Franks as a new Israel? Education for an identity from Pippin to Charlemagne, in: The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages, ed. Yitzhak Hen/Matthew Innes (Cambridge 2000) 114–161, at 129–134.

[91] Paulus Diaconus, Historia Langobardorum IV, 47; V, 6, ed. Waitz 171–172; 186–187; Walter Pohl, Memory, identity and power in Lombard Italy, in: The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages, ed. Yitzhak Hen/Matthew Innes (Cambridge 2000) 9–28, at 18, 20.

[92] Lupus of Ferrières, Vita Maximini Episcopi Treverensis 5 (ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH SS rer. Merov. 3, Hannover 1896) 71–86, 76. Sulpicius Severus was already worried about bishops of his time having the nerve to stand up to an emperor, Vita Martini 20, 1, ed. Fontaine 1, 294–298; Clare Stancliffe, St Martin and His Hagiographer. History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus (Oxford 1983) 190.

[93] Theodor Adorno, Philosophy of Modern Music, trans. Anne G. Mitchell/Wesley Blomster (New York 1973) 131, 133; the translation of the last phrase is a rather free rendering of Adorno’s “Die wahre Flaschenpost” (id., Die wahre Flaschenpost [Philosphie der neuen Musik, Frankfurt am Main 1958] 126), but makes the intensity of the image explicit and is accepted without comment by Martin Jay, Adorno (London 1984) 153, and Edward W. Said, Musical Elaborations (London 1991) 13–14. This paper grew from the meetings held by the Staat und Staatlichkeit group to whom I am very grateful. I am indebted to Julia M.H. Smith and Ian N. Wood for critical advice on a draft of this text.