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The Church, State, and Literature of Carolingian France

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of History

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in History

by

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August 2016

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Keywords: Boniface, Church, *Speculum Principum*, Louis the Pious.

ABSTRACT

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by

Steffan Geiter

This thesis examines the eighth century rise in power of the Carolingian Church and the Carolingian dynasty through an early promise of religious revival, monarchical revival, and increased Papal power. Such aims gained the Carolingians a powerful in the Church. Aided by Boniface (672-754 AD) and the Church, the Carolingians replaced the Merovingians in Francia. In conjunction with this revival, Church scholars dictated a reformation of kingship in treatises called the *Speculum Principum*. A king's position became tremulous when they strayed from these rules, as it betrayed their alliance. Ultimately, Louis the Pious (778-840 AD) faced deposition after they disagreed on his appointments and adherence to the ideologies of the *Speculum Principum*.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

The study of the Carolingians can sometimes be daunting based on the vast amount of sources, different languages used in the secondary sources, and the numerous arguments presented. That being said, this work looks at the way the church influenced the monarchy, specifically through the use of the *Speculum Principum*, followed with a chapter viewing if those ideas made an impact upon King Louis the Pious. The Carolingians were a product of their own demise. By gifting too much power to the church, they enabled themselves to fall by the power they granted.

The Carolingian roots began in the city of Metz in Germany with the marriage between Arnulf and Pippin the Elder's children. They slowly emerged as the leading family in the Merovingian Kingdom¹. A failed coup by the son of Pippin led to both his execution and that of his son, who he placed on the throne. The family line then descended down from Arnulf's family through Pippin of Herstal. His bastard son, Charles Martel ousted his brothers and nephew to claim the position of *Mayor of the Palace*² for both Neustria and Austrasia.³ He divided his position between his two sons, Carloman and Pippin the Short when he died. Pippin became king of France after deposing the Merovingian king and his older brothers abdication. He ruled for many years before dividing his kingdom between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. Charles

¹ The Merovingians descended from Clovis, who united all of Gaul under his rule in the late fifth and early sixth century.

² The *Mayor of the Palace* was a political position that became hereditary among the Pippinids, but originally meant second in command of that kingdom, although they usually held all the power in that territory.

³ Neustria refers to the areas generally considered France while Austrasia, the Frankish heartland, was eastern France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and portions of Germany.

became king over the entire kingdom with the death of his brother and became Emperor in 800. After his death, the Carolingians appeared to have a extremely powerful kingdom established. Unfortunately, Louis the Pious failed to live up to his father's prestige and the kingdom began to decline. Under his son's rules and their sons' the kingdom broke apart into three kingdoms and the Carolingian dynasty died out in the tenth century with a shudder.

This work is greatly indebted to the works of Mayke de Jong, Thomas Fx Noble, and Rachel Stone for their pivotal works on how monasticism and these writings influenced Louis the Pious' reign.⁴ So many historians have written on the Carolingians since their demise, that there is not enough pages in a book to recount all of them, but this introduction will look at a few that prove the most important. The historiography of the Carolingians spans many decades, but this thesis will only concentrate on monographs and articles from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Historians generally blame Louis the Pious for the collapse of the Carolingian dynasty, however, this work seeks to address that argument in a new light.⁵ Louis the Pious's reign shows a similar decay that had occurred under the reign of the Merovingians, but in a different way. The decline of the Carolingians began at their own inception with the Carolingian Church gaining too much power. The power the Carolingian Church garnered during the early years and during the reign of Charlemagne changed the course of Louis' reign. Instead of a strong and powerful kingly upbringing, much of his upbringing was orchestrated by the Church. He still

4 Mayke De Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Thomas Noble, "The Monastic ideals as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious," (*Revue Bénédictine* 1976)

⁵ Historians such as Heinrich Fichtenau, Eleanor Duckett, Walter Ullmann, Robert Folz, Thomas FX Noble, etc, all state that the Carolingian Dynasty fell because of an issue with Louis.

received a great deal of princely teachings, but he portrayed “monkish” habits his whole life.⁶ This historiographical portion of the introduction seeks to understand both the rise in power of the Church and Louis’ fall from grace.

While giving a general overview of the Medieval Church from 590-1500, Margaret Deansely’s book, *A History of the Medieval Church 590-1500*, written in 1925, gives an important look into the Carolingian Church. Deansely tracks the rise in power of the Church during the reigns of Pippin the Short and Charlemagne, culminating in a viewing of the Carolingian Renaissance. Although she lacks an outright argument, she nevertheless continues the old traditions of blaming Louis the Pious for the collapse of the Carolingian dynasty and the creation of the Capetian state of France. She further helps to paint a picture concerning the importance of the Church to the Carolingian monarchs. M.L.W. Laistner offers one of the very few works in English on Smaragdus, one of the most important authors of a *Speculum Principum*. His work “The Date and the Recipient of Smaragdus’ *Via Regia*” was published in 1928 and still proves an important piece of literature in the historiography. His supposition that the *Via Regia*, instead of traditionally addressing Charlemagne, addresses Louis the Pious holds great merit. This addressment to Louis confers greater power and importance to Louis because of this work. With this addressment of Louis, Smaragdus placed crucial limitations on how Louis could reign as Emperor, instead of ruling as his father had, Louis had to obey the Church.

The next work comes from the minds of Edward Peters and William McDermott in their book, *Monks, Bishops, and Pagans*, written in 1949. Although mainly primary sources that McDermott translated, they also write important introductions to works such as a significant

⁶ Thegan, “The Deeds of Emperor Louis,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, trans. Thomas F.X. Noble, 203 (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2009) 203.

portion of Gregory of Tours works, as well as important selections from Jonas' *Life of Saint Columbanus*. These introductions give important glimpses into the lives of these men, their culture, and the writings themselves. Written in 1957, Heinrich Fichtenau's work, *The Carolingian Empire*, offers a very cynical look compared to other medieval narratives concerning Charlemagne's reign. He attempted to demythologize Charlemagne and show many of the contradictions and fundamental flaws that the Carolingian Empire possessed from the start. He further argues in the anti-Louis the Pious trend in another chapter. This book contributes greatly to the historiography of the era because it shows a more "human" Charlemagne and his people.

The 1960's appear as one of the strong points in Carolingian studies with several notable books arriving in 1962 and a few others later on. Starting with Eleanor Duckett, in one of her last books, *Carolingian Portraits: A Study in the Ninth Century*, written in 1962, she paints an interesting picture of the Carolingians. Her main interests lie with the study of early medieval saints, but her discussion of Louis the Pious and several Carolingian clergy prove important to the historiography. Her argument that Louis, although a strong emperor to begin with, relinquished too much power to his advisors, whereby setting himself up to fail. J.M. Wallace-Hadrill's *The Long-Haired Kings*, also written in 1962, gives an important viewing into France/Gaul before the Carolingians attained the right to be named king. His use of sources such as Gregory of Tours, Fredegar, and Hincmar, are among the best in the 1960's. He shows the decline in power of the Merovingians and the rise in power of the Carolingian family. His work on the law codes that allowed the Carolingians to usurp the throne also prove vastly important.

Continuing with the 1960's. *The Two Kingdoms: Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought* by Karl F. Morrison, was written in 1964. Morrison's extremely important works

explains the dichotomy between ecclesiological thought and political thought. He further dictates the ways that theology affected the evolution of ideas about rightful forms of government. This pivotal work in the field enables the reader to understand the Carolingian monarchy in a very important light. Through a thorough perusal of the Church Councils and the *Speculum Principum*, Morrison's value to the historiography lies within his careful analysis on how these effected kingship. While Morrison may not explicitly state that the fault on the decline of the Carolingians lays entirely on Louis the Pious, he makes allusions to this train of thought.

Next arrives Walter Ullmann's *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, written in 1969. In this important work, Ullmann describes how a new European society was welded together by the co-operation of the kings and the ecclesiastical hierarchy and also an amalgamation of the Greco-Roman heritage with Germanic civilization. Furthermore, the Carolingian age gave birth to Western Europe in all its multifarious complexity and helped to consolidate the already growing tension between East and West, Roman and Greek, which had far reaching implications. Ullmann's work is still highly regarded by Carolingian scholars and continues to be important for the field. The final book from the 1960's titles itself *Life in the Age of Charlemagne* by Peter Munz, written in 1969. Although a popular historical work, Munz does a fantastic job portraying the rise of the Carolingian church and the birth of feudalism. His inspection of the church construes his most important look into this time period. One final thing about his work entails his massive use of art and documents within his text, this enables the reader to get a much better grasp of Carolingian Culture than some of the other books previously mentioned.

Leading the historiography into the 1970's arrives Francois-Louis Ganshof's *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarch*, written in 1971. Although retired for nearly ten years

when this was published, this work, indeed, holds high merit in the study of the Carolingians. A prolific writer, his works span nearly fifty years with many monographs, articles, and reviews. Ganshof sadly only has a few works translated into English from Dutch and French, but luckily this work is perhaps his best work. In this work, Ganshof heavily focuses on Charlemagne and the institutions he created, his use of oaths of fidelity, power in the written word, and finally a section on how Louis the Pious needs to be reconsidered. Louis's strength as a king does not appear as his downfall according to Ganshof, instead his sons and some of the Bishops use their combined strength to overpower him. Some of Louis' ideas did not bode well with certain members of the clergy and his issues with his sons caused his downfall.

Robert Folz, writing in 1974, extends the historiographical works with his book *The Coronation of Charlemagne*. The name of the book however, proves somewhat misleading as he only concentrates on Charlemagne's actual coronation for only a short portion of the book. Instead, he explains the history of the Franks in Gaul from Clovis to Charlemagne and other preliminary things leading up to the coronation in the first third of the book. He then delves into the Empire of Charlemagne in the second portion followed by a smaller section dedicated to Charlemagne's successors. Not interested in the successors of Charlemagne, he consistently points out their flaws throughout the last portion of the book. His discussion on the creation of the empire, however, increases the understanding of the imperial power at the time. For him, Louis the Pious, ruined the empire and started the decline of the Carolingians.

Thomas F.X. Noble burst into the scene in the mid-1970's as a key player in Early Medieval Mediterranean studies. However, his work on "The Monastic Ideal as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious," proves one of his best works. Noble discusses the varying types of models for rulership that existed in medieval Europe, including Roman, Biblical, Celtic,

and Gothic. His argument states that Louis was weak because he held ideals that made him more suitable for the church than for ruling a kingdom. He, like the monkish king Noble portrays him as, also proved much too prone to forgiving everyone when he should have stopped them entirely and also for his lack of tact in choosing advisors. Furthermore, had Louis managed his family life better, nearly all his problems would not have happened.

Moving forward the next two books are both written by Pierre Riche. The book, *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne*, written in 1978, gives an impressive look into, as best as can be told, the daily life of the people and clergy. Most sources from the time period originate with the upper class or higher ranking churchmen, this task proved difficult, but Riche managed to write a good monograph on the topic still. He used several new studies on nutrition, disease, demography, and climatology alongside the works of art historians and archaeologists to possibly understand the Carolingian mentality and reconstruct the material culture of the early modern world. Riche's next undertaking arrives in 1983 with *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe*. Riche examines the Carolingian family from their early beginnings all the way to their demise. Although written more like a textbook than a monograph, the work still contains numerous tidbits of helpful information. His understanding of the creation of the Carolingian church and their influence on the monarchy proves his most interesting viewpoints. Similarly to many of the other authors in this field, Riche also argues that Louis the Pious caused the downfall of the Carolingians. Even though he traces the Carolingians back to their roots with Arnulf and Pippin, he still argues for Louis as the cause for the decline.

Rosamond McKitterick's pivotal work *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians: 751-8-987*, written in 1983, is the first modern book in any language to examine the entire history of the Carolingian 'dynasty'. What makes her work so important lies in the fact that she

does not discuss the rise and fall of the kings, instead she looks at the way the rulers conducted themselves, their authority, landed wealth, and the manner in which they retained their power for so long before succumbing to contemporaries hungry for power. Her vast knowledge on kingship and government make this book incredibly valuable to the historiography on Carolingian kingship.

Leaving the 1980's, Mayke de Jong's article, "Power and Humility in Carolingian Society: The public Penance of Louis the Pious," arrives. Written in 1992, this article holds extremely high importance for the historiography in this field. De Jong's looks into the different forms of penitence and piety in the Carolingian realm have truly changed the field. She extensively uses the Carolingian *speculum principum* and penitentials from the time period to help her argument and show the definitions of penance, humility, and how kingship needed to be kept honest. The two key moments in history she focused on in this work were the two public penances of Louis the Pious in 822 and later in 833 and explained the key differences between the two. Overall, this work greatly helps other historians to understand kingship in a different light than just the traditional viewing.

An important work on a lesser known writer of the *speculum principum*, "Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis, was written in 1999 by Joanna Story. Story's interests lie in the intersection of culture and relationship between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England the Carolingian Kingdom. Story discovered that Cathwulf, although Anglo-Saxon, wrote the earliest known Carolingian mirror for princes. This plays a massive role in the argumentation and historiography of the field. Previously, many authors put forth different contemporary writers, but Cathwulf's proved the oldest written work. With a massive contribution to Carolingian studies arrives Alessandro Barbero's *Charlemagne: Father of a*

Continent, written in 2000, but not translated into English until 2004. This work explores the world that Charlemagne created, from his own life and empire, down to the lowest peasant. Barbero's best work occurs while explaining the creation of the Empire, thus giving a vast amount of context to the historiography in a similar fashion to what Riche did back in the 1970's and 80's. However, Barbero singles out Charlemagne instead of discussing every single king, nevertheless, this work does an astounding job depicting the creation of medieval Europe. At the same time, he does not focus only on Charlemagne, thus taking this work out of the biographical category.

Adding a different viewpoint to the historiography arrives G.R Evans, *The Church in the Early Middles Ages*, written in 2007. Instead of focusing on a single kingdom, Evans approaches this broad topic thematically, however, her discussion on how the Carolingian Empire increased its boundaries more by missionaries than by the sword proves an interesting argument. Yet, the Carolingians still sometimes killed the pagans who would not convert, which somewhat weakens her arguments. She also looks at the institution of church and state and how the Carolingians combined the two, with some disdain and appears to favor the later division of church and state in England until the Tudors. Overall, the book proves an interesting read despite the issues within her argument, nevertheless, it still contributes to the historiography of the period.

Mayke De Jong's second work, and probably the more important work, arrives in 2009 with *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840*. She gives an important look into the life of Louis the Pious while placing him within the context of his time by looking at ninth-century narratives. Her main discussion points arrive with the first public penance of Louis in 822, followed by a second and even more important public penance in 833. The first public penance came from a point of power, however, the second, he arrived at

against his will, under guard by his sons and nobles. Louis, forced to abdicate through this public penance, nonetheless, still managed to regain his throne. Her book easily hails among the most important works in this field and in this historiography.

Next arrives Michael Edward Moore's *Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850*, written in 2011. His importance to the field entails his interweaving of several important concepts. He heavily looks at the rise of the Frankish Church, the manner in which, the Carolingians gained their power, and the usage of the *speculum principum* in the daily lives of the monarchs. With the reign of Louis the Pious, the religious ideal of kingship and the vision that the Frankish Kingdom was a sacred kingdom reached a high point, however, the civil wars and the loss of his throne destroyed his place as the most important Carolingian ruler. Among his most interesting discussions, Moore looks at the influence of Pharaonic Kingship and Biblical Kingship on Carolingian Kingship. Within those two cultures the king essentially held the title king and "bishop" or ruler of the religion. Within the Carolingian kingdom and later empire, the king worked alongside the bishops, somewhat as equals, but the king also held religious power over them.

In *Rewriting Saints and Ancestors: Memory and Forgetting in France, 500-1200*, Constance Bouchard, examines a large section of French history. However, chapters six and seven deal exclusively with the Carolingians. Unlike most of the other historians, Bouchard studies a later time period than the Carolingians, thus giving her an outside view into the time period. She describes the creation of the Carolingian kingdom, the deposition of the Merovingians, the problems the Carolingians endured with legitimizing their rule, and finally the way mirrors of princes were used to also grant legitimacy. Louis garners all the blame for the fall of the Carolingian family.

A new face to Carolingian history arrives Rachel Stone with her work, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, written in 2015. Stone's main area interest lies in medieval gender history, specifically Carolingian. This work looks at the ways that Carolingian nobles maintained their masculinity and social position, but having to adhere to new and stricter moral demands by religious reformers concerning: behavior in war, sexual conduct, and the correct use of power. Stone heavily looks at the way lay mirrors and mirror for princes influenced the nobles in their endeavor to become more moral. Finally, this innovative analysis of Carolingian moral norms interprets how gender interacted with political and religious ideology to create a distinctive Frankish elite culture, creating a new picture of Carolingian masculinity.

The last book in this historiography arrives *Hincmar of Rheims: His Life and Work*. This work, although edited by Rachel Stone and Charles West, grants many different viewpoints and topics of information regarding the life of Hincmar of Rheims through fourteen different essays. Hincmar, held his archbishopric for over forty years and proves one of the most important people in the ninth century France. A notable historian, Hincmar wrote several historical accounts, but is most famous for the *Annals of St-Bertin*. However, his most important works lie in his mirror for princes and his *on the governance of the palace*. This collection of essays shows the many different approaches to studying and understanding Hincmar of Rheims.

Overall, these works all greatly contribute to the historiography of this time period. They enable the reader to understand the time period better because of their differing viewpoints and overall love for their topic. This thesis would not be possible if not for the work of the men and women who have put time and effort into writing these monographs and essays. Finally,

understanding the past proves impossible, but by studying these sources and secondary sources, historians can garner a greater knowledge of the events.

CHAPTER 2

THE RISE OF THE CAROLINGIANS AND THE CHURCH

From its inception, the Carolingian dynasty was conceived in terms drawn from the social thought of episcopal councils. This theology placed king and bishop at the pinnacle of the Christian social order—a vision of order that connected Christian society to the distant past of ancient Israel, to the figure of King David or the high priests in their robes of hyacinth.⁷

Although addressed to Aethebald, an Anglo-Saxon king, this incredibly powerful sentence by the famous missionary Boniface, allows a glimpse into the mindset of the Church regarding kingship. “A king’s sin could destroy the image of God in him and make him an image of the devil instead.”⁸ Boniface, although principally working as a missionary for the Germans, also helped to reform the Frankish Church, which declined greatly. The Merovingian kingdom began a decline after the death of Clovis that worsened with time until they finally met their end in 750. Likewise, the Church became corrupt, with little learning or any growth. The family of Arnulflings and Pippinids combined to become one of the strongest families in all of the Merovingian kingdom and eventually became the Carolingians. The Carolingian family helped to rejuvenate the ailing Church, creating one of the most powerful entities in early Medieval Europe. Not only did the Church gain an exorbitant amount of power during this time period, but it also became much more militarized. This same Church that the Carolingians restored, later helped bring about their downfall.

⁷ Michael Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850*, (Washington D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2011) 244.

⁸“*Ut imaginem Dei, que in te create est, per luxorium ad imaginem et similtudinem maligni diaboli convertas*” Boniface to Aethebald (746-47), *Die Briefe des Heligen Bonifatius*, Letter 73:149.

Bishops inherited an enduring aristocratic role going back to late antiquity, often governing cities and controlling extensive properties and the people who lived in them. The premier exercise of their authority was in legislation enacted at councils. This law was wide in scope and expressive not only of moral ideals, but also of a fully elaborated social thought.⁹ Most bishops in Frankish society, not only held their respective bishoprics, but also extensive family land as most came from the nobility. This aristocratic origin of most bishops was not seen by contemporaries as an impediment to episcopal office, but rather as an appropriate background for someone who would rule a community, in addition to governing its religious cult. Bishops, moreover, did not act as functional equivalents of senators or nobles, but as a distinctive, cohesive group, possessing a self-conscious and unifying identity. However, that changed during the missionary wars in Germany under Pippin II and Charlemagne. Unlike the nobility, bishops were ordained clerics, gave sermons, and baptized people. They adopted a special hairstyle (tonsure)¹⁰ symbolically connecting them to the asceticism of the desert and a moral code that brought them into contact with the poor and that gave them a unique position from which to make demands on their kings (and on the poor.)¹¹ However, towards the end of the Merovingian kingdom, these same bishops proved prone to corruption and sinful natures, similarly to how the Carolingians would also depict the Merovingians themselves.

Michael Moore states that “the first half of the eighth century witnessed a reconfiguration of power and the emergence of a new political order in the Frankish kingdom, accompanied by

⁹ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship*, 5.

¹⁰ This tonsure is thought to have been attributed to Peter by the Medieval Church.

¹¹ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 15.

an altered relationship between the bishops and their king.”¹² The means for this reconfiguration lay within the unification of the dying Merovingian kingdom, alongside a push to conquer the east and north, namely Germania. The Franks set about this in two parts, militarily and spiritually. The first wave arrived by papal authority under the command of Boniface. But gradually the Franks began to assist in the “desire” to spread the Christian faith, even through violence. This time period proved a bloody, yet strikingly pious time period, specifically from Charlemagne’s reign till the end of Louis the Pious’. This period witnessed a vast amount of time and resources put forth into reforming both Church and State. However, the Carolingians first needed to depose the Merovingian kings.

Although many differing theories or reasons for how the Carolingians gained legitimacy in the deposition of the Merovingians, Moore offers an intriguing opinion. “The usurpation was conceived as a reform of kingship based on theocratic concepts of royal power that have been traced to episcopal social thought. These assertions of royal power came to be suffused with a “rhetoric of reform.”¹³ This reforming rhetoric, became the guiding principle for the Carolingians, but sadly had repercussions for the monarchy, and also the Church. The Episcopate, faced accusations of abandoning its most important duties, thusly requiring, in the Carolingians’ mind, a much needed change.

Upon learning of the desire of the Carolingians to promote and foster episcopal power on a scale much higher than the Merovingians, the bishops wholeheartedly joined this reforming movement, which helped legitimize the Carolingians position even more. Bishops claimed there

¹²Michael Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 203.

¹³ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 204.

were two governing “persons” in their society: king and bishop. As a result of this perception, they gradually changed their notion of kingship, until a certain point (751), they deployed their intellectual resources on behalf of a new royal family that offered to advance their social and religious ideals, the Carolingians.¹⁴

Boniface’s task originally required only converting the Germans, however, he lacked the military protection he needed to complete his task. He also soon realized that the Frankish Church direly needed aid in fixing their Church. In a letter addressed to his Anglo-Saxon Bishop Daniel, Boniface states that “Without the patronage of the prince of the Franks, I am not able to rule the people of the church nor to defend presbyters, clerics, monks, or the handmaidens of God. Nor can I prohibit those rites and sacrileges of pagan idols in Germany without his mandate and the fear he inspires.”¹⁵ Pope Gregory II sent a recommendation to Charles Martel in 722 that Boniface needed his aid. “For the sake of the German people, we warmly commend him to your high favor and pray you to help him in every need, to defend him against every enemy over whom you may prevail in the Lord’s name, bearing in mind that whatever support you solicitously give to him will be given to God, who said that those who received his holy apostles, sent forth as a light to the Gentiles, would be receiving himself.”¹⁶ Within the next year, Charles Martel extended his support to Boniface with a proclamation sent out to all the nobles and bishops of the land. In this proclamation, he addressed everything the Pope stated in his

¹⁴Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 6.

¹⁵*Sine patricinio principis Francorum nec populum ecclesiae regere nec presbiteros vel clericos, monachos vel ancillas Dei defendere possum nec ipsos paganorum ritus et sacrilegia idolorum in Germania sine illius mandato et timore prhibere valeo.* Found in “Boniface to Daniel (742-746) *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Die Briefe des Heiligen Bonifatius*, Letter 63:130.

¹⁶ “Pope Gregory II recommends Boniface to Charles Martel, December 722,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, Ed. Paul Edward Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004) 5.

recommendation and told his own people that he, the *maior domus* or simply *princeps*, decreed they needed to aid Boniface in every endeavor.¹⁷

Even though Charles wished to help reform the Church, he still granted his allies and vassals positions within the Church as bishops and abbots, which angered many other bishops and Boniface.¹⁸ But Charles saw it differently, “when the local aristocrats whom he frequently fought held bishoprics and monasteries in their own hand and regarded them as private property, the exile of bishops and sequestration of church property was the only way, not just to break the political power of the aristocracy, but also to bring about a reform of the Church on correct canonical lines.¹⁹” When Charles died in 741, he left the task of reforming the church to his two sons, Carloman and Pippin the Short.

With the aid of Pippin and Carloman, Boniface continued his task of reformation. Carloman and Pippin more than anything, wanted Boniface’s help in “integrating politically and assimilating culturally the eastern reaches of the Frankish realm and beyond” that Boniface had worked on converting.²⁰ Their desire had a twofold approach. Not only did they desire to increase their own land holdings, but it could also help them curry favor with the episcopacy and even someday later, become kings of Frankia. Of the two brothers, Carloman devoted his

¹⁷ “Charles Martel extends his support to Boniface in 723,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, Ed. Paul Edward Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004) 6.

¹⁸ Edward James, *The Origins of France: From Clovis to the Capetians, 500-1000*, (London: The MacMillan press ltd, 1982) 153.

¹⁹ James, *The Origins of France*, 153.

²⁰ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 206.

attention chiefly to religious synods and councils, whereas Pippin cared more for war, but this changed later once Carloman abdicated.

In 742, Carloman, with Boniface at his side summoned a synod, the *Concilium Germanicum* to discuss reforming the Church.²¹ “Carloman promised that he would do something toward reforming and reestablishing the ecclesiastical discipline, which for a long time, not less than sixty or seventy years, had been despoiled and trampled on.”²² At this synod the Council also filled all empty bishoprics and also helped to infuse the Church with a fresh vigor that had diminished drastically in the past seventy to eighty years. As Willibald states, “So great was the religious fervor kindled by the teaching of Saint Boniface that Carloman and Pepin freed the faithful to a large extent from the evil practices in which through long neglect they had become deeply rooted and through which, partly by giving rein to their own passions, partly by being misled by the insidious doctrines of heretics, they had forfeited their right to eternal bliss.”²³ The next few years, the reformation and rejuvenation of the Church progressed exceedingly well.

While these reforms transpired, a different approach to changing the Church began. Previous to these councils, clergymen did not have the right to bear arms, they were only allowed to help with litanies and processions before the war and after the war. However, Pippin had the Church change the rule and Bishops began to join in his military operations. Furthermore, at the

²¹ “Boniface to Pope Zacharias on the condition of the Frankish Church in 742”, in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, Ed. Paul Edward Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004) 6.

²² “Boniface to Pope Zacharias on the condition of the Frankish Church in 742” 6.

²³ C. H. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany, Being the Lives of SS. Willibrord, Boniface, Leoba and Lebuin together with the Hodoepericon of St. Willibald and a selection from the correspondence of St. Boniface*, (London and New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954)

Council of Lestines in 743, Pippin commanded that the Church set aside a certain portion of their wealth to help fund the war efforts.²⁴ The militarization of the Church helped further the goals of the wars in Germany and the Christianization of Germany, but now not only did the Church have the backing of the *Mayors of the Palaces*, but they also could fund their own armies.

Dating back to 737 when King Theuderic IV died, Charles Martel decided to not set up another Merovingian figurehead king, thusly ruling on his own until his death.²⁵ The two brothers finally ended the interregnum created by their father by placing the last Merovingian, Childeric III on the throne in 743. However, by 750, Childeric once again found himself in a monastery as Pippin became king of the Frankish Kingdom in 751. Other assemblies and councils pushed forward more ideas of reforming the Church and also how to deal with heretics.

However, in 745, Carloman, the leading brother, after everything he had done to help with the revival of the Church, retired to a monastery to live out his days as a monk in Italy. This move by Carloman still puzzles historians.²⁶ Carloman held the larger portion of the kingdom as *Mayor of the Palace* in Austrasia and also had helped to start the revival of the Frankish Church. Nonetheless, he left all of it behind and helped to found a monastery in Monte Soratte and later Monte Cassino.²⁷ Moore offers up the supposition that Carloman removed himself from a

²⁴ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 228. His discussion of the Council can be found in the MGH Concilia 2.1:7.

²⁵ Paul Edward Dutton, *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, Ed. Paul Edward Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004) 12.

²⁶ The *Annales Regni Francorum* states that, Carloman then confessed to his brother Pippin that he wished to retire from the world. They undertook no campaign that year, but both made preparations. Carloman for his journey and Pippin for his brother's departure with gifts and honors. "*Tunc Carlomannus confessus est Pippino Germano suo, quod voluisset seculum relinquere; et in eodem anno nullum fecerunt exercitum, sed praeeparaverunt se uterque, Carlomannus ad iter suum et Pippinus, quomodo germanum suum honorifice direxisset cum muneribus*".

“dangerous struggle for power, a frequent solution to power struggles in Anglo-Saxon royal families.”²⁸ In addition, much speculation about this move by Carloman has taken place, including an idea that Carloman undertook this because of pressure from Pippin and that Carloman received his tonsure from the Pope himself.²⁹ Norman F. Cantor claims Carloman was “the first of a new type of saintly king, who was more interested in religious devotion than royal power, who frequently appeared in the following three centuries and who was an indication of the growing impact of Christian piety on German society.”³⁰

Before leaving political power, Carloman helped foster Boniface’s reform project and even presided over a series of councils and assemblies that worked to coordinate new German sees with those in the Austrasian region of the Frankish Realm.³¹ The decade that leads up to the Carolingian usurpation, the *Mayors of the Palace’s* legislation mainly focused on episcopal concerns, enacted at assemblies at which both lay nobility and an important episcopal council worked in tandem. This began a trend, in France, that helped to organize the Church and state together for the betterment of the people. However, it also gave the Church a much greater say in what transpired within the kingdom as well as a vast amount of power. By adopting this method of promulgating episcopal legislation, the Carolingians succeeded in bringing the bishops within their government.³² At the same time, bishops had gained the cooperation of a newly effective

²⁷ Pierre Riche, *The Carolingians: A family who forged Europe*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993) 59.

²⁸ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 222.

²⁹Riche, *The Carolingians*, 60.

³⁰ Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1993) 170.

³¹ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 222.

instrument of central control, one capable of staging more ambitious projects. Once incorporated into royal law, canonical legislation had greater force and compass, and could now be enforced in ways inconceivable two generations before.³³

With his brother out of the picture, Pippin decided that the reform proved more interesting than before. He sent a commission to Rome in 746, seeking guidance on topics ranging from clerical discipline to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. His court administration also changed drastically with clerics beginning to take a leading role. Episcopal cooperation also became a genuine asset for the assertion of royal power with Bishops serving as guarantors of a religious and social order.³⁴ It appears at this point that the religious reforms set down by Boniface were working to great effect. By 747, Boniface finally garnered his archbishopric in Mainz and became the primate of Germany as well as the apostolic legate for both Germany and Gaul.³⁵

With his brother's abdication, Pippin worked hard to shore up his power. However, Pippin had to contend with Carloman's son, Drogo and Pippin's half-brother Grifo, who both tried to take power from him. Pippin managed to neutralize Drogo quickly, but Grifo escaped and made his way to Bavaria and later Saxony.³⁶ Pippin defeated the Saxons and forced them to turn over Grifo. In a similar fashion to both his son and later grandson, Pippin pardoned Grifo and even gave him several counties in the Mainz region to rule and also keep watch on the

³² Patrick Geary, *Before France & Germany: The Creation & Transformation of the Merovingian World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988) 217.

³³ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 223.

³⁴ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 223.

³⁵ C. H. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*

³⁶ Riche, *The Carolingians*, 58.

Bretons, who proved a continual threat until Charlemagne defeated them.³⁷ Between 748 and 750 there appears a relative peace in the Frankish kingdom, which granted Pippin the necessary time to finally formulate his plans on how to take over the kingdom.

The Pippinids/Carolingians attempted to take the throne at an earlier point in their history under Grimoald, an ancestor of Charles Martel. He actually succeeded in taking over the kingdom, but other nobles conspired against him and removed him. Therefore, attempting to stage a *coup d'état* did not look like a promising endeavor to his successors. This, however, changed drastically by the time of Pippin. Pippin at this point in time reigned virtually supreme in France and Germany in all but name. Pippin controlled vast territories and huge quantities of money as *Mayor of the Palace* and through his profitable marriage. Furthermore, Pippin, through his families striving to reform the Church, granted them a far superior ally than any secular power.

Dating back to the *Concilium Germanicum*, the Merovingian kings held blame for the decline of the Frankish Church and thusly needed removal in the eyes of both the Church and the two brothers.³⁸ Carloman, laid out the aims of his reform effort in an aggressive way, attacking the previous dynasty while coming close to claiming kingship himself.³⁹ He instructed the bishops and council to “counsel me on how the law of God and ecclesiastical religion might be covered, which fell into ruins in the days of former princes; and just how the Christian people

³⁷ Riche, *The Carolingians*, 59.

³⁸ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 223.

³⁹ Although dated back to 742, this part of the argument helps to show the demise of the Merovingian king as a cooperative effort between the Carolingians and the Church.

might come to the salvation of their souls and not perish, by being deceived by false priests.”⁴⁰ Carloman began styling himself *dux* or *princeps* after this council. From this point onward, the two brothers, namely Carloman at this point, strove to drive out the Merovingians who they believed were not upholding their sacred duty to the Church. “By allying himself with the bishops, Pippin’s political desires found a home in a world of power that had depth in time and a geographical reach unlike the relations between strongman in the Frankish kingdom. Language and reconceptualization of the past were used as an instrument of power in overthrowing the Merovingians.”⁴¹

According to the Annals of Lorsch, in “Anno 749 Burchard, bishop of Wilzburg, and Fulrad, priest and chaplain, were sent [by Pippin] to Pope Zacharias to ask his advice in regard to the kings who were then ruling in France, who had the title of king but no real royal authority. The Pope replied by these ambassadors that it would be better that he who actually had the power should be called king.”⁴² Between the years of 750 and 751 prove among the best for the Carolingians because they finally take the throne. Pippin was crowned King of the Franks in 750 and a new era began. The *Royal Frankish Annals* state “Pippin was elected king according to the custom of the Franks, anointed by the hand of Archbishop Boniface of saintly memory, and

⁴⁰ *Ut mihi consilium dedissent quomodo lex Dei et ecclesiastica religio recuperetur, quae in diebus preteritorum principum dissipata corruit, et qualiter populus christianus ad salutem anime pervenire possit et per falso sacerdotes deceptus non pereat.*” Carloman’s proem to the Concilium Germanicum, *Die Briefes des Heiligen Bonifatius*, Letter 56:99.

⁴¹ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 233.

⁴² “Annals of Lorsch” in, Edgar Holmes McNeal and Oliver J. Thatcher, *A Source Book for Medieval History*, (New York: Scribners, 1905), p. 37-38 in the Royal Frankish Annales. *Burghardus Wirzeburgensis episcopus et Folradus capellanus missi fuerunt ad Zachariam papam, interrogando de regibus in Francia, qui illis temporibus non habentes regalem potestatem, si bene fuisset an non. Et Zacharias papa mandavit Pippino, ut melius esset illum regem vocari, qui potestatem haberet, quam illum, qui sine regali potestate manebat; ut non conturbaretur ordo, per auctoritatem apostolicam iussit Pippinum regem fieri.*

raised to the kingship by the Franks in the city of Soissons.”⁴³ With the kingdom now under his control, both legally and physically, Pippin could now concentrate on his “missionary” conquest of Saxony.⁴⁴ Throughout the rest of his reign and for a significant portion of his son’s reign, they constantly warred in Saxony and Germany as a whole.

The Carolingians further engrained their alliance with the Church by becoming the protectors of Rome, and specifically, the Pope. The Pope did not believe that his protector, the Emperor of Constantinople, would be able to protect him from the invading Lombard armies, so he turned to another Germanic kingdom, who he hoped, could stop the Lombards. Both Pippin and his son Charlemagne warred against the Lombards for significant portions of their reigns, with the culmination of their defeat to Charlemagne in 774.⁴⁵ War and the Church went hand-in-hand for the Carolingians with many of their wars having a religious undertone. For instance, the wars in Saxony and Bavaria started as a missionary war, the war against the Lombards, for the Pope, and later wars in Germany because of sacrilegious events.

When Boniface died in 754, as a martyr in Germany, Chrodegang of Metz replaced him as Archbishop of the Church. Chrodegang continued with the reforming movement of the Church and placed an exceptionally high amount of work towards fixing the monasteries. Boniface earlier, remarked upon the sheer lack of knowledge and understanding of Latin in the monasteries.⁴⁶ Chrodegang placed the Rule upon the Frankish monasteries which would guide

⁴³ *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard’s Histories*, Trans. Bernhard Walter Scholz, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970) 39. *Pippinus secundum morem Francorum electus est ad regem et unctus per manum sanctae memoriae Bonifacii archiepiscopi et elevatus a Francis in regno in Suessionis civitate.*

⁴⁴ When Charles Martel agreed to help Boniface with *Germania* he did so because he wanted the territory, and Pippin seems to have followed in his father’s footsteps.

⁴⁵ *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish Annal* , 51.

them in their everyday lives, and later Louis the Pious and Benedict of Anniane would revise and live by.⁴⁷ What Chrodegang set into practice finally came into fruition with the reign of Louis the Pious in 814. All the hard work that Boniface, Carloman, Pippin, and Chrodegang did, still unraveled in 833 with the deposition and public penance of Louis the Pious. The Church and Lothar paired together to usurp power from Louis, however, Lothar used the Church to his ends and then turned away from it.

With the Carolingian *coup d'état* complete, the bishops realized their increase of power. They became the chief allies of Pippin, his successors, and became chief members in the court. Their dream of unifying and reorganizing their order, soon began to materialize before their eyes through the revival of the Church. Moreover, through the battle against heresy, namely iconoclasm and adoptionism, they managed to unify their order and create a canon for their Church.⁴⁸ Through the close association with bishops and their desires, Frankish kingship became sacralized. Carolingian royal law became shaped by episcopal initiatives, and the kingdom itself was considered an entity of religious importance.⁴⁹

Pippin continued to preside over Church councils and lead the army during campaign seasons. The reform movement set down by his father and Boniface continued to push forward, with the Church's power continued to grow. Nevertheless the Church continued with its

⁴⁶ "Boniface to Pope Zacharias on the condition of the Frankish Church in 742" 6.

⁴⁷ Chrodegang created his *Regula canonicorum* on the basis The Rule of St. Benedict and was introduced at the Synod of Ver in 755. Rosamond McKitterick's work *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians* gives more insight into this matter.

⁴⁸ See Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and The Carolingians*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) for a discussion on Iconoclasm. And "The Iconodule Controversy in Francia," *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, Ed. Paul Edward Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004) 95-99.

⁴⁹ Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 245.

missionary project in Germany and helped create Bavarian Laws. Pippin and Charlemagne also share an interesting similarity. They both were anointed as king on two separate occasions. Pippin's first anointing came from Boniface in 750, but also received a second anointing in 754 by Pope Stephen.⁵⁰ Charlemagne received his first anointing alongside his father in 754, and later received anointing in 800, when he received the title emperor. After ruling his country as both *Mayor of the Palace* and as King for twenty-seven years, Pippin died in 768, dividing his kingdom between his two sons, Charles and Carloman.

Although the two brothers constantly quarreled, they still worked on helping the Church with its revival. However, with the death of Carloman in 771, the kingdom once again united behind one ruler and one head of the Church. Charlemagne believed that it was his duty to continually better the state of his Churches.⁵¹ Charlemagne laid public claim to, and, on more than one occasion; within his realm, God had entrusted the Church to his keeping that he might watch over its destinies in the midst of so many besetting dangers.⁵² Under his rule, all secular clergy, such as bishops and abbots were required to swear oaths of fidelity to him, but monks and lesser clergy just had to make a simple promise.⁵³

Charlemagne brought monks from Ireland, England, Italy, and Spain to help with his revival of the Church. Among the most famous arrived Alcuin, Sedulius Scotus, Paul the

⁵⁰ *Carolingian Chronicles: Royal Frankish*, 47.

⁵¹ F.L Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1971) 205.

⁵²Ganshof, *The Carolingians*, 205. Also found in the *Libri Carolini*. MGH *Concilia*, II.

⁵³These oaths Charlemagne required from both the clergy and nobles began to be viewed as a commodity. By holding these men in his power, he controlled both the secular realm and the church, thusly creating a combination of church and state. See Charles Odeggard, "Carolingian Oaths of Fidelity," *Speculum*, Vol. 16. No. 3. (1941).

Deacon, and Theodulf of Orleans. Several of the men would later go on to write important works in the genre of the *Speculum Principum*.⁵⁴ These writings not only show how to be a good king, but also contain an element of force. The Church wanted the kings and nobles who had these works written for them that if they failed in their positions, they could face removal from office. Louis the Pious suffered from failing to control his family and choose wise counsel, which both place highly among the commands of these teachings.

Charlemagne made it his prerogative to protect the Church and also to bind that duty on to his successors in 806.⁵⁵ By doing this Charlemagne placed the Church in a higher position than his own nobles, with the Bishops becoming the strongest group in the kingdom outside the king. Bishops, abbots, and abbesses, all rendered justice for the king in their jurisdictions, but had to follow strict canonical and secular laws with just minds and hearts.⁵⁶ During Charlemagne's life, he used his *Missus Dominicus* to keep a watch on the Church and make sure they followed his orders and those of the Bishops.⁵⁷ Charlemagne gave a great deal of power to the Church, but it appears that he still did not trust it fully.

After his long reign and important work in the kingdom and with the Church, Charlemagne died in 814, passing along all of his power to his son, Louis the Pious. Louis placed all of his attention into Church related matters. Under his reign, as mentioned before, all the work set down by his great-grandfather and his successors came to fruition. The Church attained

⁵⁴ This will be discussed in-depth in chapter 2.

⁵⁵ Ganshof, *The Carolingians*, 214.

⁵⁶ "The General Capitulary for the *Missi* from 802," *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, Ed. Paul Edward Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004) 70.

⁵⁷ Ganshof, *The Carolingians*, 216. The *Missus Dominicus* were special envoys of the king who helped supervise the administration of justice and were in a sense, watchdogs for the kings.

the most power it had since during Roman rule. The Pope, although still requiring aid from the Carolingians, became a major player in European politics with the Church becoming the prominent political power in Europe for the next several hundred years.

With the revival of the Church underway, Bishops turned towards reforming kingship. Monks and Bishops began composing treatises that dictated the mannerisms they wished kings to possess. Although the genre of the *Speculum Principum*⁵⁸ predates the Carolingians, some of the most important works outside of Machiavelli were composed in this time. Through these writings, the Church hoped to gain even more power over the king. If the king failed in following these rules, he would face punishment. Charlemagne never faces punishment from the Church based on the guidelines in these works, but his son Louis the Pious lost his kingdom. Louis regained his throne, but the damage had been done.

The rise of the Carolingians originated with a push for reforming the Church and led to their overthrowing of the Merovingian dynasty and began a new Frankish Kingdom. The Church began as a tattered and worn down entity, but through the revival set forth by Boniface, Pirmin⁵⁹, and Charles Martel, it became one of the most powerful entities in Europe. The Carolingians used the decline of the Church to usurp power from the Merovingians on a platform of reformational ideology. Unfortunately, the Carolingian kings did not know that by making the Church so powerful, it would inevitably destroy their own power.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 3 on what *Speculum Principum* are and their purposes.

⁵⁹ Important Abbot in Austrasia and missionary in Alsace.

CHAPTER 3

THE *SPECULUM PRINCIPUM*

It must be known to all faithful men that the Universal Church is the Body of Christ; that its Head is none other than Christ; that two ruling powers are to be distinguished within it: namely, that of priests and that of kings; and also that the power of priests is the more excellent, since it is they who are to render to God an account even of kings. In view, then, of the great authority by which the ministry of priests is distinguished, in that it is they who are to render to God and account even of kings, it is both fitting and urgently necessary that we be always anxious to secure your salvation: that we vigilantly admonish you lest—which God forbid—you stray from the will of God or from the ministry which He has committed to your charge; and that if—which God forbid—you turn aside from it in any respect, we bring appropriate measure to bear for the sake of your salvation by means of the humble admonition and wholesome guidance of our pontifical zeal.⁶⁰

Through the use, specifically, of the *Speculum Principum*⁶¹ and other biographical writings, historians view the influence of literature on kings in a different way than before. One of the most important ways to view Carolingian kingship is through the works of these men who wrote the *Speculum Principum*. With the rise in power of the Catholic Church in Carolingian lands, the men who wrote these works had not only the power to write them, but also believed the works ordained by God. If their teachings failed to change the Kings actions, public penance and removal of kingship sometimes occurred.⁶² These men who wrote the *Speculum Principum* or “mirror for princes” used them as a form of guideline on how to be a good king or lord.

⁶⁰ Jonas of Orleans, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract: De Institutione Regia*, Trans. R.W. Dyson. (New York: Exposition Press, 1983) 10.

⁶¹ The *Speculum Principum* and “Mirror for Princes” are generally interchangeable in most historical works, however, for this chapter, only the *Speculum Principum* will be used to avoid confusion. Furthermore, these works are referring to a genre, not a specific text.

⁶² See later section in reference to the Public Penance of Louis the Pious in 822.

Viewing kingship through the lenses of these works gives context to the Carolingians outside of books written on Medieval Europe. These works also help to show the path the Church took after their reformation in the early Carolingian reign. The Church had garnered enough power at this point that they believed they could even command kings how to live. Furthermore, these writings played a large role in aiding and shaping the *Ministerium* of the realm.⁶³

The basic outline of what comprised a good *Speculum Principum* follows a certain set of guidelines. Crucially, the works exhort a king to live a good and pious life with many examples taken from the Bible and from the past. These works essentially become guidelines for proper kingship and detail exactly how to attain the position of a good king. Furthermore, they explain how the king ought to help the people through their toils and more importantly why they should receive help. These works dealt with issues surrounding the Church and how to combat heresies and other issues within the Church. These works explain how to wage war, yet remain a pious and good king who showed willingness to forgive those who transgressed against him and his people. These acts may appear simple, but they prove crucial in understanding that these Carolingian kings wanted their legacy to be viewed in a different light than the previous rulers of Europe. With portrayals such as good and strong kings, but pious and wise as well.

These *Speculum Principum* came in all shapes and sizes, which interests medieval historians greatly. Monks and bishops wrote the majority of these works with Smaragdus, Scotus, and Hincmar leading the way. Lay scholars such as Alcuin and Einhard also lent their respective knowledge to the field. However a woman wrote one of the most interesting ones.

⁶³ Mayke De Jong, "Power and Humility in Carolingian Society," *Early Medieval Europe* 1, no. 1 (2007): 33. *Ministerium* translates to sacred task, according to Mayke de Jong. This *ministerium* was shared with the various ordinances of the realm, with the bishops, king and nobles all working in conjunction to maintain a pious and strong kingdom.

This proved very unusual at the time; women, with the exception of a few, generally did not exhibit this type of training or learning. Historians have been able to differentiate her more feminine writing from that of her male counterparts to prove she most likely wrote it.⁶⁴

The lady in questions name was Dhuoda; the wife of the ruler of Septimania in Northern Spain, Bernard. He, a good friend to Charlemagne, however, constantly fought with Louis the Pious. When placed behind bars and his sons taken as hostage, Dhuoda wrote her *Handbook for William*, to one of her sons so that he may grow up to be a good ruler and a good man, most importantly in her mind, that he be a good Christian. Throughout her book she exhorts him to love God with all his heart, how to pray, lead a moral life, social life, etc. Her writing style shows much more Biblical teaching than the other works that shall be presented. The work proves valuable in understanding that women were beginning to find a voice in Court, which proved to be a rarity in the medieval world.

The discussion on who wrote the earliest Carolingian *Speculum Principum* proves an interesting one. First among the authors discussed arrives M.L Laistner, writing in the 1920's, argued that Smaragdus wrote the first *Speculum Principum* in 813, however, this theory was disproved in 1955 with the arrival of Luitpold Wallach, who argued that Alcuin's *Rhetorica or Via Regia* as the first of the genre.⁶⁵ However, in 1999, Joanna Story brought a new argument to the field. Story argued that Cathwulf's work predated Alcuin's by almost twenty years, thus making it the oldest *Speculum Principum*. The reason this argument needs noting is because

⁶⁴ Dhuoda, *A Handbook for William: a Carolingian Woman's council to her son*, trans. Carol Neal, (Washington D.C: The Catholic University press, 1991) pp. XIII

⁶⁵ Luitpold Wallach, "Alcuin on Virtues and Vices: A Manual for a Carolingian Soldier," in *The Harvard Theological Review* Vol 48. No. 3 (Jul. 1955.) pp. 175-195. M.L.W Laistner, "The Date and the Recipient of Smaragdus' *Via Regia*," *Speculum*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (July, 1928) pp. 392-397.

many of the future *Speculum Principum* copy from the earlier writings, either adding portions, detracting portions, or mostly staying true to the older writings. Although *Speculum Principum* predate the Carolingian time period, this chapter only deals with the Carolingian models.

Cathwulf appears in history only for a fleeting moment with his minute letter to Charlemagne, dated around 775. Although relatively unknown, Joanna Story argues that his letter has long been known to historians interested in the formative years of Charlemagne's royal dynasty and in the people and ideas that shaped the Carolingians peculiar brand of kingship.⁶⁶ Nearly twenty years later, a new work arrives and appears fairly similar to Cathwulf's. Alcuin mirrors Cathwulf's so closely that some scholars suppose that Alcuin knew Cathwulf's letter directly.⁶⁷ The letter itself, Joanna Story, argues, paves way for Alcuin and many of the other writers of the genre of *Speculum Principum*.⁶⁸

Accompanied by a series of formulaic exhortations in which Charlemagne is asked to preserve and endow the Church, to protect the poor and the widowed, and to take good counsel from wise men and the like, Cathwulf's letter to Charlemagne can be classified as a *littera exhortatoria*, or an early example of the genre of political writing that was to become known as the *Via Regia* or *Speculum Principis*, the "way of kings" or "mirror for princes" Though neither particularly long nor especially profound, Cathwulf's letter to Charlemagne with its references to the biblical kingship of David and Solomon places it as an important stepping-stone in the evolution of Carolingian political thought.⁶⁹ Overall this small piece in the historiography of the

⁶⁶ Joanna Story, "Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint Denis", in *Speculum*, Vol. 74, No. 1, Jan 1999. Pp. 1-21.

⁶⁷ Story, "Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint Denis."

⁶⁸ Story, "Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint Denis."

Via Regis or *Speculum Principis* enables the historian to attain a small understanding on the roots of the Carolingian version of these works.

Alcuin, one of the most famous intellectuals and writers in the Carolingian time period, wrote several letters and treatises regarding kingship. Both his *Rhetoric* and his *Vices and Virtues* depict the virtues that he believed as quintessential in kingship. The *Rhetoric* is a dialogue between Charlemagne and Alcuin, in which Charlemagne asked Alcuin a question and Alcuin answered. Charlemagne poses numerous questions, but his questions regarding kingship are the most important. Alcuin explained that, God has granted leadership in government to princes (*illis eos praeesse voluit*) that they may guide the people.⁷⁰ However, Alcuin, extols the king to also not be merciful in putting down wrong doers. “May God help Charlemagne everywhere to subdue through the triumph of his terror the hostile nations and to subdue the wildest spirits to the Christian faith. The authority of Charlemagne’s *potestas* prove him to be a *rex*, and his persevering diligence in spreading the word of God makes him a *praedicator*.”⁷¹

His works, however, prove a stark contrast to the others for this reason. Alcuin believes that a king needs to wage war in a fashion that could be construed as barbaric. These letters and treatises generally entreat upon the king to protect the weak and helpless, but hardly ever illicit emotions concerning the massacre of enemies. However, he also entreated upon Charlemagne “to pour forth the light of truth into the pagans.”⁷² He further states “How great will your glory

⁶⁹ Story, “Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint Denis, 2.

⁷⁰ Luitpold Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968) 7

⁷¹ Alcuin, “Epistles 178 Alcuin to Charlemagne 799”. in Wallach’s, *Alcuin and Charlemagne*. 16.

⁷² Even though these were written during the wars with the Saxon’s, Alcuin still hoped to win souls like the wars fought in earlier Carolingian times. Example the missionary wars under Pippin, Carloman and even Charles Martel.

be, O most blessed king, on the day of eternal retribution, when all those who through your good care were converted from the worship of idols to the recognition of the True God.”⁷³ So in a sense, Alcuin expected Charlemagne to act in such a manner in order to save the people from themselves, however odd it may sound. Alcuin’s work also shows he did not fear Charlemagne and believed he had the right to help keep him in check.

The *De Virtutibus et Vitiis* or *On Vices and Virtues*⁷⁴ appears fairly similar to the *Liber Manualis*⁷⁵ of Dhuoda to her son, Alcuin’s work was written for Wido, Margrave of the Marca Britanniae. Alcuin outlines the treatise into four parts: the first portion covers virtues that a noble needed to have in order to appear pious and christianly, the second portion defines the eight principal vices, the very last chapter contains the two final portions. It defines and is also a disquisition on four cardinal virtues; wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance.⁷⁶ The person the treatise is ascribed to, constantly involved himself in battles according to Alcuin, thusly he needed to also remain a good and law abiding citizen when not engaged in war.⁷⁷ “This treatise needed use as a handbook to guide the soldier Wido in moral conflicts that might occur in the everyday affairs of a military man and royal judge.”⁷⁸ Although Wido clearly does hold not the

⁷³ Alcuin, “Epistles 110”, in Wallach’s, *Alcuin and Charlemagne*

⁷⁴ Alcuin, *De Virtutibus et Vitiis Liber*, Trans. Rachel Stone, (The Heroic Age, 2015.)
<http://www.heroicage.org/issues/16/stone.php>

⁷⁵ Dhuoda, *Liber Manualis or Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman’s Counsel for her Son*, Trans. Carol Neel, (Washington DC: Catholic University of America, 1991.

⁷⁶ Liutpold Wallach, “Alcuin on Virtues and Vices: A Manual for a Carolingian Soldier, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (July 1955) 175-195.

⁷⁷ Wallach, “Alcuin on Virtues and Vices”, 177.

⁷⁸ Wallach, “Alcuin on Virtues and Vices,” 179.

title prince, this work, nonetheless, gives a slightly different approach to the *Speculum Principum*, because it fits the genre and guidelines of what comprises a *Speculum Principum*.

Among the first Carolingian *Speculum Principum*, arrives Smaragdus's *Via Regia*. Written around 813, moreover, began a trend that lasted until the sixteenth century and possibly beyond⁷⁹. Although not much is known about him other than his work, many of the other writers pick up on things Smaragdus writes about and use them. From this point on we see many more of these types of works written and this helps historians to gain a better understanding into Carolingian kingship.

He may have been an Irishman similar to Sedulius Scotus, or he could have even been a Visigoth from Spain.⁸⁰ Smaragdus like many of the other writers, began life as a monk, but later achieved a higher position within the Church. Smaragdus helped establish the monastery at Saint Mihiel after serving as a principal for a convent school.⁸¹ Charlemagne entrusted him with the monasteries keeping and he became abbot. The sources prove unclear on his origins; however, this should not detract from his writings. Many historians have written that he addressed his work to Louis the Pious, but speculation suggests the possibility of its purpose directed to Charlemagne.⁸² Smaragdus used his knowledge and background in working with Charlemagne to construct this text with the intention of Louis learning from his father's actions. By understanding the works origin, historians gain a better understanding of the man who wrote it,

⁷⁹ *The Prince*, written by Machiavelli, hails as the most well-known in the genre.

⁸⁰ M.L.W Laistner, "The Date and the Recipient of Smaragdus' *Via Regia*," *Speculum*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (July, 1928) pp. 392-397.

⁸¹ *Ibid* 393.

⁸² *ibid* 392

but also to its targeted audience. In his work, Smaragdus extols the virtues of Charlemagne as a good ruler and how Louis should look up to his father and become a good Christian man like him.

Oddly, he doesn't discuss any other good rulers from history rather; he only cites biblical leaders as his other primary examples of good rulers.⁸³ Laistner argues that because of the language presented in the *Via Regia* it had to have been written for Louis. "There is an exhortation to the king to remedy abuses in the Church, which gains greatly in point if read in light of Benedict of Aniane's zeal for reform and of the interested in, and support of, Benedict's policy that Louis had shown from early manhood."⁸⁴ He argues that this proves one of the most essential parts in what constitutes a *Speculum Principum*.⁸⁵

The next *Speculum Principum*, Einhard's *Vita Karol*, Einhard exemplifies the life of King David as one that should be followed to Charlemagne. Although the work concerned classifies itself as a *vita*, it still fulfills the principles of a *Speculum Principum*. It described how Charlemagne maintained himself as a good king and what he did that made him good, so in that sense it could be construed as a *Speculum Principum*, but mainly, describes a history depicting Charlemagne's conquests and life. One of the best things it does for historians is it gives a greater look into what a 9th century chronicler or historian viewed kingship as. Charlemagne described as tall, at "slightly over six feet tall" along with his physical presence commanded every room he entered and he remained dignified whether he sat or stood.⁸⁶ Einhard also gives

⁸³ Ibid 394.

⁸⁴ ibid 395.

⁸⁵ Ibid 395.

⁸⁶ Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, trans G.Waitz, ed. Paul Dutton, (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004) pp. 41

further descriptions into his physical body, clothing, his interests, but also his moral standpoints, oddly enough Charlemagne was not much of a drinker (only three per meal, considered nothing at the time)⁸⁷ like one would assume most medieval kings are portrayed. From Einhard's standpoint, historians learn what the biographers of kings viewed as important in terms of kingship and this proves crucial in understanding why the *Speculum Principum* demand attention. These next three writers prove themselves as the strongest and best-writers works on the *Speculum Principum*.

Jonas of Orleans, born in the Kingdom of Aquitaine around the year 780, showed great promise. He rose to the rank of Bishop of Orleans with the expulsion of Bishop Theodulf for his alleged complicity in the revolt of Bernard of Italy against Louis the Pious.⁸⁸ Of the three works that remain, his *De Institutione Regia*, written roughly between 827-831 after he advised the young Pippin at his court in Aquitaine until he became bishop in 818, is his most important.⁸⁹ One of the most important things that he argued, differed considerably and added something new to the historiography of the genre. For Jonas, the king's power is derived from God rather than any human origin. His authority as God's appointee is very great, and his subjects and servants owe him their unswerving allegiance as a matter of religious duty. But, his position also proves very vulnerable and is relatively humble.⁹⁰ If he does not govern the people of God justly and

⁸⁷ *ibid* 42.

⁸⁸ Jonas of Orleans, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract: the De Institutione Regia by Jonas of Orleans*, Trans. R. W. Dyson. (Smithtown, NY: Exposition Press, 1983) pp. xi.

⁸⁹ Jonas, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract*, xi.

⁹⁰ Jonas, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract*, xiv.

appoint subordinates who can be relied on to do the same, then he will place his kingdom in jeopardy and will be deposed.

“The king is called upon to rule justly. If he rules piously and justly and with mercy, then he deserves to be called a king; but if he holds himself aloof from these things, he forfeits the kingly title. For the men of ancient times called all kings tyrants; and, although the title of King has subsequently come to be applied to those who rule piously and justly and with mercy, those who are impious and unjust and cruel in their government are more properly to be called tyrants than kings. And so, since a king is said to be one who rules rightly, let him make it his first concern, with the help of Christ’s grace, to purify himself and his own household of unworthy deeds, and to cause it to abound in good work, so that the rest of his subjects may always receive a good example from it.”⁹¹

Jonas wrote this work, as previously stated, for Pippin of Aquitaine. This writing occurred during a time in which Louis the Pious and Pippin quarreled. The way that Louis handled this argument spoke to Jonas and he congratulated both Louis and Pippin for the way that they resolved the issues. Jonas constantly, throughout his time as bishop, worked tirelessly to assist Louis with everything he could. One of the many things he constantly relates to Pippin is that he needs to keep wise counselors. After the death of Benedict of Aniane, Louis the Pious struggled with choosing good helpers in the running of the kingdom. Jonas saw how this affected the kingdom and did not want the same problems to arise for Pippin. Moreover, this treatise proved to be similar to later *Speculum Principum* and helped the later writers have a solid background for what comprised of a good *Speculum Principum*.

⁹¹ Ibid 14.

Because of Jonas' position as a Bishop in the Church, he had a different position than some of the other writers mentioned. Jonas not only wrote the works, but also sat in the general councils and possessed the ability to help make sure the king followed these rules. After the *Concilium Germanicus*, Bishops and Abbots sat on the Councils with the nobility, therefore, Jonas and his brethren had a say in courtly matters. This placement would have also provided the opportunity to assist the kings in maintaining their godly duties to the Church and people.

Sedulius Scotus, born in the middle of the 9th century, in Ireland, grew up in a monastery. He, a notable monk and scholar in his native land, felt the call of intellectualism at the court of Louis the Pious which drew him to France. He joined a colony of Irish teachers in Liège and became a teacher at St. Lambert.⁹² He, noted as a scholar who composed a great many works on education, wrote *De Rectoribus Christianis*, which holds most importance. Scotus says that the king needs to be just and clement; not hasty or immoderate in his judgments; not tyrannical or arbitrary; perspicacious in his choice of queen and companions; not susceptible to flattery; studious in avoiding anger, pride and greed.⁹³ This is fairly typical and entirely predictable according to Dyson in his introduction into the works of Sedulius Scotus.⁹⁴ The king needs to first be able to rule himself and then he is able to rule others. "It behooves him to observe a threefold rule, namely terror, order and love. For unless he is loved and feared equally, his ordinance will not in the least be able to endure"⁹⁵ The kingdom is kept safe based on how the king rules, if he proves to rule weakly and unjustly then the kingdom is in peril.

⁹² Sedulius Scotus, *De Rectoribus Christianis*, trans. R.W. Dyson, (New York: The Boydell Press, 2010) 5.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 38.

⁹⁴ *Ibid* 39.

Scottus, used examples from the lives of Constantine, Theodosius I, and David as royal models for his addressee, Lothar II. Unlike his predecessors and successors, he views Charlemagne as solely a king and not the leader of the Church. He defends the Church and claims their independence from the crown.⁹⁶ Most likely this differing ideology in his writings comes from his Irish roots and not living through the reforming of the Carolingian Church. Scottus, unlike his contemporaries, disagreed with the combination of the Church and State, but he still desired for the king to act in a Christ-like fashion.⁹⁷ Scottus and the other writers of the *Speculum Principum*, with their differing ideologies, but similar messages, allow the Church to have greater power over the kings through letters and words, rather than force.

Of all the writers of the *Speculum Principum*, Hincmar of Rheims gains the most importance. He lived during the lifetime of Charles the Bald as well as the life of Charles' sons. He rose to become the most prominent lawyer and statesmen of the time as well as a bishop and advisor to the king. He saw the path that Louis the Pious set down when he could not control his sons and thusly wanted to help Carloman, the grandson of Louis the Pious, not go down the same path. He wrote books describing the way the palace should be run and also how the king ought to rule. His work entitled, *On the Governance of the Palace*⁹⁸, he explicitly set down in a similar fashion, many of the things expressed by Scotus, Jonas and Smaragdus. But, among the things he changed, arose the idea that the king needed to be more than just a religious figure, he needed to

⁹⁵ Quem decet trinam observare regulam, terrorem scilicet et ordinationem atque amorem. Nisi enim ametur partier et metuatur, ordinatio ilius constare minime poterit. Scotus, *De Rectoribus Christianis*. 58.

⁹⁶ Ibid 5.

⁹⁷Ibid, 5.

⁹⁸ Hincmar, "On the Governance of the Palace." in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, Trans. Paul Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004.)

lead the household with an iron fist, yet remain both just and compassionate. This contrast proved to be hard for many rulers such as Louis the Pious, for Hincmar desired his king to look back at the life of Charlemagne as an example for properly guiding his family.

Hincmar, importantly, stated that “the king ought to maintain within himself the dignity of his own name. For the name “king” intellectually signifies that he fulfill the office of “corrector” for all his subjects. But how can he who does not correct his own morals be able to correct others when they are wicked? It is by the justice of the king that the throne is exalted, and by truth that the governments of people are strengthened.”⁹⁹ By appointing counts and bishops who hated greed and love justice, the ruler assures himself of less issues with God. “It profits nothing to have the authority of commanding, if the Lord himself does not have the strength or virtue. But this strength of virtue does not require external might, although this is also necessary for secular lords, but rather inner spiritual power.”¹⁰⁰ He lists three things that become necessary for kingship: fear, obedience, and love. If the ruler does not receive both love and fear, his commands hold little power. “Through favors and friendliness, let his seek to be loved, and through just punishments, not for injury to himself, but violations of the law of God, let him strive to be feared.”¹⁰¹

Although there are many instances of kings, acting out the paths set down for them in the *Speculum Principum*, no other king exemplified these works more than Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. Charlemagne and Louis constantly forgave their enemies, treated their families

⁹⁹ Hincmar, “On the Governance of the Palace.” 518.

¹⁰⁰ Hincmar, “On the Governance of the Palace.” 520.

¹⁰¹ Hincmar, “On the Governance of the Palace.” 521.

respectfully, took care of the Church, and attempted to follow God to the best of their abilities. Often, instead of killing their enemies, these two kings' threw their enemies into a monastery and tonsured them. This not only allowed them to dispose of enemies, but also retained the good graces of the Pope and the clergy.

Perhaps the best example of this ideal king occurred in 822. When Louis the Pious struggled against his nephew, Bernard of Italy, over the over lordship of Italy, Louis attempted to end the fight quickly. Bernard attempted to declare independence from his Uncle the Emperor, but Louis declared that the land belonged to the Carolingians and himself. Louis and his sons marched into Italy and forced Bernard to surrender. Bernard was sentenced to death, but, out of the kindness of his heart, Louis sought to only blind him for his transgressions against the Carolingian Empire. Unfortunately, Bernard died from the blinding that went horribly; moreover, he suffered greatly for three days from the botched attempt and, much to the chagrin of Louis, perished. Bernard's death caused Louis to become horribly upset and he worried that he allowed regicide.¹⁰² His chroniclers stated that he never wanted Bernard to die; moreover, his intention was to treat him very well once he healed from the blinding, perhaps even give him a monastery.¹⁰³

The actions Louis next took not only aided his strength as a king thusly proving himself to his people, but also relieved his soul of his burden. As previously mentioned, in 822 Louis gathered his bishops and with them held a public penance. This not only showed his remorse in front of a vast crowd of people, but also strengthened his power over them by showing that even

¹⁰² Louis's Public Penance in 822", in *Carolingian Civilization: a Reader*, ed. Paul Edward Dutton, (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004) pp. 205.

¹⁰³ Ibid 206.

a King needed to ask forgiveness from God. Although Louis would later struggle against his sons and hold blame for the collapse of the Carolingian empire because of his bickering sons, this moment, at the height of his power shows that he truly earned the appellation the Pious. Louis' actions portray a king who not only knew the literature of the time, which discussed what made a king good and righteous, but he also instinctively knew why it was important to read these works. From an early age he was brought up knowing he would rule and thusly learned from these works concerning what comprised all the parts of a good king.¹⁰⁴ Louis the Pious will be further addressed in the next chapter.

These examples of the *Speculum Principum*, put into practice, show that these works were actually important to the kings, as well as the people. Because the public penance of 822 improved the power of Louis, it crucially improved the idea of learning from the *Speculum Principum* based on the fact that Louis followed them and it benefitted him greatly. Pippin of Aquitaine did not live long enough to become one of the kings of the divided empire, but he nonetheless learned from these works as well and it helped him reconcile with his father. These writings later paved way for other works and some would consider these works the background writings for later *Speculum Principum*.

In conclusion, the *Speculum Principum* essentially proved how to be a good king through their usage in juxtaposition with the evidence found in the public penance of 822. These works played a key role in the literature of the time and help to give historians a better understanding of the time. Without these works, the role of the King in Carolingian history would be diminished.

¹⁰⁴ Mayke De Jong,. *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 34.

Therefore, the *Speculum Principum* should be viewed as one of the most important forms of documents in interpreting kingship in Medieval France. These works did allow for the overthrow of Louis the Pious in 833 and show the power of the Church in Carolingian France, but nonetheless enable historians to view kingship in a different way.

CHAPTER 4

LOUIS THE PIOUS AND THE FRAGMENTATION OF THE EMPIRE

When the good or bad deeds of the ancients, especially of princes, are drawn back into memory, a twofold advantage is conferred upon those who read about them: the one serves to benefit and edify them, and the other to warn them. The foremost men stand on the heights like watchtowers and therefore cannot hide, so the more widely their fame is disseminated, the more broadly it is understood. To the extent that many are attracted by their good, then, they boast of emulating the most distinguished men. In imitating their zeal, although in less style, we do not wish to be careless with the present or begrudging to the future, so we present the deeds and life of the orthodox emperor Louis, whom God loved.¹⁰⁵

-The Astronomer

Why was Louis known as the Pious? It is clear that piety at this point in time, was not only a main focus of the clergy, but also Louis, why did he devote his energy to this? His biographers make allusions to his “pious actions” and Ermoldus even calls him the pious Caesar.¹⁰⁶ The revival set forth by his ancestors came into fruition during his reign as he blended the sacral and monarchical powers together. Louis believed that the king received at his ordination, laws to rule piously and if any fault was on himself or that of his family, it reflected on his kingdom. From his early life studying religion, Louis understood the rules the Church began to establish on kingship. Under Louis’ reign the Church possessed so much power that it removed him from office for his “misdeeds” and placed him in a monastery. Nonetheless, Louis

¹⁰⁵ The Astronomer, “Vita Hludowici ,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, trans. Thomas Noble (University Park, Pennsylvania : The Pennsylvania University Press). 227.

¹⁰⁶ Ermoldus Nigellus, “In honor of Louis,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, Trans. Thomas Noble, (City Park, Pennsylvania: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). 170.

set forth to work with his bishops in order to create a stronger empire, his desire to live a “monkish” life shows signs of exaggeration, but he, according to his biographers strove for this ideal.

Growing up, Louis had two older brothers in line to the throne. Therefore, the likelihood of becoming emperor appeared small, and enabling him to entertain ideals of a monastic life “until his father warned him to desist.”¹⁰⁷ Louis, even after becoming emperor always kept bishops as his closest advisors because he trusted them more than other nobles. He, akin to his father, had monks and abbots, such as Benedict of Aniane who became main advisors to the king.¹⁰⁸ Before his ascension to the throne, Louis, directly or indirectly held responsibility for the construction of a dozen or more houses for priests in Aquitaine.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, of the most importance was his creation of the monastery at Aniane.¹¹⁰

With the creation of the monastery of Aniane, one of his closest friend Bishop Benedict, began to bring back the Benedictine rules and side by side with Louis, attempted to reform the Carolingian Church based on those principles. They also worked on continuing the works on penitentials, which were a set of rules to govern everyday life in either the monastery or in the secular realm. Louis loved Benedict so much that according to *the Life of Benedict of Aniane*, he granted him control over all the monasteries in the kingdom.¹¹¹ However, because of the death of

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Noble, “The Monastic idealas as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious.,” 239.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Noble, “The Monastic idealas as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious.,” 239

¹⁰⁹ Ermoldus Nigellus, “In honor of Louis,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, Trans. Thomas Noble, 133 (City Park, Pennsylvania: The University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). For a full look into the names of these houses or monasteries see *Vita Hludowici* by the Astonomer. 19.

¹¹⁰ The Astronomer, “Vita Hludowici .” 244.

Benedict of Aniane, Louis's most important moral supporter in 821, Louis had to deal with the other bishops who did not believe that Louis was a strong or capable ruler.¹¹²

In 813, Louis received a summons from his father to attend him in court. Charlemagne had a second crown created just for this occasion, he then placed that crown upon Louis' head proclaiming him joint emperor. During this time, Charlemagne also had all of the assembled nobles and bishops swear that they would serve Louis as they had him. This, in Charlemagne's mind, enabled the succession of Louis to the throne to be less bloody and easy. After named co-Emperor by Charlemagne, Louis went back to Aquitaine, but he remained close to his father until Charlemagne's death one year later. This moment tells historians a few things.

Charlemagne knew he was close to death and wanted to make sure his succession fell to Louis. Charlemagne also did not want Louis to have issues within his first year of becoming Emperor either with the succession or even with the Church. It appears odd that Louis returned home after this moment, but he must have had things to tie up in Aquitaine before he could become full Emperor.

After Charlemagne's death in 814, he left a set of guidelines or admonitions for Louis. Among the final admonitions of his father, as recounted by Thegan in his *Life of Louis*, Louis was advised to: "Show unflinching mercy to his younger brothers and sisters, his nephews, and all his relatives." Then he (Charlemagne) directed Louis to honor the bishop as fathers, to love the people as sons, to compel and direct haughty and worthless men into the ways of salvation, and to be a consoler of monks and a father to the poor. Louis was further advised "to appoint faithful

¹¹¹ Ardo, "The Life of Benedict," in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton, 192 (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004).

¹¹² Hilduin of St-Denis, "Louis's Public Penance in 822," in *Carolingian Civilization: A reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Toronto : Broadview Press, 2004).

and God-fearing ministers (bishops mainly), who would hold unjust gifts in loathing.”¹¹³ The exhortation of Charlemagne to his son greatly influenced his life and beliefs. De Jong makes the argument that kingship was conceived of as a sacred task (*ministerium*), shared with the various ordinances in the realm, bishops and counts first and foremost.¹¹⁴ This idea of language informed Louis, who tried to obey his father’s well wishes; that he was also expected to obey them. If he left the short and narrow path, he was to be corrected by his aids.

Does Louis take this to heart and build his empire with the thought of having bishops be his main aid: and was he already inclined towards the idea as Thomas Noble calls it, “a monastic ideal as model for empire”?¹¹⁵ His argument alongside Mayke de Jong’s argument that Louis’ kingdom was a “penitential state” create the strongest parts of the historiographical arguments for this study.¹¹⁶ Together with the bishops the emperor held responsibilities to God for the moral well-being of his subjects. If he fell short then he would have to submit himself to the charge of negligence. The ideas of kingship as a type of monastic rule lead the reader all the way back to Saint Augustine in the fourth century, but more recently in the works of Smaragdus, Cathwulf, and Sedulius Scotus.

¹¹³ Thegan, “Life of Louis,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004) 161.

¹¹⁴ Mayke De Jong, “Power and Humility in Carolingian Society,” *Early Medieval Europe* 1, no. 1 (2007): 33.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Noble, “The Monastic ideals as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious.,” *Revue Bénédictine* 86 (1976): 236-288

¹¹⁶ Mayke De Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

The beginning of Louis' reign marks one of the high points in Carolingian France. They held more power than any other family in Western Europe and also strove to bring back the glory of Rome. Yet, they also strove to acquire the title, the "new Israel" that Carolingian rhetoricians began ascribing to them under Charlemagne.¹¹⁷ Louis, alongside his able bodied ministers worked hard to keep the kingdom together. His issues began, as mentioned previously, when his close friend and advisor Benedict died. With his death, Louis began to, in the words of some of his biographers, choose poor council.

He further garnered the agitation of his sons by remarrying and breaking his word to them regarding their inheritance. The *ordinatio imperii* of 817 essentially divided his kingdom between his three sons, through his first wife, Lothar, Louis the German and Pippin. However, this document placed the two younger brothers, Louis and Pippin under the control of their oldest brother even though they would still be kings, which angered them and their constituents greatly.¹¹⁸ When Louis the Pious' wife died, he married Judith and she quickly had a son, later known as Charles the Bald. Louis desired to give him land as well, but the three brothers already held all the land and did not want to give it up. This led to numerous conflicts throughout the rest of Louis the Pious' life.

Louis' monkish attributes, recounted by Thegan, depict an interesting and important picture. According to Thegan, "Louis went to church every single morning to pray, and bending his knees, he humbly touched his forehead on the pavement and prayed for a long time,

¹¹⁷ This was a trend that not only the Carolingians did, but also the Merovingians, the Anglo-Saxons, but numerous countries throughout history.

¹¹⁸ Various political protests arose against this including *Visio cuiusdam pauperulae mulieris* or *The vision of the Poor Woman of Laon*. Found *Carolingian Civilization: A reader*, ed. Paul Dutton (Toronto : Broadview Press, 2004). This vision shows the anger a little of the two younger sons, but more importantly shows how the nephew of Louis the Pious, Bernard, is completely ignored from his Italian inheritance and instead is killed.

sometimes tearfully.”¹¹⁹ Louis was adorned with every good quality, he was generous, he was temperate in food and drink, and inconspicuous in dress.¹²⁰ Another monkish attribute was that he never smiled nor showed his teeth and never raised his voice in laughter.¹²¹ The Astronomer also writes similarly worded sentences such as: “the most pious spirit of the king was roused to divine worship and the exaltation of the Church, so that his works proclaimed that he was not only a king, but also a priest.”¹²² This proves a stark contrast to his father, who almost always held the center stage in everything he did.

Examples of Louis’ piety and his notion that he, like an abbot, was to forgive multiple times the sins committed by his nobles and family can be found throughout the Astronomer’s account of Louis as well as Thegan’s *Life of Louis*. It is possible to say that like his father, who was recognized as the new David, he too wanted to exemplify the virtues of David.¹²³ Like David who forgave Absalom for all his iniquities, so too does Louis. Both Hincmar and Sedulius Scottus also espouse this Davidic tradition.¹²⁴ These virtues would include the forgiveness of sins by his sons and nobles; he is slow to anger and tries to abide by love.¹²⁵ Throughout the years of

¹¹⁹ Thegan, “The Deeds of Emperor Louis,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, trans. Thomas F.X. Noble, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2009) 203.

¹²⁰ Ibid 203.

¹²¹ Ibid 203.

¹²² The Astronomer, “Vita Hludowici,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, trans. Thomas Noble, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009) 243.

¹²³ Nickname given to Charlemagne by Alcuin. Alcuin, “To the King on Books, Learning and Old Age,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton, (Toronto : Broadview Press, 2004) 120.

¹²⁴ Sedulius Scottus, “On Christian Rulers,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, trans. Paul Dutton (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004). Hincmar, “On the Governance of the Palace,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, trans. Paul Dutton, 516-532 (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004). 374-386.

¹²⁵ Examples can be found in *Life of Louis* and the Astronomer’s account of Louis’s life.

830-833 during the rebellions, he continuously shows that he was willing to forgive his sons, even amidst such circumstance as being dethroned. After he was reinstated, he still forgave Lothar and let him keep his kingdom.¹²⁶ He also forgives his sons Louis and Charles multiple times during these tumultuous years. The continuous forgiveness by Louis, portrays him as a “monkish ruler.”

It appears from a thorough reading of Sedulius Scottus and Hincmar, that at least Sedulius depicts his ideal king somewhat in the likeness of Louis. Although this is a lofty claim to state, the evidence and Sedulius’ wordage suggests this might be the case. He states, “For, what are the rulers of the Christian people unless ministers of the Almighty? Moreover, he is a faithful and proper servant who has done with sincere devotion whatever his lord and master has commanded to him.”¹²⁷ A king is to also devote himself with pious zeal to the almighty King’s glory and honor. Therefore, the pious ruler should fervently strive to obey the will and holy commands of the supreme master of all things by whose divine will and ordination he does not doubt himself to have risen to the summit of authority.¹²⁸ Sedulius also depicts six key ways a ruler should justly rule: he restrains his will, considers useful councils pertaining both to his own benefit and to those of his people, avoids using inane speech, uses his mind and reads both the writings of glorious princes and also the Bible, he is fearful of coming any dishonor of a pernicious deed, and finally, when he notably performs deeds in honor of the Lord with a devout will so it will shine publically for the people.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Thegan, “Life of Louis,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004). 175.

¹²⁷ Sedulius Scottus, “On Christian Rulers,” 376.

¹²⁸ *Ibid* 376.

For Hincmar, being a king meant acting as a “corrector” of the people.¹³⁰ Not only must he be able to correct his own morals, but also those of his people. It is by the justice of the king that the throne is exalted, and by truth that the governments of people are strengthened.¹³¹ “It is even less permissible for a king than for anyone else, no matter what his station, to act contemptuously against the divine laws. Therefore, the prince of the land ought strenuously to provide and secure that God be not offended in those person who chiefly maintain the Christian religion and who keep others from offending. The king by divine judgment has received ecclesiastical property to defend and protect.” The question arises then, how does this translate to Louis’s rule? To answer this question, both Sedulius and Hincmar give examples of kingship that depicts facets of Louis’s reign shown in the writings of Thegan, Ermoldus, and the Astronomer.

An example of the piety and “monkishness” of Louis is shown through his public penance in 822. The need for such a public penance arose because of the treatment of his nephew Bernard of Italy. Bernard plotted against his uncle and his failed *coup d’etat* led to his imprisoning. Rather than outright executing him, Louis ordered him blinded, a slightly less cruel option, but Bernard resisted and died from the wounds suffered during the blinding in 818. Louis also treated his half-brothers poorly with his rise to the throne. Hilduin stated that, “After receiving the advice of his bishops and nobles, the lord emperor was reconciled with those brothers whom he had ordered, against their will, to be tonsured. He made a public confession and performed penance. He carried this out in the presence of all his people at the assembly which he held in August 822 at Attigny. At this gathering he took the trouble to correct with the

¹²⁹ Ibid 378.

¹³⁰ Hincmar, “On the Governence of the Palace,” 519.

¹³¹ Ibid 519.

greatest care whatever things of this sort he and his father had done.”¹³² Thomas Noble argues that Louis did this, in order to persuade the bishops and people to follow him as well.¹³³ Furthermore, Louis did not want to set a bad example for his people so one can assume this is why he did the public penance instead of private penance.

De Jong makes a similar argument regarding this. She claims that in 822, Louis “acted from a position of strength, and this was exactly the quality that his behavior must have conveyed to those present—certainly to the clerics. Instead of forcing him into obedience, the bishops followed his ‘most salubrious example.’”¹³⁴ While these are all equally important arguments, it is hard to actually grasp the mind of Louis at this point in time. Yes, from the sources it appears that he really strove to be a good example of how a pious person should act, but it is impossible to actually get inside the mind of Louis. Thegan, Ermoldus, and the Astronomer all give him the epithet “the pious emperor,” this would suggest that he was, indeed, striving to aid the people in their lives.

One interesting note to make is that Thegan, Louis and Notker all write similarly about their respective kings. Although Notker wrote much later on the life of Charlemagne, his writing concluded that his view of Charlemagne; was quite similar to the positive portrayal of a pious and almost “monkish” king espoused by both Thegan and the Astronomer about Louis.¹³⁵ Notker claims that Charlemagne is a God-willed priest in several places as well as stating that control

¹³² Hilduin of St-Denis, “Louis's Public Penance in 822,” Pg 205.

¹³³ Thomas Noble, “The Monastic ideals as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious.,” 246.

¹³⁴ Mayke De Jong, “Power and Humility in Carolingian Society,” 33.

¹³⁵ Notker Balbulus, “The Deeds of Emperor Charles the Great,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, Trans. Thomas Noble. (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press , 2009). This is taken from the introduction by Thomas Noble. 56.

and protection of the Church were fundamental royal duties.¹³⁶ Since Notker was writing later in history than either Thegan or the Astronomer, it is possible that he, likewise, employed their practice of calling a king “priestly or monkish.”

The difference between public and private penitence is quite obvious, nevertheless, they both played a much larger role in the Carolingian world than we think. Penitentials became a commodity, which many wished to gain knowledge from, however, because they varied and appear rather contradictory and different from each other. Because of this, they were banned at the council of Paris in 829.¹³⁷ However, a reform on penitentials, led mainly by Ebbo and other likeminded Bishops, began to take place surrounding the controversy of “falsely worded penitential.” Bishop Halitgar of Cambrai became one of the main reformers on penitentials, after Ebbo asked him to write one.¹³⁸ The main purpose of Halitgar’s penitential was because Ebbo of Reims asked him to write one because of the confusion among the others.¹³⁹ Traditional penance was ordered thusly: a bishop would impose the penance upon the penitent in a solemn public ritual, which involved the penitent being driven from the Church and forced to wear sackcloth. He would then “make amends” in a monastery; “his reconciliation consisted of an equally solemn reentry into the community of the faithful.”¹⁴⁰ However, if the crime by the penitent had not attracted public notice, he would meet “secretly” with a priest and confess; this would then

¹³⁶ Ibid 56, 60 “Most religious of Kings”, etc.

¹³⁷John T. McNeill, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990). Pg. 286.

¹³⁸Ibid 286.

¹³⁹ Halitgar, “Penitential of Halitgar,” in *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader*, ed. Paul Dutton, (Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004). 235.

¹⁴⁰ Mayke De Jong, “Power and Humility in Carolingian Society,” 33.

lead him down a path of penance, which would be found in one of the handbooks.¹⁴¹ However, if the sin was great enough, it did not matter if the penance was a secret one, it would be brought into light; furthermore, the penitent would be forced to make a public confession. Normally this would only occur if the sin was “bad enough.” These sins would include: murders, parricides, incest, heretics, robbers and their like. Public penance was called *paenitentia occulta* and private was called *paenitentia privata*.¹⁴² The point in which they differed was finally distinguished at the Council of Rheims in 813.¹⁴³

Getting back to Louis and penance, Louis, forced to do battle with his rebellious sons, lost in battle in 833 at the Field of Lies. Lothar, his oldest son, and his cronies alongside several bishops judged him incapable of ruling and agreed the only way to depose him entailed a public penance. One of the most important things that occurred during the Public Penance of 833 was that Lothar and the bishops took away Louis’s sword and armor.¹⁴⁴ By taking his *cingulum militia* away from him, it signified his utter deposition.¹⁴⁵ This came back to the ideal that a king without a sword and strength could not rule an Empire. His opponents meant to make Louis powerless and to even force him to take up a monastic habit.¹⁴⁶ Louis was destroyed by the same practice that he wished to serve. The same men he had raised up to help him rule the kingdom did him away. Thegan would say that Ebbo, the bishop of Rheims, was one of the causes of the

¹⁴¹ John T. McNeill, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance*

¹⁴² Mayke De Jong, “Power and Humility in Carolingian Society,” 33.

¹⁴³ Ibid 35.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid 170-171.

¹⁴⁵ Mayke De Jong, “Power and Humility in Carolingian Society,” 41.

¹⁴⁶ Thegan, “Life of Louis.” 171.

civil war because he was not of noble blood. He let the power get to his head and essentially wanted more than his allotment.¹⁴⁷

De Jong states that the very idea of a Christian realm in which the ruler had a responsibility towards the Church and the people, and therefore could be called to account, implied an exalted position of the bishops. Furthermore, if co-operative they could also enhance the power of the emperor, such as at Attigny. However, it could also be dangerous in a situation of family strife and political adversity, a self-confident episcopate could change from ally into enemy, and could fight Louis with the same weapons he forged.¹⁴⁸

One loophole that Louis was able to use was that a penitent had to willingly accept the status of a penitent. By claiming he was forced at Soissons in 833, he was able to invalidate his penitential status.¹⁴⁹ Of course, this was after his sons had freed him from Lothar after they realized how evil the deposition was to their father. He was reinstated as Emperor on March 1, 834 at Saint-Denis after they reversed the “ignominious ritual” performed at Soissons.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, of even greater importance, was that he forgave his sons yet again. And he ruled his empire until he died.

In conclusion, I would like to state again, that according to the evidence found in Thegan, Ermoldus, and the Astronomer, Louis does appear to be a pious and monkish king. While Thegan does not neglect to point out faults in Louis’s reign (trusting and listening to “wicked”

¹⁴⁷ Ibid 171.

¹⁴⁸ Mayke De Jong, “Power and Humility in Carolingian Society,” 41.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid 42.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid 42.

advisors), he still wants his readers to note that he was indeed a monkish king, but not perfect.¹⁵¹

The Public Penance of 822 further shows Louis belief that he needed to rise above the norm and to set an example for his people to live good Christian lives. His own beliefs in how he was to live were his own undoing in 833 because of his expectations in how one should rule. He truly was trying to live a pious or monkish life, however the strife caused by his family was another facet of his undoing. His father had admonished him to love his sons, which he had done, but they had rebelled and thus forced the hand of the bishops who were there to guide and “correct” him if he erred. The Church helped force the issue, in regards to helping push Lothar along with his rebellion based on their writings.

¹⁵¹ Thegan, “The Deeds of Emperor Louis,” in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious*, trans. Thomas F.X. Noble, 215 (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State Press, 2009).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

From a place in posterity, it proves easy to look at past cultures and peoples and wish to condemn them. However, historians have the hard task of staying unbiased in what they read and write about. Many historians fail in this endeavor, whether through an abject hatred of religion, or a love of their own religion. It proves challenging viewing a culture that struggled with the boundaries on whether or not to keep the Church and State separate without thinking of modern times. But, the historian overlooks that opinion in the back of their head to give the best unbiased written work they can do. The people discussed in this paper, merely lived the way they believed was fit and normal. They lived within their own culture and societal ideas and should be allowed to believe that way. Overall, the Carolingians struggled with boundaries on where religion and the state could meet.

Although the Carolingians began their reign in France and Germany to much acclaim, they ended with a whimper. Lothar's family died out in 875, Louis the German's in 911, Charles the Bald's in 987, the internal dissent caused by the *Speculum Principum*, caused the downfall of the empire and led to the rise of the Ottonians and Capetians. The family of the Father of Europe¹⁵² dissolved into history. The Church they had struggled to reform fell back into decay and although powerful, fell into the hands of the Ottonian and Salian Empires of Germany.

The Carolingians' held power in France and Germany long before they became the kings and later Emperors. However, it was through their alliance with the Church that garnered them

¹⁵² See Alessandro Barbero's, *Charlemagne Father of a Continent*, Trans. Allan Cameron, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004)

the kingship of the land. Through the reformational ideology created by Boniface and Charles Martel, the Carolingian family deposed the weak and irrelevant Merovingian king. Carloman and Pippin began to use rhetoric that changed the way they viewed themselves and the people viewed themselves by calling themselves *princeps*. And by militarizing the clergy and strengthening them, they ousted the king. Although Carloman and Pippin pushed forward the revival of the Church, it was through Charlemagne and Louis the Pious that the Church became one of the strongest entities in Europe.

The rise of power in the Frankish Church enabled it to dictate how kings and nobles ought to live through its literature and doctrines. Not only could they dictate to the kings, but they also had the power to remove the kings if they walked down the wrong path. The taking of Louis the Pious' *cingulum militiae* signified that it was they who held primary power in the kingdom and not the kings. Their view that God had entrusted even the king into their care, shows both arrogance and also that the revival had taken a different approach than Charles Martel or even Boniface wished it to. Overall the Carolingians achieved their goal, but lost their empire because they failed to protect their own kings.

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