

defence of chorbishops is a letter that Hrabanus Maurus wrote to Drogo of Metz between 835 and 842¹⁸. In this text, Hrabanus characterises the abolitionists as western bishops who have developed reservations about the worth of the sacraments that chorbishops confer. They believe these sacraments are invalid and that they should be repeated by ordinary bishops. Alongside confirmation, Hrabanus acknowledges their concern over clerical consecrations, a subject avoided by Paris 829, and objects to the equation of chorbishops with priests¹⁹. Hrabanus also addresses Acts 8, pointing out that the Philip who had baptised new converts but could not confirm them was a deacon, and that the episode has no relevance for chorbishops at all²⁰. Hrabanus, it is clear, knows fuller arguments than those promulgated by the fathers at Paris, but the full abolitionist vision, with its binary view of the Christian clergy, remains beyond him. The bulk of his letter is consumed with scriptural exhortations to fraternity and humility.

No answer from Drogo to Hrabanus's letter is known. The next reform council, held at Aachen in 836, restates a great part of the canons enacted at Paris 829, but declines to re-issue c. 27²¹. The abolitionists might have found themselves out of power after Lothar's failed coup of 833/34, or perhaps their attacks on the office were no longer politically viable. From other sources we know that Louis had installed interim chorepiscopal administrators to manage the dioceses of at least a few of his deposed episcopal opponents²². The abolitionists could not renew

Ancyra c. 12, Antioch c. 10, Innocent J³ 701, c. 3, along with excerpts from Isidore of Seville: *Etymologiae* VII, 12, 4–15 (ed. W.M. LINDSAY, *Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX*, vol. 2 [1911]) and *De ecclesiasticis officiis* II, 6, 1 (ed. MIGNE, PL 83 col. 786f.). On the date of the letter, POKORNY, *Karolingisches Briefgutachten* p. 367; „Mit aller gebotenen Vorsicht“ it appears to have been written „eher noch vor der Mitte des 9. Jahrhunderts“.

18) So also *ibid.*, p. 364 n. 12, tightening slightly the chronological window in the edition of Ernst DÜMMLER (MGH Epp. 5, 1899) p. 431–439. On this letter see also GOTTLÖB, *Chorepiskopat* (as n. 6) p. 110–112; and WEIZSÄCKER, *Kampf gegen den Chorepiskopat* (as n. 6) p. 27–32.

19) Hrabanus's summary of the debate is ed. DÜMMLER, MGH Epp. 5 (as n. 18) p. 431 l. 28–p. 432 l. 1.

20) *Ibid.*, p. 435 l. 7–41.

21) On Aachen 836 (ed. WERMINGHOFF, MGH Conc. 2, 2 [as n. 15] p. 704–724), see GOTTLÖB, *Chorepiskopat* (as n. 6) p. 110, and more generally HARTMANN, *Synoden der Karolingerzeit* (as n. 15) p. 190–194. Jonas of Orléans was closely involved in this council, as he had been in Paris 829, and drafted the letter to Pippin of Italy (ed. WERMINGHOFF, p. 725–767).

22) This must have been the case at Reims, as we will see just below. It perhaps also happened at Lyon: The rubric prefacing Florus's letter denouncing Amalarius,