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Louis 'the Pious' and his poets

To J. M. Wallace-Hadrill

Quid possum tibi amplius dicere? Nisi linguam habuissem ferream et labia aenea, omnes nequitias tuas explanare nec enumerare potuissem![1] Thus Thegan, biographer and apologist of Louis the Pious, in bitter recrimination against Ebbo, archbishop of Reims and traitor to his lord. The attempt to envisage an artist capable of conveying the turpitude of this faithless upstart stretched Thegan's heated imagination to its modest limits. Since his own abilities were not equal to the task, a higher talent was needed: *Sed si aliquis fuisset, qui poetico carmine omnia facinora tua rimari voluisset, forsitan vetustum Homerum, Mincianumque Maronem cum Ovidio superare potuisset*! If a poet was the preferred candidate of Louis's biographer, his choice was influenced not only by the classics of the past but also by the example of authors active during his master's reign. For Thegan, subject of Walahfrid Strabo's flattering verses[2] and contemporary of Ermoldus Nigellus, had witnessed one of the most fruitful yet least recognised epochs in the development of Carolingian poetry.

This is not the conventional image of the years 814 to 840 enshrined in the standard literary histories. There a more sombre picture of decay and disorder prevails. After the flowering of poetry during the lifetime of Charlemagne, the accession of his son is commonly held to mark the beginning of a blight that lasted until the revival of letters stimulated by Charles the Bald. The rapid eclipse of the court as a literary centre, and the growing prominence of regional institutions, especially the abbeys and monasteries of Carolingian Francia, are often regarded as the immediate consequences of Louis the Pious's ill-starred policy. "La désagrégation commence dès le règne de Louis le Pieux," asserts Bezzola,[3] and his words are representative of a general opinion[4] that is sustained by the rhetoric of

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[1] Vita Hludowici cap. 44 ed. R. Rau (Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte i) Berlin 1972 p. 242. Cf. Virgil Aeneid vi 625–627; Georgics ii 43. The transmitted reading *nisi* is mistakenly altered by Rau to *nec si*. On *nisi* = *non nisi* see E. Löfstedt, Coniectanea. Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der antiken und mittelalterlichen Latinität, i, Stockholm 1950 pp. 28 ff.

[2] For Walahfrid's poem-epistle to Thegan *in persona Tattonis* see MGH Poetae ii, pp. 351–352

[3] R. Bezzola, Les origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500–1200) i (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes 286) Paris 1944, p. 145.

[4] Cf. F. J. E. Raby, A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages, Oxford ²1953, pp. 177 ff; F. Brunhölzl, Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters i, Munich 1975, p. 316; W. Wattenbach – W. Levison – H. Löwe, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter iii, Weimar 1957, p. 303.

Ludowician authors describing the singular personality of their emperor or looking back with romantic nostalgia to the scholarly achievements of the past.[5] But how valid is this view of decline and reversal, and how different in reality were these two periods of Carolingian literary activity?

If a radical change occurred in 814, it seems legitimate to enquire when and where conditions favouring unity and cohesion had previously existed. The literary histories provide no clear answer to this question, although one is implied by their contrast between the "court poetry" of Charlemagne's ascendancy and its alleged dearth during Louis the Pious's period of rule. But what does that ill-defined term mean in its Carolingian context? Poetry written by individuals temporarily resident at, or in occasional communication with, Charlemagne's courts is a definition patently insufficient to sustain the hypothesis of discontinuity, for no one denies the existence of such literature in the years 814 to 840. If the term "court poetry" has any useful or exact meaning, it cannot embrace works composed by Alcuin while in England, by Paul the Deacon for his Lombard and Beneventan patrons, or by other authors addressing verse to Charlemagne and his entourage while active elsewhere in Francia: it must refer to poetry that was demonstrably written *at* court. And if the number of poets active there between 814 and 840 is acknowledged to be small,[6] is the evidence from the years 768 to 814 so very dissimilar?

The transmission of Carolingian poetry is unsystematic and imperfect, and the vicissitudes of its textual tradition inevitably affect the view that can be formed of literary endeavour during Charlemagne's reign.[7] Moreover, a number of texts — didactic, religious, or inscriptional — frustrate, by their very nature, any attempt at location or dating. These problems are compounded by the unsatisfactory state of attribution and identification of some significant works. None the less the internal and external evidence which we do possess suggests that the familiar image of early Carolingian "court poetry" is distorted.

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[5] Cf. GODMAN, Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance (Duckworths Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance Texts) London 1984, p. 33 and p. 34. The clichés recounted in this sentence have been challenged in a number of recent studies, most persuasively by B. BISCHOFF, Die Hofbibliothek unter Ludwig dem Frommen (Medieval Learning and Literature. Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt, edd. J. J. G. ALEXANDER and M. T. GIBSON, Oxford 1976, pp. 3—22 = IDEM, Mittelalterliche Studien. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte iii, Stuttgart 1981, pp. 170—186) and R. SCHIEFFER, Ludwig 'der Fromme'. Zur Entstehung eines karolingischen Herrscherbeinamens (Frühmittelalterliche Studien 16, 1982, pp. 58—73) with the bibliographical note 101 [p. 73].

[6] In addition to Walahfrid Strabo, whose works are discussed below, we know that the *capellanus* Grimald was a poet; cf. MGH Poetae ii, p. 377, *vv.* 230—232 with A. ÖNNERFORS, Die Verfasserschaft des Waltharius-Epos aus sprachlicher Sicht, (Rheinische-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vorträge G. 236, Opladen 1979, pp. 44 ff). But see now R. SCHIEFFER, Zu neuen Thesen über den Waltharius (Deutsches Archiv 36, 1980, pp. 196 ff) and D. SCHALLER, Ist der Waltharius frühkarolingisch? (Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch 18, 1983, pp. 62—83) especially p. 64, note 8. On the lost poetry of Einhard, and the ascription of extant works to him, see D. SCHALLER, Das Aachener Epos für Karl den Kaiser (Frühmittelalterliche Studien 10, 1976, pp. 134—168) pp. 165 ff with note 14. For the poetry of Moduin see below.

[7] See E. DÜMMLER, Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der lateinischen Dichtungen aus der Zeit der Karolinger (Neues Archiv 4, 1879, pp. 98 ff).

The history of poetry in the reign of Charlemagne scarcely begins until more than a decade after his accession in 768. And even when the international élite of scholar-poets had assembled during the 780s, its unity in time and place was both qualified and strikingly short-lived. The itinerancy of the court before it had settled at Aachen in 794; the manifold duties and preoccupations other than literature of each of the major poets in the course of these years; the relative smallness of their numbers; the withdrawal from Aachen of most of them by 796: all these features of literary life in the early Carolingian period[8] should caution us against over-estimating the productivity in the field of "court poetry" of the authors whom Charlemagne temporarily gathered about him.

In the first of the three 'phases' that can be distinguished in the development of Charlemagne's courts[9] — from 768 to *circa* 780, when he was chiefly occupied with consolidating and extending his kingdoms — not a line of extant verse can plausibly be linked with the royal entourage. In the second 'phase' — from *circa* 780 to 796, the approximate dates of the arrival at court and final departure from it of most of the leading figures whose names are associated with the early Carolingian *renovatio* — the surviving corpus of court poetry is far more limited than conventional hyperbole might suggest. A mere handful of Alcuin's numerous poetic works was demonstrably written at court; no more than one or two poems among Theodulf's entire *œuvre* can be proved to have originated there.[10] None of the court poetry of the Lombard authors Peter of Pisa and Paul the Deacon post-dates the late 780s;[11] most (perhaps all) of Paulinus of Aquileia's rhythmical verse was written after his departure from Francia.[12] Of the two works on the court in Angilbert's slender poetic production, one was composed while he was certainly absent from Aachen and neither is later than 796. In the third 'phase' of Charlemagne's reign — from *circa* 796 to 814, when the circle of Alcuin and Theodulf was gradually replaced by that of their pupils — examples of court poetry are even rarer. There survives the subtle and programmatical Egloga by Moduin of Autun,[13] and the epic fragment composed in the first decade of the ninth century

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[8] These factors are further discussed in GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 6—7 with bibliography.

[9] See J. FLECKENSTEIN in: Karl der Große. Lebenswerk und Nachleben 1, Persönlichkeit und Geschichte, ed. H. BEUMANN, Düsseldorf 1965, pp. 24 ff and IDEM, Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige 1 (MGH Schriften 16/1) Stuttgart 1959, pp. 231 ff.

[10] For the figures cited in this paragraph see the Appendix. Unless otherwise specified, all references are to MGH Poetae i. In analysing the canon of Alcuin and Theodulf I have taken account of the dissertations of H.-D. BURGHARDT, Philologische Untersuchungen zu den Gedichten Alkuins, diss. phil., Heidelberg 1960, and of D. SCHALLER, Philologische Untersuchungen zu den Gedichten Theodulfs von Orléans, diss. phil., Heidelberg 1956, and in: Deutsches Archiv 18, 1962, pp. 13—91.

[11] For the work of Paul the Deacon and Peter of Pisa I have cited the edition of K. NEFF, Die Gedichte des Paulus Diaconus (Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters) Munich 1908.

[12] D. NORBERG, L'œuvre poétique de Paulin d'Aquilée (Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlinger, filologisk-filosofika serien 18) Stockholm 1979, now supersedes the MGH edition.

[13] New editions by D. KORZENIEWSKI, Hirtengedichte aus spätrömischer und karolingischer Zeit, Darmstadt 1976, pp. 76—87, 138—142 and by R. P. H. GREEN, Some Versions of Carolingian Pastoral (Reading University Medieval and Renaissance Texts) Reading 1979, pp. 14—17, 70—80.

and traditionally if misleadingly known as 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' whose questionable attribution to Einhard constitutes the principal reason for linking it with the court.[14]

No conspectus of early Carolingian poetry can do justice to the work of such elusive figures as 'Hibernicus Exul', variously identified with Dungal and Dicuil, the external evidence for whom is too ambiguous to permit of certainty, nor can it fully account for religious texts, possibly originating at court, which defy the type of scrutiny to which secular literature in general, and encomiastic or commemorative verse in particular, more readily lend themselves. But if comprehensiveness is precluded, a number of conclusions can still be drawn. It is striking that every one of the famous sequence of poems written in the mid-790s on the subject of the court by its three leading authors — Angilbert, Alcuin, and Theodulf — was composed while these men were absent from Aachen;[15] that for most of the first decade of the ninth century — at the very apogee of Charlemagne's power — the quantity of surviving court poetry is exceedingly small; and that the sum total of texts assembled in the Appendix below amounts to less than 30 items from a corpus of more than 300 works.

In these circumstances, the prominence of the verse-epistle — among the most amply-attested of all forms of early Carolingian secular poetry — is due to no accident of transmission. Verse in epistolary style from Carolingian poets to one another reflects an enduring condition of literary life under Charlemagne: the need to communicate by letter while writers were not working in close proximity at court. As early as 796 the dispersal of these authors to the provincial institutions of the Church was already well advanced, and, even before that date, a permanent and settled circle of court poets had never truly existed. Our surviving witnesses to early Carolingian poetry, if incomplete, can thus be considered representative of a pattern of ebb and flow between the court and the regional centres of culture in whose development the year 814 marks no perceptible change. The contrast commonly drawn between a body of poetry produced at, and centred on, the court during Charlemagne's lifetime and one written away from it under Louis the Pious is an illusion.

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When the clichés of a sudden decline from an ideal momentarily realised under Charlemagne and of the consequent disintegration of a unified corpus of court poetry are abandoned, the need for a revaluation of the literary history of the years 814 to 840 becomes more apparent. Continuity, or at least an absence of radical change, in the outward conditions of poetic activity throughout the reigns of Charlemagne and his son serves to accentuate the subtler differences of character and of purpose that began to emerge within Ludowician verse. The following

[14] For reservations about this revived ascription see GODMAN (as n. 5) p. 205, note to *v.* 146.

[15] D. SCHALLER, Vortrags- und Zirkulardichtung am Hof Karls des Großen (Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch 6, 1970, pp. 14—36).

pages do not attempt to survey the entire evolution of Latin poetry under Louis the Pious;[16] rather, the dealings of that emperor with some of the most celebrated authors of his lifetime and the impact of new developments in the political and intellectual life of the Franks upon the poetry of this period form their central themes. How did the unsmiling enemy of art so vividly described by Thegan (Vita Hludowici Pii, cap. 19) react to the course that Carolingian poetry had taken since the days of Alcuin, Angilbert, and Theodulf?

Theodulf's verse bridges the two reigns. Not without grim irony, for if the poet's fortune was made by Charlemagne, it was abruptly terminated by his son. Among the earlier works of Ludowician literature are a number of panegyrical and *adventus*-poems by Theodulf and by Jonas, his successor as bishop of Orléans.[17] Helene Siemes has plausibly argued that there is no discontinuity between the images of imperial virtue in which Charlemagne had been presented by previous encomiasts and those employed by Theodulf in the early years of Louis the Pious's reign.[18] But how much does this prove? Conservatism is a deep-rooted trait of Carolingian *adventus*-poetry, and its stereotypical diction reflects constraints imposed by a genre inherently static. In the public sphere of acclamation a pronounced caesura between the poetic styles of the two reigns was hardly to be expected.[19] More flexibility was possible, and more insight into Theodulf's relations with Louis the Pious before and after his accession can be gained, from different genres of poetry that comment reflectively, and sometimes contentiously, on contemporary events.

Chief among these were the two attempts, during the first quarter of the ninth century, to solve the problem of the succession to the Frankish kingdoms: Charlemagne's *Divisio Regnorum* of 806 and Louis's *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817. Notwithstanding the reservations of F. L. Ganshof, who judged Carolingian poets incompetent to speak on such questions,[20] important evidence of Theodulf's political views can be gained (I shall argue) from two texts written by him in response to the arrangements made for the succession in the years 806 and 817. These works enable us to examine afresh the causes of Theodulf's disgrace in 818, and to reconsider the imperial policy which it reflects. Because Theodulf was no provincial

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[16] Cf. GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 33–48.

[17] The poems in question are Carmina xxxix, lxx, lxxvi and lxxvii (MGH Poetae i, pp. 531–560, 577–578).

[18] H. SIEMES, Beiträge zum literarischen Bild Kaiser Ludwigs des Frommen in der Karolingerzeit, diss. hist., Freiburg 1966, pp. 169–187. For a just evaluation of this dissertation, see A. ÖNNERFORS, Mediaevalia. Abhandlungen und Aufsätze (Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 6) Frankfurt am Main-Bern-Las Vegas 1977, p. 96.

[19] Cf. E. EWIG, Zum christlichen Königsgedanken im Frühmittelalter (Das Königtum. Seine geistigen und rechtlichen Grundlagen, Vorträge und Forschungen 3, ed. T. MAYER, Konstanz 1956, pp. 7–73 p. 70 (= IDEM, Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien. Gesammelte Schriften [1952–1973], 1. Beihefte der Francia 3/1, Munich 1976, pp. 3–71, pp. 68–69).

[20] F. L. GANSHOF, Some observations on the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817 (IDEM, The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy. Studies in Carolingian History, translated by JANET SONDHEIMER, London 1971, pp. 273–288) p. 278. GANSHOF (pp. 286–287) rightly denies the relevance of Theodulf's Carm. lxxviii (MGH Poetae i, p. 597) to the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817 but does not consider Carm. xxxiv.

versifier but a major author and a statesman accustomed to pronounce on the course of affairs,[21] the rôle that he played in the public life of the early ninth century illuminates both the political and the literary history of this period.

The *Divisio Regnorum* provided for a partition of Charlemagne's kingdoms, after his death, between his three sons, Charles, Pippin, and Louis.[22] It did not mention the imperial dignity, perhaps because Charlemagne regarded it as personal and non-hereditary,[23] and its conception of power was patrimonial: the Frankish kingdoms were to be divided as if they were the monarch's own property. The late Peter Classen, in a powerful and convincing essay,[24] argued that Charlemagne was deliberately attempting to concentrate power, wealth and influence in the hands of his eldest son by these dispositions which were intended to favour Charles in the future over his two younger brothers. An awareness of these plans is reflected in Theodulf's verse.

Before his coronation as king at Rome in 800 Charles is only once mentioned by Theodulf — and then it is but a passing reference, in a poem on the subject of Charlemagne and his court.[25] No separate panegyric by Theodulf on Pippin or Louis was composed, or has survived, from the years between Charlemagne's elevation to the imperial throne and his death. The sole extant encomium written before 814 on any of his sons is addressed to Charles.[26] Traditionally if somewhat vaguely dated to before 811 (the king's obit), Carm. xxxv gives fulsome expression to Theodulf's longing for Charles (*v.* 9 ff) — a sentiment which makes best sense in the period of the poet's protracted absences from court after 800. The probability of a date in the first decade of the ninth century is strengthened, moreover, by the subject and tone of this work, which surpasses the customary hyperbole of panegyric in its eager efforts to represent Charles as the worthy heir to Charlemagne:

1 *O mea magna salus, o spes, o gloria regni,*
Karle, valeto poli rege favente tibi!
Tu patris et patriae, tu totius ecce senatus
Gaudia multiplicas et decus omne paras.
5 *Clarior electro, ter cocto purior auro,*
Cedunt splendori cuncta metalla tuo.

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[21] Cf. Carm. xxix and xxvii with M. Fuhrmann in: Das Profil des Juristen in der europäischen Tradition. Symposion aus Anlaß des 70. Geburtstags von Franz Wieacker, edd. K. Luig and D. Liebs, Ebelsbach 1980, pp. 257–277, and Godman (as n. 5) pp. 3–15.

[22] See especially Ganshof in: The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy (as n. 20) pp. 245 ff, 275–276, 278; W. Schlesinger in his Beiträge zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte des Mittelalters, Göttingen 1963, pp. 193 ff, and I. Haselbach, Aufstieg und Herrschaft der Karolinger in den sogenannten Annales Mettenses priores (Historische Studien 412) Lübeck–Hamburg 1970, p. 148.

[23] As argued by S. Hellmann, Das Kaisertum Karls des Großen (Le Moyen Âge 40, 1930, pp. 406–408).

[24] P. Classen, Karl der Große und die Thronfolge im Frankenreich (Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag ... 3, Göttingen 1972, pp. 109–134).

[25] Carm. xxv, *v.* 71 (MGH Poetae i, p. 485). Pippin, as Dümmler notes ad loc, was absent from court at the date of this poem's composition (795).

[26] Carm. xxxv (MGH Poetae i, p. 526–527).

It is through no mere formula of verse composition that Theodulf here describes (*v.* 5) Charles in terms near-identical to those he had employed in the mid-790s to describe his father.[27] The earnest protestations of personal devotion in the lines that follow, the praise of Charles's achievements in glowing terms denied to either of his brothers, culminate in a prayer that Charlemagne's eldest son may one day triumphantly ascend the throne of his father:

31 *At tu, magne puer, salveque valeque per aevum,*
Te dominus caeli protegat, ornet, alat,
Ut patrias valeas rutilus conscendere sedes,
Atque iuvante deo sceptra tenere manu!

Theodulf's attempt to attach his fortunes to the man who seemed, in 806, to be the rising star follows naturally from the provisions for the future made in the *Divisio Regnorum* or, at least, in the wake of the deliberations leading up to its promulgation, and Carm. xxxv reveals this poet-politician making a shrewd bid for favour, sadly frustrated by Charles's premature death in 811.

This attempt to capitalise on Charles's special position *circa* 806 may also suggest some of the grounds for a latent hostility to Theodulf on the part of the future Louis the Pious which, after his accession in 814, the poet's enemies were able to exploit. The satirical style of Theodulf's earlier writings had scarcely been calculated to win him friends among the lay aristocracy whose foibles he had pilloried so mercilessly in the past,[28] nor was Wibod the only magnate who had grounds for hostility to this influential and aggressive figure.[29] Deprived of his deceased patron's protection and confronted with a new emperor increasingly disposed to make his own way, Theodulf, after 814, was exposed to the hostility of his many enemies.[30] E. Dahlhaus-Berg has persuasively contended that it was Matfrid, count of Orléans, who stood to profit by the bishop of Orléans' disgrace,[31] and further evidence for this conflict, both at a local and at a national level between the secular and ecclesiastical magnates of the same region, will be uncovered in Theodulf's verse. But first it is necessary to consider the timing, and the ostensible cause, of the poet's fall from favour.

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[27] Cf. Carm. xxxv, *v.* 13 (MGH Poetae i, p. 483).

[28] Cf. Carm. xxv with D. SCHALLER in: Classical Influences on European Culture, 500–1500, ed. R. R. BOLGAR, Cambridge 1971, pp. 151 ff.

[29] Carm. xxxv, *v.* 205 ff.

[30] Cf. L. WEINRICH, Wala. Graf, Mönch und Rebell (Historische Studien 386) Lübeck 1963, p. 30.

[31] Cf. E. DAHLHAUS-BERG, Nova Antiquitas et Antiqua Novitas. Typologische Exegese und isidorianisches Geschichtsbild bei Theodulf von Orléans (Kölner Historische Abhandlungen 23) Cologne–Vienna 1975, pp. 17–19 followed by J. M. WALLACE-HADRILL, The Frankish Church (Oxford History of the Christian Church) Oxford 1983, p. 172. See too E. RZEHULKA, Theodulf Bischof von Orléans ..., diss. phil., Breslau 1875, pp. 55 ff. DAHLHAUS-BERG (p. 15) also draws attention to the *Catalogus abbatum Floriacensium* (MGH Scriptores xv, p. 501) which makes clear the clash of interests between the rival secular and ecclesiastical magnates. On the gains of Matfrid's successor, count Odo, in Orléans from Theodulf's disgrace see FRANZ J. FELTEN, Äbte und Laienäbte im Frankenreich. Studie zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche im früheren Mittelalter (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 20) Stuttgart 1980, p. 15 note 55, and DAHLHAUS-BERG, p. 19.

An opportunity to move against Theodulf was provided, many scholars have alleged, by the appearance of *Ordinatio Imperii* in 817 and by the rebellion of Bernhard, king of Italy. Opposed to and scandalised by the *Ordinatio*, Theodulf, according to Walter Mohr[32] and Thomas F. X. Noble,[33] "attached himself to the rebellion as a means of giving expression to his dissatisfaction with it [the *Ordinatio*]". Yet this view raises a number of difficulties which Mohr and Noble scarcely resolve. If Theodulf was a member of what Mohr calls the "kirchliche Einheitspartei", how was the cause of imperial unity to be served by the establishment of a separate realm in Italy? No conspicuous areas of common interest bound him to the Frankish aristocracy of that kingdom, as Noble himself has shown. North of the Alps, Theodulf was the only ecclesiastical magnate to be accused of treachery. And if he was the spokesman of a party of traditionalists, why did they remain silent and inactive in 817? The mixed and murky motives attributed to the so-called "Einheitspartei" by Mohr („Man könnte höchstens annehmen, sie habe gehofft, bei einem Erfolg des italischen Aufstandes würde auch die *Ordinatio* fallen, und müßte ihr also etwa unterstellen, sie habe im trüben fischen wollen") do little to resolve these difficulties. Yet there is one poem, written probably on the eve of Bernhard's uprising and hitherto neglected in accounts of Theodulf's disgrace, which enables us to sever the hypothetical link which Mohr and Noble have sought to establish between the poet's attitude to the *Ordinatio Imperii* and his implication in the revolt of 817: Carm. xxxiv.[34]

In this outspoken work, whose title *Quod potestas impatiens consortis est,* is ominously borrowed from Lucan's epic on the civil wars of Pompey and Caesar,[35] Theodulf rejects the fable of Geryon, which represented three brothers ruling in harmony, and asserts, on the authority of Scripture and of universal custom, that it is necessary for one to assume the primacy and for the other two to take a subordinate rôle:

3 *Pagina veridico recinit sermone beata*
Figmenta exsuperans omnia lege pia,
Terrea germanos ob regni culmina reges
Crudeli quosdam fraude dedisse neci.
Omnibus hoc votis, omni est hoc arte cavendum,
Ne nostro in saeclo tale quid esse queat.
Gentibus unus erat pridem ferme omnibus usus
Unus ut e fratrum corpore sceptra gerat,

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[32] W. Mohr, Die kirchliche Einheitspartei und die Durchführung der Reichsordnung von 817 (Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 72, 1961, pp. 1–45) pp. 8–9.

[33] T. F. X. Noble, The revolt of King Bernhard of Italy in 817: its causes and consequences (Studi Medievali 15, 1974, pp. 315–326) p. 321.

[34] MGH Poetae i, p. 526.

[35] Cf. Bellum civile i, *vv.* 92–93. On knowledge of Lucan during the Carolingian period see H. Gotoff, The Transmission of the text of Lucan in the Ninth Century (Loeb Classical Monographs) Harvard 1971. Lucan is not listed among the authors studied by Theodulf and described in his Carm. xlv (MGH Poetae i, pp. 543–544) but his place among 'curriculum authors' was already assured by the late eighth century. See P. Godman (ed.), The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York (Oxford Medieval Texts) Oxford 1982, p. lxxi and p. 124 (*v.* 1554).

Cetera nitatur magni pars esse senatus,
Ut regni solidus continuetur apex.

To which circumstances do these lines refer? Neither internal evidence nor the history of the text's transmission provide any clear answer, and no advance has been made over the view, elliptically expressed by Hauréau[36] more than a century ago and echoed by subsequent scholars,[37] that the poem dates from 806 and alludes to Charlemagne's *Divisio Regnorum*.

Hauréau assumed that Theodulf, as one of Charlemagne's "confidents ordinaires", would not have hesitated to tender advice to the emperor on the problem of the succession. This is indeed a possibility, but in itself it falls far short of proof that Carm. xxxiv was composed in 806. Nor does it take into account the essentially religious view of imperial unity which serves as Theodulf's principal point of departure. The memory of Biblical *exempla* of fratricidal dispute over the succession to the throne, such as those related in the tale of Adonias at III Kings 1–2, lies behind *vv.* 3–16, and this is consistent not with the fundamentally secular dispositions of 806 but with the profoundly spiritual conception of the *Ordinatio Imperii*.[38] Moreover, the unitary arrangements for the imperial succession made in 817 were designed to eliminate a division which the *Divisio*, at least in principle, had been intended to implement: the *Ordinatio,* like Carm. xxxiv, asserts the sacred indivisibility of the Frankish kingdoms. According to its terms they were to be subject to the authority of Lothar, Louis the Pious's eldest son, and a drastic diminution in the rôle of the sub-kings, Louis, Pippin, and Bernhard was provided for: theirs were the title and attributes of royalty but "from now on a king was to be no more than the titular of a subordinate power".[39]

It is therefore improbable that Carm. xxxiv, explicitly religious in spirit and firmly unitarian in design, represents a brash proclamation of Charlemagne's intentions as they are obliquely reflected in the *Divisio Regnorum* of 806. Whether Carm. xxxiv is considered to express views in whose legislative formulation its author had been influential – perhaps as one of the *paucissimi* in whose company Gerd Tellenbach, following Agobard of Lyons, has imagined Louis the Pious discussing the succession[40] – or simply assumes that the poem expresses support for them, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, in the context of 817, it represents a second attempt, along the lines of Carm. xxxv, on Theodulf's part to win favour of the reigning emperor and his heir-apparent. The participants in this game of power-politics had changed; Louis the Pious and Lothar had taken the place of Charlemagne and Charles; yet it is clear that Carm. xxxiv – whether one

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[36] B. HAURÉAU, Singularités historiques et littéraires, Paris 1861, pp. 86–88.

[37] The uncertainty of A. SIMSON, Jahrbücher des fränkischen Reichs unter Ludwig dem Frommen i, 1874 (reprinted Berlin 1969) p. 114 is not accurately represented by DÜMMLER (MGH Poetae i, p. 526, note 4) who himself follows Hauréau. D. SCHALLER (Deutsches Archiv 18, 1962) p. 22 assigns the poem "nicht mit voller Sicherheit" to 806.

[38] Best discussed by WALLACE-HADRILL (as n. 31) pp. 231 ff.

[39] The classic treatment of the *Ordinatio* is by GANSHOF (as n. 20).

[40] Agobard (MGH Epistolae v, p. 224, 28) with G. TELLENBACH, Königtum und Stämme in der Werdezeit des deutschen Reiches, Weimar 1939, pp. 62–63. Cf. GANSHOF (as n. 39) p. 275 and p. 283, note 20.

assigns it to 817 or adheres to the earlier date of 806 — demonstrates the very opposite of what Mohr and Noble allege. We have no evidence that Theodulf was opposed to the letter or the spirit of the *Ordinatio Imperii*: Carm. xxxiv provides us with a firm indication to the contrary.

Opposition to the *Ordinatio Imperii* therefore does not provide a credible explanation for Theodulf's exile, nor is there any clear proof that the poet "attached himself" to the cause of Bernhard of Italy. All our sources tell us is that Theodulf was implicated in the charges levelled against the conspirators in 818, deprived of his see, and exiled, first to the monastery of St-Aubin in Angers and then (at the latest, in 820) to Le Mans.[41] Contrary to Noble and Mohr, I wish to argue that this information is accurate and that Theodulf's exile in 818 does not prove his participation in Bernhard's rebellion. This distinction between the public circumstances in which Theodulf's banishment took place and the personal reasons for his fall from favour is implicit in the poet's own comments on these events, and it is time to consider what he and others tell us about them.

In two poems, the one (Carm. lxxi) addressed to bishop Aiulf of Bourges and the other (Carm. lxxii)[42] sent to Moduin of Autun, which date from 820,[43] Theodulf treats of his disgrace and mounts a spirited self-defence. In Carm. lxxxi, he touches on the case of bishop Sintegaud, removed from his see by *livor edax, dolus, et pellacia fallax* (*v.* 25). In these emotive terms lies a parallel to Theodulf's own case, and they will recur in his and Moduin's subsequent discussion of this subject. Sintegaud had brought the poet word of bishop Aiulf's pastoral achievement, and Theodulf praises him for his work, urging him on to greater things. Then a note of despair intrudes, as Theodulf implores for intercession and prayer on his own behalf. Acknowledging his general sinfulness, he yet denies the specific charge of complicity in the rebellion:

71 *Non regi aut proli, non eius, crede, iugali*
Peccavi, ut meritis haec mala tanta veham.
Crede meis verbis, frater sanctissime, crede:
Me obiecti haudquaquam criminis esse reum.
Perderet ut sceptrum, vitam, propriumque nepotem:
Haec tria sum numquam consiliatus ego.

The testimony of these lines and the evidence of our narrative and annalistic sources[44] here match one another: Theodulf rebuts the same allegations which they report. There can be no doubt that the rebellion of 817 furnished the charges on which he was arraigned, but was that all? Denying that he had even wished such great evil to come about, Theodulf indicates another, less obvious, cause for his punishment:

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[41] That Theodulf spent his last years in Le Mans is argued by D. SCHALLER (Deutsches Archiv 18, 1962) p. 52 (repunctuation of *vv.* 151–152) and cf. IDEM, in: Das Tier in der Dichtung, ed. U. SCHWAB, Heidelberg 1970, p. 102 and note 39, but see DAHLHAUS-BERG (as n. 31) p. 20, note 11.

[42] The best edition of this text is by SCHALLER (Deutsches Archiv 18, 1962) p. 45.

[43] Dating established by SCHALLER in: Das Tier in der Dichtung (as n. 41) p. 102, who edits and translates Carm. lxxii, *vv.* 137–224 (pp. 106 ff).

[44] Listed by NOBLE (as n. 33) p. 318, notes 21–23.

Addimus et quartum: mihi non fuit illa voluntas,
Utcumque ut rerum haec mala tanta forent.
Hoc ego clamavi, clamo, clamabo per aevum,
Haec donec animae membra liquor vegetat.
Qui modo non credit, cogetur credere tandem,
Ventum erit ut magni iudicis ante thronum.
Qui mihi testis erit pius et iustissimus ultor,
Omnia cui semper nuda et aperta manent.

Is there not a carefully planted hint in the allusion to Hebrews (4:13) at *v.* 84 that all is not plain and open in the accusations against him? The poet continues to invoke divine judgement, laying particular stress on its incorruptibility in the face of influence and wealth:

Qui non acceptat personas, munera sive,
Diligit aequum aequus, diligit omne bonum.
Eius in aspectu falsissima cuncta peribunt,
Hic meus alterius non ope testis eget.

'God does not attend to the mighty; His justice pays no heed to earthly riches': the implication, unflattering to Louis the Pious, is that this is exactly what those who sat in judgement on Theodulf have done. The ambiguous appeal to Heaven's equity is also directed against the poet's powerful enemies on this earth.

Who they were, becomes clearer from an exchange of poetic epistles between Theodulf and Moduin of Autun. Calling, in Carm. lxxii, on his friend's compassion and familiarity with his case, Theodulf hints darkly at the general implications of his personal hardships:

Unus ego quamvis sim, non est unius haec res:
Quod factum est mihimet, esse potest alii.
Est commune malum, communis cura petenda est:
Quod nostrum est hodie, cras erit alterius.
Haec non quis frater timeat contagia demens,
Ne illi, quae nobis, inrepat ista lues.

In the light of the recent dismissal of Charlemagne's counsellors and of the tensions that were beginning to become apparent already in the early 820s these lines foreshadow a prophetic style that is lent fuller expression later in the same work.

There follow, after an assertion that the only authority which Theodulf will acknowledge is that of the Pope (*vv.* 55–66), two accounts of battles of birds which, as Dieter Schaller has shown, present auguries of future dissension within the empire.[45] Both parts of this text – the self-exculpatory and the prophetic – are intimately linked. The rejection of secular justice, coupled with an allusion to the animus of his unspecified enemies and the ominous pointers to civil war stem from a general state of corruption of which Theodulf's individual sufferings are

[45] Cf. note 43, pp. 95 ff.

symptomatic. The poet presents himself as a victim of forces at work in the empire at large, and his appeal to the pope derives not only from an insistence upon his rights as a bishop but also from a mistrust of anything but ecclesiastical authority. The charges arising from the rebellion of Bernhard of Italy are no longer at the front of his mind in Carm. lxxii: what this text shares with Carm. lxxi is Theodulf's desire to defend himself against his *secular* adversaries. From whom in this sphere had he to fear? The answer is plainly stated by Moduin in his response to Theodulf's letter (Carm. lxxiii).[46]

Moduin begins by deftly forestalling the criticisms of his prickly correspondent: the Muses' inspiration may fire some poets, but pedestrian sanity guarantees that Moduin knows his place:

23 *Nonnulli adfirmant etiam insanire poetas,*
Carmina dum statuunt mente carere sua.
Ast nobis integra manet mens ipsa, nec audet
Longius amisso ordine abire suo.
Scandala sed propter vitanda nec appetit alta,
Contenta est modico nam moderata loco.

The intention behind these lines is less guarded than their insistence on discretion might seem to imply: by stressing his wish to avoid scandal, and by emphasising his own modesty, Moduin reminds Theodulf of those qualities of reserve and political prudence which were so signally lacking from his friend's combative stance. As a response to the earlier verse-epistle, which brashly asserts Theodulf's innocence, Moduin's diffident words are meant to be sobering:

41 *Nonnullis prodesse solet prudentia multa,*
Laesus ab ingenio es, pater alme, tuo.
Praecipue tua magna tibi sapientia soli
Obfuit, et quod habes triste paravit onus.

Moduin's compassion for Theodulf's plight is thus combined with a brisk awareness of his friend's responsibility for it. If dimness is a defect, brilliance is a bane: Theodulf, like Ovid (Tristia ii. 2; cf. iii. 74) is the victim of his own *ingenium*. This theme is further developed by words that echo Theodulf's previous complaint to bishop Aiulf about *livor edax* and by the example of Ovid's exile:

45 *Livor edax petit alta fremens, consternere temptans*
Id quod ovans simplex pectore turba colit.
Pertulit (an nescis?) quod longos Naso labores,
Insons est factus exul ob invidiam.

Moduin continues with a list of famous men of the past who endured banishment; a list which will be discussed below. It is significant that the name which again heads his series of *exempla* is that of Ovid, for Moduin employs that poet's self-characterisation in the Tristia, describing the cause of Theodulf's disgrace, in order to emphasise his parallel between the misfortunes of the Augustan and Carolingian

[46] MGH Poetae i, pp. 569–573.

authors. After the expansive set of contrasts between the lowliness of Moduin's verse and the superior writing of his friend, these words (complemented and reinforced by Theodulf's own terms, in his verse-epistle to Aiulf, of *livor* and *invidia*) point unmistakably in one direction: the modern Ovid incurred his Caesar's wrath by the *ingenium* of his poetry. Or, regarded less flatteringly, he aroused the *scandala* which Moduin at *vv.* 27–28 declares he wished to avoid. Assertions of modesty turn imperceptibly into reminders of the dangers incurred by arrogance, as Moduin suggests the ambiguity and the danger of Ovid's example.

After his list of *exempla* Moduin considers the abuses of the day. If the clergy is not held in honour, the fault is its own: the pursuit of wealth distracts it from the common interests of its order (*vv.* 69–76). Moduin is at pains to distinguish himself from these degenerates, and he sets out to prove his point by the vigour of his intercession on Theodulf's behalf. He reports the rumour, currently sweeping the court, that Theodulf is to be released from exile if only he will confess his fault, and his pregnant words deserve to be cited in full:

Haec te nosse reor, quoniam cito spargitur orbe
Fama celer toto aulica dicta gerens,
Sis quod ab infesta hac demum regione movendus,
Caesaris ad nitidum limen iturus item,
Illius ante oculos veniens, letumque videbis
Iamdudum vultum, qui tibi tristis erat.
Commissum scelus omne tibi dimittere mavult,
Si peccasse tamen te memorare velis.
Nam prodesse tibi confessio pura valebit,
Si te voce probas criminis esse reum.
Si te dissimulas, de quo tibi crimine dicam,
Scire nota pro quo huc situs ipse fores.
Elige sed quid agas et quod tibi cumque videtur,
Consilium melius mente teneto, precor.
Sed mihimet melius visum est, ut sponte fatetur,
Quodque negari ullo non valet ingenio.
Nullo alio superare modo puto principis iram
Posse, probes nisi te criminis esse reum.
Promittit, si te peccasse fateberis, ipse
Consilium Caesar dedere velle tibi.
Nam tibi promittit, redeat quod pristina virtus,
Amissum ut possis rursus adire gradum.
Nescio, frater amans, mage quid tibi scribere possim,
Cum sint haec tota non tibi nota minus.

What are these lines but an attempt to strike a compromise between Louis the Pious and Theodulf? In return for an admission of wrong-doing the emperor offers to restore the poet to his former rank. The distinction between the grave term *scelus*, from suspicion of which Louis the Pious is prepared to absolve Theodulf, and *peccasse*, the less heinous fault to which Moduin advises him to admit, is preserved at *vv.* 89–90, in order to save face. Reported threat of the emperor's

implacable wrath is designed to elicit an avowal of a lesser fault which Caesar, in his magnanimity, will be pleased to forgive: Moduin's poem sets out the terms of a deal from which both sides stood to gain. What is so striking about this offer, with its intriguing mixture of concession and condescension, is the sense that the initiative appears to have come from the imperial party to the dispute. Moduin is not relaying newly discovered information: he is merely repeating what Theodulf already knows (*vv.* 83, 106). And in declaring that his message cannot be denied by *ullo ... ingenio* (*v.* 98), Moduin consciously recalls *v.* 42 of his own poem: he means Theodulf, in any mood.

But there were other participants in this quarrel. Moduin not only advises Theodulf to come to terms with Louis the Pious; he also urges him to seek the favour of the influential Matfrid:

109 *Mahtfridum crebris appellat epistola dictis,*
Lectaque sint vestra verba frequenter ei.
Ille valet lapsis optatam adhibere medellam,
Naufragioque pium ferre patrocinium.

Theodulf's letter was already known to Matfrid; to aid the afflicted was within the count's power; and, as if to underline his hint, Moduin offers to act as an intermediary. The appeal to Matfrid's influence at this heightened moment in Moduin's work is not fortuitous. The power of secular magnates was the cause to which Theodulf had allusively ascribed his fall in Carm. lxxi; his mistrust of earthly justice flowed from this source; and Matfrid, as we have seen, had gained most by the poet's loss.

If we take all our sources together – rather than considering Theodulf's and Moduin's poetry as a thing apart – the picture that emerges of Theodulf's relations with Louis the Pious is rather different from the one hitherto accepted. It is clear that, in 820, the emperor wished to reach an accommodation with the poet, albeit on terms which were to be of his own dictation. Theodulf was to confess that he had done wrong, and then he was to be pardoned. The rebellion of 817 provided the occasion and the pretext for his disgrace, but it is far from plain that the actual reasons for Theodulf's fall from favour were so simple. Is it not possible that his denial, in Carm. lxxi (*vv.* 71–76), that he took part in the revolt of Bernhard of Italy is in fact true? The evidence which scholars have cited for Theodulf's alleged dissatisfaction with the *Ordinatio Imperii* will not withstand critical scrutiny, and this supposed leader of an ill-defined 'Reichseinheitspartei' appears to have been acting, as usual, in headstrong isolation. And if we allow the possibility that Theodulf's innocence of the charge of participation in the rebellion of 817 is as genuine as he asserts it to be, does it not account for his suspicion of the equity of the secular authority that had judged him and lend weight to Moduin's interpretation of his position in 820?

When, in 818, shaken by the events of the previous year, Louis the Pious chose to move against possible sources of disaffection, the repression of Bernhard's co-conspirators provided Theodulf's enemies with a convenient pretext for implicating the poet in the charges against these rebels, in order to wring from him

concessions that would have been impossible to exact in other, more ordinary, circumstances. Such a strategy would explain not only the exile of this ambitious statesman from the circles of power but also the emperor's subsequent readiness to reach a compromise with him. A desire to humble Theodulf, not a wish to wreak punishment upon him for treason, is what is conveyed to the poet by Moduin; and if his use of the language of diplomacy was disingenuous, it seems odd that he emphasises that Theodulf was already familiar with these terms.

Accommodation proved impossible, and the poet's changed circumstances had a sobering effect on his style. The envenomed polemic of his previous satirical poetry, written on the subject of Charlemagne's court or about his experiences as *missus dominicus,*[47] gives way, in works written during Theodulf's years of exile, to pessimistic denunciations of avarice, hypocrisy and falsehood, to prophecies of future insurrection and to declarations of the imminence of Judgement Day.[48] If a poem such as Carm. xvii, which condemns *simulatores,* is indeed aimed at Matfrid of Orléans,[49] its indirectness marks a notable change from the hard-hitting style of invective in Theodulf's earlier verse. Instead of attacking a person, he now condemns a vice: the value of obliqueness he had learned the hard way, in an exile from which he was never to be released.

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Unlike Ovid, to whom he is compared by Moduin of Autun, Theodulf was offered a pardon which he appears to have chosen to shun. Yet a kind of literary victory, not dissimilar to Ovid's,[50] over Theodulf's imperial antagonist was ultimately won by the potent images in which Moduin had portrayed his friend's exile. The refugee from Visigothic Spain who had become one of the major poets of Charlemagne's reign and a force to be reckoned with in Carolingian politics could be likened, flatteringly but not foolishly, to Ovid and Boethius, Seneca and Virgil, Saints Peter and Paul. The author of these comparisons, Moduin of Autun, was himself sensitive to the delicate relationship between the work of Carolingian poets and the exercise of imperial patronage: a gifted writer, he was also a perceptive courtier who stood near to the centre of events.[51] For Ermoldus Nigellus — smaller fry, a mere provincial poetaster of little brain and less talent, as some would have it[52] — the example of these magnates held an obvious attraction. In his bid to effect his restoration to the court of Louis the Pious's son, king Pippin of Aquitaine, whence he had been banished on unspecified charges,[53] Ermoldus consciously adapted the literary models provided by Moduin and Theodulf to the actual circumstances of his own career. Neither historical accident nor stylistic imitation

[47] Cf. note 21.
[48] Cf. MGH Poetae i, pp. 459–477.
[49] Cf. SCHALLER (Deutsches Archiv 18, 1962) p. 26 (with bibliography).
[50] See R. SYME, History in Ovid, Oxford 1978, p. 215 ff.
[51] Cf. GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 25–26.
[52] See below.
[53] See In Honorem Hludowici Pii iv, *vv.* 755 ff; Epistola ii, *vv.* 202–204.

are sufficient explanations for this tradition in Carolingian exilic and panegyrical poetry: the reasons for its continuity were more complex and more urgent, as we trace a series of attempts by able and ambitious men to refashion the legacy of the poetic past in the pursuit of self-interest and of self-justification.

Little is known about Ermoldus's life and background beyond what he himself tells us in his poetry. That is highly significant, both for our understanding of his writings and for an appreciation of the circles in which he moved. Ermoldus did not work in isolation, nor is the case of a poet active at the court of a Carolingian sub-king without parallel. The generation before Ermoldus had produced at late eighth-century Verona, in the entourage of Charlemagne's son, Pippin of Italy, a group of poets responsible for some of the most exciting experiments in early medieval Latin rhythmical verse.[54] And Pippin of Aquitaine, a ruler not primarily renowned for his intellectual attributes in the primary sources,[55] none the less inspired the dedication of authors of the stature of Jonas of Orléans.[56] Ermoldus's allusions to the *magni* who were capable of writing great things for Pippin, and had done so, in contrast to his own humbler efforts (Epistola ii, *vv.* 7–8), should not be lightly dismissed as mere *topoi* of modesty: here was a man who felt his verses to be susceptible to criticism at the Aquitainian court (*vv.* 217–220) and whose activities mattered enough for him to be banished from his master's entourage by Louis the Pious. A subversive, in short, at least in the eyes of imperial authority; a writer with an audience, and with a number of powerful enemies. It is worth enquiring for whom Ermoldus was writing and when.

2 *Carmina parva, paro quae recinenda tibi,*

is how Ermoldus describes his second Epistola to king Pippin of Aquitaine at the beginning of that work, and at its end he says:

215 *Carmina nostra tuo, princeps, tutamine posco*
ante tuos vultus sint recitata, pie.

His chosen form – the verse-epistle – was one adapted by earlier Carolingian poets, particularly Angilbert, Alcuin, and Theodulf, for public recitation at court; and Theodulf himself describes in some detail the manner and circumstances in which such works were intended to be circulated and declaimed.[57] Any interpretation of Ermoldus's Epistolae to king Pippin that approaches them as private communications from the poet to his monarch is thus seriously awry: no less than Ovid's Tristia and Epistolae ex Ponto,[58] from which they are lineal descendants, these poems are addressed both to the ruler and to a wider readership. Epistola i entreats the royal entourage in hierarchical order, seeking for someone to intercede

[54] Cf. GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 29–30.

[55] Cf. BEZZOLA (as. n. 3) p. 166.

[56] See below.

[57] Theodulf, Carm. xxv, *vv.* 9–12 with SCHALLER (as n. 15) p. 19.

[58] Cf. W. MARG, Zur Behandlung des Augustus in den 'Tristien' Ovids (Atti del Convegno internazionale Ovidiano II, Rome 1959, pp. 345–354 = Ovid, ed. M. VON ALBRECHT and E. ZINN, Darmstadt 1968, pp. 502–512). Vgl. R. MARACHE in: Ovidiana. Recherches sur Ovide, ed. N. I. HERESCU, Paris 1958, pp. 412 ff with the appraisal of SYME (as n. 50) pp. 224–225.

on its author's behalf; but Ermoldus's work also makes a broader appeal: it arraigns the king before the tribunal of a literary posterity that shall observe his mercy or note his obduracy. In these respects, the verse-epistle is a means both of addressing Ermoldus's immediate audience and of engaging a larger public – what Walter Marg, writing of Ovid, has aptly called a "Publikum ... der Zukunft".[59] Emphasis on the ruler's clemency becomes a means of eliciting it – or, in the absence of forgiveness, of making this known. Ostensibly despairing, resourceless, and suppliant, the poet still retains the trenchant weapon of self-publicity.

Firm dates have not been established for the two verse-epistles to king Pippin by Ermoldus. His larger work, entitled In Honorem Hludowici Pii, is assignable 826 – February 828.[60] Ermoldus alludes to this poem in his second Epistola to Pippin and implies that a copy of it had been sent to the Aquitainian king in order to edify him with the example set by his father:

139 *Nulla valent melius proprii quam gesta parentis*
reddere te certum, si recitata placent,
unde reor vobis super scripsisse parumper,
nescio si vestris auribus apta forent.

The second verse-epistle to king Pippin thus falls later in the period 826–828. Manitius (p. 554), assuming that it and Epistola i represent the two halves of a composite work, interpreted Ermoldus's words at the beginning of Book i of In Honorem Hludowici Pii:

7 *Forte foret satius coeptis insistere rebus*
plangere delicti gesta nefanda mei,
cum sim rusticulus ...

as an allusion to earlier efforts to regain the emperor's favour which have not survived. But there is no external or internal evidence for taking the two Epistolae to king Pippin together or for other verse, subsequently lost, written on this theme (self-referential though the poet is prone to be), and the expression *coeptis insistere rebus* at *v.* 7 of Book i of In Honorem Hludowici Pii, in the context of regret for past misconduct, of reliance on the clemency of the ruler and of complaint about Ermoldus's exile (*vv.* 11–14), firmly evokes the themes of the first Epistola to Pippin. It follows that the second verse-epistle to the Aquitainian king is divided from the first by the period in which In Honorem Hludiwici Pii was composed. The consequent separation and revised datings of these works would thus imply a series of closely successive appeals to two different patrons. This hypothesis is borne out (I shall argue below) by internal evidence which shows Ermoldus presenting Epistola i to king Pippin as a prelude to In Honorem Hludowici Pii and then constructing his second Epistola as a continuation of, or complement to,

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[59] Ovid (as n. 58) p. 508.

[60] The dating of E. Faral, Ermold le Noir. Poème sur Louis le Pieux et Epîtres au Roi Pépin (Les Classiques de l'Histoire de France au Moyen Age 14) Paris 1964, p. viii is better founded than that of Manitius, Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters i (Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft 9, 1) Munich 1911, p. 508.

that epic. Each of these three poems forms part of a sequence whose meaning is enhanced and whose interdependence is revealed when examined in the order in which it was written.

The first Epistola to king Pippin begins with the poet's address to his personified work. His Muse is Thalia – a direct allusion to Moduin's consolatory and admonitory poem to Theodulf (Carm. lxxiii, *v.* 3) and an indirect one to Alcuin, emphasising the writer's humility and the rusticity of his style.[61] While the influence of Moduin is paramount in this Epistola, the verse-epistles of Alcuin and the writing of other early Carolingian poets are also pressed into the service of Ermoldus's attempt to regain favour.

Ermoldus's poem opens in the manner of a 'Stationsgedicht': a personified verse-epistle directed to pay its respects to various notables at different places, like Alcuin's poem iv.[62] Sent through Aquitaine to the royal palace at Andiacum (= Angeac ?), it is enjoined to address the king and his court, from the family of Pippin to the courtiers of Ermoldus's acquaintance, to remind them of Ermoldus's plight, and to plead for his release. Not only is the hierarchical order observed in Angilbert's, Alcuin's and Theodulf's verse-epistles to Charlemagne and his entourage reproduced in Ermoldus's Epistola but also the diction and style of a number of these works.[63] At the opening of his poem, Ermoldus was thus seeking to recreate the literary atmosphere of the 790s, with its associations of patronage and favour. Pippin was to play Charlemagne to Ermoldus's Theodulf, and the poignancy of the implied analogy is perhaps reinforced by the fact that, while Theodulf, like Alcuin and Angilbert, wrote his verse-epistle during a voluntary absence from Charlemagne's court, Ermoldus composed his in an exile imposed by Charlemagne's son. Times, the poet is to suggest in subtle ways, have changed.

The king asks where Thalia has come from, and enquires the purpose of her mission (*v.* 61). The Muse replies in pointed words that establish the irony of Ermoldus's tone:

> 65 *"Exulis imperium me tanta per aequora vectam*
> *conpulit ad vestra regna venire modo ..."*

"*Exulis imperium*"? The banished author has an authority of his own, a comical counterpoint to the *Caesaris imperium* of *v.* 163 which effected his banishment. The mock grandiosity of the language attributes to Ermoldus the same authority over his Muse that the emperor exercises over his subjects. In the restricted sphere of his own writing a poet too can lay ironical claims to being autonomous and autocratic.

The king responds with a request for a description of Moduin's place of exile, and there follows (*v.* 89 ff) a dialogue between the personified Rhine and the Vosges.

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[61] GODMAN (as n. 35) p. 129 (note to *v.* 1597).

[62] MGH Poetae i, pp. 220 ff with SCHALLER (as n. 15) p. 19 and note 18.

[63] On the hierarchical order of these texts, see SCHALLER (as n. 15) pp. 20 ff, and GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 10–13. To the sources listed by DÜMMLER and FARAL ad loc. add the following comparisons: Ermoldus, Ep. i. *v.* 19 ff: cf. Theodulf, Carm. xxv, *vv.* 61 ff, 115 ff; Ermoldus, Ep. i, *v.* 29 ff: cf. Theodulf, Carm. xxv, *v.* 63; Ermoldus, Ep. i, *v.* 35 ff: cf. Theodulf, Carm. xxv, *v.* 67 ff; and with the dialogue-form of Ermoldus's text cf. Theodulf, Carm. xxxvi.

G. Brugnoli has rightly denied the context of mime which has been proposed for this part of the text,[64] but his contention that the work as a whole is a composite of two poems – the one a bucolic debate, addressed to Bernold, bishop of Strassburg, the other an elegy of exile intended for Pippin, king of Aquitaine – rests on the shaky grounds that Ermoldus is merely "un grello imitatore" incapable of originality: "la descrizione dei luoghi d'Alsazia così lunga e particolareggiata, è certamente eccessiva o fuor di luogho, diretta com' è a Pipino",[65] asserts Brugnoli, without regard to the literary models, taken from the previous generation, which Ermoldus employs so deftly.

The dialogue and debate-form adopted by Ermoldus was already well-established in early Carolingian poetry, and the use of personified abstractions in the Conflictus Veris et Hiemis ascribed to Alcuin[66] had anticipated the type of jocular exchange to be found in the first Epistola to Pippin. The Vosges and the Rhine assert their respective merits with the same kind of lighthearted banter used by Spring and Winter in the Alcuinian Conflictus; but the cut-and-thrust of their debate has no independent life of its own. Their speeches humorously project the respective merits of the region of Ermoldus's exile and of his homeland and the witty statement of home-sickness, expressed in borrowed voices, tactfully avoids any criticism of the poet's place of captivity. Where Theodulf had pictured himself in a prison dungeon (Carm. lxxii, *v.* 13), Ermoldus visualises a garden of earthly delights. If he declares his preference for Aquitaine, it is not because he spurns Alsace. Personal devotion to king Pippin and love for his *patria* provide graceful explanations of Ermoldus's motives, and his Epistola embodies the kind of panegyric which his return would impel him to write:

135 *"Quae tibi, Rhene, dedi, Ligeri fortasse dedissem,*
Si licitum patriam posse redire foret."

The would-be court poet exhibits his wares, and holds out a promise of more to come if he is pardoned.

The departure from the model of Moduin, which Brugnoli adduces (p. 141) as an argument against the unity of the text, can thus be seen as integral to Ermoldus's purposes and as consistent with his refashioning of earlier Carolingian poetry. And in returning, at the end of his poem, to Moduin's example, by citing the same instances of famous exiles which Moduin had unsuccessfully employed earlier in the same decade to console Theodulf on his banishment and to counsel patience, Ermoldus envisages the failure of his own pleas in a spirit of self-irony which Moduin's friend had been incapable of mustering. The refusal of Ermoldus's request is attributed to king Pippin himself, pointedly quoting the consolatory words of Moduin.[67] After the cold comfort which the poet imagines his erstwhile

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[64] G. Brugnoli, La prima elegia a Pippino di Ermoldo Nigello (Cultura neolatina 15, 1955, pp. 133 ff) rebutting G. Ermini, Un mimo convivale nell' età carolina (Studi Medievali N.S. 1, 1928, pp. 133–134 = Idem, Medio evo latino, Modena 1938, pp. 141 ff).

[65] Brugnoli (as n. 64) p. 141.

[66] MGH Poetae i, pp. 270–272, discussed, with bibliography in Godman (as n. 5) p.20–22.

[67] Ermoldus i, *v.* 181 ff (MGH Poetae ii, p. 85), cf. Moduin, Carm. lxxii, *v.* 47 ff (MGH Poetae i, p. 571). On the irony of this borrowing see further Godman (as n. 5) pp. 45–46.

patron offering him, the way was prepared for an appeal to the mightier authority of Louis the Pious.

A change of direction, this, but no fundamental change of tactics. Ermoldus stage-manages his rejection by Pippin in Epistola i as an elegant pretext for proceeding to In Honorem Hludowici Pii. Yet in his appeal to the emperor the king of Aquitaine is not forgotten. The passage of that poem most regularly cited in modern accounts of Ermoldus's life and works is Book iv, *vv.* 131–138, which relates Ermoldus's poor showing as a soldier during the Breton campaign of 824 and reports Pippin's indulgent advice that he abandon arms for literature. These lines are less ingenuous then the many literal interpretations of them might suggest. Ermoldus's autobiographical vignette is one of a number of discreet reminders, carefully planted in the course of his poem in praise of Louis the Pious, of his past intimacy with king Pippin and of his ever-present desire to return to the Aquitainian court[68]: a reiteration, in short, of the central theme of Epistola i, and a sign of the two-sided focus of his attentions that will fully emerge in Epistola ii.

In his first letter to king Pippin, Ermoldus has been observed drawing on earlier literature in order to recreate the atmosphere of a previous period and to describe and dignify his personal plight. Similar parallels of poetic form and of situation are found in his In Honorem Hludowici Pii which derives inspiration from the major work in narrative verse of the early Carolingian period: the epic poem, celebrating the triumphs of Charlemagne, probably also composed in four books (only the third of which survives) and traditionally known as 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa'.[69] Ermoldus's verbal debts to this work have been ably (though not comprehensively) listed by Dümmler and Faral in their editions, but the significance of the poet's choice of model and the reasons for the failure of his work have never been assessed. By 'failure' in this regard I refer not to Ermoldus's biography – it is possible, though far from certain, that he secured his release from exile and may be observed witnessing Aquitainian charters during the 830s[70] – but to his poem's lack of literary influence. Ermoldus's adaptation of his Carolingian precursors was to make an impact on the authors of subsequent verse-epistles, but In Honorem Hludowici Pii, the direct descendant of 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa', begat no successors. It is remarkable that no Carolingian poet was ever again to attempt to celebrate his monarch in the manner in which Ermoldus, drawing on 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa', had celebrated Louis the Pious. In the epic genre, where this fertile writer might have seemed most likely to father a continuing tradition, he failed to produce an heir. A chance of transmission? Or rather a direct consequence of the lack of ability of this "naïf artisan de lettres" who burdens his narrative with a gratuitous "ornement littéraire" and whose vagueness of style and confusion of thought are redeemed only by a general chronological accuracy which he anyway owes to lost annalistic sources? Such is

[68] Ermoldus i, *vv.* 613–614; iv, *vv.* 759–762.

[69] On the date and character of this text see SCHALLER (as n. 6). For discussion of 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' and further comparison between it and In Honorem Hludowici Pii see GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 22–24, 73–74.

[70] See WATTENBACH–LEVISON–LÖWE (as n. 4) p. 331 and note 128.

the view of Ermoldus's most recent editor, Edmond Faral,[71] who condemns him as a poet because he judges him as a historian. And that (I shall argue) is exactly what Ermoldus is not. No simple criteria of historicity or of realism will enable us to do justice to this poem as a work of art or to understand the circumstances in which it appeared, as an analysis of the exordium and the first book of In Honorem Hludowici Pii in their historical and literary context reveals.[72]

Ermoldus's consciousness of the traditions of narrative verse, both religious and secular, in which his own work took its place is immediately apparent from the exordium of In Honorem Hludowici Pii. The elaborate periodic sentence with which the poem opens, invoking Christ, stating the poet's theme, and asserting his personal humility, is followed (*v.* 11 ff.) by a repudiation of the profane deities of pagan poetry and by a conventional *topos* of brevity. An acrostic explains the authorship, recipient and subject of the work. "On le voit suivre docilement les traces d'Adhelm" [sic] is Faral's characterisation of this exordium and his account of the work that follows ("un simple centon") is scarcely more generous. But it is not enough to register Ermoldus's debt to the first Anglo-Latin poet without appreciating its significance. Aldhelm's evocation of the wonders of the Creator is adapted by Ermoldus to sing the martial deeds of his emperor; the conventions of religious narrative verse are transferred to the secular sphere; *Caesaris arma* are presented as a subject commensurate with the spiritual attainments of the champions of Christ venerated by Aldhelm; and divine favour is invoked to reconcile the displeased emperor to his exiled encomiast. Ermoldus transforms the Anglo-Latin poet's exordium, rendering to his Caesar what Aldhelm had offered to his saints.

Yet *Caesaris arma* are only one aspect of Ermoldus's portrayal of Louis the Pious. The division of the four books of In Honorem Hludowici Pii into two parts — Books i and ii depicting the emperor as a warlord, Books ii and iv emphasising his achievements in peace — proposed by Alfred Ebenbauer can scarcely be sustained.[73] If some two-thirds of Book i are devoted to a narrative of the campaign of Barcelona, the remainder is concerned with the circumstances leading to the foundation of Conques and with Paulinus of Aquileia's prophecies of Louis's accession to the throne. Book ii may say little about military subjects, but Book iii reveals a mixture of religious, civilian and martial themes similar to those of Book i. And if the conversion of the Danes is the primary concern of Book iv, the campaign against the Bretons is a not insignificant event among the deeds which it relates. The complementary character of Louis's spiritual and secular achievements is thus reflected in the structure and themes of the poem, and they are amply illustrated by Book i of In Honorem Hludowici Pii.

Book i moves briskly through the emperor's early career. Of his boyhood Ermoldus knew little; Louis's administration while king of Aquitaine receives only the briefest of notices; and the poet openly admits his ignorance of the details of

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[71] FARAL, p. viii, x, xi, xxvii.

[72] This text is discussed at greater length in P. GODMAN, Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry, Oxford forthcoming, to which this study is preparatory.

[73] A. EBENBAUER, Carmen Historicum. Untersuchungen zur historischen Dichtung im Karolingischen Europa i (Philologica Germanica 4) Vienna 1978, pp. 136–137. Ebenbauer's study has the merit of taking Ermoldus seriously as a poet, and of paying close attention to his work.

campaigns waged against the Basques and elsewhere. Attention has also been drawn[74] to Ermoldus's omission of aspects of Louis's youth which might have lent themselves naturally to panegyric, such as his coronation at Rome in 781. Within less than seventy lines the poet comes to the subjects of the Franks' conflict with the Moors and of Louis's expedition against Barcelona, which remain at the centre of his attention for much of Book i. This choice of theme has puzzled scholars, and Ermoldus's treatment of it has aroused criticisms that are characteristic of modern interpretations of the work as a whole. It is therefore worth considering more closely the development of this part of the poem and the grounds on which it has been deprecated.[75]

Ermoldus's narrative begins in earnest with his account of Barcelona's unstable place on the future Spanish Mark (*v.* 67 ff).[76] Brief accounts of the incursions of Moorish brigands and of previous unsuccessful attempts by the Franks to besiege the city provide a background to the actions of Louis. At Toulouse, the king summons his counsellors to ask which course he should take, and in this passage an important feature of Ermoldus's portrayal of Louis the Pious first emerges. Louis is *satus a Carolo* (*v.* 112) and, only a few lines later, *Carolides* (*v.* 119): a characterisation that is emphatic and repeated.[77] The actions of Charlemagne's son are constantly described, throughout Book i, by reference to his father; stress is placed on the old emperor's moral and political preeminence; and the idealised image of filial obedience to paternal authority not only makes Louis's succession, described in Book ii, seem natural and fitting, it also had implications as pertinent to king Pippin's future career as they were to the emperor Louis's past.[78]

Two problems exercise the scholars who have examined Ermoldus's account of the siege of Barcelona. Both derive from apparent discrepancies between what Ermoldus asserts and what is recorded in other sources. Ermoldus is notoriously vague about the duration of the siege: at *v.* 379 he speaks of its having lasted twenty days, when the Franks increased their efforts and stormed the city by the end of the month (*v.* 497). Other accounts give its length as seven months or two years; differences here can be reconciled by assuming (as Ermoldus implies) that the siege stretched over a period of two years and that he describes only part of

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[74] Ebenbauer, p. 103.

[75] Little assistance is provided in the most recent essay on Ermoldus's account of the Barcelona campaign by J. E. Ruiz Doménec, El asiedo de Barcelona según Ermoldo el Negro (Notas sobre el carácter de la guerra en la alta Edad Media, Boletín de la Real Academia de Barcelona 37, 1979, pp. 149–168). For a view of the work as propaganda, see J. Batany, Propagande carolingienne et mythe carolingien: le programme de Louis le Pieux chez Ermold le Noir et dans le Couronnement de Louis (La chanson de geste et le mythe carolingien. Mélanges René Louis, Saint-Peil-sous-Vézelay 1982, pp. 313–340); on Ermoldus's conception of war, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, Early Medieval History, Oxford 1975, pp. 32–33.

[76] The Spanish Mark is not usually regarded as being formed until 802; see P. Wolff in: Karl der Große. Lebenswerk und Nachleben 1: Persönlichkeit und Geschichte, ed. H. Beumann, Darmstadt 1965, p. 279 and note 81; for the historical background to this part of Ermoldus's work, see Idem, pp. 271 ff, especially pp. 278 ff.

[77] Cf. *vv.* 287, 323, 385, 469, 549, 550, 562–564. The emphasis is not dissimilar to Thegan's in the early chapters of his biography. Cf. cap. 6 (Rau, as n. 1, p. 220).

[78] Cf. below.

it.[79] However, no harmony is possible between the allegedly passive rôle assigned to Louis the Pious by his biographer the Astronomer (cap. 13) and by the chronicle of Moissac (wrongly s.a. 803) and the active initiative on the campaign attributed to him by Ermoldus Nigellus (e.g. *v.* 267 ff). "Sollte sich die Phantasie Ermolds so weit verstiegen haben, daß er einen Kriegshelden aus einen müßigen König machte, der ins Lager kommt, um unverdiente Lorbeeren für sich zu pflücken? Das wäre doch die gröbste Lüge!", exclaims C. Tykocinski,[80] who then attempts to resolve the difficulty by assuming that the siege did not begin in earnest until Louis's arrival before the gates of the city, on the grounds that the Astronomer cannot have wished to present his subject unfavourably and that the emperor had a creditable reputation as a campaigner (pp. 16–18). No amount of special pleading will remove this difficulty, however, if Ermoldus's text genuinely differs from what our other sources recount. But does it?

After the war-council of Toulouse and the decision taken by Louis, in consultation with his magnates, to besiege Barcelona (*vv.* 67–188) Ermoldus relates the foundation of the monastery of Conques (*vv.* 189–266). This passage has been stigmatised as a digression characteristic of its rambling author, without recognising that Ermoldus's narrative is built around a series of deliberate contrasts that are planned to lead up to their point of culmination, the siege. Moreover, the shift of perspective – from the military aspect of Louis's planning to the sphere of ecclesiastical policy – exemplifies the double nature of his interests and responsibilities, and serves to heighten the suspense of the narrative. For the account of an earlier atrocity committed by the Moors against the mother of Datus, Louis's collaborator in the foundation of Conques, underscores the cruelty of the enemy whom the Franks were to face at Barcelona.

The reader thus comes to the subject of the siege and storming of that city with a deeper understanding of the purpose of the Frankish army and with a sense of Louis's diverse abilities. The scene opens (*v.* 267 ff) in a second council of the magnates, parallel to the first. It is this passage which has aroused so much indignation about the poet's misrepresentation of Louis's rôle in the capture of Barcelona: "Selon Ermold, Louis arrive donc des premiers devant Barcelona ...", writes Faral, who then emphasises the different accounts provided by Astronomus and the Moissac chronicle. Here is what Ermoldus actually says:

267 *Interea regis proceres populique phalanges,*
dudum commoniti jussa libenter agunt.
Undique conveniunt Francorum more catervae
atque urbis muros densa corona tenet.
Convenit ante omnes Carolo satus agmine pulcro;
urbis ad exitium congregat ille duces.
Parte sua princeps Vilhelm tentoria figit,
Heripreth, Lihuthard, Bigoque sive Bero,

[79] Faral (as n. 60) pp. 42 ff, note 1.

[80] C. Tykocinsky, Quellenkritische Beiträge zur Geschichte Ludwigs des Frommen, diss. hist., Leipzig 1898, p. 15.

Santio, Libulfus, Hilthibreth, atque Hisimbard,
sive alii plures, quos recitare mora est ...

Vv. 267–270 describe the fulfilment of Louis's command at *vv.* 175–176: the troops had gathered before the city as they were ordered to do, and were busy obeying the king's orders. To translate these lines, with Faral, as: "Cependant, les princes et leurs bataillons, convoqués, obéissent avec empressement à l'ordre" is simply to misinterpret them. *Interea* at *v.* 267 is further defined by the temporal conjunction *dudum* and the past participle *commoniti* of *v.* 268. The Franks were engaged in pursuing the siege when Louis appeared before them (*v.* 271); his arrival marks the next stage in the action: thus far the poet's account is entirely consistent with our other sources. How then does Faral arrive at his belief that Ermoldus depicts the king arriving "des premiers" before Barcelona at the outset of the campaign?[81] By a second mis-translation, this time of *v.* 271: "le fils de Charles, le premier, arrive avec une belle armée ...". "Le premier" is Faral's version of *ante omnes,* but the preposition is temporal neither in context nor in sense. After the activities related at *vv.* 267–268, the king proceeds before the forces described at *vv.* 269–270 and holds the public council of magnates which is recounted at *v.* 272 ff. 'Ante' refers not to time but to place: Ermoldus depicts Louis dramatically announcing the decision to storm the city in a speech delivered before his assembled host. The 'gröbste Lüge' of Tykocinski's analysis, like the difficulties raised by Faral and others, is based on a misunderstanding of Ermoldus's Latin.

The speech by Louis to his followers (*v.* 287 ff) represents the assault on Barcelona as a religious duty: peace will follow the Moors' conversion and divine *pietas* is invoked in support of the enterprise. Parallel to the Christian king's oration is one by the *wali* Zado or Zaīd. Emphasis is laid on his craftiness (*v.* 316) – a trait that recurs later in the work – and a measure of his shrewdness is provided by his recognition of the flattering self-image of the Franks. The lines in which this Frankish poet depicts first Zado and then the Moor Durzaz extolling the courage, martial triumphs and toughness of their Frankish adversaries (*v.* 329 ff; *v.* 355 ff) and urging them to depart are not exempt from a certain irony. In sarcastic tones Durzaz reproaches the besiegers with the words:

355 'O *gens dura nimis, latum diffusa per orbem,*
cur pia castra quatis inquietasque pios?'

This chief of brigands and robbers rebukes the Franks for the same kind of incursion for which his followers had been condemned at *v.* 71 ff, and the heathen general echoes the rhetoric of Louis, the Christian ruler, emphasising the *pietas* of his people and the righteousness of his side. When Faral comments, a few lines after Durzaz's speech, 'il est impossible de discerner ce qui dans la description de le siège, representerait un trait authentique. L'auteur, trop manifestement, use et abuse de la convention littéraire' (p. 35, note 2), he ignores the fact that the speeches of Zado and Durzaz and of Louis are contrasted with one another, their common stress upon *pietas* serving to underline their differences. Durzaz perverts

[81] Faral (as n. 60) p. 28, note 1, paraphrased by Wolff (as n. 76) p. 280, note 87.

the language of his opponent, appealing to a false ideal of self-interest in Louis's Christian terms and praising the virtues of the Franks in a work intended for a Frankish audience consequently disposed to acknowledge his perceptiveness. Ermoldus's technique is no less subtle than that of the Waltharius-poet when he voices the fear of Heiric, king of the Burgundians, at the prospect of Attila's attack by means of an unflattering comparison of his people's courage with the famous valour of the Franks.[82]

To the proud resolve of Louis (*v.* 385 ff) the Moors reply with insults (*v.* 397 ff) – a further stage on this series of exchanges. Zado makes his attempt to slip out of Barcelona and to raise help from Cordoba; he is captured, but his instructions to his followers in this eventuality prevent them from yielding the city to the Franks. A scene of feigned entreaty between Zado and his men follows (*v.* 477 ff) in which he commands them to open the gates, conscious that his previous orders prevent them from obeying and observed by the Frankish count William, divided between irritation at the Moor's deviousness and admiration for his daring:

489 *Hoc vero agnoscens Vilhelmus concitus illum*
percussit pugno, non simulanter agens,
dentibus infrendens versat sub pectore curas;
miratur Maurum, sed magis ingenium.

The neat antitheses of emotion – cunning dissimulation by Zado and its blunt recognition by William, the combination of anger and astonishment in the Frank's understanding of his opponent's wiles – play upon the tensions displayed in the parallel speeches in the earlier part of Book i. The Moors are represented as a worthy foe for the Franks; suspense is heightened; and Louis's forces (unlike the previous Frankish occupiers of the Spanish Mark, drably likened at *v.* 89 ff to thrushes and other lowly birds) at their moment of victory are compared to the majestic eagle descending from heaven upon a flock of lesser fowls (*v.* 505 ff). Contrasts of imagery, speech and action are finely sustained by Ermoldus.

The spoils of victory together with Zado, humbled in his captivity, are brought in triumph to Charlemagne. On hearing the news of his son's success the emperor recalls a prophecy about Louis's future which Ermoldus attributes to Paulinus of Aquileia. The Vita Alcuini (cap. xv), written probably at Ferrières between 826 and 829, records a story that has often been compared with Ermoldus's account and has sometimes been used to discredit it. Asked by Charlemagne which of his three sons deserved to become emperor after him, Alcuin, according to the Ferrières Life, prophesied Louis's future accession. Ermoldus presents a similar tale, in the form of a rapidly narrated and striking vignette. Charles, the emperor's eldest son, appeared in the Dome at Aachen while Paulinus was chanting the Psalms. Surrounded by a brilliant entourage, he entered the church; Paulinus inquired his identity; fell silent on being informed; and Charles passed on without pausing. He was followed by Pippin, Charlemagne's second son, who similarly did not stop to acknowledge Paulinus's homage. Finally Louis made his entrance. Unlike his brothers, he remained in the church, humbly entreating God's clemency. The

[82] Waltharius, *vv.* 56–63.

patriarch then prophesied that Louis would become emperor. Both Ermoldus's poem and the Vita Alcuini, implicitly or overtly, make the same point: Louis's success was a fulfilment of the prophecies of Matthew 23:12 and of Psalm 51:10. The humble shall be exalted, and at the moment of Louis's major military triumph Ermoldus (again like Thegan) lays stress on the future emperor's spiritual qualities.[83] 'The Pious' may not be the most accurate name for Louis, nor the one most securely founded in our sources,[84] but the *pietas* reflected in this passage (as in Ermoldus's earlier account of the foundation of Conques) was one of the attributes that gave him a special title to the throne. The subjects with which Book ii opens – the nomination of Louis as Charlemagne's successor and his accession following the old emperor's death – thus follow naturally from preparations carefully laid in Book i. And this integration of Louis's military and religious achievements into an idealised image of Christian kingship not only extolled and explained the authority of the reigning emperor but were also directed to his son, Pippin of Aquitaine.

The last lines of Book i of In Honorem Hludowici Pii (*vv.* 613–614) plead for the poet to be allowed to return to Pippin's court. They abstract the reader from the events leading up to Louis the Pious's succession in 814, and remind him of the circumstances in which Ermoldus wrote his poem. Much is explained about the distinctive themes, and perhaps the failure (in the sense defined above) of this work, by the political background of its period of composition (826–828) and by the two audiences for which it was intended.

The poet's emphasis on Louis the Pious's rôle as Charlemagne's son, and on his obedience to paternal authority, emerges clearly in the course of Book i. And in describing the emperor's success in capturing a city which had served in the past as a base for Moorish incursions into Francia, Ermoldus touched on a topic that was highly pertinent to the duties and the ambitions of his former patron.

Between 826 and 828 the Spanish Mark remained notoriously unstable. The Royal Frankish Annals for each of these years record Louis the Pious's concern for this embattled frontier. King Pippin, like his father before him, was charged with the direction of operations against the Moors during this period. In writing of Louis's prowess at Barcelona, Ermoldus held up a mirror of conduct that was pertinent to the son who had succeeded the emperor both as ruler of Aquitaine and as the intended pacifier of the troubled Spanish Mark. Hence his anxiety, in the second Epistola to Pippin, that the king read In Honorem Hludowici Pii and his readiness to repeat and to develop several of its central themes. These parallels between father and son, implicit in Ermoldus's epic, are (as we shall see) made plain in the verse-epistle in which he goes on directly to address king Pippin.

But if the analogy between Pippin and Louis the Pious is understated and cautious in Book i of In Honorem Hludowici Pii, the direct comparison of Louis to Charlemagne – unmistakable in a work explicitly modelled on 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' – rubbed against raw issues that were beginning to emerge in the

[83] Thegan, cap. 19 (RAU, as n. 1, p. 226). On hagiographical traits in the Astronomer's biography there are perceptive remarks in SIEMES (as n. 18) pp. 18–105.

[84] SCHIEFFER (as n. 5).

late 820s. Ermoldus had chosen to concentrate, in Book i of his epic, on Louis the Pious's military triumphs in 801: the whole world proclaims and applauds *Caesaris armigeri ... gesta,* he declares at the beginning of the poem (*vv.* 5–6 and cf. *v.* 1). Like Horace's rhapsodies on the subjugation of the Parthians, the target of "Caesar's last, doomed campaign" which "gave special pleasure to a *princeps* sensitive on the subject of military glory and inevitably compared with his irresistible parent",[85] the first book of In Honorem Hludowici Pii, with its account of the capture of Barcelona, was designed to give particular satisfaction to Louis the Pious. Charlemagne had never managed to secure the Spanish Mark: hence Ermoldus's emphasis on Louis's success in that region. Yet, by the late 820s, the emperor's achievement in securing the Spanish Mark had come to seem increasingly uncertain. Moorish incursions in 826, 827 and 828 may have provided Pippin with an opportunity to emulate the victories of his father, but the Spanish Mark had again become a source of anxiety and of instability for the empire. The success which Ermoldus portrays as so permanent in In Honorem Hludowici Pii had every reason to seem illusory in its subject's eyes at the time of the poem's appearance, when the kind of narrative suitable for recounting the deeds of Charlemagne had the effect of assimilating Louis the Pious to a martial model whose appropriateness seemed ever more dubious. The artistic dilemma that had confronted Horace and Virgil when they attempted to find the suitable form in which to celebrate the actions of an Augustus whose wars seemed small in comparison with Caesar's[86] never presented itself to Ermoldus who, in imitating 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa', made the fatal choice of an epic form that recalled Charlemagne's spectacular triumphs to his less obviously successful son. And if Book i of In Honorem Hludowici Pii contained material that had cause to rankle with Louis the Pious in the late 820s,[87] those years of emerging conflict which accompanied the growth of Judith's influence, can king Pippin of Aquitaine, his position already weakened by the provisions of the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817,[88] have regarded with unmixed satisfaction Ermoldus's description, in Book iv, of a hunt in which lingering attention is paid to the empress and to Charles the Bald[89] — a blatant indication of the way in which favour was moving at court and one that posed a naked threat to the interests of the emperor's elder sons?

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[85] J. GRIFFIN, Augustus and the Poets: *Caesar qui cogere posset* (Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects, edd. F. MILLAR and E. SEGAL, Oxford 1984, pp. 189–218) p. 198. I wish to thank Jasper Griffin, who generously made this splendid essay available to me in advance of publication.

[86] GRIFFIN, p. 198.

[87] The later we place the poem in the 820s, the greater is the pertinence of this argument. The best analysis of the events of these years, which contains much that is relevant to the last three books of In Honorem Hludowici Pii, is by F. L. GANSHOF, Am Vorabend der ersten Krise der Regierung Ludwigs des Frommen. Die Jahre 828 und 829 (Frühmittelalterliche Studien 6, 1972, pp. 39–54, an amended version of a Dutch paper that first appeared in: Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap 82 deel, Utrecht 1968).

[88] Cf. L. AUZIAS, L'Aquitaine carolingienne, Toulouse 1937, pp. 81–82. On the reception of the *Ordinatio* more generally, see L. LEVILLAIN, Recueil des Actes de Pépin I et de Pépin III, rois d'Aquitaine, Paris 1926, pp. xli-xlii, and H. ZATSCHEK, Die Reichsteilungen unter Kaiser Ludwig dem Frommen, (Mitteilungen des österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung 49, 1935, pp. 187–190).

[89] Ermoldus iv, *vv.* 501–534. See GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 46–47.

The content and form of In Honorem Hludowici Pii thus bear witness to difficulties which its emollient style seeks to belie. On the one hand, the poet sought pardon from his erstwhile patron; on the other, ultimate authority lay less with the king who had been the object of Ermoldus's attentions in Epistola i than with the emperor who is the subject of his epic. The second Epistola to Pippin reflects these strains more vividly than its bland manuscript titulature — Ad Eundem Pippinum — might suggest. For if Ermoldus's second poem to the Aquitainian king is a mirror for princes, then it is set in the two directions already discernible in In Honorem Hludowici Pii.

"In nuce enthält seine Elegie fast alle Elemente eines Speculum Principis der hochkarolingischen Zeit", observes H. H. Anton in his valuable study of this genre,[90] emphasising Ermoldus's debt to Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel's Via regia, to Isidore's Sententiae and to pseudo-Cyprian's De duodecim abusivis saeculi. But Ermoldus's Epistola ii is more than a verse synthesis of political themes treated in the prose tracts of this period: it is a work of poetry composed for a potential malcontent at a difficult moment in his career by an author alive to the tensions about him and anxious to improve his own position. Deliberately contrived variations of tone and changes of style contribute to the advice that Ermoldus tenders to Pippin, and humour is one of the means which he employs to defuse the potentially explosive situation in which he and his patron found themselves. It would be difficult to improve on Anton's thorough account of the writings on Christian kingship from which the poet derived some inspiration, and it would be wrong not to acknowledge Anton's conclusion that Ermoldus was working within a flourishing tradition — Carolingian in general, but specifically Aquitainian as well — of composing mirrors for princes. Yet Anton scarcely discusses what is distinctive about Ermoldus's work: the attempt, in a manner both admonitory and comic, to offer guidance to Pippin in the light of his earlier epic. The poet was not employing empty rhetoric when he stated his wish that In Honorem Hludowici Pii come into the king's hands (Epistola ii, *vv.* 139—142), for the example of Louis the Pious held several attractions — not all of them innocent — for his ambitious son.

Ermoldus's second Epistola begins by comparing his own *carmina parva* (*v.* 2) with the great works written by the *magni,* (*vv.* 7—8), expressing a preference for small-scale verse which is not without edge coming as it does from this recent author of epic. The *topos* of modesty is further developed by recalling classical authors of the past:

> 3 *Carminibus prisci quondam placuere poetae,*
> *carmine Naso placet atque poeta Maro.*
> *Rustica nostra tamen super Musella placebat,*
> *et solitus nostris ludere versiculis.*

The juxtaposition of his own humble efforts with the great names of these Augustan poets evokes not only the literary fame of Ovid and Virgil but also the one's exile

[90] H. H. Anton, Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit (Bonner Historische Forschungen 32) Bonn 1968, p. 198.

and the other's material success. Cited by Moduin to Theodulf[91] and ironically adapted by Ermoldus in his previous epistle to king Pippin,[92] these figures from antiquity serve to intensify the contrast between the Carolingian poet's present state and future aspirations. Superficial humility is thus deployed to stake out Ermoldus's own claims.

The tone changes, with an abruptness characteristic of this work. Simpler, less literary examples succeed the classical allusions with which the elegy opens. A small dog among a pack of hounds heads the list of objects whose lowliness does not diminish their appeal (*v.* 9 ff) – an example shrewdly selected, for by presenting his humility in terms of the hunt Ermoldus alludes to a favourite activity of king Pippin. Imagery of the chase gives way in its turn to the figure of the jester or buffoon in which the poet chooses to represent his own work and which accounts for its subsequent alternations of tone:

19 *Sic auro ferrum, sic ulmus grata Lieo,*
inter doctilocos scurra placere solet;
sic arbusta iuvant proprio plantata labore,
ingenii nostri sic tibi Musa placet.

The inspiration to which Ermoldus lays claim in this passage is of the home-grown variety, like the examples which he draws from the natural world. Consistent though they are with the preceding instances of modesty, they reflect Ermoldus's anxiety to deny the seriousness of his message, by depicting himself (*v.* 20) as a *scurra* among scholars. The natural partner for his unassuming rôle is the *Musa iocosa* of v. 24. This Ovidian allusion (Tristia ii. 354) is no less pointed than the one at *v.* 4. Writing from exile, in the manner of the author of the Tristia, Ermoldus (like Moduin before him or like himself in Epistola i) recalls the punishments meted out to his Augustan predecessor. Having failed to sing the deeds of the Caesar, Ovid fell from favour (Tristia ii. 335 ff). His frivolous poetry displeased the *princeps*, and he fell back on the proverbial distinction between art and life:

335 *... distant mores a carmine nostro*
(vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea).

The subject of Ovid's defence becomes the ground for Ermoldus's disclaimer. On the point of offering political counsel to king Pippin, Ermoldus deprecates the solemnity of what he is about to advise. In this context the terms *scurra* and *Musa iocosa* take on a deeper resonance than the elements of a mere modesty-*topos* conventionally convey. They reflect an awareness of the precariousness of Ermoldus's position and of the importance of maintaining a light-hearted tone in which to present his admonitions. Behind the allusive banter lies a tenseness that is reflected in the uneasy alternation between jest and earnest in the poem that follows.

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[91] See above.
[92] See avobe.

Admonition is preceded by encomium. Its initial emphasis, like that of Jonas of Orléans in the preface to his De Institutione regia,[93] is on the physical and moral qualities of Pippin; the king's beauty, the wisdom of his words, his intelligence and his kindly intentions all make him the equal of the fabled rulers of antiquity (*vv.* 25–36): The verses which sum up Pippin's excellence are succeeded by a couplet which urges a different kind of virtue:

37 *Omnia conveniunt regali in corpore membra;*
conveniat casto Christum in amore coli.

The paranomasia (*conveniunt* : *conveniat*), coupled with a shift of mood from the indicative to the subjunctive, signals Ermoldus's adoption of a more cautious, more deliberately didactic tone. The dependence of temporal authority upon divine power is next linked to the primacy of the kingdom of heaven:

41 *Caelica regna monet primum tibi quaerere Christus:*
sufficientur, ait, cetera sponte sua.

This *auctoritas* is taken from the Gospel of Matthew (6:33) but the idea is given a new and subtle twist. The stress is placed on *sponte sua,* in emphatic position at the end of the pentameter, and the point is reinforced by the injunction:

43 *Utere concessis: flagito, inconcessa caveto,*
sic bona cuncta bonis adsociata manent.
Utere nempe iocis silvestribus, utere campo,
cum cane cumque capo ista vel illa cape;
sitque statuta dies venaticis utier armis
sitque statuta dies utiliora sequi.

"Nach dem Hinweis auf die theokratischen Grundlagen der Herrschaft folgt in Ermolds Elegie eine allgemeine Mahnung, nur das Erlaubte zu tun, das Unerlaubte zu meiden. Sie wird dahingehend erläutert, daß Pippin zwar der Jagdleidenschaft frönen, dabei aber nicht die Regierungsgeschäfte vernachlässigen dürfen", writes Anton (p. 192), whose interpretation tacitly expands upon the questionable translation of *vv.* 47–48 offered by Faral: "qu'un jour soit réservé à manier les armes de chasse, un autre à poursuivre des œuvres plus utiles" (p. 221). But Ermoldus's language embodies a studied imprecision: *sitque statuta dies* is suggestive of a determined, if unstated, date which Faral's rendering "qu'un jour soit réservé" does not entirely capture; and 'Regierungsgeschäfte' is, by contrast, an unwarranted gloss on *utiliora*, the exactitude of the German misrepresenting the deliberate generality of the Latin word. The context is a list of the qualities requisite in the ideal ruler; and imperial analogies are evoked in a comparison between Pippin's future progress and the expansion of the Roman empire (*vv.* 53–54). If it is an exaggeration to detect in this passage explicit counsel against rebellion,[94] it is a

[93] Ed. J. Reviron, Les idées politico-religieuses d'un évêque du IX[e] siècle. Jonas d'Orléans et son 'De Institutione Regia'. Étude et texte critique, Paris 1930, p. 123.

[94] R. Faulhaber, Der Reichseinheitsgedanke in der Literatur der Karolingerzeit bis zum Vertrag von Verdun (Historische Studien 204) Berlin 1931, pp. 104 ff; criticised by Anton (as n. 90) p. 182, note 283 and p. 194, note 298.

mistake to ignore its pertinence to the advice which Ermoldus tenders later in the work. At one level the poet is urging his king efficiently to divide his time between the pleasures of the chase and the business of the realm; at another, the deliberate ambiguity of his words is only clarified by the parallel between Pippin and Louis the Pious advanced at the conclusion of his Epistola. But before that parallel could be drawn, a less charged tone had to be adopted.

Lengthier than the list of regal virtues derived from Smaragdus is the account of a hermit which succeeds it (*vv.* 69–106). This passage has embarrassed the commentators who have taken it as an illustration of the importance of placing divine love before all else and as an example of the dangers attendant on Pippin's political isolation. But how uneconomically – indeed how absurdly – these solemn points are made by Ermoldus! From an unspecified and unidentified *vita patrum* he relates the story of a hermit who became so fond of a cat that Christ refused to continue his daily interviews with him. The hermit was forced to chase his pet away. The poet swears that he will never keep such a cat, recalls that Pippin does not do so either, and warns him not to be so keen on hounds (*vv.* 105–108). Caution against excessive indulgence in hunting is expressed in Jonas's definition of the qualities of the ideal layman, in his De institutione laicali,[95] and this passage in Ermoldus's Epistola ii half-comically tenders the same advice, releasing some of the uneasiness mounting in the preceding lines of ambiguous admonition. The subject of the chase was thus not incongruous in Ermoldus's *speculum principis,* and the persona of the *scurra* adopted at the opening of the work licensed the defensive humour of its tone. Cats and dogs were not the most pressing of the disaffected king's problems.

With the reversion to a more direct and exhortatory style at *v.* 109 ff, Ermoldus drops his mask. Each of the instances of Old Testament kings – Saul, David and Solomon – selected by the poet emphasises the importance of reliance upon divine grace, the necessity of penance, and the failure of even famous rulers who did not act in accordance with divine will. The examples he chooses thus amplify the message of the earlier part of the poem (*vv.* 37–44). From past history Ermoldus then turns to the example of Louis the Pious (*vv.* 139–140) and, again like Jonas of Orléans in his Institutio regia,[96] urges Pippin to honour and emulate his father. After alluding to his previous poem on that subject (*vv.* 141–142), Ermoldus proceeds to a genealogy of the Carolingian dynasty that amplifies a passages in In Honorem Hludowici Pii.[97] The culmination of his account comes, predictably, with a description of the reigning emperor, and the qualities which Ermoldus identifies in Louis correspond to the virtues which he enjoins on Pippin. It was Christ who bore Louis the Pious to *imperium* when his heart was set only on the realms of heaven (*vv.* 181–182, 185–186). Compare Ermoldus's earlier advice to Pippin at *vv.* 41–42 (p. 268). During the emperor's *pueritia*, none of his actions was puerile. Compare *vv.* 49–50, again to Pippin:

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[95] PL 106, cols. 215–218 (*De his, qui propter venationes et amorem canum causam pauperum negligunt*).

[96] Reviron (as. n. 93) pp. 128–129.

[97] Ermoldus, Epistola ii, *v.* 143 ff. Cf. In Honorem Hludowici Pii iv, *v.* 275 ff.

Nec puer esse velis iam nunc aetate nec actu;
esto vir: hoc quoque, rex, nomen habere vales.

As if to make plain both the analogy and the need for caution Ermoldus states with an explicitness rare in his carefully understated work:

187 *Hic virtute sua nescivit quaerere regna,*
imperium que modo dante tonante tenet.

The point required no further emphasis: like Pippin, Louis had been king of Aquitaine; also like Pippin, Louis the Pious had had brothers and yet succeeded to the title and dignity of emperor. *Utiliora sequi* (*v.* 48): pointing the path to success and even to empire, Ermoldus repeats his counsel of prudence; the *statuta dies* of *vv.* 47 and 48 will be determined by Christ. Overt praise of Louis the Pious is coupled with implicit warning to Pippin.

In urging the king to follow the example of his father Ermoldus earnestly protests his innocence:

201 *Haec tibi, rex, quondam, verbis scriptisque solebam*
dicere, non ea quae composere quidam.

Panegyric thus serves a further line of self-defence. Evil counsel is the fault of unspecified advisers; Ermoldus himself is as blameless as Susanna (*vv.* 205–206): witness the work before you. The elegy ends by enjoining the conjugal virtues on Pippin and his wife Ringart, and by imploring his patron's support for his work against the animus of his detractors. Requests for delivery from his plight and assertions of his blamelessness in the face of these nameless enemies conclude Ermoldus's adroit attempt simultaneously to counsel Pippin and to conciliate Louis the Pious. If the tone of his Epistola shifts uneasily between humour and solemnity, directness and obliqueness, it is not difficult to sympathise with the delicacy of this subtle courtier's predicament. Judging the situation from exile with two audiences in mind, Ermoldus was keenly aware that the ambiguity he was obliged to cultivate could be a two-edged weapon.

Flattering Pippin by appealing to a sense of judgement which his own poem is designed to inculcate, affirming the importance of advisers (and thus indirectly validating his assumed rôle), Ermoldus seeks to nurture and to direct his patron's ambitions while attempting to reconcile Louis the Pious to himself. The ardent supporter of Pippin sought to keep a foot in both camps, and in an effort to combine the parts of counsellor and encomiast this devious courtier plays a double game. Exile perhaps accounts for the ill-timed nature of Ermoldus's writing, and literature in the style of an earlier generation was scarcely the means with which to redeem a reputation for which he pleaded with more eloquence than tact, but the grounds for the poet's difficulties were already present in the fast-changing political scene of the late 820s and in his equivocal attempts to reconcile incompatible objectives in these three interdependent works. Ermoldus repeatedly cites Ovid, whose poetry of exile offers an insight into nature of power under the Principate,[98] and whose fate provided an authentic counterpoint to his own, but

[98] See now the fine analysis of R. G. M. Nisbet, 'Greater and Lesser Bear' (Ovid, Tristia 4.3) (The Journal of Roman Studies 72, 1982, pp. 49–56).

there is one line from the second book of the Tristia which Moduin had applied to Theodulf[99] that Ermoldus never quotes, perhaps because he was uncomfortably aware of its alarming pertinence to his own ingenious writings:

2 *Ingenio perii qui miser ipse meo.*

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* *

Ermoldus's difficulties stand in striking contrast to Walahfrid's success. The vicissitudes and triumphs of their respective careers provide external indications of how they were judged, but a different and perhaps deeper measure of their achievements can be taken by comparing their response, as expressed in the creation and adaption of poetic forms, to the political events of their own times.[100] Ermoldus was a traditionalist, refashioning earlier Carolingian literature in order to evoke analogies between himself and the famous authors of the past. A court poet in the style of the previous generation, he attempted with irony and with high if at times misdirected ingenuity to cast his literary persona in the mould of writers whose works had been most acclaimed during the reign of Charlemagne. Their example was (we have seen) a fatal one to follow, but there is a further, less adventitious, reason why Ermoldus failed where Walahfrid was to succeed. The model provided by the poetry of Charlemagne's lifetime no longer fitted the altered conditions of Louis the Pious's reign: in order to express realities that had not existed, or had not been perceived, before 814 a different, less derivative, style needed to be found. The political verse of Walahfrid Strabo, in its originality, was an attempt to meet these challenges.

Walahfrid's precociousness and brilliance have long been acknowledged.[101] Less recognised is the extent to which his poetry reflects a series of moves in a shrewdly planned and skilfully executed literary career, the first major step in which was taken when its architect was not yet 18 years of age. In 825–827 Walahfrid composed a metrical version of a prose account (probably edited by himself)[102] of a vision experienced by his teacher Wetti shortly before his death on 4 November 824. Visio Wettini is prefaced by a letter to Grimald, then *capellanus* to Louis the Pious and formerly Walahfrid's teacher at Reichenau.[103] An earlier poem[104] on the occasion of Wetti's death in 824 complements Walahfrid's dedicatory epistle. The

[99] See above.

[100] The religious poetry of this period, excluded from this article, is considered in GODMAN (as n. 5) p. 42ff, where special attention is paid to the work of Gottschalk. The literary relations between Gottschalk and Walahfrid will be the subject of a separate study.

[101] Not, however, by WALLACE-HADRILL (as. n. 31) p. 326. For a full survey of Walahfrid's poetic *œuvre* and of bibliography on it, see ÖNNERFORS (as n. 18) pp. 169–201.

[102] See J. AUTENRIETH, Heitos Prosaniederschrift der Visio Wettini – von Walahfrid Strabo redigiert? (Geschichtsschreibung und geistiges Leben im Mittelalter. Festschrift H. Löwe, edd. K. HAUCK and H. MORDEK, Cologne–Vienna 1978, pp. 172–178).

[103] Ed. D. A. TRAILL, Walahfrid Strabo's 'Visio Wettini'. Text, Translation, and Commentary (Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 2) Bern–Frankfurt 1974.

[104] MGH Poetae ii, pp. 301–303.

ostensible theme of Walahfrid's poem is personal sorrow, but its ulterior motive is not far to seek. Emphasis on the young man's special closeness to his former teacher (*v.* 14 ff) lends substance to his claim of an inconsolable grief which only Grimald, it seems, can assuage:

> 26 *Decidit ille mihi, vicibus nemo illius asstat.*
> *Fercula pulchra dedit, victum quis porrigit artum?*
> *Vestibus ornavit, praebet quis tegmina grossa?*

The language here is scarcely metaphorical and the plea for patronage could hardly be more blatant; sorrow at the death of one patron leads directly into self-commendation to another:

> 35 *Haec iam dicta leges, pater optime, corde receptans:*
> *exhinc esse mihi dignare affabilis atque*
> *rebus in occultis nostrum solare dolorem.*

A similarly polished and self-confident tone is present in the epistle to Grimald with which Walahfrid introduces his metrical Visio Wettini.[105] He dwells on the bond between the great man and himself, representing with false modesty the meagreness of his own talents by the same metaphor of a spark which occurs in his poem to Grimald: *nec aetas ad talia competit nec scientia suppetit. Scintilla quaedam inest et eget fomite.*[106] Here, as in the lines cited above, a heavy hint is conveyed by the image of nourishment. The *fomes* which Walahfrid lacks is patronage. Much would depend on how skilfully he could acquire it by manoeuvring himself into a position of implied dependence on Grimald.

Treating a subject designed to attract Grimald – himself a writer of verse[107] who is invited to correct the draft presented to him[108] – and drawing attention to his own abilities, Walahfrid leads the *capellanus* to infer that they might be better developed by being transposed to a different setting. This is surely the implication of the semi-conspiratorial manner in which he forewarns Grimald that the work will have to be disclosed to Erlebald, abbot of Reichenau (822–838), and to his teacher Tatto, *quia fas non est monacho suum quicquam celare abbatem.* The solemn dutifulness of this phrase is undercut by the note of mock naïveté in which Walahfrid voices his fears of punishment: *ut vereor, qui paene octavum decimum iam annum transegi, dignis verberibus vapulabo.* Ingenuous surprise at having passed the age for such beatings does not readily consist with the blatant flattery and obvious self-advertisement by which Walahfrid attempts to insinuate himself into Grimald's favour. An unstated but plain expression of disenchantment with his position at Reichenau reinforces the youthful poet's bid for patronage; Grimald is cast in the rôle of confidant and protector; and Walahfrid dexterously plays the suppliant's part. By commending himself to this relative of Wetti and influential figure at the

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[105] MGH Poetae ii, p. 334. For the dating see Önnerfors (as n. 18) p. 177.

[106] MGH Poetae ii, p. 302. Cf. iii a (p. 334), *vv.* 38–39:
Scintillam portamus enim, quam si quis adauget
multiplicabit opem veniarum fine futuro ...

[107] Cf. note 6.

[108] MGH Poetae ii, p. 302.

imperial court,[109] Walahfrid was thus preparing for his own advancement along a path familiar to ambitious young clerics during the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious.[110] The strategy achieved its purpose. Walahfrid was summoned to Aachen and, in a later poem written while he was abbot of the monastery which in 825–827 he had been attempting to leave, this now established figure was to protest his devotion to his former patron.[111] What then did Grimald find in the earliest writings of his protégé?

Not a work of disinterested spirituality like the Vitae of the Oriental Mammes or of the Irish martyr Blaithmac which Walahfrid composed after 825,[112] but a poem that takes a calculated stand on the controversial issues of the day. Many of the abuses which Visio Wettini denounces — from its attack on the corruption of the *comites* (*v.* 482 ff) to its censure of monastic avarice, gluttony, and sodomy (*vv.* 699–778) — link this text with the concerns of the reforming party at court led by Benedict of Aniane.[113] General fidelity to Heito's prose version does not prevent Walahfrid from departing from it and calling directly on Louis the Pious to end the practice of appointing widows as abbesses (*v.* 762 ff).[114] Adalhelm, though a bishop, had dared to be sceptical about another vision (*vv.* 404–406) and for this he was consigned to torment after death. The cautionary tale of a critic of the genre in which Walahfrid was writing served to forestall any attack on his own work. But the parallel often drawn[115] between Walahfrid and the outspoken authors of the Visio Rocharii[116] and the Visio cuiusdam pauperculae,[117] who advance candid criticisms of contemporary events, is more than a little misleading. Visio Wettini was not written in the first flush of youthful idealism; its commitments are coolly assessed; and it employs Wetti's insights into the other world to improve Walahfrid's position in this one. Behind the thin façade of a faithful reporter of his teacher's experiences, the poet consciously adopts the persona of an angry young man.

This entailed a number of paradoxes that became increasingly apparent in the rapid course of Walahfrid's subsequent career. One of the most graphic passages of description in Visio Wettini is of Charlemagne in purgatory, his genitals being torn by a wild beast as punishment for lust (*v.* 466 ff).[118] Yet in 829, within two

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[109] See FLECKENSTEIN (as n. 9) pp. 89 ff, 168–177, 179–183, 187–189, 237.

[110] FLECKENSTEIN, pp. 44 ff, especially p. 73.

[111] MGH Poetae ii, p. 349, *v.* 429 ff.

[112] MGH Poetae ii, pp. 275–301. Dating after ÖNNERFORS (as n. 18) p. 174 with note 45 and 46. For the cult of Mammes in Francia see E. EWIG, Die Verehrung orientalischer Heiliger im spätrömischen Gallien und im Merowingerreich (IDEM, Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien 2, as n. 19, pp. 393–410) pp. 404–407.

[113] See TRAILL (as n. 103) p. 168 (*vv.* 722–734) *et passim*, and cf. the helpful pages of H. J. KAMPHAUSEN, Traum und Vision in der lateinischen Poesie der Karolingerzeit (Lateinische Sprache und Literatur des Mittelalters 4) Bern–Frankfurt 1975, pp. 132–146.

[114] See TRAILL (as n. 103) pp. 171 ff *ad loc.*

[115] TRAILL, p. 172.

[116] Ed. W. WATTENBACH in: Anzeiger für Kunde der deutschen Vorzeit N.F. 22, 1875, pp. 73 ff with KAMPHAUSEN (as n. 113) p. 141.

[117] Ed. H. HOUBEN, Visio cuiusdam pauperculae mulieris. Überlieferung und Herkunft eines frühmittelalterlichen Visionstextes (mit Neuedition) (Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins 124, 1976, pp. 31–42).

[118] See GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 35–36.

years of writing these lines, uninhibited by, and perhaps unconscious of, the inconsistency of his newly adopted stance, Walahfrid was warmly to commend Charlemagne's name, deeds and *mores* to the future Charles the Bald. So dramatic a change of attitude suggests the opportunism, perhaps the contrivance, of the reforming zeal to which he had previously laid claim. But Walahfrid did not stop there. Beginning his career by condemning the sins of Charlemagne, he ended it by editing Einhard's Vita Karoli Magni and by writing a preface which showers praise on the subject of that biography. Effected with speed and pursued with thoroughness, the volte-face is no less remarkable for the brazenness with which it was accomplished.

Not every public position which Walahfrid chose to take up was consistent with his private aims of self-advancement, nor was his success achieved without the surrender of hostages to fortune. The angel who guides Wetti launches, at Visio *v.* 328ff, into a violent condemnation of priests who crave worldly honours at court:

> *"Lucra petunt terrena quibusque inhianter adhaerent*
> *atque palatinis pereuntia praemia quaerunt*
> *obsequiis, ornantque magis se veste polita*
> *quam radiis vitae ..."*

The accusation of seeking preferment from the emperor and his circle had indeed some foundation in reality, and the acquisition of many of the major monasteries of the empire by Louis the Pious's *capellani* was an aspect of imperial policy that lends historical substance to this charge,[119] but the truth of the criticism scarcely diminishes its disconcerting relevance to the prosperous Grimald, whose patronage Walahfrid was seeking, or indeed to the poet himself after the first stage of his ambitions had been achieved and he had been installed among the imperial entourage at Aachen. An uncharitable reader of Visio Wettini – perhaps one of the wordly clerics denounced so categorically in these lines – might have embarrassed its author with his own words by 829. At a tender age Walahfrid had acquired a grasp of the advantages of partisanship. The expediency of tact he had yet to learn.

The atmosphere at Aachen required him to learn quickly. Ensconced at court, Walahfrid made his next move in 829 – the dramatic, and perhaps the actual, date of his enigmatic and controversial work, De Imagine Tetrici.[120] That troubled

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[119] FLECKENSTEIN (as n. 9) pp. 109ff. On Louis the Pious's appointments as reflected in his *privilegia,* see FELTEN (as n. 30) pp. 257–287; on his attempts to reform the abuses censured by Walahfrid, see J. SEMMLER, Reichsidee und kirchliche Gesetzgebung bei Ludwig dem Frommen (Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 71, 1960, pp. 37–65).

[120] MGH Poetae ii, pp. 370–378. A recent appraisal of the abundant bibliography on this text is provided by F. THÜRLEMAN, Die Bedeutung der Aachener Theoderich-Statue für Karl den Großen und bei Walahfrid Strabo. Materialen zu einer Semiotik visueller Objekte im frühen Mittelalter (Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 59, 1977, pp. 25–65) pp. 25ff, 64–65. For a comprehensive guide to the secondary literature, see D. SCHALLER and E. KÖNSGEN, Initia Carminum Latinorum Saeculo Undecimo Antiquiorum. Bibliographisches Repertorium für die lateinische Dichtung der Antike und des früheren Mittelalters, Göttingen 1977, p. 151, no. 3226. I discuss the conflicting interpretations of this text as they arise, without repeating Thürlemann's and Schäller-Könsgen's bibliography.

year[121] — following the dire forebodings recorded by Einhard in his account of a vision in which the archangel Gabriel made pessimistic prophecies as to the future of the empire, in the wake of Wala's call for reform and of the synod of Paris with its assertion of episcopal autonomy in the ecclesiastical sphere and its distinction, founded on Isidore, between the proper duties of a king and the sinful abuses of a tyrant[122] — saw the rift between Louis the Pious and the sons by his first marriage widen, while the emperor advanced the ambitions of Judith and her party and made provision for their son Charles. The crisis, soon to erupt into rebellion, was already unmistakable, and Walahfrid, who in Visio Wettini had taken a combative stand on the abuses he perceived about him, was placed in the difficult position of a young man anxious to conciliate the many powerful patrons in whose proximity he now lived and of an ardent sympathiser with the imperial cause. The partisan voice that sounds so stridently in his metrical account of Wetti's experiences is now raised in more muted tones.

Constructed as a dialogue between the poet and Scintilla, his personified source of inspiration, De Imagine Tetrici begins with criticism of a symbolic image, the statue of Theoderich which Charlemagne had set up before his palace at Aachen. Theoderich's name and reputation are alleged to have had political associations of far-reaching significance in Charlemagne's policy that need to be considered in any account of De Imagine Tetrici, for the poem has been interpreted as an oblique attack on him or on his son.[123] Obliqueness on the subject of Charlemagne's flaws seems a curious quality to attribute to the author of Visio Wettini, nor was the image of Theoderich in the early ninth century quite what it has been claimed to have been. The history of the statue and the hypotheses surrounding it therefore demand a re-consideration.

In 801, after his coronation at Rome, Charlemagne visited Ravenna whence he took back to Aachen a statue which has been identified with the work depicted in De Imagine Tetrici. The implications of this act of casual rapacity were, it would seem, momentous: „So hat es programmatische Bedeutung, daß Karl bei der Rückreise von der Kaiserkrönung das Standbild des großen Theoderich von Ravenna nach Aachen überführen und dort vor dem Palast aufstellen ließ. Die Päpste hatten ihn mit Konstantin verglichen. Um so stärker zeugte es für die innere Unabhängigkeit des Mannes, daß er sich diesem Vergleich nicht anschloß und, unbeirrt durch alle klerikale Voreingenommenheit ... in dem Arianer Theoderich ein Vorbild völkisch-germanischen Herrschertums aufstellte," wrote Heinz Löwe in 1937.[124] And again in 1973: „Die Gestalt Theoderichs wurde ... zum geschichtsträchtigen Symbol für Karls politisches Programm."[125] What is the

[121] See GANSHOF (as n. 87).

[122] ANTON (as n. 90) pp. 206 ff.

[123] Vgl. F. VON BEZOLD, Kaiserin Judith und ihr Dichter Walahfrid Strabo (Historische Zeitschrift 130, 1923, pp. 377–439) p. 392. The theory of an attack on Louis the Pious is rightly rebutted in the helpful essay of H. HOMEYER, Zu Walahfrid Strabos Gedicht über das Aachener Theoderich-Denkmal (Studi Medievali 3ª Ser. XII, ii, 1971, pp. 889–913).

[124] H. LÖWE, Die karolingische Reichsgründung und der Südosten (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte 13) Stuttgart 1937, S. 162.

[125] IDEM, Von Cassiodor zu Dante. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Geschichtsschreibung und politische Ideenwelt des Mittelalters, Berlin–New York 1973, p. 70 and cf. pp. 67 ff (based on the 1959

evidence for these impressive claims? The chronicler Agnellus, writing in 838, records Charlemagne's aesthetic interest in the statue.[126] Not only does Agnellus never mention Charlemagne's presumed attachment to Theoderich, he even makes it clear that, in 801, there was room for doubt as to whether the statue represented that Arian heretic or the Catholic emperor Zeno.[127] Löwe disposes of these difficulties in a rhetorical question: „wie darf man annehmen, daß ein später und in einem von dem Karls so verschiedenen geistigen Klima lebender Schriftsteller noch ein Wissen um Karls persönliche Gedanken hatte?"[128] So much for Agnellus. Yet his dismissal creates further problems. If Agnellus cannot be trusted on this question, how are we to know what was in Charlemagne's mind in 801? The difficulty is scarcely removed by Löwe's reference to De Imagine Tetrici, for Walahfrid's identification of the statue as an image of Theoderich in 829 does not license us to generalise about the personal opinions of the late emperor 28 years before this poem was written. Nor is there any sign of interest either in the statue of Theoderich or in the king whom it depicted during the first three decades of the ninth century other than the testimonies of Agnellus and Walahfrid. This seems surprising, if Theoderich meant so much to Charlemagne. Löwe meets this problem by conjuring up what he calls the "geistiges Klima" of the day: Einhard's account of Charlemagne's interest in *barbara et antiquissima carmina*; the fame of Theoderich in vernacular literature; the production of Carolingian copies of Cassiodorus, Jordanes and Ennodius – these factors, according to Löwe, contributed to create the atmosphere in which the figure of Theoderich took on the political symbolism it supposedly possessed for Charlemagne.[129]

If this was indeed the case, it made no impression on our primary sources. Prose and verse texts composed during Charlemagne's reign unhesitatingly liken him to the rulers of Scripture, to Constantine and to Theodosius;[130] but none of them ever compares him with Theoderich. Charlemagne could be addressed by the pseudonyms Flavius, Anicius,[131] Augustus,[132] or even Palaemon,[133] but not one early Carolingian writer hails him as the new Theoderich or implies any re-

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revision of his essay: Von Theoderich dem Großen zu Karl dem Großen, in: Deutsches Archiv 9, 1952, pp. 353–401).

126 Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis in: MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardorum i, p. 338: *Ravennam ingressus, videns pulcherrimam imaginem, quam numquam similem, ut ipse testatus est, vidit, Franciam deportari fecit atque in suo eam firmare palatio, qui Aquisgranis vocatur.*

127 *Alii aiunt, quod supradictus equus pro amore Zenonis imperatoris factus fuisset ... Post mortem vero filii sui ... iste Zeno imperator factus est; sedecim annis gentibus imperavit. Pro isto equus ille praestantissimus ex aere factus, auro ornatus est, sed Theodericus suo nomine decoravit.* Cf. H. FICHTENAU, Byzanz und die Pfalz zu Aachen (Mitteilungen des österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung 59, 1951, pp. 1–54) p. 52, and L. FALKENSTEIN, Der 'Lateran' der karolingischen Pfalz zu Aachen (Kölner Historische Abhandlungen 13) Cologne–Graz 1965, p. 55 and note 73.

128 LÖWE (as n. 125) p. 67.

129 Ibidem p. 66, note 150.

130 Bibliography and discussion in GODMAN (as n. 5) p. 5, where Löwe's view is ineptly rehearsed.

131 See D. SCHALLER, Die karolingischen Figurengedichte im Codex Bernensis 212 (Medium Aevum Vivum. Festschrift für W. Bulst, edd. D. SCHALLER and H. R. JAUSS, Heidelberg 1960, pp. 22–47) pp. 37–38.

132 See SCHALLER, Das Aachener Epos (as n. 6) pp. 149 ff.

133 Moduin, Egloga i, *v.* 24 (MGH Poetae i, p. 385).

semblances between his achievements and those of the Ostrogothic king.[134] If an "Ansippung" of Theoderich to the Carolingian dynasty had been effected by Charlemagne,[135] would Ermoldus Nigellus, writing shortly before Walahfrid and setting the imperial house in a lineage of famous rulers that extends through late Antiquity,[136] have omitted to mention it, or would Einhard, with his sensitivity to art and to literature and with his first-hand knowledge of Charlemagne's enthusiasms, have remained wholly silent on a topic of such great political significance to his subject?

The silence of our sources on this topic is hardly surprising in the light of Theoderich's reputation during the early Middle Ages. Little or no sense of the nationality or conquests of Dietrich von Bern, Theoderich's legendary Doppelgänger, is preserved in vernacular literature, which represents him not as an exemplary figure of Germanic kingship, but as the fabulous hero of a distant age. Learned and ecclesiastical writers of this period are far less flattering: what they recall about Theoderich is his persecution of Boethius, his Arianism, and his punishment in hell.[137] All these features of Theoderich's unsavoury reputation are reflected in De Imagine Tetrici, and they explain why there is no evidence that Charlemagne wished to employ the Ostrogothic king as a symbol of his 'political programme', whatever affection he may be imagined to have felt for the statue he saw in 801. With the potent aid of David and Solomon, of Augustus and Constantine, of Theodosius and – perhaps significantly in this context – of the patrician Anicii,[138] to whom Charlemagne was likened by the verse and prose sources of his age, what need had he of the heretical Theoderich whose name they never mention?

Why then is Theoderich so prominent in the early part of Walahfrid's poem? Part of the answer lies in the negative moral and historical connotations of his name, outlined above, which Walahfrid intended to exploit. To Strabus's question:

25 *cur sit imago suis sic effigiata figuris?*

Scintilla does not reply with a general denunciation of the vices of tyranny and avarice: that comes later, at *vv.* 49 ff and 60 ff. Symbolic description of the statue follows a specific identification of its subjects because to Walahfrid it mattered that Theoderich was who he was:

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[134] As is acknowledged by H. Hoffmann, Die Aachener Theoderichstatue (Das erste Jahrtausend. Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abendland an Rhein und Ruhr, ed. V. H. Elbern 1, Düsseldorf 1963, pp. 318–335) p. 320.

[135] K. Hauck, Geblütsheiligkeit (Liber Floridus. Festschrift für Paul Lehmann, Munich 1950, pp. 187–240) pp. 192 ff.

[136] In Honorem Hludowici Pii iv, *v.* 269 ff.

[137] The best succinct summary of research is by F. Graus, Lebendige Vergangenheit, Cologne–Vienna 1975, pp. 39 ff, especially p. 40, note 41. A useful conspectus of the vernacular and learned traditions of Theoderich is H. J. Zimmermann, Theoderich der Große – Dietrich von Bern. Die geschichtliche und sagenhafte Quellen des Mittelalters, diss. phil. Bonn 1972.

[138] The view that Alcuin was alluding to Boethius, the most famous of the Anicii, when he called Charlemagne Anicius in Carm. vii, *v.* 9 (MGH Poetae I, p. 226), advanced by Schaller (as. n. 117) p. 38, seems to me more probable than his scruples might suggest.

30 *Tetricus, Italicis quondam regnator in oris,*
multis ex opibus tantum sibi servat avarus,
at secum infelix piceo spatiatur Averno,
cui nihil in mundo, nisi vix fama arida restat,
quamquam thermarum vulgus vada praeparet olli;
hoc sine nec causa, nam omni maledicitur ore,
blasphemumque dei ipsius sententia mundi
ignibus aeternis magnaeque addicit abysso.

Not, then, an arbitrary image selected because the statue happened to be familiar to the audience at Aachen for which the poem was intended, but the carefully-chosen focus for condemnation of the vices with which Theoderich, the murderer of Boethius, is progressively associated. The style of De Imagine Tetrici is dense, the Dialogues of Gregory the Great and scriptural exegesis contributing to its complexity,[139] but among its many constituent elements the memory of Boethius's fate and the influence of his writings are clearly distinguishable. Theoderich had had Boethius put to death in circumstances whose infamy is seldom understated in the medieval Vitae Boethii;[140] tyranny is vividly portrayed in one of Boethius's works that was eagerly studied in the early ninth century, the Consolatio Philosophiae;[141] and in a poem on the tormented heart of a tyrant, whose diction is no less metaphorical than that of De Imagine Tetrici, Boethius may well have Theoderich in mind.[142] Moreover, Boethian terms lend colour and point to Walahfrid's description of the ills which the statue symbolises: the *avaritia, superbia* and tyranny that are analysed in the Consolatio all appear at the opening of De Imagine Tetrici.[143]

At its conclusion the impact of Boethius is no less evident. Writing to Charlemagne in 801, Alcuin had cited the Consolatio's definition of an ideal state ruled by philosophers or by kings who are students of philosophy,[144] and Walahfrid's

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139 The portrayal of Theoderich in hell at *v.* 32 ff derives from Gregory the Great's Dialogues (iv. 31), as DÜMMLER noted ad loc. For the exegetical sources of this part of the text, see HOMEYER (as n. 121) pp. 905 ff, and SIEMES (as n. 18) pp. 116 ff.

140 Cf. the conspectus in R. PEIPER's Teubner edition, Leipzig 1871, pp. xxxff, with W. BARK, The legend of Boethius's martyrdom (Speculum 21, 1946, pp. 312–317), and H. A. PATCH, The beginnings of the legend of Boethius (Speculum 22, 1947, pp. 443–445).

141 See P. COURCELLE, Le portrait du tyran par Boèce, ses sources (IDEM, La Consolation de Philosophie dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et postérité de Boèce, Paris 1967, pp. 347 ff) and IDEM, Le tyran et le philosophe d'après la 'Consolation' de Boèce (Passaggio dal Mondo Antico al Medio Evo. Da Teodosio a San Gregorio Magno [Atti dei Convegni Lincei 43] Rome 1980, pp. 195 ff). On the ninth century commentators of the *Consolatio* see IDEM, pp. 241 ff and J. BEAUMONT, The Latin Tradition of the *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (Boethius. His Life, Thought, and Influence, ed. M. GIBSON, Oxford 1981, pp. 278–305).

142 Boethius, Consolatio iv, metr. 2. Cf. H. CHADWICK, Boethius. The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy, Oxford 1981, p. 240.

143 The parallel cited by DÜMMLER (to *vv.* 42–43) is convincing, although not all the passages adduced by HOMEYER (as n. 121) p. 904 and note 10 are directly pertinent. With *v.* 49 cf. Consolatio i, metr. 4, *vv.* 11–12.

144 Consolatio ii, pr. 4, cited by Alcuin (MGH Epistolae ii, pp. 372–373): On Carolingian use of this passage, see COURCELLE (as n. 141) pp. 62 ff.

vision of the ideal society which he envisages Louis the Pious being about to create culminates with the same maxim that Alcuin had applied to the emperor's father:

256 *Nunc tandem crevit felix res publica, cum sat*
Et reges sapiunt simul et regnant sapientes.

Walahfrid's rejection of Theoderich is thus completed in poignantly Boethian terms. De Imagine Tetrici begins by denouncing the vices symbolised by the statue of Theoderich and ends by affirming the views of his victim.

The Boethian undercurrent in Walahfrid's poem runs a less obvious course than the Ovidian allusions or the references to other, more recent, authors in Ermoldus Nigellus's works. De Imagine Tetrici draws on a multiplicity of sources but resists assimilation to any of them. Nor do accounts of fine art in previous Carolingian poetry, even the writings of Theodulf, offer true parallels to Walahfrid's aims and intentions.[145] Only Ermoldus Nigellus, describing the paintings at Ingelheim and setting them within a scheme of universal history that reaches back to Creation itself,[146] attempts anything comparable to what Walahfrid seeks to achieve in De Imagine Tetrici. The symbolism of the pictorial cycle at Ingelheim is deployed by Ermoldus to figure forth an imperial ideal, and the message is enhanced by being translated from one medium into another. Thus far, but no further, the resemblance to De Imagine Tetrici obtains: if translation is an appropriate metaphor for Ermoldus's straightforward attempt to create in verse a faithful reproduction of an actual objet d'art, it does not apply to Walahfrid's methods of symbolism and implication. The controversial subject in contemporary politics with which he was dealing required a less direct approach; and, with an almost Virgilian sense of caution and subtlety,[147] Walahfrid embarked on his description of a work of art within a work of art.

Hence the initially perplexing contrast between the exactitude with which the context of De Imagine Tetrici is defined and the allusiveness with which its content is described. *Versus in Aquisgrani Palatio Editi Anno Hludowici Imperatoris XVI. De Imagine Tetrici* is the exceptionally precise title given to this text by the *codex unicus,* St. Gall 869. Aachen provided the setting; 829 was the occasion of the work: this indicated enough about its time and place to raise, for its palace audience, expectations of a political theme. Wariness was then needed in the face of the unspecified opposition which the poet goes on to adumbrate, and stylistic obliqueness was a means of hinting at the dangers he sensed about him, without running the risk of naming names.

Choice of form thus presented a peculiarly delicate problem. Inclination to the dialogue might have led Walahfrid to imitate the greatest political eclogue of

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[145] See, especially, Carmina xxviii, *v.* 179 ff (with GODMAN, as n. 5, p. 13), xlvi, xlvii, and A. FREEMAN in Speculum 32, 1957, pp. 695 ff.

[146] Cf. note 136 with the excellent study by W. LAMMERS, Ein karolingisches Bildprogramm in der Aula Regia von Ingelheim (Festschrift für H. Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag, Göttingen 1972, pp. 226–289 = IDEM, Vestigia Mediaevalia. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur mittelalterlichen Historiographie, Landes- und Kirchengeschichte, Wiesbaden 1979, pp. 215–283).

[147] Cf. GRIFFIN (as n. 85) p. 214.

the previous generation, by Moduin of Autun,[148] but that would also have demanded of him a perilous candour. Less dangerous was the model provided by a fragmentary poem by 'Hibernicus Exul', similarly on the theme of rebellion which can be read between the lines of Walahfrid's text and likewise composed of a series of exchanges between the Poet and his Muse.[149] Yet, here again, the analogy to literature of the preceding generation is only superficial. The identity of the speakers in 'Hibernicus Exul's' work is not integral to its meaning; it depends on editorial judgement rather than manuscript authority; and critics like myself who interpolate speakers' names in order to assist the modern reader may be stressing an aspect of the poem that did not especially matter to its author.[150] Crucial to an understanding of De Imagine Tetrici, by contrast, is the fact that the two participants in the dialogue are called Strabus and Scintilla – the second name, in the light of Walahfrid's earlier poem and dedicatory epistle to Grimald, from which it is taken,[151] being as obviously autobiographical as the first. In this regard, Alf Önnerfors was surely right to suggest that the influence of the Soliloquies of St. Augustine helped to determine Walahfrid's choice of form.[152] Like the Soliloquies, like Boethius's Consolatio Philosophiae,[153] and like some of the finest symbolic literature of the ninth century, De Imagine Tetrici is constructed as a reflective interior monologue conducted between the two projections of a single composite persona. Strabus adopts the rôle of the acolyte, enlightened by Scintilla's replies: the poet himself takes second place and to the personified source of his inspiration, abstract and authoritative, are attributed all the criticisms of the contemporary political scene. Strabus does no more than put his questions: answers are vouchsafed from within, by a figure no less commanding but no less part of himself than Boethius's Philosophia. No more than a private validity is thereby imputed to Walahfrid's public remarks, and the self-defensive spirit which informs so much of De Imagine Tetrici is shrewdly embodied in its form.

The poem opens in a Spring-setting of bucolic tranquillity that contains no hint of the un-idyllic exchange that is to follow. The choice of season was again carefully considered. Convened in December 828, the assembly of Aachen at which Wala launched his appeal for reform was dissolved in February of 829. The assembly of Worms, which assigned part of Lothar's dominions to Charles, relegated Lothar himself to Italy and summoned Bernard of Barcelona to court to take up the office of chamberlain, was convoked in August of that year. Between these two seasons – winter and summer of 829 – occurred, at the end of May, the synod of Paris which gave consideration to the abuses of the age and the respective spheres of episcopal and imperial authority. Against the background of its deliberations –

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[148] Cf. note 13.

[149] MGH Poetae i, pp. 396 ff.

[150] I have assumed that there are two speakers in this poem (and not three) for reasons set out in (GODMAN (as n. 5) p. 177, note 20 (with repunctuation).

[151] See p. 272.

[152] ÖNNERFORS (as n. 18) pp. 177–178.

[153] Both the Soliloquies and the Consolatio are described by Peter Abelard in his Expositio in Hexaemeron as *quasi ... aliquis secum loquens se et rationem suam quasi duo constituit cum eam consulit* (PL 178, col. 760; cited by COURCELLE, as n. 141, p. 54 and note 5).

neither in direct response to Wala's admonitions nor in the wake of the controversial decisions taken at Worms – Walahfrid sets his poem. Spring of 829 was the season in which to set his affirmation of loyalty without unbridled partisanship.

Strabus declares his desire to learn, and Scintilla responds with a contrast between poets of the present age and authors of the past who wrote their works in solitude and in harmony with nature. Her emphasis, in this glowing account of erstwhile glories, is on freedom from care (*v.* 17); and in her description of the circumstances in which she finds herself filth and cacophony supplant the vision of vernal peace, as the tranquil tone of the beginning gives way before the violence with which the harassed Scintilla deplores her changed condition (*v.* 20 ff). The poem thus opens by foreshadowing the pessimism and the nostalgia of Walahfrid's preface to Einhard's Vita Karoli Magni,[154] and it continues with a forceful statement of the difficulty of achieving its objectives. The concluding words of Scintilla's speech:

26 ... *sed si*
pauca loquar, quia deest locus, argue lenius, oro.

signal the need to be elliptical in the adversity which she has just described. Measure, brevity, understatement: nothing could be further from the outspoken style which Walahfrid affects in Visio Wettini.

Scintilla's initial and general denunciation of the evils of the age provided an obvious opportunity for her interlocutor to invite her detailed views on this question. It was a temptation which the author of a straightforward political allegory must surely have found irresistible. But Walahfrid was not writing that kind of poem, and Scintilla replies with an attack on the statue of Theoderich and on the sins which it represented – an attack that was designed to have a special resonance for the courtiers who were to hear it at Aachen.

Tetricus, the despised heretic, is consigned to hell-fire in the passage cited earlier (*vv.* 36–37): he needs all the help he can get, is Walahfrid's implication, and who better to aid him than the *thermarum vulgus* (*v.* 34), the rabble at Aachen? They minister waters (*vada*) to Tetricus (*v.* 34); the pejorative symbolism of this substance is made plain at *v.* 67.[155] The tone of *hoc sine nec causa* at *v.* 35 is thus sardonic; the context is one of subservience to avarice, blasphemy, and pride; and with it the court, or sections of it, is implicitly linked.

Scintilla's objections to the arrogance that commissioned the statue (*v.* 40 ff) go hand-in-hand with her criticisms of misplaced acquiescence in its ambitions; these ideas now form a central theme of her subsequent speeches. As if embarrassed by the vehemence of Scintilla's attack, Strabus remarks – half tentatively, half speculatively – on the doves which come three times a day to the statue (*vv.* 46–48). To his words Scintilla responds with an interpretation that again lifts these facts from their literal level to an allegorical plane: the doves are symbolic of humility, and *humiles* feign love for tyrants because they desire peace and provisions (*vv.* 49–51). This insincere devotion produces no security. The present tense of

[154] Cf. Godman (as n. 5) p. 34.
[155] Homeyer (as n. 123) p. 906.

the interrogation — *nonne vides ...?* — and the choice of substantive — *humiles,* corresponding to *vulgus* at *v.* 34 — make it clear that Scintilla's subject has not changed since her last speech. The Aachen audience for which De Imagine Tetrici is intended receives an explanation of why the lowly fawn upon tyrants and a warning of the consequences of their efforts at accommodation and their search for temporary advantage.

Thus, when Scintilla identifies Tetricus with the vice of avarice of which Walahfrid had already arraigned the *comites* in Visio Wettini (*v.* 490 ff):

60 *Fulget avaritia exornatis aurea membris*

and goes on to declare:

72 *O pestis sine fine nocens, non sufficit omnem*
pervolitasse orbem bellis et caede potentum,
quin etiam faciem praeclara palatia contra
christicolasque greges videas posuisse nefandam!

she describes two stages of a threat — the one realised and now past, the other potentially immediate — that is further defined at *v.* 81 ff:

81 *Iam tamen ipsa pedem tuis conatibus unum*
optima nequicquam contra consulta levasti,
nam quotiens procerum tibimet coniungere quemquam
es conata, tibi aut obvia mortis
ex insperato venere repagula nigrae ...

The infinitive perfect *pervolitasse* at *v.* 73, like the perfect tenses at *vv.* 82, 84 and 85, refers to ravages caused in the past by this vice, and the implied opposition *palatia* (*v.* 74) — *proceres* (*v.* 83) borders on explicitness. Whether one assumes with Bezold[156] that Walahfrid is describing the rebellion of Bernhard of Italy in 817 or believes, with Hauck, that the poet is also referring to an 'Adelsconiuratio',[157] the language in which Walahfrid represents the causes of strife bears a striking resemblance to Nithard's analysis of the roots of the political turmoil of 830: *Res autem publica, quoniam quisque* cupiditate *illectus sua querebat, cotidie deterius ibat* (Historiae i.3).[158] What Nithard detected by hindsight, Scintilla foresees with prophetic defiance: black death shall overtake the rebellious; the *cautela patrum* (*v.* 85), supported by heaven's authority, will forestall their plots. Significantly, Scintilla ends by foretelling, in the words of Genesis (49:10), the unending fruitfulness of the reigning dynasty:

87 *deficiet quorum sceptrum de semine numquam,*
donec in ignivoma veniet rex nube coruscans!

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[156] VON BEZOLD (as n. 123) p. 382.

[157] HAUCK (as n. 135) and IDEM, Heldendichtung und Heldensage als Geschichtsbewußtsein (Alteuropa und die moderne Gesellschaft. Festschrift O. Brunner, Göttingen 1963, pp. 118—164) pp. 161 ff.

[158] On the term *cupiditas* see W. WEHLEN, Geschichtsschreibung und Staatsauffassung im Zeitalter Ludwigs des Frommen (Historische Studien 418) Lübeck—Hamburg 1970, pp. 91 ff.

In 829, after six years of determined effort by Judith to advance her young son, these words cannot but have seemed a provocation. To the disaffected, in Lothar's camp and elsewhere, they exposed the very roots of the problem: Louis the Pious's alarmingly persistent paternity. The cluster of associations evoked by Scintilla – prospective rebellion by the magnates and the defence of the established order, the divinely sanctioned authority of the Carolingian kings and the regeneration of their seed until Judgement Day – form an unmistakable pattern. Scintilla prophesies the crisis that, in 829, was about to break; identifies Theoderich with *avaritia*; censures his adherents at Aachen; and goes on to proclaim the ultimate victory and righteousness of the imperial party. Tension rises to its height at this point in the text, and Strabus hastily intervenes to suggest instead the happier and easier subject of panegyric.

The verses that follow (*v.* 91 ff), like those which precede them, bear no resemblance to the *adventus*-poetry of Charlemagne's reign or to the Carolingian *susceptacula regum* that were intended to be sung with musical accompaniment.[159] They are modelled on the panegyrical and epic poetry of the previous generation which describes the emperor and his court in hierarchical order.[160] Walahfrid's proclamation of the dawning of a golden age in the fraught circumstances of 829 is no less emphatic than that of Moduin of Autun writing in the wake of the imperial coronation of 800:[161]

94 *Aurea, quae prisci dixerunt saecula vates,*
Tempore, magne, tuo, Caesar venisse videmus!
Tu pietate reples quicquid minus esse potestur:[162]
Thesauris alii, meritis tu comptior esto;
Tu bonitate places, aliique tyrannide gaudent.

But there is little of Moduin's serene optimism in these lines. The context is messianic: the new Moses (*v.* 100), like his forbears,[163] will achieve a regeneration of his people. The antithesis Louis-Moses and Theoderich-Pharaoh gives Scriptural expression to the conflict darkly delineated in the earlier part of De Imagine Tetrici,[164] and the setting which Scintilla visualises for the temple worthy of Solomon she imagines Louis creating is an idyllic landscape where the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the harmonious coexistence of otherwise incompatible crea-

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159 As suggested by HAUCK, Heldendichtung (as n. 157) p. 158, note 129 and p. 159. On the differences between these genres and the kind of panegyric analysed below, see SCHALLER (as n. 6) p. 159 and note 122 and 123.

160 See above.

161 Cf. Moduin, Egloga [ii] *v.* 92 ff (MGH Poetae i, p. 390).

162 On this reading, see ÖNNERFORS (as n. 18) pp. 107–108.

163 See SIEMES (as n. 18) pp. 130 ff; W. MOHR, Christlich-alttestamentliches Gedankengut in der Entwicklung des karolingischen Kaisertums (Judentum im Mittelalter. Beiträge zum christlich-jüdischem Gespräch, ed. P. WILPERT, Berlin 1966, pp. 382–409) pp. 394 ff; and E. RIEBER, Die Bedeutung alttestamentlicher Vorstellungen für das Herrscherbild Karls des Großen und seines Hofkreises, diss. Tübingen 1949, pp. 52 ff.

164 On the sarcophagus of Louis the Pious at Metz with its representation of Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea, see SIEMES (as n. 18) pp. 149 ff.

tures are at last fulfilled.[165] Upon this vision is superimposed another scene which again takes as its point of focus the statue of Theoderich. *Vv.* 128–146 are distinguished from the rest of the text by majuscule letters (at *vv.* 128 and 147) in the St. Gall manuscript which transmits them.[166] Is this passage misplaced? I think not, although its integration into the rest of the poem may not have been fully worked out by Walahfrid.

De Imagine Tetrici is built around a series of symbolic contrasts further developed in these lines. The concord about to be created by Louis the Pious is here opposed by the equestrian statue accompanied by a crowd of music-makers: from the imaginary harmony of a Biblical paradise we are then transported back to the menacing actuality of Aachen. What Walahfrid emphasises at *v.* 131 ff is the error of the audience, real or fictive, as it attends the triumphant progress of the horseman through the courtyard of the imperial palace. Above their siren sounds booms forth the mighty noise of an organ whose construction by the Venetian Georgius in 827 is also acclaimed by Ermoldus Nigellus (In Honorem Hludowici Pii iv, *vv.* 639–642). On one side, Tetricus and his adherents, deluded and crazed, celebrate their illusory success; on the other, the organ, symbolic of Francia's superiority over the pomp and pretensions of Byzantium and representative of Louis's authority,[167] is beset by its antagonists. That *vv.* 128–146 were written to incite the destruction of the statue they describe, as has recently been argued, seems to me far-fetched.[168] The enmity between the two parties is elliptically but powerfully communicated by an imagined conflict between two symbols: Tetricus and the insensate forces of *avaritia* versus the organ of the emperor and the threatened but finally triumphant imperial cause.

From the erring mob about the equestrian statue Scintilla passes (*v.* 147 ff) to the righteous entourage which she envisages surrounding Louis the Pious. Now we are in a position to see why *vv.* 128–146 occur where they do: the emperor's opponents were to be denounced in general and symbolic terms, and then clearly distinguished from the faithful retinue about him. At this point names could be mentioned. That the three sons by Louis the Pious's first marriage are portrayed at the head of his supporters reflects Walahfrid's awareness that danger to the ideal order he had described was to be expected from their quarter. Hence his eagerness to affirm, on their behalf, a loyalty which his poem was designed to foster, and his implication that their interests too were threatened by the *avaritia* symbolized by Tetricus. The hierarchical order so decorously observed in the panegyrics of Alcuin, Theodulf and Angilbert, and faithfully imitated by Ermoldus, thus assumes a heightened significance in De Imagine Tetrici; and Walahfrid's concern, in 829, to present the imperial family and the court as a united and harmonious entity derives from his sensitivity to the tensions that were to divide them so dramatically during the following years. The reassurances directed to Lothar, Louis the German, and

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[165] See K. Hauck, Tiergärten im Pfalzbereich (Deutsches Königspfalzen i. Veröffentlichungen des Max Plancks-Institut für Geschichte 11/1, Göttingen 1963, pp. 30–74) pp. 40–41.

[166] See Thürlemann (as n. 120) p. 58.

[167] See D. Schuberth, Kaiserliche Liturgie: die Einbeziehung von Musikinstrumenten in den frühmittelalterlichen Gottesdienst, Göttingen 1968, p. 196.

[168] Thürlemann (wie Anm. 120) pp. 59 ff.

Pippin; the anxious declarations of their allegiance to their father; and the guarantees of their unalterable importance bear witness to this aim.[169] Asserting their unqualified respect for the established order, Scintilla exposes its potential precariousness.

The praise of the empress Judith and the depiction of her son as the worthy continuator of his grandfather's example (*v.* 174 ff), if hardly consistent with Walahfrid's portrayal of Charlemagne in Visio Wettini, reflect an attempt to bolster the claims of Charles the Bald that is in keeping with the efforts of other contemporary authors.[170] Walahfrid did not take a partisan stand in isolation, nor is his bid for the empress's favour so dissimilar from Ermoldus's. Seeking to conciliate all parties he nonetheless gives a priority to the imperial cause to which he was attached that was to prove irreconcilable with what Lothar, Louis the German and Pippin were to regard as their own interests. Here Walahfrid's emphasis on the ability of Judith's Biblical namesake to take vengeance on her enemies was doubtless intended as a caution to the empress's many enemies. This paragon of faith and learning (*v.* 192 ff) was also capable of defending herself, and Scintilla's eulogy of the purity of Judith's life forestalled the charges of her critics. A similar cautionary spirit may motivate the stress on the archchaplain Hilduin's repudiation of *idola* and avarice at *vv.* 215–218, its charged diction recalling the terms in which Tetricus had been censured earlier in the poem. The injunction *melioribus utere fatis* at *v.* 219, after the chain of associations in the lines that precede it, points to Hilduin's potential implication in the events that led up to the revolt of 830, in consequence of which he was disgraced, just as the prominence ascribed to Einhard in the circle of ecclesiastical magnates who are depicted following the empress has an air of wishful thinking in the light of his already ambiguous rôle and of his withdrawal during the events of the following decade.[171] Praise assumes an air of admonition as Scintilla concludes by declaring the modesty of her talents (*v.* 233 ff). Her final wish is for a tranquil state controlled by an emperor who subdues the Bretons, the Danes, and the Saracens as effortlessly as he slays wild beasts while hunting (*vv.* 250–255). This simile is influenced by an earlier panegyric by Theodulf on Louis the Pious,[172] but its nuance is different: let Louis assail *external* enemies – Walahfrid has alerted his audience to the dangers from within the empire. De Imagine Tetrici turns back on itself, with glorious prospects of foreign conquest and internal peace, its hopeful tone of tranquil confidence barely covering the disharmony which it has described so obliquely and yet revealed with such vividness.

In Walahfrid's later poetry Louis the Pious never recaptures the central position which he occupies in De Imagine Tetrici. The element of public devotion

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[169] Admirably discussed by N. Staubach, Das Herrscherbild Karls des Kahlen. Formen und Funktionen monarchischer Repräsentation im früheren Mittelalter, diss. Münster 1982, pp. 62–63. Cf. note 200.

[170] See Staubach, pp. 55 ff, especially pp. 60 ff. I accept his arguments in defence of the reading *pars quinta* at *v.* 180 (p. 63).

[171] See J. Fleckenstein in: Das Einhardkreuz, ed. K. Hauck, Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften, Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse Nf. 87, 1974) pp. 104–105, and M. Bondois, La Translation des Saints Marcellin et Pierre. Etude sur Einhard et sa vie politique de 827 à 834 (Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes) Paris 1907, pp. 88 ff.

[172] Carm. xxxix, *vv.* 7–12 (MGH Poetae i, S. 531).

to the emperor that is a salient feature of literature in the reign of Charlemagne diminishes and takes a different from in verse which Walahfrid wrote after 829. Louis could be addressed in the lighter guise of an epigram, with its ambiguous black humour,[173] or in the formal setting of the dedication to a Christmas hymn,[174] but he is no longer hailed as the new Moses or as a second David: the explicit likeness to these Biblical heroes and the comparison thereby implied with his father, whose poetic image had owed much to their example, are now tacitly dropped. Instead, in dream-poetry,[175] written against the background of the revolts of 831 and 833, Walahfrid projects a vision of restored stability that contrasts with the brutal reality of the conflict which his master, now named Equitatius (the pseudonym for Louis contains a *double-entendre* — *aequus* / *equus*[176] — and a timely stress on the need for speed), shall overcome.

It would be easy to allege, following Bezold, that the focus of Walahfrid's attention shifts from Louis the Pious to Judith and her son whose adherent De Imagine Tetrici had plainly proclaimed him to be. But the poems that constitute panegyrics on Judith alone or on Charles the Bald by himself are few in number.[177] Nor are they among the most remarkable works that Walahfrid was to compose in the course of his productive career. It is above all in the Carmen ad Ruadbern,[178] a text addressed to a follower of Louis the Pious and Judith, whose loyalty typified the qualities required in defence of the imperial cause, that Walahfrid again attempts to treat a political theme in a form whose scale and novelty will sustain comparison with De Imagine Tetrici. Conventionally employed as a vehicle for eulogy, the poem epistle is here stretched beyond its customary limits. Admiration for Ruadbern leads on to a stirring narrative of his hardships and adventures; the subject of fidelity to the emperor and empress produces a moving manifesto of their righteousness. Civil dissension, the revolts of sons against their father, the determination in the face of adversity of vassals faithful to their lord: the theme was worthy of epic treatment, and Walahfrid clearly felt the temptation to write one.[179]

That he never succumbed to this temptation may perhaps be explained by the literary context in which he worked.[180] But such an explanation is plainly speculative, and only partially true. An expansive account of the troubles of the 830s on epic scale, or even concentration on Judith and Charles to the exclusion of all others, would have required a radical departure from previous models and entailed an unimaginable break with the politics of *amicitia* which Walahfrid cultivated so assiduously throughout his lifetime. No Lucan, he: rather, a diplomat with sincere if selective commitments, carefully counterbalanced by a network of influential

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[173] Carm. xxv (MGH Poetae ii, p. 382) with GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 11–13.

[174] Carm. xxv (MGH Poetae ii, pp. 380–381).

[175] See Carm. xxiv (pp. 379–380) with the helpful analysis of KAMPHAUSEN (as n. 113) pp. 146 ff.

[176] See KAMPHAUSEN, pp. 152 ff, as against SIEMES (as n. 18) pp. 164 ff.

[177] To Judith: Carm. xxiiia (MGH Poetae ii, pp. 378–379), Carm. xxiv (pp. 379–380), Carm. xxvi (p. 382); to Charles: Carm. xxvii (pp. 382–383).

[178] Carm. xxxviii (pp. 388 ff) translated, with notes, by ÖNNERFORS (as n. 18) pp. 195–201, 391–393 and by GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 216 ff.

[179] GODMAN, ibidem p. 37.

[180] Ibidem p. 74.

contacts. The names of the recipients of his verse-epistles illustrate this feature of his work: Walahfrid writes to Bodo, capellanus of Louis the Pious;[181] to Thomas, the *praeceptor palatii;*[182] to Adalheid, sister-in-law of Judith;[183] to the emperor's staunch supporter, bishop Ferendarius of Cur;[184] to Louis's half-brother, Drogo of Metz;[185] to Moduin of Autun;[186] to Hrabanus Maurus;[187] to Werinbert, abbot of Reichenau;[188] and to Sigimar, abbot of Murbach.[189] In the persona of his teacher Tatto, in his youth, Walahfrid addresses a poetic-epistle to Louis's future adversary, Ebbo of Reims;[190] extols the patronage of Hilduin[191] and celebrates long-standing links with Agobard of Lyons.[192] The list could be extended but it is not necessary to multiply examples in order to make the point that Walahfrid's numerous verse-epistles reveal this courtier's ramifying connections on both sides of the conflict that shook the empire during the 830s and 840s. Walahfrid employs poetry for the same purposes of self-commendation, flattery and exhortation that it had served for previous Carolingian authors, but his circle of addressees and would-be patrons is wider than any of theirs and his attentions are more insistent and more pressing. To claim with Bezold, in his classic study misleadingly entitled "Die Kaiserin Judith and *ihr* Dichter Walafrid Strabo",[193] that "er war keine politische sondern eine weiche, echte Dichternatur"[194] is to ignore the intricacy and the range of this political game of letters. Neither Reichenau nor Fulda, during the ninth century, produced any poet who was so widely sensitive to the dangers imminent and realised in the later part of Louis the Pious's reign or so broadly connected with the leading personalities enmeshed in them. Poetry remained the consistent means with which Walahfrid spun the web of his allegiances and ambitions.

The adaptability of Walahfrid to the sudden changes in the political circumstances of his lifetime is illustrated by his long appeal in verse to the emperor Lothar.[195] Driven out of Reichenau by Louis the German's invasion of Alemannia in 840, Walahfrid sought, in the following year, the favour of Louis the Pious's eldest son. Long out of practice at writing (he claims) but stimulated by Lothar's triumphs, Walahfrid pinned his hopes for the future on the ruler who raised up the humble and laid low the proud (*v.* 12 ff). Once again the oblique and abstract manner of conventional panegyric is abandoned and Walahfrid relates, in the heightened style of his Carmen ad Ruadbern, the hardships he endured after the

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[181] Carm. xxxiv, p. 386.
[182] Carm. xxxvi, p. 387.
[183] Carm. xxxix, p. 391.
[184] Carm. lix, pp. 400–401.
[185] Carm. v, pp. 353–355.
[186] Carm. vi, pp. 355–356.
[187] Carm. ix, 1–3, p. 358.
[188] Carm. xi, p. 359.
[189] Carm. xii, ibid.
[190] Carm. v.i, pp. 350–351.
[191] Carm. xxix, p. 383.
[192] Carm. viii, pp. 356–357.
[193] Note 123.
[194] p. 389 and 423. Cf. Önnerfors (as n. 18) p. 193.
[195] Carm. lxxvi (MGH Poetae ii, pp. 413–415). Cf. Önnerfors, pp. 187 ff.

decease of his protector, Louis the Pious: his flight from Alemannia, and his enthusiasm for Speyer, previously despised but now a welcome haven in his exile (*vv.* 30–57). He foretells the collapse of the empire unless it reverts to rule by one man (*vv.* 57–59) and, in support of his argument, cited from Matthew (13:57), that a prophet is not honoured in his own land, he parades the same *exempla* of exile which the poetry of Moduin and Ermoldus had invested with a peculiarly sinister relevance:

60 *Est veluti proprium et cunctis civile poetis*
Extera regna pati, tormentaque mentis amarae
Carmine solari vario. Sub frigore Naso
Congemuit Scythiae, Musarum ubi munere tantum
Excoluit, quantum Romanae moenibus urbis
Non faceret patriae praedulci nomine captus.
Quid memorem magnum pro parvo rure Maronem
Perplexo dulci longo torrente profundo
Ac velut in tabula pinxisse poemate mundi
Totius effigiem, Neptuni et regmina Ditis?
Porphyrius propriis longe est depulsus ab oris,
Fugit Anaxagoras Socratem stravere venena.
Quid mihi paganos templis inducere sacris?
Ipse pius salvator ait, non esse prophetam
Indecorem, nisi gente sua patriaque domoque.

Was the ultimate irony of Walahfrid's career to be reduced to the unhappy position of an Ermoldus?[196] The defeat of Lothar at Fontenoy in 841 barred his chosen route to restoration as abbot of Reichenau, and the poem he had addressed to the new emperor precluded a comparable attempt to appeal directly to Louis the German. But matters were not quite hopeless. There remained another string for this ever-resourceful diplomat to pull. Grimald had become *archicancellarius* of Louis the German,[197] and the man who advanced Walahfrid during the late 820s again interceded with his master to restore the poet to the abbacy of Reichenau in 842. It was with reason, and with a pleasing symmetry, that one of the last points, like one of the first, in Walahfrid's poetic career was marked by the dedication of a major poem to Grimald.[198]

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The continuities of style and thought and situation which have emerged from this study of three major poets active during the reign of Louis the Pious reflect a coherent pattern of literary interdependence accompanied by marked individuality

[196] See above.

[197] In 833–837/40: see FLECKENSTEIN, Hofkapelle (as n. 9) pp. 170–176, and B. BISCHOFF, Mittelalterliche Studien iii (as n. 5) pp. 192 ff.

[198] Carm. iv, MGH Poetae ii, pp. 335–350, with GODMAN (as n. 5) pp. 38–39.

in the face of parallel artistic and political dilemmas. The images upon which these authors drew in order to represent their work — from the ambiguous model of Ovid to the tragic fate of Boethius —; their attempts to refashion previous poetic tradition or to create one afresh; their sensitivity and their obtuseness to the circumstances in which they were placed: all these features of Ludowician poetry merit a sympathetic understanding of its literary context and historical background which the peremptory dismissals conventional in the standard surveys of this period effectively preclude. "History which ignores art or literature is jejune history, just as a society without art and literature is a jejune society, and, conversely, art and literature which are studied in detachment from history are only half-understood," writes a combative historical essayist.[199] The literature considered in these pages has rarely been paid the compliment of even partial attention, and the period in which it was written remains, in many important respects, obscure and perplexing. But enough has been said to suggest that the platitudes which represent its political development as a depressing series of disasters and its literary history as a desert between the oases formed by the initiatives of Charlemagne and Charles the Bald require a fresh appraisal.[200]

APPENDIX: EARLY CAROLINGIAN POEMS WRITTEN AT COURT

[Square brackets indicate dubious cases]

Paul the Deacon
xiii
xiv
xv
[xviii]
[xix]
[xx]
xxiii

Peter of Pisa
xii
xxi

Angilbert
i

'Hibernicus exul'
i
ii
iii
v

Einhard (?)
['*Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa*']

Moduin
Egloga

Alcuin
vii
[ix]
[xii]
xxxii
xl
[xlii]
[lix]
lxxx (ii)
*Epitaphium Hadriani**

Theodulf
xxvi
[xxvii]

Joseph Scottus
iv
v

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* See L. Wallach, Alcuin and Charlemagne: Studies in Carolingian History and Literature (Cornell Studies in Classical Philology xxxii) Ithaca, New York 1968, pp. 178 ff.

[199] Hugh Trevor-Roper, Princes and Artists, Patronage and Ideology at four Hapsburg courts, 1517–1633, London 1976, p. 7.

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