

**TEMPORALITY, AUTHORITY, AND ‘ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY’ IN  
THE CAROLINGIAN ERA**

by

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Temporality, Authority, and “Ancient Christianity” in the Carolingian Era

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submitted by Joshua Lee Timmermann in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines the powerful, pervasive influence of the past – especially that of “ancient Christianity” and the Latin Church Fathers – on understandings of time, temporality, authority, and the relationship of past to present in the Carolingian era (*ca.* 751–888), as well as the diverse uses of that past by Carolingian writers, compilers, and readers.

The Carolingian reforming project (*reformatio*, or *correctio*) was inherently concerned with the social and spiritual improvement of the temporal world, particularly by bringing the present age into closer alignment with the “traditional” Christian past. For eighth- and ninth-century reformers, the defining, paramount virtues of that “ancient Christian” past and the orthodox tradition running through it were concord and consensus among authorities. Carolingian ecclesiastical and lay leaders sought to facilitate and engender these same virtues in the Christian society of the present and anticipated future.

The Carolingian *reformatio*, it is argued here, was imbued with a distinctive sense of “progress toward the past,” bolstered by texts inextricably associating the Church Fathers with authority, orthodoxy, and the essential harmony and continuity of the “ancient Christian” tradition. The *imperium Christianum* that the Carolingians sought to create, “reform,” and ultimately perfect was fundamentally rooted in an idealized vision of “ancient Christianity” and of the Church Fathers as a special type of timeless authorities – fashioned through the Carolingians’ own purposeful, pragmatic connections of antiquity with authority.

## **Lay Summary**

This dissertation examines the myriad ways in which an adaptable, idealized conception of “ancient Christianity” was constructed and deployed in early medieval Europe, particularly during the Carolingian era (*ca.* 751–888). In a broader sense, this project seeks to contribute to the study of how “golden ages” in the past are perceived and pragmatically invoked to address cultural, social, and political concerns in later contexts—a phenomenon that is directly pertinent to many other historical milieux, as well as to present-day circumstances.

## Preface

This dissertation is original, independent work by the author, Joshua Lee Timmermann.

Parts of Chapter 8 and the Conclusion are published in Josh Timmermann, “An Authority among Authorities: Knowledge and Use of Augustine in the Wider Carolingian World,” *Early Medieval Europe* 28.4 (2020), pp. 532–559.

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## Acknowledgements

I began envisioning the topic, scope, and approach of this dissertation in 2015. I did not consider then just how pertinent a study that starts with “dangerous times” and “evil days,” with the possibility of mustering up hope for reform and improvement of the world and its societies (despite such times and days), and which reflects throughout on the uses of idealized pasts for present purposes, might seem at the time of its completion. This is not, to be perfectly clear, a study about a global pandemic, or potentially world-ending environmental catastrophe, or the cynical appropriations of imagined national golden ages by contemporary leaders and states intent on erasing the social progress and developments of the more recent past. But histories have never been composed in a vacuum—whether written in the fifth-century Roman empire, the ninth-century Carolingian empire, or twenty-first-century Canada, within the immediate orbit of a precariously teetering American empire. *Nos sumus tempora*, indeed...

In a much *more* immediate – and infinitely more benign – sense, this dissertation has been shaped and supported by the kindness of others, upon whom I have depended in a variety of ways: above all, my family (and family-in-law), and especially Teresa Nieman and Logan Timmermann, who have made every day of my life better and happier, more fun and more interesting, even when I have been immersed in work, frantically multitasking between various jobs and duties.

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me to think through, or rethink, some of the larger ideas at stake in my dissertation during a late stage in its progress. Whether replying to an email query, sharing unpublished or hard-to-locate papers, meeting for coffee and a thought-provoking chat (or for harder drinks and conversation until late at night, on the steps of the Karlskirche in Vienna's Karlsplatz), challenging my ideas in class, or reading and commenting on entire chapters of my work, these scholars have made that work better, more complete, more considered and refined than it would have been otherwise. Of course, I take full responsibility for any and all errors or infelicities that remain in the pages that follow—but very much of what is good here derives from the fruits of collegial generosity, mentorial guidance, and friendship.

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*For Teresa and Logan*

## **Introduction: The Carolingians and the Christian Past(s)**

The Carolingian world was profoundly shaped by the past—by biblical history, by classical and Christian Rome, by the preceding generations of early medieval European culture. All modern scholars of the Carolingian era agree on this point. Yet, this general observation provokes myriad questions, on which there is far less agreement. Which past, or pasts, loomed largest for the Carolingians; or is such a division of the past into discrete eras, ages, or types a strictly modern phenomenon, and thus anachronistic with regard to Carolingian perceptions of the past? What did such “shaping” actually consist of, or look like, in practice; and in what areas or aspects of Carolingian culture and thought is the influence of the past most evident? Perhaps most contentiously, were the Carolingians subjects or objects (or both, by turns or at once?) in their relationships to the past, actively shaping or passively shaped by the traces and resources of the past available to them?

The ambiguity surrounding such questions has allowed for a wide range of responses. Some scholars have posited that the “Carolingian Renaissance” was the first medieval revival of classical literature, art, and ideas. Others have expressed a more skeptical view of this period, as an age marked mostly by dutiful, unquestioning reception, prolifically copying but rarely reading, much less truly understanding, the great works of antiquity and producing virtually nothing “original” worthy of note. Still another view of the Carolingians is one of a (relatively) highly literate, creative culture that drew frequently from the resources of the past for its own pragmatic ends.<sup>1</sup> Over the past few decades, this third view, emphasizing the “uses of the past”

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss these changing views of the Carolingian Renaissance, and some examples thereof, at greater length in my Conclusion. For a recent survey of these evolving approaches, see Janet L. Nelson, “Revisiting the Carolingian Renaissance,” in Helmut Reimitz and Jamie Kreiner, eds., *Motions of Late Antiquity*:

by sophisticated Carolingian intellectuals, has become the dominant, orthodox position, especially within Anglophone historiography. To be sure, a wealth of insightful, pathbreaking scholarship has followed from this revisionist view of the Carolingians—though, perhaps, at times, the creative and active, interest-driven interventions of eighth- and ninth-century actors have been exaggerated, or else framed too narrowly. The resulting picture of an exceptionally sophisticated, subtly “original” Carolingian culture consciously and purposefully making use of the distant past may seem a little too neat and tidy.

My dissertation both builds from and, in some respects, implicitly challenges this now-orthodox view. Taken together, the chapters that follow do so by illustrating the powerful, pervasive influence of the past—particularly that of “ancient Christianity” and the Latin Church Fathers—on Carolingian understandings of time, temporality, authority, and the relationship of past to present. I argue that the Carolingians’ particular, distinctive “sense of the past”—a perceived “tradition” from which Carolingian-era intellectuals drew their inspiration and to which they professed a profound reverence and deference—was, ironically, in some ways a conspicuous product of their own appropriations of it. By closely examining a variety of eighth- and ninth-century texts across a range of contemporary genres, I aim to show how Carolingian ideas of the past, present, and future served, together, to shape particular understandings of “authority” and “tradition” rooted in an idealized Christian past—an ambiguous compression of

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*Essays on Religion, Politics, and Society in Honour of Peter Brown* (Turnhout, 2016), 331–346. Giles Brown, “Introduction: The Carolingian Renaissance,” in Rosamond McKitterick, ed., *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), 1–51 provides a well-balanced summary of the various cultural and political influences at work in Carolingian *renovatio*. Also, for a new rethinking of the Carolingian era and its political culture—albeit one drawn mainly from the orthodox approaches and interpretations of recent Anglophone historiography—see now Stuart Airlie, *Making and Unmaking the Carolingians, 751–888* (London, 2020), which is structured around the cultivation and maintenance of “a discourse of the uniqueness of Carolingian royalty” (p. 18). For a different perspective, pointedly de-emphasizing the idea of the Carolingian royal dynasty as such, see Karl Ubl, *Die Karolinger. Herrscher und Reich* (Munich, 2014), esp. 6–13.

the apostolic and patristic ages—but deployed toward the future-oriented project of *reformatio*. This on-going, diffuse Carolingian reforming project, I contend, was inherently concerned with the social and spiritual improvement of the temporal world, particularly by bringing the present age into closer alignment and harmony with the “traditional” Christian past, and perhaps ultimately even surpassing, or perfecting, past ages of perceived greatness. For eighth- and ninth-century reformers, the defining, paramount virtues of the “ancient Christian” past and the orthodox tradition running through it were concord and consensus among authorities, and Carolingian ecclesiastical and lay leaders sought to facilitate and engender these same virtues in the Christian society of the present and anticipated future.

### **Constructing Christian “Tradition” and “Orthodoxy”**

Much of the Christian intellectual culture that the Carolingians inherited was established in the course of “officially” settling the doctrinal struggles and controversies of the late Roman world, following the conversion of the emperor Constantine and the Roman empire’s subsequent turn to Christianity. In fact, it cannot be overstated the extent to which the Christian writers and ecclesiastical leaders of the fourth and fifth centuries contributed to the construction, and delimiting, of orthodoxy in its Western, Latin form.<sup>2</sup> This period—roughly the century between the conversion of Constantine and the dissolution, or fragmentation, of the Western Roman empire in the early decades of the fifth century—was the first great era of Christian consolidation, canon formation, and doctrinal definition, due in large part to the forceful, influential efforts of prominent Christian writers and ecclesiastical leaders: the “Church Fathers.”

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<sup>2</sup> On the construction of orthodoxy in Late Antiquity, see esp. Thomas Graumann, “The Conduct of Theology and the ‘Fathers’ of the Church,” in Phillip Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), 539–555; and Mark Vessey, “The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature: A Case Study,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), 495–513.

Some four centuries later, Carolingian admirers of these great late antique writers and their ambitious, impactful late Roman Christian culture were certainly well aware of the Fathers' contributions to Christian orthodoxy. But rather than recognizing these efforts as polemical, contested interventions at particular, charged moments in the Church's history—though occasionally they did consider such views<sup>3</sup>—the Carolingians associated the major writers and ecclesiastical leaders of this fateful period with ancient Christianity in a quite general sense. This perception of the Christian past was defined, above all, by a continuous, harmonious tradition among authorities, often collapsed together with those of earlier eras, such as the ages of the martyrs and the early Church or, earlier still, of scripture and the time of the apostles. The Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries were thus lent a generous share of the pristine, divinely inspired authority of Christianity's foundational textual layer, the New Testament itself.

In the Carolingian context, the result of this highly malleable, discursive conception of “ancient Christianity” was a more firmly reified, but also an expanded and continuous, canon of “authoritative” writers connected intimately with the ancient Christian “tradition.” In practice, though, this could well include figures as relatively recent as Isidore of Seville (d. 636) and Bede (d. 735). As prolific writers whose works spanned numerous genres and forms of Christian literature, the Iberian archbishop and the Northumbrian monk were among the most important intermediaries between the late antique Fathers and the Carolingians. It was sometimes through the texts of these seventh- and eighth-century intermediaries—texts that hewed closely to illustrious patristic exemplars, while also interpreting and adapting them—that the Carolingians gained familiarity with the approximate words and ideas of the late Roman Fathers. Some

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<sup>3</sup> A key example of a Carolingian author adopting a rather more nuanced view is Walafrid Strabo's *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, which will be examined at length in chapter 6.

intervening figures, most prominently Isidore and Bede, were increasingly treated and regarded as patristic authorities in their own right. In other instances, however, important intermediaries, such as Taio of Saragossa (d. *ca.* 683) and Defensor of Ligugé (fl. *ca.* 700), were rarely acknowledged or cited by name and thus remained obscure, despite the significance of their texts—carefully selected and edited collections transmitting excerpts from the works of the Church Fathers. Defensor’s *Liber scintillarum*, a popular *florilegium* that survives in over 360 manuscripts, and Taio’s *Libri sententiarum*, a five-book compilation drawn primarily from the writings of Gregory the Great, were frequently repurposed in Carolingian texts but with the Fathers themselves almost always named as the source(s), without any mention of Taio or Defensor. Unlike the “works” of Isidore and Bede—properly rooted in the writings of the preceding, orthodox Fathers, but also distinguishable from them—Taio and Defensor’s texts, notwithstanding the subtle editorial interventions of their author-compilers, were viewed mainly as useful sources for directly accessing the Fathers in manageably pared-down forms.<sup>4</sup> Such early medieval intermediaries—whether cited by name or passed over in favour of their more prestigious antecedent sources—are very often present in the *acta* of Carolingian-era Church councils and patristic *florilegia*, in exegetical and liturgical commentaries, in lists of the Fathers and the key works of Christian literature, and in many other texts compiled from purportedly “ancient” authorities. While figures like Taio and Defensor are normally invisible, ghostlike presences, their approximate contemporaries Isidore and Bede are invoked by name and joined

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<sup>4</sup> On Taio and the use of his *Libri sententiarum* in the Carolingian era, see Jean Battany, “Tayon de Saragosse et la nomenclature sociale de Grégoire le Grand,” *Bulletin du Cange* 37 (1970), 173–192; Roger Collins, *Visigothic Spain, 409–711* (Oxford, 2004), esp. 84, 100, 169; Bruno Judic, “La tradition de Grégoire le Grand dans l’idéologie politique carolingienne,” in Régine Le Jan, ed., *La royauté et les élites dans l’Europe carolingienne* (Lille, 1998), 17–57; and Josh Timmermann, “*Beati patres*: Uses of Augustine and Gregory the Great at Carolingian Church Councils, 816–836” (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 2015), esp. 24–32. On Defensor, see Henri Rochais, “Contribution à l’histoire des florilèges ascétiques du haut Moyen Âge latin. Le *Liber scintillarum*,” *Revue bénédictine* 63 (1953), 246–291; Leslie S.B. MacCoull, “More Sources for the *Liber scintillarum* of Defensor of Ligugé,” *Revue bénédictine* 112 (2002), 291–300.

together with the likes of Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose as comparable and corroborating sources.

Consequently, on account of such later eighth- and ninth-century uses of the Fathers, and of “ancient Christianity” more generally, the Carolingian era should be considered as the *second* great age in the construction and consolidation of Christian orthodoxy and “tradition” in the Latin West, after the major interventions of the late antique Fathers themselves. The Carolingians’ firmer, more reified, though never wholly fixed or static, conception of “patristic” status—of how “the Fathers,” as a special category of nearly all-purpose authorities, should be understood and utilized—is among their most important legacies.<sup>5</sup> To be sure, the Carolingians’ collective conception of “the Fathers” was fundamentally rooted in the ancient Christian past, and their uses of patristic authors and texts varied widely among Carolingian writers and across different genres or forms of writing. Yet, as I endeavour to show in what follows, the Fathers and their texts were also understood as a living tradition that could be reclaimed, continued, and properly followed by later generations of Christians, living, thinking, and writing in a new and different age of “Roman” Christian *imperium*.

### **Carolingian Reform and Renewal**

At the turn of the ninth century, such an idea of a Christian Roman empire in the West had indeed reemerged for the first time since the era of the late antique Church Fathers. Taking the late Roman world of the Fathers and the Christian emperors as a prime source of inspiration,

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<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Conrad Leyser, “Late Antiquity in the Medieval West,” in *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, 32–33: “*Correctio* involved canon formation. The Carolingians were largely (although not solely) responsible for the construction of the Latin patristic tradition. The four Latin Fathers – Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory the Great – emerge clearly in the library catalogs of the ninth century. If we scan backwards, we can see this canon taking shape in Bede, Isidore of Seville, Gregory, and before him, in the late Roman period itself, in Gennadius of Marseille and in Jerome. The antiquity of the canon was crucial for the Carolingians – more so, in fact, than its content.”

Charlemagne (d. 814) and his heir, Louis the Pious (d. 840), spearheaded a revival of learning and a program of political and ecclesiastical *reformatio*, or *renovatio*. During the so-called Carolingian Renaissance, Augustine and his fellow late antique “Church Fathers” found some of their most admiring and attentive early medieval readers, particularly among the ambitious ecclesiastical leaders clustered around the courts of Charlemagne and Louis.<sup>6</sup> Some of these court-connected Carolingian readers of the Fathers composed theological and historical works of their own, while others produced detailed commentaries on patristic texts and/or edited compilations of patristic quotations, known as *florilegia*.<sup>7</sup> In such texts, both the writings and the exemplary, saintly lives of the various Church Fathers were compressed into a relatively homogeneous golden age of “ancient Christianity,” while the present period of the expanding

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<sup>6</sup> In recent decades, there has been an abundance of important scholarship on the influence and reception of Augustine and other Church Fathers in the Carolingian era. See, for example, Dominique Alibert, “La transmission des textes patristiques à l’époque carolingienne,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 91 (2007), 7–21; Bernice M. Kaczynski, “The Authority of the Fathers: Patristic Texts in Early Medieval Libraries and Scriptoria,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 16 (2006), 1–27; James LePree, “Sources of Spirituality and the Carolingian Exegetical Tradition” (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2008); Conrad Leyser, “Augustine in the Latin West, 430–ca. 900,” in Mark Vessey, ed., *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, 2012), 450–464; Brian J. Matz, “Augustine, the Carolingians, and Double Predestination,” in Alexander Y. Hwang, Brian J. Matz, and Augustine Cassiday, eds., *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, D.C., 2014), 235–270; Michael E. Moore, “Ancient Fathers: Christian Antiquity, Patristics, and Frankish Canon Law,” *Millennium* 7 (2010), 293–342; Michael E. Moore, “Carolingian Bishops and Christian Antiquity: Distance from the Past, Canon-Formation, and Imperial Power,” in Alasdair A. MacDonald, Michael W. Twomey, and R.J. Reinink, eds., *Learned Antiquity: Scholarship and Society in the Near-East, the Greco-Roman World, and the Early Medieval West* (Leuven, 2003), 175–184; Willemien Otten, “The Texture of Tradition: The Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology,” in Irene Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*. (Leiden, 1997), I: 3–50; Matthew D. Ponesse, “Standing Distant from the Fathers: Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel and the Reception of Early Medieval Learning,” *Traditio* 67 (2012), 71–99; Rainer Berndt and Michel Fèdou, eds., *Les receptions des Pères de l’Église au Moyen Âge: Le devenir de la tradition ecclésiale* (Münster, 2013), esp. François Dolbeau, “La formation du Canon des Pères, du IV<sup>e</sup> au VI<sup>e</sup> siècle,” 17–39; Jesse Keskiäho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages: The Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400–900* (Cambridge, 2015); Richard Matthew Pollard and Anne-Gaëlle Weber, “Définir les Pères de l’Église carolingienne et la place de Flavius Josèphe à leurs côtés,” *Revue d’études augustiniennes et patristiques* 67 (2021; forthcoming). See also Karla Pollmann, et al., eds., *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford, 2013), which includes entries for more than two dozen Carolingian-era writers, including Alcuin of York, Amalarius of Metz, Benedict of Aniane, Claudius of Turin, Florus of Lyon, Frechulf of Lisieux, Hrabanus Maurus, Paschasius Radbertus, Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, Theodulf of Orléans, and Walafrid Strabo.

<sup>7</sup> On late antique and early medieval *florilegia*, especially compilations from Augustine’s works, see Joseph T. Lienhard, “The Earliest Florilegia of Augustine,” *Augustinian Studies* 8 (1977), 21–31; François Dolbeau “Sur un florilège carolingien de Septimanie, composé par Benoît d’Aniane,” *Revue bénédictine* 118 (2008), 46–68; and the essays collected in Jérémy Delmulle, Gert Partoens, Shari Boodts, and Anthony Dupont, eds., *Flores Augustini: Augustinian Florilegia in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 2020).



Christian (Frankish) empire was situated ambiguously (and not just subsequently) in relation to the earlier ages of patristic and biblical inspiration.

While the Carolingians deliberately endeavoured to appropriate the resources and ideas of the “ancient” Roman-Christian past,<sup>8</sup> they also maintained crucial—if, at times, turbulent—relations with the Roman present, especially as embodied by the living institution of the papacy. For the Carolingians, the bishop of Rome stood as a powerful symbol of the continuous transmission of Christian tradition across time, harkening back to its establishment by the apostle Peter. The connection between the papacy and the Carolingians was crucial from the very inception of the new Frankish dynasty. In 751, it was Pope Zachary I who by his famously worded consent bolstered the cause of Pippin the Short in usurping the last Merovingian king, Childeric III. Half a century later, the beleaguered Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as the new Roman emperor on Christmas Day, 800, a seemingly calculated affront to the ostensible continuators of the Roman Empire, the Byzantine “*Graecos*” in the East. To be sure, the political strength of these popes relative to that of the Frankish kings remains vigorously debated;<sup>9</sup> and perhaps no single moment from the Carolingian era has been subject to as many different interpretations as has Charlemagne’s imperial coronation.<sup>10</sup> Yet, whichever interpretation one accepts, these episodes attest, in any case, to the deeply intertwined relations of the papacy and

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Rosamond McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Ind., 2006), 35–62.

<sup>9</sup> See the classic studies of Thomas F.X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia, 1986); Walter Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy* (Abingdon, 2004; originally published, 1972), 45–70; and Karl Morrison, *Tradition and Authority in the Western Church, 300–1140* (Princeton, 1969), 155–253.

<sup>10</sup> Richard E. Sullivan, ed., *The Coronation of Charlemagne: What Did It Signify?* (Boston, 1959) remains a very useful guide for understanding the essential contours of this debate among modern historians, including Louis Halphen, F.-L. Ganshof, Christopher Dawson, Henri Pirenne, Walter Ullmann, and others. Of course, other interpretations have been posited since, though most of them seem to follow, more or less, from those included in *The Coronation of Charlemagne*. Also, see now Janet L. Nelson, “Why Are There So Many Different Accounts of Charlemagne’s Imperial Coronation?” in *eadem*, *Courts, Elites, and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2007), 1–27. An inspired recent reading of the coronation’s significance can be found in Peter J. Heather, *The Restoration of Rome: Barbarian Popes and Imperial Pretenders* (Oxford, 2014), 207–247.

the Carolingians.<sup>11</sup> The special relationship of the Carolingians to the Roman episcopate also palpably contributed to the ambitious conception of Frankish-Roman *imperium Christianum*, articulated most notably and coherently by Alcuin of York.<sup>12</sup> In this evolving Carolingian formulation of Christian empire, the Rome of the Christian emperors, particularly Constantine and Theodosius I<sup>13</sup>—as well as the greatest popes of the past, as memorialized in texts like the *Liber pontificalis*<sup>14</sup>—would serve as a potent model for instituting something akin to the City of

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<sup>11</sup> Later papal encounters would prove more contentious, perhaps most provocatively Pope Gregory IV's support of the rebel party seeking to oust Louis the Pious in 833. On this, see Cornelia Scherer, "Gregor IV. im Kampf um das Erbe Ludwigs des Frommen I: Die Reise ins Frankenreich 833," in *eadem*, *Der Pontifikat Gregors IV. (827–844): Vorstellungen und Wahrnehmungen päpstlichen Handelns im 9. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 2013), 165–195; Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious* (Cambridge, 2009), 220–221; Irene van Renswoude, *The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2019), 230–242; Courtney M. Booker, *Past Convictions: The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), 133–136; and Courtney M. Booker, "The Dionysian Mirror of Louis the Pious," *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 19 (2014), 241–264, who argues that Carolingian-papal relations were significantly fractured after 833, noting that no pope ventured north of the Alps again until 878. On the later relations between Charles the Bald and the papacy, see Janet L. Nelson, "'Not Bishops' Bailiffs but Lords of the Earth': Charles the Bald and the Problem of Sovereignty," in *eadem*, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), 133–143.

<sup>12</sup> Florence Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l'Empire: La pensée politico-théologique de Charlemagne* (Brussels, 2011), esp. 241–245; Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire: The Age of Charlemagne*, trans. Peter Munz (Oxford 1957; adapted and translated from *Das karolingische Imperium*, first published, 1949), 62–63; François-Louis Ganshof, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971), 22–23.

<sup>13</sup> On the utility, and also the problems, with these late imperial models of Christian rulership, see esp. Janet L. Nelson, "Translating Images of Authority: The Christian Roman Emperors in the Carolingian World," in *eadem*, *The Frankish World*, 89–98; Walter Pohl, "Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rule" and Graeme Ward, "Lessons in Leadership: Constantine and Theodosius in Frechulf of Lisieux's *Histories*," both in Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 15–33 and 68–83.

<sup>14</sup> On the *Liber pontificalis*, see Rosamond McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber pontificalis* (Cambridge, 2020).

God,<sup>15</sup> or the Kingdom of Heaven,<sup>16</sup> on earth, thus expanding the reach of orthodox Christendom to eventually include all men and nations.<sup>17</sup>

If Alcuin's ideal of *imperium Christianum* was something of a guiding principle for Charlemagne as a powerful Christian sovereign, its most discernible, political manifestation during his reign was in the series of broad-ranging reforms that he advocated. This bold, multi-faceted program of *reformatio* began in earnest with the *Admonitio generalis* of 789, but it proceeded with greater urgency after the imperial coronation, occupying much of the last 14 years of Charlemagne's life and continuing into the reign of his successor.<sup>18</sup> At the reform-centred Church councils called by Charlemagne in 813 (held at Arles, Reims, Mainz, Chalon, and Tours) and by Louis the Pious in 816–17 (at Aachen), high-ranking bishops and abbots, together with some lay leaders, convened to better define the proper functions and obligations of the *ordines*, or “orders,” in Christian society. These councils—to which I will return in greater

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Henri-Xavier Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme politique: Essai sur la formation des theories politique du Moyen-Age* (Paris, 1934), although his once-influential thesis—that a perverted, early medieval understanding of Augustine's doctrine of the Two Cities facilitated the conflation of secular and spiritual power and led ultimately, after Charlemagne, to the submission of State to Church and the monarchical papacy of Gregory VII—is now generally disputed, especially by Carolingianists. See Michael E. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, D.C., 2011), esp. 14–17, 254–255; John J. Contreni, “Carolingian Era, Early,” in Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1999), 128.

<sup>16</sup> Donald A. Bullough, “Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven: Liturgy, Theology, and the Carolingian Age,” in *idem*, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991), 161–240.

<sup>17</sup> See Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l'Empire*; Sophia Mösch, *Augustine and the Art of Ruling in the Carolingian Imperial Period: Political Discourse in Alcuin of York and Hincmar of Rheims* (Abingdon/New York, 2019); and Owen M. Phelan, *The Formation of Christian Europe: The Carolingians, Baptism, and the Imperium Christianum* (Oxford, 2014). Cf. Karl Ubl, “Karl der Große und die Rückkehr des Gottesstaates,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 301 (2015), 374–390, who, reviewing modern studies of Charlemagne's life and career, suggests that historiographical conceptions of a Carolingian “*Gottesstaat*” have often been much too reliant on Einhard's brief mention of Charlemagne's fondness for Augustine's *De civitate Dei*; and Jennifer R. Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Cambridge, 2015), who argues that the ideology of the *imperium Christianum* that many modern historians associate with the Carolingians only really developed under Louis the Pious, not during Charlemagne's reign.

<sup>18</sup> See Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London/New York, 1983), 59–127; Josef Semmler, “*Renovatio Regni Francorum*: Die Herrschaft Ludwigs des Frommen im Frankenreich 814–829/830” and Gerhard Schmitz, “The Capitulary Legislation of Louis the Pious,” both in Peter Godman and Roger Collins, eds., *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)* (Oxford, 1990), 125–146 and 425–436.

detail in my Conclusion—were meant to establish standard rules governing the conduct of the secular clergy, the regular clergy, and the laity, thus, at least in theory, uniting a religious culture that had for centuries existed as fragmented, idiosyncratic “micro-Christendoms.”<sup>19</sup> Given the diversity of monastic rules passed down across the early medieval West, the standardization of monastic practice seemed particularly imperative. Louis, with his close advisor, the ascetic monk Benedict of Aniane, placed special emphasis on bringing all the empire’s monasteries under the *Regula Benedicti*.<sup>20</sup> So dominant and pervasive did the influence of Benedict’s Rule become, with its firm yet clement abbot entrusted with the souls of his brethren, that some modern scholars have argued for the reassessment of Louis’s reign in light of a distinctively “monastic model” of rulership, deeply internalized by an emperor praised by contemporary admirers for his great *pietas*, *aequitas*, and *clementia*.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, the imperial reform efforts, and particularly the large-scale synods convened with increasing regularity, gave rise to a corps of formidably powerful Carolingian bishops, united by a shared “episcopal consciousness” rooted in the deeply felt duties of their pastoral *ministerium* and their collective role as “watchmen unto

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<sup>19</sup> On the 813 councils, see Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 279–85; Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus. Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008), 72–83; Abigail Firey, *A Contrite Heart: Prosecution and Redemption in the Carolingian Empire* (Leiden, 2009), 196–220; Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), 128–140. Janet L. Nelson, “Charlemagne and the Bishops,” in Rob Meens, Dorine van Espelo, Bram van den Hoven Genderen, Janneke Raaijmakers, Irene van Renswoude, and Carine van Rhijn, eds., *Religious Franks: Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms: Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong* (Manchester, 2016), 367–368, suggests that the five synods of 813 may well mark the beginning of the Carolingian episcopate’s “sense of themselves as a cadre,” a pivotal development in the history of the Frankish Church. On the 816/17 reform efforts under Louis, see Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*, 279–85; Hartmann, *Die Synoden*, 155–160. For “micro-Christendoms,” see Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Malden, Mass./Oxford, 2003), 355–379.

<sup>20</sup> See Matthew D. Ponesse, “Smaragdus of St Mihiel and the Carolingian Monastic Reform,” *Revue bénédictine* 116 (2006), 367–392; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 115–116.

<sup>21</sup> See Thomas F.X. Noble, “The Monastic Ideal as a Model for Empire: The Case of Louis the Pious,” *Revue bénédictine* 88 (1976), 235–250; Thomas F.X. Noble, “Louis the Pious and His Piety Re-considered,” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 58 (1980), 297–316; Booker, *Past Convictions*, 213–246; Andrew Romig, “In Praise of the Too-Clement Emperor: The Problem of Forgiveness in the Astronomer’s *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*,” *Speculum* 89 (2014), 382–409; and Rutger Kramer, “Teaching Emperors: Transcending the Boundaries of Carolingian Monastic Communities,” in Eirik Hovden, Christina Lutter, and Walter Pohl, eds., *Meanings of Community across Medieval Eurasia: Comparative Approaches* (Leiden, 2016), 309–337.

the house of Israel.”<sup>22</sup> Recognizing the central importance of both the episcopate and monasticism to Louis’s reign, Karl Ubl aptly terms the Carolingian empire of this period “ein Reich der Bischöfe und Klöster.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, bishops and monks (including prominent figures like Hrabanus Maurus who moved between secular and regular *ordines*) were, together, at the very forefront of the *reformatio*, or *correctio*, particularly during Louis’s time as sovereign but more generally throughout much of the Carolingian era.

It is within the context of these wide-ranging—if, perhaps, unevenly implemented—reforms to *ecclesia* and *populus* that the Carolingian Renaissance (or perhaps, *renaissances* plural<sup>24</sup>) should be understood as, first and foremost, “religious” in its orientation, directed in service of both the temporal and soteriological needs of the new *imperium Christianum*. In addition to the distinctive works of poetry and art associated with this “rebirth of learning”—many of which centred on biblical or other Christian themes, or were produced to complement the texts of sacred books<sup>25</sup>—the attention of the “international” circle at Charlemagne’s court, and, later, too, the ecclesiastical intellectuals drawn to the courts of Louis the Pious and his sons, were principally focused on the amelioration of Christian culture and practices. In the first phase of this “renaissance,” shared reforming objectives motivated increased efforts towards copying, correcting, and rightly interpreting the books of the Bible, reforming the liturgy according to

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<sup>22</sup> Patzold, *Episcopus*; Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*; De Jong, *The Penitential State*, esp. 112–147.

<sup>23</sup> Ubl, *Die Karolinger*, 63ff.

<sup>24</sup> Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West: Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, trans. from the third edition by John J. Contreni (Columbia, S.C., 1976), 497–499, distinguishes between a “first,” largely unoriginal Carolingian renaissance, under Charlemagne, a program centred mainly on the practical necessities of Christian education and reform and a subsequent, ninth-century period evincing renewed interest in classical texts, “the real Carolingian renaissance.”

<sup>25</sup> For poetry and art, see, for example, Paul E. Dutton and Herbert L. Kessler, *The Poetry and Paintings of the First Bible of Charles the Bald* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1998); Peter Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985) and *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1987); Florentine Mutherich and Joachim E. Gaehde, *Carolingian Painting* (New York, 1976); George Henderson, “Emulation and Invention in Carolingian Art,” in *Carolingian Culture*, 248–273.

perceived Roman tradition, and instructing the secular clergy (beyond the upper ranks of the episcopate) on how best to deliver God's word to their flocks.<sup>26</sup> These eminently practical, religious projects, to which such great energy and seriousness were directed, must be viewed within the same immediate context as Alcuin's enthusiasm for logic, Hrabanus Maurus's attempt at natural philosophy, the impressive verse compositions of Theodulf of Orléans and Walafrid Strabo, and the luxurious illuminated (chiefly, biblical) manuscripts produced around this

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<sup>26</sup> Providing Carolingian bishops and priests with the textual and rhetorical tools necessary for preaching effectively, and correctly, to the laity was a major component of the Carolingian reform program, particularly in the earlier decades of the ninth century. On Carolingian preaching activity and sermons, see esp. Thomas L. Amos, "Augustine and the Education of the Early Medieval Preacher," in Edward D. English, ed., *Reading and Preaching Wisdom: The 'De doctrina Christiana' of Augustine in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1995), 23–40; Thomas L. Amos, "The Origin and Nature of the Carolingian Sermon" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1983); Thomas L. Amos, "Monks and Pastoral Care in the Early Middle Ages," in Thomas F.X. Noble and John J. Contreni, eds., *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1987), 165–180; Thomas L. Amos, "Preaching and the Sermon in the Carolingian World," in T. L. Amos, E. A. Green, and Beverly M. Kienzle, eds., *De ore Domini: Preacher and Word in the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1989), 41–60; Thomas L. Amos, "The Audience of the Early Medieval Sermon," in Jacqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermand, eds., *De l'homélie au sermon: histoire de la prédication médiévale. Actes du colloque international de Louvain-la-Neuve (9-11 juillet 1992)* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1993), 1–14; Henri Barré, "L'homilaire carolingien de Mondsee," *Revue bénédictine* 71 (1961), 71–107; Réginald Grégoire, *Les Homéliaires du Moyen Âge: Inventaire et analyse des manuscrits* (Rome, 1966); Paul Mercier, ed., *XIV Homélies du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1970); Jean-Paul Bouhot, "Un sermonaire carolingien," *Revue d'histoire des textes* 4 (1974), 181–223; Raymond Étaix, "Le recueil de sermons composé par Raban Maur pour Haistulf de Mayence," *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 32 (1986), 124–137; Michael Frassetto, "The Role of the Sermon in Carolingian Political Theory and *Renovatio*," (M.A. thesis, Michigan State University, 1986); R. Emmett McLaughlin, "The Word Eclipsed? Preaching in the Early Middle Ages," *Traditio* 46 (1991), 77–122; Thomas Martin Buck, *Admonitio und Praedicatio: Zur religiös-pastoralen Dimension von Kapitularien und kapitulariennahmen Texten* (Frankfurt a. M., 1997); Jennifer Claire Woods, "Six New Sermons by Hrabanus Maurus on the Virtues and Vices," *Revue bénédictine* 107 (1997), 280–306; Thomas N. Hall, "The Early Medieval Sermon," in Beverly M. Kienzle, ed., *The Sermon* (Turnhout, 2000), 203–269; Susan Keefe, *Water and the Word*, 2 vols. (Notre Dame, Ind., 2002); Michael Thomas Martin, "The Italian Homiliary: Texts and Contexts" (Ph.D. diss., Western Michigan University, 2005); James McCune, "Four Pseudo-Augustinian Sermons *De concupiscentia fugienda* from the Carolingian Sermonary of Würzburg," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 52 (2006), 391–431; James McCune, "The Sermons on the Virtues and Vices for Lay Potentates in the Carolingian Sermonary of Salzburg," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 19 (2009), 250–290; Carine Van Rhijn, *Shepherds of the Lord: Priests and Episcopal Statutes in the Carolingian Period* (Turnhout, 2007); Stephen Pelle, "An Edition of an Unpublished Carolingian Sermon Collection," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 23 (2013), 87–160; Owen M. Phelan, *The Formation of Christian Europe*; Maximilian Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern: Arn von Salzburg, Karl der Große und die Salzburger Sermones-Sammlung* (Berlin, 2015); Carine van Rhijn and Steffen Patzold, eds., *Men in the Middle: Local Priests in Early Medieval Europe* (Berlin, 2016); Laura Hohman, "Carolingian Sermons: Religious Reform, Pastoral Care, and Lay Piety," (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 2016). On the presence of Augustine and other Church Fathers in Carolingian sermons and sermon collections, see now Josh Timmermann, "An Authority among Authorities: Knowledge and Use of Augustine in the Wider Carolingian World," *Early Medieval Europe* 28 (2020), 532–559.

period.<sup>27</sup> The writings of the Church Fathers were integral to these aims, especially biblical correction and exegesis, but also to the compilation of sermons, the writing of history, and the reforming of the liturgy. Subsequent phases of Carolingian *renovatio*—once the essential groundwork had been laid by the court scholars of the late eighth and early ninth centuries—saw more ambitious and complex works of literature, theology, liturgical theorization, and philosophy. Most of these later Carolingian works continued to be rooted firmly in scripture; the works, ideas, and examples of the Church Fathers; and the “tradition” of the Roman Church as exemplified by the ecumenical late antique Church councils and the apostolic institution of the papacy. Even after the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis, which nurtured the formative stages of Carolingian *reformatio*, the textual works of later ninth-century intellectuals continue to evince the same widely shared concern for social and spiritual reform of the *populus Christianus*. Indeed, this most fundamental aspect of Carolingian culture far outlasted the unified empire itself, persisting into the tenth century and beyond.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Here, I partly follow Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1969), 17, on the “wholeness (or ‘totalitarian’) character of the Christian theme” with regard to the Carolingian Renaissance (at least the “first renaissance,” as identified by Riché), although I would not go quite so far as to argue, with Ullmann, that “there was no conceptual distinction between a Carolingian State and a Carolingian Church.” For a more nuanced, recent reading, acknowledging the Carolingian efforts as distinguishing the *ordines* of earthly society, see Mayke de Jong, “*Ecclesia* and the Early Medieval Polity,” in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), 113–132. More recent surveys of the “Carolingian Renaissance” do not necessarily stress its intrinsically religious and practical character to the overwhelming extent of Ullmann’s study, and at the expense of its other, less obviously “religious” aspects, but in summarizing its achievements, the Renaissance’s fundamentally and essentially Christian impetus remains apparent. See, e.g., Donald A. Bullough, “Roman Books and Carolingian *renovatio*,” in *Carolingian Renewal*, 1–38; John J. Contreni, “The Carolingian Renaissance,” in *idem*, *Carolingian Learning: Masters and Manuscripts* (Hampshire, 1992), 59–74; Brown, “Introduction: The Carolingian Renaissance”; Richard E. Sullivan, “The Context of Cultural Activity in the Carolingian Age,” in *idem*, ed., *The Gentle Voices of Teachers: Aspects of Learning in the Carolingian Age* (Columbus, Ohio, 1995), 51–105.

<sup>28</sup> On the persistence of distinctly Carolingian initiatives and ideals after the empire’s division and later the end of the Carolingian dynasty, see Rosamond McKitterick, “The Legacy of the Carolingians,” in *Carolingian Culture*, 317–323; Eric Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2006); Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade* (Oxford, 2011); Geoffrey Koziol, “Leadership: Why We Have Mirrors for Princes but None for Presidents,” in Celia Chazelle, Simon Doubleday, Felice Lifshitz, and Amy G. Remensnyder, eds., *Why the Middle Ages Matter: Medieval Light on Modern Injustice* (London/New York, 2011), 183–198; and

### **The Uses of the Resources of the Past**

In recent decades, some of the most fruitful studies of the distinctive intellectual culture that developed around this ambitious Carolingian reform program have centred on the myriad “uses” to which eighth- and ninth-century writers, compilers, and editors put the “resources” of the past. For example, in both *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (published in 2000) and its belated companion volume, *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (2015), scholars—many of them Carolingian specialists—argued for early medieval intellectuals’ pragmatic employment of biblical, patristic, classical, and historiographical texts and ideas toward the collective, contingent objective of *reformatio* understood in its more literal sense, as a kind of returning, or reshaping, of the present to an earlier time or state.<sup>29</sup> In the interim between these edited collections, compatible claims have been convincingly posited in numerous monographs, examining diverse facets of Carolingian culture, politics, and law.<sup>30</sup>

Among these studies, a number of key works have focused, in particular, on the central place of the Church Fathers in the so-called Carolingian Renaissance—a program marked, above all, by its total commitment to the “correction” and amelioration of Christian culture and practices across the vast empire of Charlemagne. Recent scholarship has shown that while

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the essays collected in Stefan Esders, Alice Hicklin, and Sarah Greer, eds., *Using and Not Using the Past after the Carolingian Empire: c. 900–c. 1050* (Abingdon, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000); Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015).

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, although this list is far from exhaustive, Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004); Martin A. Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the Regula canonicorum in the Eighth Century* (Cambridge, 2004); Booker, *Past Convictions*; Patzold, *Episcopus*; De Jong, *The Penitential State*; Firey, *A Contrite Heart*; Christopher Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (London, 2009); Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom*; Keskiäho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages*.



Carolingian readers of the Fathers sought to cast themselves as dutiful (and never novel) followers of an ancient Christianity exemplified by the *beati patres* and most especially by Augustine, the writers and redactors of the later eighth and ninth centuries, to a great extent, constructed a practical, readily usable patristic “tradition” structured around the words and names of these revered figures from centuries past.<sup>31</sup> While this evolving canon certainly included Augustine, as well as his contemporaries Ambrose and Jerome, it also drew frequently and prominently from later writers like Julianus Pomerius, Caesarius of Arles, Isidore of Seville, Bede, and, perhaps above all, Gregory the Great.<sup>32</sup> This group of later writers straddled the (ever hazy) line demarcating the world of Roman late antiquity inhabited by Augustine, authoring polemical statements *contra paganos*, from an early medieval world of near-total Christianization—the latter a milieu more immediately recognizable to the Carolingian audience. While the texts of the late sixth-century pope Gregory the Great (d. 604), for example, could still benefit from the special authority that Carolingian readers ascribed to sources of “ancient” Christianity, his words and general worldview seemed, discernibly, to register closer to home. Works like Gregory’s *Regula pastoralis* lacked much of the speculative nuance that characterizes much of Augustine’s corpus, and they were discernibly removed from a context where Christianity remained in discursive competition with a learned pagan culture.<sup>33</sup> Carolingian

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<sup>31</sup> On these points, see esp. Kaczynski, “The Authority of the Fathers”; Moore, “Carolingian Bishops”; Leyser, “Late Antiquity in the Medieval West”; and Sumi Shimahara, “Citations explicites ou recours implicites? Les usages de l’autorité des Pères dans l’exégèse carolingienne,” in *Les réceptions des Pères de l’Église au Moyen Âge*, 369–388.

<sup>32</sup> See now Pollard and Weber, “Définir les Pères de l’Église carolingienne,” which attempts a quantitative measurement of “patristic,” or “quasi-patristic,” status in the Carolingian era by tracking the explicit mentions or clustering of mentions of potential “Fathers” within a large sampling of Carolingian manuscripts. An early draft of this article, outlining Pollard and Weber’s groundbreaking methodology, was generously shared with me by the authors.

<sup>33</sup> On the seismic shifts within Christian intellectual culture between the time of Augustine and that of Gregory the Great, see Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000); and R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990). For a provocative critique of Markus’s thesis, that the “secular” was increasingly “drained out” of Western Christian culture in the centuries after Augustine, see now Robin Whelan, “After Augustine, After Markus: The Problem of the Secular at the End of

writers, editors, and compilers selected carefully and purposefully among the variety of purportedly orthodox options available to them. In so doing, they continued to negotiate and redefine certain aspects of Western orthodoxy itself, even as their efforts depended crucially upon the idea of an already established, monolithic, orthodox “tradition,” which required “reforming” to its earlier, purer state due to perceived corruptions in the centuries dividing the Carolingian world from the privileged age(s) of “ancient Christianity.”

A secondary aim of my dissertation is to put the above-described scholarship on creative and pragmatic Carolingian uses of the past in closer conversation with the wealth of recent studies on the intellectual and literary history of Late Antiquity. Doing this, I argue, is essential to recognizing the distinctive ways in which the Carolingians, in equating antiquity with authority, built upon rhetorical or textual approaches and ideas inherited from the Fathers themselves. This will also help to better recognize the ways in which the Carolingians—true to their word—mainly adhered faithfully to established precedents, making only minor or superficial changes in adapting earlier models for their purpose. Mark Vessey, for instance, has demonstrated the pivotal role that Augustine and Jerome played in both shaping their own literary legacies before their deaths and bringing into being a special category of post-biblical “authorities” and “illustrious (Christian) men” whose names and arguments could be explicitly cited in cases of doctrinal disagreement. In the process, the (eventual) “Fathers” of the fourth and

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Antiquity,” *Early Medieval Europe* 29 (2021), 12–35, arguing for a “continuing plurality and complexity of late ancient and early medieval secularities” (p. 34) among “deeply Augustinian authors” (p. 35) whose conceptions of the *saeculum* were nonetheless quite different, at times, from Augustine’s notion (as influentially evoked by Markus). See also the critical reconsideration of Markus’s landmark study, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970) in Michael J. Hollerich, “John Milbank, Augustine, and the ‘Secular,’” in Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, and Alan D. Fitzgerald, eds., *History Apocalypse and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine’s City of God* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1999), 311–326. R.A. Markus, *Christianity and the Secular* (Notre Dame, Ind., 2006), 40–45, responded to Hollerich’s criticisms of his work.

fifth centuries brought into being new conceptions of “Christian literature” and “Christian history.”<sup>34</sup> Along with the particular theological and exegetical ideas received from these major Christian writers, their early medieval readers also inherited and drew upon the larger discourses and discursive strategies fleshed out in the Fathers’ works—but with the significant difference that Carolingian writers referred back to a hallowed “ancient” Christian “tradition,” whereas Augustine and Jerome were citing their coevals or men preceding them by just a few generations. The temporal and cultural distance that separated the Carolingians from the late Roman Fathers supplied the Fathers and their works with a heightened authority associated with Christian antiquity—extending from the apostolic age up to the era of the Christian Roman empire, and perhaps beyond. The special authority that would eventually be firmly attached to the names, writings, and lives of the Church Fathers has, itself, a complex history. Karla Pollmann has traced the development of *auctoritas* and its range of meanings across ancient Latin culture and up to the works of the Fathers, showing that, in late antique Christian discourse, *auctoritas* was expanded from being understood as “a concession to this world [that] will come to an end” to, by contrast, something variously associated with the divine, and thus potentially eternal, through its connection to the Church.<sup>35</sup> Her study does not continue through the early Middle Ages, but suggests excellent questions, not yet pursued, for studies of how *auctoritas* functioned in later (“post-patristic”) contexts like the Carolingian era.

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<sup>34</sup> See Mark Vessey, “Augustine among the Writers of the Church,” in *idem*, ed., *A Companion to Augustine*, 240–254; Vessey, “History of the Book: Augustine’s *City of God* and Post-Roman Cultural Memory,” in James Wetzel, ed., *Augustine’s City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2012), 14–32; Vessey, “Reinventing History: Jerome’s Chronicle and the Writing of the Post-Roman West,” in Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno, and Edward Watts, eds., *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Later Roman History and Culture, 284–450 CE* (Cambridge, 2010), 265–289; and Vessey, “The Forging of Orthodoxy.”

<sup>35</sup> Karla Pollmann, “Christianity and Authority in Late Antiquity: The Transformation of the Concept of *Auctoritas*,” in Carol Harrison, Caroline Humfress, and Isabella Sandwell, eds., *Being Christian in Late Antiquity: A Festschrift for Gillian Clark* (Oxford, 2014), 156–175 (quotation at p. 172).

More broadly, the perception of “golden ages” in the past, and efforts to emulate those idealized periods, is a phenomenon recognizable across many different historical milieux (and not least in the present moment). A corollary of such attempts to recreate a given golden age is that the key figures, texts, and ideas associated with that past period are often lent a powerful, even sacred authority, and are pragmatically deployed for a variety of present purposes. Yet, the discursive functions of time and temporality in the formulation of such ostensibly past-oriented authority remains only dimly understood or recognized as part of the larger process of constructing purposeful “golden ages” out of the raw materials of the past. This is the process that I aim to better illuminate and to chart in exploring the coalescence, reification, and use of “ancient Christianity” and “the (Church) Fathers” in the Carolingian era.

### **Content and structure**

Part I of my dissertation is concerned with views of the remaining time of the world, before its End, in late antique interpretations of eschatologically ambiguous scriptural passages and in the texts of Carolingian writers who drew heavily from those late antique authors. Chapter 1 focuses on the influence of patristic writers—particularly Augustine, but also, to a great extent, the Donatist theologian Tyconius, who significantly impacted Augustine’s thought—on the “spiritual,” or allegorical, reading of several eschatologically charged passages in the Pauline letters. Chapter 2 considers Carolingian readings and uses of Paul, derived from Augustine and other patristic sources. I argue that the distinctive exegetical methods advocated by Tyconius and Augustine—and largely accepted on the basis of Augustine’s authoritative status—profoundly informed readings of such scriptural passages up to the times of Bede and the Carolingians, who, following these late antique writers, understood the duration of the remaining time of the world as essentially opaque and indeterminable. Ninth-century Pauline commentaries, often

constructed directly from the writings of the Church Fathers, are illustrative of the central, authoritative role of these revered figures within Carolingian culture, and of the patristic ideas that informed Carolingian writers' understandings of time and temporality. In chapter 2, I also examine some examples of appropriations of seemingly apocalyptic Pauline rhetoric in Carolingian letters and other contemporary texts to consider how these more "discursive" invocations of Paul's words stem (or, at times, seemingly diverge) from standard exegetical interpretations. Here, I contend that, while Paul's pronouncements regarding the "dangerous times" (*periculosa tempora*) and "evil days" (*dies mali*) could be deliberately deployed to provoke necessary action, the exegesis-derived view that the world could well endure for many more generations served as an impetus to, and justification for, reform and correction within the Carolingian political and ecclesiastical spheres. Such an understanding of time, emphasizing the mystery and unintelligibility of God's providential plan for mankind, allowed for the real possibility of reforming and ameliorating earthly Christian society, making more tenable the enormous, necessarily time-consuming project of Carolingian *reformatio*.

In Part II, I consider the variety of ways that Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, together with roughly contemporary works like Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos* (typically viewed by modern historians as being incompatible with Augustine's views) and Jerome's Latin adaptation of Eusebius's *Chronicon*, could be interpreted and appropriated within the ninth-century cultural context. In chapter 3, I examine a selection of Carolingian-era manuscripts of the *De civitate Dei*, looking in particular at early medieval annotations and other paratextual features that offer insight into how Carolingian readers studied and used Augustine's dense, sprawling 22-book work. Alongside such manuscripts containing the works of Augustine, I consider a major, "new" Carolingian work that draws prominently from the *De civitate Dei*, as well as from Orosius and

Eusebius–Jerome: the two-part “universal history” by the bishop and historian Frechulf of Lisieux. As I show, Frechulf’s uses of Augustine closely mirror the apparent points of interest and implicitly suggested ways of reading Augustine’s work that are discernible in early medieval annotations on the *De civitate Dei*. Across these two closely interrelated chapters, I argue that Carolingian-era readers, writers, and compilers turned to Augustine’s magnum opus not only as a source of authoritative, patristic theology and doctrine, but also as a valuable source of information about the more ancient past, its peoples, and ideas. In this respect, Augustine served as a trusted, reliably orthodox and learned guide to accessing the past, including the overlapping spheres of ancient pagan history and philosophy and the sacred history recounted in scripture.

While the first four chapters span a fairly wide range of texts across different genres and discursive contexts, the two chapters that make up Part III focus more explicitly on the important role of genre itself in molding Carolingian views of time and the past, and, to some extent, shaping or delimiting the literary representation of those views. I examine Amalarius of Metz’s *Liber officialis*, in which the author seeks to restore liturgical practices to their once-perfect, apostolic forms—a vision of Roman tradition and orthodoxy that I contrast with Walafrid Strabo’s more “historicist” book on the liturgy, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*. I also provide a comparison of Walafrid’s ideas expressed in his liturgical treatise with his earlier, past-invoking poetic works, particularly his *Visio Wettini* and *De imagine Tetrici*. Drawing from the pathbreaking scholarship of Mark Salber Phillips concerning the rhetorical functions of “distance,”<sup>36</sup> these two chapters pay particular attention to the figurative use of “distance” and “proximity” in how Carolingian writers represent their

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<sup>36</sup> Mark Salber Phillips, *On Historical Distance* (New Haven, 2013); and also Mark Salber Phillips, “Introduction: Rethinking Historical Distance,” in Mark Salber Phillips, Barbara Craine, and Julia Adeney Thomas, eds., *Rethinking Historical Distance* (New York, 2013), 1–18.

relationships to periods or certain prominent figures of the past. Textual strategies of distantiation, I argue, were instrumental in investing “ancient (Roman) Christianity” with a special type of authority. Yet, to suit different rhetorical purposes, Carolingian writers might, alternately, position themselves and their age in close, intimate relation to periods of the Roman and biblical past.

Transitioning from these chapters on the generic variability of Carolingian conceptions of the relationship of past to present, Part IV is concerned with the use of the Fathers’ writings together with knowledge of their lives. In the view of their Carolingian devotees, the Fathers were regarded, at once, as both sources of orthodox doctrinal authority through their own texts and as shining examples of correct Christian living and leadership through representations (both textual and pictorial) of their lives, careers, and individual characters. In chapter 7, I examine early models for representing the canon of Christian writers as a continuous, on-going tradition originating with the authors of the New Testament, namely Jerome’s *De viris illustribus* and Gennadius’s continuation of it. Next, I consider two Carolingian-era texts that offer their own, patristically inspired visions of “Christian literature” for their own times and places: Alcuin’s poem on the *Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York* and Notker’s later ninth-century *Notatio de illustribus viris*. Following from this, chapter 8 centres on the influence of textual *vitae* of the Fathers, particularly Possidius’s *Vita Augustini*, on Carolingian understandings of an ideal Christian mode of life and ecclesiastical leadership. This influence, I show, is vividly evident in biographies of Carolingian-era holy men like Boniface of Mainz, Benedict of Aniane, and Adalhard of Corbie. Lastly in this chapter, I turn to Paschasius Radbertus’s *Cogitis me*, a “sermon” on Marian devotion written from the authorial perspective of Jerome, to demonstrate, again, how powerfully the lives and careers of the Fathers and the general milieu of late Roman

Christianity informed and shaped Carolingian notions of the ancient Christian tradition, of how present Christian society ought to function, and how pious Christians ought to live their lives. Taken together, chapters 7 and 8 argue that both the *verba* and *vitae* of the Fathers functioned as authoritative, suitably “ancient” sources or examples for Carolingian readers, in much the same manner that the apostles and authors of scripture, above all Paul, served as both sacred theological sources and powerful role models for the fourth-century “generation of Paul,” of which Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose were a part. At the same time, however, the Fathers were also increasingly viewed and represented, by Carolingian writers, as a harmonious collective entity, whose individual texts and pious lives were fundamentally concordant with one another, thus adding up to even more than the sum of their parts.

Building from this contention in Part IV, my Conclusion examines references to the Fathers, as individual authorities and especially as a unified, collectively harmonious source of authority (much like scripture itself or the records and creeds of the ecumenical, “universal” late antique Church councils), in the *acta* resulting from Carolingian-era Church councils. Connecting together all the preceding chapters, I here consider the idea of Carolingian reform as a kind of “progress toward the past,” bolstered by texts (ranging across contemporary genres) inextricably associating the Church Fathers with authority, orthodoxy, and the essential harmony and continuity of the “ancient Christian” tradition. I argue that the *imperium Christianum* that the Carolingians sought to create, “reform,” and ultimately perfect was fundamentally rooted in a vision of the ancient Christian past and of the Church Fathers as a special type of timeless authorities, fashioned through the Carolingians’ own purposeful, pragmatic connections of antiquity with authority. Finally, I compare the picture of Carolingian *reformatio* stitched together across my dissertation chapters to some of the dominant paradigms for understanding



the Carolingian “Renaissance” and/or “Reform(s).” In arguing for a more nuanced position—between viewing the Carolingians as merely passive transmitters of classical and patristic texts or as the truly “original” and innovative authors of a new medieval Christian culture—I aim to show that Carolingian intellectuals were thoroughly interested in, and influenced by, the past and its rich cultural resources, but that the pervasive sense of the “ancient Christian” past that so informed Carolingian thought and texts was itself, to a significant extent, a gradual, useful construction—a kind of expansive mosaic—assembled by Christian intellectuals in the eighth- and ninth-century Latin West.

My dissertation, too, is structured as a mosaic, one consisting of the various choices I have made for how to go about illustrating the many different, overlapping aspects and problems related to “Temporality, Authority, and ‘Ancient Christianity’ in the Carolingian Era.” To be sure, I could have focused on other genres of early medieval writing, on other works within the genres I selected, or on other cases involving different Carolingian-era writers engaging with the past. For instance, in chapters 1 and 2, on exegesis and eschatology, I might have foregrounded interpretations of messianic pronouncements in one or more of the gospels rather than examining interpretations of certain passages in the Pauline letters. Instead of devoting a chapter (4) to Frechulf’s “universal” history, I might have looked at Nithard’s more immediate and contemporary books of history. Such changes would have no doubt altered the appearance of the “mosaic” that I have assembled here—though perhaps not very much in an overall sense, insofar as one of the primary features of the picture I have attempted to sketch is the remarkable variety and diversity of views, strategies, discourses, and forms that characterized the ideas and uses of the ancient Christian past in the Carolingian age.

Some of the Carolingian writers whom I have closely studied turn up in multiple chapters, through the lens of different themes, topics, or genres in which they wrote. Alcuin of York, Hrabanus Maurus, Florus of Lyon, Walafrid Strabo, and most of the other eighth- and ninth-century writers considered here are highly exceptional figures in that they read widely and composed in Latin in a time and place where most people did not and could not. Almost all of the early medieval writers discussed here were male ecclesiastics, whether secular clergy, monks, or both by turns, and many of them enjoyed a degree of *Königsnähe* far beyond that of most Carolingian subjects. Nevertheless, in a certain sense, these writers are typical of the general figure of the Carolingian Christian intellectual in terms of their spectrum of cultural influences, the books and writers known to them, and the general moral and spiritual concerns that compelled their thought, actions, and textual output. These learned individuals operated within a broadly shared discursive framework structured around the use of ideas and resources of the past to guide and improve their present world; many of these figures corresponded within literal “textual communities,” exchanging letters, advice of all kinds, and reading suggestions with one another.<sup>37</sup> These writers, to varying extents, contributed something of substance to the ever-evolving social shape of that discursive framework, at different moments in the later eighth and ninth centuries. Yet, each of these writers was also an idiosyncratic thinker, molded and motivated by specific environmental or circumstantial contingencies. They came from different parts of the Carolingian realm or from outside it, and thus brought a multitude of perspectives to the Carolingian court and its ecclesiastical periphery. Their diversity of views and approaches

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<sup>37</sup> On the concept of “textual communities,” see Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983) and *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia, 1990). On the impact and adaptability of Stock’s theorization of communities of readers bound together by their shared association and intense familiarity with a given text or set of texts, see Jane Heath, “‘Textual Communities’: Brian Stock’s Concept and Recent Scholarship on Antiquity,” in Florian Wilk, ed., *Scriptural Interpretation and the Interface between Education and Religion* (Leiden, 2018), 5–35.

lent a richness and texture to the Carolingian “Renaissance(s)” —even when a given writer was arguing *against* diversity, and for the imposition of greater uniformity and standardization. As, for instance, the liturgical treatises by Walafrid Strabo and Amalarius of Metz, taken together, show us, there was always more than one way to pursue a broadly shared goal, like drawing upon knowledge of the history and tradition of the Christian liturgy to refine current practices.

Augustine looms especially large in what follows. Several of my case studies centre on the influence and reception of his texts, ideas, and representations of his life and career in the early Middle Ages. This is not because he was the monolithic, ultimate Father towering over all others. Gregory the Great and Jerome were roughly as important, and in certain contexts or situations perhaps more so.<sup>38</sup> In many Carolingian texts, Isidore and Bede are as frequently cited and quoted as the late antique Fathers. Still, it is Augustine who, through the all-purpose employment of his vast and varied oeuvre by Carolingian readers, writers, and compilers, most fully and profoundly epitomizes the *transdiscursivity* that is distinctly characteristic of the “Church Fathers” as a special category of “ancient” Christian authorities.<sup>39</sup> To be sure, the Carolingians did not invent this category of the Fathers, nor did they conclusively “fix” the canon of patristic literature. But they elaborated, drew from, combined, and merged together “the Fathers,” their works, ideas, and examples in myriad new ways. References to the Fathers as individual figures and/or as a unified group are ubiquitous across Carolingian-era texts of nearly every type. Under the Carolingians, the *beati patres* took on a more solid, ostensibly concordant, and overwhelmingly authoritative form—at times, even rivaling the divinely inspired authority

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<sup>38</sup> See, for instance, Koziol, “Leadership,” 189, arguing that Gregory was in fact “the most important patristic author for the formation of early medieval Christianity.”

<sup>39</sup> On the notion of the “transdiscursive” “author,” see Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?” in Josué Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, 1979), 141–160. This concept will be considered further in Chapter 5.

of scripture itself—than in any preceding period. The Fathers were held up as the ultimate evidence of the harmony, preservation, and gradual refining of the hallowed “ancient Christian tradition”; sometimes they were invoked as essentially synonymous with this tradition itself.

In the preface to Robert Markus’s magisterial study of the changing intellectual landscape of Latin Christian culture between the respective ages of Augustine and Gregory the Great, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (an author and book that have had a tremendous impact on my thinking and understanding of this period), Markus offers some remarks qualifying the aims and limitations of his work:

I have made no attempt in any of my chapters to give anything like a full treatment of its subject, and rarely surveyed the whole range of evidence on any point....Although some of the chapters will, I hope, be seen to have something new to offer, if the book as a whole has a claim to making any discoveries, it is in the sense defined by Nelson Goodman: ‘Discovery often amounts, as when I place a piece in a jigsaw puzzle, not to arrival at a proposition for declaration or defense, but to finding a new fit.’ I think the ways I have put the jigsaw puzzle together is new, and that it fits.<sup>40</sup>

In a far more modest sense, my aspiration is the same for the “mosaic”—perhaps jigsaw puzzle is the better metaphor?—I have put together here, hopefully also in a way that “fits” and which offers something like a new, resulting picture of the Carolingians and their complex relations to the “ancient Christian” past and the Church Fathers.

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<sup>40</sup> Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, xii, quoting Nelson Goodman, *Ways of Worldmaking* (Hassocks, 1978), 21.

## **PART I END TIMES?**

How could large-scale, time-consuming reforms of earthly Christian society be effected if—as numerous passages in Christianity’s sacred texts seemed to insist—the End of that world, and of time itself, was just around the corner? Why would Christian emperors, kings, bishops, and others who wielded earthly power expend enormous effort and energy in attempting to forge an improved temporal society for the future if all that truly mattered was the heavenly community of the future, after the imminent End? Such questions are at the core of the two chapters in Part I.

Christians from late antiquity to the early Middle Ages (and indeed, long after that) were constrained by the texts of scripture, which were divinely inspired and thus never wrong. But there were always many different, and sometimes starkly divergent, ways of interpreting the words of scripture. Different readers and “textual communities” between the time of the early Church, the age of the martyrs, and the conversion of Constantine asserted different understandings of the Pauline Epistles, the Apocalypse, and other texts containing messianic or apocalyptic statements or predictions. Readers and communities of readers did not interpret these texts in a vacuum, of course, but in particular cultural and social contexts. At the same time, though, a sense of ambiguity and polysemy was inherent to many scriptural texts, not least the letters attributed to Paul. The sometimes cryptic, elusive quality of Paul’s words was in itself part of the mysterious divine encoding of God’s word. These were some of the sharp and decisive points made by Tyconius, a fourth-century Donatist theologian in Roman Africa. Given the variety of readings possible for many scriptural passages, Tyconius argued, it was not possible to determine, with any kind of certainty, the remaining time of the world or the date of its End.

In the wake of Rome's sacking in 410 and an apparent intensification of apocalyptic expectations and fears among Roman Christians, Augustine drew from and adapted Tyconius's arguments and exegetical principles (or "rules") to forcefully assert that God's ultimate providential plan for humankind can not be inferred from the course of earthly events. Attempts to "read" temporal circumstances through the lens of scriptural pronouncements and prophecies are thus dubious, because, as Tyconius had contended, the words of scripture were often accommodating of multiple, variant readings. Augustine did not deny the reality of the eventual End, and he remained convinced that he was living in the world's Sixth and final "Age," which had begun with Christ's Incarnation. But, in his later writings (around and after 410), he emphasized the opacity of the divine plan to human minds and a consequent sense of uncertainty about when that Age would terminate. On this basis, Augustine, following Tyconius, advocated a "spiritual" reading of many apocalyptic or eschatological passages in scripture – and not only in the Apocalypse itself, but also, very prominently, in the Pauline letters, texts at the very centre of Augustine's mature theology.

On the basis of Augustine's orthodox, "patristic" authority, his advocating of "spiritual" exegesis – and his essentially amillennial eschatology – proved immensely influential in the early medieval Latin West. In most eighth- and ninth-century commentaries on Paul's letters (and on the Apocalypse), the Augustinian position is evident, often explicitly so, in readings of passages like Eph. 5:15–16 and 2 Tim. 3:1. In the Carolingian context – with dutiful reverence for the wise words of the Fathers a ubiquitous point of emphasis – "spiritual," non-literal interpretations of Paul's most (seemingly) imminently messianic statements served to justify the on-going, future-oriented project of *reformatio*, because the world *could* persist for many years to come. Yet, outside exegesis, Carolingian writers also deployed Paul's words about "evil days"

and “dangerous times” to argue for the extreme urgency of reforms in a sinful, perilous world teetering on the brink of catastrophe and damnation. Perhaps intensified reforming efforts could even stave off and delay the world’s End, appeasing a God who was evidently incensed by the sinful habits of men at this very late point in the lifetime of the world. As I suggest in chapter 2, such apocalyptic rhetoric in service of reform imperatives and spiritualizing exegesis of imminent apocalypticism in scripture were two sides of the same coin, both intrinsic to the ambitious, hopeful, socially and soteriologically urgent project of Carolingian *reformatio*.

## Chapter 1

### On ‘Dangerous Times’ and ‘Evil Days’: Pauline Eschatology from Tyconius and Augustine to the Early Middle Ages

#### Introduction: How soon is “now”?

In the Second Epistle to Timothy 3:1, the author, purportedly the apostle Paul,<sup>1</sup> warns that “in the last days shall come dangerous times” (*in novissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa*).<sup>2</sup> These last days, it seems, are fast approaching, as the author warns his reader(s) about how they ought to ready themselves for the End. Yet, it remained, in Paul’s present, the penultimate time, just before the promised messianic event. Similarly, at Ephesians 5:15–16, Paul’s “brethren” are advised to “walk circumspectly; not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (*videte itaque fratres quomodo caute ambuletis / non quasi insipientes sed ut sapientes redimentes tempus quoniam dies mali sunt*). As modern historians and philosophers have recognized, Paul was writing about an essentially wicked temporal world, one that he was convinced was soon to perish according to the culmination of God’s plan as realized through Christ. He was not concerned with trying to improve the conditions of this impermanent world, but with preparing fellow Jesus followers—and increasing their numbers

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<sup>1</sup> On the disputed authorship of some of the letters traditionally attributed to Paul, see pages 43–45 below.

<sup>2</sup> Although Paul’s letters were composed in Greek, I have provided the Latin translations of these verses because my study is concerned with the reception of these texts among late antique and early medieval Western Christians, who read Paul mainly or exclusively in Latin. The Latin text for biblical passages presented on their own is from *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem, Editio quinta* (Stuttgart, 2007), although I have retained variations in scriptural quotations where they occur in the texts of late antique or early medieval writers; English translations are from the Douay-Rheims Vulgate. On variations in the Pauline epistles between the *Vetus Latina* and Vulgate, see H.A.G. Houghton, *The Latin New Testament: A Guide to Its Early History, Texts, and Manuscripts* (Oxford, 2016), 169–181; Eric W. Sherbenske, *Canonizing Paul: Ancient Editorial Practice and the Corpus Paulinum* (Oxford, 2013), 181ff. Catherine Brown Tkacz, “‘Labor Tam Utilis’: The Creation of the Vulgate,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 50 (1996), 52–53, notes that while it was long maintained within Christian tradition that Jerome had produced the entire Vulgate New Testament, the current consensus among scholars is that he was directly responsible only for the Vulgate versions of the Gospels, and that the other New Testament books are “less fully revised” (i.e., correcting *Vetus Latina* texts by comparison with the Greek). The Pauline epistles, she notes, were “probably the work of a single reviser,” whose identity continues to be debated but is not conclusively known.



and geographic extent—for the return of the Lord and the next world promised by Him.<sup>3</sup> In what was probably his final letter, the Epistle to the Romans, Paul proclaimed, “*Now (iam)* is the hour for us to rise from sleep; for *now (nunc)* our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand” (my emphasis).<sup>4</sup> As the apostolic age of Paul’s missionary activity, with its small, discrete communities of Jewish and Gentile followers, gave way to the age of the Church, marked by a developing canon of sacred texts (including, of course, the letters attributed to Paul) and an incipient institutional structure, Christians inevitably had to grapple with what, or when, Paul meant by “now.” Recognizing that earthly time had not in fact reached its end in Paul’s era, but insistent on demonstrating that Paul’s divinely inspired, canonical words were nonetheless (in some other, less literal sense) *true*, later Christians—chief among them, the Donatist theologian Tyconius and Augustine, the “catholic” Bishop of Hippo—developed new approaches to reading scripture, advocating and demonstrating “spiritual,” moral, or allegorical interpretations of its most eschatologically charged, imminently apocalyptic passages. The exegetical strategies and ideas of these late antique writers were profoundly influential for the understanding of both sacred scripture and of time and temporality among subsequent generations of Christian intellectuals.

Centuries after Paul’s *periculosa tempora*, late antique Christian readers inhabited a Roman world that was very different from Paul’s, and they interpreted and employed the Apostle’s words in novel, path-breaking ways. In a well-known sermon delivered in Carthage

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<sup>3</sup> See especially Paula Fredriksen, *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle* (New Haven, 2017); Beverly Roberts Gaventa, ed., *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* (Waco, Texas, 2013); Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul*, trans. Dana Hollander (Stanford, 2004), edited, translated, and published posthumously from a series of lectures delivered at Heidelberg in 1987, shortly before Taubes’ death; Richard A. Horsley, “Rhetoric and Empire—And 1 Corinthians,” in Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation* (Harrisburg, Penn., 2000), 72–102.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 13:11–12: “Et hoc scientes tempus quia hora est iam nos de somno surgere nunc enim propior est nostra salus quam cum credidimus / nox praecessit dies autem adpropiauit abiciamus ergo opera tenebrarum et induamur arma lucis.”

around 410, perhaps just after learning about the sacking of Rome, Augustine strongly rejected the possibility of confidently discerning the providential meaning of current, earthly events: “Bad times, difficult times; this is what men are saying. But let us live well, and the times will be good. We are the times: such as we are, such are the times.”<sup>5</sup> Behind Augustine’s bold conviction regarding the *mala* and *laboriosa tempora* of the present, one can detect echoes of both 2 Tim. 3:1 and Eph. 5:15–16. A more proximate source of inspiration may have come from the exegetical examples of Tyconius, the Donatist theologian referenced in Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana*. In his commentary on the Apocalypse, for example, Tyconius follows a quotation of Eph. 5:16 with his own contention that “days are not able to be evil, but people who are in days are evil.”<sup>6</sup> For both Tyconius and Augustine, the age, or smaller temporal units thereof, were only as bad or as good as the actions of people living within, or during, them; they revealed little or nothing in themselves about the final fate of the world.

Roughly four centuries after Tyconius’s death, Alcuin of York, in the preface to his Life of St. Vedastus, wrote, “These are dangerous times, as the Apostles predicted, because many false teachers are springing up, introducing novel doctrines, conspicuous in staining the purity of the Catholic faith with wicked assertions. Therefore it is necessary for the Church to have many guardians who, not only by holiness of life but also by the doctrine of truth, may be able to defend bravely the fortress of God.”<sup>7</sup> Alcuin here invokes 2 Tim. 3:1 regarding *tempora*

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<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *serm.* 80: 8, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jacques-Paul Migne (Paris, 1844–55) (hereafter *PL*) 38, col. 498: “Mala tempora, laboriosa tempora, hoc dicunt homines. Bene vivamus, et bona sunt tempora. Nos sumus tempora: quales sumus, talia sunt tempora.” On the dating of this sermon, see Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine’s “City of God” and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden, 1990), 60.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Johannes Van Oort, “Tyconius’s Apocalypse Commentary, Its Reconstruction, and Its Significance for Augustine’s Doctrine of the Two Cities,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 72 (2018), 513–532. See n. 60 below for this quotation in fuller context.

<sup>7</sup> Alcuin of York, *Vita Vedastis episcopi Atrebatensis duplex (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* [hereafter *BHL*] 8506–08), ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH, SSrM* 3 (Hannover, 1896), 415: “Sunt tempora periculosa, ut apostoli praedixerunt, quia multi pseudodoctores surgent, novas introducentes sectas, qui catholicae fidei puritatem impiis

*periculosa*, but his response to the problem of “dangerous times” is markedly different from the Pauline epistle’s author; and, if Alcuin’s remarks are informed by Augustine’s understanding of the times, they subtly diverge from that Father’s thought as well. In the words of these authors of different eras, we can detect different responses to worldly problems: The author of the Pauline epistles is warning his community to ready their souls for the likely imminent messianic event. Augustine, in his sermon, strongly denies the providential significance of temporal events, or at least their intelligibility among humans, boldly suggesting that the members of his congregation—Christians in a very different sense from the early communities attracted by the preaching of Paul—“*are the times*,” for better or for worse. Essentially the same contention was expressed in Tyconius’s reading of Eph. 5:16.<sup>8</sup> Alcuin, meanwhile, invokes the *periculosa tempora* to insist upon the importance of reliable authorities to guide the (earthly) Christian kingdom toward correction and reform. Where both the Pauline epistles and Augustine’s writings express serious doubts—albeit in different ways and for different reasons—regarding the ultimate legitimacy or significance of terrestrial governments, for Alcuin “dangerous times” signaled the need for a strong Christian *imperium* led by a powerful sovereign. In his time, the Carolingian era, the discursive construction of *periculosa tempora*, or *dies mali*, came to serve as a catalyst for reform, correction, and guidance in the service of improving the times, the behaviour and thought of people living during them, and the temporal world itself, so long as it endured.

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adsertionibus maculare nituntur. Ideo necesse est, ecclesiam plurimos habere defensores, qui non solum vitae sanctitate, sed etiam doctrina veritatis castra Dei viriliter defendere valeant”; trans. Mark Lasnier: <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/courses/cstraw/PrimaryDocuments/thelifeofsaintvedastus.html> [accessed 13 December 2018].

<sup>8</sup> As Taubes, *Political Theology of Paul*, 21, notes, “The word ‘Christian’... doesn’t yet exist for Paul. This modernization, these anachronisms are the ruin of any venture into sensible textual study.”

The early medieval elaboration of tradition, orthodoxy, and a canon of trusted post-scriptural authorities—Augustine often, but not always, foremost among them—is absolutely key in explaining the fundamental differences among the various responses to “dangerous” or “evil” times noted above, even as some Carolingian writers diverged from the late antique authorities to whom they claimed to adhere. Augustine, for instance, argued against investing any true significance in the course of earthly events after the Resurrection. Yet, as I will show in this chapter and the following one, in the eighth and ninth centuries Augustine’s “radical agnosticism” concerning the ultimate unknowability of the temporal trajectory of God’s plan for mankind—deriving in part from his critical engagement with Tyconius—was used to bolster a new kind of confidence in earthly *imperium Christianum*, the soteriological importance of effective Christian rulership, and a strong, orthodox Church for implementing right order among the souls under its care.<sup>9</sup> Tyconius and Augustine’s exegetical innovations did not constitute a denial that the apocalypse would eventually arrive, more or less in the manner described in the book of John of Patmos, but rather a denial that men could ever truly know precisely when it would arrive, given the great variety of possible interpretations of scripture (especially of the many cryptic references to times, temporal units, and numbers), a point emphatically stressed in Tyconius’s work. Building from Tyconius, Augustine’s understanding of the time(s) of the world guided later generations of Christian intellectuals in formulating a distinctive, *Ecclesia*-centred Christian politics, which reached full fruition under Charlemagne and his successors.<sup>10</sup> Led by a

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Paula Fredriksen, “Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity: From John of Patmos to Augustine of Hippo,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (1991), 159: “A radical agnosticism controls [Tyconius’s] estimate of both current events and traditional prophecies: neither persecution nor peace indicates God’s ultimate time-table; and no exterior fact (like persecution), conforming to a church’s view of itself as holy (hence persecuted), can actually confirm that view.” Robert Markus, “‘Tempora Christiana’ Revisited,” in Robert Dodaro and George Lawless, eds., *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honor of Gerald Bonner* (London/New York, 2000), 199–211, writes (at p. 205) of “Augustine’s radical agnosticism about God’s purposes in human history.”

<sup>10</sup> On these points, see esp. Mayke de Jong, “*Ecclesia* and the Early Medieval Polity,” in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), 113–132

powerful Christian sovereign and court-connected ecclesiastical elite, responsible for both the social welfare and the soteriological fate of the peoples under their care, the Carolingian reformers sought to “correct” and order their world after their idealized conception of the “ancient Christian”—Roman and biblical—past.

### **“Messianic time” and the politics of eschatology**

While recent historical scholarship on Paul, such as Paula Fredriksen’s *Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle*, consistently emphasizes Paul’s expectation of an imminent apocalypse, the philosopher Giorgio Agamben holds that Paul was referring not to the *ultimate* times of the apocalypse, but to the *penultimate* times.<sup>11</sup> In *The Time That Remains*, Agamben stresses the difference between messianic time and apocalyptic time, as he insists that it was the former that truly concerned Paul. He argues that Paul’s messianic proclamation imparted the sense of “contracting” time, thereby heightening its lived experience, rendering it more urgent and immediate; this age was for Paul (per Agamben) not “the end of time” but “the time of the end.”<sup>12</sup> Broadly speaking, this understanding of the time of the present may also extend to Augustine’s sense of time; Augustine positioned his own period somewhere in the Sixth and final Age of the world, that is, between the Incarnation and the End. Yet, something important had changed between Paul and Augustine. As Fredriksen shows, Paul fully expected to experience the messianic event within his own lifetime. Augustine, by contrast, maintained no

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<sup>11</sup> For example, Fredriksen, *Paul*, 132: “From first (that is, from his earliest letter, 1 Thessalonians) to last (his letter to the Romans), Paul remained convinced that Christ was about to return, to redeem history, to raise the dead, and to establish the Kingdom of his father...Paul himself expects to live to see Christ’s triumphant return and the coming of the Kingdom.”

<sup>12</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford, 2005), esp. 59–78. On Agamben’s interpretation of Paul’s thought, see David Ferris, “Agamben and the Messianic: The Slightest of Differences,” in Anna Glazova and Paul North, eds., *Messianic Thought Outside Theology* (New York, 2014), 73–92.

such confidence. If Paul's special sense of "messianic time," is, as Agamben puts it, "the time of the now," this experience of time—whether we prefer to call it "messianic," "apocalyptic," or some other cognate term—loses much of its urgency and immediacy in Augustine's rendering of it as the world's Sixth Age. The quality of earthly time that is emphasized in Augustine's later writings, especially after *ca.* 410, is less its penultimate place in history (though it still occupies that place) and much more its indeterminate duration—thus allowing for the indefinite delaying of the *Parousia* that Agamben identifies in the subsequent development of the institutional Church. It is this fateful draining-out of this tension from the orthodox doctrine of later Christianity with which Agamben takes issue in his polemical text *The Church and the Kingdom*.<sup>13</sup> Yet, in that short essay, building from his earlier *The Time That Remains*, Agamben is only able to give a cursory summary of the long and complex trajectory by which the "messianic" temporality of Paul became relatively muted, or interpreted in ways that allowed for the Church to develop and flourish as a singular, temporal ecclesio-political entity. Toward a clearer understanding of this fateful development in the history of "ancient Christianity" and its complex refashioning in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, this chapter and chapter 2 will together provide a closer look at several key moments within that longer trajectory of apocalyptic de-emphasis. However, chapter 2 will also show that, even as exegetical interpretations of Paul opted to sidestep literal readings of his most eschatologically radical statements, appropriations of Paul's messianic anxiety remained viable discursive options when ecclesio-political circumstances necessitated such urgent expressions.

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<sup>13</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Church and the Kingdom*, trans. Alice Attie (London, 2018). This text is adapted from a lecture that Agamben delivered at the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris in 2009.

For his studies of Paul's thought, Agamben draws prominently from the ideas of Jacob Taubes, particularly his posthumously published lectures, *The Political Theology of Paul*.<sup>14</sup> In that work, Taubes uses the term "political theology" in a wholly different sense than did Carl Schmitt (a sometime sparring partner of Taubes).<sup>15</sup> Taubes interprets Romans 11, for example, as "political" in the sense that it poses a polemical challenge to temporal power and law that is interwoven with, or indeed inextricable from, the theological arguments of Paul's letter.<sup>16</sup> This challenge to the legitimacy of earthly power and law is also, for Taubes and Agamben, at the core of Paul's radical messianic eschatology: the fact of the imminent *Parousia* totally nullifies the significance of all earthly authorities. This is not at all the same as Schmitt's understanding of a Christian theology that in its very structure and organization provided a direct, translatable blueprint for a politics of the secular sovereign state.<sup>17</sup>

Where Taubes' final work, *The Political Theology of Paul*, is primarily concerned with the Pauline texts themselves, his earlier study *Occidental Eschatology* moves beyond Paul's age to track the evolution of Western thought about the End across later centuries. Here, Taubes outlines something closer in spirit to Schmitt (and closer still to Henri-Xavier Arquillière's "political Augustinism," though without ever citing Arquillière): the process whereby the Christian sovereign state was made possible, and by which it came to be understood as a sacral entity.<sup>18</sup> It is a perverse development that, according to Taubes, took root in the corruption of

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<sup>14</sup> For his discussion of Taubes' work, see Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 2–3.

<sup>15</sup> Taubes, *Political Theology of Paul*, 97–105, discusses his relationship to Schmitt, their correspondence, and Schmitt's conception of "political theology."

<sup>16</sup> Taubes, *Political Theology of Paul*, esp. 16–28.

<sup>17</sup> For a cogent discussion of Schmitt's thought and its implications for the study of history, see György Geréby, "Carl Schmitt and Erik Peterson on the Problem of Political Theology: A Footnote to Kantorowicz," in Aziz Al-Azmeh and János M. Bak, eds., *Monotheistic Kingship: The Medieval Variants* (Budapest, 2004), 31–61.

<sup>18</sup> On this important work, which originated as Taubes' doctoral dissertation, see Willem Styfhals, "Evil in History: Karl Löwith and Jacob Taubes on Modern Eschatology," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 76 (2015), 191–213.

scriptural ideas during the era of the Christian Roman Empire, and was then given its adamantine form in Augustine's *De civitate Dei*:

Once Christianity has been raised to the status of the religion of the empire, any hope for God's Kingdom is snuffed out. Ever since Constantine, even the Roman empire has been referred to as "holy." This state of affairs, in evidence since the days of Constantine, becomes an ideal in Augustine's City of God, is effectually established by the policy of Charlemagne, and ends in the Christian Europe of the Western Holy Roman Empire. [...] The only reason why the Roman Catholic Church is able to grow into the organism of the Roman Empire is because the pagan Roman Empire of the third century is itself a church. [...] Augustine's *civitas Dei* is the foundation of the medieval state. There is no separate state and church, but in the *corpus christianum* the state is always embedded in the Church.<sup>19</sup>

Taubes joins together the institutionalization of the imperial Roman Church and Augustine's doctrine of the "Two Cities" as one larger historical development facilitating medieval ecclesio-political power. His argument both oversimplifies the relationship of *Ecclesia* to the "state" and world in Augustine's work and suggests, essentially, a straight line between this supposedly "Augustinian" paradigm and the absorption of the sacralized "medieval state" into the Church. This is, in certain respects, a less nuanced reiteration of Arquillière's long influential thesis, which claimed that early medieval misunderstandings of Augustine's ideas concerning the earthly and heavenly cities resulted in the conflation of "state" and "Church," with the latter eventually occupying the dominant position within their increasingly merged relationship.<sup>20</sup> Yet,

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<sup>19</sup> Jacob Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, trans. David Ratmoko (Stanford, 2009; first published in German in 1947, republished in 1991), 77–81.

<sup>20</sup> See Henri-Xavier Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme politique: Essai sur la formation des théories politique du Moyen-Age* (Paris, 1934/1955). On the impact and reception of Arquillière's influential thesis, see Michael Bruno, *Political Augustinianism: Modern Interpretations of Augustine's Political Thought* (Brooklyn, 2014), esp. 35–42. In recent decades, Arquillière's conception of an "Augustinian" early medieval politics has been reassessed in John J. Contreni, "Carolingian Era, Early," in Allan Fitzgerald, ed., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, 1999), 124–129; Conrad Leyser, "Augustine in the Latin West, 430–ca. 900," in Mark Vessey, ed., *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, 2012), 450–464; Michael E. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, DC, 2011), esp. 253–264; Paul Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings: Peace, Power, and the Early Medieval Political Imagination* (Oxford, 2011), 239–240; Sophia Mösch, *Augustine and the Art of Ruling in the Carolingian Imperial Period: Political Discourse in Alcuin of York and Hincmar of Rheims* (Abingdon/New York, 2019); and Courtney M. Booker, "Sacred Kingdom, Penitential State: A Short History of *L'Augustinisme politique*" (article forthcoming).



Arquillière recognized that Augustine had not actually intended—and could not have possibly foreseen—such a use of his densely theological work, as a kind of blueprint or guide for ordering Christian politics. Taubes traces this purported “ideal” back to Augustine himself, and suggests that Augustine’s prominent influence and the force of his ideas (not necessarily misunderstandings thereof) directly contributed to the lack of separation between “state and church” in the Middle Ages.

While I agree that Augustine’s work indeed played an important role in shaping early medieval ideas about Christian governance and society, my main focus here is not on the familiar, well-trod territory of the “Two Cities” and the degree to which Augustine’s famous doctrine, rightly or wrongly conceived, was used directly to justify the machinations of the medieval state. For Augustine, the *civitas terrena* and *civitas Dei* were necessarily opaque, suprahistorical entities, and the true composition of both “cities” would remain mysterious to all save God until time’s End. In the meantime, “citizens” ultimately belonging to each of these two cities dwelled both inside and outside the bounds of the earthly institution of the orthodox Church; the state (i.e., the Roman empire) as such was of little consequence or significance within this complex equation. Augustine’s insistence on the mostly inscrutable operation of God’s providential will in human history and political affairs derives, to a considerable extent, from his critical engagement with Tyconius and with scripture—Paul and the Apocalypse, arguably above all—read in light of Tyconius’s challenging ideas. Thus, what I wish to show here is that Augustine’s Tyconius-influenced eschatological perspective, including his denial of the intelligible providential significance of earthly events, was an essential precondition for a particular kind of early medieval Christian politics (broadly conceived), most vividly manifested in the Carolingians’ ambitious commitment to reform and correction. The approach to scriptural,

particularly Pauline, eschatology developed by Tyconius and Augustine allowed for early medieval readers to think of the temporal world as something that could endure for some time into the future and which, rather than inherently wicked, could be made good through the ameliorating influence of the Church and its traditional authorities on the affairs of men.

In other respects, however, my thesis across these first two chapters builds from Taubes' provocative work, together with Agamben's. In *Occidental Eschatology*, Taubes argued that "[t]he secret history of Christianity issues from the nonoccurring event of the *Parousia* and consists of attempts to understand this nonoccurrence in terms of a Christian design."<sup>21</sup> Agamben goes slightly further on this point in his suggestion that the nonoccurrence of the messianic event led to a concerted effort to persistently, continuously defer the time of the End, thus allowing for the rise of a corporate Church existing as a permanent, governmental entity in this world.<sup>22</sup> While Tyconius and Augustine were not the first Christian intellectuals to look back at the Christian past and realize that the End had not in fact come in Paul's age, and that it still had not arrived in their own times, the innovative responses to such plain facts in the writings of these two late antique theologians helped to decisively shape patterns and strategies of exegesis for centuries thereafter. What Tyconius and Augustine—and to some extent their approximate contemporary, Jerome—offered were other options for understanding eschatological references in scripture beyond the literal-apocalyptic. The great authority ascribed to the Church Fathers, and Augustine especially, in the early Middle Ages facilitated a Tyconian-Augustinian "spiritual" method of interpretation to be increasingly understood as the higher sense of

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<sup>21</sup> Taubes, *Occidental Eschatology*, 65–66.

<sup>22</sup> Agamben, *The Church and the Kingdom*, 40–41.

scriptural meaning.<sup>23</sup> This point will be made clearer by way of illustration in chapter 2, where I shall closely examine patristic-based Carolingian commentaries on Paul.

### **Paul and the Pauline epistles**

Historical studies of Paul, seeking to recover the first-century Apostle from under layers of patristic and medieval Christian theology, emphasize the deep sense of eschatological and messianic tension that pervades the Pauline epistolary corpus, as well as the particular contemporary conjunctures that shaped and informed Paul's thought. In order to better understand the many ambiguities in Paul's letters, some of the most important twentieth- and twenty-first-century historical scholarship on Paul has attempted to situate his texts and ideas within the contexts of Hellenism, the Roman Empire, and a mid-first-century Judaism rife with competing factions, including multiple, divergent cults of Jesus followers. What this diverse scholarship has consistently argued against is the traditional view of Paul as already (after Damascus) fundamentally Christian, or proto-Christian. This latter view, as Krister Stendahl prominently argued, derives from Augustine, whose conception of Paul as the "introspective" apostle to the Gentiles exercised enormous influence throughout the Middle Ages and continued to shape the modern, Western image of Paul for both Catholic and Protestant Christians.<sup>24</sup> According to this view, Augustine's rendering of Paul has successfully obscured not only the historical apostle, but also his complicated yet persistent commitment to Judaism and the Mosaic Law, and the intensely apocalyptic character of Paul's messianic message to his followers, both

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<sup>23</sup> On the early, Eastern development of "spiritual" interpretation of scripture, see Bradley Nassif, "Spiritual Exegesis in the School of Antioch," in Bradley Nassif, ed., *New Perspectives on Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1996), 343–377.

<sup>24</sup> Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," in *idem*, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles* (Philadelphia, 1976), 78–96. On Stendahl's tremendous impact on the field, see Horsley, "Introduction: Krister Stendahl's Challenge to Pauline Studies," in *Paul and Politics*, 1–16.

Jews and Gentiles. Although Augustine’s interventions may have ultimately proven the most decisive in recolouring Paul for Christian posterity, this process of “catholicizing” Paul’s ideas may have begun soon after, or even during, his lifetime. Already in the New Testament letters that are today often regarded as “deutero-Pauline” or otherwise apocryphal but are traditionally ascribed to Paul, scholars have detected efforts at making Paul’s message more compatible with a coherent, Christian Church—early, subtle steps in transforming Paul’s *ekklēsia* (small, discrete communities of Jesus followers readying themselves for the imminent *Parousia*) into the *Ecclesia* that was understood by Augustine as both the perfect, celestial kingdom of God and the imperfect, “mixed” earthly institution rooted in Rome, and by Augustine’s medieval readers as a sacred corporate entity charged by God with governing, or co-governing, the souls of Christendom.

Modern scholars continue to debate the differences in theology and writing style that they perceive between the letters almost universally regarded as authentically Pauline and those considered suspect, either entirely composed by later disciples of Paul or containing interpolations embedded within originally Pauline texts. The so-called “Pastoral Epistles,” i.e., 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus, are today frequently classified as apocryphal; Ephesians is also sometimes regarded as suspect, although there is less consensus on its authorial status.<sup>25</sup> Readers in the Roman world and early medieval West, however, harboured no such suspicions, except

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<sup>25</sup> The literature on the authorship of the Pauline epistles is vast and constantly growing, but see, for instance, Jermo van Ness, *Pauline Language and the Pastoral Letters: A Study of Linguistic Variation in the Corpus Paulinum* (Leiden, 2018), arguing from lexical and syntactical evidence that there may be no good reason to doubt the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles. In contrast, David G. Meade, *Pseudonymity and Canon: An Investigation into the Relationship of Authorship and Authority in Jewish and Earliest Christian Tradition* (Heidelberg, 1986), 118ff., held that the lack of early textual witnesses for the Pastorals lends strong support to the skeptical modern view of their authorial status. Doubts regarding the authorship of Ephesians (going back to Erasmus of Rotterdam) tend to centre around the letter’s theology (particularly its use of the term *ekklēsia*, which some critics regard as too finely developed and universalistic for Paul’s time) and its similarities to Colossians, which is also sometimes regarded as pseudonymous. A concise summary of these debates concerning the status of Ephesians can be found here: <http://www.bible-apologetics.com/history/ephesians.htm> [accessed 13 December 2018].

toward Hebrews, which was regarded by some Christian readers as non-Pauline, though still canonical.<sup>26</sup> It is easy to understand why these readers accepted the Pauline authorship of the other 13 letters, particularly if their familiarity with Paul came mainly or entirely from Latin translations of the Greek texts. While it may be true that letters like Ephesians and the Pastorals provide a more cohesive, readily understandable theology than do other Pauline letters, this could be understood as a natural progression in Paul's thought across the period of his missionary activity, or simply due to the different intended audiences of his various epistles—points of rebuttal still maintained by many Christian biblical scholars arguing for Paul's authorship of all the letters traditionally ascribed to him.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, the urgent, “messianic” apocalypticism of the verses highlighted above, 2 Tim. 3:1 and Eph. 5:15–16, can certainly be read as broadly consistent with eschatological passages present across the Pauline corpus, including both letters regarded as authentic and those

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<sup>26</sup> On the status of Hebrews in Late Antiquity, see Anne-Marie la Bonnardière, “L'Épître aux Hébreux dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustin,” *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 3 (1957), 137–162; and Anne-Marie la Bonnardière, “The Canon of Sacred Scripture,” in Pamela Bright, ed. and trans., *Augustine and the Bible* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1999; first published in French, 1986), 39, where she notes that “around 409–411, while recognizing the canonicity of Hebrews, Augustine no longer attributes it to Paul [but] provides no hypothesis concerning its authorship.” Augustine was by no means novel, or alone, in his questioning of Hebrews' authorship. Earlier, Eusebius had acknowledged that some Christians disputed the attribution of this letter to Paul, although Eusebius himself maintained that it was authentic. Others, such as Tertullian, attributed Hebrews to Paul's companion Barnabas, while Origen considered Luke and Clement I as possible authors. Along with apparent stylistic differences in the Greek text, modern critics cite the letter's sacerdotal representation of Jesus, its discussion of faith, and the exceptionally high number of Old Testament references as evidence against Pauline attribution. See, e.g., Brian Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews* (Leiden, 2014); and Richard A. Thiele, “A Reexamination of the Authorship of the *Epistles to the Hebrews*” (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 2008), which provides a detailed survey of the doubts and hypotheses concerning the authorship of Hebrews from antiquity up to the modern era, though Thiele ultimately concludes, against the modern consensus, that Paul was the author of Hebrews, perhaps having dictated it to an amanuensis. Small, *Characterization of Jesus*, 29–30, observing that “[n]o less than twenty-three different persons have been posited as the author of Hebrews—a virtual Who's Who of NT figures!,” concludes more cautiously that “[t]he best that can be said is that the author is likely a Hellenistic-Jewish Christian. The masculine participle (δηγούμενον) in 11:32 likely rules out a female author. The mention of Timothy in 13:23 suggests someone who was an acquaintance of Paul's. Hebrews shows some affinities in language and thought to the Pauline letters, but it is also sufficiently different that the author may have been influenced by Paul, but he certainly is an independent thinker in his own right.”

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., Jeffrey A.D. Weima and S.M. Baugh, *1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2002), 43–44, who argue that in writing to knowledgeable associates like Timothy and Titus, Paul did not need to explain basic aspects of his theology, as he needed to do for the incipient Christian communities at Corinth, Galatia, Thessaloniki, etc., and therefore “we can safely accept the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals.”

considered suspect or apocryphal—although in places Paul (or “Paul”) suggests that there is some small amount of time remaining before the *Parousia*, in other places that the messianic event is immediately at hand. Some notable examples include: Romans 13:11–12;<sup>28</sup> 1 Cor. 7:29–31;<sup>29</sup> 1 Cor. 10:11;<sup>30</sup> 1 Cor. 15:30–32;<sup>31</sup> 1 Cor. 15:51–52;<sup>32</sup> 2 Cor. 6:2;<sup>33</sup> Gal. 4:9–11;<sup>34</sup> Gal. 6:9–

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<sup>28</sup> “Et hoc scientes tempus quia hora est iam nos de somno surgere nunc enim propior est nostra salus quam cum credidimus / nox praecessit dies autem adpropiauit abiciamus ergo opera tenebrarum et induamur arma lucis”; “And that knowing the season; that it is now the hour for us to rise from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. / The night is passed and the day is at hand. Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light.”

<sup>29</sup> “hoc itaque dico fratres tempus breve est reliquum est ut qui habent uxores tamquam non habentes sint / et qui flent tamquam non flentes et qui gaudent tamquam non gaudentes et qui emunt tamquam non possidentes / et qui utuntur hoc mundo tamquam non utantur praeterit enim figura huius mundi”; “This, therefore, I say, brethren: The time is short. It remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none; / And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; / And they that use this world, as if they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away.”

<sup>30</sup> “haec autem omnia in figura contingebant illis scripta sunt autem ad correptionem nostram in quos fines saeculorum devenerunt”; “Now, all these things happened to them in figure; and they are written for our correction, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

<sup>31</sup> “ut quid et nos periclitamur omni hora / cotidie morior per vestram gloriam fratres quam habeo in Christo Iesu Domino nostro / si secundum hominem ad bestias pugnavi Ephesi quid mihi prodest si mortui non resurgunt manducemus et bibamus cras enim moriemur”; “Why also are we in danger every hour? / I die daily, I protest by your glory, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. / If (according to man) I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me if the dead not rise again? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.”

<sup>32</sup> “ecce mysterium vobis dico omnes quidem resurgemus sed non omnes inmutabimur / in momento in ictu oculi in novissima tuba canet enim et mortui resurgent incorrupti et nos inmutabimur”; “Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again; but we shall not all be changed. / In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise again incorruptible; and we shall be changed.”

<sup>33</sup> “ait enim tempore accepto exaudivi te et in die salutis adiuvavi te ecce nunc tempus acceptabile ecce nunc dies salutis”; “For he saith: In an accepted time have I heard thee and in the day of salvation have I helped thee. Behold, now, is the acceptable; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

<sup>34</sup> “nunc autem cum cognoveritis Deum immo cogniti sitis a Deo quomodo convertimini iterum ad infirma et egena elementa quibus denuo servire vultis / dies observatis et menses et tempora et annos / timeo vos ne forte sine causa laboraverim in vobis”; “But now, after that you have known God, or rather are known by God; how turn you again to the weak and needy elements which you desire to serve again? / You observe days and months and times, and years. / I am afraid of you, lest perhaps I have laboured in vain among you.”

11;<sup>35</sup> Phil. 3:13–14;<sup>36</sup> Phil. 4:5;<sup>37</sup> 1 Thess. 4:14–16;<sup>38</sup> 2 Thess. 2, esp. 2:6–7;<sup>39</sup> 1 Tim. 4:1–2.<sup>40</sup> In what follows, I will consider the late antique and early medieval interpretations of some of these quotations repeatedly and at length, others only in passing. Not all of them exercised equal influence on the eschatological thinking of Christian exegetes—some were often conspicuously by-passed or ignored in commentaries on Paul’s letters, others were quoted repeatedly—but all of these scriptural passages can potentially be read as evidence of an imminent End to an evil temporal world or as spiritual, allegorical statements directing Christians to other, less literal but potentially more profound truths.

### **Christianity and the *pax Romana***

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<sup>35</sup> “bonum autem facientes non deficiamus tempore enim suo metemus non deficientes / ergo dum tempus habemus operemur bonum ad omnes maxime autem ad domesticos fidei / videte qualibus litteris scripsi vobis mea manu”; “And in doing good, let us not fail; for in due time we shall reap, not failing. / Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith. / See what a letter I have written to you with my own hand.”

<sup>36</sup> “fratres ego me non arbitror comprehendisse unum autem quae quidem retro sunt obliviscens ad ea vero quae sunt in priora extendens me / ad destinatum persequor ad bravium supernae vocationis Dei in Christo Iesu”; “Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended. But one thing *I do*: forgetting the things that are behind and stretching forth myself to those that are before; / I press towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus.”

<sup>37</sup> “modestia vestra nota sit omnibus hominibus Dominus prope”; “Let your modesty be known to all men. The Lord is nigh.”

<sup>38</sup> “si enim credimus quod Iesus mortuus est et resurrexit ita et Deus eos qui dormierunt per Iesum adducet cum eo / hoc enim vobis dicimus in verbo Domini quia nos qui vivimus qui residui sumus in adventum Domini non praeveniemus eos qui dormierunt / quoniam ipse Dominus in iussu et in voce archangeli et in tuba Dei descendet de caelo et mortui qui in Christo sunt resurgent primi; “For this we say unto you in the word of the Lord, that we who are live, who remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who have slept. / For the Lord himself shall come down from heaven with commandment and with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God; and the dead who are in Christ shall rise first. / Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air; and so shall we be always with the Lord.”

<sup>39</sup> “et nunc quid detineat scitis ut reveletur in suo tempore / nam mysterium iam operatur iniquitatis tantum ut qui tenet nunc donec de medio fiat”; “And now you know what withholdeth, that he may be revealed in his time / For the mystery of iniquity already worketh; only that he who now holdeth do hold, until he be taken out of the way.”

<sup>40</sup> “Spiritus autem manifeste dicit quia in novissimis temporibus discedent quidam a fide attendentes spiritibus erroris et doctrinis daemoniorum / in hypocrisi loquentium mendacium et cauteriatam habentium suam conscientiam”; “Now, the Spirit manifestly saith that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of evils / Speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared.”

While it is clear that Paul himself regarded the “time remaining” as “short,” expecting the messianic event within his lifetime or soon after, it is less certain when this sense of apocalyptic tension first began to ease within the early Christian communities. Historians, however, have long recognized that one of the key developments in this process was the discursive joining of the *pax Augusti* (or *pax Romana*) with the *pax Christi*.<sup>41</sup> Where Paul had denied the providential significance of the Roman empire, some later Christians accepted that Christianity and the empire had a shared destiny, as demonstrated by the fact that Christ’s Incarnation coincided with the reign of Augustus, the first emperor. Although this “imperial Christian ideology” became particularly dominant after the conversion of Constantine to Christianity, and is epitomized in the historical and panegyric works of Eusebius, it is detectable in the Latin West well before the Roman state’s official embrace of Christianity. Around 197, Tertullian expressed his fervent hope for the continuation of the world and empire: “We pray for the permanence of the world, for peace in things, for the delay of the end” (*Oramus etiam pro imperatoribus, pro ministris eorum et potestatibus, pro statu saeculi, pro rerum quiete, pro mora finis*); and elsewhere in the same work, his *Apologeticus*: “We realize that the tremendous force which is hanging over the whole world, and the very end of the world with its threat of dreadful afflictions, is arrested for a time by the continued existence of the Roman Empire” (*Qui uim maximam uniuerso orbi imminentem ipsam quae clausulam saeculi acerbitates horrendas comminantem romani imperii commeatu scimus retardari*).<sup>42</sup> Of course, the great significance that Tertullian placed on the

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<sup>41</sup> François Paschoud, “La doctrine chrétienne et l’idéologie impériale romaine,” in *L’Apocalypse de Jean: Traditions exégétiques et iconographiques* (Geneva, 1979), 31–72, remains one of the best short studies of these auspicious developments in the connection of Christianity and the Roman Empire. See also Robert A. Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World* (London, 1974), esp. 87–140; Theodor E. Mommsen “St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of *The City of God*,” in *idem, Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, ed. Eugene F. Rice, Jr. (Ithaca, NY., 1959), 265–298.

<sup>42</sup> These quotations of Tertullian are discussed in Agamben, *The Time That Remains*, 109, and Jesse A. Hoover, *The Donatist Church in an Apocalyptic Age* (Oxford, 2018), 7, respectively. On Tertullian’s conception of the world and the course of earthly time, see also Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late*



empire's survival spread and intensified after Rome itself adopted Christianity, a development that could be perceived as miraculously confirming the providential role assigned to it by earlier Christian writers like Tertullian. This confidence in a strong Christian Roman empire arguably reached its zenith during the reign of Theodosius (r. 379–395), when Christianity became not only legal but compulsory, and greater, imperially supported efforts were made to stamp out alleged heresies polluting the orthodox, “Catholic” church. This era was termed the *tempora Christiana*, an expression used negatively by contemporary pagan critics as well as positively by Christian triumphalists.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, the spirit of this age was not “non-apocalyptic” or “anti-apocalyptic.”<sup>44</sup> If its proponents were more confident than Paul that the world would continue to exist well into the future, that confidence stemmed from a shared understanding that at least the general contours of God's plan for humankind could be discerned from scripture, that the Roman empire was a force for good within that divine plan, and that the power and might of Rome would keep at bay the End-time figures and phenomena described in scripture (particularly in the Apocalypse, Daniel, and certain passages in Paul's letters, most notably 2 Thessalonians).<sup>45</sup> Paul had proclaimed that the End would come when Christ had “delivered up to the kingdom to God and the Father; when he shall have brought to nought all principality and power and virtue” (1 Cor. 15:24). For the

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*Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2012), 21–30; Brian Daley, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology* (Cambridge, 1991), 34–37; James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2014), 28.

<sup>43</sup> On *tempora Christiana*, see Robert Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970); Goulven Madec, “‘*Tempora Christiana*’: Expression du triomphalisme chrétien ou récrimination païenne?” in Cornelius Petrus Mayer and Willigis Eckermann, *Scientia Augustiniana: Studien über Augustinus, den Augustinismus und den Augustinerorden* (Würzburg, 1975), 112–136; Robert Markus, “‘*Tempora Christiana*’ Revisited.” For a critical reconsideration of whether, or to what extent, there remained prominent “pagan critics” into the Theodosian era, see Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Phillipe Buc, *Holy War, Martyrdom, and Terror: Christianity, Violence, and the West* (Philadelphia, 2015), 76–77.

<sup>45</sup> On late antique and early medieval interpretations of passages relating to the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians, see Kevin L. Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist: Paul, Biblical Commentary, and the Development of Doctrine in the Early Middle Ages* (Washington, D.C., 2005).

Apostle, the termination of all worldly powers—including, and especially, Rome—was integral to the longed-for, soon-to-come messianic event. Subsequent generations of Roman Christians, in the centuries following Paul, prayed for the world’s continuation, and thus for the Roman Empire to endure as the principal force restraining the apocalypse, even as Rome was simultaneously resented and criticized for its persecution of Christian communities. After 313, however, Christian writers like, and following, Eusebius could unambivalently celebrate the empire’s success, and praise rulers like Constantine and Theodosius for safe-guarding both the Church and the world.

However, as the *tempora Christiana* gave way to a period of turbulence and instability, including the sacking of Rome and other major cities of the empire, the viability of the “Eusebian” Christian imperial ideology and the truth of its concomitant theology of history were severely tested.<sup>46</sup> Some Christians of this period were convinced that if the Roman empire perished, so too would the world.<sup>47</sup> If some form of Christian politics were to survive this time of (not necessarily apocalypse-signaling) “catastrophes,” new ways of understanding scripture, and especially its many allusions to the End, would be necessary. In particular, temporal troubles had to be understood and experienced in non-apocalyptic terms, rather than conflated with, or literally mapped onto, cryptic biblical statements about the world’s End.<sup>48</sup> Writing well before

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<sup>46</sup> See, however, Mark Vessey, “Reinventing History: Jerome’s *Chronicle* and the Writing of the Post-Roman West,” in Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno, and Edward Watts, eds., *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Late Roman History and Culture, 284–450 CE* (Cambridge, 2010), 261–285, who shows that Jerome’s *Chronicle*, adapted from Eusebius’, already offered alternative possibilities for the continuation of Christian-Roman history beyond 378, and thus presumably beyond 410 as well. Yet, as Hoover, *Donatist Church*, 7, notes, Jerome asserted in his Commentary on Daniel that Rome was directly coterminous with the present age.

<sup>47</sup> On the apocalyptic anxieties of this period, see Palmer, *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 25–54; Jacques Chocheyras, “Fin des terres et fin des temps d’Hésychius (V<sup>e</sup> siècle) à Beatus (VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle),” in Werner Werbecke, Daniel Verhelst, and Andries Welkenhuysen, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 72–81.

<sup>48</sup> Much recent scholarship on this liminal period emphasizes “transformation” with important continuities into the early medieval centuries, rather than widespread disaster in the wake of the empire’s sudden collapse, e.g., Walter Pohl, ed., *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity* (Leiden, 1997); Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, second ed. (Malden, Mass.,

the troubles of the early fifth century, Tyconius (d. *ca.* 390) offered possible solutions to this problem; impressed with Tyconius's strategies, Augustine adapted, applied, and elaborated on them, particularly in his writings around and after 410.

### **Tyconius: Rules, "Keys," Possibilities**

Of the major late antique figures who would serve to significantly shape Western exegesis and eschatology, Tyconius is perhaps the least well known.<sup>49</sup> What we do know about him—and indeed, what his early medieval readers knew—comes from his own extant writings (which contain few biographical clues), a short note in Gennadius of Marseille's *De viris illustribus*, and most of all, from Augustine's work, most prominently Book 3 of the *De Doctrina Christiana*, but also the *Contra epistulam Parmeniani*. In this last text, Augustine, as one recent commentator has put it, "[wrote] himself into the persona of Tyconius" in a remarkable, telling instance of textual "ventriloquizing."<sup>50</sup> As many subsequent mentions of Tyconius note, he was a Donatist, and thus a "schismatic" or "heretic," but an exceptionally slippery one to pin down. After feuding with the Donatist bishop Parmenian, Tyconius was excommunicated from the Donatist Church for his characterization of its composition as essentially "bipartite"; as with the "Catholic" Church, the Donatist community contained, according to Tyconius, both the good and

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2003); Julia Smith, *Europe After Rome: A New Cultural History, 500–1000* (Oxford, 2005); Christopher Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (London, 2009). Nevertheless, some recent works have continued to argue for the world-historical significance of the "barbarian invasions" in contributing to a catastrophic Roman fall, e.g., Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome: And the End of Civilization* (Oxford, 2006); Peter Heather, *Empires and Barbarians: The Fall of Rome and the Birth of Europe* (Oxford, 2010).

<sup>49</sup> There are numerous variant spellings of Tyconius's name, both in medieval texts naming him and in modern scholarship: "Tychonius," "Ticonius," "Tichonius," etc. I am using the "Tyconius" spelling only because this appears to be the most common among recent, English-language studies. Kenneth B. Steinhauser, "Tyconius: Was He Greek?" *Studia patristica* 27 (1993), 396, suggests that Tyconius's name (a Latinization, without translation, of the Greek word for "fortune," *τύχη*) is evidence of Tyconius's Greek ancestry, and that while we know of late Roman figures named Fortunatus, Fortunius, and Fortunatianus, there is no evidence for anyone else named Tyconius (or its variant spellings).

<sup>50</sup> Jennifer Ebbeler, "Charitable Correction and Ecclesiastical Unity in Augustine's *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani*," in Richard Miles, ed., *The Donatist Schism: Controversy and Contexts* (Liverpool, 2016), 287.

the wicked, the elect and the damned, and the composition of these parts would be revealed only in the course of God's final judgment.<sup>51</sup> This contention undermined the arguments of fellow late fourth-century Donatists that their Church was the true Christian congregation in Africa, untainted by the compromise and collaboration that marked the imperial, Caecilianist faction. Yet, despite meeting with stern opposition from Parmenian and other Donatist leaders, and at least partial approval from "Catholic" rivals like Augustine, Tyconius neither wavered from this understanding of the Church nor joined with the Caecilianist ("Catholic") party.<sup>52</sup> This is because Tyconius's conception of the Church as *corpus bipartitum* lies at the very heart of his distinctive theology, where his ecclesiology and eschatology are absolutely, inextricably intertwined. Although Tyconius may have occasionally ventured cautious guesses about the future course of the world based on his interpretation of scripture, what is most striking and enduring in his thought is his insistence upon the profound mystery of God's plan for humankind and the inherently polysemous nature of scripture.

It may seem to us rather paradoxical that this provocative muddying of the waters of scriptural interpretation is the prevailing sense imparted by Tyconius's surviving works, which were explicitly intended to serve as "keys and lamps" (*claves et luminaria*) to unlock and illuminate the books of Bible. But this apparent paradox stems both from Tyconius's texts

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<sup>51</sup> Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden, 1991), 254ff. provides a solid summary.

<sup>52</sup> Modern scholars have long attempted to explain this aspect of Tyconius's life, including Traugott Hahn, *Tyconius-Studien: Ein Beitrag zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte des vierten Jahrhunderts* (Aalen, 1971; originally published, 1900) and Joseph Ratzinger, "Beobachtungen zum Kirchenbegriff des Tyconius im 'Liber regularum,'" *Revue des études augustiniennes* 2 (1956), 173–185. These debates are concisely summarized in Steinhauser, "Tyconius." Steinhauser persuasively argues that Tyconius was of Greek ancestry and likely possessed some facility with the Greek language, though his suggestion that this heritage in itself explains Tyconius's reluctance to submit to either Donatist or Catholic orthodoxy is somewhat less convincing. Now, largely through his interpretation of the reconstructed Apocalypse commentary, Hoover, *The Donatist Church*, 161–181, argues that Tyconius's thought can be best understood as essentially Donatist, representing one possible position along a spectrum of Donatist theology in the later fourth century.

themselves, in which ostensible clarifications open the way to greater expanses of opacity, and to their dissemination and transmission. Tyconius composed at least four works, though two of these, *De bello intestino* (ca. 370) and *Expositiones diversarum causarum* (ca. 375), are lost. Fortunately, Tyconius's *Liber regularum* survives intact.<sup>53</sup> This work, completed in the early 380s, has been traditionally understood—due to the influence of Augustine—as a book of rules for the interpretation of scripture, and has sometimes been described by modern scholars as a hermeneutical guidebook for exegesis. Tyconius, by subtle contrast, may have been referring instead to the mysterious yet faintly discernible “rules” latent within scripture itself, rather than to interpretative principles, or “*regulae*,” of his own invention.<sup>54</sup> In any case, and lending itself to either interpretation of Tyconius's intention, the book is divided into seven sections of unequal lengths, each corresponding to a different “rule”: (I) “On the Lord and His Body,” (II) “On the Lord's Bipartite Body,” (III) “On the Promises and the Law,” (IV) “On Species and Genus,” (V) “On Times,” (VI) “On Recapitulation,” and (VII) “On the Devil and His Body.” Across these sections, Tyconius—acknowledging no sources of authority outside scripture—discusses strategies for allegorical and especially typological exegesis of particularly intractable scriptural passages. Tyconius's approach is not so much to impose an impression of harmony on discordant scriptural passages as to emphasize the variety of potentially valid readings that may be possible for such passages. The typological resonance of biblical events appears differently from different exegetical vantage points, and numbers are shown to be remarkably malleable and resistant to

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<sup>53</sup> F.C. Burkitt, ed., *The Book of Rules of Tyconius* (Cambridge, 1894), translated into English as William S. Babcock, *Tyconius: The Book of Rules* (Atlanta, 1989). Pamela Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius: Its Purpose and Inner Logic* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1988) is the best extended study of this work.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Kannengiesser, “Augustine and Tyconius: A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman Africa,” in *Augustine and the Bible*, 149–177, esp. 155–157, draws out this distinction between Tyconius's work as *liber regularum* versus *liber regularis*. See also on this point, Robert A. Kugler, “Tyconius's Mystic Rules and the Rules of Augustine,” in *Augustine and the Bible*, 129–148. Kannengiesser's book chapter is an expanded version of his paper published in William Wuellner, ed., *A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman North Africa: Tyconius and Augustine: Protocol of the Fifty Eighth Colloquy: 16 October 1988* (Berkeley, 1989), 1–22.

literal interpretation;<sup>55</sup> where Tyconius hazards answers for the correspondence of certain biblical numbers to durations of time, these guesses are thoroughly undermined by his larger argument for the elasticity of such figures.<sup>56</sup>

Tyconius's next work, a commentary on the Apocalypse (*ca.* 385), was likely intended to serve as a fuller demonstration of the insights yielded from these "rules," whether they be his own or his illumination of scripture's "rules." This text survives only in fragments and in the products of subsequent interpreters of the New Testament's final book, but it has recently been reconstructed in a well-regarded critical edition by Roger Gryson.<sup>57</sup> This reconstruction opens up new possibilities for the study of Tyconius and his contributions to Christian thought in the Latin West, although caution must still be exercised, particularly where the subtle interpolations of later Apocalypse commentators may have gone undetected.<sup>58</sup> These issues notwithstanding, Gryson's edition is tremendously helpful for our purposes, as it provides an expanded view, beyond the *Liber regularum*, of Tyconius's perception of time as derived from his methods of reading scripture.<sup>59</sup> Although he never produced a commentary on Paul, Tyconius frequently invokes and interprets verses from the Pauline letters in his two extant works. For example, as I

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<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., *Tyconius: The Book of Rules*, trans. Babcock, 98–99. Here, Tyconius uses 2 Cor. 6:2, 1 Jn. 2:18, Is. 61:2 as cited in Lk. 4:19, among other scriptural passages, to demonstrate the ambiguity and interchangeability of references to temporal units ("time," "hour," "day," "month") in the Bible.

<sup>56</sup> See Paula Fredriksen Landes, "Tyconius and the End of the World," *Revue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 28 (1982), 59–75; Fredriksen, "Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse," in Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1992), 20–37; Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 40ff.

<sup>57</sup> Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Roger Gryson, CCSL 107A (Turnhout, 2011). An English translation has since appeared: Tyconius, *Exposition of the Apocalypse*, trans. Francis X. Gumerlock (Washington, D.C., 2017). A major study of the text, produced prior to Gryson's reconstructed edition, is Kenneth B. Steinhauser, *The Apocalypse Commentary of Tyconius: A History of Its Reception and Influence* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1987).

<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., Van Oort, "Tyconius' Apocalypse Commentary," who offers a highly positive assessment of the reconstructed edition, but expresses some concern that Gryson may have, in places, depended too inferentially on the eighth-century commentaries that used Tyconius's text. Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 263–267, had earlier expressed serious doubts about the possibility of ever reconstructing Tyconius's work.

<sup>59</sup> Hoover, *The Donatist Church*, 161–180, is one of the first substantial studies of Tyconius's eschatology since the publication of Gryson's edition.

have noted above, Tyconius quotes Eph. 5:16 to argue that times are not in themselves evil, but only insofar as evil (or good) people are living within them. Explicating Apoc. 1:13, Tyconius begins by connecting the “breasts” mentioned in this verse with the two Testaments, winds his way through figurative readings of Old and New Testament verses ostensibly illustrative of this verse from the Apocalypse, and then writes:

So also a cup that contains [a drink] is described through that which is held in it, as in: “How splendid is your intoxicating cup!” [Ps. 22:5 in the *Vetus Latina*]. For a cup intoxicates no one, but what is contained in the cup does. And he says: “The world hates you,” [Jn. 15:18] meaning those who are in the world; and “the days are evil,” when days are not able to be evil, but people who are in days are evil.<sup>60</sup>

Here, Tyconius gives his reader a perfectly clear image of the relationship between container and content.<sup>61</sup> Later in his commentary, on Apoc. 6:17, Tyconius concedes that present circumstances are grim, yet in doing so he moves from 1 Cor. 10:11 (“these things were done in a figure”) to Heb. 8:13 to Luke 23:28–31: (“...For if they do these things when the tree is green”) to then ask: “If in a time that is not yet ripe they persecute like this, how [much more] will they persecute in the last and seasonable time?”<sup>62</sup> The implication of Tyconius’s point, made explicit elsewhere in his work, is that apparent crises in the world cannot be confidently identified as those of the final times for the simple reason that things can always get worse in the future than they are at present.<sup>63</sup> (Augustine, decades later in his *ep.* 199 to Hesychius, discussed

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<sup>60</sup> Tyconius, *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, trans. Gumerlock, 29; Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson, 106: “Dicitur et sic de uasculo, quod continet, per id quod continetur, ut *calix tuus inebrians quam praeclarum est!* (Ps. 22:5) Calix enim neminem inebriat, sed quod in calice continetur. Et *mundus uos odit* (Jn. 15:18) pro eis dicit qui in mundo sunt, et *dies mali sunt* (Eph. 5:16), cum dies mali esse non possint, sed homines sunt mali, qui in diebus sunt.”

<sup>61</sup> This metaphor may be borrowed from Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis* 16.4–8, but Tyconius never refers to non-scriptural sources; any claims regarding his knowledge of earlier (Latin or Greek) patristic writings remain highly speculative.

<sup>62</sup> Tyconius, *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, trans. Gumerlock, p. 81; Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson, 145: “...id est tempore immaturo ita persequuntur, nouissimo et oportuno quomodo persequuntur?”

<sup>63</sup> Invoking Rom. 13:12, for example, Tyconius subtly shifts Paul’s proclamation that “the night is passed and the day is at hand” into an event in the future as opposed the present. Tyconius, *Exposition on the Apocalypse*,

and excerpted below, makes a very similar argument in observing the many years that had already elapsed between Paul's time of perceived danger and sin and theirs.) Tyconius also invokes 1 Cor. 10:11 to lend support to his figurative connection of the "people of Israel" with the "total church,"<sup>64</sup> which Tyconius identifies with John's "'eagle flying in the midst of heaven' (Apoc. 8:13), that is, moving about in the midst of its own members, and preaching with a loud voice the plagues of the last time."<sup>65</sup> Here, as throughout the commentary, Tyconius redirects his readers' attention from the literal descriptions of the End to a spiritual reflection on the nature and fate of the Church in a temporal world that will ultimately perish, though perhaps not any time soon.

### **The afterlife of Tyconius: from Donatist heretic to accepted authority**

Tyconius's Commentary on the Apocalypse represents a major aspect of his legacy in the early Middle Ages. It was treated as an authoritative source for the commentaries produced by Primasius of Hadrumentum, Beatus of Liébana, Bede, and Ambrosius Autpertus. Works by the latter two authors, both composed in the eighth century, would serve as the immediate models for Carolingian commentaries on the Apocalypse, such as those by Alcuin of York and Haimo of

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trans. Gumerlock, 185: "...Surely in the church there will be no idols, because 'the night,' the devil, 'is far spent,' and the ignorance of blindness has past, and 'the day,' Christ, 'is at hand'"; Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson, 226: "Vtique in ecclesia non erunt idola, quia nox diabolus praecessit, et ignorantia caecitatis abiit, et dies Christus appropinquauit." (Cf. *Tyconius: The Book of Rules*, trans. Babcock, p. 93, wherein Tyconius interprets Paul's "night" and "day" as the transition from the carnal to the spiritual, combining Rom. 13:12–13 with 1 Cor. 15:46.) Elsewhere in the Apocalypse commentary Tyconius (on Apoc. 10:5–7), similarly uses an allusion to 1 Cor. 15:52 to emphasize the vague futurity of the Church's final purification in "the time of future peace" (trans. Gumerlock, 107); Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson, 165: "Septima tuba finis est persecutionis et aduentus domini; propterea dixit apostulus in nouissima tuba fieri resurrectionem. Tempore ergo futurae pacis adfirmavit iam non esse tempus ecclesiae nisi purgationis, quam purgabit nouissima persecutio usque ad septimam tubam."

<sup>64</sup> Tyconius, *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, trans. Gumerlock, 126; Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson, 178.

<sup>65</sup> Tyconius, *Exposition on the Apocalypse*, trans. Gumerlock, 95; Tyconius Afer, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Gryson, 156: "Aquilam dicit ecclesiam; 'uolantem in media caelo', id est in medio sui discurrentem et plagas nouissimi temporis magna uoce praedicantem."



Auxerre. Given Tyconius's association with a schismatic faction, this trajectory of reception and influence is quite remarkable, if not altogether unique: works of other authors of suspect status managed to endure, either by the explicit quarantining of what was orthodox and still useful from their oeuvres, or else by pseudonymous transmission under the names of writers regarded as safely orthodox.<sup>66</sup> Even though Donatism was no longer a living threat in Bede's Northumbria, Beatus's Spain, Ambrosius's Italy, or in Carolingian Francia, it was never forgotten that Tyconius had belonged to that schismatic sect. Yet, Tyconius's reputation as an authority for exegetical theory and practice was preserved and even strengthened over time due to his well-known influence on the works of major, impeccably orthodox Christian writers—above all, Augustine, but also very significantly Bede. Bede's commentary on the Apocalypse (to which I will return in chapter 2) was the most widely diffused Latin exposition of that book before the Carolingian era, and while Bede depended heavily on the commentaries of both Primasius and Tyconius, he mentioned the former by name only once, while frequently and explicitly citing the latter. Unlike Primasius and Cassiodorus (who admired Tyconius's thinking, but were highly cautious in their use of this non-Catholic authority), Bede rarely bothers to warn his reader about Tyconius's problematic affiliation. Bede notes in the preface of his commentary that Tyconius was indeed a Donatist, that some passages in his work were meant in defence of that schismatic faction, and that Bede has thus shrewdly avoided including those unspecified passages. Where these reservations register as largely perfunctory, Bede's praise of Tyconius, as "a rose among thorns" (*veluti rosa in spinis*) who possessed "a vivid understanding of [Apocalypse], and explained it in a truthful and sufficiently catholic fashion" – apart from the aforementioned

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<sup>66</sup> See, for example, Alexander Souter, *Pelagius's Expositions on the Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul* (Cambridge, 1922); Mark Vessey, "Jerome's Origen: The Making of a Christian Literary Persona," *Studia patristica* 28 (1993), 135–145.

problematic passages, wherein Tyconius defends Donatism – is strikingly effusive. Tyconius’s “rules,” Bede asserts here, “do not apply to the Apocalypse (that is, the revelation of St. John) alone; rather [they are valid] also for the whole of canonical scripture.”<sup>67</sup>

Bede’s bold choices in this matter can be explained through his ultimate reverence for Augustine, expressed in the Apocalypse commentary and throughout his many works. As Faith Wallis notes, “Augustine’s approval of both Tyconius and his principles, bestowed the benediction of patristic authority on Bede’s choice. In short, if the principles of Tyconius’s exegesis are approved by patristic authority, so must the product.”<sup>68</sup> Although Bede worked directly and closely from Tyconius’s Apocalypse commentary, his reference to Tyconius’s *regulae* (the rules purportedly underlying Tyconius’s exegesis) derived not from the *Liber regularum* itself, but from Augustine’s inexact description of Tyconius’s “rules” in *De doctrina Christiana* 3.30–37, which Bede summarizes in the preface of his commentary. This situation presents a rather neat encapsulation of Tyconius’s peculiar textual afterlife. If Augustine’s admiring, albeit qualified and critical, remarks about Tyconius helped to rescue his reputation for posterity, his “catholicizing” summary of Tyconius’s “rules” informed, to a very great extent, subsequent readers’ sense of the “sufficiently catholic” Donatist theologian’s contributions to the orthodox tradition of scriptural interpretation.

Augustine had probably read Tyconius’s *Liber regularum* by 395, well before intervening in the decades-old epistolary debate of Tyconius and Parmenian, in which Augustine described Tyconius as “a man endowed with a sharp intellect and fertile facilities of speech despite being a

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<sup>67</sup> Bede, *Explanatio Apocalypsis*, PL 94, col. 132–133: “Has ergo regulas non in Apocalypsi tantum, id est, in Revelatione sancti Joannis apostoli, quam idem Tyconius et vivaciter intellexit, et veridice satisque catholice disseruit, praeter ea duntaxat loca in quibus, suae partis, id est, Donatistarum, schisma defendere nissus”; trans. Faith Wallis, *Bede, Commentary on Revelation* (Liverpool, 2013), 105. See also Wallis, Introduction to *Bede*, 29–30, where she also notes Bede’s mainly positive, admiring treatment of Tyconius as a key source.

<sup>68</sup> Wallis, Introduction to *Bede*, 67–68.

Donatist” (*hominem quidem et acri ingenio praeditum et uberi eloquio, sed tamen donatistam*).<sup>69</sup>

When decades later Augustine returned to his guidebook for Christian teaching, the *De doctrina Christiana* (begun *ca.* 397, but not completed until 426), he credited Tyconius with having developed a useful method for the interpretation of scripture:

One Tyconius, who, although a Donatist himself, has written most triumphantly against the Donatists (and herein showed himself of a most inconsistent disposition, that he was unwilling to give them up altogether), wrote a book which he called the Book of Rules, because in it he laid down seven rules, which are, as it were, keys to open the secrets of Scripture. [...] Now these rules, as expounded by their author, do indeed, when carefully considered, afford considerable assistance in penetrating the secrets of the sacred writings; but still they do not explain all the difficult passages, for there are several other methods required. [...] The author himself, however, when commending these rules, attributes so much value to them that it would appear as if, when they were thoroughly known and duly applied, we should be able to interpret all the obscure passages in the law—that is, in the sacred books. [...] And I have thought it right to say this much, in order both that the book may be read by the studious (for it is of very great assistance in understanding Scripture), and that no more may be expected from it than it really contains. Certainly it must be read with caution, not only on account of the errors into which the author falls as a man, but chiefly on account of the heresies which he advances as a Donatist. And now I shall briefly indicate what these seven rules teach or advise...<sup>70</sup>

In the view of some modern scholars who have closely studied Tyconius’s work, Augustine’s characterization of the *Liber regularum* as a “method” (*modus*) providing “assistance in penetrating the secrets of the sacred writings” (*adiuvant ad penetranda quae tecta sunt*

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<sup>69</sup> Augustine, *Contra epistolam Parmeniani*, *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (hereafter CSEL) 51, ed. Michael Petschenig (Vienna/Leipzig, 1908), 19–141, 1.1.1: “hominem quidem et acri ingenio praeditum et uberi eloquio, sed tamen donatistam”; Ebbeler, “Charitable Correction,” 286.

<sup>70</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 3.30, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Phillip Schaff, trans. J.F. Shaw; *De doctrina Christiana*, ed. R.P.H. Green (Oxford, 1995), 172–176: “Ticonius quidam qui contra Donatistas invictissime scripsit, cum fuerit Donatista, et illic invenitur absurdissimi cordis ubi eos non omni ex parte relinquere voluit, fecit librum quem Regularum vocavit, quia in eo quasdam septem regulas exsecutus est quibus quasi clavibus divinarum scripturarum aperirentur occulta [...] Quae quidem considerata, sicut ab illo aperiuntur, non parvum adiuvant ad penetranda quae tecta sunt divinatorum eloquiorum. Nec tamen omnia quae ita scripta sunt ut non facile intellegantur possunt his regulis inveniri, sed aliis modis pluribus [...] Iste autem cum has velut regulas commendaret, tantum eis tribuit, quasi omnia quae in lege, id est in divinis libris, obscure posita invenerimus his bene cognitis atque adhibitis intellegere valeamus. [...] Quod ideo dicendum putavi ut liber ipse et legatur ab studiosis, quia plurimum adiuvat ad scripturas intellegendas, et non de illo speretur tantum quantum non habet. Cauter sane legendus est, non solum propter quaedam in quibus ut homo erravit sed maxime propter illa quae sicut Donatista haereticus loquitur. Quid autem doceant vel admoneant istae septem regulae, breviter ostendam.”

*divinorum eloquiorum*) may itself represent the initial, and perhaps most crucial, instance of Augustine's misrepresentation of Tyconius, who, as I have already suggested, may have been referring to "rules" already inherent in scripture as a special kind of divinely coded language, rather than to exegetical "rules" of his own making for a novel method of interpretation.<sup>71</sup>

Augustine may have also shifted the typological orientation of Tyconius's approach to fit more compatibly with the allegorical method advocated in the earlier books of *De doctrina Christiana*, exemplified in Augustine's famous treatment of different types of signs and their referents.<sup>72</sup> His descriptions of the seven rules themselves vary considerably in terms of their accuracy and fidelity to Tyconius. Whether these misunderstandings were due chiefly to differences in the respective educational and cultural backgrounds of these African Christian writers or to deliberate mischaracterizations to suit Augustine's "catholic" agenda remains open for debate.<sup>73</sup>

What is unquestionable is that Augustine's summary of Tyconius's *Liber regularum* would strongly influence subsequent readers' knowledge of Tyconius's "rules," either from direct use of the *De doctrina Christiana* (as in Bede's case), or from subsequent summaries or epitomes of the *Liber regularum* that hewed much closer to Augustine's descriptions than to Tyconius's

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<sup>71</sup> In contrast to this view, however, Karla Pollmann, "Re-appropriation and Disavowal: Pagan and Christian Authorities in Cassiodorus and Venantius Fortunatus," in Judith Frishman, Willemien Otten, and Gerard Rouwhorst, eds., *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation: The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism* (Leiden, 2004), 296–297, argues that (both) "Tyconius and Augustine in their respective hermeneutics did not claim a special ontological status for the Bible as different from all other literature."

<sup>72</sup> On this point, see Maureen A. Tilley, "Understanding Augustine Misunderstanding Tyconius," *Studia patristica* 27 (1991), 405–408.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Marcia L. Colish, "Augustine's Use and Abuse of Tyconius," Henry Chadwick, "Tyconius and Augustine," Tom Conley, "Rhetoricae immensam silvam perambulans," and James J. Murphy, "Pedagogic Paradigms as Factor in Assessing Augustine's Use of Tyconius," in *A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics*, 42–61. On the cultural context(s) of late antique Roman Africa, see especially Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities*; James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York, 2005), esp. 9–34, 209–243; and Mathieu Pignot, *The Catechumenate in Late Antique Africa (4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Centuries): Augustine of Hippo, His Contemporaries and Early Reception* (Leiden, 2020).

original text.<sup>74</sup> Still, while recognizing the great importance of Augustine, his authoritative status, and the great number of copies in which his work was transmitted, it should be noted that the *Liber regularum* itself did not disappear. Medieval readers could potentially familiarize themselves with Tyconius's authentic words and ideas. In addition to short epitomes of greater or lesser fidelity to Tyconius, his *Liber regularum* survives in four medieval manuscripts, including a complete ninth-century copy that may contain the autograph of Hincmar of Rheims.<sup>75</sup> An epitome produced around this time, the so-called Monza epitome, is largely faithful to Tyconius in its presentation of his rules, rather than epitomizing Augustine's summary of the rules in *De doctrina Christiana* 3.30–37.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, while Augustine mentions the Apocalypse commentary to argue that Tyconius had neglected to follow his own exegetical precepts, Gryson's reconstructed text—which shows Tyconius, on the whole, adhering to the principles of

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<sup>74</sup> On epitomes of the *Liber regularum*, see Pamela Bright, “‘The Preponderating Influence of Augustine’: A Study of the Epitomes of the *Book of Rules* of the Donatist Tyconius,” in *Augustine and the Bible*, 109–128. As I have noted above, despite using Tyconius's Apocalypse commentary directly, Bede's summary of Tyconius's “Rules” in the preface to his own Apocalypse commentary clearly stems from Augustine's descriptions in *De doctrina Christiana* Bk. 3. Long before Bede, and not long after Augustine's time, an epitome was produced that “suggests the double influence of Augustine and Cassian” (Bright, “‘Preponderating Influence,’” 111), and which its most recent editor, Pierre Cazier, suggests may even have been authored by Cassian himself. This epitome was first published in 1883, in Dom Pitra's *Spicilegium Solesmense* vol. III. Cazier's critical edition of 1975 mainly relies on eight manuscripts, dated between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. See Pierre Cazier, “Cassien auteur présumé de l'épître des Règles de Tyconius,” *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 22 (1976), 262–297. Bright argues that this epitome is mostly faithful to Augustine's summary, and even where it diverges from Augustine's descriptions it comes no closer to accurately representing Tyconius's work. Another epitome, also published in *Spicilegium Solesmense* vol. III, is “merely a repetition of S. Augustine's remarks” on the *Liber regularum* (Burkitt, Introduction to *The Book of Rules*, xxii), but it misleadingly suggests that Augustine appended an additional three rules to Tyconius's seven, inserting passages from earlier chapters of the *De doctrina Christiana* to stand as those supposed additional Augustinian *regulae*.

<sup>75</sup> This ninth-century manuscript is Rheims, Bibliothèque Municipale cod. lat. 384; the note “HINCMARVS ARCHIEPS DEDIT SCAE MARIAE REMENSI” appears on ff. 16v–17r. The other manuscripts containing the *Liber Regularum* are Vatican Reg. 590 (s. X), Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 2359 (s. XI), and Oxford, Bodleian Marshall 21 (s. XII). Another manuscript of uncertain date, associated with the library of the Cistercian abbey of Clairmarais, was used in the early edition of 1622, but has since disappeared. There is also a sixteenth-century paper manuscript at Basel, which Burkitt consulted for his edition.

<sup>76</sup> The Monza epitome is preserved in the *Codex Modoetianus* (Monza, Tesoro della Catterdale  $\frac{c-2}{62}$ , s. IX–X), following after Ambrosiaster's commentaries on the Pauline epistles. This epitome of Tyconius is edited in Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, 89–98; Burkitt, Introduction, xxviii, suggests that this codex containing the epitome of Tyconius had “been for a long time at Monza, possibly ever since it was written.” Bright, “‘Preponderating Influence,’” argues for the Monza epitome's overall fidelity to Tyconius's original work, calling it (at p. 125) “the exception that proves the rules...[in that] it is astonishingly faithful to the Tyconian original.”

his *Liber regularum*—provides solid support for the view that Augustine had not in fact read the Apocalypse commentary but perhaps confused it with some other work circulating at the time.<sup>77</sup>

In his short biographical note on Tyconius, Gennadius of Marseilles (d. ca. 496), probably working from Augustine's remarks in *De doctrina Christiana* Bk. 3, does not follow Augustine in suggesting that there is any inconsistency between the hermeneutical principles of the *Liber regularum* and the "spiritual," never "carnal," anti-millenarian exegesis demonstrated in the Apocalypse commentary.<sup>78</sup> Three centuries later, Bede, in preparing his own Apocalypse commentary, determined that Tyconius's commentary was at least consistent with Augustine's

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<sup>77</sup> Kannengiesser, "Augustine and Tyconius," 165.

<sup>78</sup> Gennadius of Marseilles, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Hieronymus, Liber de viris illustribus. Gennadius, Liber de viris illustribus. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 14/1 (Leipzig, 1896), 68: "Tichonius natione Afer, in divinis litteris eruditus, iuxta historiam sufficienter et in saecularibus non ignarus fuit et in ecclesiasticis quoque negotiis studiosus. Scripsit De bello intestino libros et Expositiones diversarum causarum, in quibus ob suorum defensionem antiquarum meminit synodorum. E quibus omnibus agnoscitur Donatianae partis fuisse. Composuit et Regulas ad investigandam et inveniendam intelligentiam Scripturarum octo, quas uno volumine conclusit. Exposuit et Apocalypsin Iohannis ex integro, nihil in ea carnale, sed totum intelligens spiritale. In qua expositione dixit angelicam stationem corpus esse. Mille quoque annorum regni in terra iustorum post resurrectionem futuri suspicionem tulit; neque duas in carne mortuorum resurrectiones futuras, unam iustorum et alteram iniustorum, sed unam et insemel omnium in qua resurgent etiam abortivi, deformati, ne quid humani generis deformatum et animatum substantia intereat, ostendit. Distinctionem sane duarum resurrectionum ita facit, ut primam, quam iustorum Apocalypsis dicit, credamus modo in ecclesiae incremento agi, ubi iustificati per fidem a morticinis peccatorum suorum per baptismum ad vitae aeternae stipendium suscitantur, secundam vero generaliter omnis hominum carnis. Floruit hic vir aetate, qua et ante memoratus Rufinus, Theodosio et filiis eius regnantibus"; Jerome and Gennadius, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, trans. Ernest Cushing Richardson, in Phillip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers II*, vol. 3, 379: "Tyconius, an African by nationality was, it is said, sufficiently learned in sacred literature, not wholly unacquainted with secular literature and zealous in ecclesiastical affairs. He wrote books *On internal war* and *Expositions of various causes* in which for the defense of his friends, he cites the ancient councils and from all of which he is recognized to have been a Donatist. He composed also eight *Rules for investigating and ascertaining the meaning of the Scriptures*, compressing them into one volume. He also expounded the Apocalypse of John entire, regarding nothing in it in a carnal sense, but all in a spiritual sense. In this exposition he maintained the angelical nature to be corporeal, moreover he doubts that there will be a reign of the righteous on earth for a thousand years after the resurrection, or that there will be two resurrections of the dead in the flesh, one of the righteous and the other of the unrighteous, but maintains that there will be one simultaneous resurrection of all, at which shall arise even the aborted and the deformed lest any living human being, however deformed, should be lost. He makes such distinction to be sure, between the two resurrections as to make the first, which he calls the apocalypse of the righteous, only to take place in the growth of the church where, justified by faith, they are raised from the dead bodies of their sins through baptism to the service of eternal life, but the second, the general resurrection of all men in the flesh. This man flourished at the same period with the above mentioned Rufinus during the reign of Theodosius and his sons."

description of Tyconius's rules, thus side-stepping Augustine's dismissive review of Tyconius's commentary while working squarely from Augustine's authority and its apparent sanctioning of Tyconius himself. Bede admired what he found in reading Tyconius's actual work, but it is doubtful that he would have ever read it, much less explicitly cited it, without first noticing positive mentions of this fourth-century "heretic" in Augustine's unimpeachably orthodox writings. Indeed, it is likely that Tyconius would have been largely, or even wholly, forgotten over the centuries after his death if not for Augustine's summary and appropriation of his rules; this probably also stimulated the transmission of Tyconius's Apocalypse commentary, even if Augustine did not care for, or had not actually read, that work.

### **Tyconian influences on Augustine's thought and work**

What is arguably even more important than Augustine's impact on Tyconius's legacy is the influence of some distinctly Tyconian ideas on Augustine's own work, particularly in areas of his thought that readers (medieval and modern) would regard as quintessentially "Augustinian"—above all in his mature ecclesiology and his method of engaging with eschatological passages in scripture.<sup>79</sup> In his earlier writings, Augustine had at times entertained millenarian ideas and embraced the widely shared sense of Christian triumphalism characteristic of the Theodosian era. Yet, by the turn of the fifth century, Augustine had come to reject literal understandings of the Apocalypse and attempts to calculate the world's remaining time, as well

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<sup>79</sup> Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 257, e.g., goes so far as to suggest that "Western exegesis and hermeneutics of the early Middle Ages, and even for long afterwards, are almost inconceivable without Tyconius." Chadwick, "Tyconius and Augustine," 50, argues that, "Augustine's debt to Tyconius is so substantial that it must have seemed natural to him...to give him a Catholic face and voice. [Tyconius] had set Augustine on what he liked to call 'the paths of light' toward the finding of hermeneutic principles for understanding the books God had given to his people, the *libri dominici*."

as any sense that the fate of Christendom, or the world, was directly tied to that of the Roman empire. These developments in Augustine's thought, sometimes studied independently of one another, must be considered together, for they both largely derive from his changing attitude toward the interpretation of scripture and the intelligibility of God's providential will. Although numerous factors can be, and have been, cited to explain this momentous shift in Augustine's thinking, the influence of Tyconius should be rated among the most significant.<sup>80</sup> In the years that followed his reading of Tyconius's *Liber regularum*, Augustine evolved into a more sensitive—and sometimes prudently hesitant<sup>81</sup>—exegete, readily acknowledging the multiple possibilities for interpreting obscure or seemingly intractable passages in scripture and firmly insisting upon the ultimate mystery of God's plan for humankind. Augustine's conception of the temporal *saeculum* included the members of the Church on earth, some of whom would be revealed to be among the elect, others among the damned, while some presently outside the Church would, through God's grace, achieve salvation. The true, heavenly Church, a sojourner in

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<sup>80</sup> On Augustine's evolving responses to millenarianism and the providential ordering of earthly events in time, see, e.g., Markus, *Saeculum*; Markus, "Living within Sight of the End," in Chris Humphrey and W.M. Ormrod, eds., *Time in the Medieval World* (York, 2001) 23–34; Gerald Bonner, "Augustine and Millenarianism," in Rowan Williams, ed., *The Making of Orthodoxy* (Cambridge, 1989), 235–254; J. Kevin Coyle, "Augustine and Apocalyptic: Thoughts on the Fall of Rome, the Book of Revelation, and the End of the World," in John Doody, Kari Kloos, and Kim Paffenroth, eds., *Augustine and Apocalyptic* (Lanham, Md., 2014), 23–52; Richard Corradini, "Augustine's *eschaton*: Back to the Future," in Veronika Wieser, Christian Zolles, Martin Zolles, Catherine Feik, and Leopold Schlöndorff, eds., *Abendländische Apokalyptik: Kompendium zur Genealogie der Endzeit* (Berlin, 2013), 693–716.

<sup>81</sup> Aptly describing this (arguably, recognizably Tyconian) tendency in Augustine's thinking, Catherine Conybeare, in an engaging recent interview, observes: "I think there are two—in theory—incompatible aspects to Augustine's thought inasmuch as he is both a highly structured thinker and a highly indeterminate thinker. I realise it sounds nonsensical to bring the two into juxtaposition. [...] But [the highly structured] side of Augustine's thought—the one that basically comes down to us in common tradition—is held in suspension with the whole side I mentioned earlier: the willingness to say 'I don't know,' the appreciation of indeterminacy, of multivocality. You can think of the passage in *Confessions* 12 when he talks about interpretations of the Bible. He says, Well, one person can say I think this passage means this and one person can say, I think it means that and third person can say I think it means something else. He says: Why can't they all be right? Why should we think that God is so limited that he's only put one meaning into this passage of Scripture? It's this side of his thought that interests me much more. But, of course, it doesn't do justice to the whole man not to consider the structural aspects of his thought as well." See Charles J. Styles, "The Best Augustine Books, recommended by Catherine Conybeare," *Five Books*, <https://fivebooks.com/best-books/augustine-catherine-conybeare/> [last accessed 30 April 2021].



the temporal *saeculum* (much like Tyconius's Church-as-eagle flying through the world, drawn from Apoc. 8:13), was not coterminous with the institutional Church of Rome, much less with the Empire itself. The latter were *mixed* bodies, and while the political might of the empire could be effectively deployed to root out some apparent sources of contamination (e.g., heretical or schismatic groups explicitly opposed to Augustine's "Catholic" faction), it would always remain mysteriously mixed until the time of the End, its true composition known only to God. The Donatists were among the dangerous contaminants that Augustine sought to excise, ultimately through the use of imperial coercion, but it was the Donatist Tyconius's conception of the Church as *corpus bipartitum* that undergirded Augustine's (similar but not identical) notion of *corpus permixtum*.<sup>82</sup> Tyconius frustrated the Donatist ecclesiastical hierarchy with his contention that the heavenly Church was composed of "good" and "evil" parts, and that for now these parts were essentially indistinguishable from one another, with members of both parts belonging to various, earthly iterations of the total, celestial Church, including the Donatist and Caecillianist congregations in Africa.

For Augustine, Tyconius's theological formulation was not only an expedient tool with which to combat the Donatists, it also deeply informed his thinking about the Church, the relationship between earthly and heavenly times, and the nature of salvation. He applied nuanced gradations to Tyconius's binary halves, and explicitly extended the principle of a mixed-member body to all of humankind, including those untouched by Roman culture, thus downplaying the special significance of the empire and its destiny. In this light, it is easy to see why some modern

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<sup>82</sup> On Augustine's view of the temporal world as fundamentally "mixed" in its nature, see especially the classic works of Henri-Irénée Marrou, "La théologie de l'histoire," in *Augustinus Magister: Congrès International Augustinien* (Paris, 1954), 193–204; Henri-Irénée Marrou, "Civitas Dei, civitas terrena: num tertium quid?" *Studia patristica* 2 (1957), 344–350. For a recent study of the *corpus permixtum*, see Albert Bawe Wugaa, "The Church as *corpus permixtum*: Augustinian Ecclesiology in Response to the Donatist Concept of the Church" (M.A. thesis, University of St. Thomas, 2012).

scholars have even gone so far as to suggest that Tyconius was the primary source for Augustine's doctrine of the Two Cities.<sup>83</sup> The inclusion of similar ideas in the reconstructed edition of Tyconius's Apocalypse commentary may appear as tantalizing evidence in the affirmative, but, again, it is not clear that Augustine actually read this work. It may thus be safest to conclude that Tyconius was one of several important sources that Augustine creatively combined in the *De civitate Dei*.<sup>84</sup>

The shift in Augustine's thought summarized above can be detected in sources composed well before the *De civitate Dei*, particularly in sermons and letters around 410, which comment on, or echo, eschatological passages from the Pauline epistles.<sup>85</sup> Augustine's assertion that "we are the times: such as we are, such are the times" in *serm.* 80 (discussed in the introduction to this chapter) is consistent with Tyconius's use of Eph. 5:16 in his Apocalypse Commentary; whether Augustine read that work or not, he could certainly have derived this principle from the *Liber regularum*, especially the sections on times and recapitulation. Augustine's own reading of these verses from Ephesians in *serm.* 167, preached sometime between 410 and 412, is also

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<sup>83</sup> See, for example, Gerhard B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 259–260, who concludes that "[i]t is probable that...Tyconius...was the most immediate source of Augustine's ideology of the two cities." Also, Markus, *Saeculum*, 56, notes: "For the theologically neutral conception towards which [Augustine's] thought was moving, and which emerges with full clarity in the last books (especially XVIII and XIX) of the *City of God*, I know of no precedent, unless it be in the work of the Donatist theologian Tyconius. From him Augustine learnt much; unfortunately not enough of his work survives for us to be sure about Augustine's debt to him in this particular matter. The ambivalence of Augustine's attitude to Rome is a logical consequence of repudiation of both of the current Christian interpretations of Roman history. He could accept neither the hostility and opposition to Rome inculcated by the apocalyptic view, nor the near-identification of Christianity and the Roman Empire involved in the Eusebian view."

<sup>84</sup> For example, in addition to Tyconius, Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon*, 254–359, cites—among other potential sources—Tertullian, Cyprian, and the *Pastor Hermae* together with other New Testament apocrypha as significant, probable influences on the development of Augustine's conception of the Two Cities.

<sup>85</sup> On this gradual development in Augustine's thought in texts before the *De civitate Dei*, see Coyle, "Augustine and Apocalyptic," 23–52.

consistent with Tyconius and with Augustine's more famous statement in *serm.* 80.<sup>86</sup> In *serm.*

167, Augustine explains:

You heard the apostle, when he was read; or rather we all heard him telling us, *Watch how you walk carefully; not as unwise but as wise people; redeeming the time, since the days are evil* (Eph. 5:15–16). Two things, brothers and sisters, make days evil: malice and misery. It is through human malice and human misery that days are called evil. Otherwise these days, as far as their hourly divisions are concerned, are very regular; they follow each other in turn, they lead along the seasons. The sun rises, the sun sets, the seasons pass. Who would be vexed by times and seasons, if people weren't vexatious to each other? So, evil days, as I said, are made by two things: human misery and human malice.<sup>87</sup>

This sermon – as I will show in chapter 2 – was later employed by Carolingian exegetes seeking to understand these verses of Ephesians. But these same later writer-compilers would have had plenty of good options to select among from Augustine's body of work in order to deliver similar points, or to support alternate readings of Paul.<sup>88</sup> In *serm.* 81 (ca. 410–411), Augustine concedes

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<sup>86</sup> See also from Augustine, *serm.* 62: "If a genius is some kind of distinction, then let the citizens of Carthage live well, and they will be the genius of Carthage" (PL 38, col. 419: "Si genium ornamentum est aliquod; cives Carthaginis bene vivant, et ipsi erunt genium Carthaginis."); discussed in Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities*, 76–77.

<sup>87</sup> Augustine, *serm.* 167, PL 38, col. 909: "Apostolum, cum legeretur, audistis; imo omnes audivimus, dicentem nobis: *Videte quomodo caute ambuletis; non ut insipientes, sed ut sapientes; redimentes tempus, quoniam dies mali sunt* (Eph. 5:15–16). Dies malos, fratres, duae res faciunt, malitia et miseria. Per malitiam hominum et miseriam hominum ducuntur dies mali. Caeterum dies isti, quantum pertinet ad spatia horarum, ordinati sunt: ducunt vices, agunt tempora; oritur sol, occidit sol, transeunt tempora. Cui molesta sunt tempora, si homines sibi non sunt molesti? Ergo dies malos, sicut dixi, duae res faciunt, miseria hominum et malitia hominum." Cf. Augustine, *serm.* 58, PL 38, col. 398–399: "Liberatio a malo. Ergo cum dixerimus. Ne nos inferas in tentationem; sequitur, Sed libera nos a malo. Qui vult liberari a malo, testatur quia in malo est. Ideo dicit Apostolus, *Redimentes tempus, quoniam dies mali sunt* (Eph. 5:16). Sed quis est qui vult vitam, et diligit videre dies bonos? Quando omnis homo in hac carne non habet nisi dies malos; quis non vult? Fac quod sequitur, Cohibe linguam tuam a malo, et labia tua ne loquantur dolum; declina a malo, et fac bonum; quaere pacem, et sequere eam (Ps. 33:13–15): et caruisti diebus malis, et impletur quod orasti, Libera nos a malo"; trans. Edmund Hill, *Saint Augustine: Sermons* (Hyde Park, N.Y.), III.5, 211–214

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, *serm.* 84, which interprets this passage from Ephesians in relation to Matt. 19:17, the sermon's pericope. Here, Augustine emphasizes that the days of temporal, earthly life are evil because of how stubbornly humans cling to their corruptible, carnal forms and to the pleasures of the world. The only solution offered here is for men to wholeheartedly desire the "good days" of eternal life, rather than their fleeting mortal lives—although Augustine, perhaps following Tyconius's approach to allegorical interpretation of numbers and times in scripture, is careful to clarify that the "dies boni" of eternity are "not many days, but one day. They are called 'days' after the custom of this life." PL 38, col. 519–520: "Mali sunt dies hujus vitae. Vera ac beata vita, aeterna. De his autem diebus quos agimus, ait Apostolus, *Redimentes tempus, quoniam dies mali sunt* (Ephes. V, 10). Non sunt ergo dies mali quos agimus in corruptela hujus carnis, in tanta vel sub tanta sarcina corruptibilis corporis, inter tantas tentationes, inter tantas difficultates, ubi falsa voluptas, nulla securitas gaudii, timor torquens, cupiditas avida, tristitia arida? Ecce quam malos dies: et nemo vult finire ipsos malos dies, multumque hinc rogant homines Deum, ut diu vivant. Quid est autem diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri? Quid est aliud diu vivere, quam malos

that “the world has grown old; it is full of troubles and pressures,” and compares it to an old man, “coughing, phlegm, bleary eyes, aches and pains, weariness...full of complaints.”<sup>89</sup> Yet, Augustine resists speculating on how much longer that “old man” will continue to live, and instead uses this sermon as an opportunity to critique Christians’ overconfidence in the *tempora Christiana* and the inflated importance ascribed to the Roman empire.<sup>90</sup> He argues that all Rome *is*, really, is Romans, that is, individual persons who may be good or wicked in their actions, and this would remain the case even if the city of Rome were destroyed. In a sermon on 1 Cor. 12:26, probably preached in Carthage around the same time, Augustine expresses the same resilient conviction: “If the city which gave us birth in the flesh does not remain standing, the one which gave us birth in the spirit does [...] Why panic, just because earthly kingdoms crumble? That is why a heavenly kingdom was promised to you, so that you would not crumble away with the earthly ones.”<sup>91</sup> Arguably, the reason that Augustine needed to continue reiterating these same points regarding Rome, earthly and heavenly times (or “days”), and the threat of the End in sermon after sermon is because some, perhaps many, Christians in his (physical or epistolary) orbit remained unconvinced and profoundly worried. The anxiety of these Christians derived

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dies malis diebus addere? Et cum crescunt pueri, quasi accedunt illis dies; et nesciunt quia minuuntur: et ipsa est falsa computatio. Crescentibus enim decedunt dies potius, quam accedunt. Constitue alicui homini nato, verbi gratia, octoginta annos: quidquid vivit, de summa minuit. Et inepti homines gratulantur plurimis natalitiis, tam suis, quam filiorum suorum. O virum prudentem! Si tibi vinum minuatur in utre, tristaris: dies perdis, et gaudes? Mali ergo sunt dies: et eo peiores, quia diliguntur. Sic blanditur hic mundus, ut nemo velit finire aerumnosam vitam. Vera enim vita vel beata haec est, cum resurgemus et cum Christo regnabimus. Nam et impii resurrecturi sunt, sed in ignem ituri. Vita itaque non est, nisi beata. Et vita beata esse non potest, nisi aeterna, ubi sunt dies boni; nec multi, sed unus. Ex consuetudine hujus vitae appellati sunt dies. Dies ille nescit ortum, nescit occasum. Illi diei non succedit crastinus; quia non praecedit eum hesternus. Hunc diem, vel hos dies, et hanc vitam, et veram vitam in promissis habemus. Alicujus ergo operis merces est. Si enim mercedem amamus, in opere non deficiamus: et in aeternum cum Christo regnabimus.”

<sup>89</sup> Augustine, *serm.* 81, *PL* 38, col. 504: “Miraris quia deficit mundus? mirare quia senuit mundus. Homo est, nascitur, crescit, senescit. Querelae multae in senecta: tussis, pituita, lippitudo, anxietudo, lassitudo inest. Ergo senuit homo; querelis plenus est: senuit mundus; pressuris plenus est”; trans. Hill, *Sermons*, III.3, 364.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. *serm.* 296, which also compares the world to an old man and assesses the significance of the *tempora Christiana*.

<sup>91</sup> Augustine, *serm.* 105, *PL* 38, col. 622: “Si non manet civitas quae nos carnaliter genuit, manet quae nos spiritualiter genuit [...] Quid expavescis, quia pereunt regna terrena? Ideo tibi coeleste promissum est, ne cum terrenis perires”; trans. Hill, *Sermons*, III.4, 92–93.

from their projection of eschatological, or apocalyptic, passages in scripture, including in Paul's letters, directly onto the current events of the Roman world. We can see this dynamic in action in Augustine's letters to Bishop Hesychius of Salona (*ep.* 197, 199) and Hesychius's reply (*ep.* 198). In *ep.* 197, Augustine denies that time remaining in the world can be accurately calculated from scripture, directing Hesychius away from the cryptic prophecy of Daniel and toward "what the Lord himself said," quoting Acts 1:7<sup>92</sup> and Mark 13:32 (closely echoed in Matt. 24:36),<sup>93</sup> verses that subsequent opponents of millenarianism, following Augustine, would routinely invoke to cement their arguments. Applying lessons learned from Tyconius's *Liber regularum*, Augustine refers to the ambiguity, especially in Latin, of the terms for "days," "hours," and "times," which must not be read literally; and he proceeds to refute Jerome's "rashness" in reading the "weeks" mentioned in Daniel as predictive of the time of Christ's future return, rather than his initial Incarnation.<sup>94</sup> Deferring to the sublime and infinitely complex mystery of God's plan, and encouraging Hesychius to do the same, Augustine explains that he would "rather to confess a cautious ignorance than to profess a false knowledge."<sup>95</sup> Hesychius, however, replied to Augustine by quoting from a long list of scriptural passages that seemed to eerily,

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<sup>92</sup> Acts 1:7: "dixit autem eis non est vestrum nosse tempora vel momenta quae Pater posuit in sua potestate"; "But he said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father hath put in his own power."

<sup>93</sup> Mk. 13:32: "De die autem illo vel hora nemo scit neque angeli in caelo neque Filius nisi Pater"; "But of that day or hour no man knoweth, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father"; cf. Matt. 24:36: "De die autem illa et hora nemo scit neque angeli caelorum nisi Pater solus"; "But of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone."

<sup>94</sup> On Jerome's interpretation of Daniel, see Maria Ana Travassos Valdez, "St. Jerome's Commentary on Daniel," in *eadem*, *Historical Interpretations of the "Fifth Empire": The Dynamics of Periodization from Daniel to António Vieira, S.J.* (Leiden, 2010), 157–173.

<sup>95</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 197, *PL* 33, col. 901: "...magis eligo cautam ignorantiam confiteri, quam falsam scientiam profiteri"; trans. Wilfrid Parsons, *Letters*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C., 1955), 350. This may have also been an approach that Augustine learned from Ambrose's sermons, for as Michael Stuart Williams, "'But I May Be Wrong': The Self-Conscious Construction of Episcopal Authority in the Sermons of Ambrose of Milan," in Shari Boodts, Johan Leemans, and Brigitte Meijns, eds., *Shaping Authority: How Did a Person Become an Authority in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance?* (Turnhout, 2016), 157–196, shows, Ambrose only strengthened his authority as an exegete by frequently, explicitly conceding that his interpretations of scripture may not be the most correct readings, owing to the great complexity and mystery of God's Word.

presciently describe the present state of the world—prominent among these are Paul’s warning about the *tempora periculosa* at 2 Tim. 3:1, followed by 1 Thess. 5:1–3 and 2 Thess. 2:5–8, thus obliging Augustine to address these ominous verses.<sup>96</sup> He does exactly this in *ep.* 199 (often transmitted in manuscripts under the title *De fine saeculi*), arguably Augustine’s most powerful statement against millenarian apocalypticism. It is instructive to quote at length from this extraordinary text:

[T]he exact span of the nearness, that, as we said, “is not for you to know.” Notice when the Apostle said this: “For our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is past and the day is at hand,” (Rom. 13:11–12) and look how many years have passed! Yet, what he said was not untrue. How much more probable is it to say now that the coming of the Lord is near when there has been such an increase of time toward the end! Certainly, the Apostle said: ‘The Spirit manifestly saith that in the last times some shall depart from the faith.’ (1 Tim. 4:1) Obviously, those were not yet the times of heretics such as he describes them in the same sentence, but they have now come. According to this, we seem to be in the last times and the heretics seem to be a warning of the end of the world. Likewise, he says in another place: “Know also this: that in the last days shall come on savage times”—or, as another version has it: dangerous times—and then he describes what they will be like, saying: “Men shall be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, haughty, proud, blasphemous, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, irreligious, without affection, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, blind, lovers of pleasures more than of God, having an appearance of godliness but denying the power thereof.” I wonder if such men have ever been lacking. [...]

We are not to think that in this passage he used his verbs in the present tense for the future, because, in fact, he was warning his correspondent to avoid these persons. Yet, he had a purpose in saying: ‘In the last times shall come on dangerous days,’ and he proved that the times will be dangerous by prophesying that men will be such, if for no other reason than because they will be more and more numerous as the end draws near. We see that they are numerous at present. But what does that signify if they will be even more numerous after us and most numerous of all when the end itself is imminent, although it is not known how far off it is? Indeed, those last days were spoken of even in the first days of the Apostles when the Lord’s Ascension into heaven was a recent happening; when on the day of Pentecost He had sent the promised Holy Spirit; when some were amazed and wondered at men speaking tongues which they had not learned, while others mocked, saying that they were full of new wine.

Therefore, there were last days even then; how much more now, even if there remained as many days to the end as have already passed from the Ascension of the Lord to this day, or even if there remain something over, more or less! Manifestly, we do not know this, because

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<sup>96</sup> Hesychius’s letter is catalogued among Augustine’s correspondence as *ep.* 198.

it is not for us ‘to know the times which the Father hath put in his own power,’ although we do know that we, like the Apostles, are living in last times, last days, a last hour, and this is much more so of those who lived after them and before us, much more so of us, and much more of those who will come after us than of us, until the time comes, so to speak, of the last, and finally of that very last moment which the Lord referred to when He said: “And I will raise him up in the last day.” But how far off that is cannot be known. [...]

But what of the very children of light and children of the day, that that day should overtake them as a thief? Do they not still “use this world as if they used it not,” because they think with pious care of the saying: “The time is short,” (1 Cor. 7:31) even though this was said many years ago, in the times of the Apostles? Do not the majority of them still set out vines, build, buy, possess, hold offices, marry wives? [...]

I think it is better to apply these things to the Church so that the Lord Jesus may not seem to have predicted, for the approach of His second coming, a magnified form of what has been accustomed to happen in this world even before His first coming, and that, when we fall into a panic over present happenings as if they were the ultimate and extreme of all things, we may not be laughed at by those who have read of more and worse things in the history of the world.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Augustine, *ep.* 199, *PL* 33, col. 912–919: “quanto intervallo propinquet, hoc, dictum est, *non est vestrum scire*. Vide quando dixit Apostolus, *Nunc enim propior est nostra salus, quam cum credidimus. Nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit* (Rom. 13:11–12): et ecce quot anni transierunt! nec tamen quod dixit falsum est. Quanto magis nunc dicendum est propinquare Domini adventum; quando tantus est ad finem factus accessus! Apostolus certe, *Spiritus*, inquit, *manifeste dicit quia in novissimis temporibus recedent quidam a fide* (1 Tim 4:1). Nondum utique erant eadem tempora, haereticorum scilicet et talium, quales eodem sermone describit; sed iam venerunt: ac per hoc in novissimis temporibus videmur etiam per ipsos de fine saeculi commoneri. Itemque alibi dicens, *Hoc autem scitote, quoniam in novissimis diebus instabunt tempora saeva*, vel, sicut alii codices habent, *periculosa*: deinde qualia futura sint exprimens, *Erunt enim homines*, inquit, *seipsos amantes, amatores pecuniae, elati, superbi, blasphemi, parentibus non obedientes, ingrati, scelesti, irreligiosi, sine affectione, detractores, incontinentes, immites, sine benignitate, proditores, procaces, caecati, voluptatum amatores magis quam Dei, habentes speciem pietatis, virtutem autem eius abnegantes*. Mirum si tales homines aliquando defuerunt. [...]

Nec putandus est hoc loco, pro temporis futuri verbis, praesentis temporis verba posuisse; quandoquidem illos ab eo cui scribit, evitari admonebat. Nec tamen frustra dixit, *In novissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa*; et hinc ea periculosa futura demonstrans tales homines futuros esse praedixit, nisi quia tanto plures erunt, magisque abundabunt, quanto magis propinquatur ad finem. Videmus ergo tales nunc abundare. Sed quid, si abundantiores erunt post nos, et omnino abundantissimi quando iam iamque ipse finis instabit, qui quamdiu aberit ignoratur? Novissimi quippe dies dicti sunt, et in ipsis primis Apostolorum diebus, cum Domini in coelum recens esset ascensus, quando die Pentecostes misit promissum Spiritum sanctum, et quidam stupebant admirantes eos qui linguis quas non didicerant, loquebantur, quidam vero irridentes, musto plenos esse dicebant. Quo die Petrus loquens ad illos qui de hac re varie movebantur: *Non enim sicut*, inquit, *susplicamini, ebrii sunt isti, cum sit hora diei tertia. Sed attendite quoniam hoc est quod dictum est per prophetam, Erit in novissimis diebus, dicit Dominus, effundam de Spiritu meo super omnem carnem*, etc. (Acts 2:1,17).

Iam tunc ergo erant dies novissimi; quanto magis nunc, etiamsi tantum dierum remansit usque in finem, quantum ad hunc diem a Domini ascensione transactum est, vel aliquid sive minus restet sive amplius? quod profecto nescimus, quia non est nostrum scire tempora vel momenta, quae Pater posuit in sua potestate: cum tamen sciamus, in novissimis temporibus, in novissimis diebus, in novissima hora nos agere, sicut Apostoli; sed multo magis qui fuerunt post illos ante nos, et multo magis nos, et magis quam nos qui erunt post nos, donec ad illos veniatur qui erunt, si dici potest, novissimorum novissimi, atque ad ipsum omnino novissimum, quem vult intelligi Dominus, ubi dicit, *Et resuscitabo eum in novissimo die* (Jn. 6:40): qui quam longe absit, comprehendi non potest. [...]

Essential to Augustine's unmistakably Tyconian argument is his contention that Paul was certainly not wrong in his warnings about the *tempora periculosa*, but that these passages from his letters must be read in a spiritual, allegorical manner; like Tyconius, Augustine suggests that these eschatological passages should be applied to the Church in its mystical, celestial sense. That Paul had lived and preached many years prior is the basic historical fact that grounds Augustine's argument. He notes that Paul had already perceived the insidious dangers of the "last times" in his own day, and the world did not end in Paul's time nor during the generations that followed him. While these dangers may have seemingly increased and intensified in the time of Augustine and Hesychius, there is simply no good, scripturally warranted reason to believe that they would not *continue* to increase and intensify for an unknowable, unpredictable duration thereafter. Thus, Paul was indeed correct that he was living in the world's last days, but it was impossible to know how many literal days those "last days" would encompass, particularly *because* they already contained the considerable span of time separating Paul from Augustine and Hesychius, a span much greater than the years between the Incarnation and Paul's missionary activity. More than a decade later, the arguments delivered by Augustine in his letters to Hesychius, and in numerous sermons preached around the same time (*ca.* 410), would reappear—revised, polished, and embedded within an expansive, systematic theology of heaven and earth—in Augustine's magnum opus, *De civitate Dei*, particularly in book 20, a text that

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Quid ipsi filii lucis et filii diei, qui non sunt in tenebris, ut eos tanquam fur dies ille comprehendat? nonne adhuc utuntur hoc mundo tanquam non utentes? Quia etsi ante multos annos, Apostolorum temporibus dictum est, pia tamen sollicitudine cogitant quod dictum est, *Tempus breve est* (1 Cor. 7:29). Nonne a maxima parte eorum novellatur, aedificatur, emitur, possidetur, geruntur adhuc honores, ducuntur uxores? [...]

Haec quippe in Ecclesia melius existimo intelligi, ne Dominus Iesus appropinquante secundo adventu suo ea pro magno praedixisse videatur, quae huic mundo et ante primum eius adventum consueverant evenire, et irrideamur ab eis qui haec, quae velut novissima et omnium maxima horrescimus, plura in historia gentium, et multo maiora legerunt"; trans. Parsons, *Letters*, 373–387.



would prove extraordinarily influential, and useful, for early medieval readers who sought to understand scriptural passages relating to the ends of time and the world.<sup>98</sup>

### **Augustine and the “Generation of Paul”**

The *De civitate Dei*, Augustine’s sermons, and his letters were among the many texts that early medieval readers would turn to in seeking out Augustine’s interpretations of Paul’s letters.<sup>99</sup> Such mining of Augustine’s diverse works proved necessary because, on the one hand, Augustine would be regarded as perhaps the greatest Latin patristic authority on Paul, while, on the other hand, he never produced a complete commentary on the Pauline epistles. In the *Confessiones*, Augustine clearly modelled his autobiographical account of his own conversion on that of Paul—it was Romans 13:13–14 that he “picked up and read” in the garden in Milan—and he references and interprets passages from Paul’s letters throughout his many works.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See especially Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, 20.2, 20.4, and 20.7. On the crystallization of Augustine’s interpretation of the Apocalypse in this book of the *De civitate Dei*, see Fredriksen, “Apocalypse and Redemption,” esp. 160–166; Paul B. Harvey, Jr., “Approaching the Apocalypse: Augustine, Tyconius, and John’s Revelation,” in Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, and Allan D. Fitzgerald, eds., *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine’s City of God* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1999), 133–151; Harry O. Maier, “The End of the City and the City without End: The *City of God* as Revelation,” in *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination*, 153–164, who focuses on *De civitate Dei* books 20–22. On the *De civitate Dei*’s seismic impact on early medieval understandings of time and the temporal world, see Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, who notes (at p. 32), “Augustine’s political thought had important implications. The nature of the ‘mixed body’ meant that it was radically predisposed to action, because it could never be satisfied with itself. The inherent tensions between spiritual ideals and pragmatic earthly action ensured that there was a perpetual drive to criticise and reform; the only state of perfection could come with Judgement Day and the removal of the corrupting sinfulness of human existence.”

<sup>99</sup> On the enduring influence of the *De civitate Dei*, see especially Alain Stoclet, “Le ‘De civitate Dei’ de Saint Augustin: Sa diffusion avant 900 d’après les caractères externes des manuscrits antérieurs à cette date et les catalogues contemporains,” *Recherches augustiniennes* 19 (1984), 191. See also Michael M. Gorman, “The Manuscript Traditions of St. Augustine’s Major Works,” in *idem*, *The Manuscript Traditions of the Works of St. Augustine* (Florence, 2001), esp. 332–335; Jocelyn Hillgarth, “L’Influence de la *Cité de Dieu* de Saint Augustin au Haut Moyen Âge,” *Sacris Erudiri* 28 (1985), 5–34. On Augustine’s influence more generally, see Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustine and His Influence Through the Ages*, trans. Patrick Hepburne-Scott (New York/London, 1957), 147–159; Leyser, “Augustine in the Latin West”; Jesse Keskiäho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages: The Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400–900* (Cambridge, 2015).

<sup>100</sup> On the profound impact of Paul on Augustine’s thought from the 390s on, as famously evinced in the *Confessiones*, see especially Stendahl, “The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience”; Fredriksen, “Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1986), 3–34; Benjamin Myers, “A Tale of Two Gardens: Augustine’s Narrative Interpretation of Romans 5,” in

Furthermore, around roughly the same time that he composed the *Confessiones*, Augustine's reading of Tyconius's *Liber regularum* equipped him with a new approach to interpreting Paul, against the interpretations of his former sect and later opponents, the Manichees.<sup>101</sup> Yet, despite the centrality of Paul to Augustine's mature theology, he completed just one focused commentary on a Pauline text (Galatians), in addition to two separate unfinished commentaries on Romans, both written against the Manichees; all three composed in the mid-390s.<sup>102</sup>

As we shall see in chapter 2, these two facts—Augustine's reputation as a great authority on Paul and the problem of his writings on Paul being spread widely across his works—together served to motivate the efforts of eighth- and ninth-century figures like Bede and Florus of Lyon, who strove to dutifully follow and understand Augustine, as Augustine had striven to follow and understand Paul. In the early Middle Ages, Augustine, perhaps more profoundly than any other patristic author, deeply informed how Paul was interpreted and understood. Yet, it was Tyconius who had effected a subtle but crucial change in Augustine's own way of reading of scripture, including the Pauline epistles, and who therefore remains a vital player in this story, even where he is seemingly invisible.<sup>103</sup>

Although Augustine did not produce a full commentary on the Pauline letters, other late antique writers from what Peter Brown has aptly called the “generation of Paul” did accomplish this task.<sup>104</sup> In the Latin West, the earliest surviving commentaries on Paul were written by the

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*Apocalyptic Paul*, 39–58; Thomas F. Martin, “Vox Pauli: Augustine and the Claims to Speak for Paul, An Exploration of Rhetoric at the Service of Exegesis,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 237–272; Charles Hallisey, “The Surprise of Scripture's Advice,” in *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation*, 28–48; Markus, *Saeculum*, 80ff.

<sup>101</sup> Mark Vessey, “History of the Book: Augustine's *City of God* and post-Roman Cultural Memory,” in James Wetzel, ed., *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2012), 17.

<sup>102</sup> Paula Fredriksen Landes, Introduction to *Augustine on Romans: Propositions from the Epistles to the Romans, Unfinished Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Chico, Calif. 1982), ix–xvi.

<sup>103</sup> Ebbeler, “Charitable Correction,” 287, for example, notes Tyconius's “apparently profound influence on Augustine's theology, especially on his understanding of the Pauline letters” [my emphasis].

<sup>104</sup> See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, 1967), 151

anonymous, fourth-century author known as “Ambrosiaster,” so called because his writings were long misattributed to Ambrose of Milan. Ambrosiaster’s commentaries did not include Hebrews (which he viewed as canonical though not authentically Pauline), but did cover the other 13 letters. Ambrosiaster’s work was known to Augustine, Jerome, and Pelagius, the latter of whom produced his own commentary on Paul’s letters, completed *ca.* 410.<sup>105</sup> Despite Pelagius’s legacy as a heresiarch, following his acrimonious dispute with Augustine over free will, predestination, and grace, his commentaries on Paul nevertheless exercised considerable influence in later centuries. This persistent influence can (at least partly) be explained by the fact that Pelagius’s commentaries circulated under the names of Jerome, Primasius, and Cassiodorus.<sup>106</sup> The last of these figures had provided a revised gloss on Pelagius’s commentaries, ostensibly eliminating their “Pelagian” errors and adding content from orthodox authorities like Augustine. Primasius, the sixth-century bishop of Hadrumetum, in Africa, did not actually write a commentary on Paul, although he did produce a commentary on the Apocalypse that was heavily dependent on that of Tyconius. Jerome, drawing partly from the works of Origen, did complete commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, Titus, and Philemon, which can result in some confusion (for modern scholars) when medieval exegetes cite Jerome’s genuine commentaries alongside Pelagius identified as Jerome, as is sometimes the case.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Although Ambrosiaster’s is the earliest complete Latin commentary on the Pauline epistles, it was probably preceded by Marius Victorinus’s commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians; see Stephen Andrew Cooper, “Situating Victorinus’s Commentaries on Paul,” in *idem*, *Marius Victorinus’ Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford, 2005), 127–181. On Ambrosiaster and his eschatology, see Joshua Papsdorf, “‘Ambrosiaster’ in Paul in the Middle Ages,” in Steven Cartwright, ed., *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2012), 51–77; Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist*, 37–50.

<sup>106</sup> Alexander Souter, *Pelagius’s Expositions on the Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, remains a vital study of Pelagius’s work and its medieval afterlife. Thomas P. Scheck, “Pelagius’s Interpretation of Romans,” in *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages*, 11–49, provides a good summary of more recent scholarship on Pelagius’s Pauline exegesis.

<sup>107</sup> See Giacomo Raspanti, “The Significance of Jerome’s Commentary on Galatians in His Exegetical Production,” in Andrew Cain and Joseph Lössl, eds., *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings, and Legacy* (Aldershot, 2009), 163–171; Thomas P. Scheck, Introduction to *St. Jerome’s Commentary on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon*

## **Conclusion**

The Pauline commentaries of these late antique figures, roughly contemporary to Tyconius and Augustine, were influential throughout the early Middle Ages, including in the Carolingian era. Regarding the close relationship between authority and antiquity in Carolingian discourse, it is certainly worth noting that the persistent presence of the Ambrosiaster and Pelagius commentaries was due in no small part to the attribution of these works to well-known, orthodox authorities, particularly the great names of the idealized late Roman *tempora Christiana*. As we shall see in chapter 2, Carolingian exegetes, and/or compilers of patristic exegesis, frequently drew from these late antique Pauline commentaries in conjunction with Augustine's many, scattered discussions of Paul—as well as the works of key early medieval Christian writers, active between the “generation of Paul” and the age of Charlemagne.

Carolingian intellectuals and reformers gained from the interwoven works, ideas, and exegetical strategies of Tyconius, Augustine, and—of particular importance among those key early medieval writers—Bede a kind of eschatological agnosticism, tested by their own *tempora periculosa* and *dies mali* but resilient enough to facilitate and support a far-sighted, ambitious program of correction and reform in a world that *could* continue on for many more generations. While the major, late Roman Fathers Augustine, Jerome, and “Ambrose” (i.e., usually Ambrosiaster) may loom largest in the Carolingian commentaries examined in our next chapter, Bede comes remarkably close to these “ancient” authorities. Indeed, it is during the Carolingian era, and especially in the areas of scriptural exegesis and of temporality (in its multiple senses), that we can most clearly see the construction of Bede as a major patristic authority in his own

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(Notre Dame, Ind., 2010), 1–45; Ronald E. Heine, Introduction to *The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Oxford, 2002), 5–35.

right, nearly comparable in status to the late antique Fathers whom he had explicitly endeavoured to follow.<sup>108</sup> Through this authority that was increasingly attributed to Bede as one of Latin Christianity's foremost experts on time—as well as through Augustine's bold challenges to confident chiliastic interpretations of scripture and his summary of the *Liber regularum* in *De doctrina Christiana* Bk. 3—a distinctly Tyconian eschatology and scriptural hermeneutics persisted into the ninth century, even where Tyconius himself is absent in name.

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<sup>108</sup> Cf. Joyce Hill, "Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede," in Scott DeGregorio, ed., *Innovation and Traditions in the Writings of The Venerable Bede* (Morgantown, W.V., 2006), 227–249.

## Chapter 2

### ‘Redeeming the Time’: Pauline Eschatology in Carolingian Exegesis and Discourse

#### **Introduction: Carolingian context(s)**

One of the hallmarks of the Carolingian era was the meticulous effort put into biblical correction and interpretation, often at the urging of kings and emperors who understood these projects as integral to the reforming of Christian society itself. These textual efforts were carried out both by the period’s most prominent intellectuals, many of whom produced scriptural commentaries, and by countless, anonymous scribes, copying both biblical books and the exegetical works of earlier centuries.<sup>1</sup> In both respects, correction and commentary, the Carolingians depended to a great extent on the products of patristic genius—Jerome’s Vulgate text, his explanatory notes, and the numerous commentaries of the fourth- and fifth-century Christian writers discussed above. Consequently, most (though not all) Carolingian commentaries appear much closer to compilations of patristic texts than to “original” works of exegesis. Nevertheless, the discernible choices of such compilers are themselves potentially expressive and revealing. From these creative selections, we can learn something about how learned Christians of the eighth and ninth centuries understood—or preferred to interpret—scripture, including its more eschatologically charged passages. In what follows, I will examine

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<sup>1</sup> On the Bible in the Carolingian era, see especially Celia Chazelle and Burton van Name Edwards, eds., *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era* (Turnhout, 2003); Bernice Kaczynski, “Edition, Translation, and Exegesis: The Carolingians and the Bible,” in Richard E. Sullivan, ed., *The Gentle Voices of Teachers: Aspects of Learning in the Carolingian Age* (Columbus, Ohio, 1995), 171–185; Sumi Shimahara, “Citations explicites ou recours implicites? Les usages de l’autorité des Pères dans l’exégèse carolingienne,” in Rainer Berndt and Michel Fédou, eds., *Les réceptions des Pères de l’Église au Moyen Âge: Le devenir de la tradition ecclésiale* (Münster, 2013), 369–388; John J. Contreni, “Carolingian Biblical Studies,” in Uta-Renate Blumenthal, ed., *Carolingian Essays* (Washington, D.C., 1983), 71–98.

several of the Carolingian commentaries on the Pauline letters to determine what sense these writer-compilers made of Paul's warnings about "dangerous times," "evil days," and the imminent messianic event that would nullify all worldly powers.<sup>2</sup> To a lesser extent, I will also consider Carolingian commentaries on the Apocalypse, such as those produced by Alcuin of York and Haimo of Auxerre, to show the continuing, if indirect, influence of Tyconius on the reading of this book and the use of Paul's words to explain its message. As we shall see repeatedly in what follows, Carolingian exegetes—following the examples of past authorities (especially Augustine) and closely drawing from their works—consistently preferred non-literal, spiritual, or moral interpretations of apocalyptic/messianic passages from the New Testament.

In sketching brief contemporary contexts for these Carolingian writers, I do not mean to imply that their commentaries can be fully explained by developments in the contemporary political or cultural spheres. This type of over-dependence on current events toward explicating exegetical works is what Kevin Hughes aptly terms the "historicist fallacy."<sup>3</sup> Indeed, as Hughes suggests, intertextual contexts may ultimately tell us more of direct pertinence about scriptural commentaries than extratextual events can. Nevertheless, while the contextual details that I provide are meant primarily to situate these texts and their "authors" in particular times and places, these details may also help us to better understand individual decisions with regard to intertextual selection and, more generally, what motivated Carolingian writer-compilers to continue producing "new" commentaries on Paul at all, despite the availability of earlier Pauline commentaries. To be sure, all of the Carolingian-era commentaries examined here draw

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<sup>2</sup> For overviews of the Carolingian commentaries on Paul, see especially Johannes Heil, *Kompilation oder Konstruktion? Die Juden in den Pauluskommentaren des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Hannover, 1998); Johannes Heil, "Labourers in the Lord's Quarry: Carolingian Exegetes, Patristic Authority, and Theological Innovation: A Case Study in the Representation of Jews in Commentaries on Paul," in *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*, 75–96; Ian Christopher Levy, "Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles in the Carolingian Era," in *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages*, 145–174.

<sup>3</sup> Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist*, 15–17.

extensively from works by the major Latin Fathers, but also from less lofty figures, who were lent a share of patristic status through their (real or imagined) connections with the great names of “ancient Christianity.” Many Carolingian commentaries also rely on the works of vital intermediaries from the centuries between the ages of Augustine and the Carolingians—above all, Bede, whose varied oeuvre provided a relatable (early eighth-century) blueprint for Carolingian ideas regarding time(s), God’s providential ordering of human history, and the eventual but not necessarily imminent End of time.

Yet, while Carolingian exegetes, following the authoritative examples of late antique writers and more recent exemplars like Bede, overwhelmingly preferred spiritual, figurative readings of Paul’s more eschatologically ambiguous verses, they nonetheless remained cognizant of the apocalyptic connotations in these same verses. In textual contexts outside biblical commentary, some Carolingian writers borrowed Paul’s words, inflected with clear notes of apocalyptic urgency, in order to deliver their arguments in the strongest-possible terms. However, as I shall argue, these eighth- and ninth-century texts that speak of the *tempora periculosa* or *dies mali* should not necessarily be taken as earnest predictions of the End-times, but rather as products of a discursive context centred on correction and reform, *Ecclesia* and *imperium*.<sup>4</sup> As Matthew Gillis has recently observed, “Carolingian theology was imperial politics on a cosmic scale.”<sup>5</sup> This statement certainly rings true for Carolingian eschatology. Although

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<sup>4</sup> On these points, see especially Mayke de Jong, “*Ecclesia* and the Early Medieval Polity,” in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), 113–132; Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious* (Cambridge, 2009); Courtney M. Booker, *Past Convictions: The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009); Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus. Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008); Abigail Firey, *A Contrite Heart: Prosecution and Redemption in the Carolingian Empire* (Leiden, 2009); Florence Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l'Empire: La pensée politico-théologique de Charlemagne* (Brussels, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Gillis, *Heresy and Dissent in the Carolingian Empire: The Case of Gottschalk of Orbais* (Oxford, 2017), 2.



deeply rooted in the ideas of the Fathers and purportedly following from their authoritative examples, Carolingian understandings of “time(s)” and their relation to the eventual End-times are marked by a variety of malleable exegetical and discursive options, which could be pragmatically deployed to different ends across the eighth and ninth centuries.

In James Palmer’s important recent study, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, he states his thesis as follows:

[A]pocalyptic thought in the early Middle Ages was commonplace and mainstream, and an important factor in the way that people conceptualised, stimulated and directed change. It was not solely the marginal and extremist way of thinking nearly all modern scholars imagine. Apocalyptic thought, understood properly, essentially becomes a powerful part of reform discourse about how best to direct people – individually and collectively – towards a better life on Earth.<sup>6</sup>

My chapter will not directly consider the question of whether or not apocalyptic thought was in fact “common and mainstream” in early medieval Europe, nor will it enter into the long-running historiographical debate over whether a silent (or *silenced*) majority of millenarian literalists continued to calculate the date of the End up to and beyond the year 1000; rather, my points here pertain to the writers and texts at hand, and are not meant to be extended to the entire regional cultures to which they belonged.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, some Carolingian-era people did offer predictions

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<sup>6</sup> James T. Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2014), 3.

<sup>7</sup> For these debates see, e.g., Richard Landes, “Lest the Millennium Be Fulfilled: Apocalyptic Expectations and the Pattern of Western Chronography, 100–800 C.E.,” in Werner Verbeke, D. Verhelst, and Andries Welkenhuysen, eds., *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 1988), 137–211; Wolfram Brandes, “‘Tempora periculosa sunt’: Eschatologisches im Vorfeld der Kaiserkrönung Karls des Großen,” in Rainer Berndt, ed., *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794. Kristallisationspunkt karolingischer Kultur. Akten zweier Symposien (vom 23. bis 27. Februar und vom 13. bis 15. Oktober 1994) anlässlich der 1200-Jahrfeier der Stadt Frankfurt am Main* (Mainz, 1997), 49–79; Paula Fredriksen, “Apocalypse and Redemption in Early Christianity: From John of Patmos to Augustine of Hippo,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (1991), 151–83; Sylvain Gouguenheim, *Les Fausses terreurs de l’an Mil: Attente de la fin des temps ou approfondissement de la foi?* (Paris, 1999); Johannes Fried, *Aufstieg aus dem Untergang. Apokalyptisches Denken und die Entstehung der modernen Naturwissenschaft im Mittelalter* (Munich, 2001); Robert A. Markus, “Living within Sight of the End,” in Chris Humphrey and W.M. Ormrod, eds., *Time in the Medieval World* (York, 2001), 23–34; Johannes Fried, “Die Endzeit fest im Griff des Positivismus? Zur Auseinandersetzung mit Sylvain Gouguenheim,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 275 (2002), 281–322. For recent reviews of this and other literature on apocalypticism, see Palmer, *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 4–19.

for the time of the apocalypse, and even welcomed its coming as putting to an end an irredeemably corrupt, wicked world full of hardship and misery. For example, Paul Dutton detects a “popular apocalyptic message” in the Fulda annalist’s description of the mid-ninth-century prophetic visions of Thiota, who evidently warned of a very imminent End. Yet, such cases notwithstanding, Dutton contends that “ninth-century intellectuals did not often succumb to apocalyptic thought, at least not in its more extreme forms...[T]hey seem not to have been overly afraid that the end of time was rapidly rushing towards them.”<sup>8</sup> This point indeed holds true for the Carolingian intellectuals with whom my study is chiefly concerned. For these writers—most of them high-ranking ecclesiastical figures, often with connections to Carolingian courts—the world could still be reformed and improved before its eventual End.

Palmer’s approach to the apocalyptic as “a mode of argument, and one which makes sense of key problems in human experience (the existence of evil, the mystery of time, the problem of authority),” rather than of apocalypticism as a strictly either/or question, serves to create a navigable route around the interminable debates over whether or not the early Middle Ages were a time of intense, widespread apocalypticism. My case study, particularly in the later part of this chapter, will similarly explore how apocalyptic thought functioned as “a powerful part of reform discourse.”<sup>9</sup>

Before moving on to these “discursive” appropriations of Paul (outside scriptural commentaries), however, we shall first consider how eschatological, or apocalyptic, passages in Paul’s letters came to be understood in a primarily, and sometimes wholly, “spiritual” or moral

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Edward Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, Neb., 1994), 126–127. In examining the cases of Thiota and Audradus Modicus, Dutton makes the important distinction between “apocalyptic” and “prophetic” thought in Carolingian culture.

<sup>9</sup> Palmer, *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 3. Also, see now James T. Palmer and Matthew Gabriele, “Introduction: Reform and the Beginning of the End,” in Gabriele and Palmer, eds., *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (London, 2018), 1–9.

light in Carolingian exegesis. These late-eighth- and ninth-century readers of Paul and of the late antique Fathers—and of the less temporally or culturally distant early medieval intermediaries, discussed below—recognized that such allegorizing, or spiritualizing, approaches to the problem of the End served well to ground their ambitious efforts at correction and reform of a world that might not end anytime soon, despite being in its final “Age.”

### **Early medieval intermediaries and the special significance of Bede**

The ideas of Tyconius and Augustine concerning eschatological passages in Paul were often transmitted to the Carolingians through the works of writers between the sixth and eighth centuries. Caesarius of Arles (d. 542), for instance, worked closely from Tyconius for his commentary on the Apocalypse, and was so thoroughly influenced by Augustine that his sermons and other writings were often misattributed to him throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup> The eschatology of Gregory the Great (d. 604)—one of the most important and ubiquitous sources of authority in the Carolingian era, perhaps even rivalling Augustine—is exceptionally difficult to neatly summarize, but is, above all, emphatic in its call for all Christians to prepare themselves for an End that could arrive at any moment. While ostensibly following Augustine, Gregory was deeply concerned by the troubled and dangerous temporal circumstances of the period of his pontificate, and we can discern this anxiety in his repeated warnings to secular clergy, monks, and the Christian laity. Those urgent warnings continued to echo into the eighth and ninth centuries, and perhaps lent themselves to readings of *tempora periculosa* as predictable signs of a fast-approaching End.

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<sup>10</sup> On Caesarius’s use of Tyconius, see Palmer, *The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 40–41; Wallis, Introduction to *Bede: Commentary on Revelation*, 19. For recent assessments of Caesarius’s work and its importance, see the articles contained in *Early Medieval Europe* 26.1 (2018).

However, this apocalyptic aspect of Gregory's work was tempered not only by the earlier works of Augustine and Tyconius, but also by the later, influential exegetical writings of Bede, who consistently downplayed any possibility of predicting the time of the End from scripture, worldly events, or the two "read" in tandem.<sup>11</sup> Bede's interpretations of eschatological passages in scripture followed closely from Augustine and from Tyconius, whom he fully accepted as a credible authority on the basis of Augustine's endorsement in the *De doctrina Christiana*. Where Bede's commentary on the Apocalypse, considered in chapter 1, used Tyconius as one of its major sources (often following Tyconius's interpretation of Pauline verses to interpret the Johannine pericopes), his commentary on Paul's letters is drawn almost exclusively from the many writings of Augustine.<sup>12</sup> In addition to these influential exegetical works, Bede's two treatises on the reckoning of time were also widely accessible and frequently copied in the Carolingian era, wherein they were used as guidebooks for computistical study. The longer and more popular of these two works includes lengthy quotations from Augustine's *ep.* 199 to Hesychius and from book 20 of the *De civitate Dei*, deployed to argue against chiliastic readings of eschatological passages in Paul, the Apocalypse, and other scriptural texts.<sup>13</sup>

Bede's body of work served as one of the principal vectors by which distinctively Augustinian and Tyconian ideas regarding the meaning and interpretation of eschatological passages in scripture were transmitted to the Carolingians. Where Bede's widely circulating

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<sup>11</sup> On Gregory's eschatology and its tempering by Bede, see Markus, "Living within Sight of the End" and "Gregory and Bede: The Making of the Western Apocalyptic Tradition," in *Gregorio Magno nel XIV centenario della morte: Convegno internazionale (Roma, 22–25 ottobre 2003)* (Rome, 2004), 247–255. For a general, up-to-date overview, see Jane Baum, "Gregory's Eschatology," in Matthew Dal Santo and Bronwen Neil, eds., *A Companion to Gregory the Great* (Leiden, 2013), 157–176; and also, see now James T. Palmer, "To Be Found Prepared: Eschatology and Reform Rhetoric, ca. 570–ca. 640," in *Apocalypse and Reform from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, 31–49.

<sup>12</sup> Both of these texts will be discussed at greater length below, particularly Bede's Augustinian compilation on Paul, a source for Florus of Lyon's more extensive *Expositio in beati Pauli ex operibus sancti Augustini*.

<sup>13</sup> Bede, *De temporum ratione*, in C.W. Jones, ed., *Bædæ opera didascalica* (II), CCSL 123B (Turnhout, 1977); Wallis trans., *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool, 1999).

longer treatise on the reckoning of time increased Carolingian readers' familiarity with Augustine's apocalyptically agnostic arguments in his letter to Hesychius, the strong influence of Bede's Apocalypse commentary ensured that at least substantial parts of Tyconius's own commentary remained in circulation, informing Carolingian treatments of the New Testament's final book and other eschatologically charged scriptural passages. Explicitly working from the orthodox authority of Augustine, Bede's commentary harmoniously synthesizes Tyconius's views with Augustine's, especially those of the *De civitate Dei*, leaving little discernible difference between their respective eschatologies. Bede's subtly innovative synthesis is strongly reflected in the eschatological writings of his Carolingian readers, beginning with his fellow Northumbrian, Alcuin of York.

### **Alcuin of York on Paul and the Apocalypse**

Alcuin (d. 804) was himself a vital intermediary of sorts, between the insular monastic world of Bede and the court culture of the early Carolingian renaissance. Serving as a close advisor to Charlemagne, Alcuin was a major proponent in the early Carolingian efforts at biblical correction and education and a prolific exegete.<sup>14</sup> Alcuin was long believed, by subsequent medieval readers, to have composed commentaries on all of the Pauline letters. While this was probably not actually the case, he did produce the earliest extant Latin commentary on Hebrews.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, only incomplete fragments of his commentaries on Ephesians, Titus,

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<sup>14</sup> On Alcuin's thought, his exegesis, and his use of the Church Fathers, see especially Donald A. Bullough, "Alcuin and the Kingdom of Heaven: Liturgy, Theology, and the Carolingian Age," in *idem*, *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage* (Manchester, 1991), 161–240; Mary Garrison, "The Bible and Alcuin's Interpretation of Current Events," *Peritia* 16 (2002), 68–84; F.-L. Ganshof, "Alcuin's Revision of the Bible," in *idem*, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy*, trans. Janet Sondheimer (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971), 28–40; Sophia Mösch, "Augustinian Thought in Alcuin's Writing: A Philological-Historical Approach," *History of Political Thought* 39 (2008), 33–53; Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l'Empire*.

<sup>15</sup> For his Hebrews commentary, Alcuin depended in part on a Greek commentary by John Chrysostom; on this, see Frederick S. Paxton, "The Early Growth in the Medieval Economy of Salvation in Latin Christianity," in

Philemon, Hebrews, and a brief treatment of some “sayings” (*sententiae*) of Paul have survived.<sup>16</sup> We will find more of direct pertinence to Alcuin’s understanding of Paul’s *tempora periculosa*, and those of his own age, in other writings of Alcuin, discussed below. Still, Alcuin’s Pauline commentaries, even in their fragmentary forms, offer suggestive, if tentative, evidence of how he interpreted ambiguities in Paul in light of contemporary circumstances. For example, in his brief treatment of Paul’s “sayings,” Alcuin invokes Eph. 5:14 (“Rise, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall enlighten thee,” *Exsurge, qui dormis, et exsurge a mortuis, et illuminabit te Christus*). Alcuin does not quote the verses that follow after this, including Paul’s assertion that “the days are evil” (at Eph. 5:16), but this idea is nevertheless implied by Alcuin’s comments on Eph. 5:14, observing that, in “these days also” those who “lay low and die in the darkness of sin” shall, “through penance, soon afterwards rise up and feel the divine light of grace.”<sup>17</sup> Here, Alcuin has made Paul’s darkness and death that of “sin” (nowhere mentioned in Ephesians 5), and reads Paul’s verse about the Resurrection, seemingly related to the mystery of the imminent messianic event, as a metaphor for the illuminating, restorative effect of penance on the soul of a sinner, not literally dead and buried but figuratively “low” due to his unrepentant, sinful status. Similarly, in his commentary on Titus, Alcuin quotes Titus 1:6 as: “*Si quis est sine crimine, unius uxoris vir, filios habens fideles, non in accusatione luxuriae, aut non*

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Stefan C. Reif, Andreas Lehnardt, and Avriel Bar-Levav, eds., *Death in Jewish Life: Burial and Mourning Customs among Jews of Europe and Nearby Communities* (Berlin, 2014), 29–30. On the belief, shared by several subsequent medieval exegetes, that Alcuin composed commentaries on all 14 letters ascribed to Paul, see George E. McCracken and Allen Cabaniss, *Early Medieval Theology* (London, 1957), 193.

<sup>16</sup> Alcuin’s commentaries on Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews, and the *sententias* are in *PL* 100, col. 1007–1086. The unedited surviving fragments of Alcuin’s Ephesians commentary are discussed in Paul-Irénée Fransen, “Fragments éparés du commentaire perdu d’Alcuin sur l’Épître aux Éphésiens,” *Revue bénédictine* 81 (1971), 30–59 and Johannes Heil, “Labourers in the Lord’s Quarry,” 78–79. However, as Michael M. Gorman, “Alcuin Before Migne,” *Revue bénédictine* 112 (2002), 101–130, notes, there remains some lingering doubt, and debate, over which Carolingian-era biblical commentaries traditionally attributed to Alcuin were actually composed by him.

<sup>17</sup> Alcuin, *Commentatio brevis in quasdam Sancti Pauli Apostoli sententias*, *PL* 100, col. 1083: “His etiam dicitur qui in tenebris peccatorum iacent, imo et moriuntur; qui si per poenitentiam surgunt, mox sibi divinae gratiae lumen adesse sentiunt.”

*subditos peccato.*” The idea of being “slaves to sin” (*subditos peccato*) is not found in either the Vulgate rendering, the Greek text of this passage, or Jerome’s commentary on Titus, from which Alcuin’s is largely drawn. If indeed “*peccato*” is Alcuin’s own addition, it would be consistent with his frequent tendency to read “sin” into passages in Paul where it is not actually mentioned.<sup>18</sup> Earlier in his commentary on Titus, at 1:3 (“*manifestavit...temporibus suis*”), Alcuin quotes from Jerome regarding the relation of the temporal and the eternal:

By him, according to the story of Genesis, the world was made, and through the changes of nights and days, likewise of months and years, seasons were established, in this journey and rotation of the earth the seasons pass away and come again—and either will be or have been. Thus it is that certain of the philosophers do not think that time is present but that it is either past or future; that everything we speak, do, think, either while it takes place passes away, or if it has not yet been done is still awaited. Therefore, before these times of the world, one must believe there was an eternity of ages in which the Father with the son and the Holy Spirit always existed, and as I say, all eternity is a single time of God; indeed, there are countless times. Not yet has our world existed six thousand years, and how many eternities and how many times before the beginnings of the centuries must one think there were in which angels, thrones, powers, and other forces served the Creator and existed, by God’s order, without change and measurements of times. Before all these times which neither does speech dare to utter, nor the mind to comprehend, nor thought to touch upon in silence, God the Father promised his Word to his Wisdom that that very Wisdom of his, and the life of those who would believe, should come into the world. Pay careful attention to the text and the order of the reading, how life eternal, which God who does not lie promised eternal ages ago, is not different from God’s Word.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Alcuin, *Explanatio in epistolam Pauli ad Titum*, PL 100, col. 1013. This curious addition to Titus 1:6 is discussed in Alcuin, “Commentary on the Epistle to Titus,” ed. and trans. McCracken and Cabaniss, *Early Medieval Theology*, 200, n. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Alcuin, *Explanatio in epistolam Pauli ad Titum*, PL 100, col. 1011: “Ex quo, iuxta historiam Geneseos, factus est mundus, et per vices noctium ac dierum, mensium pariter et annorum, tempora constituta sunt, in hoc curriculo et rota mundi tempora labuntur, et veniunt, et aut futura sunt, aut fuerunt. Unde quidam philosophorum non putant esse tempus praesens, sed aut praeteritum aut futurum; quia omne quod loquimur, agimus, cogitamus, aut dum fit, praeterit; aut si nondum factum est, exspectatur. Ante haec ergo mundi tempora, aeternitatem quamdam saeculorum fuisse credendum est, quibus semper cum Filio et Spiritu sancto fuerit Pater: et, ut ita dicam, unum tempus Dei, est omnis aeternitas: imo innumerabilia tempora sunt, cum infinitus sit ipse, qui ante tempora omne tempus excedit. Sex millia necdum nostri orbis implentur anni, et quantas prius aeternitates, quanta tempora ante saeculorum origines fuisse arbitrandum est, in quibus angeli, throni, dominationes, caeteraeque virtutes servierint Creatori, et absque temporum vicibus atque mensuris, Deo iubente, substiterint. Ante haec itaque omnia tempora, quae nec sermo eloqui, nec mens comprehendere, nec cogitatio tacita audet attingere, promisit Deus Pater sapientiae suae verbum suum, et ipsam sapientiam suam, et vitam eorum qui credituri erant, mundo esse venturam. Diligenter attendite textum et ordinem lectionis, quomodo vita aeterna, quam non mendax Deus ante saecula aeterna promisit, non alia sit absque verbo Dei”; trans. McCracken and Cabaniss, *Early Medieval Theology*, 197–198. Cf. Jerome, *Commentariorum in epistolam ad Titum liber unus*, PL 26, col. 559–560.

According to this reading, the time of the world is presented not as imbued with discernible providential meaning, but as a largely undifferentiated series of times, months, and years cyclically structured by the seasons, a brief duration when compared with the preceding (atemporal) eternity. In this view, it is not possible to figure when the End might come: “not yet...six thousand years” of earthly time has elapsed; the duration of the remaining time of the world’s existence is presumably part of the incomprehensible mystery of God’s plan. Although Alcuin’s remarks here are not from Augustine or Tyconius but borrowed from Jerome (who alone among these writers produced a commentary on Titus), they are certainly consonant with the “neutral” understanding of earthly time and the inscrutable nature of providence described above. The days, nights, months, and years of the world are not in themselves intelligibly significant, but are only the fleeting temporal units within which man may live wickedly or live well, always mindful of and repentant for his sinful nature, while preparing for the salvation granted to the faithful by God.

In their close adherence to patristic sources, Alcuin’s Pauline commentaries are highly typical of late-eighth- and early-ninth-century exegetical projects. As Bernice Kaczynski has shown, Jerome was the most vital authority for this generation of Carolingian intellectuals, for whom the technical labor of biblical correction and standardization—following from Jerome’s Vulgate—were arguably more important than the finer points of interpretation.<sup>20</sup> However, while Jerome was Alcuin’s main source for his commentaries on Paul (or at least for those that survive), Alcuin’s incomplete commentary on the Apocalypse relies on more recent sources, skillfully interweaving Bede’s commentary (composed between 701–710) with the “spiritual”

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<sup>20</sup> Bernice Kaczynski, “The Authority of the Fathers: Patristic Texts in Early Medieval Libraries and Scriptoria,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 16 (2006), esp. 10–12.



commentary of Ambrosius Autpertus (ca. 758–767).<sup>21</sup> Both of these eighth-century commentaries rely heavily upon Tyconius, Primasius (who also drew much from Tyconius, albeit with serious reservations about Tyconius’s status), and on Augustine’s *De civitate Dei*. Although overall Alcuin draws more from Ambrosius Autpertus, he begins the preface to his commentary by referring to the greater authority—“[According to] the blessed Bede...”—and follows this with a short summary of Bede’s prefatory remarks regarding the structure of the Apocalypse and his summary of Tyconius’s *Liber regularum* (after Augustine’s in *De doctrina Christiana* 3.30–37), noting the correspondence between the seven “sections” (*periochis*) of John’s book (per Bede) and Tyconius’s seven rules. Alcuin then summarizes from Ambrosius Autpertus’s prefatory history of preceding Latin Apocalypse commentaries, noting:

The Donatist Tyconius also published a manifold exposition on it, but he mingled it with the poison of perfidy. After him, Primasius, bishop of the African church, a man in all respects Catholic and learned in the divine Scriptures, explained it in five books, in which, as he himself affirms, he did not so much write his own ideas as those of others, selecting what the same Tyconius had interpreted correctly, but also adding a few chapters exposed by blessed Augustine.<sup>22</sup>

If Ambrosius Autpertus had sought to shield himself from the “*perfidiae venenum*” by means of Primasius, “*vir per omnia catholicus*” (and yet, Ambrosius concedes, not a particularly innovative exegete), and Bede had less ambivalently utilized Tyconius (whom he cites by name far more often than he does Primasius) upon the basis of Augustine’s endorsement, Alcuin is even more securely insulated from any residual traces of Donatist heresy by immediately naming

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<sup>21</sup> E. Ann Mattter, “The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis,” in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 47–48.

<sup>22</sup> Alcuin, *Beati Alcuini Commentariorum in Apocalypsin libri quinque*, PL 100, col. 1087: “Donatista etiam Tichonius multiplicem in eam edidit expositionem, sed perfidiae veneno commiscuit. Post quem Primasius Africae Ecclesiae antistes, vir per omnia catholicus et in divinis Scripturis eruditus, quinque eam libris enodavit, in quibus, ut ipse asserit, non tam propria quam aliena contexuit, eiusdem scilicet Tichonii bene intellecta deflorans; nihilominus et beati Augustini quaedam exposita capitula adnectens”; adapted from trans. Sarah van Der Pas, ed. John Litteral, *Alcuin of York: Commentary on Revelation: Commentary and the Questions and Answers Manual* (Scotts Valley, Calif., 2016), 2. cf. Bede, *Explanatio Apocalypsis*, PL 93, col. 129–134; Ambrosius Autpertus, *Ambrosii Autperti Opera: Expositionis in Apocalypsin*, ed. Robert Weber, CCCM 27–27A (Turnhout, 1975), 5–6.

Bede as his source. Like his Pauline commentaries, Alcuin's Apocalypse commentary is rarely "original," and it too survives only partially, abruptly cutting off midway through the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse. In selecting appropriate sources for his commentary, Alcuin, working near the end of the eighth century, chose two relatively recent exemplars that were themselves highly synthetic creations, both demonstrating non-literal, or "spiritual," readings of the Apocalypse that ultimately harken back to the allegorizing strategies of Augustine and Tyconius. Consequently, Alcuin's name—increasingly authoritative in its own right as the ninth century progressed—could serve as yet another stamp of orthodox approval positively associated with the Donatist theologian.

By the Carolingian era, Tyconius had become a "patristic" authority, if a minor one often employed via intermediary sources and sometimes necessitating careful qualification given his association with a schismatic sect. His Donatist error aside, Tyconius's ideas were viewed as essentially congruent with Augustine's. Their non-literal approaches to interpreting apocalyptic passages in scripture were extraordinarily useful in a temporal world that had not yet perished. Within that world, Alcuin, his contemporaries at court, and their sovereign endeavoured to create (or "reform") something that would take considerable time to perfect, but which could potentially endure well beyond their individual lifetimes: a (new) Christian Roman empire, more perfect in its order and fidelity to God and to "ancient Christian" tradition than either its Eastern rival or its Western antecedent.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l'Empire*; Thomas F.X. Noble, "Tradition and Learning in Search of Ideology," in *Gentle Voices of Teachers*, 227–260; Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*.

### **Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel's *Liber comitis***

The project of large-scale Christian *reformatio* only intensified in the generation after Alcuin, as is evinced in the work of the monastic writer/compiler Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel (d. ca. 840), an advocate of the rigorous reforming efforts of Benedict of Aniane.<sup>24</sup> Smaragdus's *Liber comitis*, a compilation of patristic exegesis deliberately structured for monastic liturgical use, provides still stronger evidence for the security of Tyconius's reputation as a suitable patristic source. In the preface to that work, composed soon after 812, Smaragdus places Tyconius on a list of the "great Fathers," together with Hilary, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Cyprian, Cyril, Gregory, Victor, Fulgentius, John Chrysostom, Cassiodorus, Eucharis, Isidore of Seville, Figulus, Bede, and Primasius. Notably, Smaragdus followed this list with two more names, "who must be approached cautiously...as if reducing powerful rivers and whirling eddies of the sea into moderate currents," namely Pelagius and Origen.<sup>25</sup> It is telling that Tyconius did not need to be relegated to this second category of problematic writers. While Alcuin, just a little more than a decade earlier, had repeated Ambrosius Autpertus's warning about the "poison of perfidy" intermingled with Tyconius's useful contributions to exegesis, Smaragdus evidently felt no need for such a disclaimer.

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<sup>24</sup> On Benedict of Aniane's reform efforts, see now especially Rene S. Choy, *Intercessory Prayer and the Monastic Ideal in the Time of the Carolingian Reforms* (Oxford, 2017). See also Matthew D. Ponesse, "Smaragdus of St Mihiel and the Carolingian Monastic Reform," *Revue bénédictine* 116 (2006): 367–392; James Francis Lepree, "Sources of Spirituality and the Carolingian Exegetical Tradition" (Ph.D. diss.: City Univ. of New York, 2008), 127–166; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London/New York, 1983), 115–116.

<sup>25</sup> Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, *Liber comitis*, PL 102, col. 13: "...de magnorum tractatibus prolatisque sermonibus Patrum, id est Hilarii, Hieronymi, Ambrosii, Augustini, Cypriani, Cyrilli, Gregorii, Victoris, Fulgentii, Ioannis Chrysostomi, Cassiodori, Eucherii, Tychonii, Isidori, Figuli, Bedae, Primasii et de caute legendis, Pelagii et Origenis, quasi de magnis fluminibus pelagique gurgitibus in modicos rivulos"; translated and briefly discussed in Matthew D. Ponesse, "Standing Distant from the Fathers: Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel and the Reception of Early Medieval Learning," *Traditio* 67 (2012), 71–72.

As his list suggests, Smaragdus weaves together an impressive variety of patristic sources across the *Liber comitis*, often combining several different authorities to comment on a single verse of scripture. Although named in Smaragdus's preface, Tyconius is not actually prominently used in the *Liber comitis*, though his ideas are indirectly present as the underlying source for quotations that Smaragdus selects from Bede's Apocalypse commentary. When Smaragdus attempts to explain ambiguous passages in Paul's letters, Augustine is usually prominent, often used together with Jerome and other sources.<sup>26</sup> For example, commenting on Gal. 4:22–31, Smaragdus inserts a brief snippet from *De civitate Dei* 15.2, followed by Pseudo-Primasius and Ambrosiaster.<sup>27</sup> On 1 Cor. 10: 6–13, Augustine is combined with Jerome, Isidore of Seville, and Pseudo-Primasius.<sup>28</sup> In two separate chapters on Rom. 8, Smaragdus includes excerpts from Augustine's *De moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae* and *Ad Orosium contra Priscillianistas et Origenistas*. Both passages were likely taken from Eugippius's *Excerpta ex operibus sancti Augustini*, upon which Smaragdus relied heavily, perhaps together with other convenient patristic *florilegia*.<sup>29</sup> Of greatest interest for our study is Smaragdus's chapter on Eph. 5, for which he employs Augustine's *serm.* 167. This text was a particularly popular choice for early medieval commentators attempting to make non-apocalyptic sense of Paul's warning at Eph. 5:16 that "the days are evil." In this sermon, preached *ca.* 410–412 (quoted and discussed in chapter 1, pages 65–66), Augustine contends that what makes days "evil" are human "malice" (*malitia*) and "misery" (*miseria*).<sup>30</sup> Otherwise, Augustine asserts, days in themselves are

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<sup>26</sup> Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist*, 117–121.

<sup>27</sup> Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, *Liber comitis*, PL 102, col. 148–150.

<sup>28</sup> Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, *Liber comitis*, PL 102, col. 415–417.

<sup>29</sup> Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, *Liber comitis*, PL 102, col. 367, col. 529; cf. Eugippius, *Ex s. Augustini operibus*, PL 62 col. 626, col. 609–610. On Smaragdus's use of Eugippius's *florilegium*, see Matthew D. Ponesse, "Smaragdus of St-Mihiel," in Karla Pollmann, Willemien Otten, *et al.*, eds., *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford, 2013), web version [last accessed 23 December 2020].

<sup>30</sup> See ch. 1, n. 87 above.

“regular,” neutral containers of human activity. Smaragdus compresses key points from Augustine’s sermon, including his explanation of what it means to “redeem the time” (*redimere tempus*). Here, Augustine suggests that this verse in Paul refers to spending one’s time prudently in devotion to God, not on frivolous matters. To illustrate his point, Augustine proposes that in “losing” a lawsuit by not taking the time and actions necessary to defend your worldly interests, one gains time that can instead be focused on God.<sup>31</sup> Turning one’s attention away from ultimately trivial worldly concerns to the deeper contemplation of God would have certainly been a directive with which Smaragdus, a champion of monastic reform, would have heartily concurred. Yet, nowhere here is it suggested, by Augustine or Smaragdus, that doing so is more urgently advisable *now* than at any other moment in the course of earthly time on account of the days being exceptionally “evil” or the End drawing near.

### **Claudius of Turin’s commentaries on the Pauline epistles**

Shortly after Smaragdus’s *Liber comitis* (ca. 815), a series of commentaries on Paul’s letters was begun by the Iberian-born theologian Claudius. This would have been just after the death of Charlemagne, at whose Aachen court Claudius had been a frequent participant in theological and exegetical debates. Claudius had also been a regular contributor—perhaps as court chaplain or in some similar capacity—at Louis the Pious’s royal court in Aquitaine, before Louis’s ascent to the imperial throne as co-emperor with his father in 813 and then as sole emperor after Charlemagne’s death. Evidently impressed by Claudius’s exegetical acumen, Louis commissioned Claudius’s scriptural commentaries, including his writings on Paul, and

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<sup>31</sup> Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, *Liber comitis*, PL 102, col. 485–486; cf. Augustine, *serm.* 167, PL 38, col. 909–911.

appointed Claudius to the Turin episcopate in 817.<sup>32</sup> Although Claudius would later, in the 820s, become something of a magnet for controversy, suffering accusations of heresy for his critical view of the veneration of images and saints' relics, his star was still on the rise in 815, when he began his Pauline commentaries.<sup>33</sup> Despite his eventually tarnished name and reputation, Claudius's scriptural commentaries served as a strong precedent for the ambitious, erudite exegetical projects of the decades that followed, even as some of those later works applied their formidable knowledge of the Fathers' writings to a looser, more "original" style than Claudius would have considered appropriate. Carolingian efforts at correcting the biblical text and improving contemporary readers' understanding of scripture through the careful study of patristic authorities—core components of the *reformatio* program—evolved gradually between the late eighth and mid ninth centuries. Claudius's commentaries represent an important moment in that evolution, not least for his more rigorous employment of the Fathers.

Surely one of the attributes that had most endeared Claudius to Charlemagne and Louis, prior to his fall from good standing, was Claudius's extensive knowledge of the Church Fathers, and especially of Augustine, although he was accused by a rival theologian of privileging Augustine's writings to such an extent that he disregarded the ideas of the other Fathers.<sup>34</sup> Claudius's use of Augustine's *Retractationes* provided him an awareness of lesser-known Augustinian works, including texts that were not included in widely circulating *florilegia*.<sup>35</sup> This

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<sup>32</sup> For a recent reconsideration of Claudius's work and his reputation, see Janneke Raaijmakers, "I, Claudius: Self-styling in Early Medieval Debate," *Early Medieval Europe* 25 (2017), 70–84.

<sup>33</sup> Claudius's surviving commentaries are in *PL* 104, col. 911–918 and *PL* 134, col. 585–834. On these texts, see Johannes Heil, "Claudius von Turin – eine Fallstudie zur Geschichte der Karolingerzeit," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 45 (1997), 389–412; Heil, "Labourers in the Lord's Quarry," 80–82; Levy, "Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles," 149–150. On the survival of Claudius's exegetical works, see Michael M. Gorman, "The Commentary on Genesis of Claudius of Turin and Biblical Studies under Louis the Pious," *Speculum* 72 (1997), 279–329.

<sup>34</sup> See Pascal Boulhol, *Claude de Turin, un évêque iconoclaste dans l'occident carolingien. Étude suivie de l'édition du Commentaire sur Josué* (Paris, 2002), 191–200.

<sup>35</sup> Levy, "Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles," 149.

allowed for a more discriminating approach in Claudius's selection and combination of sources, as he explains in the preface to his Galatians commentary.<sup>36</sup> For this work, Claudius used Augustine's commentary on Galatians together with Jerome's commentary and other pertinent works by Augustine, rather than simply plucking stray comments on Pauline verses from patristic works otherwise unrelated to the scriptural text at hand. In the preface to his Ephesians commentary, addressed to Louis the Pious, Claudius laments that the "tepid studies" in "our times" are a consequence of those speaking (or writing) not having read carefully and deeply enough, and from such dubious readings of scripture, and of Paul in particular, dangerous heresies can emerge. Again, here, Claudius explicitly states that he will work from the "most blessed" Augustine in order to combat such "detestable" deviation from orthodox dogma, referring specifically to Pelagianism.<sup>37</sup> For Claudius, the best way, in his own time and place, to

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<sup>36</sup> Claudius of Turin, *Enarratio in epistolam d. Pauli ad Galatas*, PL 104, col. 841–842: "Tres, ni fallor, et eo amplius iam pertranseunt tempore anni, quod me adhuc in Aluenni cespitis arvo, in palatio pii principis domini Ludovici tunc regis, modo imperatoris, detentum socordia sensus mei tua fervida dilectione adorsus excitare, ut aliquem fructuosum laborem in Epistolis magistri gentium assumerem apostoli Pauli. Sed quia laboribus et turbinibus mundi depressus hactenus parere iussioni tuae nequivi, modo largiente Deo in isto Quadragesimae tempore epistolam beati iam dicti apostoli Pauli ad Galatas ex tractatibus beatorum Augustini et Hieronymi Patrum permixtis procuravi ordinare sententiis. In quibus tractatibus cum ad congruentem expositionem multa deesse cernerem, verti me ad alios libros praefati iam Patris Augustini et exinde eam, quae in illis deerat tractatibus, explere studui expositionem."

<sup>37</sup> Claudius of Turin, *Praefatio expositionis in epistolam ad Ephesios, ad Ludovicum pium imperatorem*, PL 104, col. 839–841: "Cum nostris temporibus tepescentibus studiis rarus quisque inveniatur quotidiana intentione promptissimus, non solum ad disserendum quae indiscussa sunt, sed etiam ad legendum quae iam a maioribus disserta sunt, mirum a me opus tanta ac tam sublimis vestra exigit imperialis potestas, cum Epistolas magistri gentium apostoli Pauli ex tractatibus maiorum nostrorum disserere iubet qui nos illuminantes e Christo in studio huius operis affatim scientia et tempore praecesserunt. Novit namque sacratissima et mihi semper amantissima serenitas vestra, quae piis est semper operibus intenta, et sanctis lectionibus erudita, quam sub imperiali diademate theoreticam non ambigo peragere vitam; quid de laude earumdem epistolarum in Epistola sua secunda scripserit beatus porro apostolus Petrus, in qua ait: Sicut et charissimus frater noster Paulus secundum datam sibi sapientiam scripsit vobis, sicut et in omnibus Epistolis loquens in eis de his in quibus sunt quaedam difficilia intellectu, quae indocti et instabiles homines depravant, sicut et caeteras scripturas ad suam ipsorum perditionem. Ecce teste beato Petro eius coapostolo invenimus quod adhuc in carne viventibus ipsis apostolis, ob difficultatem sensus illarum ab indoctis hominibus, qui eas non recte intellexerunt, diversae haereses emerserunt [...] Quam expositionem si aptam ad legendum iudicaverit serenitas vestra, ad auctorem referite Christum: quia hoc ipsum, ut praefatus sum, donante Domino vestrum est. Si vero reprehensioni patuerit propter sermonis rusticitatem, remota fallacia quae rectam fidem offendit, huiusmodi homines a nobis non pertimescendos ille admonuit, de quo loquimur, et quem tenemus in manibus, qui regnum Dei non in sermone, sed in virtute esse perdociuit, as semetipsum verbo potius quam scientia imperitum esse scripsit. Funestum atque detestabile Pelagii dogma, qui ingratus divinae gratiae exstitit praedicator

combat the dangers and evils of perceived heresy was through diligent reading and dutiful adherence to ancient Christian authority, especially that of Augustine. When confronted with eschatological passages in Paul's letters—particularly Galatians, for which Augustine and Jerome had completed full commentaries—it is thus little surprise that Claudius follows these Fathers very nearly to the letter.<sup>38</sup> In this regard, Claudius's commentaries represent a corrective to the often scattershot approach apparent in many earlier commentaries—no doubt at least partly a consequence of material circumstances.

### **Hrabanus Maurus's commentaries on the Pauline epistles**

Like Claudius, Hrabanus Maurus went to great lengths, even by Carolingian standards, to demonstrate his fidelity to the “ancient” Christian tradition of the Church Fathers, sometimes, for example, annotating his works with the initials of the patristic authors from whom he had drawn so that the authoritative foundations of his work were unmistakable.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, Hrabanus's exegetical works have long been characterized as thoroughly “unoriginal” in their thinking and their contents. Contemporary scholars, however, have increasingly taken notice of the subtly creative strategies of Carolingian compilers and the historical value of studying their selections. One corollary of this new perspective is that Hrabanus's scriptural commentaries have been the subject of fruitful study over the past few decades.<sup>40</sup>

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per coelestis gratiae gratissimum praeconem beatissimum Augustinum de hac epistola, quantum potui, funditus abdicavi.”

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., on Gal. 4:10, Claudius of Turin, *Enarratio in epistolam d. Pauli ad Galatas*, PL 104, col. 882.

<sup>39</sup> On the practice of citing patristic authorities by initials or abbreviations—employed by such earlier influential writers as Cassiodorus and Bede—see Markus Schiegg, “Source Marks in Scholia: Evidence from an Early Medieval Gospel Manuscript,” in Mariken Teeuwen and Irene van Renswoude, eds., *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages: Practices of Reading and Writing* (Turnhout, 2017), 237–261.

<sup>40</sup> See, e.g., Mayke de Jong, “The Empire as *ecclesia*: Hrabanus Maurus and Biblical *historia* for Rulers,” in Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), 191–226; De Jong, “Old Law and New-Found Power: Hrabanus Maurus and the Old Testament,” in Jan Willem Drijvers and Alasdair A. MacDonald, eds., *Centers of Learning. Learning and Location in Pre-Modern Europe and the Near*



It is not clear when Hrabanus first began his commentaries on Paul, but he seems to have finished work on them by 841, shortly after the death of Louis the Pious.<sup>41</sup> Hrabanus had been a well-regarded pupil of Alcuin, who gave him the nickname “Maurus” after the leading disciple of Benedict of Nursia, credited with spreading Benedictine monasticism beyond Italy to the Frankish hinterlands. In the course of his lifetime (*ca.* 780–856), Hrabanus moved between monastic and episcopal offices while witnessing, and often participating in, the major changes that transformed the Carolingian realm between the time of Charlemagne and his grandsons, including the contentious deposition and restoration of Louis the Pious in 833–34 and the civil war among Louis’s sons that followed Louis’s death and left the *imperium Christianum* fractured and divided.<sup>42</sup> In the later period of his career, as Archbishop of Mainz, Hrabanus led the charge to root out the double-predestinarian heresy of Gottschalk of Orbais.<sup>43</sup> Hrabanus’s work can thus be understood as a bridge between the early imperial period, with Alcuin helping to guide the reign of a newly crowned Christian “Roman” emperor, and the markedly different milieu of the mid-ninth-century kingdoms. Across these decades, Hrabanus closely associated himself with what was understood by powerful contemporaries as the “mainstream” current of Carolingian Christianity. But he did not merely follow this current; recognizing the danger posed by deviant beliefs and practices for an increasingly shaky and perilous temporal realm, Hrabanus, a

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*East* (Leiden, 1995), 161–176; David Appleby, “Rudolf, Abbot Hrabanus, and the Ark of the Covenant Reliquary,” *American Benedictine Review* 46 (1995), 419–443; Phillipe le Maitre, “Les méthodes exégétiques de Raban Maur,” in Michel Sot, ed., *Haut Moyen-Age: Culture, Éducation, et Société: Études offertes à Pierre Riché* (Nanterre, 1990), 343–352; E. Ann Matter, “The Lamentations Commentaries of Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Raderbertus,” *Traditio* 38 (1982), 1–17; Maria Rissel, *Rezeption antiker und patristischer Wissenschaft bei Hrabanus Maurus* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1976). For additional, older studies on Hrabanus, see Helmut Spelsberg, *Hrabanus Maurus: Bibliographie* (Fulda, 1984).

<sup>41</sup> Hrabanus’s commentaries on Paul can be found in *PL* 111, col. 1273–1616 and *PL* 112, col. 9–834. They are discussed in Heil, *Kompilation oder Konstruktion?*, 131–133, 251–270; Heil, “Labourers in the Lord’s Quarry,” 82–84; Levy, “Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles,” 150–153.

<sup>42</sup> Useful recent studies of Hrabanus’s life and career can be found in Stephanie Haarländer, *Hrabanus Maurus zum Kennenlernen. Ein Lesebuch mit einer Einführung in sein Leben und Werk* (Mainz, 2006) and Roman Büttner, *Hrabanus Maurus und sein Wirken im Kloster Fulda* (Norderstedt, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> See Gillis, *Heresy and Dissent*.

powerful figure in his own right, continuously sought to shape and reinforce this contemporary conception of orthodoxy, not least through his insistence upon reverence in all things for purported patristic consensus.

Hrabanus's Pauline commentaries weave together writings, authentic and apocryphal, from a variety of patristic authors, and although Augustine appears frequently he is not as obviously preeminent as in Claudius's work. In Hrabanus's commentaries, Augustine is always one among several authorities, with an emphasis not on his special status in the Latin Church but on the supposed consistency of a larger patristic tradition of which Augustine is an essential but not disproportionately important part. Imparting this sense of harmonious consensus clearly motivated Hrabanus's method of selecting sources, as he often incorporates short excerpts from various Fathers that, taken out of their original contexts, present an exaggerated, not always accurate impression of agreement.

The tendency to produce the appearance of resolute consensus is apparent when examining Hrabanus's treatment of eschatological passages in the Pauline epistles. For example, at Gal. 6:10, Hrabanus combines brief excerpts from the Galatians commentaries of Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrosiaster. In Augustine's reading of this passage, quoted by Hrabanus, he asks, "To whom do you suppose he [i.e., Paul] is referring if not to Christians? For eternal life ought to be desired with equal love by everyone, but the same duties of love (*dilectionis officia*) cannot be fulfilled for everyone."<sup>44</sup> Following these remarks in Augustine's own commentary, Augustine clarifies that this is so because "the works of the law that are salutary and have to do with good morals can be fulfilled only by the love that comes from faith, not slavish fear."<sup>45</sup> But Hrabanus

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<sup>44</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Enarrationum in epistolas Beati Pauli*, PL 112, col. 375; cf. *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Notes*, ed. and trans. Eric Plumer (Oxford, 2003), 230–231.

<sup>45</sup> *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, ed. and trans. Plumer, 230–231: "opera ipsa legis, quae sunt salubria et ad bonos mores pertinent, dilectione fidei posse tantummodo impleri non timore seruii."

does not keep these comments by Augustine together, nor include the second part of this quotation at all, which in effect obscures Augustine's point.<sup>46</sup> It might, for instance, be assumed by a reader unfamiliar with Augustine's commentary that he is referring to the duties of a special, privileged ecclesiastical elite, rather than more broadly to all who are able to respond to God's call with faith instead of fear.

The vital importance of *Ecclesia* and the terrible danger of heresies that the Church must forcefully oppose are frequently emphasized throughout Hrabanus's commentaries,<sup>47</sup> both through the patristic passages that Hrabanus selects and the verses from other scriptural texts that he invokes out of context to help interpret Paul's points. Additionally, it is worth noting that Augustine does not acknowledge the messianic connotations of Paul's pronouncement that "we will reap at harvest-time if we are tireless," nor Paul's qualifying clause, "while we have time." In order to speak to the temporal aspects of this passage from Galatians, Hrabanus quotes from Jerome: "As we have said, there is a time for sowing, and that time is now and the life whose course we are running. While we are in this life, we are allowed to sow whatever we want, but when this life passes away, the time for doing work is taken away."<sup>48</sup> Here, the time that remains refers not to the short amount of time left before the End, but to the finite duration of any individual human life. The present, "now," is important precisely because, as Jerome goes on to explain, "life's race is short." In elaborating on this metaphor, Jerome actually comes quite close

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<sup>46</sup> In contrast, Claudius of Turin, *Enarratio in epistolam d. Pauli ad Galatas*, PL 104, col. 907 retains both parts, and thus the full sense, of Augustine's comment on Gal. 6:9–10.

<sup>47</sup> On Hrabanus's forceful opposition to perceived heresy, in particular Gottschalk of Orbais' suspect interpretations of Augustine and Paul, see Gillis, *Heresy and Dissent*, esp. 118–128; Phillipe Le Maître, "Les méthodes exégétiques de Raban Maur," in Michel Sot, ed., *Haute Moyen Âge: Culture, Éducation, et Société: Études offertes à Pierre Riché* (Nanterre, 1990), 343–351.

<sup>48</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Enarrationum in epistolas Beati Pauli*, PL 112, col. 375: "Tempus sementis, ut diximus, tempus est praesens, et vita quam currimus. In hac licet nobis quod volumus seminare; cum ista vita transierit, operandi tempus auferetur"; Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Andrew Cain (Washington, D.C., 2011), 258.

to Augustine's interpretation of "*redimere tempus*" (in *serm.* 167, discussed above): "What I say, what I dictate, what is written down, what I correct, and what I proofread is either a gain or a loss to me in terms of my time."<sup>49</sup> But the Fathers' respective Galatians commentaries, which are Hrabanus's principal sources on Galatians, do not align so neatly on this particular verse of Paul; more creative, or less obvious, selection among the many available writings of these patristic authors (which, indeed, we will see later with Florus of Lyon in particular) would have helped to better harmonize their individual readings of Paul. In Hrabanus's chapter on Gal. 1, however, he finds Augustine and Jerome (again, from their respective Galatians commentaries) more closely aligned in their interpretations of Gal. 1:4–5. Regarding Paul's statement "who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present world," Hrabanus quotes Augustine asserting, "The present world is understood to be evil because of the people who live in it, just as we also say that a house is evil because of the evil people living in it"<sup>50</sup>—a point that recalls Tyconius's understanding of the "evil days" of Eph. 5:16 in his Apocalypse commentary. Similarly, Jerome, in the passage selected by Hrabanus, invokes Eph. 5:16 for Gal. 1:4–5, writing:

What does the phrase "present evil age" mean? The heretics usually take advantage of this opportunity to assert that there are two deities, one who governs light and the future age and the other who presides over darkness and the present age. As for us, we do not say that the age itself, which passes in days, nights, years, and months, is evil. Rather, we use the same terminology (ὁμωνύμως) to affirm that the things occurring during the age are evil. Hence, it is said that each day has enough trouble of its own (cf. Mt 6:34). [...] If there were no distinction between evils, it would not be written in Ecclesiastes, "Do not say that my former days were better than these" (Eccl 7:11). This is also why John says, "The whole world lies under the sway of the evil one" (1 Jn. 5:19). He does not imply that the world itself is evil, but that evil things are done in the world by men who say, "*Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die*" (1 Cor. 15:32). And the Apostle adds that we are "*redeeming the time because the days are evil*" (Eph. 5:16). Forests are brought into ill repute when robberies abound in them,

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<sup>49</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Enarrationum in epistolas Beati Pauli*, PL 112, col. 375: "Hoc ipsum quod loquor, quod dicto, quod scribo, quod emendo, quod relego, de tempore meo mihi aut crescit, aut deperit"; cf. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Cain, 259

<sup>50</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Enarrationum in epistolas Beati Pauli*, PL 112, col. 249: "Saeculum praesens malignum, propter malignos homines; qui in illo sunt, intelligendum est, sicut dicimus et malignam domum, propter malignos inhabitantes in ea"; *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, ed. and trans. Plumer, 128–129.

not because the ground or the trees commit sin but because they have gained a bad reputation as places where murders occur. We also despise the sword by which human blood is poured out as well as the cup in which poison is mixed, not because the sword and cup commit sin but because those who use these things for evil purposes deserve reproach. So also the age, which is a period of time, is not good or evil in itself; it is called good or evil depending on the people who live in it.<sup>51</sup>

Together, Augustine and Jerome help Hrabanus to show that Paul was not wholly rejecting earthly time or the world itself as inherently evil (perhaps as a sign that the End was very near), but that days were evil on account of the evil acts committed by people living within them. Conversely, if an age is characterized by people doing good things, then that age may itself be good. In this light, Hrabanus, through the words of the Fathers, implicitly salvages hope for a temporal age that may yet be redeemed through the vigilant correction of men's behaviour.

The intertextual approach described above at times locates real agreement among patristic authorities, while at other times it imposes the appearance of consensus on incongruous fragments. To be sure, this approach is exceedingly common in Carolingian commentaries (as well as other contemporary textual genres, like the conciliar *acta*), though it is arguably exemplified in those of Hrabanus. It can be dizzyingly circular in that often the writer-compiler never quite gets to the heart of the matter. Rather, he defers head-on engagement with Paul's provocative words by assembling short snippets of the Fathers, which are often themselves

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<sup>51</sup> Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Cain, 67–68; cf. Hrabanus Maurus, *Enarrationum in epistolas Beati Pauli*, PL 112, col. 250–251: “Quaeritur quomodo praesens saeculum malum dictum sit. Solent quippe haeretici hinc capere occasiones, ut alium lucis et futuri saeculi, alium tenebrarum et praesentis asserant conditorem. Nos autem dicimus non iam saeculum ipsum quod die et nocte, annis currit et mensibus, appellari malum, quam ὁμωνύμως, ea quae in saeculo fiant: quomodo sufficere dicitur diei malitia sua [...] Nec scriptum esset in Ecclesiaste (Eccl. 7): *Ne dixeris quia dies mei peiores erant boni super istos*, nisi ad distinctionem malorum. Unde Ioannes ait: *Mundus omnis in maligno positus est* (1 Jn. 5), non quod mundus ipse sit malus, sed quod mala in mundo fiant ab hominibus, *manducemus et bibamus*, dicentibus, *cras enim moriemur* (Isa. 22); et ipse Apostolus: *Redimentes*, inquit, *tempus, quia dies mali sunt*. Infamantur et saltus, cum latrociniis pleni sunt, non quod terra peccet et silvae, sed quod infamiam homicidii loca quoque traxerint. Detestamur et gladium quo humanus effusus est cruor: et calicem in quo venenum temperatum est, non gladii calicisque peccato; sed quod odium mereantur illi qui his male usi sunt. Ita et saeculum quod est spatium temporum, non per semetipsum aut bonum aut malum est, sed per eos qui in illo sunt, aut bonum appellatur, aut malum.” Where it may be only speculated that Tyconius was thinking of Tertullian, *De resurrectione carnis* 16.4–8 for his metaphorical use of the cup, it is much more probable that Jerome was drawing from Tertullian.

ambiguous and inconclusive out of their original contexts, or in some cases are mainly references to other scriptural verses. For example, in considering Rom. 13:11, Hrabanus selects a quotation from Augustine's *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos*, in which Augustine redirects the reader to another ambiguous eschatological verse, 2 Cor. 6:2, vaguely suggesting that both verses refer to the "time of the gospel" (*tempus evangelii*).<sup>52</sup> This type of exegetical evasion by way of deference to patristic "consensus" may in itself speak to Carolingian impulses to quietly gloss over, or otherwise neutralize, the messianic anxiety of the original Pauline texts.

### **Haimo of Auxerre on Paul and the Apocalypse**

Hrabanus's work most likely served as one of the sources used by Haimo of Auxerre for his commentaries on Paul. For this reason, scholars have supposed that Haimo began his commentary *ca.* 841–42, soon after the completion of Hrabanus's text. Both also managed to complete full commentaries on all 14 letters (Romans to Hebrews), which suggests that Alcuin's attention to Hebrews had helped to encourage acceptance of this text as authentically Pauline, despite occasional doubts expressed by Christian authorities over the preceding centuries. Yet, in contrast to Hrabanus's commentaries, Haimo adopts a much freer exegetical approach. This difference in style is readily apparent in examining Haimo's treatment of eschatological issues, in both his Pauline commentaries and his commentary on the Apocalypse. Also unlike Hrabanus, who was one of the key figures in ninth-century ecclesiastical politics, Haimo never held any position of great importance, such as abbot or bishop, and does not seem to have enjoyed any

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<sup>52</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Enarrationum in epistolas Beati Paul libri triginta*, PL 111, col. 1570; cf. Augustine, *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos*, in ed. and trans., Fredriksen Landes, *Augustine on Romans*, 44–45.

close connections to a Carolingian court. Virtually all that is known about Haimo, a monk at St-Germain in Auxerre who died around 865, comes from his own writings—many of which were long mistakenly attributed to the ninth-century bishop Haimo of Halberstadt or to Remigius of Auxerre. Most of the texts that are now confidently ascribed to Haimo of Auxerre are biblical commentaries or glosses. These works, like Hrabanus's, have been the subject of much insightful recent scholarship, which has consistently highlighted both the relative originality of Haimo's exegesis and its enormous influence on medieval biblical interpretation over the centuries that followed.<sup>53</sup> Johannes Heil, for instance, has gone so far as to argue that Haimo should be regarded as one of the most important of all medieval theologians, "at least in the category of 'biblical studies'"; and that his commentary on Paul "can be considered one of the most successful texts of the Middle Ages," surviving in approximately 180 manuscripts from all over Europe (though in smaller numbers on the Iberian peninsula), and continuously copied between the ninth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>54</sup>

The enduring popularity of Haimo's commentaries can be attributed in part to the "plain and simple form of explication...easily understandable and illustrated with examples and biblical sentences" that Haimo achieved through paraphrases of his patristic (or post-patristic) sources.<sup>55</sup> The commentaries of Smaragdus, Claudius, and especially Hrabanus Maurus are interesting for their methods of selection and arrangement, yet they often feel like a cacophony of different

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<sup>53</sup> See, e.g., the studies of Haimo's work collected in Sumi Shimahara, ed., *Études d'exégèse carolingienne: Autour d'Haymon d'Auxerre* (Turnhout, 2007); and in Guy Lobrichon, ed., *L'école carolingienne d'Auxerre de Murethach à Remi, 830–908* (Paris, 1991). See also Sumi Shimahara, *Haymon d'Auxerre, exégète carolingien* (Turnhout, 2013); John J. Contreni, "The Biblical Glosses of Haimo of Auxerre and John Scottus Eriugena," *Speculum* 51 (1976), 411–434; and John J. Contreni, "'By Lions, Bishops Are Meant; By Wolves, Priests': History, Exegesis, and the Carolingian Church in Haimo of Auxerre's Commentary on Ezechiel," *Francia* 29 (2003), 1–28.

<sup>54</sup> Heil, "Haimo's Commentary on Paul. Sources, Methods, and Theology," in *Études d'exégèse carolingienne*, 103–104.

<sup>55</sup> Levy, "Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles," 161.

voices from the Christian past, made (somewhat) harmonious through the efforts of these Carolingian writer-compilers but, in effect, still bearing a strong resemblance to the *florilegia* from which they often drew. Haimo's exegetical style, by contrast, feels more seamless and cohesive; if many of the underlying ideas remain recognizably patristic, deriving in particular from Augustine and Jerome, the voice expressing them is that of a mid-ninth-century Carolingian monk speaking for his own time and place. For example, in his treatment of Eph. 5:16–17, Haimo is clearly drawing from Augustinian and Hieronymian interpretations of Paul discussed above, while expressing them in a clear and straightforward manner:

In what way is the time evil: how does it follow from God's plan of the months, days and nights, and moments through which men are always proceeding? For just as it is said that the house is an evil one whose inhabitants are evil, so too is it said of evil days, in which evil things are done by evil men. What then does he mean when he says, "redeeming the time"? That is, what has been made of your [time]; for instance: while others may sell something by evil means to further their evil, you may redeem that thing through good works from which you profit. For whosoever does that which is useful redeems and acquires the time for himself, because he has made it his own and made use of it for his salvation.<sup>56</sup>

Once again, as for earlier Carolingian exegetes, the days (or months, nights, hours) are understood by Haimo to be evil on account of the wicked actions of some bad men living within them. In his suggestion that Christians may "redeem the time" and make it their own through their good actions, there is a distinct echo of Augustine preaching that "we are the times: such as we are, such are the times," and his contention in another sermon that, "by the expression 'this age' is to be understood sinners, who have no hope except in this age. Just as you talk about an evil house when you mean the people living in it, so we can talk about this evil age when we

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<sup>56</sup> Haimo of Auxerre, *In divi Pauli epistolas expositio*, PL 117, col. 727: "*Quomodo tempus malum: quod secundum dispositionem Dei semper volvitur mensibus, diebus et noctibus, horis, momentisque currentibus? Sicut enim dicitur mala esse domus, quae malos habitatores habet: ita dicuntur mali dies, in quibus mala fiunt a malis hominibus. Quid est quod dicit, redimentes tempus? Id est, vestrum illud facite; verbi gratia: alii vendunt illud, mala operando ad malum suum, vos redimite illud a vobis, talia opera faciendo, pro quibus remunerationem capiat. Quicumque enim hoc facit quod sibi utile est, tempus redimit sibi et acquirit, quia suum illud facit, et in suam salutem illud occupat.*"



mean those who live in this age in their heart of hearts, that is, whose domicile is not in heaven. *For our domicile*, says the apostle, *is in heaven* (Phil 3:20). But all sins are a serving of the devil, who of his own free choice wished to be the prince of sin; that is why he is called the prince of this age. This is a rule of interpretation which I advise you to learn by heart. The Lord will help you to examine and solve with it many scriptural problem passages, with which these people bait the traps of their error.”<sup>57</sup> Haimo indeed seems to have taken to heart these principles of scriptural interpretation, even if this sermon was not his immediate source. Across Haimo’s commentaries on Paul (especially 2 Thessalonians) and the Apocalypse, Haimo also often explicitly associates the evil present in the time and space of this world with the workings of the devil, but when discussing the devil, the Antichrist of the Apocalypse, or the End itself, his preference is for allegorical or typological readings centred on the Church, usually following the methods for “spiritual” interpretation favoured by Tyconius and Augustine in their treatment of eschatological verses in scripture; in his Apocalypse commentary, drawn largely from Ambrosius Auterpertus’s work, Haimo explains that the Johannine text represents a vision for both the present and future status of the Church.<sup>58</sup> It is not, of course, that Haimo doubted that these figures or events really existed, or would eventually come to pass in some form or another, but that allegorical interpretation allowed for readers to penetrate, if not fully understand, the “highest sense” of scripture. Yet, unlike Tyconius and Augustine, who acknowledged differences

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<sup>57</sup> Augustine, *serm.* 12, *PL* 38, col. 100–101: “...quia saeculi huius nomine peccatores intelliguntur, quorum spes nulla est, nisi in hoc saeculo. Sicut enim dicitur mala domus, cum significantur habitatores eius: sic malum hoc saeculum dicimus, cum eos significamus qui corde hoc saeculum inhabitant, hoc est, quorum conversatio non est in coelis. *Nostra* enim, dicit Apostolus, *conversatio in coelis est* (Phil. 3:20). Diabolo autem serviunt cuncta peccata, qui libero arbitrio princeps voluit esse peccati; propterea princeps huius saeculi dicitur. Quam regulam intelligentiae moneo cordibus vestris infigatis: adiuvabit per hanc Dominus ad multa Scripturarum discutienda atque solvenda, de quibus illi laqueos nectunt erroris sui”; trans. Hill, *Sermons* III.1, 298.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Matter, “The Apocalypse in Early Medieval Exegesis,” 49. On Haimo’s Apocalypse commentary and his understanding of the Antichrist in 2 Thessalonians, see Palmer, *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 167–170 and Hughes, *Constructing Antichrist*, 144–167.

between their times and that of the apostles, Haimo downplays the significance of change across time; Paul's words, read in the correct moral and spiritual light, can thus speak as aptly to Haimo's era as to Paul's. There is no serious difference between "good" or "bad" Christians, heretics, or Jews (a particular, recurring target of Haimo's ire) in ninth-century Francia versus in the apostolic age of scripture.<sup>59</sup> Stripped of their historical specificity or contingency, these are static, unchanging types. As Heil has vividly put it, history, for Haimo, is an "almost timeless raw mixture, which employs both good and bad examples for instruction of the faithful," and therefore "a proper reading of Paul would also provide clear orientation for correction and reform, meaning for politics in the spirit of the church" in Haimo's own age.<sup>60</sup> In order for such reform-oriented politics to take shape, and perhaps bear fruit, it was in the first place essential that Paul's many references to the imminent messianic event be interpreted spiritually, or else continuously deferred to an uncertain future time. The understanding of time suggested in Haimo's commentary allows for the possibility that the present period may be as good as, or better than, past periods, *if* Christians are rightly led to follow the transhistorical example of the Apostle. In other words, neither positive progress nor decline are inevitable consequences of history's providential trajectory, though both are possible depending on the strength of the Church to guide men's actions toward goodness and away from evil and the devil.

Haimo's apparent indifference to change over time between the apostolic period and his present also allows him to remain purposefully vague in his interpretation of Pauline verses that seem to refer to Paul's imminent expectation of the ultimate messianic event. For instance, in considering Romans 13:11–12, Haimo reflects that, "as the end of the world approaches closer

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<sup>59</sup> Heil, "Labourers in the Lord's Quarry," 86–88; Heil, "Haimo's Commentary on Paul," 111.

<sup>60</sup> Heil, "Haimo's Commentary on Paul," 111.

and closer, the future life and eternal salvation draw nearer and nearer.”<sup>61</sup> Following Augustine, Haimo understands that the world is in its final age and—of course—its End is closer now than it was for Paul, but this is simply a matter of deductive reasoning, not a reflection of the particular conditions of the present era. Recalling Tyconius’s demonstration of the many potentially valid interpretations of numbers and temporal expressions in scripture, Haimo suggests different readings of the “night” that has (already) passed according to Paul in Rom. 13:12: “Night is the blindness of infidelity, night is ignorance, night also is living darkly in sin.”<sup>62</sup> None of these readings of *nox* refer to the imminent End. On Paul’s pronouncement that the “time remaining is short,” at 1 Cor. 7:31, Haimo, after Jerome and Augustine, understands this as referring to the fact that any individual life is short. His reading of Gal. 6:10 is squarely in this same light: “The present life is the time for planting and working virtues, because, after all, after this there will be no time nor space for repentance and salvation.” Haimo follows from this interpretation of Gal. 6:10 by quoting 2 Cor. 6:2 to reinforce his argument; Paul’s urgent “now,” for Haimo, refers to the finite lifetime of any individual Christian.<sup>63</sup> As we have seen, this de-eschatologizing treatment of Paul, inherited from the Fathers, was particularly appealing to Carolingian compilers and exegetes. Although Haimo’s formal presentation diverges from his (patristic and Carolingian) predecessors, his consistent tendency to allegorize Paul’s most apocalyptically charged verses is largely consistent with Hrabanus and earlier Carolingian commentators.

### **Sedulius Scottus’s commentaries on the Pauline epistles**

The looser form and preference for paraphrase over quotation of authorities that characterize Haimo’s work is not typical of mid-ninth-century Carolingian exegesis; the roughly

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<sup>61</sup> Haimo, *In divi Pauli epistolas expositio*, PL 117, col. 483.

<sup>62</sup> Haimo, *In divi Pauli epistolas expositio*, PL 117, col. 483.

<sup>63</sup> Haimo, *In divi Pauli epistolas expositio*, PL 117, col. 697–698.

contemporary Pauline commentaries by the Irish grammarian and poet Sedulius Scottus and the deacon Florus of Lyon (both d. *ca.* 860) adhere much more faithfully to their patristic sources. Sedulius's commentaries resemble a shorter version of Hrabanus's, although, as Alexander Souter demonstrated, Sedulius made greater use of the Pelagian commentaries in their uninterpolated form (as opposed to the "Pseudo-Primasius" text discussed above) than did other Carolingian exegetes.<sup>64</sup> Augustine is incorporated often enough in Sedulius's *Collectaneum*, and is occasionally employed for eschatological passages in Paul's letters—sometimes culled from mildly surprising places in the Augustinian corpus. For example, in his chapter on 1 Cor. 15 Sedulius includes an excerpt from *De Genesi ad litteram* 7.18, and on Gal. 4:9–10 Sedulius draws from chapter 21 of the *Enchiridion* in lieu of the more obvious source, Augustine's Galatians commentary, which Sedulius, following Bede's Augustinian compilation on Paul (discussed below), does not use directly. This *Enchiridion* passage (21.79, in which Augustine was referring to Matt. 5:22–23) is also decidedly non-apocalyptic in its interpretation of Paul, stressing the danger of superstitiously ascribing special importance to certain days or seasons:

Who would think how great a sin it is to observe days and months and years and seasons—as those people do who will or will not begin projects on certain days or in certain months or years, because they follow vain human doctrines and suppose that various seasons are lucky or unlucky—if we did not infer the magnitude of this evil from the apostle's fear, in saying to such men, "*I fear for you, lest perhaps I have labored among you in vain* (Gal. 4:11)"?<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Alexander Souter, "The Sources of the Sedulius Scottus' 'Collectaneum' on the Epistles of St. Paul," *Journal of Theological Studies* 18, 70/71 (1917), 184–228. See also Souter, *Pelagius' Expositions*, 336–339; Heil, *Kompilation oder Konstruktion?* 156–158, 359–368; Levy, "Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles," 154–158.

<sup>65</sup> Sedulius Scottus, *Collectanea in Omnes B. Pauli Epistolas*, PL 103, col. 189: "Quis aestimaret enim quod magnum peccatum sit dies observare et menses, et annos et tempora, sicut observant qui certis diebus, sive mensibus, sive annis, volunt vel nolunt aliquid inchoare, eo quod secundum doctrinas vanas hominum fausta vel infausta existimentur tempora, nisi mali huius magnitudinem ex timore Apostoli pensaremus? qui talibus ait: *Timeo vos ne forte sine causa laboraverim in vobis.*"; Augustine, *Enchiridion*, trans. Albert C. Outler (Philadelphia, 1955), 387.

While Augustine's critical remarks, compressed by Sedulius, may refer primarily to the superstitious practices of pagans or heretics, they could also be applied to those who expend too much time and effort attempting to predict the time of the End from cryptic hints in scripture.

In addition to this passage from the *Enchiridion*, Sedulius incorporates extracts from the *De civitate Dei*, *De Trinitate*, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, *Liber quaestionum*, and *Contra Iulianum*. Yet, these sporadic appearances notwithstanding, Augustine is often overshadowed in Sedulius's *Collectaneum* by Jerome, Origen, Ambrosiaster (whose *Quaestiones* are sometimes misattributed to Augustine), Isidore of Seville, Gregory the Great, Cassian, Alcuin (Sedulius's main source for Hebrews), and Pelagius.<sup>66</sup> As in Hrabanus's commentary, Augustine is one among many venerable authorities, not the supreme post-scriptural authority that he is often assumed to have been throughout the early Middle Ages. This impression may derive partly from Sedulius simply not having Augustine's commentaries on Galatians or Romans at hand as he worked on his *Collectaneum*; or perhaps he did, but simply preferred the treatments of Paul's letters by other "ancient" commentators, including Augustine's late-career opponent, Pelagius.

### **Florus of Lyon's *Expositio in epistolas Beati Pauli ex operibus Sancti Augustini***

In stark contrast to the variety of patristic authors present in Sedulius's work, Florus's commentary, probably composed between 840 and 852, is drawn almost exclusively from Augustine and consists almost entirely of verbatim quotations on all 14 Pauline epistles. Florus's *Expositio in epistolas Beati Pauli ex operibus Sancti Augustini* survives partially or completely in over 75 manuscripts, including a partial autograph (Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale 484), which is fire-damaged and lacks Florus's preface and the commentaries before 2 Corinthians,

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<sup>66</sup> Souter, "Sources of Sedulius," 185–225.

and a complete copy of the mid-ninth century from Saint-Oyen (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale 96). However, in many of these extant manuscripts, Florus's work is mistakenly attributed to Bede. This misattribution is due to the fact that Bede had already produced a collection of Augustinian excerpts on the Pauline letters, which Florus, like Sedulius, indeed used as one of his sources. Bede's own *Collectio ex opusculis sancti Augustini in epistulas Pauli apostoli* survives in 12 manuscripts, six or seven of which are Carolingian, suggesting that it was effectively outmoded or superseded by Florus's work. Bede's mention of this collection among his many works at the end of his *Historia ecclesiastica* ensured that readers who may have never actually seen a copy of Bede's *Collectio* nonetheless knew that such a work existed.<sup>67</sup> As I have argued, Bede's reputation as a major patristic authority increased steadily during the Carolingian era in several different areas of interest (exegesis, time-reckoning and computus, the writing of history), and his works were widely utilized as solid, orthodox sources for Carolingian writers and compilers. Before Florus, Bede's *Collectio* had served as one of the sources used by Hrabanus Maurus and Sedulius Scottus for their Pauline commentaries, and it was known to

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<sup>67</sup> Adding to the confusion, both Bede's and Florus's compilations were sometimes misattributed to a "Peter of Tripoli." This stems from Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*, wherein he mentioned requesting a copy of a complete commentary on Paul's letters compiled from Augustine's writings by a certain "Peter of Tripoli," but it is not certain whether this compilation, no longer extant, ever actually arrived at Vivarium. Bede, for his part, may not have read Cassiodorus's *Institutiones* by the time that he assembled his own *Collectio*, probably in the early eighth century. While it remains possible that Bede did have a copy of this otherwise unknown Peter's work available to him, there is no indication that such a work was ever present at the libraries of Wearmouth and Jarrow. What is more likely is that Bede followed the example of Paterius, Gregory the Great's secretary, who had assembled a biblical commentary compiled from excerpts of Gregory's writings. On these points, see Gert Partoens, "The Sources and Manuscript Transmission of the Venerable Bede's Commentary on the *Corpus Paulinum*. Starting Points for Further Research," in Emmanuela Colombi, ed., *La trasmissione dei testi patristici latini: problemi e prospettive: Atti del convegno Roma, 26-28 ottobre 2009* (Turnhout, 2012), 201–251. Bede's *Collectio* has never received a modern critical edition. David Hurst evidently prepared, but did not publish, an edition, although he did produce a translation of Bede's collection as Bede the Venerable, *Excerpts from the Works of Saint Augustine and the Letters of the Blessed Apostle Paul* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1999). Also, see Nicolas de Maeyer and Anthony Dupont, "Patrum uestigia sequens: The Transmission and Reception of Augustine's Exegesis of Eph. 3:17–18 in the Venerable Bede's *Collectio ex opusculis sancti Augustini in epistulas Pauli apostoli*," *Traditio* 72 (2017), 21–59, who describe the work that is presently being done toward the *editio princeps* of Bede's *Collectio*; and Nicolas de Maeyer, "Bede's *Collectio*, an *opus imperfectum*? The Conception and State of Completion of the Venerable Bede's Augustinian Commentary on the Pauline Epistles," in Jérémy Delmulle, Gert Partoens, Shari Boodts, and Anthony Dupont, eds., *Flores Augustini: Augustinian Florilegia in the Middle Ages* (Leuven, 2020), 107–130.

other major Carolingian figures like Lupus of Ferrières and Hincmar of Rheims. Later readers may have thought they were reading from Bede's collection of Augustine on Paul, but were more often than not using Florus's work instead. Florus was only conclusively identified as the compiler of his *Expositio* in 1675 by Jean Mabillon, an identification that was occasionally disputed up to the 1930s, but is now almost universally accepted.

Although obscure compared to Bede (much less Augustine) and merely a deacon by ecclesiastical rank, Florus is today considered one of the more accomplished Carolingian-era writers, and was in his time an actor of some importance.<sup>68</sup> Florus counted among his interlocutors (if not friends) some of the major intellectuals of the Carolingian world, including John Scottus Eriugena, Walafred Strabo, Modoin of Autun, Hrabanus Maurus, Amalarius of Metz, Hincmar of Rheims, and the controversial Gottschalk of Orbais; to some of these men Florus wrote admiring, at times flowery, letters, to others he penned caustic polemical treatises against their ideas. Florus's knack for polemic might have come in part from Agobard, the archbishop of Lyon and arguably the foremost polemicist of the Carolingian era (discussed at length below). Agobard had been something of a father-figure for Florus (born *ca.* 800–810), who was raised within the church at Lyon, where he had perhaps been deposited as a child oblate.<sup>69</sup> A star pupil at the Lyon cathedral school, Florus began writing poetry as a precocious adolescent, and went on to produce an impressive and diverse corpus of works across numerous genres: ambitious theological texts, polemical treatises, eloquent letters, scriptural exegesis, an exposition on the Mass, conciliar *acta*, and most famously, varied works of verse—including the

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<sup>68</sup> On Florus's life and work, see especially Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, *Florus von Lyon als Kirchenpolitiker und Publizist. Studien zur Persönlichkeit eines karolingischen »Intellektuellen« am Beispiel der Auseinandersetzung mit Amalarius (835–838) und des Prädestinationsstreits (851–855)* (Stuttgart, 1999).

<sup>69</sup> On the practice of child oblation, see Mayke de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden, 1995).

*Querela de divisione imperii*, a poetic lament for the fractured realm, written in the wake of the deaths of Agobard and Louis the Pious and the official division of the war-ravaged empire among Louis's sons.<sup>70</sup> Although Florus's *Expositio* does not speak directly to these contemporary troubles given that its text is almost entirely copied from the words of Augustine, it can nevertheless be understood generally within this tumultuous post-840 context.

As with the biblical commentaries of Hrabanus Maurus and Haimo of Auxerre, recent scholarly interest in the methods and strategies of early medieval writer-compilers has also provoked serious studies and promising editorial work on Florus's *Expositio*.<sup>71</sup> However, one modern historian, writing before the recent surge in scholarly interest, summed up Florus's *Expositio* as follows: "Not in the least original or distinguished, these studies were an extensive selection of apt and relevant passages from the writings of Saint Augustine, a laborious endeavour which signalized Florus as a competent and minute student of both of the great saints [i.e., Augustine and Paul]. Occasionally he composed his own sentence or two to serve as connecting links in the catena."<sup>72</sup> With this tepid assessment in mind, it is worth pausing, before proceeding to examine Florus's *Expositio*, to ask why a creative and often brilliant writer like

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<sup>70</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Querela de divisione imperii*, MGH, *Poetae* 2, 559–564; in Peter Godman trans., *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), 264–273. For analysis of this poem, see Dutton, *Politics of Dreaming*, 121–123; Peter Godman, *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1987), 149–151; Anne A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800–1229* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2013), 36.

<sup>71</sup> On Florus's work and its manuscript tradition, see Pierre Chambert-Protat, Franz Dolveck, and Camille Gerzaguët, eds., *Les douze compilations pauliniennes de Florus de Lyon: Un carrefour des traditions patristiques au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Rome, 2015); Shari Boodts and Gert Partoens, "The Transmission of Florus of Lyons' *Expositio epistolarum beati Pauli apostoli*: State of the Art and New Results," in H.A.G. Houghton, ed., *Commentaries, Catenaes, and Biblical Tradition: Papers from the Ninth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, in association with the COMPAUL project* (Piscataway, N.J., 2016), 253–276; Paul-Irénée Fransen, "Le florilège augustinien de Florus de Lyon," in Gérard Neroy and Marie-Anne Vannier, eds., *Saint Augustin et la Bible: Actes du colloque de l'Université Paul Verlaine-Metz (7–8 avril 2005)* (Bern, 2008), 313–324; Brian W. Hawk, "The *Expositio in Epistolas Beati Pauli ex operibus S. Augustini* by Florus in Strasbourg, BNU Ms.0.309," *Revue bénédictine* 124 (2014), 109–114. See also the earlier studies of Célestin Charlier, "Les manuscrits personnels de Florus de Lyon et son activité littéraire," in *Mélanges E. Pödechard* (Lyons, 1945), 71–84; Célestin Charlier "Florus de Lyon," in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité. Ascétique et mystique. Doctrine et Histoire* (Paris, 1964), t. 5, col. 514–526.

<sup>72</sup> Allen Cabaniss, "Florus of Lyon," *Classica et mediaevalia* 19 (1958), 219.



Florus devoted so much time and effort to such an unoriginal, “laborious endeavor.” (By comparison, the Pauline commentary compiled by Sedulius Scottus, another accomplished poet, is much shorter, and was presumably a far less time-consuming undertaking. Hrabanus Maurus’s lengthy Pauline commentary, on the other hand, is more consistent with Hrabanus’s oeuvre, which is dominated by such “unoriginal” exegetical concatenations.) Florus was obviously aware that an Augustinian compilation on Paul had already been produced, and he may well have known that it had been assembled by no less an authority than Bede, given that Bede describes this work in his *Historia ecclesiastica*. Florus’s motivation was therefore, presumably, not to “fill a gap.” Through his prodigious knowledge of Augustine’s writings and his more extensive bibliographic resources, Florus must have believed himself capable of producing a *superior* collection of Augustine’s writings on Paul—something that readers of the *Retractationes* and/or Possidius’s *Indiculum* knew Augustine himself had never composed, despite committing extraordinary attention to curating his own posthumous literary legacy.<sup>73</sup> Perusing Bede’s *Collectio*, Florus could have likely spotted the places where Augustinian statements known to him, but unknown or unavailable to Bede, could be inserted to strengthen the overall presentation of Augustine-on-Paul. Where Bede used around 35 different Augustinian works (plus numerous individual sermons and letters), Florus drew from over 70, with the only apocryphal items deriving from excerpts he had copied from Bede’s *Collectio*. While Bede’s work is a “complete” commentary insofar as it runs from Romans to Hebrews, it omits many verses from Paul’s letters, sometimes using only a single Pauline verse to stand in for a chapter, and occasionally skipping past entire chapters, presumably because Bede could not locate Augustinian content referring to those missing passages. Such omissions are certainly apparent in examining Bede’s

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Mark Vessey, “*Opus imperfectum*: Augustine and His Readers, 426–435. A.D.,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998), 264–285.

treatment of eschatological passages in Paul's letters; for example, Romans 13:11–12, 1 Cor. 13:10, 1 Cor. 15:30, 6 Cor. 6:2, Gal. 6:10, Eph. 5:15–16, 1 Tim. 4:1–2, and 2 Tim. 3:1 are passed over in silence by Bede. Remarkably, Bede apparently never read, or at least never used, Augustine's commentary on Galatians nor either of his attempted Romans commentaries. A deeply knowledgeable and discriminating reader of Augustine, Florus would have detected ample opportunity for fleshing out and expanding Bede's compilation, and he suggests as much in the preface to his work, which includes one or more Augustinian excerpts for nearly every verse in all 14 letters.<sup>74</sup> He might in fact have understood his project less as a replacement for Bede's and more as a kind of expansion or continuation of his work; Florus did, incidentally, produce a continuation of Bede's *Martyrologium*.<sup>75</sup>

While Bede's *Collectio* was quite accurate in its selection of genuine Augustinian quotations (and in its few mistaken inclusions, Florus was also fooled into perpetuating Bede's errors), Florus must have cringed at the many errors in attribution, including dubious misrepresentations of Augustinian views, that appeared in the works of compilers and exegetes nearer to him in time. If, say, the fiercely critical marginal remarks on Amalarius of Metz's *Liber officialis* in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. acq. lat. 329 that have been ascribed to Florus do in fact originate with him (as seems probable), he was prone to frustration when he sensed that less discerning contemporary writers had misused or abused the hallowed name of Augustine.<sup>76</sup> Yet beyond, or in addition to, these probable motivating factors, might we go one

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<sup>74</sup> Troyes, Bibl. mun. 96, fol. 1v: "In qua expositione, licet nonnulla ex uerbis Apostoli ommissa uideantur, tamen Deo auxiliante et per doctorem mirabilem mirabiliter agente quaecumque difficiliora, profundiora uel excellentiora ibi inueniuntur, tam diligenter paene omnia et praeclare tractata sunt, ut diuina gratia adspirante pio et prudenti ac studioso lectori sufficere possint ad instructionem doctrinae, ad exercitationem ingenii et ad ea quae intermissa sunt, facilius inuestiganda atque, in quantum Dominus adiuuerit, penetranda"; Boodts and Partoens, "Transmission," 255.

<sup>75</sup> *PL* 94, col. 797ff.

<sup>76</sup> For these marginal notes, which will be discussed in chapter 6, see Amalarius, *On the Liturgy, Volume II: Books 3–4*, ed. and trans. Eric Knibbs (Cambridge, Mass., 2014), 635–662.

step further and suppose that Florus also sought to produce a version of Augustine-on-Paul that was more directly useful to contemporary circumstances as he perceived them—an increasingly shaky and tenuous Christian *imperium* following the death of Louis the Pious? Augustine had bequeathed to the Latin West its enduring image of the Apostle, though not in one convenient, easy-to-use textual location. Earlier generations of Christian scholars, from Eugippius to Bede, had chiseled out different iterations of “Augustine” (on Paul or otherwise) for their own purposes and contexts. The possibility that Florus was in part motivated to create a version of the Augustinian corpus for his own time, place, and cultural circumstances warrants consideration in studying a source as seemingly intractable, anonymous, and untethered to any specific moment in history as his *Expositio*.

Answers to these questions must necessarily be tentative until the complete critical edition of Florus’s work is published; the extent of its dependence on Bede’s *Collectio*, among other issues, remains to be determined. At present, only the commentaries on 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians have been published as part of the eventual, full edition of Florus’s *Expositio* for the *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* series.<sup>77</sup> Yet, for our purposes, there is much to discuss in Florus’s selections for these four Pauline letters. On 2 Cor. 6:1–2, for example, Florus draws from the *De Trinitate*, 8.9.13. In this excerpt from Augustine, there is no consideration at all of Paul’s pronouncement, “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” Instead, Augustine uses these verses from 2 Corinthians as a point of departure to reflect on the complex relationship between love and faith, and the proper manner in which Christians should understand and express their love for those who, like Paul,

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<sup>77</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio in epistolas beati Pauli ex operibus s. Augustini III. In epistolam secundam ad Corinthios. In epistolas ad Galatas, Ephesios et Philippenses*, ed. Paul-Irénée Fransen, Luc de Coninck, Bertrand Coopieters ’t Wallant, and Roland Demeulenaere, CCCM 220B (Turnhout, 2011).

most completely embody the Christian form of life. “Why is it that we are inflamed with love of the Apostle Paul, when we read these things, unless that we believe him so to have lived?” (*Quid est quod accendimur in dilectionem Pauli apostoli cum ista legimus, nisi quod credimus eum ita uixisse?*), asks Augustine rhetorically. Mulling over the implications of this question, Augustine suggests that, rather than loving the historical person Paul for the superlative example that he set for subsequent Christians, Paul should be loved through the knowledge of the “unchangeable form of righteousness” in God, which can be apprehended only through faith.<sup>78</sup> In contrast to the relatively straightforward paraphrases of the Fathers in Haimo’s commentary, Florus gives his readers an Augustine at his most densely theological. Where Bede had passed over 2 Cor. 6:2, Florus redirects his reader’s attention from any literal apocalyptic reading of Paul with Augustine’s speculative discourse on subtle differences in the expression of love for a worthy object.

Although Florus, unlike Bede, does draw from Augustine’s Galatians commentary, he uses it sparingly, and, very curiously, never applies it to verses from Galatians itself. (On Gal. 4:10–11, for instance, Florus, like Sedulius Scottus, follows Bede in deploying *Enchiridion* 21.79.<sup>79</sup>) It is hard to know exactly what to make of this. It is possible that Florus quietly disagreed with some of Augustine’s interpretations of Paul in that work, or at least that Florus preferred Augustine’s comments on Galatians passages scattered elsewhere in his oeuvre. In any case, this circumstance leads to some interesting choices, as, for example, with Gal. 6:10, for which Florus selects a long excerpt from *serm.* 350F (= Erfurt 4).<sup>80</sup> In this sermon, Augustine

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<sup>78</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 111–112; Augustine, *On the Trinity*, ed. Schaff, trans. Arthur West Haddan (Buffalo, N.Y., 1887), 170.

<sup>79</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 259–260.

<sup>80</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 318–320. This is one of the sermons recently discovered by Isabella Schiller, Dorothea Weber, and Clemens Weidmann in a twelfth-century manuscript at the university research library in Erfurt. A bibliography of studies related to these “new” Erfurt sermons, compiled by Naoki Kamimura, is available in draft form here:

considers whether the sinful should be given alms and food. Ignoring the eschatological suggestion of Paul's "while we have time" (though discussed in Augustine's Galatians commentary), Augustine here argues on the basis of Gal. 6:10 that, "Paul the apostle most clearly teaches that alms ought to be bestowed upon all," even if "it is abundantly clear in works of this manner that the righteous ought to be placed ahead."<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, Augustine concludes, from Paul together with Old Testament passages that he reads as compatible with Paul's message, that "we ought not to close our hearts to almsgiving, not even should they carry a hostile demeanor against us." It is tempting to wonder if perhaps Florus, disturbed by the sinful violence and acrimony of the mid-ninth-century Carolingian realm, meant for this passage from Augustine to extend beyond almsgiving specifically to the broader possibility of reconciliation among perceived sinners and ostensible enemies. Augustine emphasizes that sins themselves must be punished and sinners reproached, but that they should nonetheless be treated with *misericordia* after the example and words of Paul: "because they are also human, with human consideration. Let us persecute the proper iniquity in them, [but] let us have pity on the shared condition."<sup>82</sup> This call for mercy and moderation within the finite course of this life is how Florus chooses to represent the Augustinian position on Gal. 6:10—without a hint of apocalyptic tension.

Turning to the *dies mali* of Eph. 5:16, Florus here uses another sermon of Augustine, *serm.* 167. This sermon was also selected by Smaragdus of St-Mihiel for his treatment of Ephesians 5 in the *Liber comitis* (see pages 91–92 above). However, where Smaragdus used a relatively short, compressed excerpt from this sermon and presented it together with passages

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[https://www.academia.edu/2491151/Selected\\_Bibliography\\_on\\_Augustines\\_New\\_Erfurt\\_Sermons](https://www.academia.edu/2491151/Selected_Bibliography_on_Augustines_New_Erfurt_Sermons) [accessed 13 December 2018]. Since the preparation of this bibliography, *Sermo* 350F has been translated into English and studied closely in Kenneth Lai, "Not to Hide a Light Under a Bushel: Manichaean Missionary Practices in the Roman West" (M.A. thesis, University of Helsinki, 2017).

<sup>81</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 318; trans. Lai, "Not to Hide a Light," 81.

<sup>82</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 320; trans. Lai, "Not to Hide a Light," 86.

from Gregory the Great and Jerome, Florus incorporates more of Augustine's sermon on how "redeeming the time" should be understood, unaccompanied by statements of other Fathers.<sup>83</sup> The emphasis, though, is the same: human malice and misery are what make days evil, and the troubles caused by malice and misery can be lessened through individual Christians endeavouring to make the most spiritually profitable use of their limited time in the world.

As with Eph. 5:16, Florus opts for Augustinian texts that avoid interpreting Phil. 4:5 (*Dominus prope est*, "The Lord is near") as referring to the imminent *Parousia*. On this verse, Florus uses two sentences from Augustine's *serm.* 171, asserting: "Even if he has ascended above all the heavens in his body, he has not withdrawn in his greatness. He is present everywhere, seeing that he made everything" (*Etsi super omnes coelos ascendit corpore, non recessit maiestate. Vbique praesens est, qui fecit omnia*).<sup>84</sup> In this reading, Christ is "near" in the sense that he remains present in the world, not that his return is soon approaching. To reinforce this interpretation, Florus follows these sentences with another brief excerpt, from Augustine's *Enarratio* on Psalm 46:

For He who ascended into Heaven that He might be removed from your eyes, promised unto you, saying, *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world* (Matt. 28:20). Justly then the Apostle so addressed us, *The Lord is at hand; be careful for nothing*. Christ sits above the Heavens; the Heavens are far off, [but] He who there sits is near.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 414–415; cf. Smaragdus of St-Mihiel, *Liber comitis*, PL 102, col. 485–486 (n. 31 above). It is interesting to note that where Florus retains Augustine's description of the proverb that he quotes (in Latin) as a *Punicum prouerbium*, it is an *antiquum prouerbium* in Smaragdus.

<sup>84</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 538; cf. Aug, *serm.* 171, trans. Hill, *Sermons* III.5, 249.

<sup>85</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, *et al.*, 538: "Ille enim qui ascendit in caelum, ut tolleretur ab oculis nostris, promisit nobis dicens: *Ecce ego uobiscum, usque ad consummationem saeculi*. Merito et Apostolus sic nos alloquebatur: *Dominus in proximo, nihil solliciti fueritis*. Sedet super caelos Christus; et longe sunt caeli, et ipse qui ibi sedet prope est"; adapted from Augustine, *Expositions on the Psalms*, 47.6, ed. Schaff, trans. J.E. Tweed (Buffalo, N.Y., 1888), 255.

This is clearly consistent with the preceding excerpt, but here Christ's own words from Matthew's gospel are invoked to lend additional support to Augustine's reading of "near" as meaning still close to the temporal world, despite being "far off" above the Heavens.

Florus's preference for Augustinian statements that de-emphasize the imminently eschatological in Paul seems to apply no less within his commentaries on the letters not yet edited by Fransen, *et al.* For example, Florus uses excerpts from Augustine's *ep.* 199 to Hesychius for 2 Tim 3:1, as well as for verses from 1 Thess. 5 and 2 Thess. 2.<sup>86</sup> For ambiguous passages in Romans and 1 Corinthians, Florus draws from Book 20 of *De civitate Dei* (also applied to 2 Cor. 5:14–15<sup>87</sup>).<sup>88</sup> Working on his massive exegetical compilation during some of the most turbulent, and indeed dangerous, times of the Carolingian era, Florus, through Augustine, presents readings of scripture suggesting that evil days need not be a sign of the End, but could be improved and made good through the strict and pious yet merciful correction of imperfect humans, and that it is to this ameliorating end that men should devote their lifespans on earth, "redeeming the time" and righting the course of a troubled age. Florus's widely transmitted *Expositio*, with the help of Bede's *Collectio* and his authoritative name, served to ensure that the medieval West's Paul would be to a great extent Augustine's. Paul's messianic apocalypticism could thus continue to be read in other, allegorical or "spiritual," non-chiliastic ways, deriving substantially from Tyconius's important influence on the guiding principles of Augustine's own exegesis. Such readings of Paul's words, as not necessarily referring to an imminent End, could be used to justify hope that the condition of the world might eventually be ameliorated from the grim state of affairs described in Florus's *Querela de divisione imperii*.

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<sup>86</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, PL 119, col. 407, col. 395, col. 397–398.

<sup>87</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, ed. Fransen, et al., 91–92, drawing from *De civitate Dei* 20.6

<sup>88</sup> Florus of Lyon, *Expositio*, PL 119, col. 310, col. 315, col. 350.

In its adherence to patristic sources, Florus's *Expositio* is quite typical of Carolingian commentaries on Paul, even as Florus's extreme fidelity to Augustine and his superior critical instincts set him apart from most of his contemporaries. Carolingian commentators found myriad allegorical ways around literal imminent-apocalyptic readings of Pauline (and Johannine) verses by carefully selecting passages from Augustine, Jerome, Bede, Tyconius, and other eminent Christian writers that opened up interpretative routes around the messianic tensions apparent in scripture. Through the effective patristic authority of these figures—including Tyconius, on the basis of Augustine's qualified endorsement and Bede's additional endorsement, following Augustine—Carolingian commentators could maintain that they were the heirs of an ancient Christian exegetical tradition wherein spiritual or moral readings of scripture yielded a higher understanding than did literal readings. In the subtle reshaping of that ancient tradition, Carolingian exegetes operated from a shared understanding that the reality of "dangerous times" and "evil days" meant that correction and reform were vitally needed, from which better times on earth could yet come—not that such times were intelligible signs that the End was recognizably in sight and Christ's return near. According to this understanding, the Church is often (though not always) emphasized, both as the divinely prescribed vehicle of the temporal world's reform and as the true referent of Paul's eschatological pronouncements.

### **Invoking Paul, outside exegesis**

Paul's words were also, of course, frequently invoked by Carolingian writers in other textual contexts, outside the formal constraints of exegesis. In what follows, I will briefly examine a few instances of eighth- and ninth-century writers speaking of *periculosa tempora* and *dies mali* in texts of other genres, particularly letters. In so doing, the primary question that I



shall consider is whether their appropriations of Paul's words are consistent, or not, with the interpretations of these verses supplied in Carolingian commentaries, which typically side-stepped the imminent-apocalyptic implications of Paul's pronouncements.

All of the texts that I shall examine below can be broadly considered as letters in the sense that they are texts addressed to a certain person, who is being urged by the text's author to follow some advice or course of action. Certainly, other, more specific genre classifications can be assigned to some of these texts. The simple difference that I mean to highlight in observing their shared epistolary function is between the more explicitly discursive nature of these texts and the exegetical works surveyed above, meant to explain the timeless truths of scripture for the benefit of all Christians. The Pauline commentaries offer scripturally derived, patristically articulated hope that the days and times may be made good through the charitable correction and improvement of Christian society, while suggesting in only a general sense how this ought to be accomplished. Discursive texts of this era, in contrast, provide a clearer picture of whose responsibility it should be to promote and instill the objectives of *reformatio* and the particular ways in which would-be reformers might profitably spend their time.

### **Letters of Boniface**

In the earlier decades of the eighth century, we can see in the letters of Boniface of Mainz that Paul's *dies mali* and *periculosa tempora* were being invoked to warn about the dangers of heresy and the snares of sin and to promote correction and pious obedience through the Church. An Anglo-Saxon missionary to the continent, Boniface was sent by Pope Gregory II to spread Christianity to the outer reaches of the former Roman world, particularly to Frisia and Thuringia, earning him the (Pauline) epithet "Apostle to the Germans." Pope Gregory III appointed

Boniface as the first Archbishop of Mainz, with his diocese including all of Germania east of the Rhine. His martyrdom in 754 contributed much to his hallowed posthumous reputation as the legendary patron saint of Germany, but the historical Boniface—an often surly and beleaguered ambassador working through harsh conditions and sometimes rocky relations with Frankish kings—was without doubt a pivotal figure in the early medieval transformation of Europe, especially parts of Germania that had before his time been relatively insulated from Roman and Christian influences.<sup>89</sup> His career, beginning with his first trip to the continent in 716, spans the period between the late Merovingians and the rise of the early Carolingians, Charles Martel and Pepin the Short. Boniface’s epistolary correspondence with these powerful men, as well as with friends and ecclesiastical colleagues, can serve as a lens onto this transitional period in the eighth-century Frankish world, well before Charlemagne’s expansion of the kingdom and his ambitious reforming efforts.

In a letter sent *ca.* 725 to some of his closest contacts, the abbess Leoba of Tauberbischofsheim (where Boniface had established a convent) and her fellow nuns Thecla and Cynehilda, Boniface pleads for their spiritual assistance with his arduous mission:

I beseech, nay all but command you, my dear daughters, to implore God with incessant prayers, as I trust that you do now and have done and will do unceasingly, that we may be delivered, in the words of the apostle, *from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith* (2 Thess. 3:2)”...[in order that] *the word of the Lord may have free course, and the glorious gospel of Christ be glorified* (2 Thess. 3:1), *that the grace of God which was bestowed on me may not be in vain* (1 Cor. 15:10), and that, since I am the least and the worst of all the legates, whom the Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome has sent to preach the

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<sup>89</sup> On Boniface as a pivotal figure in the shift from the late antique to the early medieval world, see Franz J. Felten, Jörg Jarnut, and Lutz E. von Padberg, eds., *Bonifatius – Leben und Nachwirken: die Gestaltung des christlichen Europa im Frühmittelalter* (Mainz, 2007); and Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200–1000*, second ed. (Malden, Mass., 2003), 418–428. See also the classic study of Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), esp. 76–78, 280–290 on Boniface’s correspondence. For a recent consideration of Levison’s work, see Rosamond McKitterick, “Carolingian Historiography” and Janet L. Nelson, “England and the Continent in the Eighth Century,” in Matthias Becher and Yitzhak Hen, eds., *Ein jüdisches Forscherleben zwischen wissenschaftlicher Anerkennung und politischem Exil* (Siegburg, 2010), 93–112 and 113–121.

gospel, I may not die barren without some fruit of the gospel, and may not return empty-handed in the ranks of sons and daughters; that I may not be judged guilty, when the Lord comes, of hiding the talent nor because of my sins receive instead of a reward for my labour, punishment for unfruitful toil from Him who sent me. And what is worse, many who I thought would be set on the Judgment Day as sheep at the right hand of Christ, have proved to be, on the contrary, stinking and wanton goats who must be set on the left hand. Entreat the goodness of God that He who willed that I, though unworthy, should be chosen shepherd over the people, may strengthen my heart with the spirit of a ruler, so that when the wolf comes I may not flee like a hireling, but like the good shepherd may seek to defend faithfully and loyally the lambs with their mothers, that is the Church Catholic and its sons and daughters, against heretics and schismatics and hypocrites. Moreover, *because the days are evil, be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.* (Eph. 5:16–17) Wherefore, *be strong, steadfast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong; let all your things be done with charity* (1 Cor. 16:13–14); and according to the gospel: *In your patience possess ye your Souls.* (Luke 21:19). Keep in mind the holy apostles and prophets: because they laboured much in the Lord, therefore have they gained eternal rewards.<sup>90</sup>

In this personal, urgent letter, Boniface's language is thoroughly Pauline, quoting extensively from Paul's letters and casting himself as a lowly and unworthy apostle fighting against great adversity to spread the Gospel. There is a strong hint of apocalyptic anxiety in Boniface's rhetoric—"that I may not be judged guilty, when the Lord comes," "many who I thought would be set on Judgment Day as sheep at the right hand of Christ, have proved to be, on the contrary

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<sup>90</sup> Boniface of Mainz, *ep. 67, MGH, Epistolae Merovingici et Karolini Aevi*, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach and Ernst Dümmler (Berlin, 1892), 6, 335–336: "Obsecro et precipio quasi filiabus carissimis, quemadmodum vos iam incessanter facere et fecisse et facturas esse confidimus, ut vestris orationibus crebris Dominum deprecemini: *ut liberemur iuxta dictum apostoli ab inportunis et malis hominibus; non enim est omnium fides...ut sermo Domini currat et clarificetur gloriosum evangelium Christi*, ut *gratia Domini in me vacua non sit* et — quia ultimus et pessimus sum omnium legatorum, quos catholica et apostolica Romana ecclesia ad praedicandum evangelium destinavit — ut omnino sine fructu evangelii sterilis non moriar et vacuus filiorum et filiarum numero non revertar; ne de abscondito talento Domino veniente reus esse iudicer nec, peccatis exigentibus, vice laboris pro mercede ultionem infructuosi laboris accipiam ab eo, qui misit me. Multi enim, quod peius est, quos oves in futuro iudicio ad dexteram Christi ponendos fore censebam, versa vice, putidae et petulcae et ad sinistram statuendae capellae esse dinoscuntur. Et pietatem Domini precamini, ut spiritu principali confirmet cor meum Deus, qui me indignum pastorem in populo vocari voluit; ut, lupo veniente, more mercinari non fugiam, sed exemplo boni pastoris agnos pariter cum matribus, ecclesiam scilicet catholicam cum filiis et filiabus suis, contra hereticos et scismaticos vel hypochritas fideliter ac fiducialiter defensare studeam. Praeterea, *quia dies mali sunt, nolite esse imprudentes, sed intellegentes, quae sit voluntas Dei. Quamobrem confortamini et state in fide et viriliter agite et confortamini; omnia vestra cum caritate fiant*; et iuxta evangelium: *In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras*. Et recordamini sanctorum apostolorum et prophetarum: quia multum laboraverunt in Domino, ideo adepti sunt premia sempiterna"; trans. Edward Kylie, *The English Correspondence of Saint Boniface* (New York, 1966; first published 1911), 149–151.

stinking and wanton goats”—but Boniface does not go so far as to suggest in this letter that these End-times events are imminent. They could come at *any* time. The *dies mali* that Boniface describes are evil because of the actions and beliefs perpetuated by “unreasonable and wicked men” and by “heretics and schismatics and hypocrites.” These could be taken as signs of the End. Yet, Boniface still sees opportunity for correcting the course of this world by defending the Church and emulating the labors of “the holy apostles and prophets,” who also endured such terrible difficulties and furthered the extent of God’s Word—and who did not in their own troubled times experience the world’s End.

In a later letter (*ca.* 742–746) to Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, Boniface again invokes passages from Paul, including 2 Tim. 3:1, in commenting on Daniel having gone blind:

You know better than I, my master, who said, *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth* (Heb. 12:6); and Paul, the Apostle, says: *When I am weak, then am I strong* (2 Cor. 12:10); and *my power is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor. 12:9; and the Psalmist, *many are the afflictions of the righteous* (Ps. 34:19). You, my father, have, as Anthony is reputed to have said of Didymus, eyes that can see God and His angels and the glorious raptures of the heavenly Jerusalem...For what are our bodily eyes *in these dangerous times* (2 Tim. 3:1), but, so to speak, windows of sin, through which we look upon sins or sinners or, worse still, bring sins upon our own selves by what we see and lust after?<sup>91</sup>

Again speaking with the heightened language of scripture, particularly the Pauline letters, while echoing Jerome and Augustine, Boniface suggests that the world inhabited by himself and Daniel is so totally full of sin and temptation that blindness may be, as it were, a blessing in disguise.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Boniface, *ep.* 12, *PL* 89, col. 700–703: “sed ut vos, Domine, melius scitis, qui, vel per quem dixit: *Quem Deus diligit, corrigit*: et caetera. Et Paulus apostolus: *Quando infirmor, tunc potens sum, et virtus in infirmitate perficitur*. Et Psalmigraphus: *Multae tribulationes iustorum*: et reliqua. Habes, Pater mi, sicut Antonius de Didymo fertur dixisse, *oculos scilicet, quibus potest Deus videri, et angeli eius, et supernae Ierusalem gloriosa gaudia speculari*...Quid enim sunt, *isto periculoso tempore*, corporales oculi, nisi, ut ita dicam, maxima ex parte, veraciter fenestrae peccatorum? Per quas aut peccata, et ad peccantes aspicimus, aut, quod peius est, ad nos ipsos flagitia considerantes et concupientes contrahimus”; trans. Ephraim Emerton, *The Letters of Saint Boniface* (New York, 2000), 94–95.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, c. 109 (on Didymus the Blind), in *Hieronymus liber De viris inlustribus. Gennadius liber De viris inlustribus*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, 108–109; Augustine, *Contra maximum haereticum arinorum episcoporum libri duo*, 2.11, *PL* 42, col. 766.

Boniface offers his episcopal colleague this implicit interpretation of these scriptural verses (in light of present circumstances) as fraternal consolation. For Boniface, the world was a difficult, perilous, and exceedingly sinful place, but it was up to people like himself, Daniel, and Leoba to redeem the times by steadfastly rejecting sin, correcting error, and bringing some of the wicked into the saving embrace of the Church.

### **Letters of Alcuin**

Moving ahead in time to the late eighth and early ninth century, the period of Charlemagne's reign, we can discern in the writings of Alcuin the effects of the more expansively "Christianized" Frankish world that Boniface and his allies had helped to usher in—a world deeply concerned with the soteriological dangers of sin and heresy, with penance and correction.<sup>93</sup> Like Boniface, an English emigrant to Francia, Alcuin became one of Charlemagne's most important advisors, the era's preeminent teacher, and one of the principal architects of the distinctive vision of Carolingian *imperium Christianum*. Beyond his scriptural commentaries, considered above, Alcuin often used the language of the Pauline epistles in his other writings. In the introduction to chapter 1, I discussed Alcuin's preface to his *vita* of Saint Vedastus, wherein the present times were described as "dangerous" on account of the rise of "false teachers introducing novel doctrines, conspicuous in staining the purity of the Catholic faith with wicked assertions."<sup>94</sup> Alcuin does not entertain the idea here that these *pseudodoctores* should be perceived as omens of the ultimate, or penultimate, times, at least in any immediately

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. Peter Brown, "Gloriosus obitus: The End of the Ancient Other World," in William Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, eds., *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999), 289–314; Peter Brown, "The Decline of the Empire of God," in Caroline Walker Bynum and Paul Freedman, eds., *Last Things: Death and the Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2012), 41–59.

<sup>94</sup> See ch. 1., n. 7 above.

looming sense. Rather, where their “novel doctrines” represent threats to orthodoxy, “guardians” of the Church, both past (the apostles, Fathers, and saints) and present (right-believing contemporary Christians preserving and carrying on ancient Christian tradition), must be joined together to combat these insidious threats.

There is a stronger suggestion of apocalyptic anxiety in Alcuin’s *ep.* 174 to Charlemagne (written, *ca.* 799, around the same time as his *Life of St. Vedastus*),<sup>95</sup> due to the shocking situation of Pope Leo III, accused of sinful behaviour by his opponents and suffering violent attacks in Rome.<sup>96</sup> Stressing the critical importance of Charlemagne’s intervention, Alcuin writes, “On you alone the whole safety of the churches of Christ depends. You punish wrongdoers, guide the straying, console the sorrowing and advance the good. Has not the worst impiety been committed in Rome, where the greatest piety was once to be seen? ... These are the perilous times foretold in Scripture (cf. 2 Tim. 3:1), for the love of many grows cold (Matt. 24:12).”<sup>97</sup> Here, Alcuin resorts to suggesting that present events are indeed signs of terrible things to come, and then, perhaps, the end of the world. But these were truly extraordinary circumstances—allegedly, men attempting to rip out the tongue and eyes of the heir of St. Peter,

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<sup>95</sup> Mary Garrison, “The Bible and Alcuin’s Interpretation of Current Events,” *Peritia* 16 (2002), 68–84, argues that Alcuin’s eschatological thought and his use of scriptural quotations and references (particularly from the Old Testament prophetic texts) became more explicitly “apocalyptic” around 796, a year of rancorous instability and violence in his native Northumbria, which Garrison suggests steeled Alcuin’s resolve to remain in Francia. Garrison goes so far as to assert that, in his post-796 letters, “Alcuin’s sense that he can discern God’s purposes, his rejection of his prior Augustinian agnosticism about the meaning of post-biblical historical narrative, seems to persist...Alcuin’s transformed view of history seems to be accompanied by a more vivid sense of the imminence of the end of the world.” This short study and the examples provided are quite convincing in showing that Alcuin’s *selection and use* of scriptural referents grew more urgently “apocalyptic,” thus bolstering the immediacy and perhaps the effect of his epistolary rhetoric. I am less convinced, though, by Garrison’s more provocative claim that this discernible shift in biblically inflected rhetoric is necessarily evidence of a very profound change in Alcuin’s *whole understanding* of time, providence, and the ultimate messianic event.

<sup>96</sup> These events, narrated from a later Carolingian perspective, are described in the poem *Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa* (sometimes credited to Einhard), which can be found in Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 197–207.

<sup>97</sup> Alcuin of York, *ep.* 174, *MGH, Epistolae Karolini aevi* 4, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin, 1895), 288: “Ecce in te solo tota salus Christi inclinata recumbit. Tu vindex scelerum, tu rector errantium, tu consolator maerentium, tu exaltatio bonorum. Nonne Romana in sede, ubi relegio maxime pietatis quondam claruerat, ibi extrema impietatis exempla emerserunt? ... Tempora sunt periculosa olim ab ipsa veritate praedicta, quia refrigescit caritas multorum.”

in Rome itself!—and Alcuin’s heightened rhetoric, a perfect example of what James Palmer has termed “the apocalyptic as a mode of argument,” is clearly meant to inspire the action of his king—soon emperor, to be crowned by Leo III shortly after Charlemagne’s emergency protection of the Pope—and to emphasize his obligation as Western Christendom’s most powerful sovereign.<sup>98</sup> Of course, we cannot ultimately know whether Alcuin himself genuinely believed that these events in Rome were definitive signs that the End was near. But we can be fairly certain that he wanted Charlemagne to understand the severity and danger of these circumstances and to apply his might as the defender of the Roman Church.

This use of 2 Tim. 3:1 toward “the apocalyptic as argument” occurs in other letters of Alcuin with less explicit eschatological emphasis than in *ep.* 111, but always where Alcuin is attempting to persuade or compel the letter’s recipient to take some much-needed action for the higher good of Christendom. For instance, in his slightly earlier (796) letter to the royal treasurer Megenfrid, Alcuin suggests that in “the dangerous times of this age” (*tempora periculosa huius saeculi*) Charlemagne possesses, through God’s grace, all the virtue and power to succeed in converting the conquered Saxon people to Christianity. Yet, in order for these noble efforts to produce the desired results, he will need more assistants in the field, men who must be properly “trained, admonished, and taught” to act with wisdom. After invoking the spectre of Paul’s *periculosa tempora*, Alcuin takes another route to his intended goal, flattering Megenfrid with extensive praise, stressing his own devotion to Charlemagne (“my dear David”), and his abiding concern for the salvation of the peoples under his royal power.<sup>99</sup> If the eschatological was one

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<sup>98</sup> Palmer, *Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages*, 138–39, provides an insightful reading of this text and the above translation.

<sup>99</sup> Alcuin of York, *ep.* 111, ed. Ernst Dümmler, *MGH, Epistolae Karolini aevi* 4:2 (Berlin, 1895), 161: “Haec tuae, venerande amice, scripsi dilectioni, quatenus tuis proficiant ammonitionibus qui a te consilium audire desiderant. Scit enim haec omnia optime dilectus meus David, cui Deus et sapientiam dedit et bonam voluntatem: ut plurimos convertit populos ad caritatem Christi et laudem. Cui omnis bonitas et potentia ad benefaciendum sufficit, nisi unum tantummodo propter *tempora periculosa* huius saeculi: quod rariores habet adiutores in opere Domini,

option available to Alcuin to galvanize necessary action in the defence and expansion of orthodox Christendom, he had others at his disposal as well, and could nimbly alternate among them. In this case—in contrast to the attack on Pope Leo three years later—desperate times did not so much call for desperate measures as for more and better-prepared agents performing the practical labors of proselytization and conversion. Charged, readily recognizable biblical rhetoric could be highly useful for motivating the work of governance during the reign of Alcuin’s “David” over an expansive realm inhabited by diverse subjects.<sup>100</sup>

### **Agobard of Lyon’s *De insolentia Iudaeorum* and *De privilegio apostolicae sedis***

Moving forward in time again, to the reign of Louis the Pious, we can see the same combination of flattery and a rhetoric of apocalyptic urgency in the letters of Archbishop Agobard of Lyon (Florus’s mentor, discussed above) to the emperor. Like Alcuin, Agobard uses the language of Pauline eschatology to urge immediate action, not necessarily because the End-times were actually perceived to be at hand, but to convince Louis in the strongest terms

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quam necesse sit. Nullus tamen in mundo meliores, ut credo, habet quam ille. Hos erudiat, ammonet, et doceat secundum sapientiam sibi a Deo datum. Et tu, fidelissime dispensator thesaurorum et servator consiliorum et adiutor devotus, viriliter fac voluntatem illius. Esto in consilio suavis et in opere strenuus; pacificus in domo, prudens in legationibus; pius in pauperes et miseros, iustus in iudiciis, largus in elymosinis; ut ex temporalibus divitiis tuis aeternas Christi merearis in caelis. Adhuc me dilectio mei David et sollicitudo salutis multorum cogit tibi suadere quae utilia scio coram Deo et honesta coram saeculo.” On this letter, in which Alcuin strongly advises against an excessively forceful approach to the Saxon pagans, see Douglas Dales, *Alcuin: His Life and Legacy* (Cambridge, 2012), 104–106, who regards *ep.* 111 as “one of [Alcuin’s] most outspoken letters.” Alcuin also invokes Paul’s *periculosa tempora* in *epp.* 74, 116, 193, 206, and 280, in addition to the two letters specifically considered here.

<sup>100</sup> On Charlemagne’s approach to governance, see Jennifer R. Davis, *Charlemagne’s Practice of Empire* (Cambridge, 2015), who argues (at p. 39) that “what Charlemagne created was...an empire structured by ad hoc, and yet strategic, choices about rulership, and driven by the dynamics of constant political change.” Davis contends that Charlemagne’s reign was “much more profoundly shaped by immediate political concerns” than by an “ideology of empire,” and that such a conscious ideology was of far greater significance for subsequent Carolingian rulers. While this may (or may not) be true of Charlemagne, the intellectuals who served as advisors at his court, and Alcuin in particular, did articulate a coherent vision of (Roman) Christian *imperium*. Whether or not this aspirational vision directly intersected with on-the-ground administration, it likely motivated the efforts of a sovereign who, according to his biographer, Einhard, asked to have Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* read aloud to him during mealtimes. In any case, Charlemagne’s development of practical strategies of governance, as detailed by Davis, is in itself suggestive of a view of the world as something that could endure for some time to come.



available to him that a given situation was dire. During the period of Louis's deposition, (second) public penance, and monastic imprisonment (November 833 to February 834), Agobard positioned himself as one of the fiercest of the emperor's critics and one of the staunchest advocates of imperial unity, which, in the archbishop's view, had been gravely threatened by Louis's re-division of the empire among his sons following the birth of Charles the Bald.<sup>101</sup> Yet, in his texts *De insolentia Iudaeorum* (826/27) and *De privilegio apostolicae sedis* (early to mid 833, before Louis's deposition), both addressed to Louis, Agobard maintains a tone of pro forma deference coupled with the use of scriptural, patristic, and papal quotations to rouse the emperor to act according to his advice for the good of Christendom and Catholic orthodoxy. In the earlier text, Agobard argues that the treatment of the Jewish minority has been far too lenient and favourable, to the serious detriment of the Christian majority in his archdiocese. He opens by addressing Louis directly:

To his most Christian, truly pious, and always august emperor Louis, the most fortunate triumphal victor in Christ, Agobard, the most downcast of all your servants. When omnipotent God—Who knew before time itself and foreordained that you would be a pious rector in these truly demanding times—raised your prudence and zealous religion over the other mortals of your time, there is no doubt but that you were prepared as a remedy for the dangerous times (*dubium non est praeparatum vos ad remedium temporibus periculosis*) about which the Apostle speaks: *In the last days the dangerous times shall begin, and there shall be men who love themselves, greedy, puffed up, etc.* (2 Tim. 3:1–2), and *who, although they have the appearance of piety, nullify its strength* (2 Tim. 3:5). From times such as these nothing more should be expected than what is already seen, except for the release of Satan and the public trampling of the holy City for the forty-two months, which shall occur through the head of all the iniquitous, Antichrist. (cf. Apoc. 11:2)

Therefore since this is the way things are, I beseech your most tranquil forbearance that you lend your most patient ear to the words with which I, the least of your servants, consider it most necessary to admonish your most holy solicitude concerning such a vital matter, a matter

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<sup>101</sup> This new plan of succession, the *Divisio regni* of 831 was seen by Agobard as a betrayal of the earlier *Ordinatio imperii* of 817, which had been presented as a divinely inspired decision to preserve the unified empire under Lothar, Louis's eldest son. On Louis's reign, especially the political troubles of the 830s, see Booker, *Past Convictions* and De Jong, *The Penitential State*.

which is either uniquely or especially one to which your governance more than all others should bring aid.<sup>102</sup>

As in Alcuin's letter to Charlemagne regarding the hostile treatment of Pope Leo III, Agobard moves back and forth between lofty praise of the "most Christian, truly pious" sovereign and the language of eschatological emergency, evident in his quotations of Paul. His reference to the Apocalypse, however, is almost certainly a purposeful, performative exaggeration. Agobard is invoking the most extreme scriptural referent possible to aggressively hammer home his point—that the times are so miserable, owing in part to the tolerance shown to the Jews, that they could scarcely get much worse, save for the appearance of the Antichrist itself! Yet, if the wheels of the Johannine End-times events were truly in motion and far along in their trajectory, there would be little point in trying to right the course of earthly affairs. By contrast, if Agobard sincerely believes that Louis was foreordained by God to lead and correct the men of his age, then the emperor should presumably rise to the challenge of overcoming whatever perilous obstacles present themselves. To assist him in this divinely ordained duty, Agobard proceeds to propose specific policy recommendations that Louis should implement in defence of the Christian faith, the Christian community, and the Church. The stricter approach to the Jews that

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<sup>102</sup> Agobard of Lyon, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, in Lieven Van Acker, ed., *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia*, CCCM 52, (Turnhout, 1981), 191: "Christianissimo et uere piissimo, et in Christo uictori ac triumphatori Hludouico imperatori felicissimo, semper augusto, Agobardus abiectissimus omnium seruorum uestrorum. Cum omnipotens Deus, qui uos ante tempora praesciuit et praeordinauit rectorem pium futurum temporibus ualde necessariis, sublimauerit prudentiam uestram et studium religionis supra ceteros uestri temporis mortales, dubium non est preparatum uos ad remedium temporibus periculosis, de quibus apostolus loquitur: *In nouissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa, et erunt homines se ipsos amantes, cupidi, elati et cetera, et habentes quidem speciem pietatis, uirtutem autem eius abnegantes*; de quibus nihil est expectandum, quod iam non uideatur, nisi solutio Satanae, et publica calcatio sanctae ciuitatis mensibus quadraginta duobus, quae futura est per caput omnium iniquorum, Antichristum.

Cum hæc igitur ita se habeant, obsecro tranquillissimam longanimitatem uestram, ut praebeatis patientissimam aurem uestram uerbis, quibus ego, infimus seruorum uestrorum, nimis necessarium puto admonendam sanctissimam sollicitudinem uestram de re tam necessaria, quae aut sola aut praecipua est, cui prae ceteris succurrere debeat gubernatio uestra"; trans. adapted from W.L. North: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/agobard-insolence.asp> [accesssed 2 December 2020].

Agobard advocates is, he contends, “consonant with authority, that is, the Acts of the Apostles, and takes its origin from the Old Testament” (*consonum sit auctoritati uel actibus apostolicis, et a Veteri Testamento originem trahens*).<sup>103</sup>

Because scripture—however ambiguous it may in places be—represented for the Carolingians the very bedrock of ancient Christian tradition, the ways in which it was selected from and interpreted were of paramount importance to Carolingian politics and governance. As we have seen in examining ninth-century commentaries on Paul, there were myriad authoritative options available to exegetes in considering ostensibly apocalyptic/messianic passages, and the non-literal, allegorical readings of Augustine and other patristic authorities were usually favoured for these passages. But the apocalyptic connotations of Paul’s words were not lost or forgotten; as in Agobard’s text, they could be invoked to formulate a powerful argument meant to compel immediate and vital action.

A similar rhetorical strategy, alternating flattery and bold eschatological emphasis, marks Agobard’s text *De privilegio apostolicae sedis*, written sometime between April and June 833, just months before Louis would be (temporarily) removed from power by his older sons and a hostile episcopal contingent, with Agobard as one of its leading figures. Around this time, the rebel party had gained the support of Pope Gregory IV, who urged Louis to step down from the throne. In a letter sternly rebuking Louis’s loyal bishops for their stubborn arrogance in refusing to properly acknowledge papal authority, Gregory supplies a series of scriptural and patristic quotations (including *De civitate Dei* 5.24) in support of his position vis-à-vis Louis.<sup>104</sup> Agobard

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<sup>103</sup> Agobard of Lyon, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, ed. Van Acker, 194; trans. North.

<sup>104</sup> Gregory IV, *ep.* 17, *MGH, Epistolae* 5, ed. Dümmler (Berlin, 1899), 228–232. On this letter and its context, see Booker, *Past Convictions*, 133–136; Cornelia Scherer, “Gregor IV. Im Kampf um das Erbe Ludwigs des Frommen I: Die Reise ins Frankenreich 833,” in *eadem*, *Der Pontifikat Gregors IV. (827–844): Vorstellungen und Wahrnehmungen päpstlichen Handelns im 9. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 2013), 165–95; Irene van Renswoude, “License to Speak: The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,” (Ph.D. diss.,

adopts a comparable approach in his *De privilegio apostolicae sedis*, in which he tries to convince Louis to recognize papal authority by providing compelling statements from revered popes of the past: Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, and Pope Pelagius I (referencing Augustine). Quoting from Paul and Gregory the Great, Agobard stresses precipitous decline over time in the deteriorating condition of the *navis Ecclesiae*, the ship of the Church on which the fate of the world depends:

Let your sublime prudence condescend to weigh these words of the Apostle: “*In the last days perilous times will come*” (2 Tim. 3:1). These perils the blessed Pope Gregory [the Great] had already deplored at a time when the situation was incomparably better than now, when he said: “I am so much tossed about by the waves of this world that I am unable to guide to port the old half-rotten ship whose governance the hidden plans of God have charged me with. Sometimes the waves beat on the bow; sometimes the foaming billows of the sea swell along the sides; sometimes the tempest blows against the stern; and amidst all this turmoil I see myself compelled sometimes to charge right down upon an obstacle, sometimes to tack and present the side of the ship to the menace of the waves. I sigh when I realize that as soon as my vigilance slackens, the bilge-water of vices will increase, and that, in the face of the storm that is raging, the rotten planks will sound the impending shipwreck.” (Gregory I, *Epist.* 1.41) Alas! Alas! If the ship of the Church and the planks from which it is made were already rotten then, in what state is it now?<sup>105</sup>

Agobard’s point, of course, is that while Gregory decried the state of the Church in his own time, things have become drastically worse since then, owing in part to Louis’s defiance of the *navis Ecclesiae*’s rightful captain, the Pope. By the manner in which Agobard invokes 2 Tim. 3:1, it

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Universiteit Utrecht, 2011), 337–50. De Jong, *Penitential State*, 220–21, suggests that the letter may not in fact have been written by Gregory, but perhaps by Agobard himself.

<sup>105</sup> Agobard of Lyon, *De privilegio apostolicae sedis (ad Ludiicum)*, in *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia*, 305–306: “Dignetur sublimis prudentia uestra pie perpendere quod apostolus dicit: *In nouissimis diebus instabunt tempora periculosa*. Quę pericula beatus papa Gregorius suo iam tempore, quando adhuc status idem multo et incomparabiliter melior erat quam nunc, ita deplorat dicens: ‘Tantis quippe in hoc loco huius mundi fluctibus quatuor, ut uetustam ac putrescentem nauem, quam regendam occulta Dei dispensatione suscepi, ad portum dirigere nullatenus possim. Nunc ex aduerso fluctus inruunt, nunc ex latere cumuli spumosi maris intumescunt, nunc a tergo tempestas insequitur. Interque hæc omnia turbatus cogor modo in ipsa clauum aduersitate dirigere, modo, curuato nauis latere, minas fluctuum ex obliquo declinare. Ingemesco, quia sencio, quod neglegente me crescit sentina uiciorum, et tempestate fortiter obuiante iam iamque putridę naufragium tabule sonant.’ Heu heu, si tunc iam putrescebat nauis Ecclesię, et si eius tabulę iam putridę erant, quid nunc est?’”; trans. Booker, “Agobard of Lyons – On the Privilege of the Apostolic Seat” (forthcoming), adapted from Louis Halphen, *Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire*, trans. Giselle de Nie (Amsterdam, 1977), 197.

may seem as though he is suggesting the world's final days are close at hand. Yet, as Augustine explained in his letters to Hesychius (and elsewhere), the circumstances of the world growing worse and worse over time cannot be taken as evidence that the End is near, because they can always get worse still in the years ahead, the remaining number of which being known only by God. As we have seen in the Carolingian commentaries on Paul, this strong anti-millenarian argument—acknowledging the reality of decline across the world's Sixth and final Age but de-emphasizing the providential significance of earthly events evincing such decline—was certainly available in the Carolingians' exegetical toolkit and would have been familiar to Agobard. The reason that the archbishop is writing this text, and addressing it to Louis, is because decrepit ships can still, with great effort, be repaired.<sup>106</sup> Once again, the *periculosa tempora* of the present are a call to act in a certain way, to correct one's behaviour or that of others for the greater good of the Church, so that the times of the present may *not* in fact turn out to be the *novissima tempora*.

### **Dhuoda's *Liber manualis***

Although Louis was restored to the throne less than a year after his episcopally supervised public penance and deposition, reigning as emperor until his death in 840, the dangerous times perceived by Agobard persisted, particularly during the civil war among Louis's sons after his death. It is within this perilous context that the *Liber manualis* of Dhuoda, written between 841 and 843, should be understood.<sup>107</sup> Dhuoda was a Frankish noblewoman, the wife of

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<sup>106</sup> On the implications of such metaphors, see Paul Edward Dutton, "Awareness of Historical Decline in the Carolingian Empire, 800–887" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1981), 5–12.

<sup>107</sup> On Dhuoda and the *Liber manualis*, see Janet L. Nelson, "Dhuoda," in Janet L. Nelson and Patrick Wormald, eds., *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2007), 106–120; Martin A. Claussen, "Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the *Liber manualis*," *French Historical Studies* 19 (1996), 785–809; Shane Butler, *The Matter of the Page: Essays in Search of Ancient and Medieval Authors* (Madison, Wisc., 2011), 87–105; Marie Ann Mayeski, *Dhuoda: Ninth-century Mother and Theologian* (Scranton, Penn.,

Bernard of Septimania, the controversial court chamberlain to Louis the Pious, rumoured to have had an affair with Louis's second wife, Empress Judith, and to have persuaded, or bewitched, the emperor to act in sinful ways, especially toward his adult sons, by his first wife, the deceased Ermengard. In the early 840s, while Dhuoda remained at her family's home in Uzès, her husband and young sons served at courts and on the battlefield during this extraordinarily tumultuous period. Her *Liber manualis* has typically been understood as an example of the *specula principum* genre, but like Agobard's polemical texts directed to Louis, Dhuoda's work can also be read as essentially a letter—a lengthy (73 chapters) one, replete with practical advice, biblical and numerological interpretation, and urgent calls for intercessory prayer, addressed to her older son, the teenaged William. In a chapter guiding William's moral improvement, Dhuoda writes:

“But you, my son, while you fight in this secular world among all the earth's confusion, whatever good or bad things should befall you—I urge you to give thanks to God in all of them without ceasing. You should do so, however, always in this spirit: that in good times your mind should never be puffed up after the example of evil men (cf. 1 Cor. 4:18–19), and that in bad times you should never lose yourself or be cast down...The Apostle says: “*Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh*” (Gal. 5:16–17). The Fathers of past times successfully fought this desire in themselves in a spirit of gentleness and forgiveness. As is written, while they grew in virtues and wrought justice, they were found worthy to conquer kingdoms through their faith (cf. Heb. 11:33). [...] There is strife today among many men. I even fear that it will extend to you and those who fight alongside you, for, as the Apostle says, *The days are evil* (Eph. 5:16). Again: *For there shall arise false Christs* (Matt. 24:24), and there *shall come dangerous times. Men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents...lovers of pleasures more than of God* (2 Tim. 3:1–4). And this would be too long to describe in individual instances—alas—because already we see such men rising up in many ranks as if they see themselves on the point of victory. So, rouse yourself and pray...”<sup>108</sup>

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1995); Meg Leja, “The Making of Men, Not Masters: Right Order and Lay Masculinity According to Dhuoda and Nithard,” *Comitatus* 39 (2008), 1–40; Steven A. Stofferahn, “The Many Faces in Dhuoda's Mirror: The *Liber manualis* and a Century of Scholarship,” *Magistra* 4 (1998), 89–134. On the survival of Dhuoda's work, a rare example of substantial writing from an early medieval laywoman, see Courtney M. Booker, “Addenda to the Transmission History of Dhuoda's *Liber manualis*,” *Revue d'histoire des textes*, n.s. 11 (2016), 181–213.

<sup>108</sup> Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, in Pierre Riché, ed. and trans., *Dhuoda: Manuel pour mon fils: Introduction, texte critique, notes, Sources Chrétiennes* 225 (Paris, 1975), 204–208: “Tu tamen, fili, dum in saeculo militaris inter mundanas actionum turmas, quidquid tibi prospera siue aduersa uenerint, in omnibus ut Deo gratias incessanter agas

Here, Dhuoda both quotes directly from Paul and appropriates Pauline rhetoric as her own, in warning her son to avoid the sin of arrogance (being “puffed up” with pride) and to instead follow the examples of the “Fathers of past times” in remaining humble and merciful and promoting virtue and justice. Dhuoda quotes Eph. 5:16 and 2 Tim 3:1–4 to stress the great dangers and wickedness prevalent in the world at present, making it all the more essential that her son never stray from the holy examples of the Fathers and that he reject the sinful behaviour of devious men.<sup>109</sup> Fidelity to Fathers of various types—God the Father, the Church Fathers, the king, and William’s actual father, Bernard—is a ubiquitous point of emphasis throughout the *Liber manualis*. In the passage quoted above, such humble obedience, together with prayer, are presented as the best protection against times that Dhuoda perceives as *dies mali* within *periculosa tempora*. Whether they are actually the End-times or not, Dhuoda’s maternal concern for her son’s safety in this world and the eventual salvation of his soul prompts her to remind William of Paul’s warnings, presented in an apocalyptic light. Ever humble herself, Dhuoda, near the beginning of her *Liber manualis*, readily concedes, “If the patriarchs and prophets and the other saints, from the first-made man up until now, have been unable to understand entirely

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ortor, eo tamen tenore ut ne in prosperis et exemplis prauorum mens eleuet tua, ne in aduersis dispar oberres uel deiciaris unquam [...] Dicit enim Apostolus: *Spiritu ambulate et desideria carnis non perficietis. Caro etenim concupiscit aduersus spiritum, spiritus autem aduersus carnem*. Nam Patres, retro saecula, in spiritu mansuetudinis et lenitatis hunc feruorem in se utiliter certando, uitia conculcando, in uirtutibus dignis, ut scriptum est, crescentes, et iustitiam operantes, *per fidem uincere meruerunt regna* [...] Luctamen hodie surgit in multis. Timeo enim me et in te tuisque militantibus eueniat, fili, pro eo quod ait Apostolus: *Dies mali sunt*. Et iterum: *Surgent pseudo et instabunt tempora periculosa. Eruntque illis in diebus homines seipsos amantes, cupidi, auari, proterui, inobedientes, saeculo magis quam Deo placentes*, et quod longum est enarrari per singula, quod iam, heu, pro dolor! nonnulli in multis adsurgentium cuneis conspiciuntur cernentes per loca si perueneri<n>t. Surge et ora ut supra...”; trans. Carol Neel, *Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman’s Counsel for Her Son* (Lincoln, Neb., 1991), 45–46.

<sup>109</sup> On Dhuoda’s deployment of eschatological discourse to urge moral correction and reform, see now Miriam Czock, “Arguing for Improvement: The Last Judgment, Time and the Future in Dhuoda’s *Liber manualis*,” in Veronika Wieser, Vincent Eltschinger, and Johann Heiss, eds., *Cultures of Eschatology, vol. 2: Time, Death and Afterlife in Medieval Christian, Islamic and Buddhist Communities* (Berlin, 2020), 509–527, esp. 514–515, where Czock discusses Dhuoda’s non-millenarian eschatology and her use of Romans 13:12 “to remind the reader of the apocalypse and...perhaps...to establish a sense of urgency” (p. 515).

the accounts of the holy mysteries, how much less should I.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, while she offers William some timely readings of pertinent scriptural passages, she does not insist that her interpretations are the correct, or only, ways of understanding these verses. Like Ambrose, Augustine, and Tyconius before her, Dhuoda defers to the mystery of God as manifest in his scriptures, even as she attempts to explicate their possible meanings and resonances.

Dhuoda’s understanding of the course of the world’s ages seems to follow closely that of Augustine, whom she often references or quotes. In commenting on the number six, she tells William “understand the six urns that empty through the Six Ages of time. In these good and bad men are mixed together,” an echo of Augustine’s universal-history paradigm and his conception of the Church as *corpus permixtum*. Yet, like Agobard invoking Gregory the Great’s pessimistic assessment of the *navis ecclesiae*, Dhuoda believes that the state of the world has declined terribly from that of ancient Christianity:

For there are those who give good counsel and do not do it in a good way but in a way neither useful for themselves nor uplifting to another. Why? Because the counsel of such men does not lead to the highest, perfect good of heaven. And there are many who give bad counsel, but without effect. This happens in many, various ways. There were in former times many worthy, good, and truthful men, but today most people are unlike those ancients in many ways. What does this mean for us? Many things are clear in this secular world. For Scripture says, *and because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold* (Matt. 24:12). As things are now, one does not know whom to choose as a counselor or whom one ought first to believe, and for many the hope of finding help from anyone remains uncertain.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. Riché, 96: “Si patriarchae et prophetae, et ceteri sancti, a protoplasto usque nunc, eius non ualuerunt plenius intelligere sacramentis documenta, quāto magis ego, exigua et infimi generis orta!”; trans. Neel, *Handbook*, 7.

<sup>111</sup> Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. Riché, 158–160: “Sunt enim qui dant bonum et non bene, nec sibi utilem, nec alieni sublimem. Quare? Quia ad perfectum et summum non transit acumen. Et sunt plerique qui dant malum, et non flectitur ad opus. In multis diuersis agitur modis. Fuerunt retro saecula multi digni utilesque et ueraces, et sunt hodie certe dissimiles in multis. Quid ad nos? Patent in saeculo plura. Ait enim Scriptura: *Abundat iniquitas et inter multos refrigescit karitas*. In hac uoluntione nescit homo quem eligat consiliatorem aut cui primum debeat credere, spemque utilitati in ullo comitti incertum manet a pluribus”; trans. Neel, *Handbook*, 29–30.



The negligent or wayward counsel that William will receive from impious men is, to a great extent, what has motivated Dhuoda to compose the guidebook for him. These men, in her view, stand as a stark contrast to the “worthy, good, and truthful men” of the Christian past, presumably the apostles, Fathers, and saints of the Church. Yet—as is usually the case when Carolingian letters invoke Paul’s *tempora periculosa* to eschatological effect—all hope is not lost, as she continues: “But you must not despair in this, my son. There are many descended from these ancients who still, with God’s help, are willing and able to give counsel that is good, welcome, and appropriate in respect to both themselves and their lords.”<sup>112</sup> Dhuoda clearly hopes that William will seek out and find such good mentors remaining among the many bad ones, and that by following their examples and advice, as well as his mother’s, he will in time develop into such a man himself, helping to correct and ameliorate the times.

## **Conclusion**

The works described above serve as only a few examples of how Paul’s words were deployed in contexts outside biblical commentaries in the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>113</sup> Yet, it is apparent from the texts of Boniface, Alcuin, Agobard, and Dhuoda that the apocalyptic implications of certain verses in Paul’s letters were not forgotten or wholly disregarded in this

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<sup>112</sup> Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. Riché, 160: “At tamen nec in hoc difidendum est, fili: sunt plures ex prioribus orti qui adhuc, auxiliante Deo, sibi et senioribus utile et acceptum congruumque possunt et ualent, ut credo, dare consilium”; trans. Neel, *Handbook*, 30.

<sup>113</sup> For further comparison of how Paul’s words were interpreted in Carolingian exegesis vis-à-vis their deployment in other textual settings, see now Gerda Heydemann, “*Nemo militans Deo implicat se saecularia negotia*: Carolingian Interpretations of II Timothy II.4,” *Early Medieval Europe* 29 (2021), 55–85. In this important and convincing new study, Heydemann shows that late antique and early medieval interpretations of Paul’s explicit statement that clergy (i.e., those “who served God”) should refrain from engaging in secular affairs (*saecularia negotia*) usually limited this scriptural prohibition to particular areas of “secular” activity. While most late antique commentaries on 2 Timothy applied this verse to economic and trade matters, Carolingian writers, particularly outside strictly exegetical texts, invoked 2 Tim. 2:4 to question the over-involvement of ecclesiastics in the political sphere.

period, despite most exegetical readings of Paul de-emphasizing or side-stepping his messianic eschatology, following Augustine and other patristic authorities in their tendency to allegorize wherever possible. Such non-literal readings of apocalyptic passages in Paul, inherited from Tyconius, Augustine, and other past authorities, could be used to justify and bolster the Carolingian project of reform, spanning political, social, and ecclesiastical spheres. However, if, as Giorgio Agamben has argued, the radical messianic temporality of the Pauline letters was fatefully replaced by a forever-deferred *Parousia*, this did not necessarily mean that Paul's words were defanged of all the immediacy of his "penultimate times." Where the spiritual exegetical principles of Tyconius and Augustine, applied to Pauline (and Johannine) eschatology, gave Carolingian reformers patristic license to gradually improve a world that might endure for generations more, the pessimistic urgency and pastoral imperative of Gregory the Great reminded them that the End could come at any moment. It is through this dialectic that, as James Palmer has shown, the apocalyptic remained a viable form of argument even where literal, chiliastic apocalypticism was seemingly absent. In the letters (broadly classified) of the Carolingian writers examined here, this rhetorical mode was one that they turned to when they felt the need to persuade or compel their reader to take some action of deep ecclesiological or soteriological importance. Rhetoric it may have been, but they could not have expected it to have any effect if its basis were not taken seriously by their readers; the temporal world, after all, could end at any moment, however near or far from the present.

Yet, even in invoking the harrowing imagery of the Apocalypse, Boniface, Alcuin, Agobard, and Dhuoda usually tended not to over-insist that the End was truly, imminently at hand; likely, they were familiar with the patristic interpretations reproduced, or embellished, in contemporary commentaries on scripture. Ultimately consistent in spirit with the exegetical

patterns observed above, these discursive/epistolary texts always implied that the times could still be redeemed, the present age improved, and the End delayed—*if* the letter's addressee would follow the course of action advised by its writer. Consequently, the future, although known to God, remained to a certain extent malleable and correctible through pious and equitable decisions and through proper deference to the accepted sources of orthodox tradition and authority: scripture, the Church Fathers and saints, the pope(s) and the institutional Church. "Evil days" could thus be made good if good men (such as Dhuoda's son), following after the great ones of the Christian past, would come to predominate within them.

Carolingian compilers and writers drew dutifully, yet creatively and pragmatically, from bodies of orthodox, "Catholic" tradition, partly shaped by those preceding them (especially Bede) but increasingly reified between the late eighth century and mid ninth century. While Carolingian writers insisted that the blessed authorities of "ancient Christianity" had provided them with the trans-temporal keys and lamps for unlocking the higher meanings in scripture, and for reforming Church and society according to those apparent scriptural truths, they spoke through the authoritative voices of the past so as to speak purposefully of their own times and circumstances.

## PART II PAST TIMES

The chapters in Part I considered late antique and early medieval ideas about the future course of the world, as interpreted from holy scripture. In Part II, our focus turns to the Carolingian study and use of late antique texts that provide (ostensibly authoritative) information about the ancient past and the intersections between the “universal history” of the world and the sacred historical narrative of scripture. For Christian intellectuals from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages, the *historicity* of the events, peoples, and great (and terrible) figures recounted in the canonical books of the Bible imbued the whole of the ancient past with a special importance, including ancient matters barely mentioned, or omitted entirely, in scripture itself. Yet, from Augustine, Orosius, and Jerome to their ardent Carolingian admirers, there was a variety of differing views about the significance of history and of past phenomena outside the divinely guided accounts of scriptural authors.

While, as I discuss in chapter 4, Augustine himself did not write a dedicated work of *historia*, he was clearly fascinated by, and wrote a great deal about, the past; and he tasked another Christian writer, Orosius, with composing a history of the world. Yet, Augustine and Orosius drew different conclusions from the evidence of history – or rather, regarding the significance of earthly history and its events and “kingdoms” for understanding the providential ordering of time by God. Modern scholars have emphasized the purportedly stark contrasts between Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* and Orosius’s *Historiae adversus paganos*. In the early Middle Ages, however, they were not regarded as incompatible texts, and both were used as valuable sources for gaining knowledge about the past.

In the Carolingian era, Augustine's *De civitate Dei* would be read, studied, and employed as an especially rich source for knowledge about the distant, ancient past. Chapter 3, focusing on annotated eighth- and ninth-century manuscripts of Augustine's magnum opus (or parts thereof), shows how readers utilized the *De civitate Dei*, and how they provided notes enabling others within their (present or future) communities to profitably study it. Chapter 4 examines the repurposing of Augustine's work, together with Orosius's *Historiae* and other late antique texts, in Frechulf of Lisieux's own, ninth-century "universal history." In both cases, Augustine's complex theology and temporality – gradually developed across all 22 books of the *De civitate Dei* – are relatively de-emphasized. Instead, the detailed information that Augustine provides about the ancient world is at the fore, receiving the most consistent attention from reader-annotators; and frequently excerpted, in a purposeful, piecemeal fashion, by Frechulf, who invokes the wealth of positive and negative exemplars of ancient history to usefully instruct his present readership — among them some of the most powerful people in the Carolingian world.

This was a world that was deeply different from the one that Augustine had known and for which he had written. Gone were the highly learned pagan elites, critical of the Roman empire's turn to Christianity (and away from its older traditions), against whom Augustine, as well as Orosius, explicitly wrote. Frechulf largely ignores the extended polemical passages *contra paganos* in the *De civitate Dei* and Orosius's *Historiae*, extracting historical "data" from their original, apologetic textual contexts. In so doing, he eliminates any apparent tensions between these two fifth-century works, and positions them as compatible sources for history. Frechulf's use of Augustine, Orosius, and other distinctive late antique texts as concordant products of an authoritative, ancient Christian past – thus glossing over the serious differences among these

authors and their books – stands as a vivid example of the harmonization and homogenization of that past.

### Chapter 3

#### In Search of Lost Time(s): Augustine's *De civitate Dei* as a Source for Knowledge of Ancient History in the Carolingian Era

##### Introduction: *Historia* and *tempora Christiana*

Augustine of Hippo never wrote a sustained, dedicated work of history—not a “universal” history, not an ecclesiastical history, not a history of the “Christian times” since the Roman empire’s turn to Christianity. That is to say, among the many individual works credited to this most prolific of late antique authors, none can properly be termed *historia*, according to the ancient or medieval expectations of this generic form.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Augustine, ever busy not only with his writings but also with his time-consuming duties as Bishop of Hippo, outsourced the task of writing a universal history, defending the “Christian times” from pagan critics, to a minor admirer, the Spanish priest Paulus Orosius. Augustine was, to be sure, a knowledgeable reader of other writers’ histories, and he himself wrote a great deal about the events, peoples, and ideas of the past, including but not limited to those described in, or related to, scripture. Yet, he was also deeply ambivalent about the utility of secular *historia*, of looking for true meaning or significance in the course of earthly events in the past—save for the “prophetic history” contained in the divinely inspired, limited canon of biblical books.<sup>2</sup> Temporal events outside

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<sup>1</sup> On this point, see Mark Vessey, “History of the Book: Augustine’s *City of God* and Post-Roman Cultural Memory,” in James Wetzel, ed., *Augustine’s City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2012), 27, who suggests that Book 18 of *De civitate Dei* is “the nearest Augustine came to writing a ‘very short history’ of the world.” The *De civitate Dei* as a 22-book whole, notwithstanding its frequent engagement with topics related to the past, was not intended as a work of “universal history.” In the same essay, Vessey (p. 16) argues that when Augustine, at *De civitate Dei* 10.32, asks, “What history could be more faithful than that which narrates past and foretells future ones?” such a use of the term *historia* “stands for a narrative and cognitive unity rendered through writing.” Here, Augustine is referring to the sacred and prophetic “history” of scripture, not to the literary genre of history-writing more generally.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge, 1970), esp. 187–196. More recently, see Paul J. Griffiths, “Secularity and the *saeculum*,” in James Wetzel, ed.,

scripture, however seemingly remarkable or extraordinary, were either of negligible providential significance, or else their meaning, as part of God's ultimate, mysterious plan for mankind, was necessarily obscure to human minds.<sup>3</sup>

Such ambivalence is detectable in some of Augustine's writings from at least as early as the mid 390s, particularly in the first three books of *De doctrina Christiana*. Augustine's ambivalent position was given its fullest, most elaborately demonstrated expression in the 22 books of the *De civitate Dei*, completed just a few years before his death in 430. Several of these books, however, also stand as the closest of all of Augustine's writings to *historia*—above all Book 18, by far the longest of the 22, “a monster, accounting for an eighth of the whole.”<sup>4</sup> The *De civitate Dei* is packed full of specific details about past civilizations, philosophy, literature, religion, military campaigns, and myriad other topics. This rich information about the past is drawn from useful histories like the Eusebius-Jerome *Chronicon* or from the texts of learned non-Christian men like Varro and Sallust, but it is always exactly repurposed in service of Augustine's argument—narrative of the intertwined, but finally divergent, fates of the cities of God and of man.

Some of the *De civitate Dei*'s early medieval readers were highly sensitive to, and perceptive of, the complex theological and philosophical claims put forth in Augustine's magnum opus. Augustine's elaborations of the Six Ages of the world scheme and the trajectories

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*Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2012), 35–54; and G.J.P. O'Daly, “Thinking through History: Augustine's Method in the *City of God* and Its Ciceronian Dimension,” in Mark Vessey, Karla Pollmann, and Allan D. Fitzgerald, eds., *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination: New Essays on Augustine's City of God* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1999), 45–58.

<sup>3</sup> See Vessey, “History of the Book,” 17, who argues that “[f]rom Paul, Augustine derived two guiding principles: first, that God's long-term purposes for humankind were securely encoded in the texts of his prophets, apostles, and evangelists; second, that in this life those purposes—and hence those texts—were indecipherable beyond a certain point (Rom. 11:33). The history that mattered was plotted in divine scripture; scripture was partly opaque; the clarity and opacity of scripture defined the human condition as, for the time being, a ‘textual’ one.”

<sup>4</sup> Vessey, “History of the Book,” 27.



of the Two Cities across time are often noted, by modern historians, for their influence on medieval historical thinking.<sup>5</sup> Yet, as influential as such concepts may have been among certain prominent early medieval writers, many other readers of Augustine in this period—whether or not they “correctly” understood his major arguments—used this expansive work primarily as a source for historical information. For such readers, the *De civitate Dei* provided not so much a guiding model for historical thought per se, as a valuable, plentiful reservoir of data about the past, including much of interest about pagan antiquity, made safely accessible through the authoritative stamp of one of ancient Christianity’s most revered names. Even if Augustine himself had not intended to produce a work of *historia*, his later admirers could nevertheless trace and highlight the many strands of history woven into the polemical arguments and theological explanations at the fore of Augustine’s work. In other words, readers could “make history” out of Augustine, in much the same way that exegesis of particular scriptural texts (like the Pauline epistles, considered in chapter 2) could be emphasized in, and extracted from, Augustinian works that were not mainly intended as biblical commentary.

In what follows, I will first consider the early medieval context for reading, writing, and thinking about history. Then, I will examine some intriguing evidence for how early medieval readers interacted with, and made use of, the text of the *De civitate Dei*, focusing particularly on Carolingian-era manuscripts of Augustine’s work. The diverse interests of these readers—interests discernible from contemporary annotations that they made on Augustine’s work and/or earlier notes that they thought were useful enough to copy along with the work itself—speak to the variety of ways in which Augustine’s work could be studied and employed in the early

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<sup>5</sup> Michael I. Allen, “Universal History, 300–1000: Origins and Western Development,” in Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, ed., *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003), 17–42, provides a clear and useful survey of these historical paradigms and their influence on medieval writers of histories.

Middle Ages. As I will demonstrate, these reader-annotators of the *De civitate Dei* were particularly and consistently interested in the information that Augustine provides about the past, whether sacred biblical history or matters that appear to be wholly unrelated to scripture.

### **Reading and Writing about the Past in the Early Middle Ages**

Among the wealth of intellectual resources inherited from the Roman world, the Carolingian age received numerous formats, or “genres,” for writing about the events and people of the past. *Historia* was one of these genres, which Christian writers like Eusebius, Rufinus, and Jerome had adapted from the classical Latin models of Sallust, Livy, and Suetonius, among others.<sup>6</sup> In both its classical Greco-Roman and Christian forms, *historia* consisted, essentially, of a narrative of purported facts drawn from the past from which people in the present might usefully learn and benefit: history as the “teacher of life.” The events narrated—sometimes in a roughly chronological sequence, other times arranged topically—might be drawn from orally transmitted knowledge about the past, from a combination of multiple preexisting source texts, or else the historian-narrator may claim to have been a firsthand witness to some or all of the recent events he records; such elements were highly variable. What was most consistent across ancient *historiae* was the moralizing rhetorical insistence on the past’s, and/or the *text*’s, supreme usefulness and applicability for guiding the actions of people in the present period.<sup>7</sup> Even if the

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<sup>6</sup> On the development of Christian history-writing from pagan models and the many different types of historiographical examples available to the Carolingians, see Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005); R.W. Burgess and Michael Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time: The Latin Chronicle Traditions from the First Century BC to the Sixth Century AD, Volume 1: A Historical Introduction to the Chronicle Genre from Its Origins to the High Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2013); Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004); Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400–1500* (Manchester, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Much has been written on the genre of *historia* in antiquity and the early Middle Ages, but see especially David Ganz, “*Historia*: Some Lexicographical Considerations,” in Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, Margot E. Fassler, and A.B. Kraebel, eds., *Medieval Cantors and Their Craft: Music, Liturgy, and the Shaping of History, 800–1500* (Cambridge, 2017), 8–22; Hans Werner Goetz, “Historical Writing, Historical Thinking and Historical

historian did not always explicitly articulate the lesson(s) that should be learned from a particular event, his deliberate selection of that event and his manner of narrating it were almost always motivated by this strong didactic imperative. In Christian history-writing, closely studying and learning from the past took on an extra layer of significance insofar as the historian (and his readers) believed that God's own plan for mankind could, at least in some cases, be interpreted and understood from the course of temporal events. A truer knowledge of the meaning of past events could then, potentially, be used to chart a better course for the present and future, sensitive and alert to signs of God's will, favour, or displeasure with mankind as discernible in the temporal world.

Yet, the generalizations above notwithstanding, while many different texts were referred to as "histories," early medieval readers and writers never developed a single, accepted definition for what constituted *historia* vis-à-vis other textual categories or genres. The term *historia* thus remained ambiguous and fluid in its meaning throughout the early Middle Ages, including in the Carolingian era. Carolingian readers might, for instance, apply this term to the *vitae* of saints, to Vergil's *Aeneid*, or to the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>8</sup> While such texts might range quite far from the

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Consciousness in the Middle Ages," *Revista Diálogos Mediterrânicos* 2 (2012), 110–128; Roger Ray, "The Triumph of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Assumptions in Pre-Carolingian Historiography," in Christopher Holdsworth and T.P. Wiseman, eds., *The Inheritance of Historiography, 350–900* (Exeter, 1986), 67–84; Natalia Lozovsky, "Perceptions of the Past in Ninth-Century Commentaries on Martianus Capella," in Mariken Teeuwen and Sinéad O' Sullivan, eds., *Carolingian Scholarship and Martianus Capella: Ninth-Century Commentary Traditions on De nuptiis in Context*. (Turnhout, 2011), 123–145; Robert A.H. Evans, "A Secular Shift in Carolingian History Writing?" *Early Medieval Europe* 29 (2021), 36–54.

<sup>8</sup> On the differences between premodern descriptions of historical forms of writing and modern terms and the confusions arising from these semantic differences, see especially Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, 1–62. Both Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts and Historical Narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994), 95–113, and Alice Rio, *Legal Practice and the Written Word in the Early Middle Ages: Frankish formulae, c. 500–1000* (Cambridge, 2009), esp. 26–32, reflect on how the modern classification of medieval texts has resulted in a very misleading sense of how those texts were actually understood and used in medieval culture. For Vergil as *historia* in the Carolingian era, see McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 40, 209. On the "cult of Vergil" in Late Antiquity, shared by Christians and "pagans" alike, see Mark Vessey, "The *Epistula Rustici ad Eucherium*: From the Library of Imperial Classics to the Library of the Fathers," in Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Shanzer, eds., *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul: Revisiting the Sources* (Aldershot, 2001), 281–282.

classical Greek and Latin accounts of *res gestae*—themselves highly variable, to be sure<sup>9</sup>—what they nevertheless share is the representation of past events and people(s), typically within a narrative framework. Also, insofar as *historia* constituted a loosely, variably defined literary genre in the early Middle Ages, it was only one—often adopted, though not necessarily dominant—mode of apprehending and representing the past and the passage of time, normally as a linear, chronological series of events moving toward the present. Throughout the Middle Ages, this “historical” mode of thinking and writing about the past co-existed with other, markedly different temporal structures based on alternate ways of understanding time and the past—some examples of which I will discuss in chapters 5 and 6.<sup>10</sup>

The fact that Carolingian-era writers emulated many of the models for history-writing that they had inherited from antiquity suggests that they recognized the utility and advantages of these variations on *historia* for conveying, recording, remembering, and retelling the stories of past eras, whether the recent exploits of the Franks or the deep, universal past of Genesis.<sup>11</sup> The political and social circumstances of the ninth century also provoked new ways of thinking about the progress of history, building from and modifying the received temporal/chronological schemes. At the same time, some Carolingian readers also turned to earlier histories to learn more about the past times and worlds out of which came the words, books, traditions, and great names (Christian and non-Christian) that continued to occupy important roles in their own culture. The fruits of this real interest in the past are evident in many of the texts produced by Carolingian writers, from biblical commentaries to liturgical treatises to poetry imaginatively

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<sup>9</sup> On the many different ways of representing the past (and “plupast”) used by such authors, see the illuminating essays collected in Jonas Grethlein and Christopher Krebs, eds., *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography: The ‘Plupast’ from Herodotus and Appian* (Cambridge, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Gabrielle Spiegel, “Structures of Time in Medieval Historiography,” *The Medieval History Journal* 19 (2016), 21–33.

<sup>11</sup> See Rosamond McKitterick and Matthew Innes, “The Writing of History,” in Rosamond McKitterick, ed. *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), 193–220.

evoking the past—contemporary genres examined in other chapters of this dissertation—as well as, most obviously, histories.

Perhaps no single writer was more pivotal in shaping early medieval historiography than Eusebius of Caesarea.<sup>12</sup> Although the historiographical tradition in Greco-Roman culture stretches back much further than the fourth century CE, Eusebius's adaptations of earlier styles and conventions (perhaps most immediately Julius Africanus's early third-century *Chronography*), as well as his genuine formal innovations, served to decisively re-orient historical thinking and writing in distinctly Christian terms.<sup>13</sup> To the ages that followed he left the essential blueprints for Church-centred narrative history and the “universal” chronicle, as well as a prime example of panegyric imperial biography, specifically for that of a Christian emperor, in his *Life of Constantine*.<sup>14</sup> Eusebius's positioning of the empire, the emperor, and the Church—which, after its period of persecution, had won the Roman sovereign's official support—at the fore of his historical writings set the tone for Christian historical (and political) thought for centuries to follow.

However, in acknowledging Eusebius's towering importance, it must be noted that his historical texts reached the West mainly through Latin intermediaries, who altered and built upon his histories in addition to translating them. Rufinus of Aquileia's translation of the

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<sup>12</sup> On Eusebius's wide-ranging works, see Aaron Johnson and Jeremy Schott, eds., *Eusebius of Caesarea: Tradition and Innovations* (Washington, D.C./Cambridge, Mass., 2013); Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford, 1980); and Arnaldo Momigliano, “Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.,” in *idem*, ed., *The Conflict Between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford, 1963), 79–99, who observes (at pp. 90–91) that Eusebius created “a new kind of history” marked above all “by the importance attributed to the more remote past, by the central position of doctrinal controversies and by the lavish use of documents.” On Eusebius's life, times, and career, Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), remains indispensable.

<sup>13</sup> For the ambivalent reception of Africanus's work in Eusebius's histories, see Allen, “Universal History,” 19–21; Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, 114–25.

<sup>14</sup> On the *Life of Constantine*, see Timothy D. Barnes, “Panegyric, History, and Hagiography in Eusebius's *Life of Constantine*,” in Rowan Williams, ed., *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1989), 94–123; and Michael Stuart Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography: Between Eusebius and Augustine* (Cambridge, 2008), 25–57.

*Ecclesiastical History*, completed ca. 402/3, modified the formal structure of Eusebius's original, omitted some of its content, and continued his narrative of the Church's history well beyond the Constantinian period and up to the age of Theodosius I (d. 395).<sup>15</sup> Its influence can be easily detected throughout the "institutional" histories of the early Middle Ages, in such texts as the Roman *Liber pontificalis*, Gregory of Tours' *Historia* (structured less around the ruling Franks than the episcopal history of Tours), Bede's English *Historia ecclesiastica*, and, in the Carolingian age, Agnellus of Ravenna's *Liber pontificalis* for the see of Ravenna.<sup>16</sup>

However, if Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* played a major role in directing the course of early medieval historiography, his *Chronicon* was certainly no less, and arguably even more, influential. As with Rufinus's Latin rendering of the *Ecclesiastical History*, Jerome comparably altered and continued the chronological tables, or *Canones*, forming the second book of Eusebius' two-book *Chronicon* (the Greek original of which is now lost).<sup>17</sup> Early medieval readers of the Latin *Chronicon* (completed by Jerome ca. 380) not only learned about the ancient past from the *Chronicon*'s tables; some of them continued those tables up to their own period, or else used the example of Eusebius-Jerome's chronological ordering of data across time to

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<sup>15</sup> On Rufinus's interventions, see Mark Humphries, "Rufinus's Eusebius: Translation, Continuation, and Edition in the Latin *Ecclesiastical History*," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 16 (2008), 143–164. Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 232, suggests that in the Eusebius-Rufinus Latin *Ecclesiastical History* "the history of Christianity is presented as the history of written authority, of the formation of the scriptural canon and of its essential continuation by the fathers of the church in their writings."

<sup>16</sup> On Agnellus, see Joaquín Martínez Pizarro, *Writing Ravenna: The Liber Pontificalis of Andreas Agnellus* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1995).

<sup>17</sup> On Jerome's adaptation of Eusebius's *Chronicon* into a history intended specifically for Latin Christian readers in the wake of the Roman defeat at Adrianople, see Mark Vessey, "Reinventing History: Jerome's *Chronicle* and the Writing of the Post-Roman West," in Scott McGill, Cristiana Sogno, and Edward Watts, eds., *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Late Roman History and Culture, 284–450 CE* (Cambridge, 2010), esp. 278–89. For the text itself, see *Die Chronik des Hieronymus / Hieronymi Chronicon*, in Rudolf Helm, ed., *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 7, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte (GCS)* 70, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Berlin, 1956). The Eusebius-Rufinus Latin *Historia ecclesiastica* can be found in Eduard Schwartz, ed., *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 2, *GCS* 9 (Leipzig, 1909).

compose their own chronicles or “annals.”<sup>18</sup> In Carolingian continuations, such as the so-called *Chronicon universale* (brought up to 811, probably by a series of two or three scribes), the Franks are imported into the grand narrative of “universal” history. The text’s original conclusion, in the Christian Roman Empire, is updated to the newly ascendant Christian power in the West: the triumph of the line of Charles Martel is presented as foreordained and inevitable in a narrative beginning with Adam.<sup>19</sup> The chronological, “universal” formats for history-writing provided by Eusebius, transmitted to the West via Rufinus and Jerome, provided Carolingian-era writers with the means by which to write themselves and their times into the on-going stories of the world and the Church, and to suggest, through their interventions, that their roles within those stories were highly significant.

From the Christian adaptations of ancient historical genres discussed above, as well as from other, non-historiographical sources, came a number of different—though potentially overlapping—ways of understanding the nature and meaning of history. From Eusebius’s historical works, filtered through their Latin translators and continuators, early medieval readers acquired an impression of the faithful continuity of tradition within the Church, from the time of Christ through to the age of the martyrs, followed next by the imperial turn toward Christianity under Constantine, and, in Rufinus’s updating of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, the *tempora Christiana* of the Theodosian reforms. Although much had obviously changed across these centuries, readers were meant to feel assured that the apostolic tradition of the early Church had

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<sup>18</sup> Burgess and Kulikowski, *Mosaics of Time*, 12–20, argue specifically against modern medieval historians’ use of the generic terms “chronicle” and “annals,” insisting that such distinctions are anachronistic and confusing, and that they obscure the ancient origins of the chronicle tradition. Yet, even if the terms themselves are dubious and too imprecisely used across the work of different historians, Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” in *idem*, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1990), 1–25, shows how the formal evolution of markedly different types of “annalistic” writing can tell us much about the changing social and political contexts across the Middle Ages.

<sup>19</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *Perceptions of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, Ind., 2006), 23–28.

been carefully preserved, defended, and handed down.<sup>20</sup> The ecumenical councils of the Church had stamped out heretical novelties, thus maintaining, as opposed to effectively creating, orthodoxy and doctrinal tradition.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, Eusebius's histories served to impose legible meaning on events that occurred in time, particularly recent events like the Roman campaigns of persecution against Christians and the fateful turn of Constantine to Christianity. To suggest, as Eusebius did, that circumstances had improved since Constantine and through the empire's increasing embrace of Christianity was, by implication, to suggest that God's will, favour, or plan for mankind, was intelligible from, because expressed by, (extra-scriptural) earthly events.<sup>22</sup>

This powerful, and perhaps understandably appealing, implication can also be inferred from Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos*—a key Latin model of the “universal” history that merged the “universal” scope<sup>23</sup> of the Eusebius-Jerome *Chronicon* and the narrative structure of

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<sup>20</sup> See esp. Karl Morrison, *Tradition and Authority in the Western Church, 300–1140* (Princeton, 1969).

<sup>21</sup> Late antique disputes over orthodoxy are discussed in Richard Hanson, “The Achievement of Orthodoxy in the Fourth Century AD,” in Rowan Williams, ed., *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honor of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1989), 142–156, and Mark Vessey, “The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature: A Case Study,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), 495–513. On the competition for ecumenical authority among the ancient, “apostolic” sees, and that of Constantinople, see especially George E. Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter: Apostolic Discourse and Papal Authority in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2013). On medieval efforts to argue for tenuous claims of “apostolicity” in evolving primatial hierarchies (thus evincing the enduring impact of a discourse rooted in late Roman culture), see Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, trans. Patrick J. Geary (Chicago, 1991), 12–13.

<sup>22</sup> On these points, see the classic studies by Theodor E. Mommsen, “St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of The City of God” and “Augustine and Orosius,” in *idem*, *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1959), 265–298 and 325–348. For a revisionist refutation of the dominant modern view of Orosius's work as a “Eusebian” “theology of history,” see Peter van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Examining later medieval examples of universal history, Hans Werner Goetz. “On the Universality of Universal History,” in J.-P. Genet, ed., *Historiographie médiévale in Europe* (Paris, 1991), 247–261, shows that while the temporal extent of these narratives was genuinely “universal” (according to Christian conceptions of the world and/or mankind's genesis), their “universality” was decidedly more limited in terms of their geographic coverage. Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, 170–176, argues against the classification of Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos* as “universal history,” in part because his primary focus is on “traditional Roman history” (p. 176) and also because this subgenre did not yet nominally exist in Orosius's time. While it may well be true that Orosius himself did not envision his project as a “universal history,” his *Historiae* was surely read, and repurposed (as in Frechulf's work), in this way by many of his medieval admirers.



the Eusebius-Rufinus *Ecclesiastical History*. As a rebuke to “pagan” critics who equated Christianity’s adoption as the religion of state with the subsequent disasters afflicting the empire, Orosius attempted to show that terrible calamities had always ravaged human societies, but that, if anything, such calamities had measurably decreased following the Incarnation and, later, the imperial government’s embrace of Christianity. He structured his universal narrative following the biblically derived model of the “Four Kingdoms” of the world, of which the Roman Empire was the last, set to endure until the end of earthly time.<sup>24</sup> Both Orosius’s application of the Four Kingdoms paradigm and his ambiguous allowance for providential meaning to be interpreted from events in time would endure across the early Middle Ages, including up to the Carolingian era. Yet, Orosius’s arguments for the potential intelligibility of providence in history, the “progressive” improvement of the world since the Incarnation and Rome’s later official embrace of Christianity, and the Roman Empire’s eschatological destiny ran contrary to Augustine’s view of history—despite Augustine having initially prompted Orosius to compose this history. Augustine asserted, in the *De civitate Dei*, that God’s all-powerful will was inherently mysterious, and could not be confidently understood from events, like victories in war or the rise and fall of empires, occurring within the *civitas terrena*.<sup>25</sup> Even if some understanding of God’s plan could be inferred from the histories of the Old Testament, the events of the Sixth, and final, Age, begun with the Incarnation, were not meaningful in themselves, or else their meaning was only known to God. This, pointedly, included the crises impacting the fifth-century Roman empire. While the end of the Sixth Age, like that of Orosius’s Fourth Kingdom, would mark the

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<sup>24</sup> Hans Werner Goetz, “Orosius und seine ‘Sieben Geschichtsbücher gegen die Heiden’: Geschichtstheologie oder Rhetorik? Kritische Anmerkungen zu einer Neuerscheinung,” *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 96 (2014), 187–198.

<sup>25</sup> The literature on the *De civitate Dei* is, of course, extremely vast, but see James Wetzel, ed., *Augustine’s City of God: A Critical Guide*, which provides an excellent introduction to the current state of scholarship and the major, on-going debates concerning Augustine’s work.

end of the world, Augustine sharply rejected connecting the Apocalypse with the destiny of Rome or that of any other earthly entity. In addition, though he had entertained millenarian estimations of the time remaining in some of his earlier works, he later opposed any literal, numerological interpretation of the Sixth Age's duration. As I discussed in Chapter 1, Augustine, following and furthering Tyconius, deliberately sought to temper and de-emphasize the kind of imminent apocalypticism that had been an integral feature of Christian eschatological thought up to his time.<sup>26</sup>

### **Christianity and Historicity**

Long before Augustine and Tyconius, history, and *historicity*, were absolutely central to the development of uniquely Christian cultures. As Keith Hopkins observes:

The gospels tell a story which is based in history. Its apparent facticity, its location in real place and time, are important ingredients in its persuasive power: this is how it all happened, eyewitnesses saw it, it is true. But the historicity of Jesus is also a theological illusion. The bare historical facts...are interwoven with theological metaphors and beliefs, so that they mix inextricably with one another...The gospel writers are not simply telling a story, they are also constructing a belief system; they are seeking to reaffirm believers' faith and to persuade us that Jesus was/is the long-awaited Messiah. He has already come, he has defeated death and the Devil. Christian historicity has trumped vague Jewish millenarianism. Christians (ideally) believe their foundation story to be sacred and true and believe it to be true partly because it is grounded in history.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Paula Fredriksen notes the special importance of history to Christianity, but pointedly contrasts Christian particularism with Hellenistic attitudes toward the past:

Christian writers retreated from the great intellectual triumph of Hellenistic syncretism, its ability always to see the general in the particular, to transform the mythological into the philosophical. Christians insisted on historical particularity; they pressed the

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<sup>26</sup> On these points, see ch. 1, and esp. Paula Fredriksen, "Tyconius and Augustine on the Apocalypse," in Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1992), 20–37; Robert A. Markus, "Living within Sight of the End," in Chris Humphrey and W.M. Ormrod, eds., *Time in the Medieval World* (York, 2001), 23–34.

<sup>27</sup> Keith Hopkins, *A World Full of Gods: The Strange Triumph of Christianity* (New York, 1999), 293.

unreasonable claim that the divine had manifested itself uniquely through a specific person at a specific moment, and that not so long ago. They in fact remythologized their message of universal salvation in an unabashedly particularistic way.<sup>28</sup>

Further removed from both ancient Hellenistic culture and the lifetime of Jesus than the early Christian writers to whom Fredriksen here refers, Carolingian Christians retained this particularistic interest in the (purported) facts of the past. Yet, classical pagan religion and thought no longer stood as a viable contemporary rival or threat to Christianity, as was certainly the case in Christianity's earliest period, and arguably, to some extent, up to Augustine's time.<sup>29</sup> Although ninth-century intellectuals still approached pagan writers and ideas with caution and a certain suspicion—and often preferred to do so through the safe lens of Christian intermediaries—they also recognized the potential benefits of learning from the achievements of the classical past. Such interest in and appropriation of classical learning stand as the foundation for traditional historiographical summaries of the “Carolingian Renaissance.” But, just as importantly—and perhaps more so—the Carolingians recognized that it was necessary to study deeply and better understand the ancient past, because its contexts were inextricably intertwined with those of scriptural history, which had played out on earth, in real places among real people.<sup>30</sup> While Carolingian readers of Augustine could learn that the final fates of the heavenly

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<sup>28</sup> Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven, 1988), 64. See also on the crucial connection between the perceived historicity of people and events recounted in scripture and the use of typology in Christian exegesis and narratives, Williams, *Authorised Lives*, esp. 9–16.

<sup>29</sup> Although Augustine and Orosius wrote against “pagans,” recent scholarship has called into question the historical reality of a concerted pagan resistance to Christianity around this time. See, in particular, Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford, 2010), who forcefully argues that by the reign of Theodosius I, strong proponents of traditional pagan religion and culture were relatively few and not organized in any collective way in opposition to Christianity. Cameron suggests that the apologetic structure *contra paganos* in ecclesiastical writers like Augustine was more of a conscious rhetorical device, inherited from an earlier era of Christianity. In this light, most critics of the *tempora Christiana* may not in fact have been members of a residual pagan elite, but of a large middle-ground of identity/religion, between the extremes of ardent Christians like Augustine and prominent pagans like Symmachus, who, in Cameron's view, both represented exceptional positions (and tiny minorities) on opposite sides of a very broad spectrum in late-fourth-century Roman society.

<sup>30</sup> For a recent critical reassessment of the Carolingians' sharply ambivalent attitudes toward pagan literature and philosophy, see Mariken Teeuwen, “Seduced by Pagan Poets and Philosophers: Suspicious Learning

and earthly cities were ultimately wholly separate, the trajectories of these Two Cities were bound up together in time until its End, which had (still) not come yet.

Among the many things the Carolingians inherited from the past was a Christian preoccupation with the reality and priority of history and the events that comprise it—some of them of sacred importance, many more only tangentially or peripherally related to the prophetic narrative of Judeo-Christian scripture and the progress of the Church after Christ. As one Carolingian writer, in justifying his mainly “historic rather than allegoric” commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, argued, “History is the foundation of all intelligence and we must seek her from the first and embrace her, and without her we cannot successfully pass on to other knowledge.”<sup>31</sup> Much like scriptural exegesis itself, obtaining knowledge about the ancient past, in which the events of scripture played out, could help to unlock mysteries of God’s providence. If accurately reported, recorded by trustworthy (preferably Christian) sources, and read in the right (wholly Christian) light, in tandem with the Bible, history could be supremely useful. Knowledge about the events, leaders, and important ideas of the past—both scriptural and “secular” or extra-scriptural—could be deployed in service of ameliorating a revenant “Roman”

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in the Early Middle Ages,” in Concetta Giliberto and Loredana Teresi, eds., *Limits to Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages* (Leuven/Paris/Walpole, Mass., 2013), 63–80; and earlier Gernot Wieland, “Alcuin’s Ambiguous Attitude Towards the Classics,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992), 84–95. See also, on the Carolingian engagement with Martianus Capella’s work as a heavily mined source of information about the ancient past, Lozovsky, “Perceptions of the Past”; and Lenneke van Raaj, “Ancient History in the Carolingian World. Carolingian Marginal Annotations on the Works of Sallust and Justinus” (M.A. thesis, Utrecht University, 2016), who, from close examination of Carolingian-era notes on ancient historical texts, shows that while Sallust’s works may have been read and utilized primarily for their superior Latinity and grammatical value, Justinus’s second- or third-century *Epitome* of the lost history of Pompeius Trogus was studied mainly as a source for the events of ancient history or to supplement the information found in the works of late antique Christian historians.

<sup>31</sup> This quotation from Christian of Stavelot’s letter dedicating his commentary is discussed in M.L.W. Laistner, “A Ninth Century Commentator on the Gospel According to Matthew,” in *idem, The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Chester G. Starr (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), 217; *MGH, Epist.* 6, 178: “Studui autem plus historicum sensum sequi quam spiritalem, quia inrationabile mihi videtur spiritalem intelligentiam in libro aliquo quaerere et historicum penitus ignorare, cum historica fundamentum omnis intelligentiae sit et ipsa primitus quaerenda et amplexanda, et sine ipsa perfecte ad aliam non possit transiri.”

*imperium Christianum* and better understanding that new, or revived, empire's place and role in the course of earthly time.

### **Studying and Using the *De civitate Dei*: The Evidence of Carolingian Manuscripts**

Close examination of Carolingian-era manuscripts of the *De civitate Dei* can shed some light on how Augustine's work was put to use in this period. Divisions within the books of the *De civitate Dei* were not uniform in the early Middle Ages, nor were descriptions of their contents.<sup>32</sup> Such distinctive, variable features can provide subtle clues as to where the interests and priorities of early medieval readers were focused. Annotations—ranging from substantial marginal notes to symbols flagging a certain passage as being particularly important—are an especially intriguing, if often ambiguous, form of evidence.<sup>33</sup> Such notes, exceedingly common in Carolingian manuscripts,<sup>34</sup> can offer a unique, if limited, window onto how scribes and readers engaged with Augustine as they copied and perused his sprawling work. Helen Jackson, an advocate for paying more serious attention to annotations, concedes that most readers' notes

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<sup>32</sup> On chapter divisions and other structural elements of the *De civitate Dei*, see Michael M. Gorman, "A Survey of the Oldest Manuscripts of St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei*," in *idem*, *The Manuscript Traditions of the Works of St. Augustine* (Florence, 2001), esp. 187–190; Henri-Irénée Marrou, "La division en chapitres des livres de la Cité de Dieu," in *Mélanges J. de Ghellinck* (Gembloux, 1951), 235–249; James J. Donnell, "Augustine, *City of God*," web only: <https://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/augustine/civ.html> [accessed 28 June 2020].

<sup>33</sup> In the complicated (and rather daunting) study of early medieval annotations, I have been greatly aided by the superb, carefully measured scholarship and the advice and resources generously shared by others scholars, particularly Jesse Keskiäho, Richard Pollard, Evina Steinová, Erik Kwakkel, and Gernot Wieland. I have also benefitted much from the pathbreaking studies of Michael Gorman, Paul-Irénée Fransen, and David Ganz.

<sup>34</sup> See Mariken Teeuwen, "Voices from the Edge: Annotating Books in the Carolingian Era," in *eadem* and Irene van Renswoude, eds., *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2017), 13–36, who notes (at pp. 13–14) that "a book with no annotations, no corrections, no signs of marking in the margins is a rarity... The text was meant to undergo further text-critical processes: it was to be corrected, it was to be compared to a second version to fill in lacunae or mark corrupt passages. It was also meant to receive a certain amount of visual aids to help the reader understand the structure of the text... And it was often meant to be complemented by explanations, commentaries, or subtle guidance concerning the content of the text, its usefulness, or credibility." Similarly, Thomas E. Toon, "Dry-Point Annotations in Early English Manuscripts: Understanding Texts and Establishing Contexts," in Stephen A. Barney, ed., *Annotation and Its Texts* (Oxford, 1991), 76, observes, "The early medieval experience of text was radically different. Medieval scribes would not understand our sense of the inviolability of the written page. Any ancient text that was well used shows ample evidence of that use."

in books can only tell us so much about the individual mental processes involved in reading and interpretation of the text. But annotations can potentially show us much more about how books were *used*, what was considered most useful in them, and how certain reader-annotators (whether anonymous or individual figures known to us) thought others could most profitably make use of a given book.<sup>35</sup> Until very recent times, most marginalia were not “private” or “personal” notes, but were deliberately intended for others to see when they examined the book in question—hence the limitations and the opportunities in studying annotations (particularly premodern notes) observed by Jackson. In examining annotations in English books of the Romantic era, for instance, Jackson concludes that these marginalia “were designed for use, for show, for persuasion; they were oriented towards others, not the self.”<sup>36</sup> This point is perhaps truer still of early medieval manuscripts, most of which belonged to monasteries or cathedral libraries. These manuscripts were normally meant for use by a multitude of contemporary readers, as well as by future generations of monks or students; only in rare cases were Carolingian books “private” possessions in the way of present-day mass-produced copies in the personal collections of individual readers.<sup>37</sup>

The manuscripts containing *De civitate Dei* examined below were intended for communal benefit and study, perhaps in some cases for specifically pedagogical purposes. Relatively few of the annotations in these manuscripts are of the “discursive” and “critical” type

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<sup>35</sup> H.J. Jackson, “‘Marginal Frivolities’: Readers’ Notes as Evidence for the History of Reading,” in Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote, eds., *Owners, Annotators and the Signs of Reading* (New Castle, Del., 2015), esp. 148–150.

<sup>36</sup> Jackson, “Marginal Frivolities,” 145.

<sup>37</sup> On this point, see Jesse Keskiaho, “The Annotation of Patristic Texts as Curatorial Activity? The Case of Marginalia to Augustine’s *De Genesi ad litteram* in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,” in *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages*, 698, who rightly notes, “In a communal setting, such as a monastery, there may have been few truly private books and accordingly few private paratexts. Even occasional annotations in a communally owned book may have been made knowing that others would encounter them – or they would have been made unobtrusively, perhaps with their meaning masked in shorthand.”

that Jackson studies in the books of Romantic-era intellectuals.<sup>38</sup> Most of the early medieval (Carolingian or earlier) notes on Augustine's text in these manuscripts are of the sort that Jackson concludes are most pervasive in *any* age—graphic traces, whether brief notes or common symbols, calling for “extra-heightened attention” to certain passages and notes registering particular approval of, or agreement with, certain points made by the author of the main text.<sup>39</sup> Such notes may tell us very little about the individual personality or sensibility of the reader, or his specific manner of interpreting the text, but this kind of “highlighting” marginalia can reveal much about what the reader-annotator felt was most useful, important, or simply interesting in the text, and where other, subsequent readers should focus their attention as they proceed to study Augustine's work.

At the same time, once the page has been “activated” as an interactive space through the addition of marginal notes, then those pages, passages, or whole chapters lacking any sign of such attention may be cautiously considered as un-interesting or un-useful to the reader-annotator(s) or, in their judgment, of less interest for their community of fellow readers.<sup>40</sup> For a

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<sup>38</sup> H.J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven, 2001), 15, on what she considers “original and discursive” annotations—the exceptional type with which her study is most concerned. On readers' critical notes on the books they were reading, Jackson, *Marginalia*, 210, observes, “In a form that records a transaction between two minds, it is reasonable to suppose that they will differ from each other and that differences will show.” In contrast to Jackson's sources, such critical disagreement is almost entirely absent in Carolingian-era notes on the *De civitate Dei*. Such was Augustine's unimpeachable authority and patristic prestige. Self-deprecating “lowly” readers of the inferior “modern” (Carolingian) age would have been very unlikely to explicitly criticize one of the great Fathers, an exemplar of orthodoxy and tradition. However, what *can* be detected in early medieval annotations on Augustine are, far more subtly, sporadic differences in perspective between what Augustine seems to have most emphasized within a given passage or chapter of his work versus what his reader-annotators suggest is most useful or important therein.

<sup>39</sup> Jackson, “Marginal Frivolities,” 141. For common sub-types of early medieval annotations, including “notes of praise or derision” and “notes *de renvoi* [marking] segments of the text that may be useful for further study or excerptation,” see Richard Matthew Pollard, “*Libri di Scuola Spirituale*: Manuscripts and Marginalia at the Monastery of Nonantola,” in Oronzo Pecere and Lucio del Corso, eds., *Libri di scuola e praticedidattiche. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi* (Cassino, 2010), esp. 350–351; and now Jean-Félix Aubé-Pronce and Richard Matthew Pollard, “Annotating Flavius Josephus in the Early Middle Ages: Early Impressions from Thousands of Notes,” *Medievalia et Humanistica* 46 (2021), 167–200.

<sup>40</sup> On this important point, see Stephen G. Nichols, “On the Sociology of Medieval Manuscript Annotation,” in *Annotation and Its Texts*, 59: “The manuscript space can no longer be considered neutral, unexpressive [once annotated]... We cannot call the page neutral, but rather a folio in which the formal system has

massive text like *De civitate Dei*, which covers such vast topical terrain, looking at annotations can thus show us not only what most interested early medieval readers of this text, but also the places where they seemed to lightly skim the text with few signs of active engagement or focused interest. Sometimes, within the same manuscript containing *De civitate Dei*, entire books of Augustine's work contain very few notes or even none at all, where other books are abundantly annotated.

As evidence of greater or lesser readerly interest, however, such data should be treated with caution. Book 1 of the *De civitate Dei*, for instance, is generally the most abundantly annotated in the manuscripts I have consulted, but this tendency, taken on its own, may tell us less about the particular interests of the reader-annotator than simply their stamina, for as Mariken Teeuwen reminds us, "A common phenomenon...is that, in many manuscripts, glossing starts with great enthusiasm, but fades out after a few pages."<sup>41</sup> Still, if the preponderance of notes on Book 1 was, in some cases, a matter of the reader-annotator running out of energy after the first book of Augustine's massive work, this simple explanation would seemingly apply less to manuscripts where the quantity of marginalia is highly varied from book to book, with some books, including early ones, only lightly annotated and some later books, like Book 18, quite heavily annotated. This is indeed the case in several of the manuscripts considered below. While the paucity or absence of notes on particular books does not necessarily equate to a lack of interest, it certainly does not suggest particularly *high* interest in that book and the topics discussed therein if indeed there are annotations elsewhere. At the very least, it may be

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not been activated. But this page already poses questions. Why is it unannotated? Why unmarked?...Undoubtedly, there are reasons, including economic ones. The point here is that the absence of annotation must be seen as intentional, as a decision not to emphasize this particular segment of discourse—a critical decision that betrays a tension between the text and the manuscript."

<sup>41</sup> Teeuwen, "Voices from the Edge," 23.



cautiously assumed that this book was viewed by *some* reader-annotators to be less directly useful to their community of readers, or to the particular manner of studying Augustine's work for which their annotations elsewhere gently guide future readers. In general, from the evidence of the Carolingian-era manuscripts I have examined, Book 18 and other, earlier historically oriented books, particularly in the *De civitate Dei*'s first half (Books 1–10), seem to have elicited the most consistent and sustained attention; that is, “attention” in the form of abundant annotations.

While studying annotations in medieval manuscripts can create new opportunities for assessing the reception of a given text or author, there are serious challenges to asserting confident claims based on such evidence.<sup>42</sup> First, many, perhaps even the majority, of early medieval notes are quite brief, sometimes in the form of *nota* symbols (commonly used marginal signs inserted to mark points of particular interest in the text),<sup>43</sup> rather than instances of extended critical explication of the text at hand. While notes of this sort can still tell us something about what readers found especially interesting or useful, it is difficult to infer much more than that. However, such short notes, though limited as evidence in themselves, can sometimes form a more suggestive pattern across the duration of the text in a manuscript, or when comparing annotations in multiple manuscripts, as I shall attempt to show below. Second, it is often difficult to date marginal notes with a high degree of certainty. Even if it can be confidently determined on paleographical grounds that the annotations in a given manuscript are contemporary with, or close to, that manuscript's creation—and, for that matter, whether they are from a single reader

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<sup>42</sup> Illuminating discussions of the challenges and opportunities of studying annotations can be found in Jesse Keskiäho, “A Widespread Set of Late-Antique Annotations to Augustine's *De Genesi ad litteram*,” *Sacris Erudiri* 55 (2016): 79–128; Pollard, “*Libri di Scuola Spirituale*,” esp. 349–358; David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Paris, 1990), 68–80.

<sup>43</sup> On *nota* signs, see especially Evina Steinová, Notam superponere studui: *The Use of Annotation Symbols in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2019).

or several readers, perhaps at different points in time—it nevertheless remains possible that some or all of the notes were copies from an earlier exemplar or multiple exemplars.<sup>44</sup> This is indeed the case in several Carolingian manuscripts of *De civitate Dei*, wherein distinct series of annotations dating back centuries have been copied together with Augustine’s text itself. In these instances, the annotations have become, in a de facto sense, a part of the text, at least within a certain branch of its manuscript tradition. But it was never automatic for annotations on a given text to be copied together with that text. Someone at the time of the text’s reproduction must have decided that certain notes, or a series of notes, remained useful, and therefore copied them, or directed that they be copied, together with the main text. While such annotations may not be as compelling a form of evidence for ninth-century reception as notes that can be conclusively shown to be entirely new to the Carolingians, they were nonetheless considered relevant or interesting enough to retain, perhaps having been seen as a helpful aid for how to most fruitfully study Augustine’s work. As we have observed in previous chapters, making a hard distinction between what is authentically “new” and what is a re-used, sometimes subtly refashioned product of the Carolingians’ late antique (or earlier medieval) inheritance is often rather arbitrary, and even perhaps anachronistic. Arguably, the impulse itself to distinguish new from re-fashioned content speaks more to modern preferences for originality than to early medieval understandings of composition and reproduction. As with patristic scriptural commentaries, universal histories or chronicles, and liturgical tracts (the latter two genres discussed in chapter 4 and 6, respectively), annotations on canonical texts like the *De civitate Dei* were usually some

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<sup>44</sup> Teeuwen, “Voices from the Edge,” 20–21, discusses the problem of distinguishing “copied” from “ad hoc” annotations. In theory, the former can be identified by reference to an older exemplar, though, in practice, such an exemplar may be lost, thus further complicating assessments of the origins of a given note or set of annotations.

imprecise combination of “old” and “new,” with novelties in adaptation or continuation often disguised as part of an already-established “tradition.”

Thus, what matters most for our purposes, in examining these annotations, is that they were evidently considered valuable in the late eighth and ninth centuries. The manuscripts of *De civitate Dei* that I will consider here vary widely in terms of their origins, from northwestern Francia to Italy; their dates of creation, from the late eighth or early ninth century to the late ninth century; their organization and division of Augustine’s text; the number of books of *De civitate Dei* that they include; and the quantity and quality of their annotations. However, notwithstanding these myriad variables, I have detected a number of patterns and commonalities among the manuscripts, features that speak to a small and subtle, yet nonetheless important, part of the story of how the “ancient” Christian inheritance shaped Carolingian ideas about time, history, and the past. Carolingian scribes and readers, in turn, subtly determined how the major treasures of that inheritance, texts like *De civitate Dei*, should and (to some extent) would in future be used and understood. Only very occasionally—as in a pair of partial *De civitate Dei* manuscripts containing annotations produced by or under the supervision of Florus of Lyon (Lyon, Bibliothèque municipale [hereafter BM] 607 and 606, discussed in detail below)—can the author of marginal notes be determined. Far more often, and in all of the annotated manuscripts I will discuss here save for those connected to Florus, the annotators are anonymous and virtually impossible to identify. These annotations are distinctly representative of a deeply past-oriented Carolingian intellectual culture, which expanded well beyond the limited number of writers known to us by name. As we shall see when considering Frechulf’s *Historiae*, in chapter 4, the interests of these copyists and readers seem to be much the same as those of Frechulf himself.

The *De civitate Dei* survives, in part or in full, in over 50 manuscripts datable before the year 1000.<sup>45</sup> Judging from the manuscript evidence, it was one of Augustine's most popular works in the early Middle Ages. This may be in no small part because it is a text that can be studied and used in so many different ways. While, in a broad sense, this may well be true of any text, the sprawling *De civitate Dei* is extraordinarily wide-ranging and malleable. Its wealth of information about the past (or "history"), temporality, and philosophy and their relationship to the sacred narrative of scripture, together with Augustine's many theological insights, made this a most essential text for a Carolingian culture that placed great emphasis on learning and held up the "ancient" Christian past as a gold standard of orthodox erudition. Such an emphasis is readily detectable in the Carolingian-era manuscripts that I have consulted. These manuscripts, among others discussed below, include Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (hereafter BSB) Clm. 6267, with books 1–18 copied at Freising at different times between the late eighth and early ninth centuries;<sup>46</sup> Munich BSB Clm. 3831, a complete mid-ninth century copy from eastern Francia;<sup>47</sup> Cologne, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek (hereafter DB) cod. 75, a copy of books 1–10 originating at St-Amand in the first quarter of the ninth century;<sup>48</sup> Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (hereafter BNC) Sess. 70 + 74, mid-ninth-century copies from Nonantola of

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<sup>45</sup> On the manuscript tradition of the *De civitate Dei*, see Gorman, "A Survey of the Oldest Manuscripts"; André Wilmart, "La tradition des grands ouvrages de Saint Augustin," in *Miscellanea Agostiniana: Testi e Studi*, vol. 2 (Rome 1930–31), esp. 279–294. On late antique and early medieval annotations on Augustine's work, see now Jesse Kesiaho, "Copied Marginal Annotations and the Early History of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*," *Augustiniana* 69 (2020), 277–298.

<sup>46</sup> *Codices Latini Antiquiores* (Oxford, 1934–1971) (hereafter *CLA*) 9, no. 1257; Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts* (hereafter *Katalog*) (Wiesbaden, 1998), no. 3017. Bernhard Bischoff, *Die südostdeutschen Schreibschulen und Bibliotheken in der Karolingerzeit* (hereafter *Schreibschulen*) (vol. 1, Leipzig, 1940; vol. 2, Wiesbaden, 1980) 1, 89–90; *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der Werke des heiligen Augustinus* (hereafter *HUWA*) (Vienna, 1969–2010), 5/1, 56 and 5/2, 316–317. In this manuscript, books 12–17 (ff. 177–386) have been dated to the eighth or early ninth century, while books 1–11 and 18 (ff. 1–176v and 386–422) were copied in the first quarter of the ninth century.

<sup>47</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 2955; Bischoff, *Schreibschulen* 1, 13; *HUWA* 5/1, 56 and 5/2, 297–298.

<sup>48</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 1901; Bischoff, *Schreibschulen* 2, 106; *HUWA* 5/1, 55 and 5/2, 238.

books 8–10 and 11–16, respectively;<sup>49</sup> Brescia, Biblioteca Civica Queriniana (hereafter BCQ) G.III.3, a complete copy, also from northern Italy (perhaps Milan or Brescia), created sometime between the second and final third of the ninth century;<sup>50</sup> Bern, Bürgerbibliothek (hereafter BB) cod. 134, a mid-ninth-century complete copy from Fleury;<sup>51</sup> Leiden Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit (hereafter BR) VLF 6, a complete copy, created somewhere in France between the mid and late ninth century;<sup>52</sup> and Lyon BM 607 and 606, the former a sixth-century northern Italian copy of the first five books, at Lyon by the ninth century, where it was probably, additionally annotated by Florus,<sup>53</sup> the latter a ninth-century Lyon-created copy of books 1–14 (with books 1–5 and the accompanying notes copied from the earlier Lyon BM 607), also with demonstrable connections to Florus.<sup>54</sup> Though copied and/or annotated at different times in the Carolingian era and in various contexts, these manuscript witnesses all have things to tell us about how Augustine's work was employed by its early medieval readers.

### **On the Borders of the City of God: Ninth-century Annotations on the *De civitate Dei***

The first ten books of the *De civitate Dei* are where Augustine patiently builds, develops, and demonstrates his defence of Christianity against pagan critics.<sup>55</sup> As I shall suggest in this

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<sup>49</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 5331; *HUWA* 1/1, 52–53 and 1/2, 222.

<sup>50</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 684; *HUWA* 1/1, 32 and 1/2, 35; Ennio Ferraglio, *Manoscritti della Biblioteca Queriniana, vol. 1 (Secc. V–XIV)* (Brescia, 2010), 115–116.

<sup>51</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 540.

<sup>52</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 2184.

<sup>53</sup> *CLA* 6, no. 784; Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 2574a. On these Lyon BM manuscripts and their association with Florus, see Paul-Irénée Fransen, “Un commentaire marginal du *De civitate Dei* dans deux manuscrits (Lyon 607 et 606),” *Revue bénédictine* 125 (2015), 125–146; Célestin Charlier, “Les manuscrits personnels de Florus de Lyon et son activité littéraire,” *Mélanges E. Pödehard* (Lyon, 1945), 71–84. See also, on the close textual dependence of Lyon BM 606 on Lyon BM 607, Richard Matthew Pollard, “Reading Josephus at Vivarium? Annotations and Exegesis in Early Copies of the Antiquities,” *Florilegium* 30 (2013), 108, n. 22 and M. Léopold Delisle, *Notices sur plusieurs anciens manuscrits de la bibliothèque de Lyon* (Paris, 1880), 366–369, 397–401.

<sup>54</sup> Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 2574. The remaining books from Lyon BM 606 (15–22) are now preserved in Munich BSB Clm. 6259: Bischoff, *Katalog*, no. 3010; Bischoff, *Schreibschulen* 1, 138 and 2, 221; *HUWA* 5/1, 56 and 5/2, 315.

<sup>55</sup> On the rhetorical structure and design of Augustine's work, see O'Donnell, “Augustine, *City of God*.”

chapter and especially the next one, the ultimate truth of Augustine's polemical argument *contra paganos* could be taken for granted by a predominantly Christian Carolingian readership.<sup>56</sup> By the late eighth and ninth century, there were no longer such learned, classically oriented pagans, who saw in the empire's conversion to Christianity the dangerous betrayal of hallowed Greco-Roman tradition. In the Carolingian world, "pagans" would have meant primarily the Germanic, Slavic, or Avar tribes on the frontiers of the Frankish kingdoms, groups mainly or wholly non-literate prior to Frankish attempts at conversion and conquest.<sup>57</sup> "Tradition," of course, now meant orthodox Christianity, in the first and most important sense. Other traditions, including that of the pre-Christian classics, were still intriguing for their historical and cultural relations to the development of the singularly sacred trajectory of scriptural ("Judeo-Christian") history. Furthermore, it was Augustine himself who had contended in his *De doctrina Christiana* that the classical/pagan arts and disciplines offered tools for acquiring a fuller understanding of God's word and his world. Thus, despite the radically different social and political circumstances separating Augustine from his Carolingian readers, the latter nevertheless could find much of interest in the first half of *De civitate Dei*, something borne out by the abundance of annotations, either originally Carolingian or deliberately copied by Carolingian scribes from late antique or early medieval exemplars.

In several manuscripts, like Cologne DB cod. 75, Munich BSB Clm. 3831, and Munich BSB Clm. 6267, readers evinced an especially strong interest in the work's opening book,

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<sup>56</sup> Cf. Geoffrey Koziol, "Truth and Its Consequences: Why Carolingianists Don't Speak of Myth" in Stephen O. Glosecki, ed., *Myth in Early Northwest Europe* (Tempe, Ariz., 2007), 71–103, wherein he describes Carolingian Christianity as a "totalizing discourse" and considers the implications of such a thoroughly Christianity-dominated discursive environment.

<sup>57</sup> Cameron, *Last Pagans*, argues that any substantial, shared culture of traditional literate "pagans" had all but vanished from the Roman West by the late fourth century. On the very different forms of paganism and pagan practices that persisted into the Carolingian era, see Pierre Riché, *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne*, trans. Jo Ann McNamara (Philadelphia, 1978; originally published in French, 1973), 181–186.

wherein Augustine begins his case against critics who have blamed the on-going miseries of the Roman Empire and especially the sacking of Rome on the *tempora Christiana*. Here, Augustine offers a preliminary survey of Roman history, both recent and distant events, foreshadowing his working method that he would develop across the *De civitate Dei*'s first half and later perfect at greater length in book 18. The annotations on Book 1 do not so much critically engage with Augustine's points—they rarely, if ever, quarrel or take issue with them—as flag interesting content, often briefly summarizing the topic of a given chapter or subsection. Most of these noted passages contain historical information provided, and sometimes interpreted, by Augustine. For example, in a series of earlier annotations (recently edited by Michael Gorman<sup>58</sup>) copied into Cologne DB cod. 75, Cambrai Bibliothèque municipale 350, and, to a lesser extent (only for Book 1), Munich BSB Clm. 6267,<sup>59</sup> the notes on Book 1 are mainly concerned with highlighting Augustine's discussion of key historical passages and figures, both biblical and non-biblical, as well as identifying the sources for Augustine's quotations and allusions. Most of these notes identify Augustine's scriptural sources, but others refer to non-Christian authors, like Vergil; "*Hoc liber sextus Virgilii narrat*," reads a note accompanying Augustine's quotation from the *Aenid*, here used—as was often the case in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages—as a

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<sup>58</sup> See Michael M. Gorman, "The Oldest Annotations on Augustine's *De civitate Dei*," *Augustinianum* 46 (2006), 457–479. Gorman, 458–459, who, following Bernhard Bischoff's contention that these annotations were originally Visigothic, suggests that they may have originated in Spain or Aquitaine sometime after (perhaps not long after) Isidore, whose *Etymologiae* are referenced twice by the annotator. More recently, Keskiäho, "Copied Marginal Annotations," concurs on the earlier seventh century as a *terminus a quo* for this series of annotations, but argues that southern Gaul more broadly is as likely a place of origin as Spain; in this claim, he largely follows Stoclet, "Le *De civitate Dei* de Saint Augustin," esp. 203–204. Keskiäho has also located a later manuscript containing much of this same series of annotations, Madrid Biblioteca de la Real Academia de la historia, Fondo S. Millán de Cogolla 29, a later tenth-century Spanish manuscript.

<sup>59</sup> The fact that some of the same annotations are copied into both Munich BSB Clm. 6267 and Cologne DB cod. 75 may well be related to the involvement of Arn, the Archbishop of Salzburg (appointed in this role by Charlemagne in 798), who had earlier served as a priest and deacon at Freising and then as the abbot of St. Amand. I thank Gernot Wieland for this plausible, intriguing suggestion, and for providing valuable comments on this chapter.

source for information about ancient history.<sup>60</sup> Another note on this same chapter (1.19) calls the reader's attention to Augustine's discussion of the Roman matron Lucretia. Augustine uses this episode from early Roman history as an opportunity to contrast Lucretia's famous suicide with the more admirable behaviour of chaste Christian women, who have suffered similar violation but have "declined to avenge upon themselves the guilt of others."<sup>61</sup> For Augustine, such pagan behaviour was tantamount to murder—a moral contrast recognized by the annotators.<sup>62</sup> Notes on an earlier chapter of Book 1 alert the reader to Augustine's discussion of Marcus Marcellus's taking of Syracuse and Fabius's conquest of the city of Taranto. Here, however, there is no note summarizing or reflecting on Augustine's main point in invoking these particular historical incidents. Augustine argues (from silence) that, as no Roman historical source mentions either Marcus or Fabius sparing those among the conquered peoples who took refuge in temples, it should thus be assumed they must not have spared them, despite Marcus and Fabius being praised for other merciful actions. Notes on this chapter, eliding Augustine's rather tenuous claim, simply read "*De Marco Romano principe, qui bellum contra Siracusanos gessit*" (Concerning Marcus, the Roman leader who waged war against the Syracusans) and "*De Fabio*

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<sup>60</sup> See, for instance, Jan M. Ziolkowski and Michael C.J. Putnam, eds., *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years* (New Haven, 2006), esp. 623–705 on commentaries of Vergilian texts up to the Carolingian era; and McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 40, 209. On Augustine's use of Vergil in the *De civitate Dei*, see O'Daly, *Augustine's City of God*, esp. 278–280.

<sup>61</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 1.19, ed. Bernhard Dombart (Leipzig, 1883), vol. I, 29: "Non hoc fecerunt feminae Christianae, quae passe similia vivunt tamen nec in se ultae sunt crimen alienum, ne aliorum scleribus adderent sua, si, quoniam hostes in eis concupisciendo stupra commiserant, illae in se ipsis homicidia erubescendo committerent"; translated by Marcus Dods, from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series*, vol. 2., ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY, 1887), revised and edited by Kevin Knight: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1201.htm> [accessed 24 December 2020].

<sup>62</sup> Gorman, "Oldest Annotations," 465, on *De civitate Dei* 1.19: "Multae cum dominis suis taliter faciunt, et cum de aetate fuerint, dicunt se ab eis inuassas esse, cum hoc non solum inuassas, sed latenti faciunt consensione" (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 15v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 11v / Munich BSB Clm. 6267, f. 11v); "Consolatio illarum mulierum quae ab hoste tentae uim patiuntur (Cologne DB cod. 75, 16r / Cambrai BM 350, 12r / Munich BSB Clm. 6267, f. 11v).



*Tarentino urbis euersore*” (Concerning Fabius, conqueror of the city of Taranto).<sup>63</sup> A note near the end of the first book, on chapter 34, clarifies Augustine’s observation that Romulus and Remus, in order to increase Rome’s population, were said to have created a sanctuary for men to find asylum and absolution from crime: “*Nota de Romulo et Remo qui ausilum, id est, templum confugii constituisse dicuntur ut quicumque ad eum confugeret liber esset ab omni noxa.*” (Note concerning Romulus and Remus, who are said to have established a sanctuary, that is, a temple of refuge, in which anyone might find asylum, absolved from all crime).<sup>64</sup> Such notes on the pagan Roman past share marginal space with notes flagging Augustine’s discussions of biblical history and those emphasizing significant figures like Abraham, Samson, and Joseph of Arimathea. The richness and variety of historical details that Augustine provides and touches on in Book 1 allowed his readers to gather information from an authoritative, trusted Christian source about these figures and eras of the distant past. While such information may have been broadly familiar to well-educated Roman citizens in late antiquity, like Augustine himself, it was more exotic and uniformly “ancient” in the minds of early medieval audiences. What is clear is that Augustine was not intentionally composing a work of history when he wrote the *De civitate Dei*; his reflections on all aspects of the past are always ultimately in service of his moral, theological, and apologetic arguments. In many instances, early medieval annotators pass over these arguments in silence, noting only the historical content being discussed. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that the annotators lacked interest in Augustine’s moral interpretations of historical events.

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<sup>63</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 462, on *De civitate Dei* 1.6 (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 5v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 3v).

<sup>64</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 466, on *De civitate Dei* 1.34 (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 23v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 18v).

Similar patterns of consistent signaling of historical content are present in Book 2 and across the next several books of *De civitate Dei* as well, although generally, in the manuscripts that I have examined, these are not quite as heavily annotated as Book 1. Munich BSB Clm. 6267, for example, contains few annotations on Book 2 after a fairly heavily annotated first book. Other manuscripts, like Cologne DB 75, Cambrai BM 350, Lyon BM 606, and Brescia BCQ G.III.3, contain ample annotations on the *De civitate Dei*'s second book, wherein Augustine surveys the calamities suffered by the Romans before the coming of Christ. He conducts this survey not in order to show that Rome's fortunes greatly improved after the Incarnation or after the empire's conversion to Christianity, but only to dispel the notion that Rome's then-current troubles were unprecedented and directly connected to its turn toward Christianity. In chapter 3 of this book, Augustine reflects on a *vulgare proverbium* that he suggests is often repeated by critics of Christianity:

[R]emember that, in recounting these things, I have still to address myself to ignorant men; so ignorant, indeed, as to give birth to the common saying, "Drought and Christianity go hand in hand." There are indeed some among them who are thoroughly well-educated men, and have a taste for history, in which the things I speak of are open to their observation; but in order to irritate the uneducated masses against us, they feign ignorance of these events, and do what they can to make the vulgar believe that those disasters, which in certain places and at certain times uniformly befall mankind, are the result of Christianity, which is being everywhere diffused, and is possessed of a renown and brilliancy which quite eclipse their own gods.<sup>65</sup>

In the series of annotations edited by Gorman from the Cologne and Cambrai manuscripts, this passage is highlighted with the curious note "*Hoc prouerbium etiam nunc*

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<sup>65</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 2.3, ed. Dombart, I, 49: "Memento autem me ista commemorantem adhuc contra inperitos agere, ex quorum inperitia illud quoque ortum est vulgare proverbium: Pluvia deficit, causa Christiani sunt. Nam qui eorum studiis liberalibus instituti amant historiam, facillime ista noverunt; sed ut nobis ineruditorum turbas infestissimas reddant, se nosse dissimulant atque hoc apud vulgus confirmare nituntur, clades, quibus per certa intervalla locorum et temporum genus humanum oportet adfligi, causa accidere nominis Christiani, quod contra deos suos ingenti fama et praeclarissima celebritate per cuncta diffunditur"; trans. Dods, rev. and ed. Knight.

*aduersus Christianos proferunt*” (They still utter this saying against Christians).<sup>66</sup> It seems rather doubtful that, in a predominantly Christian early medieval world, such a slanderous saying, connecting Christianity with worldly calamity, was “still” (*etiam nunc*) used against Christians. In this instance, it seems likely that the annotator is summarizing Augustine’s point in such a way as to emphasize that in the time that Augustine was writing, decades after Rome’s initial turn to Christianity under Constantine, such anti-Christian sayings *still* persisted, perhaps especially when times were tough—not that slander of that sort “still” remained common in the annotator’s own time. If so, this is a point of historical observation that reveals much about the culture of the later Roman Empire in which Augustine lived and wrote, but little about early medieval Europe; however temporal troubles may have been interpreted in that later culture, they would not have been understood as consequences of the rejection of the pagan gods in favour of the Christian God. Slightly later in chapter 3, Augustine challenges Christianity’s critics, writing, “Let them, if they can, defend their gods...since they maintain that they worship them in order to be preserved from these disasters, which they now impute to us if they suffer in the least degree. For why did these gods permit the disasters I am to speak of to fall on their worshippers before the preaching of Christ’s name offended them, and put an end to their sacrifices?”<sup>67</sup> On this passage, a note in Lyon 606—likely written by, or under the guidance of, Florus—helps to place Augustine’s argument and his rhetorical strategy more clearly in its context, underscoring the urgent necessity of Augustine demonstrating that “the pagans were not able to benefit from the

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<sup>66</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 467, on *De civitate Dei* 2.3 (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 25v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 20v).

<sup>67</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 2.3, ed. Dombart, I, 49–50: “...et in his defendant, si possunt, deos suos, si propterea coluntur, ne ista mala patiantur cultores eorum; quorum si quid nunc passi fuerint, nobis imputandum esse contendunt. Cur enim ea, quae dicturus sum, permiserunt accidere cultoribus suis, antequam eos declaratum Christi nomen offenderet eorumque sacrificia prohiberet?”; trans. Dods, rev. and ed. Knight.

worship of their gods” (*pagani non possint aliquam sibi utilitatem de cultu deorum*).<sup>68</sup> Similarly, in Munich BSB Clm. 3831, a note on Augustine’s discussion (2.23) of the limited power of demons to impact human affairs—“only that power which the secret decree of the Almighty allots to them” (*tantum possunt, quantum secreto omnipotentis arbitrio permittuntur*)<sup>69</sup>—tersely echoes Augustine’s moral point that God’s judgments are “justly reprov’d by none” (*nemo iuste reprehendit*).<sup>70</sup> Such examples suggest a close and active—if unfailingly approbative—engagement with Augustine’s argumentation and with the larger purpose motivating his discussion of the specific topics addressed in the *De civitate Dei*’s opening books. This remains the case even where Augustine’s particular arguments directed against pagan critics of Christianity are more a matter of historical interest than of transhistorical theological value.

As in Book 1, many of the annotations on Book 2, across several Carolingian manuscripts, suggest a special interest in the historical details, or in aspects of ancient philosophy and thought, mentioned in the course of Augustine’s discussion, without much apparent attention to his arguments or reasons for invoking those historical details. For instance, a note in Lyon BM 606 highlights Augustine’s passing mention of Metellus, “truly the most highly esteemed of the Romans” (*Metellus enim Romanorum laudatissimus*),<sup>71</sup> without engaging with Augustine’s emphatic points in this chapter—that worldly success and prestige cannot be correlated with divine favour, while true happiness is given only by God to those who worship him. Where Augustine argues that vanity was the underlying cause for the creation of some of Rome’s traditionally revered gods, an accompanying note in Lyon BM 607 reads simply “*De Romulo*

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<sup>68</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 136, on *De civitate Dei* 2.3 (Lyon BM 606, f. 17v): “Quod omnino probare pagani non possint aliquam sibi utilitatem de cultu deorum aut an[t]ichristi aduentu aliquando accessisse.”

<sup>69</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 2.23, ed. Dombart, I, 77; trans. Dods, rev. and ed. Knight.

<sup>70</sup> Munich BSB Clm. 3831, f. 22r.

<sup>71</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 140, on *De civitate Dei* 2.23 (Lyon BM 606, f. 27r).

*Romae conditore*” (On Romulus, the founder of Rome).<sup>72</sup> Both Lyon manuscripts contain notes marking out Augustine’s use of Sallust in relating the decline in Roman morals following the destruction of Carthage (“*Qualiter Sallustius refert mores Romanorum post Cartaginis excidium in deterius commutatos*”) (Sallust relates how the habits of the Romans have worsened after the destruction of Carthage)<sup>73</sup> and his embellishment of Cicero’s statements on the Roman republic and the possibility of human justice, invoking the career and fate of Scipio (“*Definitio populi quam sub Scipionis nomine Cicero definiuit*”) (The definition of “the people” explained by Cicero under the name of Scipio).<sup>74</sup> In these passages, the annotator seems as (or more) interested in Augustine’s classical source for his historical information as in the substance of Augustine’s arguments, his reasons for invoking these sources, or the historical events and figures they describe.

Comparably laconic, historically-oriented annotations on Book 2 can be found in Cologne Dombibliothek cod. 75 and Munich BSB Clm. 3831, among other Carolingian-era manuscripts. A brief note in this Munich manuscript, on chapter 21, accompanies Augustine’s observation that something closer to Cicero’s definition of a republic was maintained by the early generations of Romans rather than “by the later Romans” (*quam a posterioribus romanis*, the entirety of this note).<sup>75</sup> On chapter 16, accompanying Augustine’s provocative point that Rome had to appropriate “good laws” from the Athenians because it did not have any of its own before that time, a note in Cologne DB cod. 75 simply highlights the fact that Numa Pompilius

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<sup>72</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 138, on *De civitate Dei* 2.15 (Lyon BM 607, f. 33r).

<sup>73</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 139, on *De civitate Dei* 2.18 (Lyon BM 607, f. 37r / Lyon BM 606, f. 23v). On Sallust in the *De civitate Dei*, see Paul C. Burns, “Augustine’s Use of Sallust in the *City of God*: The Role of the Grammatical Tradition,” in *History, Apocalypse, and the Secular Imagination*, 105–114; O’Daly, *Augustine’s City of God*, 272–278; and Robert M. Stein, “Sallust for His Readers, 410–1550: A Study in the Formation of the Classical Tradition,” Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1977, 11–69.

<sup>74</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 139, on *De civitate Dei* 2.21 (Lyon BM 607, f. 40v / Lyon BM 606, f. 25v).

<sup>75</sup> Munich BSB Clm. 3831, f. 21r.

was Romulus's successor in Rome's early period and that he instituted said laws—this being but an incidental bit of information for Augustine.<sup>76</sup> On Augustine's discussion of the many appalling cruelties and vices attributed to the Roman general Sulla, there is a lone note in the Cologne/Cambrai series that paraphrases Augustine's description of one incident, wherein Sulla allegedly perceived a golden crown in the entrails of a calf he had sacrificed.<sup>77</sup> This episode may have been quite interesting and strange, even perhaps exotic, to Carolingian readers, but was not in itself especially illustrative of Sulla's character (as represented by Augustine) nor of Augustine's larger point in describing the case of Sulla. These annotators seem to have engaged with the *De civitate Dei* mainly as a useful source for ancient history and philosophy; the composition and, in some cases, deliberate re-copying of such annotations guided and implicitly encouraged future readers to follow suit in making use of Augustine's text in this way.

This pattern of notes marking out historical events and figures continues, to varying extents, across the subsequent books of the *De civitate Dei*'s first half, as well as Books 15 and 18. Notes on Book 3 in Leiden BR VLF 6, for instance, simply record the names and sometimes the consular titles of certain (perhaps otherwise unfamiliar) historical figures discussed by Augustine: in chapter 24 (30r), Lucius Opimius Consul, Marcus Fulvius Consularis; in chapter 26 (30v), Lucius Saturnus, Gaius Servilius, Marcus Drusus.<sup>78</sup> Readers lightly skimming Augustine's text could clearly see where to find information about these prominent Roman men. A note on chapter 28, where Augustine recounts Sulla's slaying of the pontiff Mucius Scaevola despite the latter taking refuge at the Altar of Vespa, echoes Augustine's assertion that no place

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<sup>76</sup> Gorman, "Oldest Annotations," 468, on *De civitate Dei* 2.16: "Numa Pomphilius, qui Romulo successit in regnum, hic leges in Roma instituit." (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 32v)

<sup>77</sup> Gorman, "Oldest Annotations," 468–69, on *De civitate Dei* 2.24: "Vbi Sulla diis immolans uitulinum iecur uidet in capite uitulini iecoris similitudinem coronae aureae." (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 39v / Cambrai BM 350, 32v)

<sup>78</sup> Leiden BR VLF 6, ff. 30r–30v.

was more sacred for the Romans (“*Nihil apud Romanos templo veste sanctius*”).<sup>79</sup> Yet, isolated in this way, the note is more a historical point about the ancient city and culture of Rome than a moral one emphasizing Sulla’s shocking ruthlessness. Brief, content-marking notes in the Cologne/Cambrai series highlight similarly narrow, specific historical points, including Augustine’s remarks on, among many other topics (sacred and secular), the Trojan War in Book 3;<sup>80</sup> Alexander the Great<sup>81</sup> and the Assyrian king Ninus<sup>82</sup> in Book 4; Pompey’s battle against the pirates of Cilicia in Book 5;<sup>83</sup> the identities of the Greco-Roman gods across much of Book 7;<sup>84</sup> and in annotations on Book 10 the miracle of Abraham’s wife Sarah giving birth despite her advanced age and apparent sterility<sup>85</sup> as well as Scipio’s conquest of Africa,<sup>86</sup> both noted with evident interest. Notes on Book 3, chapters 7 and 9, where Augustine again mentions Sulla<sup>87</sup> and Numa Pompilius,<sup>88</sup> refer the reader back to Augustine’s earlier discussions of these figures<sup>89</sup>—a suggestive hint of how Augustine’s work could be practically utilized as a reference for historical information by some early medieval readers. In this regard and others—for instance, the frequent identification of Augustine’s classical sources, noted above—early medieval annotators of the

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<sup>79</sup> Leiden BR VLF 6, f. 31r.

<sup>80</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 469, on *De civitate Dei* 3.2: “Troia bellum origo ducitur populi Romani.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 44v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 37r)

<sup>81</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 471, on *De civitate Dei* 4.4: “De Alexandro magno et pirato comprehenso.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 68r / Cambrai BM 350, f. 58v)

<sup>82</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 471, on *De civitate Dei* 4.6: “De Nino primo rege Assyriorum.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 69r / Cambrai BM 350, f. 59v)

<sup>83</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 472, on *De civitate Dei* 5.22: “Nota: De bello piratarum a Pompeio.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 91v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 105r)

<sup>84</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 472–74, notes on *De civitate Dei* 7.

<sup>85</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 477, on *De civitate Dei* 10.8: “Nota: De Abraham et Sarra sterile filium generantem.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 183v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 159v)

<sup>86</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 478, on *De civitate Dei* 10.21: “Scipio Africanus est dictus eo quod uirtute Africam uicerunt.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 194v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 169v)

<sup>87</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 469, on *De civitate Dei* 3.7: “De hoc Sylla supra in secundo libro multa narrabat.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 47r / Cambrai BM 350, f. 39r)

<sup>88</sup> Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 469, on *De civitate Dei* 3.9: “In secundo libro de hoc Numa multa affatus est.” (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 47v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 39v)

<sup>89</sup> Vessey, “History of the Book,” 20–22, suggests that the *De civitate Dei* is “held together by a tissue of actual or implied cross-references, many of them turning on individual figures from biblical or Roman history,” highlighting in particular Augustine’s repeated mentions of Numa, drawn from his use of Varro.

*De civitate Dei* approached Augustine's text less as exegetes or interpreters than as editors, not wholly unlike the practices of modern, "scientific" editors of Latin critical editions. In both cases, medieval and modern, the annotator or editor seems to be anticipating the use of the text at hand as a particular kind of scholarly or pedagogical reference tool, not simply as a book to read for pleasure or for spiritual benefit through *lectio divina*. Their interventions aim to make more readily visible the formal seams of the work, particularly its internal structure and its external sources.

As in the other manuscripts considered here, the annotations in the Lyon BM 607 and 606 evince similar interests in historical topics, alongside some occasional, brief reflection on Augustine's arguments about the course and significance of temporal history. These include both the sixth- or seventh-century cursive minuscule notes present in Lyon BM 607 and the Carolingian-era notes copied, authored, or closely guided by Florus of Lyon (in both manuscripts, but especially Lyon BM 606), one of the Carolingian era's most attentive and thoughtful readers of Augustine. For example, right at the start of book 5, Augustine explicitly delivers one of his work's major arguments up to that point in the text—that "the cause of the greatness of the Roman Empire is neither fortuitous nor fatal" (i.e., attributable to the superstitious vagaries of fortune or fate).<sup>90</sup> It is this fundamental argument that drives Augustine's point-by-point survey of Roman history, its great triumphs and terrible calamities (neither being providentially meaningful or significant, per Augustine), across the first five books. The note on this chapter in Lyon BM 607, reasserting that it is only through the "true

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<sup>90</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 5.1, ed. Dombart, I, 168: "Causa ergo magnitudinis imperii Romani nec fortuita est, nec fatalis"; trans. Dods, rev. and ed. Knight.



god” and not the “false gods” (*non dii falsi sed deus uerus*) that Rome has been able to thrive, seems to grasp the importance of Augustine’s emphatic argument at this pivotal point.<sup>91</sup>

However, as Fransen observes in his analysis of the Lyon BM 607 and 606 annotations and their connections to Florus, neither of these manuscripts contains anything like a sustained marginal commentary on Augustine’s work—by either its earlier or its Carolingian annotators. More or less concise notes indicating areas of particular interest or providing brief explanations of certain topics predominate.<sup>92</sup> As with the recopied series of pre-Carolingian annotations preserved in Cologne DB cod. 75, Cambrai BM 350, and Munich BSB Clm. 6267, the combination of sixth- or seventh-century notes and ninth-century notes in the Lyon manuscripts of *De civitate Dei* suggests that the use of Augustine’s work as a source of information on (more) ancient history was perhaps quite consistent across the early Middle Ages. In Lyon BM 607 and 606, very short notes, seemingly serving as finding aids for Augustine’s discussion of historical topics, abound. These include, for example, notes about destruction of Illium by Fimbria during Rome’s civil wars;<sup>93</sup> the Achaean king Aristonicus;<sup>94</sup> the defeat of Hannibal during the Second Punic War (Lyon BM 607, 74r);<sup>95</sup> and Pompey’s battle against the pirates of Cilicia (Lyon BM 607, 134v).<sup>96</sup> Even where notes on such past figures or events are a little longer, they are more often focused on the forest than the trees. For instance, the note accompanying Augustine’s

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<sup>91</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 144, on *De civitate Dei* 5.1: “Hinc iam dicere incypit quomodo non dii falsi sed deus uerus regno ut cresceret romano fauerit.” (Lyon BM 607, f. 105r).

<sup>92</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 126.

<sup>93</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 141, on *De civitate Dei* 3.7: “Ilum quae et Troia a Fimbria quodam romano post ilium inopinatum quod a Grecis tulit excidium incendio simul cum ciuibus concrematum est.” (Lyon BM 607, f. 57r)

<sup>94</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 141, on *De civitate Dei* 3.11: “Regem Aristonicum.” (Lyon BM 607, f. 60v)

<sup>95</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 142, on *De civitate Dei* 3.19: “Post Annibalis uictoriam quanta Romanos paenuria non solum hominum sed et rei familiaris subsecuta sit.” (Lyon BM 607, f. 74r)

<sup>96</sup> Fransen, “Commentaire marginal,” 145, on *De civitate Dei* 5.22: “Bellum piratarum Pompeius uelociter confecit.” (Lyon BM 607, f. 134v)

discussion of Constantine near the end of Book 5 reiterates Augustine's point that the example of Constantine proved to the Romans that a leader could enjoy great success without the help of "demons."<sup>97</sup> Yet, the note does not speak to the bolder claim that Augustine puts forth in this chapter—that being a Christian does not in itself ensure such worldly success, as pagan emperors have prospered while some subsequent Christian emperors have failed to duplicate Constantine's triumphs. Augustine's motivation in discussing the "happiness" of Constantine is ultimately not so much to praise this former ruler for his momentous precedent, although he does this in passing, as to warn against the dangerous principle of *do ut des*, and to remind his readers that the true reason to give oneself to God and the Christian faith is to have a chance at enjoying eternal life, not for mere temporal glory. If this important point in Augustine's discussion of Constantine is not clearly emphasized, it is quite possible for readers to overlook Augustine's two main contentions: on the one hand, that it is very difficult or impossible to determine the true, providential significance of temporal events; on the other hand, that the fates of the Two Cities, although apparently intertwined in this life, are finally wholly separate.

Augustine made his extended summaries of Roman history in the first half of the *De civitate Dei* to support his polemical rebuttal against pagan critics of the *tempora Christiana*. In an early medieval world undisturbed by such learned pagan opponents of Christianity, however, these polemical passages could be unproblematically mined as sources for history. Using the *De civitate Dei* in this manner, one could easily fail to notice how Augustine's (seemingly) minor polemical points were usually, ultimately connected, however subtly, to his major arguments, developed across all 22 books, concerning the course of the earthly and heavenly cities and the

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<sup>97</sup> Fransen, "Commentaire marginal," 146, on *De civitate Dei* 5.24: "[Quod uin]cere pos[se] sine auss[i]lio demon]iorum [secund]um quod un[i]uersi Romani excitare negabant terreni regni quibusdam bonum prouenire Constantinum ponit exemplo." (Lyon BM 607, f. 137v)

inscrutability of God's providential plan. Augustine's sophisticated arguments *ex historia* meant to challenge the triumphalist overconfidence of some contemporary Christians. For early medieval readers, particularly those who enjoyed the fruits of a renewed Christian Roman empire under Charlemagne and his successors, the nuances of these powerful arguments could be glossed over or partly misunderstood.<sup>98</sup>

During the Carolingian era, a period of revived *imperium* and a renewal of learning, part of what made Augustine's work so indispensable was the opportunity to read about various aspects, or temporal strata, of ancient history side-by-side, within the same text, from the pen of a revered, orthodox Christian authority. In Rome BNC Sess. 70, for example, annotations on scriptural and Church history share space with notes marking out decidedly non-Christian historical topics. Notes indicating *sabelliani heretici* and *manicheos heretici* appear next to Augustine's mentions of these groups and their beliefs in Book 11, chapters 10 and 13, respectively.<sup>99</sup> This book is one of the most theologically focused in the *De civitate Dei*, and the annotations in Rome BNC Sess. 70 do engage with Augustine's theological points. Yet, at the same time, the notes also suggest considerable attention to the historical utility of Augustine's work. Readers guided by these notes, whether they were reading *De civitate Dei* primarily for its theological insights or its historical information, could learn about the groups and ideas of the past that were no longer of present concern but of some significance for the historical progress of Christianity.

Attention to Christianity's early development also extended to a certain interest in both the origins of the Christian world's great cities and civilizations, as well as the early generations

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<sup>98</sup> See Henri-Xavier Arquillière, *L'Augustinisme politique: Essai sur la formation des theories politique du Moyen-Age* (Paris, 1934) and related literature in ch. 1, n. 20 above.

<sup>99</sup> Rome BNC Sess. 70, ff. 12v and 17r.

of mankind as described in the Old Testament. In Book 12, annotations highlight Augustine's reference to a letter purportedly written by Alexander the Great to his mother Olympias<sup>100</sup> (12.12), and later they note Augustine's discussion of the respective establishments of Rome and Alexandria by Romulus and Alexander (12.25).<sup>101</sup> Notes on Book 15, chapter 5 similarly emphasize both Augustine's treatment of the famous fratricide associated with the founding of Rome and his comparison of Romulus and Remus to Cain and Abel.<sup>102</sup> Later in this book, notes flag Augustine's historically-oriented discussions of the contexts of Adam, Enoch, Methuselah, and, again, Rome's founding, as summarized from Vergil (*De civitate Dei* 12.19). Many centuries of sacred and secular history are interwoven here, and Carolingian readers clearly recognized that they could learn much of value and interest about the distant worlds of classical Rome and the biblical Near East from attentively following Augustine's masterful synthesis of these historical strands.

The notes recorded in these two Nonantolan manuscripts evince quite similar patterns to the annotations on *De civitate Dei* in manuscripts from other parts of the Carolingian empire, examined above. These patterns suggest that, despite their geographic distance from the empire's political centre, the monastic annotators and readers in Carolingian northern Italy were nonetheless active participants in a broadly shared Carolingian intellectual culture. Richard Pollard, in examining Rome BNC Sess. 70 and 74 alongside other Carolingian-era manuscripts produced at Nonantola, has indeed convincingly shown that theological concerns and the selection and use of patristic sources in northern Italy were largely consistent with those in the

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<sup>100</sup> Rome BNC Sess. 70, f. 48r: "epistola alexandri."

<sup>101</sup> Rome BNC Sess. 70, f. 66r: "roma et alexander."

<sup>102</sup> Rome BNB Sess. 70, f. 137r: "quomodo condita est Roma"; f. 137v: "Remum et romulum cain et abel."

Frankish heartlands of the Carolingian empire.<sup>103</sup> The use of *De civitate Dei* as a source for information about the past further demonstrates this substantial cultural connection. Scribes and readers spread far across western Europe recognized the multifaceted utility of this work by Latin Christendom's most dexterously all-purpose authority. Yet, one of these Nonantolan annotators also noted—perhaps with a little surprise—that even the brilliant Augustine did not, in fact, know everything. Augustine's admission in Book 12 that “I do not know what ages passed before the human race was created, yet I have no doubt that no created thing is co-eternal with the creator,”<sup>104</sup> is excerpted in the margin simply as “*Hic dicit se ignorare beatus augustinus*”: “Here Blessed Augustine says that he does not know.”<sup>105</sup>

Judging by the annotations, readers of Augustine at Nonantola were also interested in ancient philosophy, literature and theatre, and the classical disciplines as discussed throughout much of the *De civitate Dei*. Rome BNC Sess. 70, for instance, includes notes marking out Augustine's mentions of Plato, Vergil, Cicero, Pliny the Younger, and Homer, without any indication of why Augustine is using or referring to these classical figures, save for the note on Pliny, which reads “*De plinius secundus homo doctissim[us]*,” echoing Augustine's own description of this “most learned man.”<sup>106</sup> The annotators of the Lyon manuscripts similarly take note of Augustine's references to Terence, Cicero, and Plato. The notes in Bern BB 134 suggest

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<sup>103</sup> See Pollard, “Libri di scuola spirituale,” 362 ff.; Richard Matthew Pollard, “Literary Culture in Ninth-Century Northern Italy” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2009), 161–247. In examining annotations on patristic texts at Nonantola, Pollard argues, for instance, that heightened interest in differing theologies of predestination at Nonantola echoes the major Carolingian controversies of the mid-ninth century, and that particular interest in the nature of the soul at Nonantola may be generally connected to ninth-century debates about this subject in Francia. Many of the patristic texts—particularly works of Augustine—that seem to have been annotated and studied at Nonantola in this period were related to these and other contemporary Carolingian controversies or concerns.

<sup>104</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 12.16, ed. Dombart, I, 476: “Quae saecula praeterierint ante quam genus institueretur humanum, me fateor ignorare; non tamen dubito nihil omnino creaturae Creatori esse coaeternum”; trans. Dods, rev. and ed. Knight. On Augustine's willingness to admit uncertainty, see Catherine Conybeare's remarks in ch. 1, n. 81 above.

<sup>105</sup> Rome BNC Sess. 70, f. 55r.

<sup>106</sup> Rome BNC Sess. 70, f. 144r.

a particular interest in Augustine's remarks on Plato and ancient philosophy in Book 8, which is more heavily annotated than the preceding books (in contrast to the general pattern of high interest in the *De civitate Dei*'s early books, especially the first). In the series of annotations edited by Gorman, these notes highlight Augustine's uses of, or references to, Vergil, Sallust, Varro, "physical" or "natural" explanations for earthly phenomena, Plato, Stoic philosophy, Apuleius, Plotinus, and Porphyry. As Gorman observes, there is particular, discernible interest in Augustine's discussion of the ancient theatre<sup>107</sup> in Book 2 and of the pagan gods in Book 7—topics that would have been intriguingly strange for many early medieval Christian readers.<sup>108</sup>

More generally, knowledge about these ancient authors, topics, and disciplines referenced or quoted in Augustine would have varied a great deal among Carolingian readers. For instance, Vergil's works—although viewed with some ambivalence for their potential to seduce and corrupt Christian minds—were a well-known part of the Carolingian grammatical curriculum,

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<sup>107</sup> On knowledge and conceptions of theatre in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, see esp. Donnalee Dox, *The Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought: Augustine to the Fourteenth Century* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2004). For the Carolingian context, see Courtney M. Booker, "Hypocrisy, Performativity, and the Carolingian Pursuit of Truth," *Early Medieval Europe* 26 (2018), 174–202.

<sup>108</sup> Gorman, "Oldest Annotations," 460, observes the particular interest in Augustine's discussion of the theatre; the edited annotations, containing the above-noted references to ancient authors or concepts appear on pp. 462–479.

while the works of Sallust were not very widely available in this period.<sup>109</sup> In any case, Carolingian readers accessing, with apparent interest, these ancient authors, ideas, and topics through Augustine could feel secure in the fact that one of the great orthodox Fathers had already judiciously selected or summarized from them, thus sparing later, Christian readers the hard and potentially perilous work of separating the wheat from the chaff on their own.

### **Capitula libri XVIII**

Augustine's intermittent surveying of historical topics reaches its crescendo in Book 18, which, as I have suggested above, may be the closest thing to a dedicated work of history that he ever produced. The four remaining books are decidedly less past-oriented, focusing instead on what is, eventually, to come: the Last Judgment and the final fates of the Two Cities. Consistent with various early medieval annotators' interest in historical information in the earlier books, Book 18 is among the more abundantly annotated books in several manuscripts, such as Munich BSB Clm. 3831, Munich BSB Clm. 6267, Brescia BCQ G.III.3, Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 9641 (a complete copy of the *De civitate Dei*, created sometime between the late eighth and early

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<sup>109</sup> See, e.g., David Ganz, "The Vatican Vergil and the Jerome Page in the First Bible of Charles the Bald," in John Lowden and Alixe Bovey, eds., *Under the Influence: The Concept of Influence and the Study of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Turnhout, 2007), 45–50 and John J. Contreni, "Getting to Know Virgil in the Carolingian Age: The *Vita Publii Virgilii*," in Valerie L. Garver and Owen M. Phelan, eds., *Rome and Religion in the Medieval World: Studies in Honor of Thomas F.X. Noble* (Farnham, UK/Burlington, Vt., 2014), 21–46, on Carolingian knowledge of Vergil; Silvia Ottiano, "Reading Between the Lines of Virgil's Early Medieval Manuscripts," in *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages*, 397–426, on annotations of Vergil's texts, often using the comments of Christian authorities like Augustine and Isidore of Seville to gloss the *Eclogues* and *Aeneid*; Beryl Smalley, "Sallust in the Middle Ages," in Robert R. Bulgar, ed., *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500–1500* (Cambridge, 1971), 165–175, and more recently, Van Raaj, "Ancient History in the Carolingian World," on the medieval reception of Sallust; and also Richard Matthew Pollard, "Flavius Josephus: The Most Influential Classical Historian of the Early Middle Ages," in Elina Screen and Charles West, eds., *Writing the Early Medieval West: Studies in Honour of Rosamond McKitterick* (Cambridge, 2018), 15–32, who shows that familiarity with the great Roman historians Sallust and Livy was relatively limited among Carolingian readers, particularly when compared with the reception of Josephus—an especially vital source for early medieval readers interested in learning about the ancient (Judaic and Roman) past.

ninth century in northern Francia, probably near Corbie), and Vatican City Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV) Pal. lat. 200<sup>110</sup> (books 18–22, from Lorsch in the first quarter of the ninth century). What may, perhaps, be even more revealing than the quantity or content of these annotations on Book 18 is the fact that for only this one book several manuscripts include brief chapter descriptions, between the *Explicit* of Book 17 and the *Incipit* of Book 18. These chapter listings are included for only Book 18 in Bern BB 134,<sup>111</sup> Brescia BCQ G.III.3,<sup>112</sup> Leiden BR VLF 6,<sup>113</sup> and Paris BNF lat. 2051 (a complete, mid to later ninth-century copy from northwestern France, probably near Brittany).<sup>114</sup> (As these chapter descriptions are normally called “*capitula*” in the manuscripts, I will, for the sake of clarity, refer to them here as *capitula libri XVIII*.<sup>115</sup>) The *capitula libri XVIII* appear, too, in Munich BSB Clm. 6267,<sup>116</sup> but this manuscript also includes chapter descriptions for Books 13–17, though none for Books 1–12 or 19–22.

The Book 18 *capitula* included in these five manuscripts are not taken from the annotations associated with the so-called “*Breviculus*,” which are late antique in origin, perhaps going back to the editorial efforts of Eugippius—or even to Augustine himself.<sup>117</sup> (In what

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<sup>110</sup> On annotations, including *tituli*, in Vatican City BAV Pal. Lat. 200, see Keskiaho, “Copied Marginal Annotations,” 290–292.

<sup>111</sup> Bern BB 134, ff. 120v–121r.

<sup>112</sup> Brescia BCQ G.III.3, ff. 157r–157v.

<sup>113</sup> Leiden BR VLF 6, ff. 187r–187v.

<sup>114</sup> Paris BNF lat. 2051, ff. 193v–194v. Keskiaho, “Copied Marginal Annotations,” discusses the annotations in this copy of *De civitate Dei*, together with Bern BB 134, at 294–297.

<sup>115</sup> Bern BB 134, Brescia BCQ G.III.3, and Munich BSB Clm. 6267 use the title “*capitula*,” while Leiden BR VLF 6 and Paris BNF lat. 2051 do not refer to them by any title.

<sup>116</sup> Munich BSB Clm. 6267, ff. 386v–388r.

<sup>117</sup> Marrou, “La division,” 238–239 (255–256), speculated that Augustine may have been referring to these chapter descriptions or something close to them when he wrote to Firmus in *epist.* 1A, “Quantum autem collegerit viginti duorum librorum conscriptio missus breviculus indicabit.” Gorman, “Oldest Manuscripts,” 408–409, argues that Marrou’s argument was “inexplicable” and insists that the title “*Breviculus*” “stands without the slightest authority,” but considers it plausible that this system of chapter divisions and descriptions originated with Eugippius, who may have also divided and created chapter headings for the *De Genesi ad litteram* and *De Trinitate*. O’Donnell, “Augustine, *City of God*,” concludes that “whatever the ‘breviculus’ [as referred to in *epist.* 1A] may have been, we do not have it.” On the “*Breviculus*” and variant *capitula* in early manuscripts of the *De civitate Dei*, see also O’Daly, *Augustine’s City of God*, 311–312.



follows, simply for convenience I will refer to that series of chapter descriptions as the “*Breviculus*” to distinguish them from the *capitula libri XVIII* noted above. This is not to suggest that they necessarily derive from whatever Augustine was referring to in his letter to Firmus; rather, it is simply the term used in the modern edition.) Book 18 chapter descriptions corresponding closely to those of the “*Breviculus*” text do appear in other Carolingian-era manuscripts of the *De civitate Dei*, such as Paris BNF lat. 12215 (containing Books 16–22, from Burgundy in the first quarter of the ninth century), Vatican BAV Pal. Lat. 200, and Brussels Bibliothèque Royale 9641, which also include “*Breviculus*”–derived chapter descriptions for other books contained in these manuscripts.<sup>118</sup> The *capitula libri XVIII* were noted in passing by Henri Irénée Marrou, who observed that they were not as old nor as widespread as those of the “*Breviculus*,” the focal point of his study.<sup>119</sup> These alternate Book 18 *capitula* were likely an early medieval creation, and are perhaps no older than the ninth century.<sup>120</sup> They were edited (from Munich BSB Clm. 6267 and Paris BNF lat. 2051) and briefly discussed by Bernhard Dombart in the 1905 printing of his critical edition of *De civitate Dei*.<sup>121</sup> Distinctively, these alternate chapter descriptions for Book 18 divide the text into just 20 chapters, whereas the “*Breviculus*” splits this exceptionally long book into 54 chapters.

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<sup>118</sup> Paris BNF lat. 12215 (Burgundy, first quarter of the ninth century) contains Books 16–22, while Vatican BAV Pal. lat. 200 contains Books 18–22; both include chapter descriptions for all of the books they contain. Brussels BR 9641 contains all 22 books, but only chapter descriptions for Books 17–22.

<sup>119</sup> Marrou, “La division,” 245 (261), n. 2.: “D’autres systèmes de distribution en chapitres ont en effet existé: cf. celui du livre XVIII que fournit tout un groupe de manuscrits...Mais aucun n’est aussi anciennement attesté et n’a été aussi répandu que le système ‘normal’: il n’était donc pas utile ici de les prendre en considération.”

<sup>120</sup> The oldest of these manuscripts is Munich BSB Clm. 6267, dated to s. VIII/IX; the portion of this manuscript containing Book 18 was produced in the first quarter of the ninth century. The practice of including only these *capitula*, and no such chapter descriptions for any other book, may be later still, as the other four manuscripts date between the mid and late ninth century. At the same time, however, it remains possible, of course, that these Book 18 *capitula* descend from an older exemplar that has not survived. Keksiaho, “Copied Marginal Annotations,” 294–297, for instance, shows that annotations on Books 20–22 shared by Bern BB 134 and Paris BNF lat. 2051 derive from a common lost exemplar, perhaps as old as the sixth century.

<sup>121</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, ed. Dombart (Leipzig, 1905), X–XVI.

Although the “*Breviculus*” chapter descriptions and divisions—possibly considered, or known, by medieval readers to be more ancient in origin and therefore superior to the *capitula libri XVIII*—ultimately prevailed in the Middle Ages,<sup>122</sup> and continue to inform modern editions of Augustine’s work, the 20-chapter *capitula libri XVIII* are nonetheless subtly revealing of how some early medieval students of Augustine approached the *De civitate Dei* and in particular its longest book. The existence of this unique system of chapter descriptions and divisions for Book 18, and its inclusion in multiple Carolingian manuscripts that do not include comparable chapter descriptions for any other book of the *De civitate Dei*, speak to the special importance of this exceptionally long, history-centred book for some Carolingian readers. As Mark Vessey has argued,<sup>123</sup> Book 18 is the closest that Augustine came, anywhere in his oeuvre, to a dedicated work on, or of, history. Carolingian admirers of Augustine, in search of authoritative, Christian-mediated information about the distant past, may well have similarly recognized the unique status and utility of Augustine’s detailed survey of ancient history set alongside the superior, prophetic *historia* of scripture. The creation and application of unique “paratexts”—the *capitula libri XVIII*—for just this Book, the *De civitate Dei*’s longest, suggests such a recognition.

Paratexts such as chapter headings or descriptions are a subtle, yet potentially revealing, form of intratextual evidence. For example, in a recent study of paratexts in early medieval manuscripts of Augustine’s *De Genesi ad litteram*, Jesse Keskiahö argues that a set of early chapter headings for the *De Genesi ad litteram* were added to the text in order to “lend structure to Augustine’s text and to identify his conclusions and teachings, whether for the aid of the annotator or for a wider circle of readers.” As Keskiahö shows, such paratexts, more deliberately

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<sup>122</sup> Foreshadowing the eventual dominance of the “*Breviculus*,” in some manuscripts containing the *capitula libri XVIII*, the chapter numbers corresponding to the “*Breviculus*” divisions appear within the text of Book 18, perhaps inserted in a later hand.

<sup>123</sup> See n. 1 above.

“curatorial” than “occasional” in nature, are telling of how readers engaged with Augustine’s work, what they found most useful or important in it, and how they believed others could most fruitfully study the text as a reference work.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, the creation and transmission of the *capitula libri XVIII* suggest a similarly curatorial approach and special attention toward the *De civitate Dei*’s past-focused eighteenth book.

In a more general respect, such a curatorial impulse is discernible in most of the annotations on *De civitate Dei* considered in this chapter. That is to say, these notes do not typically seem to be the “occasional” marks of individual readerly engagement with Augustine’s work, much less evidence of “private,” “critical” reading of Augustine.<sup>125</sup> These annotations seem intended to guide future readers of the *De civitate Dei* in how to profitably study or draw material from the sprawling text. Some of these manuscripts may have been intended for use in a pedagogical setting, perhaps aiding students at a monastic or cathedral school in their reading of Augustine. Some, like Lyon BM 607 and 606, may have also served as references for composing, or compiling, “new” works assembled from Augustine’s writings, like Florus’s *Expositio in epistolas Beati Pauli ex operibus Sancti Augustini* (discussed in chapter 2). Yet, while annotations on the *De civitate Dei* help to make this huge, expansive work more readily “accessible,” they also gently delimit its content and ideas, guiding future readers of these annotated manuscripts to approach Augustine’s work in a particular, prescribed manner—focused especially on the ancient past.

### **Fashioning Useable Augustines**

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<sup>124</sup> Keskiaho, “The Annotation of Patristic Texts as Curatorial Activity?” 679ff.

<sup>125</sup> On the essentially “communal,” rather than “private,” nature of most early medieval marginalia see pages 157–158 above.

From the patterns of annotation described above it should not be inferred that early medieval readers and annotators were uninterested in other aspects of Augustine's work or in better understanding his thought. The inclusion of the *Retractationes* chapter on *De civitate Dei* in Bern BB 134<sup>126</sup> and Leiden BR VLF 6<sup>127</sup> (which Gorman notes is quite rare in manuscripts of Augustinian works from the ninth century or earlier<sup>128</sup>) suggests, rather, that readers were very much interested in improving their understanding of Augustine and his work. But Book 18, the *De civitate Dei* as a whole, and the corpus Augustinianum are each, respectively, mammoth, intractable textual bodies; there are many different areas, aspects, or themes of each where one's attention might productively be directed. Pragmatic selection and the placing of emphases or divisions in certain spots, rather than others, may have helped to make Augustine's works more practically useful, particularly as a reference for knowledge about the ancient past. Such information, however obscure, could in some sense better illuminate the broader ancient contexts out of which the sacred history of scripture emerged and God's plan for humankind played out. While Augustine sometimes sought to emphasize the great mystery of that providential plan and the difficulty in distinguishing it from the course of worldly events, the past-oriented content of much of the *De civitate Dei* nevertheless underscored the essential fact that it played out *in time*, across the ages of temporal history, not on some separate mythological plane, and also in real, knowable places in the physical world. This distinctively Christian conviction, that history and the world's past, as the larger stage on which the distant events of divine scripture had played

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<sup>126</sup> Bern BB 134, f. 3r.

<sup>127</sup> Leiden BR VLF 6, f. 1r.

<sup>128</sup> Michael M. Gorman, "Harvard's Oldest Latin Manuscript (Houghton Library, fMS Typ 495): A Patristic Miscellany from the Predestinarian Controversy of the Ninth Century," in *idem, The Manuscript Traditions of the Works of St. Augustine*, 305–306. However, Pollard, "Libri di scuola spirituale," notes that several manuscripts of Augustine texts from Nonantola include Augustine's *Retractationes* entry on those works, as well as an annotated copy of the full *Retractationes*, evidence that Pollard interprets as suggesting (p. 342) "a very scholarly attitude with which Augustine was approached by the Nonantola monks," who (pp. 380–381) "were not merely interested in reading Augustine, but ensuring their reading was the most correct 'according to' Augustine."

out, truly *mattered* motivated many early medieval readers of the *De civitate Dei* and their selections of its most (literally) note-worthy passages.

Such deliberate selection from Augustine's works, initially at the reading and note-taking stage, could result in "new" works informed by, or often made up of, favoured Augustinian excerpts. The two surviving *collectanea* composed by Hadoard of Corbie—one a patristic *florilegium* dominated by quotations from Augustine (preserved in Paris, BNF n.a.l. 13381), the other a collection of pagan/classical sources dominated by Cicero, but with Augustine as the sole Christian author referenced explicitly therein (Vatican Reg. lat. 1762)—provide a vivid sense of how this method could work in action. David Ganz has gone so far as to claim that these collections "offer unmatched evidence of just how a Carolingian scholar read Cicero and Augustine, and conceived of a synthesis of their thought."<sup>129</sup> Of the two *collectanea*, the classical *florilegium* has generated more attention among modern scholars, in part for the rarity of some of the texts excerpted by Hadoard.<sup>130</sup> Yet, the patristic collection is no less fascinating as a striking and exceptionally coherent example of how Carolingian compilation and editorial practices could create something focused, chiseled-down, and readily *useable* from the complex, unwieldy works of the Fathers; both compilations, as Ganz notes, "transmute texts by transforming their contexts so as to create a systematic exposition."<sup>131</sup> In the patristic *florilegium*, Hadoard draws heavily from Augustine's accounts of pagan philosophy and history in the *De civitate Dei*. From

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<sup>129</sup> Ganz, *Corbie*, 93.

<sup>130</sup> On the classical/Ciceronian collection, see Charles H. Beeson, "The Collectaneum of Hadoard," *Classical Philology* 40 (1945), 201–222; Charles H. Beeson, "Lupus of Ferrières and Hadoard," *Classical Philology* 43 (1948), 190–91; Bernhard Bischoff, "Hadoardus and the Manuscripts of Classical Authors from Corbie," in Sesto Prete, ed., *Didascaliae: Studies in Honor of Anselm M. Albareda, Prefect of the Vatican Library* (New York, 1961), 41–57. On Hadoard's use of Sallust, see Stein, "Sallust for His Readers," 98–103, who observes (at p. 100), "What matters to Hadoard, it seems, is that all of this [i.e., selected excerpts attributed to Sallust, Cicero, Macrobius, Martianus Capella, and others] is ancient wisdom containing permanent truth...the particular text as such has no status and the author has no individual being beyond his status as a source of truth."

<sup>131</sup> Ganz, *Corbie*, 100.

Augustine, supplemented by Fulgentius and other patristic writers, Hadoard fashions an argument for “the superiority of Jewish wisdom to Greek philosophy, and a history of the development of ethics and the love of God among the pagans.”<sup>132</sup> Hadoard’s survey of ancient history and philosophy is in service of this argument, and it closely echoes Augustine’s grand narrative in Book 18 of the *De civitate Dei*. For the classical collection, Hadoard carefully follows Augustine’s lead as a trusted Christian guide to pagan thought and culture, incorporating passages of Cicero and Sallust that Augustine had invoked in the *De civitate Dei*, while furthering the Augustinian project of fashioning Cicero into a suitable “source for Christian philosophy.”<sup>133</sup>

Taken together, Hadoard’s *collectanea* bifurcate the ancient past into classical/pagan and Jewish/Christian parts, both useful but the former requiring special caution and prudence. Augustine—and, in particular, his many discussions of ancient history and philosophy in *De civitate Dei*—serves as a textual bridge, or mediator, between these ostensibly compartmentalized pasts, not only because he sporadically referred to and quoted from pagan sources, but because in the *De civitate Dei*, especially Book 18, he supplied a critical historical narrative situating the relationship between these ultimately separate but, for now, intertwined strands of temporal progress. Readers did not need to fully grasp the totality of Augustine’s theological arguments across the *De civitate Dei*, nor their radical implications for the possibility of inferring any providential significance in extra-scriptural temporal events, in order to appreciate and appropriate his comparative survey of Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman history

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<sup>132</sup> Ganz, *Corbie*, 100.

<sup>133</sup> Ganz, *Corbie*, 96. Ganz provides a detailed description of the contents of the classical/Ciceronian *florilegium* at pgs. 94–97 and of the patristic/Augustinian *florilegium* at pgs. 97–101. He notes, for example, that Hadoard quotes from *De civitate Dei* 13.23 in a section of the classical *florilegium* adapted from Cicero’s translation of Plato’s *Timeaus*. Later in the same text, Hadoard extracts a quotation of Sallust from *De civitate Dei* 5.19. Ganz observes (at p. 96) that Hadoard also used extracts from Ambrose’s *De officiis* in the classical compilation, but does not refer to Ambrose by name as he does Augustine.

or his many individual historical examples. There was so much there to work with that new selections and arrangements could result in any number of different, and not necessarily unfaithful or inaccurate, presentations of Augustine's thought.

Of course, many early medieval readers did carefully, substantially engage with Augustine's more complex theological ideas.<sup>134</sup> In the *De civitate Dei*, taken as a coherent whole, Augustine's recounting of ancient history is always deployed in service of his theological and polemical aims. In many instances, Carolingian readers of this work focused somewhat less attention on Augustine's ultimate, deliberately constructed arguments (whether theological, polemical, or both) and more on the wealth of information he provided about the ancient past. This is not because they were simply unsophisticated readers of Augustine. They were making use of the *De civitate Dei*, as a kind of *historia*, for their own reasons and purposes.<sup>135</sup> To the extent that the Carolingian "renaissance" can still be understood as a great accumulation and transmission of "ancient" knowledge and learning, recast where necessary in a uniformly

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<sup>134</sup> On Carolingian intellectuals' engagement with Augustine and particular Augustinian issues, there is a substantial and growing literature. See, e.g., Sophia Mösch, *Augustine and the Art of Ruling in the Carolingian Imperial Period* (London, 2019); Matthew Gillis, *Heresy and Dissent in the Carolingian Empire: The Case of Gottschalk of Orbais* (Oxford, 2017); Jesse Keskiäho, *Dreams and Visions in the Early Middle Ages: The Reception and Use of Patristic Ideas, 400–900* (Cambridge, 2015); Close, *Uniformiser la foi pour unifier l'Empire*; Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, *Florus von Lyon als Kirchenpolitiker und Publizist: Studien zur Persönlichkeit eines karolingischen "Intellektuellen" am Beispiel der Auseinandersetzung mit Amalarius (835–838) und des Prädestinationsstreits (851–855)* (Stuttgart, 1999); James LePree, "Sources of Spirituality and the Carolingian Exegetical Tradition" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2008); Brian Matz, "Augustine, the Carolingians, and Double Predestination," in Alexander Hwang, Brian Matz, and Augustine Cassiday, eds., *Grace for Grace: The Debates after Augustine and Pelagius* (Washington, D.C., 2014), 235–270; Michael Moore, "Ancient Fathers: Christian Antiquity, Patristics, and Frankish Canon Law," *Millennium* 7 (2010), 293–342; Willemien Otten, "The Texture of Tradition: The Role of the Church Fathers in Carolingian Theology," in Irene Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists* (Leiden, 1997), I, 3–50.

<sup>135</sup> Such purposes could range from the study of biblical *historia* for examples of moral and political guidance to use of the *Aeneid* as a source to connect the ethnic genealogy of the Franks to that of the ancient Trojans. On these points, see Mayke De Jong, "The Empire as *Ecclesia*: Hrabanus Maurus and Biblical *historia* for Rulers" and Matthew Innes, "Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past," in Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), 191–226 and 227–249; Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity, and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550–850* (Cambridge, 2015); Richard Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber historiae francorum* (Oxford, 1987).

Christian light or redeployed for Christian purposes, Augustine was an ideal guide and the *De civitate Dei* was an integral part of that ambitious, multifaceted project.

Early medieval annotators of the *De civitate Dei* clearly recognized this function of Augustine and his work. Through their additions to, or interventions in, the text, they could subtly direct readers' attention to focus on particular features of Augustine's work, especially highlighting its potential utility as an authoritative reference for ancient history. In addition to guiding the manner of study among a community of present and future readers, the creation or recopying of such marginalia could also aid in producing textual compilations like Hadoard's *collectanea* by marking out passages to excerpt and re-deploy. More generally, this type of highly selective borrowing and repurposing from the *De civitate Dei* and other patristic works is a very characteristic aspect of Carolingian textual composition. Like the purposeful, laborious spoliation of the physical materials of the Roman world, the textual compilation and re-assembly of "ancient" authorities speak to the deeply past-oriented and composite nature of Carolingian culture.<sup>136</sup> Exemplifying these synthetic tendencies, the subject of my next chapter, Frechulf of Lisieux, shares with many early medieval annotators of the *De civitate Dei* a particular interest in the *De civitate Dei* as a prime source for information about the past. Frechulf forged that useful information, together with numerous other venerable sources, into a "new" history of the world.

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<sup>136</sup> For an insightful discussion of this comparison, of textual to architectural spoliation, see G. B. Townend, "Suetonius and His Influence," in Thomas A. Dorey, ed., *Latin Biography* (London, 1967), 79–111, esp. 103–104, where, prompted by a suggestion from Robert Markus (n. 44, p. 110), Townend compares Einhard's employment of Suetonian ingredients in the *Vita Karoli* to the re-use of both physical materials and stylistic motifs from the basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna in constructing the Palatine Chapel at Aachen.



## Chapter 4

### Harmonious *historiae*:

### Frechulf of Lisieux's Universal History and Its Late Antique Sources

#### Introduction

Reading the *De civitate Dei* as a quarry for information about the past – as numerous early medieval annotators of this text did – made Augustine's ideas about temporal history and its relationship to the present and future seem more readily compatible with those of well-known Christian historians like Eusebius and Orosius. Approached in this way, Augustine's work fostered the appearance of general harmony and concord among the authorities of "ancient Christianity," in this case through a unified, orthodox Christian vision of history. Carolingian efforts at harmonizing the views and writings of past authorities—evident, too, in the eighth- and ninth-century scriptural commentaries considered in chapter 2—were probably initially inspired by the perception, or assumption, of harmony already inhering in these orthodox Christian sources. Augustine's argument across the more historically oriented books of the *De civitate Dei*, reaching its culmination in Book 18, endeavours to show the ultimate superiority of scriptural history to the histories of pagan cultures that developed around but outside the Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>1</sup> This meticulously constructed argument would have been absorbed by, and seemed entirely natural and self-evidently true to, Carolingian readers who perused the *De civitate Dei* as a source for historical data. But Augustine's particular critical points in these books could have also easily been confused, or assumed to concur, with the view that human history and the

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<sup>1</sup> See my discussion of Book 18 in chapter 3, following from the important insights in Mark Vessey, "History of the Book: Augustine's *City of God* and Post-Roman Cultural Memory," in James Wetzel, ed., *Augustine's City of God: A Critical Guide* (Cambridge, 2012), 14–32.

condition of the world had markedly *improved* since the Roman Empire's conversion to Christianity. Indeed, such a triumphalist celebration of the *tempora Christiana* marks the *historia* of Augustine's pupil Orosius, despite this view being increasingly regarded with suspicion and even contempt by Augustine himself.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, understood by some early medieval readers as two authoritative, "ancient" sources of history (or information about the distant past), Augustine and Orosius's works could be made compatible and congruous—rather than philosophically opposed, as modern scholars see it. This harmonizing application of Augustine and Orosius is vividly demonstrated in the universal history written by the ninth-century bishop Frechulf of Lisieux. In his two-part *Historiae*, Frechulf weaves together numerous models of ancient and early medieval historical writing, as well as the *De civitate Dei*, from which he draws extensively yet in a selective, purposeful, and rather limited manner. Assembled from the resources of the Roman-Christian past, Frechulf's *Historiae* shows how the selective use of the *De civitate Dei* as a source for information about the ancient past could soften—or sometimes simply erase—the rougher polemical edges of

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<sup>2</sup> Despite Orosius's dedication of his *Historiae adversus paganos* to Augustine, who apparently suggested this undertaking, Orosius's views of history and the significance of worldly affairs are read by most modern historians as incompatible with, if not entirely antithetical to, Augustine's mature thought about history and the meaning of *tempora Christiana*. See, for example, Theodor E. Mommsen, "Augustine and Orosius," and "St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress: The Background of The City of God," in *idem, Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1959), 325–348 and 265–298; Robert A. Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World* (London, 1974), 141–61; Markus, *Saeculum*, esp. 157–178; James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York, 2005), 249–253. In contrast to the extensive twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship on the purportedly deep differences between Augustine and Orosius, Peter van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford, 2012), 23, contends that "master and pupil were much closer to one another than often assumed, and the difference in perspective not as radical." In Van Nuffelen's view, Orosius differed from Augustine in his understanding of the earthly Church as an ameliorating force in human history—but not on the ultimate significance of the Roman empire. The main difference between Orosius's work and the *De civitate Dei*, Van Nuffelen argues, is simply one of genre: Orosius's was first and foremost a work of history, competently composed within the limits of the classical format of rhetorical history-writing, whereas Augustine's work far transcended these generic parameters. On the close relationship between rhetoric and historiography in classical histories and their continued influence – combined with biblical exemplars – in late antique and medieval historical writing, see Matthew Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400–1500* (Manchester, 2011).

Augustine's thought, thereby allowing it to seamlessly blend in to the patchwork mosaic of Christian historiography.

Composed four centuries after the tumultuous times of Augustine and Orosius, Frechulf's widely transmitted,<sup>3</sup> skillfully interwoven synthesis de-emphasizes the providential status of the historical Roman Empire as the world's final kingdom, associating it, like Augustine, with the Babylonian type of the *civitas terrena*. At the same time, though, Frechulf also follows Orosius's connection of the *pax Augusti* with the *pax Christi* in the sense that Rome, like all of history's great kingdoms, had an important part to play within God's plan for humanity—but more so, due to the historical occurrence of the Incarnation in the time of the Roman Empire.<sup>4</sup> Frechulf's thoroughly intertextual work is emblematic of the subtle dexterity of which Carolingian history-writing was capable. It is also quite representative of the variety of ways that “ancient Christian” writings about the (still more ancient) past informed and helped determine ninth-century attitudes about the utility of studying history, or *histories*, for the edification and correction of their present society. Readers and writers of history like Frechulf used, and subtly reshaped, authoritative Christian texts like the *De civitate Dei*, Orosius's *Historiae*, and the Eusebius-Jerome *Chronicon* in ways that made sense to them, in the immediate context of their own distinctively Christian world.

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<sup>3</sup> Frechulf's work, in various forms, survives in at least 41 medieval manuscripts. On the *Historiae*'s exceptionally complex manuscript tradition, see Michael I. Allen, *Frechulfi Lexoviensis Episcopi Opera Omnia: Prolegomena Indices, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 169 (Turnhout, 2002), 55–196.

<sup>4</sup> Nikolas Staubach, “*Christiana Tempora*: Augustin und das Ende der Alten Geschichte in der Weltchronik Frechulfs von Lisieux,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995), 167–206, pioneered this reading of Frechulf's text, which had long been dismissed as an “unoriginal” and hence uninteresting patchwork history of little value, especially given that it ends well before the Carolingian era and thus cannot be used for corroborating facts of ninth-century history. Building upon (and challenging) Staubach's interpretation, Graeme Ward, “All Roads Lead to Rome? Frechulf of Liseux, Augustine, and Orosius,” *Early Medieval Europe* 22 (2014), 492–505, analyzes Frechulf's ambivalent view of the historical Roman Empire.

In weaving together carefully selected, mainly “historical” passages from the *De civitate Dei* with these works of late antique Christian historiography, Frechulf effectively silences Augustine’s forceful argument that the course of events in the temporal world can not, and should not, be read as direct evidence of God’s providential plan for mankind or the ultimate soteriological destiny of a person, group, or kingdom. Although Augustine’s work contains a veritable wealth of information about the peoples and events of the past, reading, and re-using, the *De civitate Dei* as primarily a work of *historia*, as Frechulf does, meant de-emphasizing or largely disregarding Augustine’s radical challenges to both pagan critics and over-confident Christian champions of *tempora Chrisitana*.

### **Frechulf of Lisieux, the *De civitate Dei*, and the *veritas historiae***

David Ganz compares Hadoard of Corbie’s (discussed in the last section of the preceding chapter) “use of Augustine’s history of philosophy” to that of Frechulf.<sup>5</sup> This is an intriguing comparison, for these author-compilers do indeed draw from some of the same places in the *De civitate Dei*. But their aims were quite different. Hadoard’s patristic collection is centred, for the most part, on Augustine’s theology and philosophy; his ideas about history and ancient philosophy are included to support this main aim. Frechulf sought to construct a “true” and “universal” historical narrative. The *De civitate Dei* was one among several vital sources from which he gathered bits and pieces of information about the past—and, only secondarily, more abstract Augustinian (or Orosian) ideas about the operation and meaning of history and time.

Frechulf’s two-part *Historiae* were composed between the late 820s and early 830s, during the reign of Louis the Pious, whose second wife, the empress Judith, is addressed in the

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<sup>5</sup> Ganz, *Corbie*, 100.

preface to Part II. Frechulf praises Judith, whom he suggests may “surpass the empresses of past ages” (*excellantior retro saeculis imperatricibus repperiaris*),<sup>6</sup> and urges her to teach her young son, Charles, from the examples illustrated in his *Historiae*, so that, “enlightened by the deeds of emperors, the triumphs of the saints, and the instruction of the eminent teachers, he will discover in a careful and precise manner what is to be done and what is to be avoided.”<sup>7</sup> These three types of examples listed by Frechulf suggest the variety of ways in which people in the present, especially a potential future sovereign like Charles, can learn from history. In his earlier preface to Part I, addressed to Helisachar, Louis’s archchancellor, who seems to have instructed Frechulf to undertake to this work, Frechulf refers to the two types of sources from which he has drawn: “You, too, my beloved teacher, who are revered for your insatiable love of wisdom...approached my lowliness and commanded me that by carefully perusing the books of the ancients—both [*h*]agiographi and pagan writers—I should exert myself to make a clear and concise compilation of whatever pertains to the truth of history, from the circumstances of the first man until the birth of Christ our Lord.”<sup>8</sup> Frechulf’s use of the term *hagiographi* has been translated into English as “authors of saints’ lives” or more broadly as “Christian writers under the influence of the Bible.”<sup>9</sup> But, as Graeme Ward suggests, Frechulf’s *hagiographi* might best be understood as

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<sup>6</sup> Frechulf of Lisieux, *Historiae*, in *Frechulfi lexoviensis episcopi opera omnia, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 169A, ed. Michael I. Allen (Turnhout, 2002), 435; trans. Justin Lake, *Prologues to Ancient and Medieval History: A Reader* (North York, Ont., 2013), 113.

<sup>7</sup> Frechulf of Lisieux, *Historiae*, ed. Allen, 437: “quibus imperatorum gestis sanctorumque triumphis atque doctorum magnificentium doctrinis inlustratus, cautius quid agendum sit siue subtilius inueniet quid sit uitandum”; trans. Lake, *Prologues*, 114.

<sup>8</sup> Frechulf of Lisieux, *Historiae*, ed. Allen, 17–18: “tu quidem, mi dilectissime et amore insaciabilis sophiae uenerande praeceptor...meam adgressus paruitatem iussisti ut perscrutando diligenter uolumina antiquorum, seu agiographorum siue etiam gentilium scriptorium, quaeque pertinent ad historiae ueritatem breuiter ac lucide colligere desudarem, a conditione quidem primi hominis usque ad Christi natiuitatem Domini”; trans. Lake, *Prologues*, 111.

<sup>9</sup> Lake, *Prologues*, 111, opts for the former, while Bertha Schelle, “Frechulf von Lisieux: Untersuchungen zu Leben und Werk” (Ph.D. diss., University of Munich, 1952), 41, understood this term as meaning “Christliche Autoren mit Einfluß der Bibel.”

referring to Christian historians outside scripture,<sup>10</sup> even though several of the Christian sources from which Frechulf draws (including *De civitate Dei*, as well as Jerome's commentary on Daniel, Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*, and the relatively recent commentaries on Genesis by Alcuin of York and Claudius of Turin) were not works of *historia* in any strict sense. Yet, these works all reveal something important and useful about "the truth of history," the *veritas historiae*,<sup>11</sup> which, for Frechulf, was in itself spiritually and morally instructive precisely because it was *true*. This was, in part, why the events of the past were worth recounting and studying.

The stories of earlier generations could help to teach people in the present about how civilizations and leaders of the past responded to adversity, conflict, and disaster, or how they engendered and sustained relative peace and stability in happier times. Such knowledge about the past could also serve to better illuminate some of the more unfamiliar details in scriptures, aiding the interpretations of early medieval Christians, so temporally distant from the ancient world of the Bible. In Carolingian culture, these uses of *historia* were all inextricably connected to the all-pervasive "totalizing discourse" of Christianity.<sup>12</sup> Both gaining a better understanding of scripture through the study of ancient history and drawing from the examples of the past to create

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<sup>10</sup> Graeme Ward, "The Universal Past and the Carolingian Present in the Histories of Frechulf of Lisieux" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2014), 28–36.

<sup>11</sup> On Frechulf's use of this expression, and its meaning as derived from other patristic and contemporary writings reflecting on the "truth of history," see the superb discussion in Ward, "The Universal Past and the Carolingian Present," esp. 40–69.

<sup>12</sup> On these points, see Geoffrey Koziol, "Truth and Its Consequences: Why Carolingianists Don't Speak of Myth," in Stephen O. Glosecki, ed., *Myth in Early Northwest Europe* (Tempe, Ariz., 2007), 71–103, who argues (at pp. 93–94): "[T]he Carolingians did not regard Christianity simply as the story of a god that came to earth, died, and was resurrected. They did not regard Christianity merely as a good story to illustrate what happens to the sparrow outside the hall of human time. Their Christianity was part of a total system of thought that required assimilation to an entirely new habitus. They adapted Christianity as a political theory about empire, a Ptolemaic astronomy, a Plinian natural history, an Augustinian totalizing history of the world and its varied civilizations. They saw Christianity as a history of the world and of the salvation or damnation of all peoples that had ever inhabited or would inhabit the earth."

a more perfectly Christian present and future society were spiritually beneficial endeavours compelled by soteriological imperatives.

Motivated by such urgent aims, Frechulf was nonetheless acutely aware that knowledge of some events in the past may be imperfect and hazy, and that the “truth of history” may at times be obscured by the differing accounts of historians. In acknowledgement of this thorny problem, Frechulf describes his working method to Helisachar:

I have not, as you previously advised me, included in every instance the names of the authors from whom I have gathered the material collected in these seven books, since in those cases where they were in agreement I took the meaning that I had chosen and tried to phrase it more concisely. In those cases where certain authors (whether Christian or pagan) differed from the rest, however, I decided to mention their names and reproduce their opinions as found in their books. I implore whoever desires to read this, therefore, not to impute anything that may displease him to the presumptuousness of my weakness, but instead to my obedience, and not to make rash criticisms before carefully reading the authors from whom we have excerpted.<sup>13</sup>

This passage is quite revealing. Frechulf admits that he has partly defied Helisachar’s apparent instruction to always cite his sources, because, for Frechulf, this is simply unnecessary where his sources are in agreement on a given point. Here, the *veritas historiae* is adequately clear, and Frechulf is confident enough not only to omit the names of his sources but also to paraphrase and truncate their words. Where his sources disagree, however, Frechulf explains that he will be more careful in giving their names and adhering to their words, so that he cannot be blamed for misrepresenting them or particular aspects of the past under discussion. Presumably, Frechulf is referring here to instances where his sources diverge on particular factual details, and not where

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<sup>13</sup> Frechulf of Lisieux, *Historiae*, ed. Allen, 20: “Igitur nomina auctorum ex quibus ea collegi quae in septem libris conclusi idcirco non ubique inserui ut praemonuisti, quoniam in his in quibus concordare uidebantur sensum quem elegeram defloravi et sub breuitate dictare studui. Eorum autem nomina adnotare decreui, nostrorum seu gentilium, sententiasque illorum adsumpsi ut in suis habentur libris, qui uariando a ceteris exorbitare uidentur. Obsecro itaque legere uolentem, non praesumptioni reputet meae inbecillitatis si quid in his ei displicuerit libris, sed oboediantiae, nec temere reprehendat antequam curiosius eos legat auctores ex quibus haec decerpsimus”; trans. Lake, *Prologues*, 112.

their broader ideas about history and its meaning differ. This is why, as I shall argue below, Frechulf finds little trouble in using the *De civitate Dei* as a historical source alongside Orosius's *Historiae* and other works with a discernibly triumphalist perspective on Christian history.

While Frechulf utilized many different sources, most modern studies of his work have focused primarily on his employment of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos*, especially his combination of Augustine's conceptualization of the world's Six Ages with Orosius's adaptation of the Four Kingdoms from Daniel.<sup>14</sup> As modern scholars have come to see Augustine and Orosius's respective texts as essentially incompatible in their divergent ideas about history and the past, Frechulf's use of these texts side-by-side has thus been cited as further evidence of Carolingian misunderstandings of Augustine's complex ideas.<sup>15</sup> In contrast to this perception of Frechulf's work as a typical example of Carolingian "Political Augustinianism," Nikolaus Staubach argues that Augustine's model of the Two Cities thoroughly informs and structures Frechulf's work. In this light, the *De civitate Dei* is the most important, substantial, and deeply considered source for Frechulf's vision of history.<sup>16</sup> More recently, Ward has contended that Frechulf's use of Augustine's ideas, particularly his doctrine of the Two Cities, is mostly limited to the first book of Part I of his *Historiae*. This opening book, Ward suggests, is fairly atypical and idiosyncratic in its more theological and exegetical orientation. In Part II of Frechulf's text, beginning with the Incarnation of Christ, Augustine is

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<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, the discussion of Frechulf's work in Rosamond McKitterick and Matthew Innes, "The Writing of History," in Rosamond McKitterick, ed. *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. 212.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Werner Goetz, "Zur Weltchronik des Bischofs Frechulf von Lisieux," in Ekkehard Kaufmann, ed., *Festgabe für Paul Kirn zum 70. Geburtstag, dargebracht von Freunden und Schülern* (Berlin, 1961), 93–110, who argued that, in merging Augustinian with Orosian ideas, Frechulf presented Augustine's theological conception of the Two Cities as material reality discernible in the progress of earthly time and historical events. This reading of Frechulf's work accords with modern views of "Political Augustinianism" as a pervasive force during the Carolingian era.

<sup>16</sup> Staubach, "*Christiana Tempora*," arguing specifically against Goetz's view at 172–173.



almost entirely absent.<sup>17</sup> Ward thus convincingly argues that other late antique texts, like the Chronicle of Eusebius-Jerome and Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos*—the latter being “perhaps the most popular Roman history of the Middle Ages”—were more fundamentally and consistently essential for guiding and shaping Frechulf's work.<sup>18</sup>

Frechulf's treatment of the *De civitate Dei* as something of a secondary, principally historical source is evident upon close inspection of his *Historiae*, particularly when compared with roughly contemporary annotations on the *De civitate Dei* (as discussed in the preceding chapter). Indeed, Frechulf uses many of the same passages, containing bits of interesting information about ancient history or philosophy, that were noted or briefly commented on in the annotations discussed above. As we have seen, relatively few of these annotations on Augustine's work emphasize the places therein where Augustine seems to most decisively diverge from Orosius's view of history. When the *De civitate Dei* is being used more as a source for information about the past than as a philosophical or theological critique of traditional notions of history and temporality, it is much easier to reconcile Augustine's work with Orosius's and to treat them as complementary sources.<sup>19</sup> It is thus understandable how an author

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<sup>17</sup> Ward, “The Universal Past and the Carolingian Present,” 14–16 and 143ff. At p. 15, Ward pointedly, and persuasively, observes that most of the Augustinian content in Frechulf's work “emerged not through an attempt to study the *City of God* as a book containing a specific and usable ‘philosophical model of history,’ but from a desire to understand the early history of the world, as described in Genesis. It is thus problematic to see the first book as establishing ‘the *geschichtstheologisch* foundation for the unique image of world history that Frechulf develops’ (quoting from Staubach, *Christiana Tempora*, p. 182) throughout the rest of his books. Such an approach, moreover, fails to do justice to many other texts which Frechulf exploited when composing his *Histories*. Frechulf's use of Augustine should rather be understood in relation to his other sources, rather than as the central text which shaped the whole focus and argument of his *Histories*. In order for him to have written his *Histories* along Augustinian lines, he would have had to have read the *City of God* as we do today, that is, for its own sake.”

<sup>18</sup> Ward, “The Universal Past and the Carolingian Present,” esp. 98–102. On the immense popularity of Orosius's work in the Middle Ages, see Walter Pohl, “Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rule: Historians of the Christian Empire,” in Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 19–20, who notes that at least 31 pre-900 C.E. manuscripts of the *Historiae adversus paganos* are extant, out of 249 surviving medieval manuscripts.

<sup>19</sup> On Frechulf's use of Augustine together with Orosius, see Ward, “The Universal Past and the Carolingian Present,” 144–150; and Ward, “All Roads Lead to Rome?”

like Frechulf, attempting an ambitious, synthetic narrative of “universal” history, could perceive the *De civitate Dei* and Orosius’s *Historiae adversus paganos* as largely harmonious products of “ancient Christianity.” Working from this perception, Frechulf subtly imposes a further sense of concord through his deliberate selections from these, and other, works with useful information about the past, smoothing over or else omitting passages from his late antique sources that might undermine the appearance of essential agreement.

Before moving on to Frechulf’s uses of Augustine and Orosius, we should first consider Orosius’s own use of Augustine, which he alludes to in his preface, dedicated to the Bishop of Hippo, writing:

You instructed me to write in opposition to the blustering perversity of those strangers to the city of God who are called pagans [*pagani*] because they come from the crossroads and villages [*pagi*] of rural areas, or gentiles because they are wise in the ways of the world. Because these men do not look to the future and either forget the past or know nothing of it, they charge the age in which we live of being particularly plagued with misfortunes because Christ is believed and God is worshipped, while the worship of idols dwindles. You instructed me therefore by employing all the histories and annals that could be obtained at present, to discover whatever I could in past ages about the savagery of war, the devastation of disease, the anguish of famine, the terror of earthquakes, extraordinary floods, dreadful volcanic eruptions, dire lightning strikes and hailstorms, and the misery of patricide and sin, to set these things forth concisely and in chronological order in a book. Because you were laboring to complete an eleventh book against these same pagans (the rising rays of the ten volumes having already shone over the world as soon as they arose from the watchtower of your fame in the Church), and I did not think it proper that your reverence should be bothered with such a trifling little work, and because your holy son Julian of Carthage, a servant of God, was insistent that his request in this matter should be fulfilled in a manner that would justify his confidence in me, I set to the work, and at first I bogged myself down in confusion, since it appeared to me, as I frequently pondered it, that the disasters of the present day had overflowed beyond measure. But I have since discovered that past ages were not only just as oppressive as the present days, they were actually more cruelly wretched to the degree that they were further removed from the remedy of the true faith. Through these investigations, therefore, it became clear to me that bloodthirsty death had reigned for as long as the faith that prohibited bloodshed was unknown, but that when the faith came to light, death fell silent; that death is now held in check, since life prevails; and that death has no future, since only life will reign...<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Pauli Orosius historiarum adversum paganos libri VII* (hereafter Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*), ed. Karl Zangemeister (Vienna, 1882), 3–5: “Praeceperas mihi, uti aduersus uaniloquam prauitatem eorum, qui

Orosius understands his own “trifling little work” as closely connected to Augustine’s current grand project. Both present extensive arguments *contra paganos*,<sup>21</sup> as Christian defences mounted against pagan critiques in the wake of the great troubles of the early fifth century. Initially, Orosius followed Augustine’s lead, showing in detail that miseries and calamities had *always* occurred in the world, long before the advent of “Christian times”; the general state of affairs was not better or more peaceful in ages past, as contemporary critics claimed. But then Orosius took this sound line of argument one bold step further by contending that the general condition of the world had markedly improved in the *tempora Christiana*, which goes beyond Augustine’s instruction and is seemingly contrary to his understanding of the course of temporal events and their lack of intelligible providential meaning. The problem is not in itself Orosius’s belief that the Incarnation deeply changed the world, but that evidence of this change for the

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alieni a ciuitate Dei ex locorum agrestium conpitis et pagis pagani uocantur siue gentiles quia terrena sapiunt, qui cum futura non quaerant, praeterita autem aut obliuiscantur aut nesciant, praesentia tamen tempora ueluti malis extra solitum infestatissima ob hoc solum quod creditur Christus et colitur Deus, idola autem minus coluntur, infamant: – praeceperas ergo, ut ex omnibus qui haberi ad praesens possunt historiarum atque annalium fastis, quaecumque aut bellis grauius aut corrupta morbis aut fame tristia aut terrarum motibus terribilia aut inundationibus aquarum insolita aut eruptionibus ignium metuenda aut ictibus fulminum plagisque grandinum saeua uel etiam parricidiis flagitiisque misera per transacta retro saecula repperissem, ordinato breuiter uoluminis textu explicarem. Maxime cum reuerentiam tuam perficiendo aduersum hos ipsos paganos undecimo libro insistentem – quorum iam decem orientes radii mox ut de specula ecclesiasticae claritatis elati sunt toto orbe fulserunt – leui opusculo occupari non oporteret et sanctus filius tuus, Iulianus Carthaginiensis, seruus Dei, satisfieri super hac re petitioni suae eadem fiducia qua poposcit exigeret: dedi operam et me ipsum in primis confusione pressi. Cui plerumque reputanti super modum exaestuauisse praesentium clades temporum uidebantur. Nactus sum enim praeteritos dies non solum aequae ut hos graues, uerum etiam tanto atrocius miseros quanto longius a remedio uerae religionis alienos: ut merito hac scrutatione claruerit regnasse mortem auidam sanguinis, dum ignoratur religio quae prohiberet a sanguine; ista inlucescere, illam constupuisse; illam concludi, cum ista iam praeualeat; illam penitus nullam futuram, cum haec sola regnabit...”; trans. Lake, *Prologues*, 78–79. On Orosius’s deliberate positioning of himself and his work alongside the prominent figure of Augustine, particularly in the preface to his *Historiae*, see Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, 25–44.

<sup>21</sup> G.J.P. O’Daly, *Augustine’s City of God: A Reader’s Guide* (Oxford, 1999), 307, however, notes that “*contra paganos*” was not part of the original, intended title of Augustine’s work. Its traditional addition to the title may derive from the categorical groupings of Augustine’s writings in Possidius’s *Indiculum*. This way of categorizing the *De ciuitate Dei* may not do justice to the overall complexity of the full, 22-book work, but it is nonetheless understandable given that its first 10 books are indeed structured around anti-pagan arguments of various kinds.

better is readily discernible in earthly events, including in many events outside of, or later than, the New Testament canon.

Orosius is aware that Augustine has completed the first 10 books of the *De civitate Dei*,<sup>22</sup> but the modern editor of the *Historiae adversus paganos* finds that Orosius uses only the first five books of Augustine's work, apart from an allusion to *De civitate Dei* 8.1 in *Historiae adversus paganos* 6.1, where Orosius again directly addresses Augustine, noting that he is providing some further elaboration on a topic that Augustine has covered. For the most part, though, Orosius explicitly professes that he has been cautious not to overstep his bounds by venturing into territory already well-covered by Augustine. In *Historiae adversus paganos* 3.4, for example, Orosius writes, "where your [i.e., Augustine's] reverence has already exercised your zeal for wisdom and truth, it is not proper for me to venture further. Let it suffice that I have reminded the reader and have turned his attention from any other object to your complete account."<sup>23</sup> This is further evidence, following the dedicatory letter prefacing his work, that Orosius considered his text as a kind of minor complement to Augustine's project—a modest work of dedicated *historia* to tie up any possible loose ends in Augustine's tangential discussions of the past in his far more expansive *De civitate Dei*. But much of Augustine's treatment of history, above all in Book 18 of *De civitate Dei*, was not yet available to Orosius at the time of his work's completion; indeed, he had probably died well before Augustine completed the full 22

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<sup>22</sup> On Augustine's piecemeal circulation of parts of *De civitate Dei* prior to the completion of all 22 books, see Jesse Keskiaho, "Copied Marginal Annotations and the Early History of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*," *Augustiniana* 69 (2020), 278.

<sup>23</sup> Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos*, ed. Zangemeister, 148: "Ubi nunc quidem mihi iste doloris atque increpationis locus est, sed, in quo iam reuerentia tua studium sapientiae et ueritatis exercuit, mihi super eo audere fas non est. Commonuisse me satis sit et ex qualibet intentione lectorem ad illius lectionis plenitudinem remisisse"; trans. Irving Woodworth Raymond, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans: The Apology of Paulus Orosius* (New York, 1936), 116.

books.<sup>24</sup> It is entirely possible that Augustine, writing later books of *De civitate Dei* with knowledge of Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos*, intended to correct some troubling aspects of Orosius's work—although, it must be admitted, there is no unambiguous evidence to that effect nor even that Augustine was in fact displeased with Orosius's *Historiae* for the reasons generally assumed by modern historians.<sup>25</sup>

Frechulf is able to go further than Orosius, both in terms of the textual resources available to him and his longer, more circumspect view of the “ancient” Roman past and Christian progress. Frechulf likely had complete copies of both the *Historiae adversus paganos* and the *De civitate Dei* (although he occasionally borrows paraphrases of Augustine from intermediary sources, like Claudius of Turin's Genesis commentary), in addition to numerous other useful sources. Frechulf incorporates material from half of the *De civitate Dei*'s 22 books—namely, Books 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, and 22—but he draws most heavily by far from Books 8, 15, and especially 18, books that Orosius did not use save for the lone reference to *De civitate Dei* 8.1 noted above. Frechulf often excerpts or paraphrases short passages in Augustine's work, particularly those recounting aspects of ancient history and philosophy. In weaving these together with other sources, like Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos* and the Eusebius-Jerome *Chronicon*, Frechulf typically omits or minimizes Augustine's critical comments on the events or figures he invokes. For example, Frechulf uses a brief excerpt from *De civitate Dei* 2.22, where Augustine compares the “superstitions” of the Romans to those of the Egyptians—but Frechulf

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<sup>24</sup> As Raymond, Introduction to *Seven Books* notes, “After he had finished [*Historiae adversus paganos*] in 418, Orosius disappeared from view”; indeed, nothing certain is known of his activities or life after this point. Although Gennadius, in his continuation of Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, wrote that Orosius flourished until near the end of Honorius's reign, ca. 423, modern scholars have generally concluded that Orosius probably died sooner after the completion of his *Historiae*.

<sup>25</sup> For instance, O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography*, 251 observes, “Augustine never had the gumption to disown Orosius, though a close reading of his work, especially the history in book 18 of *City of God*, reveals traces of his disappointment.”

includes only Augustine's remarks about the Egyptians, not his comparison to more recent Roman practices.<sup>26</sup> When Frechulf draws from Augustine at *De civitate Dei* 3.14, quoting from Sallust and discussing the "lust for sovereignty" (*libido dominandi*) and expansion that motivated the military conquests of the Persians under Cyrus, the Lacedemonians, and the Athenians, Frechulf leaves out Augustine's assertion that the Romans have acted with comparable ruthlessness.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Frechulf excerpts from *De civitate Dei* 8.26–27, chapters where Augustine presents a pointed contrast between the pagan attitudes toward the dead and Christian reverence for the martyrs; Frechulf does not highlight this contrast, but simply uses historical information from Augustine.<sup>28</sup> In such passages, it does not seem to be a matter of Frechulf attempting to downplay or silently gloss over the ills of Rome, but rather that his work is mainly chronological in its structure and Augustine is consulted as a useful source for describing the characteristics and events of ancient civilizations that preceded Rome.

Frechulf draws from Augustine on topics ranging from biblical history to Greek philosophy, religion, and social customs to the founding of Rome and early Roman military campaigns, but there is little that is distinctively "Augustinian" (at least from a modern perspective) in this content, as presented and arranged by Frechulf. For the most part, Frechulf, like the reader-annotators considered in my previous chapter, draws from Augustine for information about the ancient past (including biblical history), its civilizations, and intellectual culture. Indeed, several of the passages or chapters that Frechulf draws from for information about the ancient past are exactly the same passages marked with brief notes or *nota* symbols in

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<sup>26</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* II.4.18, ed. Allen, 647. According to Allen's edition, this is the only detectable use of *De civitate Dei* in Part II of Frechulf's *Historiae*. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 2.22, ed. Dombart, vol. I, 75: "Unde paene in superstitionem Aegyptiorum bestias avesque colentium Roma deciderat, cum anseri sollemnia celebrant."

<sup>27</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.1.10, ed. Allen, 39; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 3.14, ed. Dombart, vol. I, 99–102.

<sup>28</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.2.7, ed. Allen, 100; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 8.26–27, ed. Dombart, vol. I, 321–325.

Carolingian manuscripts containing the *De civitate Dei*. For instance, Frechulf excerpts from Augustine's remarks on—among many other historical topics—the Assyrian King Ninus,<sup>29</sup> marital customs among the world's earliest peoples,<sup>30</sup> the “offices of Mercury and Mars,”<sup>31</sup> Plato and pre-Socratic philosophy,<sup>32</sup> Cain's construction of the first city,<sup>33</sup> the generations subsequent to Noah,<sup>34</sup> the ancient diversity of languages and the founding of Babylon,<sup>35</sup> and the founding of the city of Rome<sup>36</sup>—passages or chapters marked with content-describing notes in Carolingian-era manuscripts. Book 18 of the *De civitate Dei*—which (to my knowledge) alone among the 22 books warranted a unique list of chapter descriptions in several of the manuscripts discussed above, and was often heavily annotated—is the most frequently used book of the *De civitate Dei* in Frechulf's work. There are 43 passages (of varying lengths) from Book 18 excerpted in Frechulf's *Historiae*; many of these correspond closely to passages that received annotations in the manuscripts discussed in chapter 3, particularly in Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm. 6267, Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Clm. 3831, and Vatican City Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 200. Frechulf drew extensively yet selectively from Augustine's long survey of

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<sup>29</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* II.2.2, ed. Allen, 92–93; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 4.6, ed. Dombart, vol. I, 134–135. This chapter is marked with a note in the series of annotations edited in Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 471 (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 69v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 60r).

<sup>30</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.1.37, ed. Allen, 68–70; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.16, ed. Dombart, vol. II, 78–81. This chapter is marked with a note in Rome BNC Sess. 70, f. 154r.

<sup>31</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.2.7, ed. Allen, 100–101; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 7.14, ed. Dombart, vol. I, 256–257. This chapter is marked with a note in the series of annotations edited in Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 473 (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 130v).

<sup>32</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.4.14, ed. Allen, 230–232; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 8.2–4, ed. Dombart, vol. I, 283–288. These chapters are marked with notes in the series of annotations edited in Gorman, “Oldest Annotations,” 474 (Cologne DB cod. 75, f. 145v / Cambrai BM 350, f. 127v) and Rome BNC Sess. 74, ff. 3v–4r.

<sup>33</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.1.8, ed. Allen, 100–101; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.7, ed. Dombart, vol. II, 57–61. Notes on Augustine's discussion of Cain and Abel in Book 15 appear frequently in Rome BNC Sess. 70, fols. 133v, 134r, 137v, 139r, 139v, 140r, 140v, 156v.

<sup>34</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.1.28, ed. Allen, 59–60; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 16.3, ed. Dombart, vol. II, 108–11. This chapter is marked with a note in Rome BNC Sess. 70, f. 175v.

<sup>35</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.2.4, ed. Allen, 95; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 16.4, ed. Dombart, vol. II, 111–13. This chapter is marked with a note in Rome BNC Sess. 70, f. 176v.

<sup>36</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.1.8, ed. Allen, 33–34; cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 15.5, 7, ed. Dombart, vol. II, 54–55, 57–61. These two chapters from *De civitate Dei* Book 15 are marked with a note in Rome Sess. 70, ff. 137v–140v.

classical/pagan and Jewish/Christian history in order to strengthen and broaden his own “universal” narrative of the ancient past, to fill in gaps in that narrative with additional details about ancient cultures and figures, and to access prominent Roman authors like Varro, Sallust, and Vergil through a trusted Christian guide to pagan antiquity.

Largely absent from Frechulf’s *Historiae* are the well-delineated parallels and pointed contrasts made by Augustine between the courses of secular history and sacred-scriptural history. While Frechulf may well have understood and meant to apply (as Staubach argues) Augustine’s model of the Two Cities, he does not consistently take up or employ the great Church Father’s firm conviction that the Cities have separate courses that are mostly indistinguishable to human perception and interpretation in this *corpus permixtum*, or only ever distinguishable to the extent that the sacred prophetic history recounted in scripture may be carefully isolated from the rest of the past. Instead, for Frechulf all history is recounted as instructive *res gestae*, as he suggested in his preface addressed to Judith, emphasizing the didactic value of his work for young Charles. The past abounds with positive examples worthy of emulation and negative examples of actions or behaviours that one should avoid. In Frechulf’s work, Augustine is a solid source more for valuable historical information than for how to unpack temporal history’s deeper significance—or perhaps, its ultimate insignificance and providential unintelligibility. Where Augustine surveys sacred and secular histories together in Book 18 of the *De civitate Dei*, he suggests, at once, both their intertwined trajectories within our limited understanding of God’s temporal plan and the ultimate superiority and higher significance of the prophetic history of scripture. Such complex nuance is lacking in Frechulf, as it is in Orosius and nearly every other Latin work of Christian history between Augustine and the Carolingians.



Is the *Historiae adversus paganos* a more vital and intrinsic source than the *De civitate Dei* for Frechulf's *Historiae*? Ward has argued convincingly that, on close inspection, Orosius's influence in Frechulf's work is ultimately more important and consistent than that of the *De civitate Dei*, particularly given that Augustine is almost entirely absent from the second part of Frechulf's *Historiae* while Orosius is used frequently throughout both parts.<sup>37</sup> However, there are some telling limits, as well, in Frechulf's appropriation of Orosius, especially with regard to Orosius's sporadic remarks on "[the] Christian times." When Orosius refers to the *tempora Christiana*, defending the "Christian times" against pagan slander and/or arguing for the special significance of the times since Rome embraced Christianity, Frechulf seems to deliberately omit these passages, either leaving out whole chapters from Orosius or, in some cases, stopping just short of Orosius's remarks about *tempora Christiana*. For instance, Frechulf draws from 1.5 and 1.7–15 of Orosius's *Historiae adversus paganos*, but conspicuously skips over 1.6, where Orosius, in countering those who "spit as much as they can upon Christ" and "murmur now and then about Christian times," compares Rome to Sodom (though he concludes that such relatively rare instances of present-day pagan slandering are not a very serious problem given that these critics of *tempora Christiana* represent only a small minority of the entire Roman populace).<sup>38</sup> Later Orosius recounts wicked abuses in Sicily under Phalaris of Agrigentum and in Latium under Aremulus, and then asserts:

Let the Latins and Sicilians now choose whether they would prefer to have lived in the days of Aremulus and Phalaris or in these Christian times. In the former times these

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<sup>37</sup> Ward, "The Universal Past and the Carolingian Present," 138–159; and Ward, "All Roads Lead to Rome?"

<sup>38</sup> Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 1.6, ed. Zangemeister, 47: "Itaque nunc si placet hi, qui in Christum, quem nos iudicem saeculorum ostendimus, quantum in ipsis est sputa coniciunt, inter Sodomam et Romam discernant causas et conferant poenas; quae a me uel maxime ob hoc retractandae non sunt, quia omnibus notae sunt. Et tamen quam libenter sententias eorum acciperem, si illi fideliter ita ut sentiunt faterentur. Quamquam quia de temporibus Christianis rari et hoc in angulis murmurent, non usque adeo moleste accipiendum putem, cum totius populi Romani consona uoce parique iudicio sensus ac sermo sit cognitus"; trans. Raymond, *Seven Books*, 51–52.

tyrants tortured to death innocent people; in the latter, the Roman emperors, who were among the first to be converted to the Christian religion, did not demand punishment even for the injuries committed by the tyrants themselves, after their overthrow had brought good to the Republic.<sup>39</sup>

Frechulf incorporates Orosius's recounting of Sicily's history, but leaves out his provocative challenge to contemporary critics of "these Christian times."<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Frechulf omits Orosius 2.3 ("those who murmur—foolishly, to be sure—about our Christian times may know that one God has directed the course of history, in the beginning for the Babylonians and in the end for the Romans"<sup>41</sup>), while using parts of 2.2 and 2.4–19. In exactly the same fashion, Frechulf dexterously, perhaps deliberately, works around all of Orosius's subsequent references to *tempora Christiana* (nine such passages in Books 3–7 of the *Historiae adversus paganos*), wherein Orosius defends these times against pagan critiques and later argues for the general improvement of the world "under Christian rulers and in Christian times" (*regibus et temporibus Christianis*).<sup>42</sup> In these instances, Orosius's arguments *contra paganos* may have simply seemed superfluous for Frechulf's purposes, doing nothing to strengthen the basic facts of Frechulf's history and unnecessary to emphasize in a time when even the faintest echoes of such anti-Christian slander had long ago gone silent. Frechulf's use of Orosius, at least in this respect, is quite comparable to his use of the *De civitate Dei*, liberally selecting credible-seeming information about the past but often leaving aside the forceful arguments *contra paganos* put

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<sup>39</sup> Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 1.20, ed. Zangemeister, 74: "Eligant nunc, si uidetur, Latini et Siculi, utrum in diebus Aremluli et Phalaridis esse maluissent innocentum uitas poenis extorquentium, an his temporibus Christianis, cum imperatores Romani, ipsa in primis religione compositi, post comminutas reipublicae bono tyrannides ne ipsorum quidem iniurias exigunt tyrannorum"; trans. Raymond, *Seven Books*, 68.

<sup>40</sup> Frechulf, *Historiae* I.3.11, ed. Allen, 173.

<sup>41</sup> Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 2.3, ed. Zangemeister, 86–87: "qui insipienter utique de temporibus Christianis murmurant, unum Deum disposuisse tempora et in principio Babylonis et in fine Romanis"; slightly adapted from trans. Raymond, *Seven Books*, 75.

<sup>42</sup> Orosius, *Historiae adversus paganos* 7.33, ed. Zangemeister, 520; trans. Raymond, *Seven Books*, 374.

forth by these authors.<sup>43</sup> If Frechulf made these works of Augustine and Orosius seem more easily compatible and harmonious, this result was not achieved through significantly altering the text of either late antique writer, nor by providing extensive interpretation of his own in order to reconcile the disagreements between Augustine and Orosius. Rather, Frechulf achieves this synthesis through careful selection and omission, almost certainly working from the assumption that the *De civitate Dei* and *Historiae adversus paganos* were already essentially concordant where it mattered most, even if they diverged on certain details. By stripping these *apologiae* of most of their polemical content,<sup>44</sup> tacitly omitting their points in support of such arguments, Frechulf is able to unproblematically employ both texts more purely as *historiae*—at once, solid building blocks and corroborating authorities for his own “new” history of the world.

The apologetic arguments against pagan critics, and the larger aims underlying these arguments, in the *De civitate Dei* and *Historiae adversus paganos* are exactly where serious differences in the perspectives of their respective authors are most consequential. Augustine’s remarks countering pagan criticisms of *tempora Christiana* were meant to suggest that there had been plenty of terrible times in the past, long before the empire’s conversion to Christianity; recounting these many disasters in fuller detail was apparently the task delegated to Orosius. But Augustine’s ultimate point was that temporal events cannot, and should not, be simplistically conflated with God’s providential order nor read as clear signs of God’s favour or displeasure:

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<sup>43</sup> Similarly, in a new study Robert Evans and Rosamond McKitterick, “A Carolingian Epitome of Orosius from Tours: Leiden VLQ 20,” in Rutger Kramer, Helmut Reimitz, and Graeme Ward, eds., *Historiography and Identity III: Carolingian Approaches* (Turnhout, 2021), 123–153, argue that a mid-ninth-century epitome of the *Historiae adversus paganos* omits most of Orosius’s polemical argumentation against and/or directed at pagans, “which were irrelevant for an entirely Christian audience” while emphasizing God’s providential order in history as evidenced through “details of God’s mercies and judgements in individual episodes” in extra-scriptural history (p. 147).

<sup>44</sup> On the *De civitate Dei*’s place in the tradition of Christian apologetic writings, see O’Daly, *Augustine’s City of God*, 42–55. On the apologetic function of Orosius’s history and his understanding of Augustine’s larger project, see Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, esp. 31–44.

there were ostensibly happy and triumphant times under some wicked pagan emperors as well as difficult, perilous periods under estimable Christian rulers. In Orosius's work, by contrast, the times of the past were largely miserable, but they have improved steadily and markedly under the rule of Christian Roman emperors, due mainly to the occurrence of the Incarnation during Augustus's reign. However, the Roman Empire itself, as a political entity, is less important for Orosius than it had been for Eusebius. In providential terms, Rome is important precisely because it was the "kingdom" under which Christ entered, and radically changed, the world.<sup>45</sup>

Frechulf maintains Orosius's focus on the Incarnation as *the* key moment in all of history—it splits history in two, symbolized in the division between the two Parts of Frechulf's work—but he places far less emphasis on the fact that Jesus's Incarnation, life and death, and the subsequent development of the Church occurred under the rule of the (original) Roman Empire. Frechulf, writing long after Orosius, in the very different context of a new, or restored, "Roman" empire, apparently saw no need to foreground Rome in his universal narrative; tellingly, his history concludes not with the original empire's dissolution nor its rebirth under Charlemagne, but just after the death of Gregory the Great, the last of the Western Church's greatest Fathers, and the Eastern Church's recognition of the Roman pontificate's supremacy.<sup>46</sup> Christ and the universal, orthodox Church are the true focus of the second Part of Frechulf's *Historiae*, emerging from the great mass of historical detail in Part I—that is, *ecclesia*, not classical Roman

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<sup>45</sup> On this point, see Ward, "All Roads Lead to Rome?"

<sup>46</sup> Ward, "The Universal Past and the Carolingian Present," 171; and also, see now Graeme Ward, "The Sense of an Ending in the *Histories* of Frechulf of Lisieux," in Rutger Kramer, Helmut Reimitz, and Graeme Ward, eds., *Historiography and Identity III: Carolingian Approaches* (Turnhout, 2021), 291–315. An early draft of this chapter was generously shared with me by the author. Also, in "Exegesis, Empire and Eschatology: Reading Orosius' *Histories against the Pagans* in the Carolingian World," in Veronika Wieser, Vincent Eltschinger, and Johann Heiss, eds., *Cultures of Eschatology*, vol. 2: *Time, Death and Afterlife in Medieval Christian, Islamic and Buddhist Communities* (Berlin, 2020), 674–697, Ward considers three Carolingian commentaries on Matthew that draw from Orosius's work, and argues that their authors (Hrabanus Maurus, Paschasius Radbertus, and Christian of Stavelot) drew from the *Historiae adversus paganos* mainly to trace the early period of the Church's history.

*imperium*.<sup>47</sup> In the Carolingian world, however, these two concepts, *ecclesia* and *imperium*, were often intertwined in their relation to the special, providential identity of the expansive Carolingian polity and its peoples.<sup>48</sup> Neatly distinguishing “religion” from “history” or “politics” in the early Middle Ages is an exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, task precisely because Christianity in its totalizing Carolingian form both superseded and contained within itself *historia* and *imperium*, or *res publica*.<sup>49</sup> Writing during the reign of Louis the Pious, Frechulf may reflect the increasing normalization of these blurred lines between aspects of the “sacred” and the “secular,” though he does not explicitly equate the progress of the celestial Church with the earthly Christian empire, whether Roman, Frankish, or both at once. Frechulf meant his work to serve as a guide for the thoughts and actions of future readers, including powerful lay leaders like Charles the Bald (as noted in his dedicatory letter to the empress Judith at the start of Part II); it is certainly not inaccurate to describe Frechulf’s work as “an authorized history textbook commissioned by the reforming circle centred on the court.”<sup>50</sup> Yet, at the same time, it should be

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<sup>47</sup> In his special emphasis on the Church as a positive driver (via God’s providential will) of temporal history, Frechulf may be following this thread in Orosius’s *Historiae*. Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, esp. 187–191, argues that it was the ascendant status of the Church, not the Christian Roman empire, to which Orosius ascribed increased peace and happiness in the *tempora Christiana*. Though persuasive, Van Nuffelen’s reading of Orosius’s *Historiae* in this way is “diametrically opposed” (p. 24) to the consensus view of Orosius as largely following Eusebius in celebrating the fruits of the Christian empire and its greatest emperors. See, e.g., Erik Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (Leipzig, 1935); Mommsen, “Augustine and Orosius” and “St. Augustine and the Christian Idea of Progress”; Henri-Irénée Marrou, “Saint Augustin, Orose et l’augustinisme historique,” in *La storiografia altomedievale. Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo* 17 (Spoleto, 1970), 59–87; Markus, *Christianity in the Roman World*.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Mayke de Jong, “*Ecclesia* and the Early Medieval Polity,” in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz, eds., *Staat in frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), 119: “[F]rom the late eighth century onwards...the notion of *ecclesia*, including all its connotations of the eventual salvation of God’s people, was harnessed to the identity of the Carolingian polity, with the ruler’s responsibility for the salvation of its people as its defining factor. Thus, the Carolingian polity became a *corpus Christi*...[A]fter 840 the notion of a universal Frankish world lingered, precisely in the sense of an *ecclesia* that encompassed a Frankish *populus Christianus* as well as the peoples that had been incorporated into this polity.” However, on the rhetorical construction of the Franks as a special, divinely elected people, a new Israel as it were, see now Gerda Heydemann, “The People of God and the Law: Biblical Models in Carolingian Legislation,” *Speculum* 95 (2020), 89–131, who argues that this connection and its discursive function were not at all consistent across the Carolingian period.

<sup>49</sup> This complex point is clearly and cogently articulated in Mayke de Jong and Rosamond McKitterick, Conclusion to *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, esp. 283–284.

<sup>50</sup> McKitterick and Innes, “The Writing of History,” 212.

noted that the orientation of Frechulf's history is ultimately, and thoroughly, ecclesiastical and specifically episcopal. If Rome reigns supreme, it is in the form of the Roman bishops as the heirs of Saint Peter, faithfully presiding over the whole community of Christians, navigating the universal *ecclesia* toward salvation, and preserving the orthodox tradition of ancient Christianity from the apostles up to the Fathers.

Frechulf, like Orosius, meant to underscore the special quality of the times since the Incarnation (which Orosius stresses had coincided with the reign of Augustus), though not the special quality of the period since the Roman empire's conversion to Christianity or even more specifically the Theodosian era, which is most often what Orosius is referring to when he writes of the *tempora Christiana*. These passages in Orosius are directly connected to his polemical arguments *contra paganos*. Directed toward a highly learned, traditional pagan elite that, at least allegedly, still maintained some influence in Orosius's period, such arguments were of very little pertinence or direct use for Frechulf's time and place. Frechulf's silent omission of no longer pertinent arguments against Greco-Roman pagan critics of Christianity may also account for his selections from the *De civitate Dei*, but what is consequently lost in bypassing such polemical points from Augustine's work is his major, overarching argument about the ultimate unintelligibility of temporal events within the *saeculum*, and the great difficulty, outside the prophetic history of scripture, of distinguishing the meaningful, providential history of the *civitas Dei* from the indifferent historical trajectory of *civitas terrena*.

In Frechulf's work, Augustine is a valuable corroborating source for ancient history, an authoritative voice in the mix but not a particularly distinctive one. History itself, the order and course of events in the past, is meaningful and significant for Frechulf, more so than it was in

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Augustine's view. Frechulf's conception of the *veritas historiae* is rooted in the strong association and connection of tradition and authority with consensus or general agreement among the solid, "ancient" sources from which he draws. Frechulf similarly endeavours to locate harmony in, or else impose it on, his sources wherever possible, weaving them together into a smoother, more congruous and coherent unity. To this end, it is important to note that much of what Frechulf takes from the *De civitate Dei* (or sometimes secondhand, from Claudius of Turin or others), and especially from Book 18, had already been culled by Augustine from the works of ancient or roughly contemporary writers, and above all from the *Chronicon* of Eusebius as translated into Latin, expanded, and continued by Jerome.<sup>51</sup> The Augustine of Frechulf's *Historiae* is thus an "authority among authorities,"<sup>52</sup> not so much a model for a "theology of history" but rather a useful guide and trusted Christian source for ancient history and philosophy, allowing Frechulf to tap into the likes of Cicero, Sallust, Varro, the pre-Socratics, Socrates, and Plato, and to recount key episodes in ancient history, prior to the Incarnation. This way of employing the *De civitate Dei* is, again, quite consistent with the early medieval, or specifically Carolingian, annotations discussed in chapter 3, which evince particular engagement or interest in passages where Augustine is discussing topics of ancient history or philosophy.

### **Conclusion: Everything is Uncertain?**

Within a culture where many aspects of Augustine's theology and doctrine had been deeply internalized, and where the ultimate *veritas* of the Christian faith was accepted as a given, no longer necessitating sophisticated arguments *contra paganos*, the *De civitate Dei* could serve,

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<sup>51</sup> Vessey, "History of the Book."

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Josh Timmermann, "An Authority among Authorities: Knowledge and Use of Augustine in the Wider Carolingian World," *Early Medieval Europe* 28 (2020), 532–559.

among other purposes, as a reference for the study of history and the history of pre-Christian philosophy. Augustine's unimpeachable patristic status served, at the same time, to sanction the study of these topics and figures of the pre-Christian past, regardless of whether or not his provocative arguments for the relative insignificance of historical events outside scripture were explicitly noted, understood, utilized, or appropriated by his Carolingian readers. Augustine, in this light, was thus more a source for historical information than for "historical thought." Yet, even if many Carolingian-era readers of the *De civitate Dei* lacked a critical Augustinian "historical consciousness," annotations on the *De civitate Dei* and Frechulf's use of it strongly suggest that intellectuals in this period had a voracious interest in history and the past. Improving knowledge of the world's past was fundamentally important to Carolingian intellectuals' ultimate, widely shared aim of "reforming" (or "correcting") their world, or many aspects of it, to a superior (unspecifically) "ancient" state of refinement and orthodoxy. Furthermore, as in Walafrid Strabo's *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum* (which will be examined in detail in chapter 6), they possessed a certain sensitivity to differences between the past and the present, and were eager for information about long-vanished ancient worlds bearing little resemblance to their own. Through texts like Frechulf's universal history, largely stripped of Augustinian "agnosticism" regarding the intelligibility of God's providential plan in earthly time, Carolingian readers could better understand the broader, earthly context for the sacred *historia* of scripture and the events of the Church's history, picking up where the biblical narratives leave off. While Frechulf and many early medieval reader-annotators of the *De civitate Dei* no longer found much use for Augustine's arguments against learned pagans, they were interested in learning whatever they could about the state of affairs in the time of this great Father, and about the broader conditions



of the world in more distant ages of antiquity, thus gaining a fuller picture of the past than they could acquire from reading scripture alone. This last great age of Christian, Roman *imperium*, which facilitated the flowering of Latin patristic literature, was of special importance as the Carolingians sought to revive and recreate the cultural conditions of this privileged period of Christian erudition and leadership.

Perhaps part of the reason why Frechulf decided to end his work just after Gregory the Great is that this was when, from Frechulf's perspective, the past ceased to be very markedly different from his present age. As Ward persuasively argues, Frechulf's primary focus, particularly in Part II of his *Historiae*, was "the story of the Western Church as contained within the writings of its authoritative historians, its struggle against a diabolic adversary, its growth in the world, and the famous authors, whose writings shaped its identity." Ward suggests that Frechulf, typical of Carolingian writers, extends the "patristic period" from the time of Augustine up to that of Gregory the Great.<sup>53</sup> After Gregory, this special period of privileged Christian literary activity may have ended, but the dominant status and all-pervasiveness of Christianity and the Church in the world could henceforth be safely assumed. Maybe, like Robert Markus,<sup>54</sup> Frechulf even perceived in Gregory's passing something like the "end of ancient Christianity," and the beginning of a Christian culture—hugely impacted by Gregory and the earlier Fathers—that was henceforth more familiar and recognizable.

The terminus for Frechulf's *Historiae* makes for a particularly stark, and perhaps revealing, contrast with the conclusion of Jerome's Latin translation/continuation of Eusebius's *Chronicon*. This Chronicle, one of Frechulf's most crucial sources, ended with the defeat of the

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<sup>53</sup> Ward, "Sense of an Ending," 309.

<sup>54</sup> Robert A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990).

eastern Roman emperor Valens at Adrianople.<sup>55</sup> As Jerome stressed in the preface to that work, “I have left the remaining period under Gratian and Theodosius for a more wide-ranging historical treatment, not because I was afraid to write freely and truthfully about those who were still living (for the fear of God drives out the fear of men) but because, with barbarians still running riot in our land, everything is uncertain.”<sup>56</sup> Frechulf ends his history much further back from his own period than Jerome had done, seemingly because what had occurred since Gregory’s time was, from the vantage-point of the Carolingian empire *ca.* 830, reasonably certain, well-understood, and seemingly secure. As Frechulf observes in his concluding remarks, the Frankish and Lombard kingdoms had been established in Gaul and northern Italy, and the Roman see was rightfully recognized as reigning supreme over the universal Church. This supreme status derived not only from the notion of Petrine priority, ostensibly harkening back to the special dispensation of Christ himself, but also from the great achievements of Gregory and “Pope Boniface” (likely a conflation of the early seventh-century Boniface III and Boniface IV<sup>57</sup>), who had, purportedly, secured the perpetual rule of the Roman see over the whole of the *ecclesia*. Events occurring since that time could thus be seen as continuing on directly from this established ecclesiastical and political order; and such subsequent events could be assumed to be generally, sufficiently well-known among Frechulf’s learned contemporaries. The less recognizable world before Frechulf’s terminus point was also potentially knowable, but only through careful, intertextual study of trusted “ancient” Christian writers like Eusebius, Jerome,

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<sup>55</sup> On Jerome’s terminus point, see Vessey, “Reinventing History,” esp. 285–289.

<sup>56</sup> Jerome, *Praefatio in Eusebii Caesariensis Chronicon*, in *Hieronimi Chronicon*, ed. Rudolf Helm (Berlin, 1956), 7: “Quo fine contentus reliquum temporis gratiani et theodosii latioris historiae stilo reseruauui, non quo de uiuentibus timuerim libere et uere scribere timor enim dei hominum timorem expellit, sed quoniam dibacchantibus adhuc in terra nostra barbaris incerta sunt omnia”; trans. Lake, *Prologues*, 68.

<sup>57</sup> On this point, see Staubach, “*Christiana Tempora*,” 168–169, 176.

Orosius, and Augustine, and the more distantly ancient sources from which these writers had drawn for their own (re)presentations of the past.

Even though Augustine, unlike Eusebius, Jerome, and Orosius, did not intentionally compose (or translate/continue) a work of dedicated history per se, the ubiquitous authority ascribed to him helps to explain the use of *De civitate Dei* as a reliable source for historical knowledge, which, in turn, served to further fortify Augustine's authority across the broad spectrum of Carolingian discourses. Like Jerome, Augustine was, by the Carolingian era, recognized as a supremely trustworthy, orthodox source; Eusebius and Orosius benefitted much from their known (textual) connections to these two major Latin Fathers. Although these fourth- and fifth-century writers each had significantly different perspectives on the natures of history and time and the providential status of earthly events and political regimes, it was nonetheless possible to read, and redeploy parts of, their works as compatible and congruous records of past deeds and developments.

From Frechulf's vantage point, these and other roughly contemporary Christian writers were all exemplars of a privileged ancient Christian world broadly positioned between the Incarnation and his narrative's end-point around Gregory the Great's death. Jerome's translation and continuation of Eusebius's *Chronicon*, to an extent, united the perspectives of the Greek author and Latin translator-continuator. Consequently, a sense of general harmony between Eusebius and Jerome was hardwired into the latter's Latin Chronicle—the form in which most Carolingian readers encountered this (originally Eusebian) work. For Frechulf, as earlier for Augustine and Orosius, this was an especially valuable and coherent source, from which he drew extensively for his own history of the world's epochs and great civilizations. If the "Eusebius-Jerome Chronicle" (as the Latin text is often termed by modern scholars) was already, inherently

a kind of merger between two “ancient Christian” authorities, the merging of Augustinian and Orosian perspectives was more directly the result of Frechulf’s manner of reading and repurposing the *De civitate Dei* and *Historiae adversus paganos*, erasing or glossing over the serious tensions between these authors’ respective views regarding history and Rome. Both texts were approached as ancient and authoritative Christian *historiae*, abounding with solid information about the past, not as polemical *apologiae*. The embattled “*tempora Christiana*” of the late fourth and early fifth centuries, the immediate discursive context of the *De civitate Dei* and *Historiae adversus paganos*, as well as much of Jerome’s later work, had long since passed by the time that Frechulf composed his *Historiae*. From the long, “universal,” view of Frechulf, this embattled period was but one moment—albeit an exceptional one for the Christian learning and leadership it had engendered—within the much longer history of the Christian times. These times began not with Constantine or Theodosius, but with the Incarnation—itself providentially foreshadowed across all preceding ages—and now continued on from the era of the Church Fathers, ending with Gregory the Great, the rightful heir of both the apostles (particularly, of course, Saint Peter) and the earlier Fathers. Christ’s immanent, material presence, which had radically changed the course of the world, endured in the spiritual form of the universal *ecclesia*, the true and ultimate subject of Frechulf’s universal *historia*.

### PART III OTHER TIMES, OTHER TEMPORALITIES

While the pair of chapters that make up Parts I and II, and again Part IV, are very clearly, closely connected to one another, the two chapters in Part III are less obviously joined. The main thread uniting chapters 5 and 6 is a Carolingian writer, Walafrid Strabo. Both chapters also focus closely on ideas about difference, distance, and diversity, within the Carolingian present and across time and space. Chapters 5 and 6 are particularly concerned with the role of genre and its impact on how the relationship of past to present is conceptualized and represented in Carolingian texts. Carolingian writers and reformers always held a variety of (sometimes competing or conflicting) ideas about the past and about their own world and how best to improve it. Yet, a single author, Walafrid, who (like numerous other Carolingian writers) composed texts in multiple genres, could also express very different visions of the past working within different generic parametres.

Considered together, Walafrid's poems *De imagine Tetrici* and *Visio Wettini* and his prose treatise on the liturgy (a matter of fundamental importance in the Carolingian *reformatio*), *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, serve to illustrate the important function of genre and the conventions, expectations, and possibilities of form in giving shape to representations of the past and its "proximity" to, or "distance" from, the present. Walafrid's nuanced, "historicist" treatment of Christian tradition and the gradual development of the liturgy is positioned in contrast not only to Walafrid's own earlier poems, but also to another, markedly different treatise on the liturgy, Amalarius of Metz's *Liber officialis*, discussed in chapter 6. In Walafrid's *De imagine Tetrici* and verse *Visio Wettini*, considered alongside other Carolingian poems in chapter 5, prominent figures, including sinful kings and

beatific saints from widely ranging eras of the past, come to life, resurrected by Walafrid's skillful pen and contained within shared textual spaces. Extracted from their specific, contingent historical contexts, Walafrid's casts of characters are deployed in service of "timeless" moral and spiritual critiques—including of recent or contemporary rulers, their values and vices.

Yet, what Walafrid accomplishes through the formal possibilities of poetry may also be applied more generally to Carolingian intellectual culture and (inter)textuality; that is, the *bringing together* of figures, names, words, and ideas from very different eras and textual settings within Carolingian texts or compilations of texts – literally compressed between the covers of a single codex – necessarily involved, or effected, a *merging together* of different layers, or distinctive strata, of the past. The presence of biblical prophets, apostles, sainted martyrs, late antique Church Fathers, and early medieval Christian writers and leaders within the shared spaces of texts and codices served to naturalize, and to reify, the impression of a harmonious, continuous "ancient Christian" "tradition."

## Chapter 5

### ‘Only Letters in Books Bring the Past to Life’: The Function of Genre and the Presence of the Past in Carolingian Poetry

#### Introduction: authors and genres

At some point in the mid-820s, Walafrid Strabo re-fashioned into verse form Heito’s *Visio Wettini*, a prose vision narrative recounting a near-death tour of the afterlife as told by the recently deceased monk Wetti. Wetti’s vision takes place in an afterlife ungoverned by normal structures of linear time and history, a generic conceit deployed to strange and vivid effect in Walafrid’s poem.<sup>1</sup> A few years later, Walafrid himself devised a comparably disorienting and unpredictable realm of temporal ambiguity in his original poem *De imagine Tetrici*. In this fascinating work, a statue conspicuously placed near the Carolingian palace at Aachen representing the Ostrogothic king Theoderic—an Arian who ordered the execution of the great Christian philosopher Boethius—suddenly comes to life, threatening the order of the Carolingian *imperium Christianum*.

Jacques Le Goff’s passing observation that most early medieval representations of the afterlife are “rather flat” may be more significant and far-reaching than Le Goff intended.<sup>2</sup> It is specifically the temporal “flatness” of Walafrid’s representations of the past and present that is most striking and distinctive. This “flattening” effect is also, arguably, representative of a certain kind of early medieval understanding of time and the past, one that eschews “historical,” progressive linearity. While Carolingian intellectuals—including Walafrid himself—were not incapable of recognizing gradual and contingent changes across preceding ages, this more

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<sup>1</sup> On conceptions of the afterlife in the *Visio Wettini* and in Carolingian texts more generally, see now Richard Matthew Pollard, “A Morbid Efflorescence: Envisaging the Afterlife in the Carolingian Period,” in *idem*, ed., *Imagining the Medieval Afterlife* (Cambridge, 2020), 40–61.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago, 1984), 96.

“historical” view of the past always coexisted with other ways of apprehending and representing the past and its relation to the present<sup>3</sup>—ways that could be more directly useful for the purposes of moral or spiritual critique. To this end, Walafrid deliberately and artfully flattens layers of time and unmoors time-bound historical actors, so as to allow (positive and negative) exemplars from the past to speak more directly to the present age.<sup>4</sup> Following from this textual strategy, the contested space of the future is also always present, if only implicitly; it is Walafrid’s discernible hope that a future time building from, and “correcting,” all the preceding ages might lead finally to a flowering of true Christian orthodoxy and powerful yet pious rulership.<sup>5</sup>

The rhetorical construction of ostensible proximity to near and distant pasts, achieved by the apparent “flatness” of these two poems, stands in contrast to Walafrid’s later *Libellus de*

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<sup>3</sup> Regarding the variety of (often overlapping) medieval temporal perspectives, see, e.g., Gabrielle Spiegel, “Memory and Time: Liturgical Time and Historical Time,” *History and Theory* 41 (2002), 149–162 and “Structures of Time in Medieval Historiography,” *The Medieval History Journal* 19 (2016), 21–33; Hans-Werner Goetz, “Historical Writing, Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness in the Middle Ages,” *Revista Diálogos Mediterrânicos* 2 (2012), 110–128; and the provocative studies collected in Miriam Czock and Anja Rathmann-Lutz, eds., *ZeitenWelten. Zur Verschränkung von Zeitwahrnehmung und Weltdeutung (750-1350)* (Cologne, 2016). The nature of Carolingian “historical thought,” or “historical consciousness,” will be discussed further in chapter 6.

<sup>4</sup> On the ancient models that informed Walafrid’s understanding of time, see Richard Corradini, “Pieces of a Puzzle: Time and History in Walafrid’s *Vademecum*,” *Early Medieval Europe* 22 (2014), 476–491; Richard Corradini, “Approaches to History: Walafrid’s Parallel Universe,” in Rutger Kramer, Helmut Reimitz, and Graeme Ward, eds., *Historiography and Identity III: Carolingian Approaches* (Turnhout, 2021), 155–197; Wesley M. Stevens, *Rhetoric and Reckoning: The ‘Vademecum’ of Walafrid Strabo* (Leiden, 2018); Miriam Czock, “Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft. Konstruktionen von Zeit zwischen Heilsgeschichte und Offenbarung: Liturgieexegese um 800 bei Hrabanus Maurus, Amalarius von Metz und Walafrid Strabo,” in *ZeitenWelten*, 113–133, compares Walafrid’s understanding of time to those of other contemporary writers.

<sup>5</sup> This way of understanding improvement, or correction, of past ages may stem in part from a supersessionist theological perspective, whereby the New Testament, and the events described therein, had perfected and thus superseded the Old Testament, and followers of Jesus Christ had henceforth replaced the Jews as God’s elect. The Franks (or Carolingians specifically) may have understood their role in the course of providential history in such terms, as a kind of “new Israel,” enjoying God’s special favour. However, important recent scholarship has prudently argued for a cautious, qualified approach to this provocative notion. See especially Conor O’Brien, “Chosen Peoples and New Israel in the Early Medieval West,” *Speculum* 95 (2020), 987–1009; Gerda Heydemann, “The People of God and the Law,” *Speculum* 95 (2020), 89–131; and Mary Garrison, “The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an Identity from Pippin to Charlemagne,” in Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes, eds., *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), 114–161. On supersessionist ideas in early Christian and patristic contexts, as well as modern theological critiques of such ideas, see the essays collected in Steven D. Aguzzi, ed., *Israel, the Church, and the Millenarianism* (London, 2017); Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New Haven, 2008), esp. 213ff.; and Charles Meeks, “Superseding Patristic Supersessionism: Hilary of Poitiers and Cyril of Alexandria on Hosea 1–3,” *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 14 (2020), 87–101.



*exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationis ecclesiasticis rerum* (completed ca. 840–42; hereafter *De exordiis et incrementis*), which presents a more historicized, differentiating image of the past, its various ages, and their relationship to the present time—perhaps, in its ninth-century context, an altogether more radical representation of the past than the essentially unchanging “flatness” of Walafrid’s earlier poems?<sup>6</sup> As its title accurately indicates, the *De exordiis et incrementis* is a treatise on the practice of the liturgy and its gradual development across Christian history. Its picture of the past is sharply multidimensional, with distances across time and space readily acknowledged so as to explain the many differences—small and large—in liturgical practice among various time-periods and regions.

Walafrid suggests very different conceptions of the past’s relationship to the present in the *Visio Wettini* and *De imagine Tetrici* than in his later history of the liturgy, which we will examine at length in the next chapter. To be sure, shifts in Walafrid’s authorial perspective over the decades of his life may help to account for these differences. When Walafrid composed these poems, he was a young monk eager to demonstrate his burgeoning literary talent. Schooled at the monastery of Reichenau under the tutelage of Grimald and Wetti himself (and later under Hrabanus Maurus at Fulda), Walafrid’s verse adaptation of the *Visio Wettini* is a direct product of this particular monastic milieu and education. The *De imagine Tetrici* feels distinctly evocative of the moment when this precocious young monk-poet entered the heady world of the Carolingian court, aspiring to earn praise and recognition, yet alarmed by apparent contrasts—like the Theoderic statue—with his earlier monastic environment. By the time that Walafrid

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<sup>6</sup> On this work and its context, see Alice Harting-Correa, Introduction to *Walahfrid Strabo’s Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum: A Translation and Commentary*, ed. and trans. Alice Harting-Correa (Leiden, 1996), 1–37; Christina Pössel, “‘Appropriate to the Religion of Their Time’: Walahfrid’s Historicisation of the Liturgy,” in Elina Screen and Charles West, eds., *Writing the Early Medieval West: Studies in Honour of Rosamond McKitterick* (Cambridge, 2018), 80–97; Yitzhak Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald (877)* (London, 2001), 122ff.

composed his work on the liturgy, he had returned to Reichenau, now as the abbot of that monastery. In the intervening years, Walafrid had become an important courtier, perhaps the personal tutor to Louis the Pious's youngest son, Charles the Bald; and, like all court-connected figures of this period, he had uneasily weathered the civil wars and dynastic strife of the 830s. Written during the renewed conflict of the early 840s between Louis the Pious's surviving sons, the cautious and measured *De exordiis et incrementis* can certainly be read as a product of this tumultuous era and a reflection of the experiences and knowledge that had shaped the mature Abbot Walafrid.<sup>7</sup>

Yet, these key biographical points notwithstanding, the role of genre in shaping and delimiting the content of such texts must be considered as well. As Anis Bawarshi notes in his study of the "genre function," "when writers begin to write in different genres, they participate within...different sets of relations, relations that motivate them, consciously or unconsciously, to invent both their texts and themselves."<sup>8</sup> Inspired by Foucault's famous elaboration of the "author function,"<sup>9</sup> Bawarshi argues that genre, as well as the discursive construction of authorship, motivates and shapes the texts of writers working within certain formal constraints; genre "constitutes how individuals come to conceptualize and act within different situations,

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<sup>7</sup> On this biographical context, see especially Courtney M. Booker, "A New Prologue of Walafrid Strabo," *Viator* 36 (2005), 83–105; Albrecht Diem, "Teaching Sodomy, Carolingian Monasteries and Queer Anxieties: A Study of Walafrid Strabo's and Heito's *Visio Wettini*," *German History* 34 (2016), 385–401; Andrew Romig, "Charismatic Art and Biography in the Carolingian World," in Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak and Martha Dana Rust, eds., *Faces of Charisma: Image, Text, Object in Byzantium and the Medieval West* (Leiden, 2018), 157–180. For detailed discussion of Walafrid's intellectual interests and pursuits across this period, see Corradini, "Pieces of a Puzzle."

<sup>8</sup> Anis Bawarshi, "The Genre Function," in *idem*, *Genre and the Invention of the Writer* (Logan, Utah, 2003), 17.

<sup>9</sup> For Foucault's thesis, see Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in Josué Harari, ed., *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca, 1979), 141–160. See also the critical discussion of Foucault's "author-function" in Adrian Wilson, "Foucault on the 'Question of the Author': A Critical Exegesis," *Modern Language Review* 99 (2004), 339–363; Jed Wyrick, *The Ascension of Authorship: Attribution and Canon Formation in Jewish, Hellenistic, and Christian Traditions* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 1–19; Roger Chartier, "Figures of the Author," in *idem*, *The Order of Books: Readers, Authors, and Libraries in Europe Between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Stanford, 1994), 25–59.

framing not only what Foucault calls a discourse's mode of being, but also the mode of being of those who participate in the discourse."<sup>10</sup> This positioning of genre as a "site of action," rather than merely being an incidental, formal, even formulaic aspect of a given text, is useful to consider in regard to the texts and writers examined in this chapter. In particular, Bawarshi's observation that the influence of genre on a writer may be conscious or unconscious is an intriguing point that may be fruitfully applied to the differences between Walafrid's thought as evinced in his poems and his prose work on the liturgy.

As a Carolingian writer who worked in multiple genres of writing, Walafrid was by no means unique. Few of the Carolingian-era authors known to us today limited themselves to a single genre or to one topical area of interest. Rather, Carolingian writers, drawing inspiration from the impressive variety of works produced by the Fathers, often tried their hand at many different types of writing; they were well aware of the principal exemplars within a given genre, even if their understandings of genres as such were not the same as ours.<sup>11</sup> For instance, Theodulf of Orléans, one of the most prolific Carolingian-era poets, whose verse texts we will encounter in the last section of this chapter, was also the author of the *Opus Caroli*, a theological critique of the Second Council of Nicaea.<sup>12</sup> Florus of Lyon, whose Augustinian compilation on Paul we examined in Chapter 2, also composed poems, polemical letters, and a treatise on the liturgy, among other works.<sup>13</sup> Einhard famously drew from the classical model of Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* for his biography of Charlemagne, the formal style of which differs significantly from his *Translatio et miracula sanctorum Marcellini et Petri*, a narrative account

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<sup>10</sup> Bawarshi, "Genre Function," 21.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, on the ambiguous modern classification of history vis-à-vis hagiography, see Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994), 95–114.

<sup>12</sup> See the studies collected in Ann Freeman, *Theodulf of Orléans: Charlemagne's Spokesman Against the Second Council of Nicaea* (Aldershot, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Hen, *Royal Patronage of the Liturgy*, 7, discusses some of the Carolingian-era writers who produced texts on the liturgy, including Florus, Agobard of Lyon, Hrabanus Maurus, and Remigius of Auxerre.

of the conveyance of saints' relics from Rome to Einhard's church at Seligenstadt.<sup>14</sup> Different generic forms afforded, and at times even enabled, different ways and means of engaging with, or expressing, the inheritance of past ages and the imagined relationship of the past to the present.

In what follows, I will examine the relationship of past to present, and the "presence of the past," as represented in the two poems by Walafrid described above, his verse adaptation of the *Visio Wettini* and the *De imagine Tetrici*, while occasionally suggesting comparisons with Walafrid's later prose history of the liturgy, which will be examined directly in chapter 6. Following this, I will also, more briefly, consider conceptions of time, authority, and the past in the texts of other Carolingian writers who composed poetry, particularly Theodulf of Orléans, Alcuin of York, and Hrabanus Maurus.

### **Time fades away: Walafrid Strabo's *Visio Wettini* and *De imagine Tetrici***

Both the verse *Visio Wettini* and *De imagine Tetrici* stand as purposeful uses of the past, evincing Walafrid's urgent concerns for moral and spiritual correction in the present and future. For Walafrid, the present has much to learn from the past, and not only from the apparent, worldly successes of "great" kings but also from their conspicuous moral failings. Such moral lessons—like those discernible from holy scripture—are fundamentally sound, and applicable, across time and space; the timeless truths that they impart are universally valid and valuable. The specificity and contingency of particular past contexts are unimportant in this poetic textual space, in contrast to the attention they merit in Walafrid's later work on the liturgy. As I will

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<sup>14</sup> Both of these works are translated in Paul Edward Dutton, ed. and trans. *Charlemagne's Courtier: The Complete Einhard* (North York, Ont., 1998). On Einhard's career and literary activity, see also Steffen Patzold, *Ich und Karl der Große: Das Leben des Höflings Einhard* (Stuttgart, 2013).

discuss in what follows, Walafrid invokes the ghostly figures of two powerful sovereigns, Charlemagne and Theoderic—one from the quite recent past and one who died three centuries earlier, both still lingering prominently in the Carolingian world of the 820s—as subjects of moral critique, illustrative, through their dubious and sinful actions, of universal, Christian truths. At the same time, in both poems, Walafrid suggests counter-examples from the past, virtuous regardless of their time or place and worthy of perpetual emulation.

In Walafrid's *Visio Wettini*, the then-teenaged monk-poet describes the rigorous purgation of Charlemagne, who, on account of his sins, must suffer for a time as some ferocious beast persistently gnaws at his genitals. According to Walafrid's poem, Wetti's angelic guide assures him that Charlemagne, the "nourisher of justice," "who once ruled over Ausonia and the lofty Roman people," will eventually "occupy the honour prepared by the Lord." Yet first, "[i]n these tortures he [now] stands because he tainted his good deeds with foul lust."<sup>15</sup> The monk Wetti, a highly revered teacher at Reichenau, experienced his deathbed vision in 824, and died soon after that. In this vision, Wetti sees men—especially monks, but also secular clergy and lay political leaders—enduring severe punishments for their sins of gluttony, avarice, or lust. In less egregious cases, the periods of purgation would at some point cease, in others the tortures of hell would be everlasting. Later in the vision, Wetti is awed by the celestial rewards enjoyed by the saints and martyrs, "where the highest glory grants to its blessed citizens the draught of eternal sweetness" ("*quo gloria summa beatis civibus aeternae reddit dulcedinis haustum*").<sup>16</sup> Heito, the author of the initial prose textualization of Wetti's vision, attests that he was present at the dying

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<sup>15</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *Visio Wettini*; both the Latin text and English translation of the *Visio Wettini* used here follow the forthcoming critical edition and translation by Richard Matthew Pollard. (The Latin text for this passage is transcribed in full below.) As the pagination for Pollard's edition has not yet been finalized, my citations will refer to line numbers for the poem; for all other texts, including the *De imagine Tetrici*, I will refer to page numbers in published editions or translations.

<sup>16</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *Visio Wettini*, 804–805; ed. and trans. Pollard (forthcoming).

monk's bedside. Wetti had felt that it was absolutely urgent to impart the content of his vision to those attending him, not least because fellow monks, who had shamefully failed to live up to the moral and spiritual obligations of their *ordo* (office, or social station) were among the punished or damned in the realm of the afterlife. In that same spirit of urgency, Heito claimed to have immediately set to work putting the vision narrative down in writing; the resulting prose text's apparent artlessness is thus meant to be read as evidence of its necessarily rapid composition.<sup>17</sup> Walafrid skillfully adapted Heito's *Visio Wettini* to Latin hexametres in the mid-820s.<sup>18</sup> While Heito never names Charlemagne, but instead laconically refers to a certain prince of the Roman and Italian people, guilty of lustful indiscretions, Walafrid's poem spells out "CAROLVS IMPERATOR" through acrostics in the section detailing the sinful ruler's purgation:

Contemplatur item quendam lustrata per arva,  
Ausoniae quondam qui regna tenebat et altae

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<sup>17</sup> Heito, *Visio Wettini*; ed. and trans. Pollard (forthcoming).

<sup>18</sup> Today, Walafrid's poetic version is the more widely cited and studied *Visio Wettini*, but this was probably not the case in the Middle Ages: Heito's text survives in at least 63 manuscripts (including six dated to the ninth century), whereas Walafrid's is preserved in just seven extant manuscripts (though three of these are from the ninth century). See Richard Matthew Pollard, "Charlemagne's Posthumous Reputation and the *Visio Wettini*, 825–1851," in Rolf Grosse and Michel Sot, ed., *Charlemagne: les temps, les espaces, les hommes construction et déconstruction d'un règne* (Leiden, 2018), 529–549. See also, for a discussion of the manuscripts containing Walafrid's verse text, David A. Traill, *Walafrid Strabo's Visio Wettini: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Frankfurt, 1974), 19–23. The ninth-century manuscripts containing Walafrid's poem are: St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 869, St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 573, and Valenciennes Bibliothèque municipale Ms. 411. The first and second were produced in the scriptorium at St. Gall, while the third may have been produced in the area of Rheims. Diem, "Teaching Sodomy," 385–401 provides useful context on the relationship of Walafrid's poem to Heito's prose text and on the specific monastic cultural environment of Reichenau out of which these texts emerged. Peter Godman, *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1987), 130–133, illuminates the immediate circumstances of the poem's composition and Walafrid's reasons for adapting Heito's prose text (which he may have edited) to verse, noting that in a prefatory letter addressed to Grimald (*MGH, Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* 2, ed. Ernst Dümmler [Berlin, 1884], 301–303), chaplain to Louis the Pious and once a mentor to Walafrid at Reichenau, Walafrid professes his devotion to Wetti and "almost inconsolable grief" following his death. Thus, despite insisting on the lowly quality of his own poetry (which Godman, 130, terms "false modesty"), Walafrid has composed this verse text to pay tribute to his departed teacher. Godman suggests, however, that Walafrid's "ulterior motive" (130) was to ingratiate himself with a prominent patron, the court-connected Grimald, through their shared ties to Reichenau. More generally, on early medieval *opera geminata*, or "twinned works" (the composition of both prose and verse versions of a given text, by the same or different authors), an Anglo-Saxon genre that was popularized on the continent through Alcuin's influence, see Peter Godman, "The Anglo-Saxon *Opus Geminatum*: From Aldhelm to Alcuin," *Medium Aevum* 50 (1981), 215–229; Gernot Wieland, "*Geminus Stilus*: Studies in Anglo-Latin Hagiography," in Michael Herren, ed., *Insular Latin Studies* (Toronto, 1981), 113–133; and Erica Weaver, "Hybrid Forms: Translating Boethius in Anglo-Saxon England," *Anglo-Saxon England* 45 (2016), 1–36.

Romanae gentis, fixo consistere gressu,  
 Oppositumque animal lacerare virilia stantis  
 Laetaque per reliquum corpus lue membra carebant.  
 Viderat haec, magnoque stupens terrore profatur:  
 ‘Sortibus hic hominum, dum vitam in corpore gessit,  
 Iustitiae nutritor erat saecloque moderno  
 Maxima pro domino fecit documenta vigere  
 Protexitque pio sacram tutamine plebem.  
 Et velut in mundo sumpsit speciale cacumen,  
 Recta volens dulcique volans per regna favore.  
 Ast hic quam saeva sub conditione tenetur,  
 Tam tristisque notam sustentat peste severam,  
 Oro, refer.’ Tum ductor: ‘In his cruciatibus’, inquit  
 ‘Restat ob hoc, quoniam bona facta libidine turpi  
 Fedavit, ratus inlecebras sub mole bonorum  
 Absumi et vitam voluit finire suetis  
 Sordibus: ipse tamen vitam captabit opimam,  
 Dispositum a domino gaudens invadet honorem’.

Next, looking across the fields, he spied someone  
 – who once ruled over Ausonia and the lofty  
 Roman people – upright on planted feet,  
 and an animal set upon him, tearing at his manhood as he stood.  
 The parts of the rest of his body fortunately were spared this punishment.  
 [Wetti] saw this, and stutteringly exclaimed in great terror:  
 ‘This man, during his bodily life, stood  
 as a nourisher of justice for people in his realms, and wrought the  
 greatest flourishing of the Lord’s studies (in this modern age),  
 and he protected the people of God as a pious ward.  
 In the world he also took – so to speak – the highest summit:  
 wishing to do right, and winging through his kingdom borne upon sweet favour.  
 But this man is held in such a terrible situation,  
 and bears a severe brand in so sad a punishment;  
 Prithee, explain.’ Then his guide said: ‘In these tortures  
 he stands because he tainted his good deeds with  
 foul lust: thinking that his indiscretions would be covered up  
 by a mountain of good [deeds], he wished to finish his life in his familiar  
 sins: nonetheless he will seize life’s spoils,  
 and happily occupy the honour prepared by the Lord.’<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *Visio Wettini*, 445–465; ed. and trans. Pollard (forthcoming). To be clear, the Latin lines beginning “*Fedavit, ratus...*” are not part of the acrostic message nor the start of a new one. They are transcribed here to complete the sentence starting with “*Tum ductor...*”

Later in the text, Walafrid more explicitly mentions Charlemagne by name—“Charles, then Caesar, declared war upon the cruel Huns” (*Bella movet Karolus duros tum Caesar in Hunos*)<sup>20</sup>—a reminder of the reference to the departed sovereign slyly concealed in acrostics in the earlier section of the poem.

In 829, a few years after he adapted Heito’s text into verse, Walafrid was at the Carolingian palace at Aachen. His *Visio Wettini* had attracted the attention of Charlemagne’s heir, Louis the Pious, and his court. For a follow-up to that work, Walafrid composed an ostensible panegyric to Louis, which modern scholars have dubbed the *De imagine Tetrici*.<sup>21</sup> This poem is structured in part as a dialogue between the poet “Strabus” and his muse “Scintilla.” Early in their exchange Strabus observes a group of statues, and one in particular, attributed to the Ostrogothic king Theoderic (r. 475–526), placed prominently within a fountain in the palace garden. Strabus asks Scintilla why this object was created, and Scintilla replies as follows:

Theoderich, once ruler in Italian lands,  
Being miserly kept much of his great wealth for himself.  
But the wretched man now walks alone along the pitch-black Avernus;  
Scarcely anything in the world is left to him save a sparse reputation,  
Even if the rabble of the baths make a ford for him.  
Nor is this without cause, for he is cursed in every mouth,  
And the reproach of God himself and the judgment of the world  
Consign him to eternal flames and the great abyss.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *Visio Wettini*, 822.

<sup>21</sup> On this poem generally, see also Michael W. Herren, “Walafrid Strabo’s *De imagine Tetrici*: An Interpretation,” in Richard North and Tette Hofstra, eds., *Latin Culture and Medieval Germanic Europe: Proceedings of the First Germania Latina Conference held at the University of Groningen, 26 May 1989* (Groningen, 1992), 25–41; Ludwig Traube, “Zu Walafrid Strabos *De Imagine Tetrici*,” *Neues Archiv* 18 (1983), 664–665; Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, 133–148; Eric J. Goldberg, “Louis the Pious and the Hunt,” *Speculum* 88 (2013), 613–643; Romig, “Charismatic Art and Biography in the Carolingian World.”

<sup>22</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De imagine Tetrici*, in Michael W. Herren, “The ‘*De imagine Tetrici*’ of Walafrid Strabo: Edition and Translation,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 1 (1991), 123, 132:

“TETRICVS, ITALICIS QVONDAM REGNATOR IN ORIS,

Multis ex opibus tantum sibi seruat auarus,

At secum infelix piceo spatiatu Auerno,

Cui nihil in mundo, nisi uix fama arida restat.

Quamquam thermarum uulguis uada praeparat olli;



In Walafrid's criticisms of Theoderic, we may detect general echoes of the *Visio Wettini*'s vivid image of Charlemagne's purgation. Although Charlemagne's situation, according to Wetti's otherworldly guide, is temporary, while Theoderic is "consign[ed]...to eternal flames and the great abyss," both rulers are suspended within the textual spaces of Walafrid's poems in an ambiguous temporality, with their sinful actions laid bare and open for moral judgment.

The sharply negative perception of the Ostrogothic king Theoderic, suggested by the quotation excerpted above, was presumably Walafrid's own. Despite Walafrid's assertion that Theoderic is "cursed in every mouth" (*omni maledicatur ore*), the statue remained on display at the palace. The iconographic and material aspects of this gilded equestrian statue (which may or may not originally have been meant to depict Theoderic) seemed, to Walafrid, to represent the historical Theoderic's cruelty and avarice. Yet, these same aspects of the statue must have registered quite differently both for Charlemagne, who in fact had transported it from Ravenna to Aachen, and for his heir, Louis the Pious. Walafrid's sharply negative view of Theoderic may well have been reflective of shifting attitudes under the more sternly restrictive sovereign. But Louis had ruled as the sole or senior emperor for fifteen years, and, evidently, had not removed the statue from the palace garden by the time that Walafrid composed his poem. The desire of these two Frankish emperors to possess, or continue to prominently display, the statue may have stemmed from a perception of Theoderic not primarily as the tyrannical Arian ruler who condemned Boethius to death, but more significantly as a strong Germanic Christian king who ruled mightily over Rome.<sup>23</sup> From such a view of the past, Charlemagne's placement of the

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Hoc sine nec causa, nam omni maledicatur ore,  
 Blasphemumque dei ipsius sententia mundi  
 Ignibus aeternis magnaue addicit abyssio."

<sup>23</sup> Several important modern studies of the statue (no longer extant) and its ninth-century significance have focused on the differing views of Theoderic and his legacy in the early Middle Ages. See, e.g., Heinz Löwe, "Von

Theoderic statue in his palace garden could well have been an emphatic statement of his own status. Following Charlemagne's coronation in Rome in 800, the translation of this symbolically powerful *spolium* may have helped to affirm his identity as a strong Germanic ruler who was now, in some sense, "Roman." In a similar vein, Paul Dutton notes of earlier kings and emperors awarded the epithet "the Great," Theoderic among them, that "what these figures share is singularity; each people or distinct period labelling one individual as preeminent at least for a time."<sup>24</sup> It is perhaps this sense of singular and specific "greatness," ascribed to Theoderic, that drew Charlemagne to the Ostrogothic king and the statue purportedly bearing his image.

Yet, for critics like Walafrid, Theoderic's enduring fame as a *rex magnus* may actually have amplified his negative, tyrannical qualities, thus making the king a particularly prominent and usefully instructive symbol of the ruthless application of power. Walafrid's severe criticism of Theoderic's tyranny may have been meant to win the approbation of Louis, who had endeavoured to "cleanse the palace" of the supposedly immoral or excessive elements tacitly

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Theoderich dem Grossen zu Karl dem Grossen," *Deutsches Archiv* (1952), 353–440; Hartmut Hoffman, "Die Aachener Theoderich-Statue," in Victor H. Elbern, ed., *Das erste Jahrtausend* (Düsseldorf, 1962), 1, 318–335; H.J. Zimmermann, "Theoderich der Grosse – Dietrich von Bern. Die geschichtliche und sagenhafte Quellen des Mittelalters" (diss., University of Bonn, 1972). More recently, on Theoderic and his early medieval reputation more broadly, see Andreas Goltz, *Barbar – König – Tyrann: Das Bild Theoderichs des Großen in der Überlieferung des 5. bis 9. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 2009). Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, 135–136, for example, notes the strong impact of the medieval *Vitae Boethii* and observes (at p. 135) that "[What] [I]earned and ecclesiastical writers of [the early medieval] period recall about Theoderich is his persecution of Boethius, his Arianism, and his punishment in hell." See also on these points Frantisek Graus, *Lebendige Vergangenheit: Überlieferung im Mittelalter und in den Vorstellungen vom Mittelalter* (Cologne, 1975), esp. 39–40. However, Felix Thürlemann, "Die Bedeutung der Aachener Theoderich-Statue für Karl den Großen (801) und bei Walafrid Strabo (829) Materialien zu einer Semiotik visueller Objekte im frühen Mittelalter," *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 59 (1977), 25–65, suggests that Charlemagne may not have necessarily been familiar (at least not at the time that the statue was moved from Ravenna to Aachen) with Theoderic's dismal reputation in texts produced by ecclesiastical writers across the intervening centuries.

<sup>24</sup> Paul E. Dutton, "KAROLVS MAGNVS or KAROLVS FELIX: The Making of Charlemagne's Reputation and Legend," in Matthew Gabriele and Jace Stuckey, eds., *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith, and Crusade* (New York, 2008), 26. On the cultivation of Charlemagne's reputation as a *magnus* ruler, see also David Ganz, "Einhard's Charlemagne: The Characterisation of Greatness," in Joanna Story, ed., *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* (Manchester, 2005), 38–51. For an interesting, extended comparison of Theoderic and Charlemagne as Germanic "pretenders" to Roman imperial might, see Peter J. Heather, *The Restoration of Rome: Barbarian Popes and Imperial Pretenders* (London, 2013), 3–102, 207–348.

tolerated (or openly enjoyed) under his father's reign. On the other hand, as noted above, the statue of Theoderic evidently remained on display in Louis's time, suggesting that, perhaps, the young, ambitious monk-poet meant to urge this "pious" emperor to fully live up to the more rigorous Christian standards that he sought to establish. "Great" power alone—which Charlemagne and Louis also certainly possessed—was not in itself worthy of praise or veneration, Walafrid suggests. Theoderic could be, at once, "great" in terms of the mighty extent of his power over Rome and former Roman lands, yet also wicked and deserving of contempt rather than admiration or emulation. It is worth observing, as Herren notes, that "[t]he name of the inspiration of the poem, *Tetricus*, is not a latinization of Theoderich, but rather a word-play on that name based on the Latin *taetricus*, 'harsh, gloomy, severe,' with a further word-play on *taeter*, 'shameful, morally loathsome.'"<sup>25</sup> As with the 'CAROLVS IMPERATOR' acrostic in his *Visio Wettini*, Walafrid uses such creative literary flourishes to support his poems' moral critiques.

Although Walafrid draws a distinction between the degree and length of punishment merited by Theoderic and Charlemagne respectively, the natures of their alleged sins do overlap. Charlemagne is being punished for sins of the flesh: his "foul lust" and "indiscretions." Similarly, the nudity of the Theoderic statue is, for Walafrid, symbolic of Theoderic's shamelessness; the bronze representing his sun-coarsened skin, as a crude barbarian. The gold on the statue, meanwhile, represents Theoderic's greed and iniquity.<sup>26</sup> In the *Visio Wettini*, the

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<sup>25</sup> Herren, Walafrid Strabo's *De imagine Tetrici*, 26.

<sup>26</sup> Walafrid's poetic critique of Theoderic, as fittingly represented by the gaudy gilded statue, is evocative of patristic remarks on conspicuously adorned wicked kings, quoted by Carolingian writers in prose texts approximately contemporary with Walafrid's work. For instance, Jonas of Orléans in his *speculum principum*, *De institutione regia* draws from Isidore of Seville to assert points that are quite similar to Walafrid's, though expressed generally rather than explicitly criticizing a particular ruler. Cf. Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione regia*, ch. 3, in Jean Reviron, ed., *Les idées politico-religieuses d'un évêque du IXe siècle: Jonas d'Orléans et son "De institutione regia"*: *Étude et texte critique* (Paris, 1930), 142–143: "Ysidorus [*Sententiae* 3.49]: 'Qui recte utitur regni potestate, ita se prestare omnibus debet, ut quanto magis honoris celsitudine claret, tanto semetipsum mente humiliet, proponens sibi

angelic guide praises Charlemagne as “a nourisher of justice for people in his realms.” Yet Charlemagne, who Walafrid knew had transported this statue to Aachen, is nevertheless implicated in the *De imagine Tetrici*’s critique of the avaricious, “golden” Germanic king. In a passage directed to Louis in that later poem, Walafrid writes, “Your father at one time enhanced their importance [i.e., that of the churches] / His golden effigies sport at the top of columns / To his genius I do not apply the teaching of Plato.”<sup>27</sup> The “golden effigies” of Charlemagne are clearly meant to echo the gilded statue of Theoderic, further connecting these two rulers, while Walafrid’s reference to the “teaching of Plato” refers to Plato’s discussion of kings and wise men, pointedly, and famously, adapted in Boethius’s *De consolazione philosophiae*.<sup>28</sup> Boethius—the greatest Latin philosopher of Christian Late Antiquity and a victim of Theoderic’s tyranny—is thus brought into the space of the text, if only implicitly. For knowledgeable readers, who would have recognized this implicit connection between Walafrid’s passing mention of “the teaching of Plato” on kings and the *De consolazione philosophiae*, the figure of Boethius is invoked, albeit indirectly, as a righteous and learned Christian critic of both kings, who were memorialized in ostentatious, golden forms that glossed over their moral failings.

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exemplum humilitatis David’...Item Ysidorus [*Sententiae* 3.48]: ‘Qui intra seculum bene temporaliter imperat, sine fine [in] perpetuum regnat; et de gloria huius seculi ad eternam transmeat gloriam. Qui vero prave regnum exercent, post vestem fulgentem et lumina lapillorum, nudi et miseri ad inferna torquendi descendunt.’”; trans. R.W. Dyson, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract: The De institutione regia of Jonas of Orléans* (Smithtown, N.Y., 1983), 17–18: “Isidore [says]: ‘He who makes right use of royal power should himself stand out from all men in this: that, the more brightly his honor shines, the more he humbles himself in his own mind displaying in himself the example of the humility of David’...And, in the same work, Isidore says: ‘He who wields temporal power well during this present age will rule without end forever, and will exchange the glory of this age for an eternal glory. But he who exercises a wicked rule will leave behind his gorgeous clothing and bright jewels and go down naked and in misery to the infernal torment.’”

<sup>27</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De imagine Tetrici*, 126: “Quorum pensa pater quondam tibi magnus adauxit; / Aurea cui ludunt summis simulacra columnis, / Cuius ad ingenium non confero dogma Platonis”; trans. Herren, 135.

<sup>28</sup> Herren, “Walafrid Strabo’s *De imagine Tetrici*: An Interpretation,” 35. On the poem’s multiple Boethian allusions, see Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, 136–137. Incidentally, according to Procopius, *History of the Wars of Justinian* 7.2.29, Boethius’s widow later used the opportunity of Belisarius’s taking of Rome to tear down statues of the recently deceased Theoderic.

Both Theoderic and Charlemagne were figures of the past for Walafrid; he would have been a young child, around four years old, when Charlemagne died. They are now both citizens of an afterlife world wherein the temporal distance separating their respective reigns has been rendered irrelevant. These poems are not histories treating certain demarcated periods of the past. The forms employed by Walafrid to evoke different figures, from different eras of the past, are merged together in a space outside the progress and order of historical time, and these poetic forms directly inform his methods of moral and spiritual critique.

In contrast to Walafrid's critical use of Theoderic and Charlemagne to represent vices and sins, both poems also include—and join together across time—figures of the past and present, who by their deeds or reputations stand as exemplars of virtuous conduct. For example, in the *De imagine Tetrici*, Walafrid seeks to praise Louis the Pious in lofty terms, writing:

While others take pleasure in tyranny you give pleasure by your goodness.  
 You alone pass on to every kind of triumph, great king.  
 Whom should I call you save Moses, great among his people,  
 Who lead your people through the light, once darkness has been removed,  
 Who construct new temples of morals and offer the gifts of Christ  
 Conferred upon you to all in common.  
 (The old) Moses is but a shade, you (the new Moses) have substance.”<sup>29</sup>

The comparison of the emperor with an Old Testament figure, and even the suggestion that he surpasses this hallowed antecedent, is not unusual.<sup>30</sup> Such recourse to biblical typology is in fact

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<sup>29</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De imagine Tetrici*, 125; trans. Herren, 134:

“Tu bonitate places, aliique tyrannide gaudent.  
 Solus ad omnigenos transis, rex magne, triumphos:  
 Quem te namque uocem, nisi magnum in plebe Moysen,  
 Qui populos tenebris per lumen ducis ademptis,  
 Qui morum noua templa struis, qui munera Christi,  
 Quae conlata tibi, cunctis communia praestas.  
 Ille umbram, tu corpus habes...”

<sup>30</sup> On the typological comparison, or conflation, of post-scriptural Christians with biblical figures, see especially Michael Stuart Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography: Between Eusebius and Augustine* (Cambridge, 2008), 25–57, who shows, for example, that Eusebius of Caesarea likened the emperor Constantine to Moses, as well as to Christ. On the close relationship between typological reading of scripture and the interpretation of “secular” history through a distinctly typological lens, see Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), esp. 90–93.

exceedingly common across Carolingian texts. But the particular comparison to Moses is rather more unusual;<sup>31</sup> recent and present rulers like Charlemagne and Louis were frequently compared to the ancient kings, like Solomon or David, with the Franks themselves cast as the Israelites, God's specially chosen people.<sup>32</sup> In Walafrid's comparison of Louis with Moses in the *De imagine Tetrici*, the powerful suggestion is that he is not only "lead[ing] [his] people through the light," but, implicitly, that he is also in some sense liberating them from the tyranny and bondage of sin, as embodied by the gilded statue of Theoderic and the golden effigies of Louis's flawed father. Walafrid's comparison of the Archchaplain Hilduin, one of Louis's closest advisors, with Aaron helps to bolster the image of Louis as a new-and-improved Moses. Yet, Walafrid does not settle exclusively upon the historical milieu of the Exodus, continuing with flattering one-to-one comparisons between figures of the ancient past, both biblical and pagan, to key figures of the Carolingian present: Grimald, a learned teacher at court, is likened to Homer; the Empress Judith is compared to Rachel, wife of Jacob and mother of Joseph and Benjamin, but also to the pagan poetess Sappho and Holda, the mythic Germanic goddess of women's arts and crafts.<sup>33</sup> All of these figures, removed from their original contexts in history or myth, are evoked by Walafrid as paragons of some virtue or fine quality that is admirable across the ages.

In a similar fashion, martyrs and saints are used in the *Visio Wettini* to embody the traits that make one worthy of entry into paradise. At one point, Wetti spots Saints Denis, Hilary, Martin, and Aniane. The first, a martyr who died around the middle of the third century, was among the most revered names in Carolingian Francia, though Denis was very often confused or

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<sup>31</sup> Yet, intriguingly, Louis was ultimately laid to rest in a late antique sarcophagus depicting Moses crossing the parted Red Sea. On this, see Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, Neb., 1994), 110–111 and fig. 16.

<sup>32</sup> On this point, see especially Mary Garrison, "The Franks as the New Israel?"; and Gerda Heydemann, "The People of God and the Law."

<sup>33</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De imagine Tetrici*, 125–130; trans. Herren, 134–38.

amalgamated with Dionysius the Areopagite, the first-century convert to Christianity.<sup>34</sup> The second probably refers to Hilary of Poitiers (d. *ca.* 367), sometimes recognized as a doctor of the Latin Church and known as the *malleus Arianorum* (“Hammer of the Arians”), though, less likely, it might have referred to Hilary of Arles (d. *ca.* 449), another, somewhat lesser doctrinal authority and saint. The Martin mentioned here is surely the fourth-century Bishop of Tours. This Aniane may be the first-century Anianus, Patriarch of Alexandria, considered the successor to Mark the Evangelist in this capacity; but is rather more likely the fifth-century Alexandrian monk of the same name, remembered for his attempts at computing the dates of major world events. Alternately, “Aniane” could refer to the far more recent holy man, Benedict of Aniane (d. 821). In any case, Wetti immediately recognized these men, “either [hearing] these things from the mouths of the blessed guide, or Grace, which showed him all this, allowed him to recognize some men without a word.” Wetti marvels at these exemplary figures as they turn away and continue on “toward the radiant abodes where outstanding glory shone upon [them].”<sup>35</sup> Slightly later in the narrative, Wetti encounters Saints Sebastian and Valentine, both third-century martyrs, and is awed by the former’s “glittering in great splendour” and the latter’s “striking appearance.”<sup>36</sup> The role of these saints, making their cameo appearances in Wetti’s vision, is similar to the list of biblical, historical, and mythic figures to whom Walafred would compare Louis, his family, and close advisors in the *De imagine Tetrici*: their names alone conjure up powerful, expressive connotations, in this case of the ages of the early Christian martyrs and Church Fathers, the expansive *tempora Christiana* of centuries past. Their worldly lives may or

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<sup>34</sup> On the veneration of St-Denis/Dionysius in the Carolingian era, see Courtney M. Booker, “The Dionysian Mirror of Louis the Pious,” *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 19 (2014), 241–264.

<sup>35</sup> Walafred Strabo, *Visio Wettini*, 567–569: “...quod vel sermone beati / Haec ducis audiret, vel quae sibi gratia cuncta / Monstrarat, quosdam faceret cognosse silenter.”; ed. and trans. Pollard (forthcoming).

<sup>36</sup> Walafred Strabo, *Visio Wettini*, 604–605: “Ecce Sebastianum magno splendore micantem / Atque Valentinum specie cognovit aperta.”

may not have overlapped, but in heaven, the space of eternity, they stand firmly together, greater than their individual parts or specific, historical, individual selves.

The “shining,” “striking” appearance of the saints, moving toward their “radiant” abodes “glowing” with glory, stands in contrast to the gilded statue of Theoderic, as depicted in Walafrid’s subsequent work. In the *De imagine Tetrici*, “Strabus” is deeply troubled by what the continued display of this statue at the palace means for the future prospects of the new Christian empire. Shortly after delivering his list of flattering comparisons, discussed above, the poet momentarily imagines that the statue has come to life and is leading an ominous procession. “Let the great image of your colossus depart, O Rome,” implores Strabus, as if exorcising a demon, “it is excessive.”<sup>37</sup> It is this “excess” that Theoderic and the ostentatious statue simultaneously exemplify in Walafrid’s view. Though Walafrid’s distaste for Theoderic can scarcely be doubted, it seems unlikely that he would have composed a poem simply to criticize the long-dead Ostrogothic king. Rather, it is the presence of Theoderic’s representation at the Carolingian palace that is most immediately concerning. The statue ostensibly representing Theoderic seemed to perfectly embody the negative traits that Walafrid ascribes to Theoderic himself, thus inspiring and providing the opportunity for this timely, time-blurring political poem.

As in the afterlife evoked in the *Visio Wettini*, instructive examples of both virtue and vice abound in the *De imagine Tetrici*. In these poetic spaces, differences separating the present from the past, or the “distant,” ancient past from more recent times, matter far less than the difference between what is good and worthy of emulation and what is wicked and deserving of rejection. Looking at these two poems together, with attention to their purposeful compression of temporal layers, is particularly revealing of Walafrid’s strategies as a moral critic, a role that he

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<sup>37</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De imagine Tetrici*, 129: “Cedant magna tui, super est, figmenta colossi, Roma”; trans. Herren, 137.



was able to play through the aesthetic possibilities of poetry, and through his uses of the past as a young, talented writer educated in the age of Carolingian *correctio*. The sins ascribed to Theoderic, Charlemagne, and the unnamed counts, as well as the virtues attributed, optimistically, to Louis, his family, and closest courtiers are not historically contingent, but connected to timeless Christian truths. Peter Brown, describing the conditions of moral exemplarity in antiquity and the classical “civilization of the *paideia*” (though Brown suggests that not very much had changed even by the time of Dante!), observes, “We have here a culture that believed the past had only become the past through the ever-remediable accident of neglect, not through any irreversible process of change and unidirectional evolution, which could render the moral paradigms of the sixth century B.C. to a man of the fourth century A.D. Moral exemplars of a thousand years previously had no built-in obsolescence. What was good for them would be good for you.”<sup>38</sup> In these early poems, Walafrid operates within something very much like this loose temporality vividly described by Brown, devoid of historical or moral relativism—in contrast to the relative specificity of historical details and contexts in his later *De exordiis et incrementis*.

In composing his *Visio Wettini* and *De imagine Tetrici*, Walafrid seems to have realized that by placing past actions that resulted in sin in particular contexts, higher Christian truth might still be evident or discernible, but would likely be more obscured. Such contingency, or relativity, could not be risked. Walafrid recognized that, eventually, the present age – that of Louis and of Walafrid himself – and those to follow would soon enough fade away, its actors elevated to the true, “golden,” sempiternal court of God or consigned to the flames of hell. Yet, within the constraints of time, pious Christian leadership, free of lust and avarice, could help to

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<sup>38</sup> Peter Brown, “The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity,” in Richard C. Trexler, ed., *Persons in Groups: Social Behavior as Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Binghamton, N.Y., 1985), 184.

foster a more perfect *imperium Christianum* on earth.<sup>39</sup> The temporally ambiguous aspect of the poems is certainly not evidence that Carolingian intellectuals like Walafrid were incapable of historical thought;<sup>40</sup> as we will see, the *De exordiis et incrementis* is strong evidence to the contrary. Rather, the position and function of the past with regard to the present suggested in Walafrid's poems versus in his later text on the liturgy's development are particular to the genres and discursive aims of these different works. In all three texts, conceptions of distance, proximity, difference, tradition, and continuity are deliberately, rhetorically constructed. In Walafrid's verse *Visio Wettini*, the eschewing of earthly time was a product of the vision's setting in the afterlife, and Walafrid skillfully exploits this central fact of Heito's prose narrative. The *De imagine Tetrici*, being an original work by Walafrid, finds the ingenious poet manipulating time in a more abstract, deliberate way to express his convictions and concerns. In both poems, especially when read together, the erasure of historical specificity and difference is perhaps the key to transtemporal moral clarity.

### **Reading, writing, and the poetic past: some other Carolingian poets**

In the works of other Carolingian-era poets, there is a similar blending of various layers of the past—including, sometimes, of the pagan classics with Christian antiquity (much like Walafrid's comparison of court figures to both biblical and non-Christian ancient exemplars)<sup>41</sup>—

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<sup>39</sup> Walter Pohl, "Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rule: Historians of the Christian Empire," in Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 33, examining Carolingian attitudes toward the Christian Roman Empire, drawn from their reading of late antique and early medieval historical narratives, perceptively observes, "Christian empire, [these histories] suggest, was a form of government that had not yet been successfully put into practice for any considerable period of time, due to human weakness and the workings of the devil. Things could be done better. Empire was a resource of the past that could have a future."

<sup>40</sup> For modern studies of historical thought (or lack thereof?) in the Middle Ages, see below ch. 6, n. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia, 1991), 5–6, makes the crucial point that "[t]he meaning of the word 'Rome' is inherently complex in the medieval context, since the single name can evoke the Rome of Julius Caesar, Vergil, Saint Peter, Constantine,

as these authors reflected on their times, the relationship of the past to the present, and the functions of writing and reading for preserving and representing the past and its riches. For instance, Alcuin's "On Scribes," probably written for a scriptorium, most likely that of St. Martin at Tours,<sup>42</sup> begins,

May those who copy the pronouncements of the holy law  
and the hallowed sayings of the saintly fathers sit here.  
Here let them take care not to insert their silly remarks;  
may their hands not make mistakes through foolishness.

He concludes this poem with the following contention:

It is an excellent task to copy the holy books  
and scribes do enjoy their own rewards.  
It is better to write books than to dig vines:  
one serves the belly, but the other serves the soul.  
Anyone who reads the hallowed sayings of the fathers  
can expound many subjects both old and new."<sup>43</sup>

Here, the "saintly fathers" are vaguely defined, but they are situated as exceptionally edifying sources for gaining knowledge of "subjects both old and new." The fact that they were written centuries ago does not preclude them from speaking usefully to "new" concerns. This is

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or Pope Gregory, among other possible associations. The 'classical' period and 'antiquity' are similarly ambiguous terms... It is important to recognize that there is not and never was a total separation between classical and medieval culture, the one pagan and the other Christian, for between the two stands the critically important period known variously as late antiquity, the Patristic Age, or Early Christian world. This critical and enormously creative period has been the subject of much recent study, and the central role of this period in the subsequent development of the medieval world has won increasing recognition, although it would still be vastly more difficult to find or develop a bibliography treating patristic influence upon medieval art than that of classical antiquity."

<sup>42</sup> Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 138, n. 11.

<sup>43</sup> Alcuin, "On Scribes," in *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, trans. Godman (London, 1985), 138–139:

"Hic sedeant sacrae scribentes famina legis,  
Nec non sanctorum dicta sacrata patrum;  
Hic interserere caveant sua frivola verbis,  
Frivola nec propter erret et ipsa manus"  
[...]  
"Est opus egregium sacros iam scribere libros.  
Nec mercede sua scriptor et ipse caret.  
Fodere quam vites melius est scribere libros:  
Ille suo ventri serviet, iste animae.  
Vel nova vel vetera poterit proferre magister  
Plurima, quisque legit dicta sacrata patrum."

precisely why scribes should work dutifully and attentively to continue copying their works, preserving them for posterity. As a further suggestion of their books' transhistorical value, they are grouped together, in Alcuin's opening line, with "the pronouncements of the holy law," that is, scripture, which by definition must endure for the continuation of the Christian faith. As Alcuin's pupil, Hrabanus Maurus, puts it in a similar short poem "On Writing":

[O]nly letters are immortal and ward off death,  
only letters in books bring the past to life.  
Indeed God's hand carved letters on the rock  
that pleased Him when He gave His law to the people,  
and these letters reveal everything in the world that is,  
has been, or may chance to come in the future.<sup>44</sup>

Hrabanus is even more vague than Alcuin about what particular books he has in mind, observing only that "it is an exceedingly holy task to copy the law of God."<sup>45</sup> What truly matters, again, is the preservation of eternal Christian truths across all of time; and, as Hrabanus asserts, "only letters in books bring the past to life," or alternately, "renew the past" (*praeterita renovant grammata sola biblis*). Yet, as we have seen, such literary renewal/resurrection was never simply a matter of preserving the past, but also of re-presenting it, positioning it, and making use of it for present purposes.

In contrast to the generality of Hrabanus's poem, Alcuin's contemporary and sometime rival Theodulf of Orléans<sup>46</sup> is much more specific about the books and writers he has in mind in

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<sup>44</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, "On Writing," in *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, trans. Godman, 248–249: "Grammata sola carent fato, mortemque repellunt, Praeterita renovant grammata sola biblis. Grammata nempe dei digitus sulcabat in apta Rupe, suo legem cum dederat populo, Sunt, fuerant, mundo venient quae forte futura, Grammata haec monstrant famine cuncta suo."

<sup>45</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, "On Writing," 248–249: "Quam sanctum est legem scribere namque dei!"

<sup>46</sup> On the acrimonious relationship of Alcuin and Theodulf, see Janet Nelson, *King and Emperor: A New Life of Charlemagne* (London, 2019), 389–392; Samuel Collins, *The Carolingian Debate over Sacred Space* (New York, 2012), esp. 91–120.

his poem, “On the Books That I Used to Read and How the Stories of Poets Should Be Interpreted Allegorically by Philosophers” (*De libris quos legere solebam et qualiter fabulae poetarum a philosophis mystice pertracentur*).<sup>47</sup> Theodulf begins by stating that he has often read the works of Gregory the Great, Augustine, Hilary, Pope Leo I, Jerome, Ambrose, Isidore of Seville, John Chrysostom, Cyprian, and “others, whose names it would take long to number, whom the honour of teaching wafted on high.”<sup>48</sup> But then, after this opening recitation of the usual patristic suspects, Theodulf abruptly transitions to naming poets, some of them Christian writers (Sedulius, Paulinus of Nola, Venantius Fortunatus, Arator, Juvencus), but some pagan (Virgil, Ovid, Pompeius). Theodulf admits that “there are many frivolous things in their poems,” but, he counters, “many truths are concealed under a false disguise” (*In quorum dictis quamquam sint frivola multa / plurima sub falso tegmine vera latent*).<sup>49</sup> Theodulf recognizes that poetry as a genre is qualitatively different from the prose treatises by the Church Fathers named at the beginning of *De libris*. It is on account of their seductive forms and sometimes questionable content that poems (including, perhaps, some verse works by Christian authors, not only those by pagans) require very careful interpretation using the tools of allegorical exegesis, carried out by suitably learned readers (or “philosophers”). Yet, in so doing, vital truths—like those expressed in the works of the Fathers, or even in scripture—may be fruitfully recovered from under the

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<sup>47</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), 150ff., takes this poem and others, like Alcuin’s “On Scribes” and Hrabanus Maurus’s “On Writing,” as evidence that Carolingian scholars “elevated all books into a special category,” and that they valued them for their content and spiritual value far above their material worth.

<sup>48</sup> Theodulf, *De libris quos legere solebam et qualiter fabulae poetarum a philosophis mystice pertracentur* (“On the Books That I Used to Read and How the Stories of Poets Should Be Interpreted Allegorically”), in *Theodulf of Orléans: The Verse*, trans. Theodore M. Andersson (Tempe, Ariz., 2014), 140–141; Theodulf, *De libris*, *MGH, Poetae* 1, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Hannover, 1881), 543: “sive alios, quorum describere nomina longum est, quos bene doctrinae vexit ad alta decus.”

<sup>49</sup> Theodulf of Orléans, *De libris*, trans. Anderson, 140–141; Theodulf, *De libris*, ed. Dümmler, 543. On Theodulf’s attitude toward the great pagan poets, see Silvia Ottaviano, “Reading Between the Lines of Virgil’s Early Medieval Manuscripts,” in Mariken Teeuwen and Irene van Renswoude, eds., *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages: Practices of Reading and Writing* (Turnhout, 2017), 397.

layers of aestheticized frivolity. These authors cited by Theodulf are of different types and span different eras of the past. Together they are representative of the great literary inheritance available to Carolingian readers and writers in the present, to collectively guide their own works, their lives, and their society.

In these poems by Theodulf, Hrabanus, and Alcuin, there is a strong sense of continuity, and the implication of proximity, between past and present insofar as the traditional “ancient” textual canons have endured across many generations, and the wise words of these authoritative writers remain as valuable and applicable as ever. Yet, at the same time, the urgent need to study and employ these texts for the purposes of wide-ranging *correctio* suggests how perilously far the early medieval Christian world had moved away from the imagined social and moral conditions of antiquity. For Theodulf, drawing such moral and spiritual guidance from the past was especially essential because the present world abounded with deception and sin. In *De libris*, he implicitly blurs together writers of the past, emphasizing their shared utility, given the correct methods of reading. In other poems, Theodulf emphasizes the contrast between past and present, and the apparent distance between the two, deliberately stressed to deliver his strong, moralizing points. One particularly polemical text, perhaps written *ca.* 800,<sup>50</sup> is titled “Concerning Hypocrites and the Fact That in the Times of the Apostles and Their Successors the Virtues of the Church Prospered More Than in These Very Recent Times” (*De hypocritis et quod apostolorum temporibus sive eorum successorum magis ecclesiae virtutes viguerunt quam his*

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<sup>50</sup> Anderson, *Theodulf*, 36, proposes this rough dating based on the similarities of this poem with Theodulf’s *Ad episcopos*, a critical call for moral improvement among bishops, which Anderson suggests came out of the same personal context as the better-known *Contra iudices*. That poem was inspired by Theodulf’s arduous tour of southern Gaul in 798, where, under Charlemagne’s instruction, he inspected and reported on the legal institutions in the cities of that region. On that important poem and its context, see Anderson, *Theodulf*, 79–83; Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, 21–143; Godman, *Poets and Emperors*, 71–78.

*novissimis temporibus*). Without naming the specific “hypocrites” he has in mind, Theodulf laments:

When the teaching of pious priests was in the ascendant,  
 Their speech and character were the norm of salvation’s grace.  
 Now the faithless hearts and treacherous words of deceivers are sovereign  
 And deception alone holds the field.  
 At that time attention was paid the honor and example of the holy fathers,  
 To whom the order of apostolic law gave the throne.<sup>51</sup>

Theodulf is likely referring here to bishops (like himself), as he next adds: “To them was given the law of loosing and binding, the realms of heaven could be opened by their keys” (*Iura quibus data sunt solvendi sive ligandi*).<sup>52</sup> Yet, in “these very recent times” (*his novissimis temporibus*), which Theodulf sets apart from all of Christian history going back to the age of the apostles, such sacred offices have been betrayed by men of “feigned honesty” and “faithless hearts.” Later in this poem, Theodulf writes:

They have abandoned all, who, having heard the voice of the Almighty  
 Struggle to follow the Lord with spiritual love  
 And stand at the foundation of the life of apostolic example  
 So that the way of the church, as it once was, may persist.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Theodulf of Orléans, *De hypocritis et quod apostolorum temporibus sive eorum successorum magis ecclesiae virtutes viguerunt quam his novissimis temporibus* (“Concerning Hypocrites and the Fact That in the Times of the Apostles and Their Successors the Virtues of the Church Prospered More Than in These Very Recent Times”), in *Theodulf of Orléans*, trans. Andersson, 51; Theodulf, *De hypocritis*, *MGH, Poetae* 1, ed. Ernst Dümmler, 472:

“Tumque sacerdotum viguit doctrina piorum,  
 Sermo habitusque horum norma salutis erat.  
 Nunc simulatorum duplex cor, verba dolosa  
 Pollent, et retinet fictio sola locum.  
 Pontificum decus et specimen tunc cura gerebat,  
 Iuris apostolici quis dedit ordo thronum.”

<sup>52</sup> Theodulf of Orléans, *De hypocritis*, trans. Anderson 51; ed. Dümmler, 472.

<sup>53</sup> Theodulf of Orléans, *De hypocritis*, 53; ed. Dümmler, 474:

“Cuncta relinquerunt, qui audita voce tonantis,  
 Decertant dominum mentis amore sequi,  
 Atque in apostolicae vitae fundamine stare,  
 Perstet ut ecclesiae qui fuit ante modus.”

In other words, the continuity of the correct, “apostolic” Christian tradition, ostensibly preserved up until the recent past (not only through writing, as in Alcuin’s and Hrabanus’s poems, but also through actions spiritually consistent with the authoritative Christian texts), is only now under threat of being broken or corrupted by the vices of Theodulf’s “hypocrites.” In his conclusion, Theodulf goes even further back than the apostles to locate exemplary models for the “three classes” (*tria genera*) of society—secular clergy, monks, and the laity—Noah (“the model of leaders”), Daniel (“the celibate and anchorite monk” *avant la lettre*), and Job (who “performed deeds in the world without stain”).<sup>54</sup> Thus, in a subtle merging of the Old Testament with the New,<sup>55</sup> Theodulf suggests that in order to reform present-day Christian society—so shamefully tarnished by the unnamed, deceptive men against whom he is writing—back to the purity of the apostolic age, it is necessary to emulate even more distant examples, who may be typologically interpreted as pious precursors of (early medieval) Christian social categories. Theodulf’s view of the two Testaments here suggests a type of supersessionism, but a rather moderate form of it. The (Jewish) exemplars of the more hazily distant, Old Testament past have not been outmoded, or replaced, by the superior Christian exemplars of the New Testament. But it is through the later, post-Incarnation developments of the New Testament that the Old Testament figures and

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<sup>54</sup> Theodulf or Orléans, *De hypocritis*, trans. Anderson, 54; ed. Dümmler, 474:

“Nempe Noe specimen rectorum continet almus,  
 Qui pecudum atque hominum spem regit inter aquas.  
 Caelebs et monachus viget in Daniele choreus,  
 Qui luxum atque gulam vincere quivit ovans.  
 Iob sunt, quos mundi vel agit vel poenitet actus,  
 Actibus in saeculi qui sine labe fuit.”

<sup>55</sup> The relationship between the events of the two Testaments was a source of great interest for Theodulf, as evinced in other poems like *Comparatio legis antiquae et modernae* (“Comparison of the Old and New Law”) and his verse *Praefatio bibliothecae* (“Preface to the Books of the Bible”) in Anderson trans., *Theodulf*, 107–110 and 128–135.



events derive their most important and instructive meaning, as they providentially prefigured the Christian sacred narrative set to play out in the ages ahead.<sup>56</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Although Theodulf produced poems and other texts extensively praising Carolingian rulers and the fruits of their reigns,<sup>57</sup> it is nevertheless clear that he considered the Christian society of his time seriously flawed and sinful. In his view, it was a world very far removed from the illustrious golden age(s) of the past, wherever in time it (or they) might be located. By contrast, the anonymous Saxon poet known simply as Poeta Saxo, writing in the closing decades of the ninth century, effused that:

In modern times Charlemagne, by God's grace  
has caused innumerable peoples to achieve supreme salvation,  
capable as he was of beautifully controlling the morals of the faithful,  
and powerfully transforming the hearts of unbelievers with piety.<sup>58</sup>

These “modern times,”<sup>59</sup> for Poeta Saxo, here celebrating Charlemagne’s victory in converting the Saxons to Christianity, were not marked by decline nor by the imperfectly Christian conditions and social corruptions criticized by Theodulf or by Walafrid in his *Visio Wettini* and

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<sup>56</sup> On supersessionist theology generally and in the Carolingian context specifically, see n. 5 above.

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., *Ad Carolum regem* (To King Charles); *Ad regem* (“To the King” [Charlemagne]); *Ad Carolum regem* (“To King Charles” [son of Charlemagne]); and *Eiusdem ad Hludicum valedictio* (“A Farewell from the Same [Theodulf] to Louis” [the Pious]) in Anderson trans., *Theodulf*, 67–73, 115–116, 120–121, and 126.

<sup>58</sup> Poeta Saxo, “The Reputation of Charlemagne,” *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, trans. Godman, 342–343:

“Temporibus Carolus rex, te donante, modernis  
Quam multis summae causa salutis erat,  
Credendum pulcre moderandis moribus aptus  
Et mutare pie perfida corda potens.”

<sup>59</sup> On this expression and its connotations during the ninth century, see the remarks by Paul E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, Neb., 1994), 208–24, 312, nn. 42–43; and in the Middle Ages more generally, Brian Stock, “Attitudes Towards Change,” in *idem*, *The Implications of Literacy* (Princeton, N.J., 1983), 472–476.

*De imagine Tetrici*.<sup>60</sup> Rather, “those who read about [Charlemagne’s] wondrous deeds cease to be impressed by ancient history!”<sup>61</sup> In Poeta Saxo’s estimation, Charlemagne now “holds the highest honour in Heaven. There he commands the respect paid to the courage of David, in the company of Constantine and Theodosius.”<sup>62</sup>

In the view of this poet of the later ninth century—writing roughly six decades after Walafrid’s early poems—Charlemagne is not suffering purgatorial tortures, nor is he dubiously connected with a sinful, Arian ruler, as in Walafrid’s *Visio Wettini* and *De imagine Tetrici*. Rather, the *magnus* emperor is enjoying prime position in paradise together with an Old Testament king and the two most illustrious Christian Roman emperors.<sup>63</sup>

Poeta Saxo’s works in praise of Charlemagne, like all the poems discussed here, stake out a certain position and advance an argument about the past’s relationship to the present and the right sources of authority or truth borne from that (discursively constructed) relationship. The same can also be said for the two divergent works explicating the liturgy that I will consider in the next chapter: Walafrid’s *De exordiis et incrementis* and Amalarius of Metz’s *Liber officialis*. Both Walafrid and Amalarius, in their respective texts, present a certain picture of the past as

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<sup>60</sup> This lofty praise would seem to accord with the earlier view of Moduin of Autun, who, writing (ca. 804–10) during the reign of Charlemagne, effused that “our times are transformed into the civilization of Antiquity / Golden Rome is reborn and restored anew to the world!” (*Rursus in antiquos mutataque secula mores. / Aurea Roma iterum renovata renascitur orbi!*), trans. Godman, *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 192–193. Nees, *A Tainted Mantle*, 8–12, argues that Moduin’s use of “renovare” to describe the Carolingian revival of Roman Antiquity refers primarily to a return to the foundations of Christian (late) antiquity and the teachings of the Church Fathers, not to a renaissance of classical culture generally.

<sup>61</sup> Poeta Saxo, “The Franks on the Day of Judgment,” trans. Godman, 342–343:

“...mirificos Karoli qui legeris actus,  
Desine mirari historias veterum.”

<sup>62</sup> Poeta Saxo, “The Franks on the Day of Judgment,” trans. Godman, 344–345:

“Caelestis Carolus culmen honoris habet.  
Illic Daviticae pollet virtutis honore  
Cum Constantino atque Theodosio.”

<sup>63</sup> On Carolingian views of Constantine and Theodosius, see Janet L. Nelson, “Translating Images of Authority: The Christian Roman Emperors in the Carolingian World,” in *eadem*, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), 89–98; and Graeme Ward, “Lessons in Leadership: Constantine and Theodosius in Frechulf of Lisieux’s *Histories*,” in *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, 68–83.

refracted in the present, particularly in terms of the differences between current liturgical practices and those of earlier periods. As we shall see, the question of whether, or to what extent, such differences are truly a problem necessitating reform is directly tied to the authors' divergent attitudes about change within Christianity over time. Such change presented as a process of gradual, incremental development and progress looks very different than it does as the preservation, or corruption, of a singularly correct, orthodox tradition.

## Chapter 6

### ‘Maintaining a Position About Halfway between the Ancient and the Modern’: Distance and Proximity in Two Carolingian Treatises on the Liturgy

#### Introduction

As with Carolingian poems such as Walafrid Strabo’s *De imagine Tetrici* and *Visio Wettini*, ninth-century prose treatises on the liturgy, like Walafrid’s *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum* (hereafter *De exordiis et incrementis*), facilitated distinctive opportunities not only to engage with the past, but to represent the relationship between the past and the present and to make the prominent figures of ages past “present” within the space of the text. Carolingian poetry, for example, often draws from ancient pagan exemplars, yet these models are usually deliberately repositioned within a Christian framework.<sup>1</sup> No less deeply rooted in the resources of the past, the liturgy is an area of study that is inherently connected to the long development of Christianity in the centuries following Christ’s death.<sup>2</sup> As the Carolingians sought to reform, or “correct,” divergent Christian practices during the later eighth and ninth centuries, the performance of the Mass and the fixing

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<sup>1</sup> See, on this point, Mariken Teeuwen, “Seduced by Pagan Poets and Philosophers: Suspicious Learning in the Early Middle Ages” in *Limits to Learning: The Transfer of Encyclopaedic Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Concetta Giliberto and Loredana Teresi (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), 63–80; and Gernot Wieland, “Alcuin’s Ambiguous Attitude Towards the Classics,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992), 84–95.

<sup>2</sup> On the development of the liturgy and its profound impact on Christian thought and practice in the Middle Ages, see, e.g., Hen, *Royal Patronage of the Liturgy*; Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, A.B. Kraebel, Margot E. Fassler, Henry Bainton, and Lars Boje Mortensen, eds., *Medieval Cantors and Their Craft: Music, Liturgy and the Shaping of History, 800-1500* (York, 2017); Susan Boynton, “The Bible and the Liturgy,” in Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly, eds., *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2011), 10–33; and Gabrielle Spiegel, “Memory and Time: Liturgical Time and Historical Time,” *History and Theory* 41 (2002), 149–162 and “Structures of Time in Medieval Historiography,” *The Medieval History Journal* 19 (2016), 21–33, who argues that the cyclical performance of the liturgy was one of the main modes through which medieval Christians thought about and experienced the passage of time, together with a linear-historical sense of temporal progress.

of the liturgical calendar were matters of the utmost importance, inspiring writers like Walafrid to compose lengthy treatises on the liturgy. In short, both of these genres of early medieval writing—poetry and explications of the liturgy—carry with them certain built-in connections of past with present. At the same time, though, such connections were always highly malleable, offering ample space for individual writers to interpret and position points of emphasized connection (or disruption) according to their own ideas about the nature of Christian history and “ancient,” “traditional” authority.

Thus, while generic forms certainly played a significant role in molding the content of texts, different writers composing texts in the same genres of writing, around roughly the same period of time, often produced very different results. To illustrate this point regarding the interpretive and operational plasticity of genre, I will compare Walafrid’s historically-oriented *De exordiis et incrementis* with Amalarius of Metz’s *Liber officialis*, an allegorical explication of the liturgy that imparts a markedly different picture of Christian history and the relationship of past to present than we find in Walafrid’s work on the liturgy. Walafrid’s *De exordiis et incrementis* may or may not have been intended as a response to Amalarius’s work,<sup>3</sup> and yet both

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<sup>3</sup> Harting-Correa, Introduction to *Walahfrid Strabo’s Libellus*, 17, discusses the contrasting interpretative styles of Walafrid and Amalarius and notes that, “[a]lthough there is no documentary evidence for his opposition to the *Liber officialis*, Walahfrid’s admiration of and friendship with Florus [who explicitly opposed Amalarius] seems to presuppose his support for Florus’s more theological approach [in Florus’s *Expositio missae* of 833].” Yet, she also acknowledges that there is almost no direct evidence in the *De exordiis et incrementis* itself to support the view that Walafrid specifically intended his text to serve as a counter to Amalarius’s. In her recent study of Walafrid’s work, Pössel, “Appropriate to the Religion of Their Time,” 84, largely concurs with Harting-Correa’s position, against older scholarship that argued from the fact of Walafrid’s friendship with Florus and the absence of allegorical interpretations from the *De exordiis et incrementis* that Walafrid was responding to the controversy generated by Amalarius’s *Liber officialis*. On balance, Pössel concludes (p. 84) that, “Instead of the omission of allegorical interpretations signifying a veiled critique of Amalarius, it seems more likely that Walahfrid genuinely intended his own work to be complementary to existing exegetical texts, and expected his readers to be already familiar with the relevant works of Augustine, Isidore, Bede and others. Supplying what he had identified as an omission in the works available, Walahfrid focused exclusively on the liturgical practices’ history.” For earlier arguments in favour of reading Walafrid’s work as a direct response to Amalarius, see, for example, J. Hrbata, “*De expositione missae Walafridi Strabonis*,” *Ephemerides liturgicae* 63 (1949), 145–165; Karl Künstle, “Die Theologie der Reichenau,” in Konrad Beyerle, ed., *Die Kultur der Abtei Reichenau*, vol. II (Munich, 1925), 703–710.

of these texts suggest that there is a pronounced *distance* between Christian antiquity and their author's own times. For Walafrid, this distance is a natural result of change over time and variety across the space of the Christian world; as Christianity expanded, initially to the Gentiles through Paul, and subsequently far beyond its origins as the faith of a persecuted minority in the Roman Empire, the ritual practices of Christians evolved in new circumstances and environments. For Walafrid, minor divergence from apparent tradition is not necessarily, in every such instance, a problem requiring urgent correction, so long as differences in liturgical practices do not stem from more substantial differences in belief. In Amalarius's view, by contrast, such divergences are symptomatic of the corruption of tradition across intervening ages, between "ancient Christianity" (which implicitly compresses and homogenizes the long period from the apostolic age to that of the Christian Roman Empire) and the present. According to this logic, every effort should be made to return the liturgy to its pristine and correct "Roman" form.

Looking at these two works together makes for a particularly fruitful comparison, as they illustrate some of the major discourses at work during the first half of the ninth century and the various ways of perceiving and representing the past that were possible within that shared discursive milieu, one in which the past (or multiple layers of *pastness*) were constantly referred to, reflected upon, and utilized in service of the present, specifically the explicitly past-oriented cultural project of *reformatio*. Just as Carolingian exegesis and appropriation of Paul's eschatological rhetoric demonstrated ninth-century writers' serious concern for the amelioration of their own, and possible future, times of the world (see chapters 1 and 2), representations of the past and its relationship to the present and future in both Carolingian poetry and writing on the liturgy reveal much about the anxieties and uncertainties that pervaded and motivated the

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imperial efforts at *correctio*. Different actors responded to this tension in different ways—and they expressed those responses differently in different textual media. Together, these variables, as opportunities for difference, add up to a multitude of perspectives on the past, sometimes suggesting that the present age was close and intimately connected to the most revered periods of the past, other times stressing distance, discontinuity, and perilous decline.

### **Positioning the past**

As in the Carolingian-era scriptural commentaries discussed in chapter 2, liturgical explications in this period also depended heavily on earlier Christian authorities, most of whom belonged to the “ancient” past contexts idealized by Carolingian writers. Just as the greatest rulers of the Christian Roman empire, particularly Constantine and Theodosius, could be held up as models for contemporary kings and emperors,<sup>4</sup> writers like Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome were the illustrious exemplars of Christian intellectuals to which Carolingian writers—many of them ecclesiastical leaders—aspired. The transhistorically valuable corpus of Christian doctrine attributed to these sainted figures is the greatest reason why this post-scriptural era occupied a special place in the imaginations of eighth- and ninth-century Christian writers. In some textual settings or genres, Carolingian writers might deliberately position themselves as the direct heirs

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<sup>4</sup> On Carolingian conceptions and uses of such exemplary Christian rulers, see especially Graeme Ward, “Lessons in Leadership: Constantine and Theodosius in Frechulf of Lisieux’s *Historia*,” in Clements Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 68–84; Janet L. Nelson, “Translating Images of Authority: The Christian Roman Emperors in the Carolingian World,” in *eadem*, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), 89–98; Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in Karolingerzeit* (Bonn, 1968), esp. 436–446; Judson Emerick, “Charlemagne: A New Constantine?” in M. Shane Bjornlie, ed., *The Life and Legacy of Constantine: Traditions through the Ages* (London/New York, 2017), 133–161. However, as Walter Pohl, “Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rule: Historians of the Christian Empire,” in *Resources of the Past*, 15–33, shows, there was also some criticism and ambivalence toward these figures in the Carolingian era. Knowledge of the errors and misdeeds of the late antique Christian emperors could serve as an impetus for the new Christian Roman empire of the Carolingians to aspire to be more perfectly, dutifully Christian than its historical precursor.

of a continuously transmitted, hallowed tradition of patristic scholarship so as to harness the authority accorded to Roman “ancient Christianity” in Carolingian culture. In others, they lamented how precipitously far the world had fallen from the golden-age heights of the Christian Roman Empire, which witnessed and facilitated the greatest period of Latin patristic writing. By emphasizing the distance separating themselves from the Fathers, they could then more persuasively and urgently argue for the vital necessity of reform and correction.

Such rhetorical constructions of temporal “distance” or “proximity,” by different Carolingian writers and in different contemporary textual forms, already observed in passing in our survey of Carolingian poems (chapter 5), will be one of the recurring themes of this chapter. To this end, Mark Salber Phillips’ *On Historical Distance* serves as an especially helpful guide for recognizing the discursive function of “distance.” In this important study, Phillips carefully analyzes the use of distantiation as a rhetorical strategy in historical writing, which he traces first to the Florentine context of Nicolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini.<sup>5</sup> According to Phillips, it was in the works of Renaissance writers, and their disagreements concerning the exemplary utility and potential intelligibility of historical events, that a discourse of historical “perspective” began to take root.<sup>6</sup> The rhetorical construction of distance, and its close connection with cool, measured objectivity, achieved broader currency and its adamant form in the Enlightenment-era histories written around 1800. Although the historians of that generation would be criticized by the later Romantic writers for their dispassionate, bloodless

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<sup>5</sup> Mark Salber Phillips, *On Historical Distance* (New Haven, 2013), 1–19. See also Mark Salber Phillips, “Introduction: Rethinking Historical Distance,” in Mark Salber Phillips, Barbara Craine, and Julia Adeney Thomas, eds., *Rethinking Historical Distance* (New York, 2013), 1–18.

<sup>6</sup> On analogy and history, see the important recent essay by Peter Gordon, “Why Historical Analogy Matters,” *New York Review of Books*, published to the Web 7 January 2020: <https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/01/07/why-historical-analogy-matters/> [accessed 24 December 2020].



approach, the conflation of distance and objectivity was nonetheless deeply ingrained and naturalized as History developed into a professional discipline.<sup>7</sup>

The Carolingians, of course, long predate this modern development traced in Phillips' study. Yet, it is nevertheless possible to productively apply the general principles of Phillips' analysis of rhetorically inflected distance, or proximity/nearness, to texts produced centuries before his starting point in the Italian Renaissance, as well as to texts outside the generic boundaries of historiography. This is not necessarily to claim that the type of modern "historical consciousness" tracked by Phillips was discernibly already present in the early Middle Ages (though there are arguably flashes of it in Walafrid's *De exordiis or incrementis*),<sup>8</sup> but rather that such subtle rhetorical strategies of temporal distantiation were tools already available to, and utilized by, some early medieval writers.

In his attempt to historicize and denaturalize "historical distance," Phillips builds upon the influential work of Hayden White, who argued for the essentially literary nature of all historical writing, emphasizing the formal "emplotment" of modern historical narratives. As White famously demonstrated, historians' selection among generic modes for their narratives may tell us much about the political and social discourses of the historian's era and his/her position among them, yet perhaps only little about the events themselves that are aesthetically

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> On "historical consciousness" in the Middle Ages, see especially Hans-Werner Goetz, "Historical Writing, Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness in the Middle Ages," *Revista Diálogos Mediterrânicos* 2 (2012), 110–128. Medieval attitudes toward the past have long been a topic of vigorous scholarly debate. In an important and influential study, Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London, 1969), once contended that "a sense of the past" as distinct from the present only emerged in the Italian Renaissance and significantly later elsewhere in Europe; the earlier medieval period served here as a foil, devoid of genuine historical thought. Yet, in an addendum to that study, published decades later, Burke, "The Sense of Anachronism from Petrarch to Poussin," in Chris Humphrey and W.M. Ormond, eds., *Time in the Medieval World* (York, 2001), 157–174, offered a more nuanced take, explaining that he "now prefer[s]...to speak of a medieval 'sense of the past' being replaced by another, later one."

represented in their narratives.<sup>9</sup> Following from White's path-breaking ideas, Phillips argues that relative distance or proximity suggested in historical writing is mediated through the "genres, media, and conventions that give a history its formal structures of representations, including its aesthetic qualities and rhetorical address," as well as its "affective impact," "moral or ideological interpellation," and the writer's attitude concerning the intelligibility of historical events.<sup>10</sup>

Understood in these terms, critical/historical "distance" always exists along a spectrum, subject to any number of inflections or variations, and there is no reason to limit this observation to texts that are strictly historiographical in form. The critical tools provided by Phillips for analyzing rhetorical strategies of positioning the past vis-à-vis the present will be of use to "think with" moving forward in this chapter—above all, as an important reminder that such "distance" is not merely a neutral, objective feature in how the past is apprehended and represented by writers.

In what follows, I will consider two treatises on the liturgy by ninth-century writers: Amalarius's heavily allegorical, at times mystical *Liber officialis* and Walafrid Strabo's more historically-oriented *De exordiis et incrementis*. Read together, these texts serve to illustrate the variety of attitudes and perspectives toward time and the past among roughly contemporary, Carolingian-era writers, and the wide spectrum of views that helped to shape Carolingian *reformatio*, or *correctio*. While Carolingian writers collectively turned to the past as a source of authority and orthodoxy, their views on how to interpret and employ the precedents and resources of the Christian past for the present purposes of correction and reform varied much among individual writers, as well as across the formal boundaries of genre.

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<sup>9</sup> For these central contentions of his work, see particularly Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, 1973); *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore, 1978); *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore, 1987). For an application of White's analysis of narrative "emplotment" to early medieval history, see Courtney M. Booker, *Past Convictions: The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Phillips, *On Historical Distance*, 6.

**In search of ancient, Roman tradition: Amalarius of Metz's *Liber officialis***

Amalarius of Metz's writings on the liturgy, in particular his four-book *Liber officialis* (or *De ecclesiastico officio*), have captured the interest of readers from medieval up to modern times on account of the highly idiosyncratic and densely allegorical quality of Amalarius's thought and exegesis. These texts were very much products of a specific era and milieu—namely, that of the intensified reforming efforts during the reign of Louis the Pious.<sup>11</sup> More generally, the emphases on correcting the liturgy and restoring, or maintaining, continuity with orthodox Roman tradition that mark the *Liber officialis* were essentially consistent with long-developing concerns among the Frankish ecclesio-political elite. Born in the late eighth century, Amalarius had already achieved formidable status, as the Archbishop of Trier, during the reign of Charlemagne, under whose authority Amalarius undertook a diplomatic mission to Constantinople. It was, however, a later official visit, to Rome in 831, that most profoundly shaped Amalarius's thinking, particularly his understanding of authority, tradition, and the relationship between Christian practices in the past and the present. Amalarius's work on the *Liber officialis*—a detailed study of almost every aspect of the liturgy—was well underway by this point, likely begun in the early 820s.<sup>12</sup> However, Amalarius's time in Rome, his meeting with Pope Gregory IV, and the opportunity to better familiarize himself with “ancient” Roman liturgical texts prompted Amalarius to rethink, revise, and expand the *Liber officialis*. Amalarius was alarmed by the many significant differences between (what he understood as) traditional

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<sup>11</sup> On the general context of Amalarius's activity during the reign of Louis the Pious, see Eric Knibbs, Introduction to *On the Liturgy*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 2014), vii–xi; Hen, *Royal Patronage of the Liturgy*, 96–120; Graeme Ward, “The Order of History: Liturgical Time and Rhythms of the Past in Amalarius of Metz's *De ordine antiphonarii*,” in *Writing the Early Medieval West*, 98–111.

<sup>12</sup> As Knibbs, viii–ix notes, “Amalar devoted his life to uncovering the meaning and the purpose of the liturgy,” and sometime before 814 he had already composed a commentary on the Mass—a copy of which was requested by Peter of Nonantola in a letter to Amalarius dated to 814.

Roman liturgical practices and those performed by the Frankish Christians of his time.<sup>13</sup> In his writings on the liturgy, Amalarius sought to mend broken links with ancient Christianity, turning to the late antique Fathers and their later followers as faithful guardians of apostolic practices.

The *Liber officialis* was apparently widely read and circulated across the Middle Ages—in its various redactions, it survives in over seventy medieval manuscripts—but was also decidedly controversial. Some of the contemporary hostility directed toward Amalarius may have stemmed less from the substance of his writings than from the circumstances of his appointment as Archbishop of Lyon. In 835, Amalarius was selected by Louis the Pious to replace Agobard of Lyon, following Agobard's involvement in the rebellion of 833 and Louis's subsequent performance of public penance and deposition.<sup>14</sup> After Louis was restored to the throne, Agobard was himself removed from power, and his devoted partisans, such as Florus (whose relationship with Agobard was discussed in chapter 2), were, like Agobard himself, fiercely critical of the Archbishop of Lyon's designated replacement. This fraught political context should certainly be taken into account when considering Amalarius's writings and their ninth-century reception, but—ecclesiastical rivalries aside—there is much in the *Liber officialis* itself for an erudite reader like Florus to take issue with (a point to which I shall return below in examining marginal annotations, possibly originating with Florus himself, in one copy of the *Liber officialis*). Indeed, while the later denunciation of Amalarius at the Council of Quierzy in 838,<sup>15</sup> leading to his removal from the archiepiscopal seat of Lyon, may have been partly

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<sup>13</sup> On these points, see Knibbs, Introduction, vii–xxxvi.

<sup>14</sup> For extended consideration of these events, see especially Booker, *Past Convictions*; Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> On this council and the broader context for the controversies it addressed, see Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, *Florus von Lyon als Kirchenpolitiker und Publizist. Studien zur Persönlichkeit eines karolingischen »Intellektuellen« am Beispiel der Auseinandersetzung mit Amalarius (835–838) und des Prädestinationsstreits (851–855)* (Stuttgart, 1999), esp. 77–180; Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus. Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008), 208–210; Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), 194–196.

motivated by a desire for political retribution, Amalarius's opponents also took serious issue with some of his theological ideas and exegetical interpretations. Before considering such contemporary reactions to Amalarius's work, however, let us first turn to the *Liber officialis* itself to get a better sense of its guiding aims and principles.

In the introductory sections that open the first book of the *Liber officialis*, it is immediately evident that Amalarius is going to great lengths to situate his project within a hallowed Christian tradition, as represented both by the apostolic age of scripture and that of the Church Fathers. In his *Proemium*, Amalarius begins by noting one rather obscure yet troubling inconsistency that he became aware of during his visit to Rome: the number and order of prayers to be read before reading the epistle during the Mass on the Feast of the Nativity. He explains that, in addition to asking the Roman clergy about this problem, he has consulted the writings of Ambrose and Augustine on these points (a little later he enlists extra support from Gregory the Great as well), while also studying the letters of Paul to try to determine its correct solution. "In all that I write I am supported by the judgment of the true, holy, and pious fathers," asserts Amalarius, before adding: "I also say what I feel."<sup>16</sup> What entitles Amalarius to personally intervene amidst accepted authorities in this way, it seems, is the new knowledge he has gained from his recent visit to Rome. He concludes the *Proemium* with a list of specific things he "learned from the Roman see, although they will be more fully explained in the treatise that follows"—that is, Amalarius will explain their deeper scriptural meanings and ritual functions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 4–5: "In omnibus quae scribo, suspendor verorum, sanctorumque, ac piorum patrum iudicio; interim dico quae sentio."

<sup>17</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 14–15: "Haecine sunt quae a Romana sede accepi de his quae hic inserere volo, quamvis iam latius explanata sint in sequenti volumine." On Amalarius's time in Rome, and his meetings with Pope Gregory IV and certain "Roman masters," as discussed in Amalarius's *De ordine antiphonarii*, see Ward, "The Order of History," 99. Yitzhak Hen, *Royal Patronage of the Liturgy*, 101ff. (esp. 105–107) argues that there was no great emphasis placed on achieving liturgical conformity with Rome during the period of Louis the Pious's reign, but Hen considers Amalarius (in multiple respects) "a unique exception." One of the ways that Amalarius was exceptional, Hen suggests (p. 105, n. 45), is the novelty and innovation of his allegorical

These practices enumerated by Amalarius are presumed to be correct, and thus superior to any current Frankish alternatives, because of their Roman usage and pedigree; for instance: “The initial greeting to the people should be ‘Peace to you,’ not ‘Peace be with you.’”<sup>18</sup> Amalarius views the Rome of his day, still under the direct care of a successor to Peter, as a more stable site for the preservation of tradition. With the popes safeguarding orthodoxy, the present practices in Rome (particularly where they conspicuously contrast with practices in Francia or elsewhere) can be used as a kind of supplemental source together with the textual traces of the “ancient” Christian past.

While placing his trust in Rome, Amalarius seems highly conscious of the fact that he must tread lightly and express his deep reverence for other authorities—of different kinds, near and far—wherever possible. In the *Praefatio*, for example, Amalarius praises Louis the Pious as “most glorious, most magnificent, and hundredfold most invincible emperor, crowned, preserved and to be preserved by God,” and suggests that, “of all the spiritual minds of our age, it occurred to me that yours excels most of all—yours which has charity without envy, wisdom without the prejudice of knowledge that puffs up, and humility with a piety that resists no virtue and that exalts before you daily before the Lord and before those who follow you.”<sup>19</sup> Amalarius explains that his work’s intent is “to know the purpose behind the order of our Mass,” having been

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interpretation, which “clashed with the traditional and very conservative clergy of Lyon.” This is, perhaps, ironic given that Amalarius repeatedly insists on his own cautious adherence to tradition and broadly accepted authorities.

<sup>18</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 14–17: “Prima salutatio ad populum: ‘Pax vobis’ pronuntiatur, non: ‘Pax vobiscum.’”

<sup>19</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 18–19: “Gloriosissime imperator et magnificentissime ac centies invictissime, a Deo coronate necnon et conservate atque conservande [...] Venit in mentem inter omnes spirituales mentes in hoc saeculo degentes vestram potissimum pollere, cui inest caritas sine livore, sapientia sine praeiudicio scientiae quae inflat, humilitas cum pietate quae nulli rectitudini resistit, quae vos cotidie exaltat ante Dominum et eos qui vestigia vestra intuentur.”

“struck...by the diversity of our celebrations.”<sup>20</sup> Amalarius therefore is not only endeavouring to determine the correct, traditional ordering and practices of the Mass, but, as he puts it, “to know what the earlier authors who established our offices had at heart.”<sup>21</sup> This is where, as Amalarius rightly anticipates, his text might prove most provocative and contentious. Sensing this, Amalarius, here at the outset of his work, turns again to Augustine, clinging firmly to the venerated Church Father so as to protect and fortify himself. This remarkable passage deserves to be quoted at length:

[B]ecause it is so difficult for me to prove that I have always written exactly what they had in mind, I have refuge only if you find that my writings do not wander from the path of charity. Let me be defended by Augustine’s treatise *On Christian Doctrine* from those who may wish to catch me out, as if I had written dangerously, because I do not have access to the minds of those who set down our offices. The aforementioned teacher says in the first book of his aforementioned treatise: “Whoever proposes a scriptural interpretation that reinforces charity, although it is obviously something other than that the author intended, has not made a pernicious mistake, and is not at all guilty of lying. For in the liar is the wish to say false things.” A little later, Augustine continues: “He is deceived who sees something in scripture that differs from what the author intended, since the scriptures do not lie. But as I was going to say, if his interpretation errs in a manner that reinforces charity, which is the purpose of the commandment, he is wrong in this way: He is like someone who wanders from the road through a field, but reaches the same destination as the road. But he should be corrected and shown how much more useful it is not to leave the road, so that he does not develop that habit of wandering sideways or in the wrong direction.” (Note also that I have added the sign of the cross where the words of the Fathers end and my own words begin, so that I cannot be accused of secretly weaving my own words with theirs.)<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 18–19: “afficiebar olim desiderio ut scirem rationem aliquam de ordine nostrae Missae, quam consueto more caelebramus, et amplius ex diversitate quae solet fieri in ea.”

<sup>21</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 20–21: “Ardor mihi inerat ut scirem quid priores auctores haberent in corde, qui nostra officia statuerunt.”

<sup>22</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 20–23: “Sed quia hoc difficillimum mihi est affirmare, ut identidem scripsissem quod illi meditabantur, unum tamen suffugium mihi est—si ea quae scripsi, videbuntur vestrae pietati a via caritatis non excedere. Ex libro Agustini *De doctrina Christiana* defendar ab illis qui me voluerint capere, quasi periculose scripsissem, eo quod mentes auctorum officii nostri non praesentes haberem. Dicit memoratus doctor in libro memorato primo: ‘Quisquis vero talem inde sententiam dixerit, ut huic aedificandae caritati sit utilis, nec tamen hoc dixerit quod ille quem legit eo loco sensisse probabitur, non perniciose fallitur, nec omnino mentitur. Inest quippe in mentiente voluntas falsa dicendi.’ Et paulo post: ‘Sed quisquis in scripturis aliud sentit quam ille qui scripsit, illis non mentientibus, fallitur. Sed tamen, ut dicere coeperam, si ea sententia fallitur qua aedificet caritatem, quae finis praecepti est, ita fallitur ac si quisquam errore deserens viam, eo tamen per agrum pergat, quo etiam via illa perducit. Corrigendus est tamen, et quam sit utilius viam non deserere demonstrandum est, ne consuetudine deviandi etiam in transversum aut perversum ire cogatur.’ (Notandum est etiam, ne videretur

Here, Amalarius, before venturing out to uncover the original, divinely inspired meanings from which all elements of the Christian Mass took shape, admits that this ambitious project may seemingly be doomed from the start, due to the impossibility of confidently inferring the thoughts and aims of the ancient authors of the liturgy. But Amalarius invokes Augustine's comments about adhering to the "path of charity," the *via caritatis*, to claim that even where his interpretative route may seem questionable, it will be justified by its end; the destination (the correction of the Carolingian liturgy) should, in theory, correspond precisely with the point of origin (the ancient and correct performance of a given liturgical rite), even if occasional, inadvertent errors are made along the way. At the conclusion of this passage, Amalarius stresses his fidelity to the words of the Fathers by explaining his method of citation—a strategy that would not prevent later critics from taking issue with his purportedly patristically supported claims. Aided by *caritas*, Amalarius insists that he will hazard originality only where absolutely necessary. Finally, in the preface's closing remarks, Amalarius provides a bit of extra cover for himself by delivering further praises to Louis, here extolling him as "the new David" and "the new Solomon"<sup>23</sup>—comparisons that, by this time, were well-worn and formulaic, but are especially resonant here, given Amalarius's bold attempt to (re-)connect the ancient, scriptural past with the Frankish Christianity of the present. However, given Amalarius's repeated, hyperbolic praise of Louis in this prefatory letter, these references to Old Testament kings register mostly as perfunctory panegyric.

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parvitas mea quasi furtim interpolare meis verbis sanctorum dicta patrum, interposui in fine eorum et principium meorum signum crucis.)

<sup>23</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 22–23: "Divo Hludovico vita. Novo David perennitas. ...Ipsi novo Salomoni felicitas."



Following this dedicatory preface, Amalarius's brief preface to Book 1 of the *Liber officialis* immediately makes reference, again, to Augustine, this time to his distinction between "will" (*voluntas*) and "desire" (*cupiditas*). Drawing selectively from the *De civitate Dei* (14.8), *De Trinitate* (15.27), and *De sermone Domini in monte* (2.22), Amalarius compares the will (or specifically, *his own will*) to acquire knowledge to a tree growing upward and outward so as to feel the rays of God's light. As in the preceding, longer preface addressed to the emperor, Amalarius is quick to remind the reader that he will be walking in saintly footsteps, tracing the way back to the origins of the liturgy by way of the sacred authorities (like Augustine) of ages past: "There is a desire in me for the path that is rubbed and worn away with age, that I may understand my subject at its core. I want, in other words, to know what the earliest authors of our offices hand in mind, and so what fruit their intentions may bear."<sup>24</sup> What is implicit in Amalarius's remarks here is that, somewhere along the course of earthly time, the ideas of those "earliest authors" were lost or forgotten—"rubbed and worn away with age" (*tritae viae et abolitae propter antiquitatem*)—and that the best way to attempt to retrieve them, and thus remedy the corruption or neglect of those ideas in intervening periods, is through focused interpretation aided by the great Christian authors of a later (though still suitably ancient) age.

Over the books that follow, Amalarius does what he pledges to do in these opening sections of the *Liber officialis*: he draws extensively from the writings of the Fathers to support his explanations of, and attempts to correct or reform, nearly every discernible aspect of the liturgy, from the blessing of lambs made of wax on Holy Saturday, to the scriptural significance of church doorkeepers, to the original meaning of the tonsure. However, Amalarius often goes

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<sup>24</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 26–27: "Ardor mihi inest tritae viae et abolitae propter antiquitatem, ut sciam quid habeat in medulla res memorata, id est quid in corde esset primorum dictatorum officii nostri et quem fructum pariat."

further than his prefatory remarks would suggest. For instance, he selects passages from the Church Fathers that either are (in their original textual contexts) largely or wholly unrelated to the liturgical topic at hand, or do not really support Amalarius's allegorical interpretation of it. More subtly, he compresses together layers of tradition and authority. Despite Amalarius's citation method, the authors of scripture are, at times, hard to distinguish from—or else are employed to the same effect as—post-scriptural authorities, including not only late antique Fathers like Augustine and Ambrose but also much later Christian writers like Bede.

Amalarius seems to be shrewdly cognizant of when his interpretations of the liturgy have drifted far afield, and in such cases he explicitly invokes the Fathers—especially Augustine—to cover his tracks. For instance, in an early chapter on the meaning of Quinquagesima (1.3), Amalarius stops mid-chapter and summons up a rather bizarre, though telling, metaphor: “Should anyone want to say, either quietly or aloud that the rest of the material contained in the aforementioned offices does not accord with my degrees as the material that I have quoted does—then I will fly to a tree, Augustine, and I will perch in high boughs; perhaps I will be defended from the rapacious hawks by his thick leafage.”<sup>25</sup> He then inserts a lengthy quotation from the *De civitate Dei* (16.2) in which Augustine acknowledges that not all events in scripture are meant to signify something in themselves, yet in their peripheral relation to significant events they are nonetheless connected to the course of prophetic history. This passage from Augustine thus gives Amalarius license to freely explicate even the most seemingly minor, incidental details of scripture, in search of some hidden meaning or significance. His interpretation of the Quinquagesima strikes an odd balance between mystical numerological exegesis and a more

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<sup>25</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 54–55: “Si quis tacito vel verboso sermone voluerit fari non cetera quae in memoratis officiis continentur, ita aptari meis gradibus, quomodo excerpta, volabo ad quandam arborem, Augustinum, sedeboque in ramis eius; forsan defender sua densitate a rapacibus accipitribus.”

literal interpretation of Old Testament biblical history. After invoking Augustine as his “tree,” Amalarius turns to Bede, excerpting a fairly general quotation from one of the eighth-century writer’s exegetical works, wherein Bede suggests that the apostolic *ecclesia primitiva* of Acts 4:32 was already prefigured in the tribal refugee communities of the Old Testament. In one of the many scathing marginal comments that appear in the copy of the *Liber officialis* in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, nouv. acq. lat. 329, Amalarius’s reader (perhaps Florus of Lyons<sup>26</sup>) notes, “Bede rightly recognized in these the return from captivity [...] the early apostolic church, not according to your ravings” (*Bene Beda intellegit in illis regressam de captivitate [...] primitivam apostolicam ecclesiam non secundum deliramenta tua*).<sup>27</sup> Evidently, shielding oneself with the names and words of accepted authorities—Amalarius’s explicit, preemptively defensive strategy—was at times insufficient, for critical readers could spot the gaps between the writer’s novel claims and the statements of the authorities purportedly supporting those claims.

In a later chapter (1.14), on the adoration of the holy cross, Amalarius weaves together excerpts from John Chrysostom, Jerome, Sedulius, Augustine, the *Historia tripartita*, and Bede to explain how the cross ought to be glorified and commemorated through the liturgy. Following the last of these quotations, a passage from Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* (3.2) recounting a relatively recent miracle achieved through veneration of the cross, Amalarius writes:

Since we accept everything else that the master Bede says, why should we not also accept these remarks, which tell of the Lord’s miracle as shown through the veneration of the holy cross? Should anyone wish to say that this was not done through the wood of the holy cross as Bede narrates, and if he should be believed, he would be able to root out the many things we have inherited from Bede about holy scripture. Heaven forbid! And should anyone want to take umbrage at the event in question, he would appear to be in

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<sup>26</sup> Knibbs, Introduction, xxvi, observes that the notes “may well reflect the thoughts of Florus himself, though they are just as likely to be the work of another, anonymous reader among the Lyon clergy.” Zechiel-Eckes, *Florus von Lyon*, 72–76, is skeptical of direct attribution to Florus himself.

<sup>27</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 499.

rebellion against God, who worked this miracle through the wood of the holy cross, not only to grant victory to his servant in the moment, but also to perform miracles in later times through the merits of the holy cross, as was recounted in his work.<sup>28</sup>

In Amalarius's forceful rhetoric and his insistence that Bede must be accepted as an unquestionable source both for scriptural interpretation and knowledge of historical events, we can detect not only Amalarius's aforementioned defensive strategy, but also his understanding of sacred history as continuous and ongoing, as evinced by the miracle that Bede recounted and by Bede's own role as a direct heir of the authoritative ancient Christian tradition, expressing shock that anyone would dare not accept Bede's account. He may thus be included alongside Augustine, Jerome, and John Chrysostom as a worthy continuator of the collective, thoroughly orthodox doctrine of these earlier Fathers.<sup>29</sup> And yet, the apparent disruption of such orthodox, Roman tradition, leading to the problematic "diversity of our celebrations" (as he put it in his preface to Louis the Pious) is what motivated Amalarius's work in the first place. Amalarius aims to set Frankish society back on the *via caritatis*, a necessarily Roman road, as embodied by the revered Fathers from the apostolic era up to Bede.

Amalarius's idealized perception of Christian tradition, harking back especially to the golden age of the later Roman Church Fathers, is marked above all by a sense of universality, or near-universality, that once existed but has since been fragmented by a diversity of customs. In a chapter on the celebration of Easter and the correct prayers to be read during the Easter Mass,

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<sup>28</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 176–177: "Quoniam cetera dicta domini Bedae accipimus, quare non et ista accipiamus, in quibus narratur virtus Domini monstrata per venerationem sanctae crucis? Si quis voluerit dicere non ita esse actum de ligno sanctae crucis, ut Beda narrat, et si ei creditum fuerit, poterit multa patrimonia sanctorum scripturarum evellere. Quod absit! Et si quis voluerit succensere praesens factum, Deo rebellis videtur esse, qui hanc virtutem praestitit ligno sanctae crucis, ut non solum in praesenti victoriam daret servo suo, sed etiam in sequenti tempore virtutes exerceret per merita sanctae crucis, ut memoratum est in praesenti opere."

<sup>29</sup> On Amalarius's use of Bede as a supreme patristic authority, see Joyce Hill, "Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede," in Scott DeGregorio, ed., *Innovation and Traditions in the Writings of The Venerable Bede* (Morgantown, W.V., 2006), 227.

Amalarius quotes from a letter of Augustine, *ep.* 149, written to Paulinus of Nola (whom Amalarius also names), wherein Augustine observes, “Many things can be added here that are not to be rejected, but I choose to understand in these words that which every or nearly every church practices.”<sup>30</sup> Here, in this textual example, is one great, catholic bishop writing across the Mediterranean to another, able to share a common reference point of liturgical celebration, practiced by “every or nearly every church.” It is this kind of assumed, near-universal Roman tradition from which Amalarius feels distant and removed, but which he hopes to recover and restore for the “Roman” empire of his own times.

In certain cases, as in a fascinating chapter on the tonsure (2.5), Amalarius concedes that he is unable to confidently determine the exact, apostolic origin of a given custom. When confounded in this way, Amalarius instinctively turns to the security and orthodoxy of the Fathers. After providing a long, symbolic explication of the tonsure’s meaning and significance, Amalarius mentions, quite vaguely, that he has “read in the letter of a certain man” that Peter was the first to adopt the tonsure, but he then concedes that “because the letter was not of sufficient authority that I could support our discussion with it, I have decided to pass it over in silence.”<sup>31</sup> But Amalarius *hasn’t* passed over it in silence, and he doesn’t drop the issue at that point. Instead, he insists that, regardless of whether Peter himself wore a tonsure or this custom originated with some close successor of Peter, “it is not out of order should we say that [Peter] or one of his successors was the first to be tonsured after our custom, because this practice was

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<sup>30</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, trans. Knibbs, 312–313: “Insuper etiam libet interponere quod sanctus Agustinus de orationibus Missae dicit in libro quaestionum ad Paulinum Nolanum episcopum: ‘Multa hinc dici possunt quae improbanda non sint, sed eligo in his verbis hoc intellegere, quod omnis vel pene omnis frequentat ecclesia.’” Cf. Augustine, *Epist.* 149.

<sup>31</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, 396–397: “Legi in epistola cuiusdam viri: Petrus, sed quia non tantae auctoritatis est, ut ex illa valeamus firmare nostram sententiam, maluimus eam silentio praeterire.”

derived from the church in which Peter and his successors presided.”<sup>32</sup> This statement comes close to placing the origin of the tonsure back in the early apostolic era (if not directly connecting it to Peter himself), but then Amalarius immediately moves on to “the evidence of Saint Augustine,” which, Amalarius insists, shows that the tonsure was “established by the consent of the Church.”<sup>33</sup> Unable to locate a precise point of origin for this tradition, Amalarius invokes Gregory the Great’s comment, in his *Moralia in Iob*, that “it is clearly superfluous to ask who wrote this [book, i.e., Job], since the author of the book is faithfully believed to be the Holy Spirit.”<sup>34</sup> By implication, Amalarius seems to extend Gregory’s logic here to suggest that the Holy Spirit—or God in some form—is the ultimate, true “author” of all that is held to be sacred and orthodox within the Christian religion. While tracing the origins of particular Christian traditions is clearly important for Amalarius, when he finds that this cannot be done, the words of the late antique Church Fathers and “the custom and authority of the Roman church” (*ex auctoritate et consuetudine Romanae ecclesiae*)—preserving and safeguarding what were originally, perhaps, divinely guided innovations—are sufficient stand-ins for explicit evidence of actual apostolic-era origins.<sup>35</sup> Amalarius’s note that the tonsure was confirmed by the Roman church’s custom and authority, together with his subsequent quotation from Gregory the Great, points to the reliability of the papacy in safeguarding the continuity of tradition through the apostolic, Petrine authority passed on to Gregory’s successors.

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<sup>32</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, 396–399: “Non tamen ab re est, si dixerimus illum aut aliquem successorem eius primo fuisse tonsum nostro more, quoniam ab illa ecclesia sumptus est talis usus in qua ipsi sederunt.”

<sup>33</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, 398–399: “Scimus tamen ex demonstratione sancti Agustini consensione ecclesiae eam esse roboratum.”

<sup>34</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, 398–399: “Dicamus quod Gregorius dicit in *Moralibus* de scriptore libri Iob: ‘Sed quis haec scripserit valde supervacue quaeritur, cum tamen auctor libri Spiritus Sanctus fideliter credatur.’”

<sup>35</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, 398–399.

However, the fact that, in Amalarius's view, liturgical traditions have suffered corruption in recent times—despite the best efforts of the popes to preserve those traditions in their ideal, apostolic forms—necessitates looking backward, before such contamination had set in, to ancient Christianity. In the *Liber officialis*, this ultimately authoritative ancient Christian past is represented by a compressed picture of consensus among authors of scripture, Church Fathers, and popes spanning centuries. Often, for example, Amalarius clusters quotations from, or references to, patristic sources together with scriptural ones, blurring the boundaries between these different strata of Christian history. He also sometimes refers to such figures collectively, as in a discussion of the consecration of bishops (2.14), where Amalarius writes (my emphasis), “According to the authority of the fathers, namely the Apostle Paul, the archbishop Ambrose and the priest Jerome....,” thereby compressing different layers of traditional authority and implicitly erasing the temporal distance between them.<sup>36</sup>

This strategy of compounding and flattening out such layers of Christian writing was not simply accepted as normal by all Carolingian thinkers. The annotator on the Paris manuscript of the *Liber officialis* mentioned above, for instance, notes here: “Although Ambrose and Jerome were orthodox teachers, instructed by the gift of the Holy Spirit, neither of them could say: ‘Do you seek a proof of Christ that speakeath in me?,’ and therefore they do not match the authority of Paul.”<sup>37</sup> This annotator of Amalarius does not take issue with Amalarius's selection of patristic sources, nor, in general, with his way of clustering together quotations of several extra-scriptural authorities (where they generally agree on a given point)—a strategy ubiquitous across

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<sup>36</sup> Amalarius, *Liber officialis*, vol. 1, 440–441: “Secundum auctoritatem patrum, scilicet Paulum Apostolum, et Ambrosium archiepiscopum et Hieronimum presbyterum...”

<sup>37</sup> Note on Amalarius, *Liber officialis* 2.14, 535: “Quamquam Ambrosius et Hieronimus catholici fuerint doctores et Spiritu Sancti dono edocti, neuter tamen eorum dicere potuit: ‘An experimentum quaeritis eius qui in me loquitur Christi’ [2 Cor. 13:3], et ideo non sunt aequalis cum Paulo auctoritatis.”

Carolingian texts. Rather, what the critical annotator deems unacceptable is that, in many instances, the patristic statements extracted by Amalarius do not actually support Amalarius's (original, speculative) claims; or, in other instances, they do not genuinely come from the patristic source cited by Amalarius and are damning evidence of his inability to clearly identify the ideas and writings of the great Fathers, as, for instance, when Amalarius credits statements from Hrabanus Maurus to Ambrose.<sup>38</sup> For this annotator—whether in fact Florus of Lyon or some other contemporary, Lyon-associated figure well-versed in the patristic corpus—Amalarius's views are radical and sometimes heretical, and he is adding insult to injury by insisting that the Fathers would also sanction such views. In the chapter discussed above, concerning the tonsure, Amalarius refers repeatedly to patristic sources throughout his explanation of the tonsure's meaning, prompting severe rebukes from the annotator. For example:

You speak with diabolical madness and a crazy mind. For blessed Augustine, in that book that you cite, *On the Trinity*, treats of some matters concerning man and the fact that he was created after his image—not about shaving or the tonsure of the bodily head. Likewise, in his book *On the Quantity of the Soul*, he deals with the wise man, not with cutting off hair. Also, blessed Gregory on the Nazirites [...] discusses [...] the law ordered [...] and the internal things that [...] do not pertain to the modern tonsure practiced in these regions. And what will you say about the many regions in which the tonsure or shaving of the head is not practiced?<sup>39</sup>

You are clearly and quite foolishly slandering blessed Gregory, who dealt with nothing concerning our manner of tonsure when he discussed the Nazirites.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Note on Amalarius, *Liber officialis* 2.13, 535: “Sequendo falsum Ambrosium, id est qui non fuit magnus nominatus Ambrosius, in tam insolentia, incidisti ut affirmares presbiteros moderni temporis nequaquam studere pietati”; “By following the false Ambrose, that is, he who was not the great man named Ambrose, in such arrogance, you have come to the point of asserting that priests in modern times in no way strive after piety.”

<sup>39</sup> Note on Amalarius, *Liber officialis* 2.5, 527: “Furore diabolico et rabida mente loqueris. Nam beatus Augustinus, in libro a te memorato, *De Trinitate*, quaedam disputat et de homine ad imaginem suam creato—non de rasura vel de tonsura corporis capitis. Similiter, in libro *De quantitate animae*, agit de sapiente viro, non de cedendo capillos. Beatus quoque Gregorius de Nazareis [...]tis tractat qu[... ]ta lex praecipit [...]ca et interna quae [...] ad modernam tonsuram harum regionum non pertinent. Et quid dicturus es de multis regionibus quibus non est usus tonsurae aut rasurae in capite?”

<sup>40</sup> Note on Amalarius, *Liber officialis* 2.5, 527: “Certe stultissime detrahis de beato Gregorio, qui nihil de nostri moris tonsura agebat cum de Nazareis disputaret.”



Blessed Gregory explains the Nazirites' hair and their tonsure and their offerings well; you are not in accord with him, but rather radically disagree.<sup>41</sup>

This annotator is so offended by Amalarius's interpretations and his loose appropriation of the Fathers to justify them that he goes so far as to write, commenting on the same chapter: "If superfluous hair signifies superfluous thoughts, and it should therefore be cropped or shaved off, you very much needed to shave not only the head of your body, but also your mind, where such superfluities come from."<sup>42</sup>

For his part, Amalarius seemed to believe that his explanations of the liturgy were fundamentally rooted in a once-universal tradition; therefore, the statements of the orthodox Fathers—however tangentially related they may seem to be to Amalarius's main points—were in general agreement with his own ideas. For how could they be otherwise? Amalarius is acutely sensitive to diversity in the present, but not in the past. In his view, it is the splintering of the Christian liturgical tradition into diverse practices that has created discontinuity and distance from the sacred, Roman past.

### **Historicizing difference: Walfrid Strabo's *De exordiis et incrementis***

In Walfrid Strabo's *De exordiis et incrementis*, a decidedly different work on the liturgy, completed ca. 840–842, diversity in Christian practices is presented as less of a problem in need of correction, and more as an inevitable consequence of Christianity's development. While it remains uncertain whether Walfrid's text was deliberately intended as a critique of Amalarius's

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<sup>41</sup> Note on Amalarius, *Liber officialis* 2.5, 528: "Bene beatus Gregorius de Nazareorum capillis atque tonsura vel oblationibus exponit, cui tu non consonas sed multum dissonas."

<sup>42</sup> Note on Amalarius, *Liber officialis* 2.5, 527: "Si capilli superflui superfluas cogitationes significant, et ideo tonderi aut radi debent, multum tibi necesse erat ut non solum caput corporis sed etiam mentem raderes, unde tanta superflua prodeunt."

ideas—condemned as heretical by the time that Walafrid completed his work, with Walafrid’s friend, Florus of Lyon, one of Amalarius’s most vocal opponents—it is evident, in any case, that Walafrid’s project’s aims and his views regarding the evolution of Christian practices across time and space diverged dramatically from those of Amalarius’s *Liber officialis*.<sup>43</sup> As Christina Pössel notes in an important recent study of Walafrid’s text, “His focus lay nearly exclusively on the history of liturgy, not its allegorical meaning.”<sup>44</sup> While Walafrid drew from earlier works by the Fathers and their followers, including perhaps Isidore of Seville’s semi-historical *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, what sets Walafrid’s text apart “is signalled by the words *et incrementis* in the title”<sup>45</sup>—its emphasis on the gradual, incremental development of the elements of the liturgy over time, a process that Walafrid still recognized as on-going and fluid. Establishing a basic chronological sequence of figures and events in the Christian past mattered to Walafrid because tracing such a temporal sequence is, for Walafrid, essential to understanding the liturgy’s gradual, incremental progress over time. Pössel refers to Walafrid’s “total historicisation of the liturgy,” an approach that she convincingly shows was in step with other Carolingian readings of the Church Fathers, in particular of Augustine’s discussion in his *De civitate Dei* of the world as a *corpus permixtum*, with sacred/providential time and earthly time intertwined and almost indistinguishable from one another.<sup>46</sup> As Walafrid puts it, midway through *De exordiis et incrementis*, in a chapter reflecting on how Christ’s Incarnation and death served to transform the ritual significance of sacrifices: “[M]ortals should not try to reason why He, who is always the same and can never be altered, should have ordered or commanded these things or those, at this or that time, which seem diverse and contradictory. For the Author and Ordainer of those times

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<sup>43</sup> See n. 3 above on this disputed point.

<sup>44</sup> Pössel, “‘Appropriate to the Religion of Their Time,’” 81.

<sup>45</sup> Pössel, “‘Appropriate to the Religion of Their Time,’” 82.

<sup>46</sup> Pössel, “‘Appropriate to the Religion of Their Time,’” 83ff.

arranges whatever is done in time, not by His wisdom's temporal plan, but by the eternal one, justly, suitably and beneficially, although often obscurely."<sup>47</sup> Insofar as Pössel's provocative thesis is correct, and Walafrid provides something like a "total historicisation of the liturgy," it is a type of historicization that is rooted directly in the Augustinian conviction that the true, providential meaning of particular earthly events cannot be correctly discerned with any confidence by mere human minds. But what *can* be profitably studied and better understood are the temporal sequences and circumstances—together with the wise statements of the orthodox Fathers—by which the Christian religion and its liturgy have (gradually and variously) taken shape over time.

Like Amalarius, Walafrid turns often to the Fathers throughout his explication of the liturgy and its gradual development. In so doing, Walafrid's emphasis is on consensus among past (post-scriptural) Christian authorities; "nothing is done without the Holy Fathers' precedents" (*quod non exempta vel dicta sanctorum patrum confirmet*), insists Walafrid, acknowledging the profound debt of his age's Christianity to the authorities of the past. He is no less emphatic than Amalarius in his insistence upon adhering closely to the path of the Fathers. For Walafrid, however, even consensus among such lofty authorities does not necessarily stand as clear evidence of a certain liturgical element's original apostolic status, but only of its acceptance having been gradually established through precedents set by trusted sources of orthodoxy. When Walafrid observes some disagreement among these authoritative sources, he favours the appearance of harmony and consensus—that is, positions for which he is prepared to

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<sup>47</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 104–105: "Non est autem discutiendum ratione mortalium, cur haec vel illa, isto vel illo tempore quasi diversa et discrepentia ille, qui semper idem est et mutari non potest, statuerit vel iusserit, cum ipsorum conditor et ordinator temporum, quicquid in tempore fit, non temporali sapientiae suae ratione, sed aeterna iuste, convenienter et utiliter, quamvis saepius occulte, disponat."

cite multiple authoritative sources (whether patristic and/or papal or scriptural) in support.<sup>48</sup> For instance, in a chapter (21) on the frequency with which Communion should be received, Walafrid attempts to summarize “varied treatment of this matter among the Doctors of the Church,”<sup>49</sup> suggesting the variety of views and liturgical practices across Christian history, before siding with the position shared by Cyprian, Augustine, and Hilary, that the Eucharist should be received daily. He concedes that “*earlier generations* looked favourably on a weekly commemoration” or at other intervals or occasions (my emphasis),<sup>50</sup> but the harmonious agreement that Walafrid finds in Cyprian, Augustine, and Hilary matters more than the greater antiquity of attested “earlier” traditions.<sup>51</sup> Although these late antique Latin Fathers were far removed from the age and context of the early Church, their shared interpretations of “daily bread” in the Lord’s Prayer were accepted as most orthodox and preferable to other understandings—including those of Christians much closer in time to the apostolic Church.

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<sup>48</sup> On the importance of creating and demonstrating unity, concord, and consensus in different areas of Carolingian culture, see Karl Morrison, “‘Know thyself’: Music in the Carolingian Renaissance,” in *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell’alto medioevo occidentale, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo* 39 (Spoleto, 1992), esp. 380–392; Rosamond McKitterick, “Unity and Diversity in the Carolingian Church,” in R.N. Swanson, ed., *Unity and Diversity in the Church, Studies in Church History* 32 (Oxford, 1996), 59–82; Hen, *Royal Patronage of Liturgy*, 83–89; Cristina La Rocca and Francesco Veronese, “Cultures of Unanimity in Carolingian Councils,” in Serena Ferente, Lovro Kunčević, and Miles Pattenden, eds., *Cultures of Voting in Pre-modern Europe* (New York, 2018), 39–57; Janet Nelson, “How Carolingians Created Consensus,” in Wojciech Fałkowski and Yves Sassier, eds., *Le monde carolingien: bilan, perspectives, champs de recherches: actes du colloque international de Poitiers, Centre d’études supérieures de civilisation médiévale, 18-20 novembre 2004* (Turnhout, 2009), 67–81.

<sup>49</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 114–115: “quoniam multiplex est eius rei apud doctores relatio, colligimus summatim quae possumus.”

<sup>50</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 118–119: “Superioribus quidem, ita ut praedictum est, complacuit; aliis vero non solum in dominicis et festis generalibus, ut sunt nativitas, epyphania, pascha, ascensio Domini et pentecostes, verum etiam in nataliciis sanctorum divinorum munerum celebranda esse mysteria.”

<sup>51</sup> Although he suggests differing views among “Doctors of the Church,” Walafrid does not name any specific patristic sources advocating for weekly rather than daily communion, but only notes that “[o]thers who celebrated Masses every Sunday, or every Saturday in the East and in Spain, believed that it was sufficient to commemorate the Lord’s Passion every week.” Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 116–117: “Alii omni dominica vel omni sabbato apud Orientem et Hispanias missas facientes commemorationem passionis dominicae, omni septimana si facerent, sufficere credebant.”

Some disagreement among the Church's authorities and some resulting diversity in practice are only to be expected, in Walafrid's view, because he recognizes the writings of the Fathers as part of the larger story of the Christian religion's gradual "progress." As Walafrid notes, in discussing collections of prayers to be used in the Mass, these "have been put together by various authorities as they each thought appropriate" (*id est concludimus, diversi auctores, ut cuique videbatur congruum, confecerunt*).<sup>52</sup> Even traditions established through suitably authoritative precedent and associated with hallowed figures of the past are subtly acknowledged to be ad hoc, contingent productions meant to address the needs of a particular time and place. Relatively small differences in practice across time and space are thus presented as normal, and even Church authorities, Walafrid shows, are not in total agreement on every aspect of the liturgy. For instance, in a chapter (22) on whether the Mass can be performed more than once per day, Walafrid begins by observing that "[a] degree of diversity is...not unusual among priests." After describing a variety of practices in performing the Mass, he notes:

It has even come to our attention through reliable writers that Pope Leo [III] himself admitted that he quite frequently celebrated seven or nine Masses in one day, whereas Boniface, archbishop and martyr, celebrated Mass only once a day. Both lived not long before our time and both were as distinguished in knowledge as in position."<sup>53</sup>

Temporal distance, in this case, is not a precondition to serving as an authoritative "ancient" precedent, nor is evidence of continuity with an "ancient" tradition (as in, e.g., Amalarius's use of Bede as a source). Boniface (d. 754) and Leo III (r. 795–816) were, as Walafrid acknowledges, figures of the relatively recent past, and they reportedly took different approaches

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<sup>52</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 132–133.

<sup>53</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 124–125: "Fidelium relatione virorum in nostram usque pervenit notitiam Leonem papam, sicut ipse fatebatur, una die VII vel IX missarum solemnina saepius celebrasse, Bonifacium vero archiepiscopum et martirem semel tantum per diem missas fecisse, qui et non longe ante nostra fuerunt tempora et ambo tam scientia, quam gradu praecipui."

to how often they performed the Mass. It is not possible therefore for *both* of these highly respected eighth-century men to have been following from a correct, apostolic tradition. Yet, just as temporal proximity is not a problem for Walafriid, neither are such relatively minor differences. Quoting Rom. 14:5, he concludes, “As long as they agree in faith, ‘let everyone be convinced in his own mind,’ as long as those making the offering quite frequently do not think that God cannot recognize petitions in any other way, and those offering the host once a day do not think that the subtlety of their faith is more acceptable to divine considerations than the devotions of others.”<sup>54</sup> To support this argument, that a certain degree of diversity in liturgical details – not major points of doctrine essential to the unity of the Christian faith – is acceptable and natural, Walafriid emphasizes the temporal proximity, or nearness, of strong sources of authority who are known to have done things differently.

Walafriid also takes a rather nuanced, relativizing view in assessing differences across space, among regions or cities in the Christian world. For instance, in considering the arrangement, ordering, and evolution over time of the core elements of the Mass, Walafriid notes differences between Greek- and Latin-speaking regions, as well as, within the Latin West, between the Milanese and Roman Masses. Though he observes that the Roman Mass derived from the apostolic example of Peter and has remained largely untainted by heresy, Walafriid does not suggest that any of the other forms of the Mass that he mentions is necessarily wrong, or in need of correction or reform. Rather, “many of the Greek- and Latin- speaking people set up the order of the Mass as they thought best for themselves; and the followers of the Roman tradition particularly, taking over the practice of observances from blessed Peter, the principal apostle,

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<sup>54</sup> Walafriid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 124–125: “Itaque ‘unusquisque in suo sensu abundet’, dum fides concordet, ut nec saepius offerentes aestiment Deum aliter petitiones non posse discernere, nec semel hostias per diem immolantes putent suae fidei subtilitatem potius, quam superiorum devotionem divinis acceptam conspectibus.”

each in their own generation added what they judged appropriate.”<sup>55</sup> Similarly, Walafrid notes that although it is most common for churches to be oriented so that their altars are facing east, he invokes selected biblical precedents to show “that they have neither erred nor err who—in churches either newly constructed for God or cleansed from the squalor of idols—have built or are building altars in various directions because of some advantage of the sites.”<sup>56</sup> To underscore these points—that church construction may be dependent upon the specific nature of the site and that variety in the physical positioning of churches is perfectly acceptable—Walafrid names a few famous examples, from both the East and the West: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and the Pantheon (re-consecrated as a Christian church, now dedicated in honour of all the saints) and St. Peter’s in Rome. Each case is different, and was thus impacted differently by contingencies of history and geography. What matters most—as Walafrid asserts earlier in his work, in a chapter on “the progress of the Christian religion” (*de profectu religionis christianae*)—is that, from Christianity’s earliest days, God himself has guided the faith’s spread so that it may be experienced “not just in Jerusalem or on the mountain of Samaria, that is, not only in a physical locality but spiritually” (*non in Hierusalem tantum vel monte Samariae, id est, non localiter sed spiritualiter*).<sup>57</sup> Thus, the adoration of God may be *essentially and spiritually* the same everywhere that God’s word has spread, even if the performance of that adoration is manifested in various local forms. Like Amalarius, Walafrid recognizes God as the ultimate source of the Church’s earthly development and its various traditions, but for Walafrid God’s

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<sup>55</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 128–129: “Multi itaque apud Grecos et Latinos missae ordinem, ut sibi visum est, statuerunt; et Romani quidem usum observationum a beato Petro principe apostolorum accipientes suis quique temporibus, quae congrua iudicata sunt, addiderunt.”

<sup>56</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 60–61: “His et allis exemplis edocti cognoscimus non errasse illos vel errare, qui in templis vel noviter Deo constructis vel ab idolorum squalore mundatis propter aliquam locorum oportunitatem in diversas plagas altaria statuerunt vel statuunt, qui non est locus, ubi non sit Deus.”

<sup>57</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 54–55.

direction of this “progress” is seemingly looser and rather more opaque. God is the overseer of the Christian religion’s providential expansion and evolution across time and space, rather than the direct author of singularly correct versions of certain religious practices and traditions.

In adopting a more relative and measured approach to the development of the Christian liturgy and faith, Walafrid is careful to distinguish between different strata of the Christian past and the varying influences exercised by these strata in present places or contexts. Amalarius, by contrast, tended to compress these strata, or layers, of the past into a homogeneous tradition, suitably “ancient” in its origin. Nevertheless, Walafrid’s work shares with the *Liber officialis* a strong association of orthodoxy with Rome. What Walafrid seems to stress, however, is less a special period of ancient Roman Christianity to which the present Church should endeavour to reform than simply the continuous and on-going significance of the popes as guarantors of orthodox doctrine and practice. This includes not only revered late antique popes like Leo I and Gregory the Great, but also, as Walafrid puts it, “the most recent bishops of the Romans, those who lived not even two hundred years ago” (*novissimis paene Romanorum praesulibus et, qui nec ducentis annis nostra tempora praecesserunt*).<sup>58</sup> The reverence ascribed to the office of the pope, continuously occupied from the time of Peter up to the present, by men who have sometimes expressed quite different views, is in itself evidence to Walafrid that authority is not the exclusive reserve of Christianity’s deep, distant past. He explicitly compares the continuously held primatial status of the popes (going back to the recognition of “the authority of the Roman see” by the great ecumenical sees of other regions) to the historical power of the Roman emperors in “secular” affairs over diverse peoples:

Just as the Roman emperors are said to have held absolute rule of the entire world, so the head bishop in the Roman see who holds blessed Peter’s office is elevated to the highest position of the entire Church [...] Just as the emperor was in fact the head ruler of

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<sup>58</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 164–165.



the secular world not only in the eyes of the Romans but sometimes also among the races of other parts of the world, so likewise were other churches linked with the authority of the Roman see, that is, Antioch in Asia and Alexandria in Africa.<sup>59</sup>

However, while Walafrid here acknowledges the supreme ecclesiastical authority accorded the Roman see in the course of the Church's development, he, in practice, tends to use the popes (including figures as recent as Leo III, as noted above) in much the same way that he uses the Fathers: Walafrid draws both from their texts to demonstrate doctrinal points as well as from their lives (specifically from the *Liber pontificalis*, as well as from other *vitae* of individual popes) and careers to serve as strong examples of Christian leadership. For instance, in a chapter on how prayers are to be ordered within the Mass, he draws from the differing examples of "Augustine, the worthy doctor" (*venerabilis doctor Augustinus*), "Gelasius, the fifty-first pope" (*Gelasius papa in ordine LI*), and "blessed Gregory" [the Great] (*beatum Gregorium*).<sup>60</sup> What is distinctive about Walafrid's references to popes is his use of their pontificates as temporal markers for charting key developments in the liturgy's history, such as the acts of important Church councils. Otherwise, significant figures—whether popes like Gelasius and Gregory or non-papal Fathers like Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome—are situated by Walafrid as complementary sources of authority, representative of different moments in the larger, on-going story of Christianity's growth over time; they are not simply collapsed into a singular Christian tradition, although they each represent significant aspects of, or contributions, to such a tradition.

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<sup>59</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 190–191: "Sicut augusti Romanorum totius orbis monarchiam tenuisse feruntur, ita summus pontifex in sede Romana vicem beati Petri gerens totius ecclesiae apice sublimatur [...] Sicut vero summus saeculi principatus non tatum apud Romanos, verum etiam apud aliarum partium gentes interdum fuit, ita et aliae ecclesiae dignitati sedis Romanae consotiantur, id est Antiochensis in Asia, Alexandrina in Africa."

<sup>60</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 132–133, 138–139.

While the words and examples of such revered figures may continue to prove useful and instructive for Walafrid's present purposes, he recognizes that they were also products of particular pasts, which served to shape and inform their contributions to Christian tradition. In a discussion of the canonical hours, for example, after referring to some suggestive passages in scripture and descriptions of the "primitive church" (*primitiva ecclesia*), Walafrid carefully notes: "And so we learn from these and similar examples that many people observed the hours which are now the most solemn, but not with the distribution of psalms or prayer which we use today, and which we notice was begun in the time of the elder Theodosius and thereafter perfected for many reasons."<sup>61</sup> Walafrid then provides examples from the career of Ambrose (closely associated with the *tempora Theodosii*)—his supposedly having composed hymns, antiphons, and vigils, which are details drawn from Augustine's *Confessiones* and Paulinus of Milan's *Vita Ambrosii*. Hilary of Poitiers and Pope Gelasius producing "treatises and hymns in the manner of blessed Ambrose" (*tractatus et ymnos in morem beati Ambrosii*) are mentioned as further examples of the activities of Fathers and popes.<sup>62</sup> This particular way of using the Fathers, as at once models of ecclesiastical leadership and Christian life and as authoritative authors/interpreters of catholic doctrine, will be the subject of chapter 8, below. At present, what is most important to note is the way that Walafrid, whether quoting from Fathers or describing their reported actions, frequently situates them within their general temporal contexts (e.g., "in the time of the elder Theodosius"). Ambrose and Augustine, for instance, are discernibly much nearer in time than the authors of scripture and the early apostolic communities, but more distant

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<sup>61</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 156–157: "Ex his itaque et similibus intellegimus apud multos horas, quae et nunc celeberrimae sunt, observatas, sed non ea distributione psalmorum vel orationum, qua nunc utimur, quam et circa tempora Theodosii senioris inchoatam ac deinceps expletam multis animadvertimus causas."

<sup>62</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 156–157.

from the present than “recent,” highly esteemed figures like Boniface of Mainz and Pope Leo III. The sequential order and relation of figures and events across the development of the Church and liturgy are crucial in Walafrid’s text. For instance, in discussing the *actio*, or *canon*—a commemorative list of saints to be read during the Mass on certain feast days—Walafrid notes, “John the Baptist was not merely contemporary with the apostles but preceded them; Stephen was certainly contemporary and both were crowned before the apostles.” Walafrid’s observation here is that this list has been expanded over time: “later Doctors of the Church added what was appropriate to what earlier Fathers had laid down; so as the number of the faithful increased so, too, the practice of the Faith might grow.”<sup>63</sup> The resulting picture is one of incremental growth and of “appropriate,” gradual change over time, with necessarily differentiated degrees of temporal distance between both key scriptural figures and “earlier Fathers” vis-à-vis “later Doctors.” Gennadius of Marseilles (d. ca. 496), for instance, is described as “maintaining a position about half way between the ancient and the modern” (*quasi inter veteres et iuniores medius existens*) regarding the frequency with which the Eucharist should be received.<sup>64</sup> For Walafrid, these degrees of temporal distance help to explain acceptable differences in liturgical practices, which have occurred as a result of the Church’s spread and growth over time and space. They are not necessarily evidence of corruptions of an original Christian tradition, but

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<sup>63</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 142–143: “sciamus Iohannem baptistam ipsis apostolis non tatum parem tempore, verum et priorem, Stephanum vero parem et utrumque ante apostolos coronatum, ceteros quoque, qui in sequenti ordine numerantur, eisdem fuisse temporibus, quibus fuere, qui prius sunt positi. Unde constat sequentes ecclesiae doctores antiquis patrum statutis, quae congrua visa sunt, addidisse, ut, sicut religiosorum aucta est multitudo, ita et religionis crescerent instituta.”

<sup>64</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 120–121. Walafrid’s description of Gennadius’s “position” seems to refer, at once, to both Gennadius’s (d. ca. 496) era falling roughly midway between antiquity and Walafrid’s present and the fact that in Gennadius’s time some Christians took Communion daily while others did so only on Sundays. Further embodying a “middle” position, Walafrid notes that Gennadius “tempered his judgment in such a balanced way that he neither praises nor censures a daily receiving of the Eucharist” (*huiusmodi libramine sententiam suam temperat, ut cotidianam eucharistiae perceptionem nec laudare nec vituperare se dicat*).

quite the contrary: in some cases, examples of the gradual refinement of primitive practices, in others of acceptable differences in aspects of the liturgy for which there does not seem to have ever been one correct way of doing things.

Walafrid does not place patristic or later papal sources on the same level as scriptural ones the way Amalarius implicitly did, which provoked criticism from the annotator mentioned above. Rather, Walafrid invokes the Fathers' or popes' writings or actions in order to clarify or illustrate points made in scripture—exegesis effectively integrated into historical writing. However, even the Bible itself is subject to historicization: Walafrid notes that the Gospels were re-ordered and “corrected to what is now considered the true version among Latin-speaking people” from the earlier “disorderly mingling of words and meanings”; Jerome is cited as the “witness” (*ut Hieronimus testis est*) for this key moment in the Bible's editorial history. Of the Vulgate's production, Walafrid is careful to note that “the Gospels were corrected to what is now considered the true version among the Latin-speaking peoples.”<sup>65</sup> He does not go so far as to insist that the Latin Gospels since Jerome are *unequivocally* “correct,” or so wholly faithful to the evangelists' words as to allow virtually unmediated access to the original, divinely inspired texts. Thus, while the authors of scripture may represent a foundational, sacred layer of Christian authority (both in their close connection to Christianity's earliest period and the special, canonical status of their works), the texts transmitting their words to later generations, particularly in the Latin West, have been shaped by certain contingencies and the critical interventions of later figures like Jerome, while strategies for interpreting those scriptural texts were likewise developed by the Fathers and adapted by their followers. For Walafrid, the fact

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<sup>65</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *De exordiis et incrementis*, ed. and trans. Harting-Correa, 142–143: “...quam evangelia ad eam veritatem, quae nunc habetur apud Latinos, corrigerentur. In prioribus enim editionibus, ut Hieronimus testis est...verborum et sententiarum erat confusa commixtio.”

that scripture has been subject to human interventions in its dissemination and translation does not undermine the essential, fundamental truth of the Christian faith that it conveys. But it presents a useful analogy to the liturgy's incremental development and growth over time. Both are ultimately, of course, subject to God's providential ordering of human history, but in the details of their progress over time, they are further evidence of the opacity, or "obscurity," of "His wisdom's temporal plan."<sup>66</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The subtle historical nuances that characterize Walafrid's work are striking for any early medieval text—and even when directly compared with a roughly contemporary work like Amalarius's *Liber officialis*. However, Walafrid's attempt to both chart and account for the liturgy's "incremental" development may appear more striking still when assessed in comparison with his own poems (considered in chapter 5), which present well-known figures and moments from the past in a far less differentiated—at times, even atemporal—manner. Differences in genre may have been as decisive as differences in individual authorial perspective in determining how the relationships between past and present, and different ("near" or "distant") temporal layers of Christian history and authority, were represented in Carolingian discourse. Different ways of engaging with and representing the past, its key figures and events, facilitated by different generic models and possibilities (as well as by different authorial perspectives), coexisted in the expansive textual culture of the Carolingian era. There was no concentrated effort to elevate a single, dominant "temporal regime."<sup>67</sup> Different temporalities could serve

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<sup>66</sup> See the quotation from Walafrid on pp. 273–274 (n. 47) above.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Spiegel, "Structures of Time in Medieval Historiography"; and, on the viability of other temporalities and modes of representing the past (not unlike those of early medieval Europe) alongside modern historicism,

different, useful purposes in the larger, on-going cultural project of *reformatio*—sometimes emphasizing distance from the past and the disruption of tradition, other times its continuity and proximity. Historical specificity and sensitivity to details of chronology mark some texts, like Walafrid’s *De exordiis et incrementis*, while temporal ambiguity pervades others, like Walafrid’s earlier poems, the *Visio Wettini* and *De imagine Tetrici*.

The positioning of the past vis-à-vis the present is partly determined by the possibilities, constraints, and formal characteristics of genre, which I have sought to illustrate specifically by examining two of Walafrid’s poems and his *De exordiis et incrementis* in successive chapters. It is very possible that Walafrid’s underlying ideas changed substantially over time between these works—between his early period as a young, ambitious monk-poet and his later career as a well-connected courtier and Abbot of Reichenau—but the vivid, intensely imaginative quality of the poems and the cautiously measured method of the *De exordiis et incrementis* are nonetheless strongly suggestive of the power of genre to impose certain contours on writers’ representations of the past, its various ages and outstanding figures, and the ways these phenomena can be made meaningfully “present” within the space of the text. What the texts examined together in these two chapters speak to, above all, is the great variety of ways in which the connection of past eras, and prominent figures from those eras, to the ninth-century present could be conceptualized and rhetorically deployed by ninth-century Christian intellectuals.

These Carolingian writers perceived the past—particularly the “ancient” Christian past—as an inexhaustible source of authority and power. But when they fixed their gaze backward, there was never one static, neutral image of “the past” apprehensible to them. As Hrabanus Maurus rightly observes, they had to first use letters in books to “bring the (or better, *a*) past to

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Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000), esp. 237–255.

life,”<sup>68</sup> whether as tradition, as history, as transtemporal truth, or as a site of moral critique to contrast with the present. Each writer, with the generic materials and sources available to him, constructed that past itself, just as he determined his age’s positional relation to it—near/modern/recent, far/ancient, or *quasi inter veteres et iuniores medius*.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> On Hrabanus’s poem, see ch. 5, pp. 243–44 and n. 42.

<sup>69</sup> See p. 282 and n. 64 above.

## PART IV LIFE–TIMES

Part IV returns to where Part I began—that is, to Paul, and ideas about Paul and his writings in Late Antiquity. Christian writers and leaders – of *Ecclesia* and *Imperium* – of the later fourth and early fifth centuries turned to Paul not only as an author of canonical scriptural texts and architect of early Christian theology, but also as an exemplary Christian man. In his rigorous manner of life, dramatic calling and conversion, and subsequent career as a missionary “apostle to the Gentiles” – especially as recounted by Luke in Acts of the Apostles – Paul was exalted as an emblematic model of the ideal Christian *modus vivendi*. Both Paul’s words (or those traditionally attributed to him) and his life itself, his *verba* and *vita*, were sources of emulation and inspiration for the men who would later be counted among the Latin Church’s greatest “Fathers,” Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome.

In Carolingian culture, the Fathers themselves were very similarly regarded as uniquely exemplary for the quality, at once, of their wise and learned textual works and of their lives and careers as Christian leaders. In chapter 7, I begin with brief discussions of pictorial depictions of Paul in Late Antiquity and of several Fathers in the Carolingian era, suggesting loose yet illustrative parallels between these representations of revered Christian role models. I then proceed to consider late antique and early medieval texts listing and describing the “illustrious men” of the Christian past. These texts emphasize their subjects’ status as, above all, writers. The books they wrote are all part of a larger story of the on-going, gradual development of the Christian faith and a continuous tradition of “Christian literature.”

The patristic *viri illustrissimi* were lofty, aspirational models for their Carolingian disciples, but also relatable ones, who could serve as measuring sticks for Church reformers and



their efforts in a new age of Roman *imperium Christianum*. As presented in biographical *vitae*, examined in chapter 8, the Fathers were dutiful administrators, diligently working for the maintenance and improvement of the Roman Church. They were bishops, priests, and monks; writers, preachers, and translators: social roles that were readily recognizable for Carolingian churchmen, as they sought to “follow in the footsteps of the ancient Fathers.” Biographical accounts of eighth- and ninth-century holy men provide evidence of the power of “ancient Christian,” and especially patristic, exemplars in the culture of Carolingian *reformatio*.

Eloquent, orthodox writings *and* a pious manner of living and serving God and the Church were not only aspects of “patristic status,” I argue, but were together fundamentally constitutive of it—at the very heart of “the Fathers” as a special, distinctive category of “ancient” authorities.

## Chapter 7

### ‘In the Footsteps of the Ancient Fathers’: Listing ‘Illustrious Men’ and Their Books

#### **Introduction: Teacher(s) of the World**

In the later Roman empire, as in the Carolingian world, Christian leaders and writers from centuries past were exalted as ideal models, worthy of praise, reverence, and emulation. To begin, we shall briefly consider two illustrative examples showing how “illustrious men” from earlier Christian contexts were represented by their admiring intellectual heirs—first in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, secondly near the end of the eighth century.

An inscription on the apse of the Theodosian-era incarnation of the Basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls (*San Paolo fuori le mura*) reads: “Theodosius began and Honorius completed this hall, consecrated to the remains of Paul, the teacher of the world” (*TEODOSIUS CEPIT PERFECIT ONORIUS AULAM DOCTORIS MUNDI SACRATAM CORPORE PAULI*). This spectacular, sprawling basilica was planned and built roughly between 386 and 403/4. It replaced the much smaller Constantinian church that had occupied the same site on the Via Ostiense, purportedly erected over the location of Paul’s remains.<sup>1</sup> While Constantine had paid special favour and attention to the apostles, and particularly to Peter and Paul, the latter figure attracted heightened interest and devotion in the later period of the fourth century. This increased reverence for Paul is powerfully reflected in the apse’s inscription declaring Paul “*Doctor Mundi*”—not only the Apostle to the Gentiles, but the teacher of the entire world.

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<sup>1</sup> Nicola Camerlenghi, *St Paul’s Outside the Walls: A Roman Basilica, from Antiquity to the Modern Era* (Cambridge, 2018), 43–44.

In commissioning and dedicating this impressive new basilica, the emperors Theodosius and Honorius were themselves representative of what Peter Brown has aptly termed the “generation of Paul.”<sup>2</sup> The ambitious Christian writers of this Paul-focused age both composed detailed exegetical commentaries on Paul’s letters and drew explicitly on his apostolic example as a model for living, preaching, and teaching Christian doctrine. For instance, while Paul’s texts were employed by Ambrose and Augustine to reconcile principles of Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy with Christian theology,<sup>3</sup> Paul’s life-changing epiphany on the road to Damascus and his sudden, profound embrace of Christ supplied the key precedent for Augustine’s self-representation of his own “conversion” in the garden in Milan. In the most famous scene from the eighth book of the *Confessiones*, it was a passage from one of Paul’s letters, Romans 13:14–15, that Augustine “took up and read” when prompted by the mysterious call to “*tolle, lege*.”<sup>4</sup> What resulted from Augustine’s intense engagement with Paul was a “conversion” not simply in the sense of turning from one set of religious practices and beliefs to another—used in this clear-cut sense, the term arguably applies to neither Augustine nor Paul—but to a wholly new way of being in the world: a *modus vivendi*, or *forma vitae*.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley, 1967), 151: “The last decades of the fourth century in the Latin church could well be called ‘the generation of S. Paul’: a common interest in S. Paul drew together widely differing thinkers, and made closer to each other than to their predecessors.”

<sup>3</sup> See Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), esp. 65–74, 91–102; James J. O’Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York, 2005) esp. 74–80; Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversations to Confessions* (New York, 2015), esp. 249–257; Goulven Madec, *Saint Ambroise et la Philosophie* (Paris, 1974); Pierre Courcelle, “Plotin et saint Ambroise,” *Revue de philologie, de littérature, et d’histoire anciennes* 76 (1950), 29–56; Pierre Courcelle, “Nouveaux aspects du platonisme chez saint Ambroise,” *Revue des études latines* 34 (1956), 220–239.

<sup>4</sup> On the profound impact of Paul on Augustine, and on his literary representation of his “conversion,” see Paula Fredriksen, “Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and Retrospective Self,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1986), 3–34; Paula Fredriksen, “The *Confessions* as Autobiography,” in Mark Vessey, ed., *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, 2012), 87–98; Thomas F. Martin, *Vox Pauli: Augustine and the Claims to Speak for Paul, An Exploration of Rhetoric at the Service of Exegesis*, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 237–272; Benjamin Myers, “A Tale of Two Gardens: Augustine’s Narrative Interpretation of Romans 5,” in Beverly Roberts Gaventa, ed., *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5–8* (Waco, Tex., 2013), 39–58.

<sup>5</sup> On the ambiguity of “conversion” and the ways in which this notion applies (or does not apply) to Augustine’s “turning,” or “re-turning,” away from his previous way of life and to God, see especially Lane Fox,

At the same time that Paul—his life, his missionary activity, and the epistolary texts attributed to him—attracted such fervent interest, the *concordia apostolorum* of Paul and Peter came to replace the *concordia fratrum* of Romulus and Remus. Peter and Paul’s joint status as Christian Rome’s new founders, or special patrons, was continuously emphasized by lay and ecclesiastical leaders of the fourth century.<sup>6</sup> Despite apparent differences in perspective and practice—neatly encapsulated in the “Incident at Antioch” as described in Galatians, a topic of serious debate for Augustine and Jerome<sup>7</sup>—the two great apostles were nevertheless presented as a harmonious pair. In this homogenizing light, Paul the early theologian and Apostle to the Gentiles and Peter the “rock” on which the Church would be built, “pope” *avant la lettre*, mutually bolstered and reinforced the other’s status and legacy. Although the Basilica of St. Paul outside the Walls was dedicated specifically to Paul, near the supposed site of his martyrdom, the

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Augustine, 6–7, 282–294; Gary Wills, *Augustine’s Confessions: A Biography* (Princeton, 2011), 58–77; and James J. O’Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley, 1979), esp. 109–114, an illuminating discussion of the overlapping uses of *conversio* and *conversatio*, centring on Cassiodorus’s “conversion” while also discussing the case of Augustine, a model well-known to Cassiodorus. Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford, 2005) provides a penetrating analysis of Paul’s sense of radical transformation, totally negating and separating from one’s former self and life.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Thacker, “Rome of the Martyrs, Saints, Cults and Relics, Fourth to Seventh Centuries,” in Éamonn O’ Carragáin and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, eds., *Roma Felix – Formation and Reflections of Medieval Rome* (Aldershot, UK, 2007), 23–25; J.M. Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum: Christian Propaganda at Rome in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries: A Study in Early Christian Iconography and Iconology* (Oxford, 1982), 81–85; Camerlenghi, *St. Paul’s Outside the Walls*, 28–31, 42–43. Also, see now Erik Inglis, “Inventing Apostolic Impression Relics in Medieval Rome,” *Speculum* 96 (2021), 309–366, who shows how textual accounts, originating in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, of Peter and Paul’s activities and deaths in Rome led to the veneration of certain sites where their bodies were believed to have left surface impressions, such as a stone from the Forum (now at the church of Santa Francesca Romana) where the two apostles supposedly prayed together in opposition to Simon Magus. Such indirect relics, and the stories situating (or inventing) them, served to strengthen the specific, historical connection of Peter and Paul with Rome.

<sup>7</sup> On Augustine and Jerome’s correspondence and their diverging interpretations of the incident in Galatians 2, see Alfons Fürst, *Augustins Briefwechsel mit Hieronymus* (Münster, 1999), esp. 80–87; René Kieffer, *Foi et justification à Antioche. Interprétation d’un conflit*. (Paris, 1982), 81–99; Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New Haven, 2008), esp. 186–187, 236–242; Virginia Burrus, “‘In the Theater of This Life’: The Performance of Orthodoxy in Late Antiquity,” in William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, eds., *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999), 80–96; Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Augustine’s Use of the Pauline Portrayal of Peter in Galatians 2,” *Augustinian Studies* 46 (2015), 23–42.

apse mosaic depicted Paul together with Peter and Christ.<sup>8</sup> (It has even been suggested that parts of each apostle's corporeal remains were intermixed with the other's, preserved at their respective tombs, where the imperial/papal basilicas were constructed.) In the later fourth and early fifth centuries, Peter and especially Paul were studied, invoked, and venerated as the supreme guides—outside the singularly perfect example of Jesus himself—for how to be a Christian writer and interpret the profound mysteries of the faith *and* for how to live one's life so as to embody Christianity's core precepts and to faithfully perform one's sacred duties as a Christian leader in the world.

Four centuries later, Carolingian Christians viewed and represented the Church Fathers—post-scriptural writers, most of whom did not suffer martyrdom—in a similarly all-purpose, exemplary light, extensively copying and studying their many texts while also using the pious models of their (collective and individual) lives and deeds as ecclesiastical leaders as models for an ideal Christian *modus vivendi*. For instance, in a letter from a group of Frankish bishops to their counterparts in Spain, Gregory the Great was praised as “the teacher who enlightens the entire earth.”<sup>9</sup> Striking examples of how Gregory and other, earlier late Roman Church Fathers were represented as ideal Christian teachers, guided by a divine wisdom almost comparable to God's inspiration of Paul and other scriptural authors, can be found in the Egino Codex, a compilation of patristic (and pseudo-patristic) sermons and homilies commissioned by Bishop

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<sup>8</sup> Camerlenghi, *St. Paul's Outside the Walls*, 80, who also notes (p. 131) that in the later eighth century, as part of Pope Hadrian's extensive renovations of the interior of the basilica, new images were added of Christ flanked by Peter and Paul. Hadrian's amelioration of the basilica so impressed Charlemagne that he sent various precious silver objects as a tribute to the beautiful apostolic basilica.

<sup>9</sup> See Johannes Fried, *Charlemagne* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016), trans. Peter Lewis, 379. Writing against the Spanish Adoptionists, the Frankish bishops who had participated at the Council of Frankfurt (794) positioned “our St. Gregory, the pontiff of the Roman See” as a great and universal authority, in contrast to “your Ildefonsus,” the seventh-century Bishop of Toledo. *Concilium Francofurtense* (794), *MGH, Concilia aevi Karolini* 2,1, ed. Albertus Werminghoff (Hanover, 1906), 145: “Et si Hildifonsus vester in orationibus suis Christum adoptivum nominavit, noster vero Gregorius, pontifex Romanae sedis et clarissimus toto orbe doctor, in suis orationibus semper eum unigenitum nominare non dubitavit.”

Egino of Verona near the end of the eighth century (*ca.* 796–99), now Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Phillips 1676. Together with the useful pastoral texts preserved in this manuscript are four miniature portraits, which have been convincingly attributed to Godescalc, the illuminator of the famous evangelistary produced at Charlemagne’s court scriptorium.<sup>10</sup> The portraits in the Egino Codex depict Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory the Great, and Leo the Great. In life, all four were bishops—at one time, the primary meaning of “Fathers” in Christian culture<sup>11</sup>—known for their superlative episcopal leadership and their brilliance as preachers of sermons. They are among the most prominent Christian authors of Latin Late Antiquity. Here, they are represented not so much as writers in the act of writing as vessels of divine teaching, communicating and demonstrating God’s word,<sup>12</sup> by, as Augustine put it in the fourth book of his *De doctrina Christiana*, “letting [their] manner of living be an eloquent sermon itself.”<sup>13</sup> Where the earlier books of this work developed a “universal” Christian hermeneutics culled from the useful fruits of the classical disciplines,<sup>14</sup> the fourth is focused squarely on the practice and function of effective preaching. It was written decades after the first two books and most of the third, and its

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<sup>10</sup> See Lawrence Nees, “Godescalc’s Career and the Problems of ‘Influence,’” in John Lowden and Alixe Bovey, eds., *Under the Influence: The Concept of Influence and the Study of Illuminated Manuscripts* (Turnhout, 2007), 21–43.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Morrison, *Tradition and Authority in the Western Church, 300–1140* (Princeton, 1969), 59, notes that this was the clear connotation of the term for third- and fourth-century leaders like Cyprian and Athanasius of Alexandria. See also, on early conceptions of “Fathers of the Church,” Thomas Graumann, “The Conduct of Theology and the ‘Fathers’ of the Church,” in Phillip Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), 539–555.

<sup>12</sup> See Michael Camille, “Word, Text, Image, and the Early Church Fathers in the Egino Codex,” in *Testo e immagine nell’Alto Medioevo* (Spoleto, 1994), 65–94, who observes (at p. 81), regarding in particular the Augustine and Leo portraits, “What is significant about these two images working as a pair, is their insistence upon the primacy of the spoken over the written word in patristic exegesis. This emphasis upon utterance is especially significant in light of the fact that this manuscript is a collection of homilies.”

<sup>13</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 4.29, ed. R.P.H. Green (Oxford, 1995), 280: “Si autem ne hoc quidem potest, ita conversetur ut non solum sibi praemium comparet sed et praebeat aliis exemplum et sit eius quasi copia dicendi forma vivendi”; trans. F.J. Shaw, *On Christian Doctrine*, reprinted in *Augustine: The Confessions, The City of God, On Christian Doctrine* (Chicago, 1952), 697.

<sup>14</sup> On this point, see Karla Pollmann, “Augustine’s Hermeneutics as a Universal Discipline!?” in Karla Pollmann and Mark Vessey, eds., *Augustine and the Disciplines: From Cassiciacum to Confessions* (Oxford, 2005), 206–231.

insights are clearly drawn from Augustine's extensive personal experience preaching to congregations in Hippo and Carthage. In the same book, Augustine emphasizes: "Whatever may be the majesty of the style, the life of the speaker will count for more in securing the hearer's compliance. The man who speaks wisely and eloquently, but lives wickedly, may, it is true, instruct many who are anxious to learn; though, as it is written, he 'is unprofitable to himself'" (Ecclus. 37.19).<sup>15</sup> The mature, experienced Augustine who wrote these words is very much the figure depicted in the Egino Codex. Carefully explaining the meaning of John's gospel, he holds a codex bearing the inscription "*In principio erat verbum*," while three tonsured men listen intently to the brilliant interpreter of God's word and a fourth records notes. Similarly, Pope Leo, flanked by two deacons, holds open an already-written book and faces the reader directly, as if about to deliver a sermon or lesson drawn from the scriptural text at hand. Ambrose and Gregory, in their respective portraits, sit hunched over lecterns, preparing to write. But the pages, for now, are completely blank. The "patristic" writers are waiting, it seems, for heavenly inspiration to guide their hands, just as the lower-ranking clergymen in each portrait stand off to the side, patiently waiting to serve the great bishops of Milan and Rome. The saintly lives and devoutly practiced *ministerium* of these four episcopal Fathers are evocatively suggested in their Egino Codex portraits—complementing their here-written, though ostensibly originally oral, texts.

While modelling exemplary Christian living was foremost among a Christian leader's duties,<sup>16</sup> so too was complying with the established doctrinal and theological "tradition"

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<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 4.27, ed. R.P.H. Green (Oxford, 1995), 276: "Habet autem ut oboedienter audiamur quantacumque granditate dictionis maius pondus vita dicentis. Nam qui sapienter et eloquenter dicit, vivit autem nequiter, erudit quidem multos discendi studiosos, quamvis animae suae sit inutilis"; trans. Shaw, *On Christian Doctrine*, 696.

<sup>16</sup> Consider, e.g., Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione regia*, ch. 16, in Jean Reviron, ed., *Les idées politico-religieuses d'un évêque du IXe siècle: Jonas d'Orléans et son "De institutione regia": Étude et texte critique* (Paris, 1930), 191–192 (my emphases): "Nam et [in] hoc obnixe deprecamur ut in observatione diei Dominici, quo Deus

established by the Church's (past and present) authorities by diligently studying scripture and the writings of the extra-canonical "Fathers." Just as a wide range of texts were gradually compressed into the biblical canon, the written works of certain post-biblical authors were likewise merged into a living history of "Christian literature," sometimes represented together with the authors and texts of sacred scripture. Carolingian readers of the Fathers could learn much from their writings about the nature, substance, and contours of this ongoing (originally Roman) literary history, drawing inspiration for the type of wide-ranging ("Roman") Christian culture that influential reformers like Alcuin sought to establish, and ameliorate, in Charlemagne's empire. Fathers like Jerome were, at once, major subjects and authoritative narrators of this centuries-spanning history of Christian writers and their books. Texts like Jerome's *De viris illustribus* provided Carolingian-era writers and readers with a reliable guide, allowing them to connect themselves and their textual projects to the greater Christian tradition.

As I will endeavour to show in this chapter together with the next one, following in the paths carved out by these "ancient" Fathers meant, at once, following their pristine examples as holy men and Church leaders and adhering to the doctrinal and exegetical statements set down in their writings (or those attributed to them). This chapter will focus in particular on the exemplary

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lucem mundi condidit, et quo auctor vite a mortuis resurrexit, quo etiam Spiritum sanctum paraclitum de celis apostolis misit, sicuti dudum genitorem vestrum admonendo deprecatus sumus, debitam adhibeatis curam, et tanto diei debitum impendatis honorem; scilicet ut in ipsa die, quantum potestis, a curis et sollicitudinibus mundanis vos exuatis, et quod tanti diei venerationem competit, *et vos faciatis, et vestros exemplo vestro ad id faciendum et doceatis et agere compellatis...Quatenus id exequentes, vestro exemplo vobis famulantes ut hoc faciant, instruatis*"; trans. R.W. Dyson, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract: The De institutione regia of Jonas of Orléans* (Smithtown, N.Y., 1983), 60: "And so let us firmly entreat you concerning the observance of the Lord's day, on which God established the Light of the World, on which the Author of life rose again from the dead, on which He sent His Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, from Heaven to the apostles. We entreat you, as we have previously admonished your father, to ensure that you bestow upon that day the honour which is due to it; and especially that, as far as you can, you lay aside the cares and anxieties of the world on that day, that you give to it as much reverence as possible, and that, *by doing so, you teach and instruct your subjects by your own example...By fulfilling these things, you instruct your servants by your example to do likewise.*" On Jonas's *speculum principum*, see Dyson, Introduction to *A Ninth-Century Political Tract*, xi–xvi; James Lepree, "Sources of Spirituality and the Carolingian Exegetical Tradition" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2008), esp. 13–45; and James Lepree, "Bishop Jonas of Orléans and Monastic Ideals in the *De institutione regia*" (forthcoming).



status of the Fathers as accomplished writers, together forming a loosely delimited, harmonious canon; and the ways in which Carolingian-era writers drew from those patristic examples and notions of canonicity and harmony in service of their own ambitious Christian intellectual culture.

### **In veterum vestigia patrum**

Christian writers and readers of the Carolingian era explicitly strove to follow in the “*veterum vestigia patrum*,” as Alcuin of York put it. They enlisted the words, lives, names, and occasionally the likenesses (as in the Egino Codex portraits) of these “ancient fathers” in service of correcting and reforming their own times and society. In attempting to (re)trace these distant footsteps, they did not draw only, nor necessarily directly, from the major writers of the Roman *tempora Christiana*—Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, and others who flourished alongside them during the Theodosian-era “generation of Paul.” To a great extent, Carolingian intellectuals also followed the connecting, intervening paths trod and illuminated by subsequent Christian writers like Gregory the Great, Cassiodorus, Isidore of Seville, and Bede. Indeed, it was Bede who, before Alcuin, had similarly insisted that, in all things, he scrupulously followed the “*vestigia patrum*”<sup>17</sup>—in much the same way that Augustine had consciously refashioned his own

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<sup>17</sup> On Bede’s frequent use of *vestigia patrum*, and his knowledge and veneration of the Fathers more generally, see especially Joyce Hill, “Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede,” in Scott DeGregorio, ed., *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede* (Morgantown, W.V., 2006), 227–249; M.L.W. Laistner, “Bede as a Classical and a Patristic Scholar” and “The Library of the Venerable Bede,” in *idem*, *The Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Chester G. Starr (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), 93–116 and 117–149; Paul Meyvaert, “Bede the Scholar,” in Gerald Bonner, ed., *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), 40–69; and Paul Meyvaert, “In the Footsteps of the Fathers’: The Date of Bede’s Thirty Questions on the Book of Kings to Nothelm,” in William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, eds., *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999), 267–286. To be sure, referring to the “footsteps of the [ancient] Fathers” long predates Bede as well. To cite just one example: in the fourth century, Basil of Caesarea (*ep.* 197) wrote to Ambrose upon his election as bishop, advising him to “follow in the footsteps of the ancient Fathers.” In this text, Basil was urging Ambrose to “fight” against powerful Arian factions threatening his Catholic diocese and to “cure” his flock. The tradition of “ancient Fathers” was in this context an embattled, polemical concept, dividing

life and thought after his idealized conception of Paul.<sup>18</sup> These writers of the sixth, seventh, and early eighth centuries had themselves provided models of how to properly emulate the earlier, “ancient Fathers.” In so doing, they provided vital connective links to the “ancient” Roman-Christian past.

Under the Carolingians, this developing patristic tradition became more reified, and fortified, as a nearly all-purpose cultural instrument. This tradition drew its authority, in part, from its purported antiquity. Nevertheless, intervening figures—including men as close in time as Bede—who became closely associated with, and absorbed within, the “ancient” Christian tradition, were sometimes ranked and referred to as “Fathers” in their own right. As M.L.W. Laistner observes, “When referring in general terms, as he frequently did, to the authority of the Fathers, [Bede] was thinking primarily of the four greatest, Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory I.”<sup>19</sup> In Alcuin and the Carolingian writers following after Bede, the “Fathers” are,

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“orthodox” Christians from their still-formidable opponents. Bede and Alcuin similarly recognize the insidious danger posed by heresies, and try always to guard themselves against the perception that their own ideas are in any sense novel, but, significantly, the patristic tradition that they endeavour to follow is one that is broadly shared and accepted, and thoroughly dominant, within their eighth-century Christian cultures—in stark contrast to the high-stakes battles still raging between Catholics and Arians, as well as other large “heretical” or schismatic groups, in the time of Basil and Ambrose. Although there were certainly still heated controversies and supposed heresies in the eighth- and ninth-century West, there was no faction like the Arians of the fourth century, who, aided at times by imperial backing, were genuine competitors for ecclesio-political supremacy. As Graeme Ward, “Lessons in Leadership: Constantine and Theodosius in Frechulf of Lisieux’s Histories,” in Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 82, notes, “By the ninth century, time had tempered the threat that Arianism posed to the Christian church.” Thus, in this light, the polemical call to combat, or to defend against, Arianism—the immediate context of Basil advising Ambrose to follow the ancient Fathers’ footsteps—would be, in the Carolingian world, a matter of chiefly historical interest, rather like the use of Augustine’s and Orosius’s *contra paganos* arguments (as discussed in ch. 3). On Basil’s above-noted letter to Ambrose, see Angelo Paredi, *Saint Ambrose: His Life and Times*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe (Notre Dame, Ind., 1964), 127. See also J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (rev. edn., San Francisco, 1978; originally published, 1960), 48, who notes that, “Writing to Egyptian monks in defence of the Blessed Virgin’s claim to be called the mother of God, Cyril of Alexandria (*Ad monach.*) counselled them to follow in the steps of the holy fathers, since it was they who had preserved the faith handed down from the apostles and taught Christians to believe aright.”

<sup>18</sup> On Augustine’s Pauline self-fashioning, in his *Confessiones* and elsewhere, see p. 290 and n. 4 above.

<sup>19</sup> Laistner, “The Library of the Venerable Bede,” 128. See also Markus Schiegg, “Source Marks in *Scholia*: Evidence from an Early Medieval Gospel Manuscript,” in Mariken Teeuwen and Irene van Renswoude, eds., *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2017), 237–261, who discusses Bede’s use of the source marks (called “*nominum signa*” by Bede) “AM,” “AV,” “GR,” and “HR” to denote the four major Latin Fathers in his patristically derived commentary on Luke. Carolingian readers such as Hrabanus Maurus and

subtly, a more expansive and fluid category, still firmly grounded in the ancient authority of the “four greatest,” but with implicit criteria for “patristic” status that could permit nearly comparable standing for later and/or lesser writers, including relatively obscure figures loosely associated with the foremost Fathers.<sup>20</sup> For instance, in the Carolingian era, Bede, despite having flourished relatively recently, was firmly positioned among the major Fathers, due in large part to the prominent influence of his fellow Englishman, Alcuin of York, in molding Carolingian intellectual culture.<sup>21</sup> For late-eighth- and ninth-century reformers, intermediary figures like Bede were crucial in demonstrating the continuity and preservation of orthodoxy across time and space, despite disturbing signs of corruption necessitating urgent correction. Whether truly ancient or as near in time as Bede, the Fathers’ transtemporally valuable and purportedly rigorously “traditional” texts and their pious manner of life, as known from their own writings or the accounts of others, were together held up as evidence of this sacred thread of continuity. Both of these factors were of the utmost importance because patristic status in the Carolingian context derived not only from an increasingly circumscribed (though still malleable and evolving) literary canon, but also from a special type of extra-scriptural transdiscursive authority rooted simultaneously in the textual *verba* (or *opera*) and the exemplary *vitae* of the men lauded as *patres*,<sup>22</sup> as the preeminent teachers of the Church and the world.

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Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel adapted this practice from Bede’s work (though earlier writers, like Cassiodorus, had used similar methods), yet often expanded their range of cited sources to include authors beyond the principal four doctors—including “BED[A].”

<sup>20</sup> Employing a variety of empirical tools, Richard Matthew Pollard and Anne-Gaëlle Weber, “Définir les Pères de l’Église carolingienne et la place de Flavius Josèphe à leurs côtés,” *Revue d’études augustiniennes et patristiques* 67 (2021; forthcoming) show that numerous writers outside of the core four of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Gregory the Great arguably qualified as “Fathers” in the Carolingian context.

<sup>21</sup> On this point, see Hill, “Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede,” 228.

<sup>22</sup> On the importance of patristic *vitae* to the medieval patristic canon, see esp. Matthias M. Tischler, “Le rythme des Pères. Le Moyen Âge des religieux vu par la tradition des écrits patristiques,” in Rainer Berndt and Michel Fédou, eds., *Les receptions des Pères de l’Église au Moyen Âge: Le devenir de la tradition ecclésiale* (Münster, 2013), 47–90.

As with other categories of revered Christians, like “the apostles” and “the martyrs,” the Fathers were often invoked collectively, clustered together so as to represent a solid, concordant block of Christian doctrine and life continuing after the foundational layer of scripture. “Bio-bibliographical” lists of exemplary “illustrious men,” almost exclusively Christian,<sup>23</sup> laid much of the vital groundwork for this way of envisioning significant Christian writers as a collective, continuous, singular tradition, going all the way back to the writers of the New Testament.<sup>24</sup> This Christian literary tradition continues on smoothly, uninterrupted where the scriptural canon terminates. Post-biblical writers interpreted, and put into worldly practice, the enigmatic Word of God for an ever-evolving *populus Christianus*. This is the story presented in Jerome’s *De viris illustribus* and its continuations by Gennadius and Isidore of Seville. In the Carolingian era, writers like Alcuin of York and Notker Balbulus would provide their own iterations of such descriptive lists of essential Christian authors and texts. Though idiosyncratic to be sure, Alcuin and Notker’s texts can serve as snapshots of the state of the Christian literary canon near the beginning and end, respectively, of the Carolingian era. Before examining these works by Alcuin and Notker, however, we should first consider Jerome’s path-breaking and highly influential *De viris illustribus* and Gennadius’s addition to Jerome’s text, which provided a vital and long-enduring framework for representing Christian “literary history.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The usual exceptions were the Jewish writers Philo and Josephus, both of whom Jerome included. The latter, in particular, was sometimes—in later centuries and in certain contexts—regarded as something close to a “Father.” On this, see Richard Matthew Pollard, “Flavius Josephus: A Carolingian Church Father?” (forthcoming); Sabrina Inowlocki, “Josephus and Patristic Literature” and Karen M. Kletter, “The Reception of Josephus in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages,” in Honora Howell Chapman and Zuleika Rodgers, eds., *A Companion to Josephus* (Chichester, UK, 2016), 356–367 and 368–381.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Michael Stuart Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography: Between Eusebius and Augustine* (Cambridge, 2008), 14–16, on late antique Christian biographies bridging the “narrative gap” between biblical history and the eventual End.

<sup>25</sup> On the enormous medieval influence and wide circulation of Jerome’s text and Gennadius’s continuation of it, see esp. Richard Sharpe, *Titulus: Identifying Medieval Latin Texts, An Evidence-Based Approach* (Turnhout, 2003), esp. 117–119; Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004), 221–226, 235–244; and Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), 200–210, who notes (201–202) that Jerome-Gennadius survives in twenty-three manuscripts dated between the seventh

## **Toward “Christian literature”: Jerome’s *De viris illustribus* and Gennadius’s continuation**

Written *ca.* 392/3, Jerome’s *De viris illustribus* was inspired by ancient pagan models, particularly Suetonius’s work of the same name,<sup>26</sup> but adapted to new, specifically Christian purposes, following from the prominent example of Eusebius.<sup>27</sup> Jerome’s text focuses squarely on writers and almost exclusively on Christians.<sup>28</sup> Forging a vivid impression of a continuous Christian “literary” tradition,<sup>29</sup> Jerome connects the apostolic origins of the Christian movement to subsequent ages, those of the martyrs and early Church leaders up to Jerome’s own time, terminating with Jerome himself in the text’s final entry. Jerome includes no biographical entry for Jesus, presumably because, ultimately inimitable, he was far more than a mere “illustrious man,” though also perhaps in part because Jesus wrote nothing. Individual writers’ textual

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and tenth centuries, “almost all of which are of Frankish origin.” Ernest Cushing Richardson, ed., *Hieronymus, Liber de viris illustribus. Gennadius, Liber de viris illustribus. Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 14/1 (Leipzig, 1896), ix–xxxv lists in total 114 extant manuscripts.

<sup>26</sup> As M.L.W. Laistner, “Some Reflections on Latin Historical Writing in the Fifth Century,” in *Intellectual Heritage*, 4, notes, “It was Suetonius, not Livy or Tacitus, who most profoundly influenced succeeding generations; and this means not merely that lives of famous or infamous persons continued to be composed but that the historical epitomes and short surveys had a strong a biographical cast.” See also Ulrich Eigler, “*De viris illustribus*,” in Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, eds., *Brill’s New Pauly*, trans. Christine F. Salazar (Leiden, 2006), <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/de-viris-illustribus-e311840> [accessed 28 June 2020].

<sup>27</sup> Sharpe, Titulus, 117 observes that Jerome “relied heavily on the information provided by the Greek historian Eusebius.”

<sup>28</sup> On Jerome’s adaptation of the serial biography genre for representing Christian literary history, and on the impacts of his new model, see Mark Vessey, “Forging of Orthodoxy”; Mark Vessey, “*Vera et Aeterna Monumenta*: Jerome’s Catalogue of Christian Writers and the Premises of Erasmian Humanism,” in Günter Frank, Thomas Leinkauf, and Markus Wriedt, eds., *Die Patristik in der Frühen Neuzeit: Die Relektüre der Kirchenväter in den Wissenschaften des 15. bis 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 2006), 351–376; Mark Vessey, “Latin Literary History after Saint Jerome: The *Scriptorium illustrium latinae linguae libri* of Sicco Polenton,” *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch* 6 (2004), 303–311.

<sup>29</sup> On the innovative quality of Jerome’s project and its immense contribution to the development of a new conception of “Christian literature,” Vessey, “Latin Literary History after Saint Jerome,” 308, observes: “Suetonius had compiled several series of chronologically arranged notices on more and less distinguished Roman representatives of major intellectual disciplines, each prefaced with a discussion of the nature, origins and development of the art or profession in question. Jerome, contrastingly, made one sequence of all who had ‘left something to posterity on the holy scriptures,’ *qui memoriae aliquid prodiderunt de scripturis sanctis*. At a stroke, he thereby created a category of something like ‘literature’ — in the first instance, something like ‘Christian literature’ — which for its combination of objective determinacy (writing with reference to a canon of sacred texts, ‘writing on writing’) and generic indeterminacy (writing of all kinds) had no exact analogue in the ancient Latin universe of letters.”

contributions to the growing, collective corpus of “Christian literature” is what Jerome takes care to emphasize at every turn. Even saints who were far better known for their acts than for their textual output are here primarily lauded for what they wrote. For instance, Anthony, Jerome notes, “sent seven letters in Coptic to the various monasteries, letters truly apostolic in idea and language, and which have been translated into Greek.”<sup>30</sup> Though Anthony’s austere manner of life would seem to more clearly and obviously evoke the simple, rustic conditions of the *ecclesia primitiva*, it is, in this case, Anthony’s letters that Jerome uses to suggest a connection with the age of the apostles.

For the writers of the post-martyrdom period, Jerome frequently observed that they lived—or were, to his knowledge, still living—long and fruitful lives. He notes, for example, that Pope Damasus “died in the reign of Theodosius at the age of almost eighty”<sup>31</sup>; that Gregory of Elvira, “said to be still living,” was “writing even to extreme old age”<sup>32</sup>; that Pacianus of Barcelona, “a man of chaste eloquence, and as distinguished by his life as his by speech...died in the reign of Emperor Theodosius, in extreme old age”<sup>33</sup>; that Didymus of Alexandria is “still living, and has already passed his eighty-third year”<sup>34</sup>; and that Epiphanius of Salamis is also “still living, and in his extreme old age composes various brief works.”<sup>35</sup> In such repeated

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<sup>30</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, in Richardson, ed., *Hieronymus, Liber de viris inlustribus*, 45: “Antonius monachus...misit Aegyptiaca ad diuersa monasteria apostolici sensus sermonis que epistulas septem, quae in graecam linguam translatae sunt”; Jerome and Gennadius, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, trans. Ernest Cushing Richardson, in Phillip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers II*, vol. 3, 379.

<sup>31</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 48: “Damasus, Romanae urbis episcopus...prope octogenarius, sub theodosio principe mortuus est”; trans. Richardson, 381.

<sup>32</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 49: “Gregorius, baeticus Eliberi episcopus, usque ad extremam senectutem...hodieque superesse dicitur”; trans. Richardson, 381.

<sup>33</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 49: “Pacianus, in pyrenaei iugis barcelonae episcopus, castigatae eloquentiae, et tam uita quam sermone clarus...sub theodosio principe iam ultima senectute mortuus est”; trans. Richardson, 381.

<sup>34</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 50: “Didymus Alexandrinus...uiuuit usque hodie, et octogesimum tertium aetatis suae iam excessit annum”; trans. Richardson, 381.

<sup>35</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 51: “Epiphanius, cypri Salaminae episcopus...superest usque hodie et in extrema iam senectute uaria cudidit opuscula”; trans. Richardson, 382.

emphases, particularly in rather brief entries, Jerome seems to imply that the God-granted longevity of these writers' lives is subtly reflective of their special importance, and perhaps also of the relative security in which Christian writers could flourish since the time of Constantine and the Roman empire's turn to Christianity.

Jerome justifies the inclusion of controversial figures like Tertullian ("now regarded as chief of the Latin writers after Victor and Apollonius...a man of keen and vigorous character"<sup>36</sup>) and Origen by focusing on the significance of their writings for the evolving Christian literary canon. "Who is there, who does not also know that he was so assiduous in the study of Holy Scriptures, that contrary to the spirit of his time, and of his people, he learned the Hebrew language, and taking the Septuagint translation, he gathered the other translations also in a single work?"<sup>37</sup> asks Jerome in his entry on Origen, one of the longest and most detailed chapters in the *De viris illustribus*. Jerome's admiration for this exceptionally brilliant Christian scholar, whose rigorous example and prodigious output paved the way for Jerome's own work, is unambiguously clear, with little suggestion of the controversy attached to Origen's name and reputation.<sup>38</sup> In this discriminating, scholarly history of Christian literature and intellectual culture, Origen looms large.

On the other hand, Jerome's terse, laconic entries for other writers strongly suggest that he is unimpressed by their works. In such cases, seemingly, Jerome has included the figures in question because they are regarded by other influential Christians as sufficiently "illustrious,"

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<sup>36</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 31: "Tertullianus presbyter nunc demum primus post Victorem et Apollonium latinorum ponitur...hic acris et uehementis ingenii"; trans. Richardson, 373.

<sup>37</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 54: "Quis ignorat et quod tantum habuerit in scripturis sanctis studii, ut etiam hebraeam linguam contra aetatis gentis que suae naturam edisceret et exceptis septuaginta interpretibus, alias quoque editiones in unum congregaret"; trans. Richardson, 373–374.

<sup>38</sup> See Mark Vessey, "Jerome's Origen: The Making of a Christian Literary Persona," *Studia Patristica* 28 (1993), 135–145; and Irene van Renwoude, "The Censor's Rod: Textual Criticism, Judgment, and Canon Formation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages*, 555–595.

that their absence from Jerome's list would thus be too conspicuous, undermining the comprehensive aim of his project. On Victorinus of Pettau (d. 303/4), Jerome disparagingly remarks that he was "not equally familiar with Latin and Greek" and "on this account, his works, though noble in thought, are inferior in style." After listing some of Victorinus's works, Jerome concludes, "at the last he received the crown of martyrdom."<sup>39</sup> If the respect owed to Victorinus's status as a martyr is what swayed Jerome to name some of Victorinus's writings and praise them as "noble in thought" despite their stylistic and linguistic deficiencies, he is far less charitable toward his contemporary, Ambrose of Milan. "I withhold my judgment of him," Jerome writes, "because he is still alive, fearing either to praise or blame him lest in the one event, I should be blamed for adulation, and in the other for speaking the truth."<sup>40</sup> Of course, Jerome does not tacitly reserve judgment on numerous other still-living writers, but praises, and names, their texts; he does not mention a single work of Ambrose despite undoubted familiarity with many of them!<sup>41</sup>

While Ambrose made it on the list, other notable contemporaries of Jerome are missing, either because their writings had not made enough of an impression on Jerome by the time that he composed *De viris illustribus*; or possibly he was unfamiliar with their work or did not consider it sufficiently significant. Some such omissions are rectified in Gennadius's

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<sup>39</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 40: "Victorinus, petabionensis episcopus, non aequè latine ut graece nouerat. unde opera eius grandia sensibus uiliora uidentur compositione uerborum. Sunt autem haec: commentarii in genesim, in exodum, in leuiticum, in esaïam, in ezechiel, in abacuc, in ecclesiasten, in canticum canticorum, in apocalypsim iohannis, aduersum omnes haereses, et multa alia. Ad extremum martyrio coronatus est"; trans. Richardson, 377.

<sup>40</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, 53: "Ambrosius, Mediolanensis episcopus, usque in praesentem diem scribit, de quo, quia superest, meum iudicium subtraham, ne in alterutram partem aut adlatio in me reprehendatur aut ueritas"; trans. Richardson, 383.

<sup>41</sup> On the rather acrimonious relations of Jerome and Ambrose—suggested here by Jerome's conspicuously laconic bio-bibliographic note—see David G. Hunter, "The Raven Replies: Ambrose's Letter to the Church of Vercelli (Ep.ex.coll. 14) and the Criticisms of Jerome," in Josef Lössl, ed., *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy* (London, 2009), 175–189.



continuation, which does not simply pick up where Jerome had left off, but circles back to the fourth century to incorporate, most significantly, Augustine, described effusively as “a man renowned throughout the world for learning both sacred and secular, unblemished in the faith, pure in life, [who] wrote works so many that they cannot all be gathered.”<sup>42</sup> Gennadius also makes space for several figures from the (physical or textual) orbit of Augustine, for better or worse, associated with the Bishop of Hippo: Tyconius, Simplicianus, Orosius, and Pelagius. In his entries on the first and last of these “illustrious men,” Gennadius follows Jerome’s example of including controversial or even allegedly heretical figures, arguing that some of their writings still have merit or may prove useful despite their errors. Gennadius mentions in passing that Tyconius was a Donatist, without explaining that schism for readers outside Africa who may have little first-hand acquaintance with Donatism. Gennadius may well have assumed that they should be familiar enough with the Donatist controversy from their reading of Augustine’s works. With no other qualification (apart from noting that he was a Donatist), Gennadius praises Tyconius as “sufficiently learned in sacred literature, not wholly unacquainted with secular literature and zealous in ecclesiastical affairs.”<sup>43</sup> Pelagius is referred to as a “heresiarch,” but Gennadius suggests that “before he was proclaimed a heretic, he wrote works of practical value for students,” namely “three books *On Belief in the Trinity* and one book of *Selections from Holy Scriptures Bearing on the Christian life*... After he was proclaimed a heretic, however, he wrote

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<sup>42</sup> Gennadius of Marseilles, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Hieronymus liber De viris illustribus. Gennadius liber De viris illustribus*, 75: “vir eruditione divina et humana orbi clarus, fide integer, vita purus, scripsit quanta nec inveniri possunt”; trans. Richardson, 392. However, as Thomas O’Loughlin, “Gennadius,” in Karla Pollmann *et al.*, ed., *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford, 2013) [web, accessed 28 August 2020] notes, Gennadius, “a minor figure in the ranks of the ‘Semi-Pelagians,’” may have, perhaps, originally included some critical remarks in his entry on Augustine, later redacted in most of the manuscripts transmitting the *De viris illustribus*.

<sup>43</sup> Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 68: “Tichonius natione Afer, in divinis litteris eruditus, iuxta historiam sufficienter et in saecularibus non ignarus fuit et in ecclesiasticis quoque negotiis studiosus”; trans. Richardson, 389. For the full entry on Tyconius, see ch. 1, n. 78 above.

works bearing on his heresy.”<sup>44</sup> If Augustine’s use, and partly admiring description, of Tyconius’s *Liber regularum* was convincing enough for Gennadius to compose an admiring entry on Tyconius,<sup>45</sup> Augustine’s famous, late-career opposition to Pelagius did not dissuade Gennadius from arguing for the substance and merit of some of Pelagius’s earlier works and separating these potentially useful texts from the “heretical” writings that had prompted Augustine’s opposition. In Jerome’s original *De viris illustribus*, early apostolic-era figures are noted for their personal or textual connections to Peter and especially to Paul. This is true of non-canonical authors like Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, and Lucius Annaeus Seneca (“a man of most continent life, whom I should not place in the category of saints were it not that those Epistles of Paul to Seneca and Seneca to Paul, which are read by many, provoke me”<sup>46</sup>), but also of scriptural writers like Luke, described as “an adherent of the apostle Paul, and company of all his journeying.” Jerome explains that Luke wrote his gospel from received information, not firsthand testimony, but he composed the Acts of the Apostles as a direct eyewitness account of Paul’s career.<sup>47</sup> Gennadius’s representation of Augustine and those in his general orbit provides a comparable, though post-scriptural, case of a rising tide, a towering figure of “Christian

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<sup>44</sup> Gennadius, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 77: “Pelagius haeresiarches, antequam proderetur haereticus, scripsit studiosis necessaria: tres De fide Trinitatis libros et pro actuali conversatione Eclogarum ex Divinis Scripturis librum unum...Postquam vero haereticus publicatus est, scripsit haeresi suae faventia”; trans. Richardson, 393.

<sup>45</sup> On the influence of Augustine on the reception and reputation of Tyconius, see ch. 1.

<sup>46</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 15: “Lucius Annaeus Seneca Cordubensi...continentissimae uitae fuit, quem non ponerem in catalogo sanctorum nisi me illae epistolae prouocarent, quae leguntur a plurimis Pauli ad Senecam et Senecae ad Paulum”; trans. Richardson, 365. The apocryphal correspondence of Paul and Seneca is edited in *Epistolae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam*, ed. Claude W. Barlow (Rome, 1938). Yitzhak Hen, “Alcuin, Seneca and the Brahmins of India,” in Rob Meens, Dorine van Epselo, Bram van den Hoven van Genderen, Janneke Raaijmakers, Irene van Renswoude, and Carine van Rhijn, eds., *Religious Franks: Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms: Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong* (Manchester, 2016), 148–161 provides a summary of modern scholarship on these late antique forgeries, as well as discussion of the spurious letters’ continued impact in the Carolingian era.

<sup>47</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Richardson, 11: “Lucas...sectator apostoli Pauli et omnis eius peregrinationis comes... igitur euangelium, sicut audierat scripsit; acta uero apostolorum, sicut uiderat ipse, composuit”; trans. Richardson, 363–364.

literature,” lifting up lesser ships so as to merit mention among Christianity’s most “illustrious men”—particularly in their capacity as writers. Such lesser figures include not only those who were actually vital players in the immediate “intellectual space” around Augustine in Rome, Milan, or Africa,<sup>48</sup> but also those who were more loosely and broadly associated with his name or ideas from the vantage point of subsequent generations. Representations of Christian literary history such as Gennadius’s continuation of the *De viris illustribus* thus deepened relatively faint connections among Christian writers, major and minor, now joined together across space and time in an *imagined* common “intellectual space.”

In effect, Gennadius, and later Isidore of Seville in the seventh century,<sup>49</sup> followed Jerome’s innovative lead in fashioning a “tradition,” necessarily delimited, yet continuous and living: a canon of Christian literature, harkening back to the writers of the New Testament. This ever-growing, still-evolving canon was heavily marked by the epoch-defining influences of Christianity’s brightest stars—Paul, Peter, Augustine, Jerome himself, and others known for their extraordinary lives and accomplishments as well as for their literary output—around whom were clustered many lesser lights, known only for their writings and/or for their peripheral connections

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<sup>48</sup> On the concept of “intellectual space,” see Therese Fuhrer, “The ‘Milan Narrative’ in Augustine’s *Confessions*: Intellectual and Material Spaces in Late Antique Milan,” *Studia Patristica* 70 (2013), 17–36, who considers both the particular cultural and material conditions of Milan during Augustine’s time there (384–387). Her working definition of “intellectual space” (at p. 18) emphasizes immediate proximity and substantial interaction among people and texts: “An intellectual space can be defined by a constellation of persons, that is, the ‘collective’ or ‘aggregate’ of actors who are in communication with each other within limits of time and place: they are located in spatial proximity at a particular moment and are in contact informally or work at the same institution. An intellectual space is also formed by a constellation of documents: that is, the simultaneous presence of texts and other materials that were or are of importance for the genesis and history of the ideas and theories produced in that space.”

<sup>49</sup> *Sancti Isidori Hispalensis episcopi de viris illustribus*, PL 83, col. 1081–1106. Unsurprisingly, Isidore added numerous Spanish writers, including his brother and predecessor as Bishop of Seville, Leander. Outside these Iberian figures, Isidore’s more notable additions include Gregory the Great, Fulgentius of Ruspe, Primasius of Hadrumetum, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Avitus of Viene. Isidore also added the earliest biographers of Augustine and Ambrose, Possidius of Calama and Paulinus of Milan, figures notable mainly, or exclusively, for dutifully recording the lives of major Fathers (discussed in ch. 8). On Isidore’s continuation, see Heinz Koeppler, “*De viris illustribus* and Isidore of Seville,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1936), 16–34; and McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 201.

to major Fathers, but nonetheless worthy of being preserved for posterity and memory. Their individual textual contributions were instructive for better understanding the temporal course of Christianity's history, and, in most cases, they could be considered as still practically valuable and useful for readers of later ages.

**Alcuin of York, *Versus de patribus regibus et sanctis Euboricensis***

Writing in the late eighth and early ninth centuries, Alcuin of York was a reverent heir and student of the “illustrious men” of the Christian past, as recorded by Jerome and Gennadius. Alcuin consciously sought to follow in the Fathers’ hallowed footsteps through his service as a much-admired teacher and mentor, first to the young men of his native York and later at Charlemagne’s court and ultimately at Tours, where he was appointed as abbot. His *Versus de patribus regibus et sanctis Euboricensis ecclesiae* (hereafter *Versus de patribus*), a verse history of the church of York, is explicitly dedicated to his former Northumbrian pupils but was probably composed after Alcuin had established a close relationship with Charlemagne, perhaps as late as 792 or 793, as Peter Godman has convincingly shown.<sup>50</sup> If Godman’s re-dating of the text is accepted, it seems likely that Alcuin considered Carolingian Christians as at least an important secondary audience for his poem. Although during the years 790–793 Alcuin had returned to England, where he most likely completed his poem, he seems to have kept one eye on a Frankish world that was already well-known to him from years spent at the Carolingian court. Notwithstanding its focus on York, Alcuin’s work is broadly moralistic in its tone, teaching his readers not only about York’s tumultuous history, but reminding them about the supreme importance of following, in all ways, the *veterum vestigia patrum*. These “*vestigia*”—sometimes

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<sup>50</sup> Peter Godman, Introduction to Alcuin, *The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York* (Oxford, 1982), ed. and trans. Godman, xlv–xlvii, argues against the traditional dating of 780–782, which had placed the *Versus de patribus* among, possibly, Alcuin’s few surviving works composed before he had first left England for the continent.

translated as “footsteps,” at other times as “legacy”<sup>51</sup>—refer alternately, or sometimes at once, to the paths carved out by the exemplary lives of the “ancient fathers” and the precious textual traces that they left behind, through which both their ideas and their character as Christian men may be known.

These “ancient fathers” whose footsteps should be followed are not only Bede’s northern English progenitors, but the great Christian writers spanning from the ancient Mediterranean world up to eighth-century Northumbria. Near the end of the *Versus de patribus*, Alcuin discusses the great library amassed by Archbishop Ælbeht (d. 780) at York, emphasizing its abundance of patristic content: the “collection of / books, which that famous teacher had collected everywhere, / storing these priceless treasures under one roof / There you will find the legacy of the ancient fathers / all the Romans possessed in the Latin world / whatever famous Greece had transmitted to the Latins / draughts of the Hebrew race from Heaven’s showers / what Africa has spread abroad in streams of light.”<sup>52</sup> The list of authors that follows may or may not reflect the actual holdings of York’s cathedral library. Given that Alcuin does not name or describe any specific works by the writers he mentions, his list is of rather limited value to modern historians who are concerned with reconstructing York’s early medieval library.<sup>53</sup> In a

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<sup>51</sup> For example, Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 102: “Actu, mente, fide veterum vestigia patrum / semper dum vixit directo est calle secutus”; trans. Godman, 103: “He followed / the footsteps of the ancient fathers in actions, spirit, and faith / walking the straight and narrow path through all his days.” Cf. Alcuin, *De patribus*, 122: “Illic invenies veterum vestigia patrum”; trans. Godman, 123: “There [i.e., in the library] you will find the legacy of the ancient fathers.” Erik Inglis, “Inventing Apostolic Relics in Medieval Rome,” esp. 343–349, considers literal *vestigia*: footprints on Rome’s Via Appia (now preserved at the church of San Sebastiano) believed to be those of the risen Christ following from the famous *Quo vadis?* appearance in the apocryphal Acts of Peter.

<sup>52</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 120, 122: “studium sedemque librosque, / undique quos clarus collegerat ante magister / egregias condens uno sub culmine gazas. / Illic invenies veterum vestigia patrum / quicquid habet per se Latio Romanus in orbe, / Graecia vel quicquid transmisit clara Latinis, / Hebraicus vel quod populus bibit imbre superno, / Africa lucifluo vel quicquid lumine sparsit”; trans. Godman, 121, 123.

<sup>53</sup> See Godman, Introduction to Alcuin, *The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York*, lxiv–lxv; Laistner, “The Library of the Venerable Bede,” 117–118. See also Mary Garrison, “The Library of Alcuin’s York,” in Richard Gameson, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge, 2011), 633–664; and Gernot Wieland, “Alcuin’s Ambiguous Attitude Towards the Classics,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992), 84–95, which

more general vein, though, this short accounting of important authors, extending far beyond the context of England and figures connected to its history, serves as a fascinating snapshot of the literary canon of the late eighth or early ninth century. Christian writers are named together with classical authors, and, at least ostensibly, Greek alongside Latin, though Greek writers' works may have been present at York only in Latin translations. In the quotation above, Alcuin tellingly refers to Greece and Africa in order to emphasize the *universality* of this great literary inheritance. As a prescribed ideal for Christian learning, with the tools of the pagan classics deployed in service of Christian scholarship, this patchwork picture of a suitably ancient and universal canon would have certainly been as applicable for readers in Carolingian Francia as for Alcuin's brethren at York, his immediate intended audience.

Alcuin begins by naming Christian authorities, and his list is largely traditional and expected, though not without its idiosyncrasies:

the perceptions of father Jerome and of Hilary  
of bishop Ambrose, Augustine, and  
of saint Athanasius, the writings of astute Orosius  
the teachings of Gregory the Great and Pope Leo,  
the glowing words of Basil and Fulgentius  
of Cassiodorus and John Chrysostom;  
the teaching of Aldhelm and Bede the master,  
the writings of Victorinus and Boethius<sup>54</sup>

Even accounting for the constraints of metre—Laistner attributes the omission of major authors like Isidore of Seville to such formal constraints<sup>55</sup>—there are curious aspects to Alcuin's survey

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provides an insightful analysis of Alcuin as a poet and his range of influences among both Christian and classical poets.

<sup>54</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 122, 124: "quod pater Hieronymus, quod sensit Hilarius atque / Ambrosius praesul, simul Augustinus et ipse / sanctus Athanasius, quod Orosius edit acutus, / quicquid Gregorius summus docet et Leo papa, / Basilius quicquid Fulgentius atque coruscant, / Cassiodorus item, Chrysostomus atque Iohannes; / quicquid et Althelmus docuit, quid Beda magister; / quae Victorinus scripsere Boethius atque"; trans. Godman, 123, 125.

<sup>55</sup> M.L.W. Laistner, "The Library of the Venerable Bede," 118: "[I]t is certain that the exigencies of metre compelled Alcuin to omit the names of writers who were certainly represented to some extent in the library, for example, Isidore of Seville." Yet, even if Alcuin's poem offers only little help toward establishing the contents of

of the Fathers. First, only Jerome and, perhaps by implication, Hilary are actually referred to as “*pater*.” For the sake of variety, metre, or both, Alcuin opts for alternate descriptions of the other writers he cites. As in the Egino Codex, he clusters together bishops, “*praesul*” Ambrose, Augustine, and “*sanctus*” Athanasius, while bishops of Rome, Popes Leo and Gregory, are paired together separately, with Orosius in between them. Although the ecclesiastical ranks held by these writers cannot, in principle, tell the reader anything about the special value or substance of their writings, shared knowledge, among early medieval readers, of these writers’ superlative service in their episcopal roles infused the reception and appreciation of their textual works. If Alcuin’s naming of the Greek writers Athanasius, Origen, Basil, and John Chrysostom lends his list (and York’s purported library holdings) a greater appearance of universality and erudition, then, in this light, it is all the more impressive for Bede and Aldhelm to merit mention among such elite, universal company. Their inclusion helps to solidify the connection of Roman Christian tradition, the distant past, and the ancient churches of the Mediterranean world with the fruitful blossoming of English Christianity as guided by native-born figures of the relatively recent past.<sup>56</sup> Following these foremost Christian writers, Alcuin cites ancient historians, poets, and grammarians, both Christian and pagan. Again stressing the impressive breadth of the library’s holdings, he insists that “there, reader, you will find many others / teachers outstanding for their learning, art, and style,” but who “would take longer than poetic usage demands” to list

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York’s cathedral library, his list of authoritative writers still makes for an interesting comparison with Smaragdus’s list of patristic sources in his *Liber comitis* (discussed in chapter 2, pgs. 88–91) and Claudius of Turin’s list for his commentary on Matthew, composed *ca.* 815 (*MGH, Epist.* 4, 594), as well as to Isidore’s earlier *Versus in bibliotheca* (*PL* 83, col. 1107–1114).

<sup>56</sup> On English textual efforts (particularly in Bede’s work) to associate themselves, their writers, and holy men with the more established, ancient Christian tradition of the Continent and Mediterranean world, see now Gernot Wieland, “Anglo-Saxon Visions of Heaven and Hell,” in Richard Matthew Pollard, ed., *Imagining the Medieval Afterlife* (Cambridge, 2020), 79–98.

in full.<sup>57</sup> The designation of these writers, explicitly named or merely suggested, as “teachers” is revealing of how Alcuin views this expansive literature—not simply as books, or as the writers of books, but as wise mentors, departed in body but still able to guide pupils in the present through the timeless value of their written words. Yet, where “the authoritative writings of Virgil, Statius, and Lucan” and other pagan authors could indeed be highly useful for their “learning, art, and style,” the Christian Fathers could continue to teach both through their enduring writings and their pious lives.

In the *Versus de patribus*, this kind of double exemplarity is especially true of “Bede the master,” whose “legacy,” or “footsteps,” Alcuin seems particularly conscious of following and carrying forward. As Alcuin repeatedly acknowledges, Bede’s own writings are the immediate model for Alcuin’s work; much of the historical narrative derives from Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*. Godman suggests, furthermore, that Alcuin’s *Versus de patribus* was specifically intended as a verse complement to the *Historia ecclesiastica* and to Bede’s *Lives* of St. Cuthbert, following Bede’s own distinctive habit of composing both prose and verse versions of certain works, but with Alcuin’s own York-centred view of Northumbrian ecclesiastical and political history at the fore.<sup>58</sup> Throughout the poem, Alcuin stresses his debt to Bede, whom he seems to view both affectionately as a countryman and spiritual ancestor and also reverently as a true Father of the Church as much as the “ancient” *patres* of the more distant, Roman past. Like those earlier illustrious men, Bede exemplified Christian excellence both through his prolific, learned writings and his manner of life. In this way, Alcuin’s heroic, patristic Bede solidified the link between the present world and that of Roman *tempora Christiana*. Gregory the Great had first

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<sup>57</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 126: “Invenies alios perplures, lector, ibidem / egregios studiis, arte et sermone magistros...nomina sed quorum praesenti in carmine scribi / longius est visum quam plectri postulat usus”; trans. Godman, 127.

<sup>58</sup> Godman, Introduction to Alcuin, *The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York*, lxvii–lix.



established a substantial connection between the Roman Church and Britain, “when he sent the seeds of life from the lofty city of Rome / to the English people,”<sup>59</sup> but Bede, together with other Christian leaders in England, helped to carefully maintain and strengthen this connection over the centuries that followed. Meanwhile, through his writings, Bede further bolstered the English Church’s prestige and its vital relationship to “Rome”—that is, not only the Roman church as a powerful, still-present institution, but also a kind of superior knowledge and erudition generally characterized as “ancient” and “Roman.”<sup>60</sup>

The explicit insistence on following in the *vestigia patrum* comes from Bede, who used this expression to remind his readers of his adherence, in both word and deed, to the path of Christian tradition established by the earlier Fathers, lest he should be accused of excessive novelty in his writings or of wayward behaviour in life.<sup>61</sup> Alcuin echoes Bede’s profession of fidelity to the Fathers, as he describes and praises Bede’s life:

He followed the footsteps of the ancient fathers in actions, spirit, and faith  
walking the straight and narrow path through all his days  
The quality of the teacher’s life was clearly revealed  
after his death by a miraculous act of healing:  
when a sick man was surrounded by relics of that blessed  
father he was completely cured from his illness.<sup>62</sup>

This miracle is meant as clear proof that Bede was more than merely a significant writer. He was also a saint worthy of emulation for the outstanding quality of his life. Bede, for Alcuin, is “the

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<sup>59</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 20: “Gregorius praesul decreverat olim, / semina dum vitae Romana misit ab arce / gentibus Anglorum”; trans. Godman, 21.

<sup>60</sup> On medieval ideas and associations of Rome and “Romanness,” see, generally, the insightful essays collected in Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick, and John Osborne, eds., *Rome across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas, c. 500–1400* (Cambridge, 2011); and in O’ Carragáin and Neuman de Vegvar, eds., *Roma Felix*.

<sup>61</sup> See Hill, “Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede,” esp. 228–229.

<sup>62</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 102, 104: “Actu, mente, fide veterum vestigia patrum / semper dum vixit directo est calle secutus. / Huius vita quidem qualis fuit ante, magistri / claro post obitum signo est patefacta salutis. / Aeger enim quidam, patris dum cingitur almi / reliquiis, penitus peste et sanatus ab illa”; trans. Godman, 103, 105.

peerless master,” to whom Alcuin pejoratively compares his own “rude verse,”<sup>63</sup> claiming to “have related only what Bede the master laid down / with unquestionable accuracy in his historical account of / the English peoples and their deeds from their first beginnings.”<sup>64</sup> He was also “a priest of outstanding merit” (*presbyter eximius meritis*),<sup>65</sup> evinced by his teaching and by the miracles yielded after his death.

In Bede, exemplary Christian living and scholarship were harmoniously merged. Alcuin’s Bede strove to better understand the word of God as transmitted in scripture and to communicate that knowledge to others through his careful teaching. Alcuin traces this dedication to learning and teaching back to Bede’s youth: “[F]rom early boyhood he had concentrated intensely on books / and had devoted himself wholeheartedly to sacred studies... This famous scholar wrote many works / unravelling the mysterious volumes of Holy Scripture.”<sup>66</sup> Such a perfect concord of *vita* and *verba* is precisely what qualifies Bede as a Father, for it is a rare and exalted combination that he shares with the likes of Gregory, Augustine, Jerome, and Ambrose—even if Bede was far removed in time and space from those “ancient Fathers.” Alcuin’s positioning of Bede among the most important and essential figures in this special category of post-scriptural Christian authorities would have a profound impact on ninth-century views of Bede, and on the composition of the patristic canon as such. A unique, elevated combination of one’s exemplary

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<sup>63</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 62: “ne tota tacere viderer / inclyta rurali perstringens carmine gesta, / haec quoniam cecinit plenius cum versibus olim / praeclarus nitido Beda sermone magister”; trans. Godman, 63: “Not to seem wholly silent I have touched briefly / on these things, passing swiftly over his wondrous deeds / in my rude verse; for Bede, the peerless master, once wrote / a full-scale poem on this subject in splendid style.” Here, Alcuin is referring to his brief account of the seventh-century Anglo-Saxon saint Cuthbert, in the immediately preceding section of the *Versus de patribus*, in contrast to Bede’s verse *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*.

<sup>64</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 94: “Diximis haec tantum, posuit quae Bede magister, / indubitante fide texens ab origine prima / historico Anglorum gentes et gesta relatu”; trans. Godman, 95.

<sup>65</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 100; trans. Godman, 101.

<sup>66</sup> Alcuin, *Versus de patribus*, ed. Godman, 102: “Qui mox a puero libris intentus adhaesit / et toto studiis servivit pectore sacris... Plurima quapropter praeclarus opuscula doctor / edidit, explanans obscura volumina sanctae / Scripturae”; trans. Godman, 103.

life and career and their important writings and ideas was increasingly the hallmark feature of “the Fathers” as a special discursive category of broadly applicable and readily emulatable post-scriptural authorities.

### **Notker Balbulus, *Notatio de illustribus viris***

Alcuin himself, as well as his most accomplished pupil, Hrabanus Maurus, are included among the “illustrious men” in the later ninth-century (*ca.* 885) *Notatio de illustribus viris*<sup>67</sup> composed by Notker Balbulus (or “the Stammerer”), the librarian of the monastery of St Gall. Notker continues the tradition of noting and describing important Christian writers and their works up to near his own times, but his text, structured as two letters—didactic yet intimate—to a former pupil named Solomon, is not simply the extension of an earlier model in the way of Gennadius and Isidore’s continuations of Jerome’s *De viris illustribus*. Though Notker draws from such exemplars, as well as from the *Institutiones* of Cassiodorus, his work is very specifically reflective of Notker’s late-ninth-century monastic milieu.<sup>68</sup> Where Cassiodorus, a sixth-century figure exceptional for his erudition and relative mastery of the classical disciplines (sometimes regarded as a “Father” or “doctor” by early medieval readers, despite the distance Cassiodorus himself sought to carve out between the “ancient” *patres* and his inferior “modern” times<sup>69</sup>), divided his work between religious and secular literature, Notker focuses almost exclusively on Christian authors and their texts. Both works, however, are thoroughly

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<sup>67</sup> As Erwin Rauner, “Notkers des Stammlers ‘Notatio de illustribus uiris’,” Teil I: Kritische Edition, *Mittelalterliches Jahrbuch* 21 (1986), 49, notes, this title, appearing in just one branch of the text’s manuscript tradition, was a later addition, not Notker’s own.

<sup>68</sup> See Bernice M Kaczynski, “Reading the Church Fathers: Notker the Stammerer’s ‘Notatio de illustribus viris’,” *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 17 (2006), 401–412, esp. 405.

<sup>69</sup> See Mark Vessey, Introduction to *Cassiodorus: Institutions of Divine and Secular Learning, On the Soul*, trans. James W. Halporn (Liverpool, 2004), 6–12; O’Donnell, *Cassiodorus*, 234–235.

bibliographic in their orientation, reflecting the great quantity of knowledge accumulated at the libraries of Vivarium and St. Gall, respectively.

Like Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*, Notker's *Notatio* positions scripture itself at the very centre of its intertextual constellation of Christian literature, though Cassiodorus and Notker represent this order of texts in somewhat different ways. In the *Institutiones*,<sup>70</sup> the second book, on the secular disciplines, is explicitly intended—following the lead of Augustine's example in *De doctrina Christiana*—as a set of practically useful tools for explicating the divine texts of the Bible. It is in this sense the summation of Cassiodorus's long, singularly diverse career as a classically trained scholar, high-ranking statesman, and finally the founder and overseer of an ambitious centre of Christian learning. The monasticism observed at his Vivarium estate was probably more flexible in its orientation than the more highly regulated forms practiced in subsequent centuries; Cassiodorus himself, despite retiring among the monks living on his family's ancestral lands in Squillace, does not seem to have ever taken a vow of monasticism.<sup>71</sup> The monastic milieu of the later ninth century, with its Benedictine system shaped by the earlier ninth-century reforming efforts of Benedict of Aniane (whose legacy and *vita* we shall consider in chapter 8), was more narrowly defined and ordered. It is this world, in which Benedictine monasteries had long functioned as the most important centres of knowledge production and preservation, that is evinced by Notker's *Notatio*. In Notker's text, the centrality and total priority of scripture is signaled through the structure of the text, which begins by moving through the Bible, book by book, and noting significant exegetical works treating each one in turn. Only after this patient, detailed survey of scriptural exegesis has concluded does Notker move on to

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<sup>70</sup> On the structure and purpose of the *Institutiones*, see Vessey, Introduction to *Cassiodorus: Institutions*, esp. 42 ff.; O'Donnell, *Cassiodorus*, 202–215.

<sup>71</sup> Kaczynski, "Reading the Church Fathers," 411.

other types of Christian writing, still useful for understanding God's word but not directly concerned with the explication of scripture.

To be sure, there was significant interest at ninth-century St. Gall in classical, non-Christian literature,<sup>72</sup> but religious and "secular" (or pagan) learning are more carefully delineated than in Cassiodorus's text, where they are seemingly two sides of the same coin, separated into different "books" but joined into a single "work." Taken as a two-book whole outlining a new program for Christian education employing both "religious" and "secular" tools, the *Institutiones* may not have exercised an especially prominent influence in the Carolingian era.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, Notker's *Notatio* serves as solid evidence that Cassiodorus's method of harnessing a textual culture of diverse books and writers in direct service of better understanding the divine mysteries of the biblical texts had been profitably digested and applied as part of the ninth-century cultural *renovatio*.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See David Butterfield, "Classical Manuscripts at St. Gall and Reichenau," *Carolingian Culture at Reichenau and St. Gall*: [http://www.stgallplan.org/en/tours\\_classical\\_mss.html](http://www.stgallplan.org/en/tours_classical_mss.html) [accessed 29 June 2020].

<sup>73</sup> See O'Donnell, *Cassiodorus*, 244–246, who notes that when the *Institutiones* was consulted during this period, its two books were usually dissociated and used separately for different purposes. Sharpe, *Titulus*, 118, observes that beginning in the ninth century the first book of the *Institutiones* was sometimes "combined" with Jerome and Gennadius's *De viris illustribus* "to form a widely-circulated survey of Christian learning"—a point that further attests to Carolingian efforts at consolidating and harmonizing the inherited "ancient Christian" tradition. McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 201, provides an illustrative example of this in "a bibliographic handbook" from the monastic library of Lorsch, described in the library catalogue as "eiusdem [Jerome] de illustribus viris et Gennadii et liber institutionum divinarum scripturarum Cassiodori et de historiis Christianis in uno codice."

<sup>74</sup> See Vesssey, Introduction to *Cassiodorus: Institutions*, 57, on the total centrality of scripture in Cassiodorus's work. While Cassiodorus's work is centred much more on texts and methods useful for interpreting scripture than on individual authors, he nonetheless does emphasize the importance of reading about, and emulating, the lives of the (post-scriptural) "Fathers." For example, near the end of the first book of the *Institutiones* (1.32), he writes (Cassiodorus, *Institutiones divinarum et saecularum litterarum*, ed R.A.B. Mynors [Oxford, 1937], 80): "Et ideo futurae beatitudinis memores, vitas Patrum, confessiones fidelium, passiones martyrum legite constanter, quas inter alia in epistula sancti Hieronymi ad Chromatium et Heliodorum destinata procul dubio reperitis, quae per totum orbem terrarum floruerunt, ut sancta imitatio vos provocans ad caelestia regna perducat"; trans. Halporn, 167: "[A]lways read the lives of the Fathers, the confessions of the faithful, the passions of the martyrs, that, among other things, you will certainly find in the letter sent by Jerome to Chromatius and Heliodorus. These readings have been famous throughout the whole world and, as a result, a holy desire for imitation will stir you and lead you to the kingdom of heaven."

Formally resembling a well-ordered monastic library (again, much like the *Institutiones*), Notker's survey of Christian literature is organized by subjects, genres, and languages of texts and their authors. It is not arranged loosely chronologically like Jerome's *De viris illustribus* and its continuations. Nor does Notker's work follow the structure of the *Liber pontificalis*, the collection of short biographies of bishops of Rome—beginning, like the *De viris illustribus*, with Peter—composed at different times between the sixth and ninth centuries, with its first iteration often misattributed to Jerome.<sup>75</sup> In contrast with these earlier series of “illustrious men,” whether selected Christian writers or all bishops of Rome, Notker's *Notatio* moves sequentially from the books of the Old and New Testaments, noting, and sometimes critically commenting on, the available patristic exegetical treatments of each biblical book. This long opening section on scripture and exegesis is followed by a more general, non-chronological survey of some key Christian writers that briefly discusses their major works, beginning with Augustine (whose implicit primacy is justified, Notker notes, by the well-known truism “*Si Augustinus adest sufficit ipse tibi*”<sup>76</sup>), followed by Cassian, Isidore, Gregory the Great, Eucherius, and Alcuin (“*Albino, magistro Caroli imperatoris*”<sup>77</sup>). This is followed by a section on Christian poets; then, a discussion of martyrs' passion narratives and where to locate them in the writings of Eusebius, Jerome, and others; and, finally, some concluding notes on significant Christian writers in Greek and Latin, where Notker is able to mention in passing some (major and minor) figures heretofore

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<sup>75</sup> Although Jerome's *De viris illustribus* and the *Liber pontificalis* share certain structural and superficial similarities, their aims are ultimately quite different. In general, the *Liber pontificalis* biographies pay relatively little attention to the individual literary activity of the popes, focusing instead on their administrative and doctrinal achievements, their material enrichment of the Roman Church, its lands, and facilities, and their contributions to the developing institution of the papacy. On the *Liber pontificalis*, see now Rosamond McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber pontificalis* (Cambridge, 2020).

<sup>76</sup> Notker, *Notatio de illustribus viris*, ed. Rauner, 63. On Notker's special interest in Augustine, see Bernice M. Kaczynski, “Reading and Writing Augustine in Medieval St. Gall,” in Gernot Wieland, Carin Ruff, and Ross G. Arthur, eds., *Insignis Sophiae Arcator: Essays in Honour of Michael W. Herren on his 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Turnhout, 2006), 120–122.

<sup>77</sup> Notker, *Notatio de illustribus viris*, ed. Rauner, 64.

absent, signaling familiarity with their names if not their writings. The figures who loom largest in Notker's ordering of Christian literature are those who wrote the most, and most widely (judging, that is, from their extant and accessible writings in the later ninth century), especially on various books of the Bible. Unsurprisingly, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great are mentioned frequently across the above-described, discrete sections of Notker's text. Origen and Bede also receive sporadic citation, rewarded for their prolific output, particularly as path-breaking exegetes. Certain "sub-patristic" writers like Tyconius, Prosper, Primasius, and Gennadius receive passing mentions, included in this summary of the Christian canon but at its margins and noted (as in Jerome and Gennadius's *De viris illustribus*) for their known connections to more prominent figures. In contrast to, say, Smaragdus of St. Mihiel's list of patristic sources in the preface to his *Liber comitis*, which does not differentiate between major Fathers and lesser lights of the Christian past, Notker's text leaves little ambiguity about which post-scriptural authors have made the greatest impact on the canon of Christian literature.

Notker's *Notatio* provides a vivid, later ninth-century picture of the intersecting constellations of Christian books, plotted together into a map of a coherent, authoritative textual universe, beginning, but not ending, with the books of the Bible and the useful interpretative tools offered by post-scriptural writers for deciphering and better understanding scripture. Unlike Jerome, who begins his *De viris illustribus* with the authors of New Testament texts, Notker does not discuss the authors of scripture as writers themselves. In Notker's work, writers like Paul, Peter, and the evangelists are not so much *a part* of the on-going tradition of Christian literary history as that history's precise *raison d'être*. The late antique Fathers are where a tradition of "Christian literature" as such properly begins. Their writings are authoritative and "ancient," but

not entirely beyond debate or critique—that is, not God’s word itself, as transmitted or directly guided by the Holy Spirit.

## **Conclusion**

Like Alcuin’s list of illustrious writers in the *Versus de patribus*—which likewise saw no need to cite by name Paul, Peter, John, or any other traditionally credited author of scripture—Notker’s motivation in writing is bibliographical, but the prose *Notatio* is far more specific and detailed than Alcuin’s brief poetic list. While it was not intended to describe the contents of St. Gall’s library (such catalogue lists survive, including copies with Notker’s own emendations and additions<sup>78</sup>), the *Notatio* provides a clear sense of which particular works by these key writers were known to Notker, whereas Alcuin’s poetic list gives only names and laudatory descriptions of the writers themselves. It is thus more readily evident from Notker’s list *why* these writers are especially important, and *how* their works fit into the larger picture of Christian literature and history. In Alcuin’s text, the authors themselves stand in for the range of texts, ideas, and specialized knowledge generally associated with, or attributed to, them. Only Alcuin’s brief descriptions of these men as “father,” “bishop,” “master,” etc. suggests any differentiation between those who ought to be revered for more than their narrow contribution to a particular discipline or genre and those who are true, transdiscursive doctors. Alcuin’s list is only implicitly ordered and is not limited to Christian writers, moving from the Church Fathers and other authoritative Christian authors to a mixture of pagan historians, philosophers, rhetoricians, and

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<sup>78</sup> See Susan Rankin, “*Ego Itaque Notker Scripsi*,” *Revue bénédictine* 101 (1991), 292–295 on St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 728, containing a library catalogue with emendations that Rankin shows are in Notker’s hand (which she describes in precise detail at pp. 277–284).



poets together with Christian poets. Notker, by contrast, is quite explicit about the categories of Christian writing<sup>79</sup> he includes, and sorts writers and texts according to those parameters.

Such significant differences notwithstanding, what Notker's *Notatio* shares with Alcuin's *Versus de patribus* list is a seeming indifference to chronology. Unlike Jerome's *De viris illustribus*, which moves from New Testament authors up to Jerome and his contemporaries, neither Alcuin's list nor Notker's *Notatio* are structured according to any historical sequence. The distinctive times and contexts of these writers, their relationships of influence or dependence across generations and centuries, are not what matters in these two Carolingian-era texts. Rather, it is the timeless merit and utility of these writers' words and texts that is of paramount importance.

Nevertheless, in their own distinctive ways, Alcuin's library list and Notker's *Notatio* do follow the *De viris illustribus* in evoking a certain vision of Christian literary history as both a bounded canon and as something continuously on-going, with writers of present or recent times capable of entering into the "ancient" tradition established by the earliest progenitors of Christian literature—for Jerome, the authors of scripture; for Alcuin and Notker, the late Roman fathers who produced authoritative statements on the meaning and nature of scripture. Where Jerome's model is linear and progressive, and can thus be easily superimposed onto his Latin translation/adaptation/continuation of Eusebius's *Chronicon* (discussed in Chapter 4), Notker's *Notatio* resembles a mosaic, with different types and tongues of Christian books and their authors selectively stitched together, presenting a picture of the scope and depth of an extra-scriptural, but scripture-centred, Christian literary canon.

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<sup>79</sup> Notker refers only to Josephus among non-Christian writers, vaguely recommending his "*hystorias*" in the *Notatio*'s last sentence (p. 69).

Despite the Carolingians' enormous interest in such an authoritative canon, and particularly in the works of the Fathers, Notker's *Notatio* is the only text of its kind to survive from the Carolingian era.<sup>80</sup> While the *Notatio* is in this sense unique among Carolingian texts, Notker's deep interest in Christian history and its "illustrious men" (and occasionally women)—Fathers, saints, martyrs—is fully representative of his ninth-century intellectual culture. Among his other "works" (broadly termed), as writer, editor/compiler, or copyist, are texts by Augustine and Isidore of Seville, a compendium of saints' *vitae*, multiple martyrologies, collections of patristic homilies,<sup>81</sup> and, most famously, a biography of Charlemagne—an "illustrious man" of a rather different type, but, in Notker's narrative, certainly an exemplary Christian leader.<sup>82</sup> Taken together, these various texts showcase both the wise words and the saintly lives and deeds of the Fathers—figures who could continue to teach the present age through both their words and ideas, as preserved in their written works, and by the holy examples of their lives and careers, as recorded by their disciples, whether contemporary or later admirers.

Texts following in the *De viris illustribus* tradition inaugurated by Jerome were crucial for the development of a distinctive "Christian literature," for identifying that literature's most important authors and their notable textual contributions, and for forging a common, imagined "intellectual space" shared by major and minor Christian writers across time and space. Individual *vitae*, the topic of our next chapter, expanded beyond the representation of illustrious

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<sup>80</sup> Kaczynski, "Reading the Church Fathers," 411.

<sup>81</sup> On Notker's "works" in these various capacities, see Susan Rankin, "Notker Bibliothecarius," in Katie Buygis, A. B. Kraebel and Margot Fassler, eds., *Medieval Cantors and Their Craft: Music, Liturgy and the Shaping of History, 800–1500* (Cambridge, 2017), 41–58; and Rankin, "*Ego Itaque Notker Scripsi*," esp. 284ff.

<sup>82</sup> On Notker's representation of Charlemagne, see Anne Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800–1229* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2013), 38–58; Andrew Romig, *Be a Perfect Man: Christian Masculinity and the Carolingian Aristocracy* (Philadelphia, 2017), 136–144; Paul E. Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, Neb., 1994), 199–200.

Christian men as (primarily) writers, and supplied their readers with richly detailed guides for how to follow the *vestigia patrum* through one's manner of living in the world.

## Chapter 8

### Exemplary *vitae*, Eloquent *verba*: Patristic Biographies and *Lives* of Carolingian Holy Men

#### **Introduction**

Lists of “illustrious men,” following from Jerome’s *De viris illustribus* and its continuations, focus primarily on the written works and contributions to Christian doctrine and exegesis made by the authors deemed to merit inclusion. These texts were particularly useful for bolstering libraries with the rich textual treasures of the past. Individual *vitae* of Fathers, meanwhile, provided richer accounts of their lives and ecclesiastical careers, and offered readers a fuller sense of the particular contexts for their writings and ideas. Biographical texts like Possidius’s *Vita Augustini*—originally composed in conjunction with a bibliographical summary of Augustine’s works, the so-called *Indiculum*—were ideal for this purpose. In the Carolingian era, the *Vita Augustini* (or excerpts thereof) was sometimes copied into manuscripts with other saints’ lives, situating Augustine as one of the many great saints in Christian history. In other Carolingian-era manuscripts, Possidius’s biography was compiled with key examples of Augustine’s own writings, thus illustrating the harmony between what Augustine wrote and how he lived as a pious Christian leader, episcopal administrator, and preacher.

The *Vita Augustini* and other textual lives of men who were regarded—whether at the time of a given *vita*’s composition or at some later point in time—as “Fathers” were typically not narratives centring on heroic, courageous martyrdom, nor, necessarily, on awe-inspiring miracles. What Possidius emphasizes in the *Vita Augustini* are, on the one hand, Augustine’s career as a highly effective bishop, combining the worldly obligations of Roman bureaucracy with the ministerial duties of the exemplary Christian teacher and preacher; and, on the other

hand, Augustine's prolific output as a writer.<sup>1</sup> Through such emphases, patristic biographies like the *Vita Augustini* provided a readily applicable blueprint for how eighth- and ninth-century ecclesiastical leaders should live and perform the duties of their office, while also contributing, however modestly, to the on-going tradition of orthodox Christian scholarship.

In texts evoking their lives, the Fathers were often closely associated with a rigorously ascetic lifestyle.<sup>2</sup> This association was particularly impactful in the Carolingian era, as during this period the strictly observed "contemplative life" was increasingly regarded as the source of the highest spiritual authority and prestige.<sup>3</sup> A shared perception that the greatest Fathers of the "ancient" Christian past had adhered to a similarly regulated, ascetic manner of life may have bolstered the prestige accorded to monastic austerity. Although most of the Latin Fathers were not monks in any strictly defined sense—bishops predominate, as in the Egino Codex (discussed in chapter 7)—what was known about their lives proved largely compatible with the general expectations of early medieval ascetic monasticism. For instance, Jerome, dwelling in Bethlehem with his community of virgins, was a model of the serious-minded ascetic scholar, even if he had, in fact, abandoned the more rigorous challenge of desert monasticism after just three years.<sup>4</sup> His contemporary, Ambrose, was nearly as ardent and impassioned, if somewhat more moderate,

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<sup>1</sup> See Erika Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama: A Study of the North African Episcopate at the Time of Augustine* (Oxford, 2008); Eva Elm, *Die Macht der Weisheit: Das Bild des Bischofs in der Vita Augustini des Possidius und anderen spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Bischofsviten* (Leiden, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> See esp. Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Josh Timmermann, "Sharers in the Contemplative Virtue: Julianus Pomerius's Carolingian Audience," *Comitatus* 45 (2014), 1–44, provides a discussion of the higher spiritual authority associated with monasticism in the Carolingian era, and the attempts by bishops to merge the *vita activa* of their *ordo* with the *vita contemplativa* so as to share in that spiritual authority and gravitas. However, it is important to note, as Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer," in Rosamond McKitterick, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II: c. 700–c. 900* (Cambridge, 1995), 622–653, does, that fluid movement back and forth among the secular and regular *ordines* remained quite commonplace in the eighth century, as it had been in many earlier Christian contexts. Efforts to more strictly delineate and fix the orders of Christian society were part of the ninth-century reform program, though there continued to be some fluidity between, for instance, offices of bishop and abbot, such as in the prominent case of Hrabanus Maurus, who was elected Archbishop of Mainz after earlier serving as Abbot of Fulda.

<sup>4</sup> See Michael Stuart Williams, *Authorised Lives in Early Christian Biography: Between Eusebius and Augustine* (Cambridge, 2008), 125–144.

in his arguments for virginity or celibacy.<sup>5</sup> Together with Paul's letters and example, the *vita* of the hermetic desert monk Anthony provided Augustine with important (if perhaps indirect<sup>6</sup>) inspiration for undertaking baptism and making a total commitment to a stricter form of chaste Christian living.<sup>7</sup> Memories of the monastic community that Augustine oversaw and lived among at Hippo, together with two sermons (*serm.* 355 and 356) and a letter (*ep.* 211) that he had written to the nuns of Hippo, later crystalized into the perception of a coherent, programmatic "Rule of Saint Augustine" having been purposefully composed by Augustine himself—thus furthering the early medieval conception of Augustine the monk-bishop.<sup>8</sup> More credibly, Gregory the Great was the model *par excellence* of this type. Having expressed deep sorrow at having to abandon his beloved monastic life for a worldly episcopal career, Gregory continued to heap praise on monks and monastic institutions—most notably, Benedict of Nursia and his *Regula*—during his tenure as pope.<sup>9</sup> In the centuries after their deaths, these authors would continue to be read for their erudition, wisdom, and unimpeachable orthodoxy, but their *vitae*

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<sup>5</sup> See Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), esp. 341–386; and Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, 137–153, who offers a thoughtful comparison between Ambrose and Jerome's respective attitudes concerning virginity.

<sup>6</sup> For a reconsideration of the significance of Anthony's *Life* in Augustine's "conversion," see Williams, *Authorised Lives*, esp. 148–185.

<sup>7</sup> Augustine, *Confessiones* 8.6, 8.12. Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, 98–111, provides sharp analysis of the combined impact of Anthony and Paul on Augustine's intellectual conception of an ideal "form of life." See also the discussion of the *Life of Anthony's* impact on Augustine in Johann Leemans and Brigitte Meijns, "Why Are Some Greater Than Others? Actors and Factors Shaping the Authority of Persons from Antiquity to the Renaissance," in Shari Boodts, Johann Leemans, and Brigitte Meijns, eds., *Shaping Authority: How Did a Person Become an Authority in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2016), 9–19.

<sup>8</sup> On the "Rule of St. Augustine," see Leyser, "Augustine in the Latin West, 430–ca. 900," in Mark Vessey, ed., *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, 2012), 455–464; Gerhard Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), with addenda; originally published 1959), 379–389, 416–417; Adolar Zumkeller, *Augustine's Ideal of the Religious Life*, trans. Edmund Colledge (New York, 1986), 283–287.

<sup>9</sup> See Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, 131–59; Robert A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, 1994), 17–33; Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (Berkeley, 1988), 1–27, 147–161.

also provided the best post-scriptural guides for how to perfectly harmonize the demands of the active and contemplative lives.

*Vitae* of patristic writers also offered authoritative and highly useful examples for how exceptional eighth- and ninth-century Christians should be represented in texts recounting their own lives and deeds. This guiding influence is readily discernible in the strong connections among exemplary Christian living, writerly eloquence, and orthodox authority that are consistently emphasized in the Carolingian-era biographies of Boniface, Benedict of Aniane, and Adalhard, which will be discussed below.

Before examining such specific examples of late antique and early medieval life-writing, however, we should first more generally reflect on the role and function of biography within Christian culture and history and the gradual development of an ideal Christian “*forma vitae*.” After this, I will consider the transmission and uses of individual patristic *vitae* in the Carolingian world, focusing in particular on the illustrative case of Possidius’s *Vita Augustini*. Next, I will examine the above-noted Carolingian-era *vitae*, which reflect the guiding influence of the patristic-saint model. Lastly, I will consider a vivid case of one of those Carolingian *vita*’s authors adopting, in another text, the distinct persona and voice of a Father: Paschasius Radbertus’s temporally hazy and ambiguously Hieronymian *Cogitis me*—a “sermon” on the liturgical devotion of Mary that depends heavily on its readers’ presumed knowledge of Jerome’s writings and the details and manner of his life.

### **Learning from Lives**

Within its first century of existence, biographical writing was already central to Christianity, as the cult developed into a unique religious movement. In the gospels and Acts of

the Apostles, the evangelists provided narrative portraits of both Jesus himself and his early followers.<sup>10</sup> As a “new” canon of sacred texts outside, and subsequent to, the “old” Hebrew Bible (or Greek Septuagint) gradually took shape, these narratives were complemented by discursive, theological texts like Paul’s epistles and letters attributed to other apostolic leaders. The fourth gospel, traditionally ascribed to “the beloved disciple,” John, was composed largely or entirely outside the synoptic narrative framework of Mark-Matthew-Luke, and offered a distinctive fusion of biography with theology, fashioning Jesus into a more explicitly Christological figure.

While Jesus was always the ultimate example that Christian readers (or hearers) of these narratives were urged to follow, his divine nature made possible a true perfection that was inherently impossible for ordinary humans to achieve, burdened as they were by the guilt of sin and the limits of their mortal condition. For early Christians, the apostles Peter and Paul served as models of Christian devotion and piety that, however lofty and revered as saints and martyrs after their deaths, were nonetheless attainable for mortal men.<sup>11</sup> Paul, for instance, had not actually known Jesus during his life, and, according to Acts, he had actively persecuted Christians prior to his personal encounter with the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. Yet,

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<sup>10</sup> Paula Fredriksen, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus* (New Haven, 1988) remains an excellent, accessible entry point for assessing the narrative functions and aims of the gospels. Thomas J. Heffernan, “Christian Biography: Foundation to Maturity,” in Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, ed., *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2003), 115–154 is a succinct and insightful summary of the development of Christian biographical writing out of the essential elements of the gospel tradition. Lawrence M. Wills, *The Quest of the Historical Gospel: Mark, John, and the Origins of the Gospel Genre* (London/New York, 1997) attempts to locate the deeper Hellenistic roots of the “gospel” as a distinctive type of biographical text. Felice Lifshitz, “Beyond Positivism and Genre: ‘Hagiographical’ Texts as Historical Narrative,” *Viator* 25 (1994), 95–114, problematizes modern assumptions about the lines dividing saints’ *vitae* from other ancient and medieval forms of writing about the people and events of the past.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory the Great, for example, reflects on the mortal limits of the efficacy of Paul’s holiness (*Dialogorum libri iv de miraculis patrum italicorum*, 2.33, ed. Adalbert de Vogüé [Paris, 1978–1980]): “Quisnam erit...in hac uita Paulo sublimior, qui de carnis suae stimulo ter dominum rogauit, et tamen quod uoluit obtinere non ualuit?”; trans. Odo John Zimmermann, *St. Gregory the Great: The Dialogues* (New York, 1959), reprinted in Mary-Ann Stouck, ed., *Medieval Saints: A Reader* (Toronto, 1999), 197–198: “Will there ever be a holier man in the world than St. Paul? Yet he prayed three times to the Lord about the sting in his flesh and could not obtain his wish.” Earlier, Augustine, *Confessiones* 13.14, similarly reflected on the limits of knowledge and understanding that stifled “even Paul himself.”



through God's grace and inspiration, Paul was nevertheless able to achieve the summit of Christian leadership, expanding the Jesus movement to the Gentile populations of the Roman world. Peter, likewise, was shown repeatedly to be an imperfect man, as he famously "denied" Jesus three times, according to the canonical gospel narratives. Later, after Jesus's death, Peter wrongfully (at least in Paul's critical view) sought to maintain Jewish customs that had been superseded by the New Covenant of Christ. These alleged flaws, however, did not preclude Peter from being regarded as the "Prince of the Apostles," Christ's immediate heir as leader of the incipient Church. Narrative accounts of the lives and deeds of Peter and Paul, particularly as presented in Acts (though also in numerous apocryphal texts), made for a harmonious accompaniment to the letters, relatively scant on specific biographical detail, authored by, or attributed to, these apostolic leaders.

As the early Jesus movement evolved and gradually coalesced over its first three centuries, Christianity took on a clearer sense of self-definition and orthodoxy.<sup>12</sup> The age of the martyrs concluded with Constantine's legalization and personal embrace of Christianity (save for one short, final gasp of pagan persecution of Christians under Julian the Apostate). By the later fourth century, the period marked by the "generation of Paul," Christianity was not only legally tolerated but essentially compulsory. Around the time of Gregory the Great's pontificate (590–604)—if not, perhaps, even earlier—Christianity possessed a near-total monopoly on the religious and intellectual activities of life across the Latin West, without any viable "classical" pagan competition of the sort that Augustine and Orosius wrote against (discussed in chapters 3 and 4). In the early medieval West, where the decisive triumph of Christianity could be taken as a providential given, Christians turned not only to the apostolic-era examples they encountered in

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<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Rowan Williams, "Does It Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy?" in Rowan Williams, ed., *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick* (Cambridge, 1989), 1–23.

scripture, but also to the later generations of Christian leaders who mediated and transmitted the examples, words, and ideas of the apostles for their own times and places.<sup>13</sup>

Many saints from the ancient (or not-so-ancient) past were praised for their wondrous deeds and pious lives. Other past figures were acknowledged as important writers who produced useful texts or methods, even if, in some cases, they erred in the course of their lives or in the evolution of their thought. A distinctive type of authority—distinct from reverence for martyrs and saints generally and that accorded to significant writers, whether Christian, Jewish, or pagan—was ascribed to an elite category of men who contributed to the intellectual development of orthodox Church doctrine, theology, and exegesis and whose lives and careers exemplified ideal Christian living in the world. The former criterion was contingent upon the survival of these writers' own texts through careful preservation and the labour of reproduction; the latter on contemporary and/or later admirers composing accounts of their lives and deeds to elevate their memory and cult, and on those textual accounts being preserved and reproduced.

In certain respects, the Carolingians' special reverence for these Fathers of the Church was comparable to the sacred status reserved for the (purported) authors of scriptural texts. However, there were at least two crucial differences. First, notwithstanding some lingering debates over minor apocrypha and doubts concerning the authorship of certain texts like the

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," in Richard C. Trexler, ed., *Persons in Groups: Social Behavior and Identity Formation in Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Binghamton, N.Y., 1985), 185: "With late antique hagiography...this robust faith in the ability of the exemplar to internalize the values of the community to pass these values on to others received the unprecedented additional momentum that came from the belief in providential monotheism. The past joined the present now through the active will of a God before Whose presence the righteous of all ages stood...[I]n late antique Christian thought, God himself was proposed to man as the Exemplar behind all exemplars. The result of this was to present history less as a discrete reservoir of "classic" persons, than as a sequence—a sequence of exemplars, each of which made real, at varying times and to varying degrees, the awesome potentiality of the first model of humanity, Adam, of human nature created 'in the image of God' before the Fall...In Christ, the original beauty of Adam had blazed forth again among men. For that reason, He was the pattern of the life of the holy man. The life of the holy man was a prolonged *imitation of Christ*."

Letter to the Hebrews and 2 Peter, the scriptural canon was virtually closed. By contrast, the patristic canon remained relatively flexible, allowing for the inclusion of later writers like Isidore of Seville and Bede. Second, it was universally accepted that the authors of scripture were guided by divine inspiration in composing their texts. The role, or degree, of divine inspiration in texts outside the Bible was more ambiguous and open to speculation and debate, even if such texts were widely regarded as perfectly “orthodox” and beyond reproach.

Over roughly the same period of time that Christianity developed into a totalizing cultural force, at least partly new, wholly dedicated types of Christian living took shape and became increasingly more prevalent and widespread. While some forms of monasticism, broadly defined, may go back to the earliest days of the Christian movement or even earlier,<sup>14</sup> Late Antiquity, as Giorgio Agamben argues, “witnessed the birth of a peculiar literature that, at least at first glance, does not seem to have had precedents in the classical world: monastic rules,”<sup>15</sup> which functioned uniquely as the textual embodiment of a particular form of life. The early monastic *regula* were “not hagiographies, even though they are frequently mixed together with the life of the founding saint or Father to such a degree that they present themselves as recording it in the form of an *exemplum* or *forma vitae*.”<sup>16</sup> Rather, these were texts that seamlessly merged the authoritative precepts and particular manner of living of an exemplary Christian figure into a readily imitable set of instructions for adherents to follow.

This textually mediated *forma vitae*—shaped by the particular prescriptions of a given *regula*—is especially evident in the Rule of Benedict of Nursia, which, in Agamben’s view,

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<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., J.C. O’Neill, “The Origins of Monasticism,” in *Making of Orthodoxy*, 270–287, who argues that monasticism may have originated with the ancient Essenes, and that this Jewish monasticism was a crucial influence on the early Christian movement, including Jesus and his disciples.

<sup>15</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life*, trans. Adam Kotsko (Stanford, 2013), 3.

<sup>16</sup> Agamben, *Highest Poverty*, 3.

resolved the tension between orality and writing in earlier *regula*.<sup>17</sup> During the Carolingian era, Benedict's became the dominant form of coenobitic monasticism, championed through the tireless efforts of Benedict of Aniane, who had modelled his own life and career on (and indeed took the name of) Benedict of Nursia, while also compiling a concordance of monastic *regulae*, harmonizing his ancient sources.<sup>18</sup> While only monks were expected to fully conform to the Rule, the guiding ideals and structure of Benedictine monasticism exercised an enormous influence on Carolingian culture and politics.<sup>19</sup> The general principles of the *Regula Benedicti*, together with the holy example of Benedict of Nursia's life (as recounted in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*), served as general models for the secular clergy and even for the laity, functioning alongside other (non-monastic) paraenetic texts, like Gregory's own *Regula pastoralis* and Julianus Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa*, as adaptable, "ancient" guides for devout and dutiful Christian living.

Beyond the direct use of particular patristic texts, the broader but no less important influence of the "ancient" Fathers' "form(s) of life," and of their lives themselves, has been examined closely in pathbreaking recent scholarship. Jonathan Teubner seeks to expand conventional definitions of "Augustinianism" by recognizing distinct types of Augustinian influence in Boethius and Benedict of Nursia, who each drew from Augustine in word as well as in spirit.<sup>20</sup> In presenting this argument, Teubner distinguishes between explicit literary

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<sup>17</sup> Agamben, *Highest Poverty*, 74–78.

<sup>18</sup> See Rene S. Choy, *Intercessory Prayer and the Monastic Ideal in the Time of the Carolingian Reforms* (Oxford, 2016); De Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism."

<sup>19</sup> See esp. Thomas F.X. Noble, "Louis the Pious and His Piety Re-reconsidered," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 58 (1980), 297–316; Thomas F.X. Noble, "Secular Sanctity: Forging an Ethos for the Carolingian Nobility," in Janet Nelson and Patrick Wormald, eds., *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2007), 8–36; Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, 2009); Courtney M. Booker, *Past Convictions: The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan D. Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine: A Study in the Development of the Latin Tradition* (Oxford, 2018).

borrowings in the texts of these sixth-century writers and the “implicit...use of themes, motifs, or constellated ideas,” especially with regard to prayer, the main subject of Teubner’s study.<sup>21</sup> He shows that both of these “Augustinianisms”—explicit textual use and the implicit yet pervasive presence of recognizably Augustinian ideas—are discernible in the writings of Boethius and Benedict, who in employing and adapting Augustine’s words and ideas initiated different, key strands of the Augustinian “tradition.” In identifying the broader, implicit mode of Augustinianism-in-spirit in both Boethius and Benedict, Teubner focuses on the “constellations of themes and concepts” in Augustine’s work and the form of life he advocated in his many writings on the practice of prayer,<sup>22</sup> though Teubner is rather less concerned with the exemplary value of the specific life and career of Augustine himself. Another recent study, by Michael Stuart Williams, however, demonstrates the significance of the distinctive genre of post-scriptural Christian biography for fostering a sense of sacred history as continuous and living.<sup>23</sup> Williams argues that late antique Christians like the emperor Constantine (as presented in Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Life*) and the desert monks Anthony and Paul of Thebes (in the *vitae* by Athanasius and Jerome) were typologically connected to figures and events from the sacred history of scripture, in much the same manner that typological exegesis joined together the Old and New Testaments. The textual *Lives* of these late antique figures thus served as imitable examples from recent times of virtues and deeds associated with the biblical past. However, in Augustine’s increasing ambivalence regarding the comparability of extra-canonical (and thus non-inspired) literature to the inspired truth of the scriptural canon, which Williams traces

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<sup>21</sup> Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine*, 14.

<sup>22</sup> Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine*, 25.

<sup>23</sup> Williams, *Authorised Lives*. See also, on the enduring influence of the model of patristic *vitae* and the vivid representations of the Fathers’ lives by their admiring biographers, Matthias M. Tischler, “Le rythme des Pères. Le Moyen Âge des religieux vu par la tradition des écrits patristiques,” in Rainer Berndt and Michel Fèdou, eds., *Les receptions des Pères de l’Église au Moyen Âge: Le devenir de la tradition ecclésiale* (Münster, 2013), 47–90.

between the *Confessiones* and *De civitate Dei*, Williams locates something like the “end of sacred history” as signaled by Augustine’s ultimate objections to the sacred exemplarity ascribed to men (and particularly men of recent times) other than Christ.<sup>24</sup> Yet, despite Augustine’s complex reservations, the lives of late antique Christian writers and leaders like (and including) himself—as known from biographies like Possidius’s *Vita Augustini*, as well as from the Fathers’ own writings—were nevertheless held up as exemplary models of life, thought, and activity, furthering the still on-going story of Christian history that had been initiated in the texts of scripture. The Fathers’ written words, their ideas and concepts more generally, their (active and contemplative) forms of life, and information about their lives and ecclesiastical careers were all vital components in an evolving patristic, and “ancient Christian,” tradition.

In the early Middle Ages and particularly in the Carolingian era, the total merging of the written word and living performance, uniquely exemplified by the genre of monastic *regulae*, served, *ipso facto*, to facilitate the deeper reification of the patristic equation of *verba* and *vitae*. Textual lives of patristic saints combined with their own writings functioned in a similar manner, but with even more expansive social applicability. Taken together, texts by or about the men categorized and grouped as “Fathers” did not merely inform or educate. They embodied an ideal *modus vivendi*, or *forma vitae*—a model, at once, for devout Christian leadership and orthodox scholarship, and a lofty ideal of the Carolingian *reformatio*. Charlemagne himself, newly crowned as emperor of a revived “Roman” *imperium Christianum*, seemed to recognize the power and utility of this aspirational model. At the synod he convened at Aachen in 802, ecclesiastical attendees were compelled to adhere to the precepts of the Fathers and the *Regula Benedicti*; patristic example and canon law for the secular clergy and the precepts of Benedict’s

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<sup>24</sup> Williams, *Authorised Lives*, esp. 186–222.

Rule for the regular clergy.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps, it was exactly the failure of these Church leaders, and of Charlemagne, to fully and consistently live up to the holy examples of the Fathers and/or Benedict that prompted the emperor, at another Aachen assembly nine years later, nearing the end of his life, to famously lament, “We must take a hard look at whether we are truly Christian. We can learn the answer quite easily through inspection of our lives and our morals, if (only) we would be willing to discuss our way of life scrupulously and openly.”<sup>26</sup> In this context of great expectations and bitter disappointment—a constant dynamic of the Carolingian *reformatio*—being “truly Christian” meant rigorously and unceasingly following in the *veterum vestigia patrum*, which then traced back further to the examples of the *ecclesia primitiva*, the apostles, and Christ himself.<sup>27</sup>

### **Possidius’s *Vita Augustini* and its early medieval transmission**

Among modern readers, Augustine’s life-story is, seemingly, among the best-known of any premodern person, due mainly to Augustine’s own vivid account of it, up to the moment of his full “conversion” to Christianity. But in the *Vita Augustini* (BHL 785), Possidius’s portrait of Augustine is not of the tempestuous, conflicted young man evoked in the earlier books of the *Confessiones*. After some brief remarks on Augustine’s birth and early education, Possidius

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<sup>25</sup> Johannes Fried, *Charlemagne* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016), trans. Peter Lewis, 455–456, drawing from the account of this assembly described in the Chronicle of Moissiac entry for 802 (*Chronicon Moissiacense*, ed. Georg Heinrich Perth, *MGH, Scriptores* 1 [Hannover, 1826], 306–307), explains that those gathered at this synod were urged to “live according to the constitutions of the Church Fathers and the Benedictine Rule,”

<sup>26</sup> *Capitularia tractanda cum comitibus, episcopis et abbatibus, 811*, *MGH, Capitularia regum Francorum* 1, ed. Alfredus Boretius (Hannover, 1883), 161: “Quod nobis despiciendum est, utrum vere christiani sumus. Quod in consideratione vitae vel morum nostrorum facillime cognosci potest, si diligenter conversationem coram discutere voluerimus.” I follow here the translation in Andrew Romig, *Be a Perfect Man: Christian Masculinity and the Carolingian Aristocracy* (Philadelphia, 2017), 72, which captures well the weary, pessimistic tone of this reflection attributed to Charlemagne.

<sup>27</sup> Additionally, as Heffernan, “Christian Biography,” 122–124, observes, Jesus (as represented in the Gospels) often quoted from the Hebrew Bible, thus pushing such recursivity back even further.

picks up roughly where Augustine's own account of his life had left off, focusing instead on the mature Augustine's decades of service as an elite Roman, Catholic ecclesiastical leader and a captivating preacher, delivering God's word to his congregations and helping them to better understand its message.<sup>28</sup> Possidius's Augustine combats dangerous heresies, navigates doctrinal controversies, eloquently strives for consensus among his ecclesiastical colleagues, uprightly administers the resources and revenues of the Church, aids the poor and sick, and leads a chaste and frugal Christian life. He also, somehow, finds the time to write many important books. To a great extent, Possidius's Augustine—a powerful bishop, a strict ascetic, an eloquent preacher, and already something of a doctrinal authority in his own lifetime—is the Augustine best-known to early medieval disciples and admirers.

Augustine's life, particularly his later, post-“conversion” ecclesiastical career as presented by Possidius, was itself a subject for careful study by Carolingian readers. In addition to composing the Carolingian era's sole surviving text in the *de viris illustribus* genre (discussed in chapter 7), Notker Balbulus also, seemingly, recognized the importance of learning from the life of this most illustrious of Christian men. A manuscript that can be closely connected to Notker is St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 571, which contains Possidius's *Vita Augustini* and *Indiculum*, a nearly complete listing of Augustine's works. Susan Rankin has shown that Notker himself “organized, oversaw and corrected” both the *Indiculum* and the *Vita Augustini*, and that he may also have created the chapter descriptions (*tituli*) and divisions, which are unique to this manuscript.<sup>29</sup> That Notker devoted close attention to this Augustine-related

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<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., Johannes van Oort, “Augustine, His Sermons, and Their Significance,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 65 (2009), 363–372, who observes, “In the brief outline of his mentor's work which he wrote shortly after Augustine's death, Possidius portrayed him above all as a pastor. This was the principal aspect of the life of the bishop of Hippo: the day-to-day ministering to his people, in the first place to the members of the Christian congregation in a harbour city somewhere in the Western part of the vast Roman Empire.”

<sup>29</sup> Rankin, “Notker Bibliothecarius,” 50–52.



manuscript is not surprising given Notker's effusive remarks on Augustine in his *Notatio*. The combination here of the *Vita* with the *Indiculum*—intended by Possidius to be paired together, but often transmitted separately over the centuries that followed<sup>30</sup>—allowed readers to both learn about and from the example of Augustine's episcopal career and refer to an accurate list of most of Augustine's authentic works, evincing the wide range of topics that he considered in his capacity as a writer.

Other Carolingian-era manuscripts containing Possidius's *Vita* go one step further, compiling this laudatory life-narrative with illustrative examples of Augustine's own writings. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouv. acq. lat. 1595, for example, includes extracts from the *Vita Augustini* together with a copy of the *De doctrina Christiana*. This manuscript most likely originated at the abbey of St. Martin of Tours, one of the most active engines of the Carolingian *reformatio*, at some point in the first half of the ninth century, perhaps even during the time of Alcuin.<sup>31</sup> Where St. Gallen 571 would have been especially useful for a monastic librarian like Notker, who could use Possidius's list as an aid in collecting as many authentic Augustinian works as possible, a manuscript like Paris BN nouv. acq. lat. 1595 could serve as a practical pedagogical tool, at once allowing its readers to engage with the brilliance of Augustine's thought in studying key examples of Augustine's work while also learning from the moral example of Possidius's account of Augustine's life—a mirror of sorts for those aspiring to, or

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<sup>30</sup> Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 9–10, notes that while Possidius meant for the *Vita Augustini* to be utilized in conjunction with the *Indiculum*, they were often transmitted separately during the early Middle Ages. For instance, Richard Sharpe, *Titulus: Identifying Medieval Latin Texts, An Evidence-Based Approach* (Turnhout, 2003), 118, observes that in later sixth-century Verona Possidius's *Indiculum* was interpolated into the chapter on Augustine in Gennadius's continuation of Jerome's *De viris illustribus*.

<sup>31</sup> E.K. Rand, *Studies in the Script of Tours, vol. 1: A Survey of the Manuscripts of Tours* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), 123–124 suggested that Paris, n.a.l. 1595 may go back as far as Alcuin's abbacy (796–804), or just after that time. Bernhard Bischoff, *Manuscripts and Libraries in the Age of Charlemagne*, trans. Michael M. Gorman (Cambridge, 1994), 123–126 argued for a later date, in the second quarter of the ninth century, and sought to connect this manuscript to Lupus of Ferrières or his immediate circle.

occupying, positions of ecclesiastical leadership. Unlike the earlier generations of saints, usually best known and revered for their miraculous acts and glorious deaths as martyrs for the Church,<sup>32</sup> the lives and careers of the major Fathers of the Theodosian *tempora Christiana*, as well as later figures like Gregory the Great and Bede, were more typically characterized by their textual output, including masterful sermons and homilies recorded for posterity, and their ministerial efficiency as managers of the Church, their diocese, or abbey. Like the early Christian examples of Peter and Paul, the Fathers could be “known” both through their own words and others’ accounts of their lives, but patristic saints from the fourth century onward inhabited a world in which Christianity was no longer an embattled, persecuted sect. Rather, it was the dominant, official religion of the Roman state. This was a historical milieu that, while still certainly strange in many other respects, could nonetheless be more practically applied to the ninth-century context of revived *imperium Christianum*. An implicit sense of perceived continuity from the patristic age forward may, in part, help to explain the Carolingian-era manuscripts in which the *Vita Augustini* is grouped together with a variety of other saints’ lives, not only fellow late Roman Church Fathers, but also early *vitae* from within the Frankish world.<sup>33</sup> In such manuscripts, the lives of Augustine and other Fathers provide strong models for a noble, ascetic Christian life—examples broadly adhered to by subsequent saints of more recent times, who may

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<sup>32</sup> On conceptions of martyrdom in Christian writers after the Roman empire’s conversion to Christianity, see Carole Straw, “Martyrdom and Christian Identity: Gregory the Great, Augustine, and Tradition,” in William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey, eds., *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999), 250–266, who argues that Gregory in particular created a more expansive, broadly applicable definition of a martyr, as (at p. 253) “someone who suffers and offers himself as a sacrifice to God, be it by enduring external attacks by unbelievers, or internal assaults from the devil’s temptation.”

<sup>33</sup> For instance, while Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 10863, a seventh-century palimpsest, compiles the *Vita Augustini* with *Lives* of Gregory the Great and Jerome in the ninth-century upper text, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 13220 places Possidius’s text together with hagiographies of both early martyrs and later Frankish saints, as well as a sermon by Ambrosius Autpertus and extracts attributed to Augustine, Caesarius, Jerome, Faustinus, Prosper, Origen, and Ephrem. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 11748 and St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 577 similarly situate Possidius’s *vita* among other saints’ lives of different eras.

not be comparable to the Fathers in stature or authority, but who nevertheless evince the merit of following faithfully in their lived footsteps.

As one major example of patristic biography, the *Vita Augustini* illustrates well the moral value, and applicability, of such late antique *vitae* for Carolingian-era readers. In learning about Augustine the bishop (and skilled Roman bureaucrat) from Possidius's biography, ninth-century readers would likely have detected a strong, central message that was also expressed across all facets of the Carolingian *reformatio*: the importance of consensus, hard-won through Augustine's diligent efforts as an episcopal administrator navigating worldly controversies and conflicts while remaining ever focused on the soteriological importance of his *ministerium*. As Erika Hermanowicz notes, "Possidius' biography...stresses unanimity among Augustine's colleagues. Possidius' representation of the harmony persisting through theological and legal difficulties is so encompassing that the men surrounding the bishop of Hippo appear ill-defined and inconsequential."<sup>34</sup> This emphatic sense of ecclesiastical "unanimity" could thus be understood as transcending the impact of individual men, however great—including even Augustine himself. Augustine's life and career are thus exceptional and exemplary for their achievements, but at the same time representative of a greater tradition of consensus-driven ecclesiastical leadership and orthodoxy that continues, and remains directly instructive, up to the ninth-century present.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> On the fostering of consensus in the Carolingian era, see esp. Janet L. Nelson, "How Carolingians Created Consensus," in Wojciech Falkowski and Yves Sassier, eds., *Le monde carolingien: Bilan, perspectives, champs de recherches* (Turnhout, 2009), 67–81; Cristina La Rocca and Francesco Veronese, "Cultures of Unanimity in Carolingian Councils," in Serena Ferente, Lovro Kunčević and Miles Pattenden, eds., *Cultures of Voting in Pre-modern Europe* (New York, 2018), 39–57; Steffen Patzold, "*Consensus - Concordia - Unitas*. Überlegungen zu einem politisch-religiösen Ideal der Karolingerzeit," in Nikolaus Staubach, ed., *Exemplaris imago. Ideale in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Frankfurt, 2012), 31–56. On notions of consensus in early medieval Europe rather more generally, see the essays collected in Verena Epp and Christoph H.F. Meyer, eds., *Recht und Konsens im frühen Mittelalter* (Ostfildern, 2017). On the representation, and shaping, of a "politics of consensus" in Carolingian history-writing, see now Helmut Reimitz, "Histories of Carolingian Historiography: An Introduction," in Rutger

Similarly valuable, and compatible, lessons on strong, superlative Christian, particularly episcopal, leadership and eloquent, compelling preaching could be gleaned from reading the (near-contemporary or later) *vitae* of Ambrose and Gregory the Great.<sup>36</sup> The earliest biography of Ambrose was composed by Paulinus of Milan—a close ecclesiastical colleague, much like Possidius’s relationship to Augustine—at the request of Augustine. Like the *Vita Augustini*, Paulinus’s *Vita Ambrosii* emphasizes the supreme commitment and dexterous skill with which Ambrose practiced his ministry, diligently guiding and preaching to his Catholic flock, fighting against heresy in its myriad forms, and deftly navigating difficult political circumstances, even, when necessary, taking bold stands against the empire’s ruling elite.<sup>37</sup> A new, later ninth-century *vita* of Ambrose, commissioned by a contemporary archbishop of Milan (of unknown name) and drawing strongly from Ambrose’s own writings, highlights many of these same achievements and qualities, but places particular stress on Ambrose’s exceptional eloquence and learnedness as

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Kramer, Helmut Reimitz, and Graeme Ward, eds., *Historiography and Identity III: Carolingian Approaches* (Turnhout, 2021), 1–35, esp. 14–16.

<sup>36</sup> On the composition, reception, and influence of *vitae* of Ambrose and Gregory, see Giorgia Vocino, “Bishops in the Mirror: From Self-Representation to Episcopal Model: The Case of the Eloquent Bishops Ambrose of Milan and Gregory the Great,” in Rob Meens, Dorine van Epselo, Bram van den Hoven van Genderen, Janneke Raaijmakers, Irene van Renswoude, and Carine van Rhijn, eds., *Religious Franks: Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms: Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong* (Manchester, 2016), 332–349; Giorgia Vocino, “Framing Ambrose in the Resources of the Past: The Late Antique and Early Medieval Sources for a Carolingian Portrait of Ambrose,” in Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 135–151; Conrad Leyser, “Late Antiquity in the Medieval West,” in Phillip Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2012), esp. 39–41. Additionally, M.L.W. Laistner, “The Value and Influence of Cassiodorus’s Ecclesiastical History,” in *idem*, *The Intellectual History of the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1957), 22–39, shows that the conflict between Ambrose and Theodosius—powerfully demonstrating the Bishop of Milan’s strong leadership and spiritual authority—was known to some of the most prominent Carolingian writers from its narration in the *Historia tripartita*. Even though pre-ca. 900 manuscripts of this Cassiodorus-directed Latin translation/adaptation of the Greek histories of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret were seemingly relatively few in number, the *Historia tripartita* was studied and utilized—particularly its representation of Ambrose and Theodosius—by Alcuin, Paulinus of Aquileia, Jonas of Orléans, Walafid Strabo, Amalarius of Metz, Sedulius Scottus, and Hincmar of Rheims. On the circumstances and outcome of the conflict itself between Theodosius and Ambrose, see Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, 1994), 291–360; Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, 295–310; Irene van Renswoude, *The Rhetoric of Free Speech in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2019), 87–108.

<sup>37</sup> Paulinus of Milan, *Vita Ambrosii* (BHL 377), ed. A.A.R. Bastiaensen, in *Vita di Cipriano, Vita di Ambrogio, Vita di Agostini* (Milan, 1975), 54–124. On Augustine’s commissioning of the *Vita Ambrosii*, see Paredi, *Saint Ambrose*, 292.

key attributes that allowed him to successfully counsel and negotiate with powerful secular rulers.<sup>38</sup> Around the same time (*ca.* 875), a *Vita Gregorii*, by a Roman deacon named John Hymmonides, presented the *magnus* pope in a similar light and also drew from Gregory's own letters to help demonstrate his eloquence.<sup>39</sup> As Giorgina Vocino has argued, these *vitae*, composed long after their subjects' deaths, reflect a ninth-century context in which "keeping a correct and balanced relation between the *ecclesia* and the *res publica*...rested on the bishop's ability to speak appropriately and effectively to rulers: in that respect, Ambrose and Gregory the Great were undoubtedly paramount models."<sup>40</sup>

The *Liber pontificalis* also provided a powerful image of episcopal leadership, though in its focus on the popes it necessarily excludes major figures like Ambrose and Augustine, who never served as bishops of Rome. Across its multiple iterations, between the sixth and ninth centuries, the authors of the *Liber pontificalis*' short papal biographies endeavoured, above all, to assert the Roman episcopate's exceptional status and its primacy above other ecumenical sees on the basis of its allegedly Petrine origin.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, these *Lives* were not so much emulatable "mirrors for bishops" as a series of arguments for institutional supremacy and continuity. All of its subjects presided paternally over the Church (or at least claimed such universal sovereignty<sup>42</sup>), but only a few were regarded after their deaths as major Fathers, or doctors, of the Church. By contrast, the individual *vitae* of the more select group of Fathers—whether popes

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<sup>38</sup> *De vita et meritis sancti Ambrosii* (BHL 377d), ed. Pierre Courcelle, in *Recherches sur saint Ambroise: 'Vies' anciennes, culture, iconographie* (Paris, 1973), 51–121.

<sup>39</sup> John Hymmonides, *Vita Gregorii* (BHL 3641–42), *PL* 75, col. 59–242

<sup>40</sup> On the key themes of the ninth-century *vitae* of Ambrose and Gregory, see Vocino, "Bishops in the Mirror," quotation at p. 349.

<sup>41</sup> On the *Liber pontificalis*, see now Rosamond McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber pontificalis* (Cambridge, 2020).

<sup>42</sup> On the rhetorical claims of early Christian and late antique Roman bishops to primacy and authority over all Christendom, despite only rarely wielding such power in practice, see George E. Demacopoulos, *The Invention of Peter: Apostolic Discourse and Papal Authority in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 2013).

like Gregory or bishops of other sees like Ambrose and Augustine—served as ancient models that could be imitated and adapted by ninth-century ecclesiastical leaders, for a wide variety of contemporary purposes.<sup>43</sup> This held true whether the *vitae* themselves were direct accounts from ancient colleagues of the Fathers or more recent productions assembled from older sources.

Patristic biographies of the latter type—written not from personal observation, as was at least partly the case for Possidius and Paulinus of Milan’s *vitae*, but from studying texts by and about these Fathers—dexterously combine the Fathers’ own eloquent, erudite words and writings with their exemplary lives and careers. From the traces of the “ancient” past the author-compilers of these later-recorded *vitae* fashioned, essentially, *specula episcoporum* for the ninth-century heirs of Ambrose and Gregory. Strictly exegetical or doctrinal texts produced by these patristic writers were not in themselves enough to cement their special status as transdiscursive, transtemporal authorities. A more immediate sense of their manner of living and serving in the world bolstered their exalted positioning as Fathers of the Church. Together, as a collective category of authoritative models sharing broadly similar personal attributes and ostensibly similar “orthodox” views, they stood for the essential harmony and consensus of “ancient” (but extra-/post-scriptural) Christian tradition across time and space.

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<sup>43</sup> See, for instance, Agobard of Lyon’s extensive use of Paulinus of Milan’s *Vita Ambrosii* to support his vitriolic anti-Jewish polemic, *De Iudaicis superstitionibus*. Together with statements drawn from the writings of other patristic authorities, Church councils, and scriptural texts, Agobard invokes the personal example of Ambrose emphatically rejecting Theodosius’s order that a Christian bishop should be held responsible for rebuilding a synagogue that had been set ablaze by local Christians. In Ambrose’s willingness to risk martyrdom by taking a defiant stand against the emperor’s excessively placating attitude toward the Jews, Agobard locates an authoritative model, and justification, for ecclesiastical leaders of his own day to push back against Louis the Pious’s allegedly over-tolerant approach to the Jewish population of the Carolingian empire.

### **Carolingian Lives: Boniface, Benedict of Aniane, Adalhard**

To be sure, the urge to both study the written words and emulate the lives of great Christians, like Paul, Peter, and the leaders of the early Church, was not in itself a Carolingian novelty. Nor was the symbiotic relationship whereby *vitae* enhanced the authority of *verba*, and *verba* bolstered the special exemplarity of *vitae*. This same urge and two-way dynamic catalyzed the fourth-century “generation of Paul,” and can certainly be identified in the writings of Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome. Such ideas were also strongly advocated by Gregory the Great, who in his *Dialogues* effusively praised Benedict of Nursia’s *Regula* for its “discretion and its clarity of language,” while observing that “anyone who wishes to know more about [Benedict’s] life and character can discover in his Rule exactly what he was like as abbot, for his life could not have differed from his teaching.”<sup>44</sup> Gregory found in Benedict a perfect joining of word and deed, simultaneously teaching through the text of the *Rule* and Benedict’s own lived performance of it. His promotion of the *Regula Benedicti* helped to ensure its place as, eventually, the dominant model of *forma vitae* in the early medieval West. Gregory’s admiring description of Benedict also helped to place the otherwise virtually anonymous *Regula* author among, or at least near, the doctors of the Church, while Gregory himself came to rank with the

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<sup>44</sup> Gregory the Great, *Libri IV Dialogorum*, 2.36, ed. de Vogüé: “Hoc autem nolo te lateat, quod uir dei inter tot miracula, quibus in mundo claruit, doctrinae quoque uerbo non mediocriter fulsit. Nam scripsit monachorum regulam discretionem praecipuam, sermone luculentam. Cuius si quis uelit subtilius mores uitam que cognoscere, potest in eadem institutione regulae omnes magisterii illius actus inuenire, quia sanctus uir nullo modo potuit aliter docere quam uixit”; trans. Zimmermann, repr. *Medieval Saints*, 201: “With all the renown he gained by his miracles, the holy man [i.e., Benedict] was no less outstanding for the wisdom of his teaching. He wrote a Rule for monks that is remarkable for its discretion and its clarity of language. Anyone who wishes to know more about his life and character can discover in his Rule exactly what he was like as abbot, for his life could not have differed from his teaching.”

greatest Latin Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>45</sup> By the Carolingian era, both could be invoked as powerful, unimpeachable, and suitably “ancient” authorities.

With the exponential increase in codex production and text copying during this ambitious period, the Fathers’ lives and words were merged together more frequently, seamlessly, and harmoniously than ever before, resulting in a quantitative intensification of a general formula of *verba* and *vitae* that went back to Luke’s representation of Paul in Acts, if not earlier still. This was a difference in scale, but not only that: spread far and wide through the efforts of Carolingian *correctio*, the consistent emphasis on dutifully following both the examples and textual pronouncements of the great Christian men of the patristic past was, at once, an effort to recreate (and to reform *to*) the essential conditions of that hazily delimited “ancient” past and to improve upon it—to forge a Christian Roman empire that was more truly and perfectly Christian than its historical antecedent.

The patristic tradition that the Carolingians inherited and continued to shape according to their needs and uses was also, by definition, longer, more expansive, and more varied than in previous eras. While in theory Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory were generally elevated above all other post-scriptural authorities, at least within the Latin West, in practice the patristic pantheon of Christian men who were considered uniquely authoritative both for the importance of their writings and the quality of their lives was enlarged and made to bridge the centuries between Gregory and the Carolingians. This malleable canon could include authors as close in time as Bede, and even, at times, Carolingian figures like Alcuin, who merited mention

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<sup>45</sup> On the assimilation of Gregory’s “charismatic” portrait of Benedict in the *Dialogues* with the author of the *Regula Benedicti*, and the subsequent development of Benedict and Gregory’s lofty reputations, see Leyser, “Late Antiquity in the Medieval West,” 37–41.



in Notker's late-ninth-century *Notatio*, and Benedict of Aniane, one of the prime architects of monastic reform under Charlemagne and especially Louis the Pious.

In what follows, I will show how an emphasis on exemplary lives “read” together with words, an essential aspect of the early medieval discursive category of the Fathers, was also applied and reflected in the biographies of illustrious men of the eighth and ninth centuries—namely, Boniface of Mainz, Benedict of Aniane, and Adalhard of Corbie by Willibald, Ardo, and Paschasius Radbertus, respectively. I will also, lastly, consider another text by the final writer, Radbertus, a “sermon” on Marian devotion long mistakenly attributed to Jerome for reasons that are particularly revealing of how knowledge of the Fathers’ texts and lives functioned closely in tandem for Carolingian readers.

Boniface, the missionary “apostle to Germany” and eventual Bishop of Mainz, straddled the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish worlds, as well as the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties (see chapter 2, pages 120–123).<sup>46</sup> Like Alcuin’s poem on the Christian history of York, probably composed during his employment at Charlemagne’s court, both Boniface’s own letters and his *Vita* by the Anglo-Saxon priest Willibald speak to the broadly common concerns of ecclesiastical culture shared by insular and continental Christians of the mid to late eighth century. Willibald’s *vita* also shares with Alcuin’s poem an emphasis on following dutifully in the *veterum vestigia patrum*, emphasizing that revered holy men of the more recent past, like Bede and Boniface, always adhered to this traditional, orthodox path. In his dedicatory preface, Willibald, addressing bishops Lull of Mainz (Boniface’s successor) and Meginoz of Würzburg, writes, “You have suggested that I write, following the model of those whose chaste lives and saintly manners have

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<sup>46</sup> On Boniface, see now the very useful essays collected in Michael Aaij and Shannon Godlove, eds., *A Companion to Boniface* (Leiden, 2020).

been turned into elegant words and put down on parchment by the holy fathers,”<sup>47</sup> raising at the text’s outset the fundamental connection of “chaste lives” and “elegant words.” Here, the “holy fathers” are the authors of *vitae*, performing the pious labour of capturing for posterity the deeds of (other) saints. Perhaps Willibald is thinking of Jerome’s hagiographical writings, or of Athanasius’s famous *vita* of Saint Anthony—subtly suggesting the significance of his own efforts in recording the details of Boniface’s life.

Willibald explains that what made Boniface so exceptional was the “balance” that he struck between chaste, ascetic living and great erudition—a moderate balance that Willibald himself attempts to mimic in the text of the *vita*:

We will now turn our attention for a moment to the general tenor of the saint’s daily contemplation and to his perseverance in fasting and abstinence. In this way, making gradual progress, we shall relate with conciseness and brevity his wonderful deeds, follow his life to its close, and examine it in greater detail. By balancing one aspect of his life against another we shall show that the venerable and holy Boniface was an example for us of eternal life in his evenly balanced moderation and that he laid before us the precepts of apostolic learning. Following the example of the saints, he climbed the steep path that leads to knowledge of heavenly things and went before his people as a leader who opens the gates of paradise through which only the upright shall enter. From the early days of his childhood even to infirm old age he imitated in particular the practice of the ancient fathers in daily committing to memory the writings of the prophets and apostles, the narratives of the passion of the martyrs, and the Gospel teaching of Our Lord.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldo* (hereafter Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*; BHL 1400), ed. Wilhelm Levison, *MGH, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* (Hannover, 1905), 2: “Conpulisti enim me, ut ad normam eorum, quorum aut vitae castimoniam aut morum sanctimoniam sancti procul dubio patres eleganter verborum ambae cartis inserendo tradiderunt”; trans. C.H. Talbot, in *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London, 1954), reprinted in Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head, eds., *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints’ Lives from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (University Park, Penn., 1995), 109. Though less well-known than Willibald’s text, a second *Life*, the so-called *Vita altera Bonifatii* (BHL 1401), was produced at some point in the ninth century (more precise dating remains debated), probably in the area of Utrecht. On this *vita*, see Shannon Godlove, “The Later Medieval *Vitae Bonifatii*,” in *A Companion to Boniface*, 174–200.

<sup>48</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, 11–12: “Ad generalem ergo cottidianae contemplationis eius formam et diuturnam parsimoniae contentiam sermo a nobis directus aliquantisper dirivatur, ut per singulos quosque ascensus sublimia huius sancti viri opera propensius conpendiosa verborum raritate exequamur studiumque vitae per omnia venerabilis sancti Bonifatii subtilius indagando prosequamur, ut et aequa libraminis moderatione exemplar nobis aeternitatis et patens fiat apostolicae eruditionis norma. Qui per sanctorum exempla arduam caelestis intelligentiae semitam feliciter scandens ac praeivum populis ducatum praebens, portam domini Dei nostri, quam iusti intrabunt, ipse ingressus aperuit. Et ab infantia sua usque ad decrepitam aetatis senectutem, praeteritorum non mediocriter patrum sapientiam imitatus est, dum prophetarum iugiter et apostolorum verba stilo sanctitatis

While always following the scholarly examples of the “ancient fathers,” Willibald holds that Boniface, in his rigorous austerity and abstention, “imitated the great figures of the Old and New Testament.”<sup>49</sup> Most of all, through his “apostolic learning” and missionary zeal, Boniface stood as a modern-day Apostle to the Gentiles. To fully underscore this lofty comparison to Paul’s extraordinary life and missionary activity, Willibald ends most chapters of the *vita* with a quotation or close reference to a passage from one of Paul’s letters—his canonical words, which Boniface is said to have lived by or to have demonstrated through his actions. For example, in concluding chapter two, Willibald writes:

Guided and sustained as he was by supernatural grace, he followed both the example and the teaching of the Apostle of the Gentiles: “Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus...Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 1:13, 2:15).<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, at the end of chapter four, Boniface, by spending the winter secluded with the brothers of a monastery in Frisia, “fulfilled that passage in the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles, where it says: ‘For I have decided to spend the winter there’” (1 Titus 3:12).<sup>51</sup> Even in such a relatively mundane detail of his life, Boniface is explicitly presented as a modern-day embodiment of Paul’s divinely inspired words and of his holy life and missionary career.

Willibald explains that he is writing the *vita* so that “[Boniface’s] life and character may be made more clearly manifest to those who wish to model themselves on the example of his holy manner

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conscripta et gloriosam martyrum passionem litterarum apicibus insertam, sed et euangelicam domini Dei nostri traditionem cottidie commendabat memoriae”; trans. Talbot, repr. in *Soldiers of Christ*, 115.

<sup>49</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, 13: “sed ita omni se ieiunii frugalitate subiugavit, ut, vinum et siceram non bibens, utrius testamenti imitatus est patres”; trans. Talbot, repr. in *Soldiers of Christ*, 115.

<sup>50</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, 11: “Quem ita superna sublevavit gratia, ut iuxta egregii praedicatoris exemplar et gentium doctores vocem *formam habens sanorum verborum in fide et dilectione Iesu Christi, sollicito curans se ipsum probabilem exhibere Deo, operarium inconfusibilem, recte tractantem verbum veritatis*”; trans. Talbot, repr. in *Soldiers of Christ*, 114.

<sup>51</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, 18: “...apostolicam gentium doctoris vocem imitaretur, dicentis: *Ibi enim constitui hiemare*”; trans. Talbot, repr. in *Soldiers of Christ*, 118.

of life.”<sup>52</sup> That “holy manner of life,” Willibald insists, was thoroughly inspired by the illustrious examples of the Christian past, as when, on a certain occasion, “the saint addressed the brethren with words of comfort and, ever mindful of the tradition of the fathers, exhorted them in a spiritual discourse.”<sup>53</sup> Boniface’s words, here delivered orally but preserved for future generations in his letters and sermons, were thus in complete harmony with his eminently traditional “holy manner of life”; a true and direct present-day heir of the tradition of Paul and “the fathers.”

Decades later, during the reign of Louis the Pious, Ardo’s biography of one of Louis’s foremost advisers, Benedict of Aniane, similarly positioned his *vita*’s subject as a contemporary embodiment of one of Christianity’s great, ascetic holy men—in this case, his purposefully selected namesake, Benedict of Nursia. At the start of the *vita*’s first chapter, Ardo, writing in 822, roughly a year after Benedict’s death, introduces him as “a man venerable in name and deed” (*vir venerabilis nomine et merito*).<sup>54</sup> While “name” here refers in part to Benedict’s purportedly noble family origins (*nobilis natalibus ortus*), Ardo is, at the same time, asserting that Benedict’s actions and manner of living proved him worthy of his adopted namesake, the revered founder of the empire’s favoured monastic order.<sup>55</sup> Ardo’s Benedict of Aniane both strived to live according to the earlier Benedict’s *Regula* and tirelessly promoted its spread across the Carolingian world. In Ardo’s *vita*, Benedict of Aniane is most closely associated with

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<sup>52</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, 18: “...ut apertior in perpetuum vitae morumque eius ad normam sanctae conversationis illius tendentibus pateat callis”; trans. Talbot, repr. in *Soldiers of Christ*, 119.

<sup>53</sup> Willibald, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, 18–19: “Iam blande adorsus est fratres et spiritalibus eos conloquiis parternae memor traditionis hortatur”; trans. Talbot, repr. in *Soldiers of Christ*, 119.

<sup>54</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis et Indensis auctore Ardone* (hereafter Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*; BHL 1096), ed. Georg Waitz, *MGH, Scriptores* 15.1 (Hanover, 1887), 201; trans. Judith R. Ginsburg with Donna L. Boutelle, reprinted and revised in Paul E. Dutton, ed., *Carolingian Civilization: A Reader* (Toronto, 1999), 158.

<sup>55</sup> On Ardo’s framing of Benedict in his *vita*, see Rutger Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire: Ideals and Expectations during the Reign of Louis the Pious (813–828)* (Amsterdam, 2019), 169–213.

the sixth-century author of the *Regula Benedicti*, though he is also more generally connected to other model leaders of the late antique Roman Christian past. Like such famous late antique figures as Ambrose, Paulinus of Nola,<sup>56</sup> Martin of Tours, and Cassiodorus, Benedict abandoned the privileges of aristocracy in favour of a humbler Christian *forma vitae*. For Ardo, this was a prime opportunity for Benedict to demonstrate that his piety and humility deserve comparison with those famous late antique exemplars: “since he was born of noble [parents], he was eager to become more noble by embracing the highest poverty of Christ.”<sup>57</sup> Initially, Benedict was too severe in his zeal for ascetic life, “not so much taming his delicate body (as if it were a wild animal) as mortifying it,” and he considered the *Regula Benedicti* as meant for neophytes or the weak, aiming instead “to climb toward the teachings of Saint Basil and The Rule of Saint Pachomius.”<sup>58</sup> Eventually, however, Benedict of Aniane tempered the rigour of his own lifestyle and his treatment of his brethren, and ultimately embraced the more moderate manner of life outlined by his adopted namesake; he “burned with love for The Rule of Saint Benedict” (*in amore prefati viri Benedicti regulae accenditur*).<sup>59</sup>

Symbolic of Benedict’s deep connection to the sacred Christian past, he tonsured himself and assumed the monastic habit on the feast day of saints Peter and Paul<sup>60</sup>—thus casting off his

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<sup>56</sup> Dennis Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley, 1999), 10–15, discusses the image and legacy of Paulinus’s renunciation and subsequent life as a powerful example for later generations.

<sup>57</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 213: “quoniam nobilibus natalibus ortus, nobiliorem se fieri Christi amplectendo pauperiem studuit”; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 171.

<sup>58</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 202: “Hoc modo tenerum quasi indomitum animal non tam mansuefaciens quam, ut ita dicam, mortificans corpus, cum cogeretur ab abbate parcius erga semet exercere rigorem, adsensum minime prebuit. Regulam quoque beati Benedicti tironibus seu infirmis positam fore contestans, ad beati Basilii dicta necnon et beati Pacomii regulam scandere nitens, quamvis exiguis possibilia gereret, iugiter impossibilia rimabat”; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 160.

<sup>59</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 202; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 160.

<sup>60</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 213: “Nec mora in deponendo comam fieri passus est, quin pocius die natalis apostolorum Petri et Pauli, auro textis depositis vestibus, chisticolarum induit abitum, seseque caelicularum adscisci numero quantocius congaudens”; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 171: “Nor did he allow there to be any delay in tonsuring himself on the feastday of the apostles Peter and Paul [29

own worldly origins in favour of the apostolic origins of the Church, and becoming “the advocate for the wretched and a father for the monks, a consoler of the poor and a teacher of the monks.”<sup>61</sup> From this pivotal point forward, Ardo relates, Benedict of Aniane did not simply live his life according to Benedict of Nursia’s *Regula*. Crucially, he contributed to the Rule’s implementation in monasteries across the Carolingian realm, while presiding as abbot at Inda, near the Carolingian court at Aachen, where Benedict enjoyed the emperor’s robust support. “Louis [the Pious] also put Benedict in charge of all the monasteries in his empire,” Ardo writes, “so that just as he had instructed Aquitaine and Gothia in the rule of life he might also imbue Francia with his wholesome example.”<sup>62</sup> Benedict’s instruction was, at once, textual, encouraging a superior understanding and observance of the *Regula Benedicti*, and highly personal, centred on the powerful living model of Benedict of Aniane himself. Benedict also sought to ensure that the monks under his care perform in every facet of their lives as clear symbols of upright Benedictine discipline, projecting a manner of life that would stand in stark counterbalance to the many vices of the world and the weaknesses of ordinary men:

And since he established a rule to be observed throughout the other monasteries, so he instructed his own monks living at Inda with every effort so that the monks coming from diverse regions would not require to be told how to act because they would see in the habits of each, in the walk of each, and in their dress, a regular and clear form of discipline.

On account of the indiscreet fervor of many, the inept tepidity of others, and the blunted sense of those less capable, Benedict established a limit and a way of life, handing it

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June]. He put off his clothing, embroidered in gold, and assumed the habit of the worshippers of heaven, rejoicing that he was immediately admitted to the number of the worshippers of Christ.”

<sup>61</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 215: “Erat quippe miserorum advocatus, set monachorum pater; pauperum consolator, set monachorum eruditor”; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 172.

<sup>62</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 215: “Prefecit eum quoque imperator cunctis in regno suo coenobiis, ut, sicut Aquitaniam Gotiamque norma salutis instruxerat, ita etiam Franciam salutifero imbueret exemplo”; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 173. On Benedict’s earlier successes in reforming monasteries in Aquitaine and Gothia, impressing the eventual emperor (then-King of Aquitaine), Louis, see Pierre Riché, *Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne*, trans. Jo Ann McNamara (Philadelphia, 1978), 88–89.

down to all to be observed. He drew them back lest they seek what is superfluous, and ordered them to shake off torpor and to seek to fulfill their program.<sup>63</sup>

As the passage above suggests, Benedict of Aniane also built upon the earlier Benedict's Rule, subtly adapting and explaining the *Regula Benedicti* for men of his own time and place. Ardo, however, makes sure to explain that in so doing Benedict was careful to intervene only where the text of the *Regula* was unclear or "silent." In compiling monastic *regulae* from various "fathers," Benedict's ultimate aim was to generate an impression of traditional consensus from different texts—hence its title, the *Concordia Regularum*:

If a page of the Rule did not reveal something clearly or was completely silent about it, he arranged and completed it rationally and fittingly, helped by divine aid...He made a book, collected together from the rules of the different fathers, so that the Rule of Saint Benedict would be foremost of all [i.e., *Concordia Regularum*].<sup>64</sup>

The *Concordia Regularum* was uniquely rooted in an authority that was both personal and textual, connected to both the spiritual authority of Benedict of Aniane as a "wholesome" present-day example of the pious monastic *forma vitae* and the traditional, ancient authority of Benedict of Nursia.

In teaching other monks, Benedict of Aniane did not focus exclusively on the doctrinal, regular, or exegetical writings of such "fathers," but encouraged his monastic brethren to learn from their lives as well. Ardo relates that Benedict "used to order the brothers to read aloud the

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<sup>63</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 216: "Et quoniam alia per monasteria ut observaretur instituit regula, suos Inda degentibus ita omni intentione instruxit, ut ex diversis regionibus adventantes monachi non, ut ita dixerim, perstreptentia, ut imbuerentur, indigerent verba, quia in singulorum moribus, in incessu habituque formam disciplinamque regularem pictam cernerent. Propter plurimorum quoque indiscretum fervorem et quorundam ineptum teporem minusque capacium sensum obtunsum constituit terminum ordinemque observandum cunctis tradidit, illos retrahens, ne superflua peterent, hos imperans, ut torporem excuterent, alios nichilominus admonens, ut saltem visa implere expeterent"; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 173.

<sup>64</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 216–217: "si qua nempe minus lucide pagina regulae pandit aut omnino silet, rationabiliter abteque instituit atque supplevit, de quibus ope divina iutus pauca relatu perstringam...Fecit denique librum ex regulis diversorum patrum collectum, ita ut prior beati Benedicti regula cunctis esset"; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 173–174.

lives and deaths of the sacred fathers; his mind recuperated with this reading, enduring even stronger.”<sup>65</sup> The impression of fundamental concordance between the lives of these great men and their words as writers of monastic rules, theological treatises, or other paraenetic texts showed what could be achieved through the ideal marriage of ascetic Christian living and the dedicated work of Christian scholarship—a mode of contemplative life that was achievable by dutifully following well-ordered *regulae* like Benedict of Nursia’s.

Much like Benedict of Aniane, Adalhard of Corbie—though Benedict’s sometime bitter adversary<sup>66</sup>—was a figure who moved back and forth between the Carolingian court and the monastery, projecting considerable influence in both spheres. However, in contrast to Benedict’s eager conversion to the regular life, Adalhard, Charlemagne’s cousin, was obliged or pressured (or forced?) to leave the court on multiple occasions under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. In the mid 770s, Adalhard spent a short period of time at Monte Cassino, the monastery famously established by Benedict of Nursia, but he soon returned to Francia, where he assumed the abbacy of Corbie, the institution with which he became most closely associated. It was there that Adalhard served as a teacher and mentor to Paschasius Radbertus, his eventual biographer. Adalhard’s abbatial duties at Corbie, though, did not mean the end of his involvement in worldly affairs, for he was still regularly enlisted to serve as an advisor and sometime diplomatic emissary for Charlemagne. Later, under Louis the Pious, Adalhard, together with his half-brother Wala, was apparently suspected of conspiring against the emperor and sent into exile at yet another monastery, St. Filibert at Noirmoutier. Although Adalhard was later granted clemency

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<sup>65</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis*, ed. Waitz, 218: “Legere siquidem coram se sanctorum patrum vitam obitusque iubeat; qua lectione recuperatus animus fortior perdurabat”; trans. Ginsburg, repr. in *Carolingian Civilization*, 175.

<sup>66</sup> On the acrimonious relationship between Adalhard and Benedict, see Fried, *Charlemagne*, trans. Lewis, 498–499.



and permitted to return to Corbie and to court, his period of his banishment—the precise circumstances of which remain somewhat obscure and disputed—left a stain on the names of Adalhard and perhaps, to a lesser extent, Corbie.<sup>67</sup>

Consequently, Adalhard's pupil/biographer, Radbertus—an intensely loyal partisan of Corbie, later elected as its abbot in 843—forcefully argues that Adalhard, despite his sadly compromised reputation, was in fact a great holy man who came to embrace, and even epitomize, the fruits of the contemplative life. To make this case, Radbertus, probably writing soon after Adalhard's death (*ca.* 826), positions both his subject and himself (as a loving, admiring, tearful disciple of the late Adalhard) in close relation to the examples and writings of the patristic and scriptural pasts. Near the beginning of the *Vita Adalhardi*, Radbertus insists that “it is a prize of achievement to emulate certain very learned men who, with pious affection of mind, dutifully and piteously wept at the funerals of those beloved in Christ and who, as they wept, also pursued them with much praise.”<sup>68</sup> This truth, drawn from Ambrose's obituary of the emperor Valentinian II (*sicut beatus Ambrosius in opere super Valentinianum dixit...*), serves to justify the mournful tone of Radbertus's text. Later, he expands this ancient precedent for weeping for the dead from the case of Ambrose's obituary for Valentinian to Jesus's mourning of Lazarus: “I know that Lord Jesus wept for Lazarus whom He loved, and not only wept but

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<sup>67</sup> On Adalhard's tumultuous career, see Brigitte Kasten, *Adalhard von Corbie: Die Biographie eines karolingischen Politikers und Klostervorstehers* (Düsseldorf, 1986). On his time at Corbie, see David Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Sigmaringen, 1990), 22–29. On Radbertus's representation of him, see Mayke de Jong, *Epitaph for an Era: Politics and Rhetoric in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2019); Ganz, *Corbie*, 103–112.

<sup>68</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi* (BHL 58), PL 120, col. 1507: “Pretium operis est viros quosque doctissimos imitari, qui pio mentis affectu, charorum in Christo funera pietatis opere deflevire, flendo quoque miris eos prosecuti sunt laudibus”; trans. Allen Cabaniss, in *idem*, *Charlemagne's Cousins: Contemporary Lives of Adalard and Wala* (Syracuse, N.Y., 1967), 25.

was also disturbed in spirit.”<sup>69</sup> By invoking these different, hallowed strata of Christian history—scriptural and patristic—Radbertus implicitly joins himself to Christ and to Ambrose, as he mourns “father Adalhard, most beloved of men, adornment of old age, image of holiness, model of virtues,” through the very act of composing his *vita*, recalling his deceased mentor “with bonds of love.”<sup>70</sup>

The controversies attached to Adalhard’s tumultuous career clearly motivated Radbertus to firmly establish Adalhard’s reputation and legacy as a great Christian leader—a “father” and “blessed ancient” (*beatus senex*), as he frequently refers to him. The lives of such men, he insists, should be recounted to serve as a holy guide for future generations: “It is an undertaking for posterity that we commit to writing the examples of their virtues...and we do not deny our sons the examples of fathers whom they ought to emulate.”<sup>71</sup> Slightly later, Radbertus reiterates this same truism, here referring to specific, major patristic figures who also demonstrated its abiding wisdom: “It is therefore, as I said, most fitting to emulate holy men such as the aforesaid Ambrose and blessed Jerome and other imitable holy men, who produced eloquent funeral orations for their dear ones.”<sup>72</sup> So worthy of veneration and representative of tradition was Adalhard, per Radbertus, that he is compared alternately to John the Baptist, Moses, and

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<sup>69</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1509: “qui dum video Dominum Iesum Christum, Lazarum quem diligebat flevisse mortuum, et non solum flevisse, verum turbatum fuisse spiritu”; trans. Cabaniss, 27.

<sup>70</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1509: “Qua pietate, licet mentis ingenio segnis, tui recorde, virorum charissime Adalharde pater, senectutis decus, species sanctitatis, forma virtutum”; trans. Cabaniss, 26–27.

<sup>71</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1508: “Caeterum posteritatis negotium est ut eorum exempla virtutum litteris commendemus...et Patrum exempla, quos imitari debeant, filiis non negemus”; trans. Cabaniss, 25.

<sup>72</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1509: “Quapropter officiosissimum est, sicut dixi, sanctos imitari viros, videlicet praefatum Ambrosium, et beatum Hieronymum, reliquosque sacros imitabiles viros, qui suis epitaphia charis facundissime condiderunt”; trans. Cabaniss, 26.

Augustine—figures spanning across the ages of scriptural and Christian history. On Adalhard's election as abbot, Radbertus writes:

It was as if another Augustine was chosen as successor while his predecessor was still living. The latter, however, was elected bishop, while the former was designated abbot. Yet both were found as perfect stewards of God. Like a servant of the aforesaid father Augustine, this blessed one was an outstanding imitator of the former's works, penetrating in character, ready of will, rich in eloquence, flowing with sweetness in greeting, impressing a hearer with such enjoyment that you could believe his tongue was nothing other than a pen of the Holy Spirit. Tears graced his preaching; his groaning softened hardness of heart.<sup>73</sup>

In this exalted comparison, Adalhard stands above other men as “another Augustine” not only on account of his “perfect” leadership (though as an abbot rather than a bishop), but also in his writerly eloquence, so remarkable that Adalhard's words seemed to be divinely inspired.

Radbertus suggests additional comparisons of Adalhard to Gregory the Great and Pope Silvester, and notes that others referred to him as “Antonius” or “Aurelius Augustinus.”<sup>74</sup>

As in Ardo's *vita* of Benedict of Aniane, Adalhard's rejection of worldly riches for Christian poverty and humility is one of the key examples from his life that makes it so worthy of emulation. Radbertus draws from a prestigious patristic source to underscore this point: “If I may employ the words of blessed Jerome, some may be richer as monks than they would have

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<sup>73</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1516: “id est alter Augustinus vivente praedecessore successor eligatur: nisi quod ille episcopus fuerit, iste vero abbatibus loco subrogatus sit; utrique tamen perfecti Dei dispensatores inveniuntur. Erat autem idem beatus praefati patris Augustini velut pedissequus operum clarissimus imitator, satis acutus ingenio, voluntate promptus, eloquentia dives, dulcifluus affatu, auditorem tanto afficiens fructu, ut linguam eius vix aliud quam calamus sancti Spiritus credere potuisses. Praedicationis eous officium lacrymae commendabant, et cordis duritiam gemitus mollebat”; trans. Cabaniss, 35.

<sup>74</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1519: “Ob hoc autem ab aliquibus, ut epistolae magistri Albini ferunt, Antonius vocabatur; a nonnullis vero, ut supra dictum est, Aurelius Augustinus: agebat namque istud Gregorii, aliud vero beati Silvestri”; trans. Cabaniss, 39. Knowledge inspiring comparisons of Adalhard to Pope Silvester (by Radbertus and/or the monastic brethren who had supposedly suggested the comparison) most likely derived from some combination of the prominent entry on Silvester in the *Liber pontificalis* combined with the legendary *Passio sancti Silvestri*. On the *Liber pontificalis* biography of Pope Silvester, see McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy*, 97–103. On the *Passio sancti Silvestri*, its influence on Adalhard, and Radbertus's conception of Silvester, see Fried, *Charlemagne*, trans. Lewis, 104–108.

been as men of the world.”<sup>75</sup> Confronted by the problem of Adalhard’s tarnished reputation during the period of his exile from the court, Radbertus draws from Bede’s comment on John (i.e., John the evangelist conflated with John of Patmos), writing, “There is no doubt that he was pruned off thus to exile by hatred of truth as blessed John was, according to the statement of the presbyter Venerable Bede.”<sup>76</sup> This scriptural analogy and patristic reference (to Bede) together help to rehabilitate the life of Adalhard, reminding the reader that worldly punishment need not be seen as diminishing the true character of the holy man. Rather, such punishment should sometimes be interpreted as further evidence of his righteous, if perilous, truth-telling role in an imperfect social world.<sup>77</sup>

In describing the state of the temporal world, Radbertus alludes, seemingly, to Augustine’s conception of the Two Cities and the turbulent state of human affairs in the worldly *corpus intermixtum*: “Everywhere we may discern the wheels of the world, driven by the waves, and the camps of Babylon and Jerusalem clashing together with mixed emotions, first weapons and then flight being taken alternately hither and thither.”<sup>78</sup> Adalhard, “a serious soldier of Christ” (*severus Christi miles*),<sup>79</sup> had to navigate this dangerous, vexatious world, Babylon invisibly intermingled with Jerusalem. Like sacred precursors in scripture and in the later Roman society of the Fathers, Adalhard expertly navigated this course, exemplifying the model Christian

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<sup>75</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1515–1516: “ut beati Hieronymi verbis utar, sint nonnulli ditiores monachi, quam fuerint saeculares”; adapted from trans. Cabaniss, 34.

<sup>76</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1531: “nec dubium veritatis odio cum beato Joanne adeo usque exsilio deputatus, sicut venerabilis Beda presbyter ait”; trans. Cabaniss, 52.

<sup>77</sup> On the role of “frank speech” in early medieval culture, and specifically Radbertus’s Adalhard as a frank advisor/truth-teller, see Van Renswoude, *Rhetoric of Free Speech*, esp. 180–205. See also Courtney M. Booker, “Murmurs and Shouts: Speaking the Conscience in Carolingian Narratives,” in Philippe Depreux and Stefan Esders, eds., *La productivité d’une crise: Le règne de Louis le Pieux (814–840) et la transformation de l’Empire carolingien / Produktivität einer Krise: Die Regierungszeit Ludwigs des Frommen (814–840) und die Transformation des karolingischen Imperium* (Ostfildern, 2018), 343–358.

<sup>78</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1531: “Quin licuit cernere fluctivagas ubique mundi rotas, et Babylonis ac Hierosolymorum mistim confligere castra, hinc inde vicibus tela atque fugam capi”; adapted from trans. Cabaniss, 52.

<sup>79</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1514; trans. Cabaniss, 33.

manner of living. Through his letters, Adalhard left behind words that, according to Radbertus, show his exceptional wisdom and eloquence—learned virtues that firmly connect him to the Fathers, famous for their *eloquentia* in preaching and writing:

How fluent was his speech, how full of meaning, how sweet to hear when it flowed! His letters were directed to a great many people. The words of all who testify are that they never heard anyone speaking more richly or expressively. More melodious in voice than a swan, he caressed the listener, but sweeter than honey was the melody to the palate of the heart.<sup>80</sup>

These splendid words of Adalhard, whether delivered orally to his monastic brothers or written in letters to numerous interlocutors, are not simply demonstrative of his learning or rhetorical skill. In the close, meaning-charged connection of *verba* and *vita*, they are strong evidence that Adalhard merits a place among the illustrious Fathers of “ancient” Christian tradition. Radbertus strives to solidify this case through his glowing presentation of Adalhard’s saintly life and his brilliance; that the *Vita Adalhardi* bears a close resemblance to the form and content of well-known *vitae* of patristic saints is precisely the point. As David Ganz observes, “Traditional *formulae* are not mere clichés adding authority to a new work, they acquired their resonance by their authority. To search for originality in Carolingian hagiography is to misunderstand its terms of reference. The eternal relevance of the values of the *Vita Adalhardi* derives not only from their place in a context of literary and monastic culture, but from the urgency with which that culture is defended.”<sup>81</sup> Radbertus’s defence of Adalhard is carefully framed within the well-fortified parametres of a Christian tradition defined by the transtemporal value and total harmony of its canonical texts and the mode of living demonstrated by its greatest writers.

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<sup>80</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi*, PL 120, col. 1540: “Porro eius oratio quam facunda, quam plena sensibus, quam suavis auditu manavit! Exstant eius epistolae ad plurimos directae, et omnium voces, qui nunquam se uberius aut expressius loquentem audisse testantur. Voce quidem canorius cygno mulcebat auditum; sed et melle dulcius palatui cordis melodia sapiebat”; trans. Cabaniss, 63.

<sup>81</sup> Ganz, *Corbie*, 112.

**Name Recognition: Paschasius Radbertus's *Epitaphium Arsenii* and *Cogitis me***

Radbertus's emphasis on ideal Christian *modus vivendi*, with the present age typologically connected to the golden ages of the Christian past, is on full display in his later, more formally inventive works like the *Epitaphium Arsenii* and *Cogitis me*.<sup>82</sup> In the former, another controversial, Corbie-connected mentor, Adalhard's half-brother, Wala, is given a comparably effusive defence against his detractors, but rather than a conventional hagiography, this text is structured as a classical dialogue, with Carolingian political and ecclesiastical figures, including Wala, assigned historical, typological pseudonyms representing their essential character. For example, Wala himself is called, alternately, Jeremiah, Benedict (of Nursia), and Arsenius, a once-close adviser to the emperor Theodosius, who later went into exile in the desert. By contrast, the alleged conspirators against Radbertus's saintly hero, Wala, are cast as sinful negative exemplars. Most prominently among these villains, the empress Judith and her alleged lover Bernard of Septimania are named as Justina, the ill-regarded wife of the emperor Justinian, and "Naso," an allusion to Ovid's purported crime of adultery.<sup>83</sup> Composed during different periods of activity, and shifting political contexts, between *ca.* 836 (shortly after Wala's death) and the 850s, the *Epitaphium Arsenii* ambiguously blurs its temporal layers as well as its multiple frames of reference (e.g., scriptural, historical, dramatic). As in Walafrid Strabo's *De*

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<sup>82</sup> On the *Vita Adalhardi*, the *Epitaphium Arsenii* (BHL 8761), and the prominent influence of the late antique "Ambrosian" past in Radbertus's work, see now Mayke de Jong, "From the Order of the Franks to the World of Ambrose: The *Vita Adalhardi* and the *Epitaphium Arsenii* Compared," in Rutger Kramer, Helmut Reimitz, and Graeme Ward, eds., *Historiography and Identity III: Carolingian Approaches* (Turnhout, 2021), 39–63.

<sup>83</sup> On the *Epitaphium Arsenii*, see De Jong, *Epitaph for an Era*; De Jong, "Becoming Jeremiah: Paschasius Radbertus on Wala, Himself and Others," in Richard Corradini, Matthew Gillis, Rosamond McKitterick, and Irene van Renswoude, eds., *Ego Trouble: Authors and Their Identities in the Early Middle Ages* (Vienna, 2010), 185–196; Booker, *Past Convictions*, 42–50; David Ganz, "The *Epitaphium Arsenii* and the Opposition to Louis the Pious," in Peter Godman and Roger Collins, eds., *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)* (Oxford, 1990), 537–550.

*imagine Tetrici* and the *Visio Wettini* (discussed in chapter 5), the haziness of time and place serves to crystalize and reinforce higher moral and spiritual truths, which transcend historical specificity, even as Radbertus implicitly addresses people and events of the quite recent past.<sup>84</sup>

The great names and figures of the Christian past provided Radbertus with a useful, versatile toolkit with which to edify and correct his contemporaries. Where in the *Epitaphium Arsenii* he assigns suggestive bynames to clearly recognizable present-day individuals, in the *Cogitis me*, one of the earliest Latin treatises on the veneration of Mary, Radbertus writes from the ostensible perspective of one of Christian history's most revered figures: Jerome. For centuries, many readers, beginning with Hincmar of Rheims in the ninth century, erroneously attributed this text to Jerome, before modern critics recognized the *Cogitis me* (sometimes known as *De assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis*) as a Carolingian creation, narrowing down the main suspects to Ambrosius Autpertus and Paschasius Radbertus and ultimately settling on the latter.<sup>85</sup> Critical modern readers recognized that the author of the *Cogitis me* had drawn from texts written after Jerome's death, among them Cassian's *De incarnatione*, a letter of Pope Leo I (*ep.* 165), and sermons of Peter Chrysologus. Yet, by far Radbertus's most frequent source is scripture, accessed directly, without reference to authoritative intermediaries. This bold approach must have amplified the impression for many medieval readers that this text was indeed the

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. Ganz, *Corbie*, 114–15.

<sup>85</sup> See Ellen Muehlberger, Introduction to “*Cogitis me*: A Medieval Sermon on the Assumption” (M.A. thesis, Indiana Univ., 2001), 1–7. There is a substantial scholarly literature on the *Cogitis me* and its influence, most of it primarily concerned with either the text's impact on the developing cult of Mary in the medieval Latin West or with the quality of Radbertus's theology. See esp. Conrad Leyser, “From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother: Royal Genealogy and Marian Devotion in the Ninth-century West,” in Conrad Leyser and Lesley Smith, eds., *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe, 400–1400: Essays Presented to Henrietta Leyser* (London/New York, 2011), 21–40; Owen M. Phelan, “Horizontal and Vertical Theologies: ‘Sacraments’ in the Works of Paschasius Radbertus and Ratramnus of Corbie,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 103 (2010), 271–289; David Appleby, “‘Beautiful on the Cross, Beautiful in His Torments’: The Place of the Body in the Thought of Paschasius Radbertus,” *Traditio* 60 (2005), 1–46; Leo Scheffczyk, *Das Mariengeheimnis in Frömmigkeit und Lehre der Karolingerzeit* (Leipzig, 1959); Henri Barré, “La lettre du pseudo-Jérôme sur l’Assomption est-elle antérieure à Paschase Radbert?” *Revue bénédictine* 68 (1958), 203–225; Salvatore Bonano “The Divine Maternity and the Eucharistic Body in the Doctrine of Paschasius Radbertus,” *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 1 (1951), 379–394.

authentic work of Jerome, a master of biblical scholarship and exegesis, who did not need to humbly defer to earlier authorities the way writers of their own day habitually did. The *Cogitis me* was a frequent inclusion in medieval homiliaries in large part because it filled a key gap in Latin Christian liturgical literature; all the better, of course, that this conspicuous lacuna be filled by the words of one of the foremost Latin Fathers. As Ellen Muehlberger observes, “In effect, Paschasius Radbertus’s conceit conferred on early medieval Marian devotion a pedigree that reached back to the venerable beginnings of Christian renunciation.”<sup>86</sup>

Radbertus never actually identifies himself as Jerome at any point in the *Cogitis me*,<sup>87</sup> but rather suggests Hieronymian authorship in other ways. Most conspicuously, Radbertus addresses his text as a “sermon” dedicated to Paula and Eustochium, two famous female companions of Jerome. These women were closely associated with Jerome, and it was well-known that Jerome wrote many letters addressed to them. In the entry summarizing his own writings that concludes the *De viris illustribus*, Jerome reflects, “How many letters I have written to Paula and Eustochium I do not know, for I write daily.”<sup>88</sup> Thus, it would have been entirely conceivable that this “sermon,” epistolary in its form, was a lesser-known work addressed to them, not specifically named among Jerome’s writings. Radbertus, whether he intended to deceive or not, surely would have been aware of this. “Think, Paula and Eustochium,” he writes near the beginning of *Cogitis me*, “of how the love of Christ compels me (2 Cor. 5:14), and of my previous habit of speaking to you in writings, so that I might be able to speak in a new way to

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<sup>86</sup> Muehlberger, Introduction to “*Cogitis me*,” 8.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Leyser, “From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother,” 33, who notes that “Radbertus casts himself as Jerome” in service of his aim of “transport[ing] himself and his dedicatees back to the Roman Empire.”

<sup>88</sup> Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ed. Ernest Cushing Richardson, *Hieronymus liber De viris inlustribus. Gennadius liber De viris inlustribus, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 14/1 (Leipzig, 1896), 55: “epistularum autem ad Paulam et Eustochium, quia cottidie scribuntur, incertus est numerus”; Jerome and Gennadius, *Lives of Illustrious Men*, trans. Ernest Cushing Richardson, in Phillip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers II*, vol. 3, 384.



you and the sacred virgins who live with you. I shall give you a sermon on the assumption of the blessed and glorious Mary, ever Virgin, using Latin speech to exhort you in the way of those who customarily speak aloud to people in the church.”<sup>89</sup> Adding to the *Cogitis me*’s Hieronymian appearance, Radbertus strikes a familiar, intimate tone with his text’s dedicatees, and refers to particular Holy Land locales that they have visited.<sup>90</sup> For most Carolingian readers, these places seem decidedly exotic and distant, known only through texts.

Being absent from your presence, I take care to write to you about the assumption of the blessed Mary, and how she was taken up, because your supplication demands it. Aware of my absence, however, I am still devoted to presenting a talk, so that your holy group might have the gift of such a sermon in Latin on the day of such great solemnity...Even you, Paula, saw with your own eyes where the church was built in her honor [between Mount Zion and the Mount of Olives], and how it is covered in wondrous stone.<sup>91</sup>

It is entirely possible that this text was meant by Radbertus as a kind of discursive role-playing exercise (much like the *Epitaphium Arsenii*), with the nuns of Notre Dame de Soissons,<sup>92</sup> who remained dear to Radbertus after raising him as a child oblate, being the real intended audience, cast affectionately as Paula, Eustochium, and the community of holy virgins living with Jerome at Bethlehem. Assigning bynames with historical or biblical resonance to contemporary figures

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<sup>89</sup> *Epistola Beati Hieronymi ad Paulam et Eustochium de assumptione sanctae Mariae virginis* (hereafter Paschasius Radbertus, *Cogitis me*), in Albert Ripberger, ed., *Der Pseudo-Hieronymous-Brief IX “Cogitis me”: Ein erster marianischer Traktat des Mittelalters von Paschasius Radbert* (Freiburg, 1962), 57: “Cogitis me, o Paula et Eustochium, immo caritas Christi me compellit, qui uobis dudum tractatibus loqui consueueram, ut nouo loquendi genere, sanctis, quae uobiscum degunt, uirginibus latino utens eloquio, exhortationis gratia sermonem faciam de assumptione beatae et gloriosae semper uirginis Mariae, more eorum qui declamatorie in ecclesiis solent loqui ad populum”; adapted from trans. Muehlberger, “*Cogitis me*,” 25.

<sup>90</sup> On the extensive travels of Jerome and Paula in the Holy Land, see J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London, 1975), 120, who suggests that they seem to have visited “every conceivable spot with Old or New Testament associations”; and Williams, *Authorised Lives*, 143, quoting Kelly.

<sup>91</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Cogitis me*, ed. Ripberger, 59–60: “De assumptione tamen eius, qualiter assumpta est, quia uestra id deposcit intentio, praesentia absens scribere uobis curauim, quae absentia praesens deuotus obtuli, ut habeat sanctum collegium uestrum in die tantae sollemnitis munus latini sermonis... [inter montem Sion et montem Oliueti posita], quam et tu, o Paula, oculis aspexisti, ubi in eius honore fabricata est ecclesia miro lapideo tabulatu”; trans. Muehlberger, 27.

<sup>92</sup> See Hannah Matis, “The Seclusion of Eustochium: Paschasius Radbertus and the Nuns of Soissons,” *Church History* 85 (2016), 665–689.

was common in Carolingian culture, particularly among close friends and interlocutors.<sup>93</sup> Radbertus addressing the nuns of Notre Dame de Soissons as “Paula and Eustochium” may be part of the same cultural practice whereby, for instance, Alcuin referred to Charlemagne as “David,” or (though it is certainly more of a special, *sui generis* case) a bishop of Rome could write using the authorial name and voice of the apostle Peter, as Pope Stephen II did in a letter to Pepin I urging him to protect Rome from the Lombards.<sup>94</sup> The learned and savvy Radbertus was undoubtedly aware of such instances of “borrowing” a famous figure’s persona or assigning allusive nicknames for literary effect, yet leaving no real doubt, at least among his intended primary audience, of the text’s actual authorship.<sup>95</sup> Alternately, and perhaps more provocatively, Radbertus may have deliberately constructed a text that (to his mind) Jerome *might* have, or even *should* have, written—adopting Jerome’s voice and using his perspective and ideas to create an authoritative “patristic” statement on Marian devotion.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> On the use of allusive nicknames as a distinctive element of Carolingian court culture, see Mary Garrison, “The Social World of Alcuin: Nicknames at York and at the Carolingian Court,” in L.A.J.R. Houwen and Alasdair A. McDonald, eds., *Alcuin of York: Scholar at the Carolingian Court* (Groningen, 1995), 59–79; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751–987* (London, 1983), 160–164.

<sup>94</sup> See Johannes Fried, *Charlemagne*, trans. Lewis, 48, on this papal letter and its context.

<sup>95</sup> De Jong, *Epitaph for an Era*, 204 argues that Radbertus “was not ‘forgery-happy’ when he wrote a treatise on Mary (*Cogitis me*) for his beloved nuns of Notre-Dame in Soissons, in the persona of Jerome writing to Eustochium and Paula. Such borrowed authorial identities had nothing to do with what is now understood as forgery: they were a way of adding to one’s own authority and honouring one’s patristic models as well as one’s audience, who were of course fully aware of this elegant ruse.” This may well be true if by “audience” one considers only those in Radbertus’s immediate textual orbit, like the nuns at Soissons or his fellow monks at Corbie. Other mid-ninth-century readers, most prominently Hincmar of Rheims, considered the *Cogitis me* to be the authentic work of Jerome, seemingly unaware of Radbertus’s “elegant ruse.” Hincmar confirmed that Jerome was the text’s author and dismissed suspicions to the contrary in a letter discovered by Cyrille Lambot, preserved in Ghent, Bibliothèque de l’Université Codex 239. See Lambot, “L’homélie du Pseudo-Jérôme sur l’assomption & l’évangile de la Nativité de Marie d’après une lettre inédite d’Hincmar,” *Revue bénédictine* 46 (1934), 265–282.

<sup>96</sup> A similar argument can (and has) been made for the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals, which Radbertus may have directed and/or composed at Corbie; his involvement in the forgeries remains disputed. Mayke De Jong, “Paschasius Radbertus and Pseudo-Isidore: The Evidence of the *Epitaphium Arsenii*,” in Valerie L. Garver and Owen M. Phelan, eds., *Rome and Religion in the Medieval World: Studies in Honor of Thomas F.X. Noble* (Farnham, UK/Burlington, Vt., 2014), 149–177 provides a helpful summary of this complicated debate and the evidence for the identification of Radbertus as “Pseudo-Isidore.” See also Clara Harder, “Pseudo-Isidorus Mercator,” in Philip L. Reynolds, ed., *Great Christian Jurists and Legal Collections in the First Millennium* (Cambridge, 2019), 397–412.

Whatever his true intentions in presenting his text as seemingly Jerome's, Radbertus draws cleverly on contemporary knowledge of the extraordinary life of Jerome and his work as a biblical scholar and exegete to urge female readers to closely follow the example of Mary, as his letter's dedicatees have piously demonstrated: "Therefore, every virgin who seeks the prize for herself from her, who asks Mary for help, must imitate her example. I ask you, O virgins, and even the widows, to imitate Paula, the widowed mother, an exemplar of continence and chastity, and to imitate Eustochium, the virgin you have with you, whose beauty is of perfect integrity."<sup>97</sup> Writing for ninth-century readers far removed from the time and place of Jerome—most of whom, unlike Paula and Eustochium, had not seen the great sites of the Holy Land "with [their] own eyes"—Radbertus merged the distant Christian past together with the present. Radbertus imitated the voice and perspective of Jerome while urging his readers to imitate the holy lives of saintly figures like Mary.

## **Conclusion**

In an important article on "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," Peter Brown wrote:

The early Christian emphasis on the *repraesentatio Christi* enabled a holy man to bear in his own person the central paradigm of the Christian community. Bearing Christ in his person, he very often *was* Christianity in his region...The idea that the great and good happenings of the mighty past were always available in any region, to be reenacted by new Christian heroes, provided an imaginative map of Europe and the Near East in which it was possible, in the course of the early Middle Ages, to add to the Christian world provinces unimaginably distant, in reality, from the Mediterranean centers of the Early Church.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Cogitis me*, ed. Ripberger, 108–109: "Propterea quaecumque uirgo sibi ab ea optat praemium et implorat auxilium, debet imitari exemplum. Rogo uos o uirgines, rogo et uiduae, imitami Paulam, matrem uiduam, exemplar continentiae et castitatis; imitami Eustochium, quam habetis uobiscum uirginem et formam perfectae integritatis"; trans. Muehlberger, 65.

<sup>98</sup> Brown, "Saint as Exemplar," 192.

Carolingian writers' purposeful use of the Fathers' lives together with their words brought their "ancient" *tempora Christiana* back to life, or at least repositioned those past times in closer, more immediate proximity to the present age—in much the same way that, as Brown describes, the holy men of Late Antiquity could stand in for the apostolic context, or even for Christ himself.

As the complex case of the *Cogitis me* shows, the basis for distinctive, "patristic" authority was not only a Fathers' words, but also his life and deeds. Knowledge of both among Carolingian and later medieval readers allowed Radbertus's ninth-century "sermon" to share in the gravitas associated with Jerome and his milieu. The patristic figure's authoritative name—implicitly suggested by Radbertus in addressing his text to "Paula and Eustochium"—could function as a convenient symbol that connected together both the written works and the acts (correctly or erroneously) attributed to him—much like the saintly images of Augustine, Ambrose, Leo, and Gregory in the Egino Codex, discussed in chapter 7. These images express Fathers' exemplary active lives as bishops guided by God's grace to preach and elucidate his word among their followers *and* their monk-like contemplative spirituality. That the texts therein are sermons or homilies, rather than longer, denser, more obviously "literary" texts,<sup>99</sup> underscores this inextricable connection between *verba* and *vita*, for these words were presumably originally delivered aloud by the Fathers in fulfilling essential duties of their sacred *ministerium*.

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<sup>99</sup> On the crafting of sermons into textual "works," see esp. Mark Vessey, "Orators, Authors, and Compilers: The Earliest Latin Collections of Sermons on Scripture," in Maximillian Diesenberger, Yitzhak Hen and Marianne Pollheimer, eds., *Sermo doctorum: Compilers, Preachers, and Their Audiences in the Early Medieval West* (Turnhout, 2013), 25–44.

Just as the fourth-century “generation of Paul” drew both from the theological ideas in Paul’s letters and from the textual evidence recounting his life and missionary activity (in Acts and elsewhere), subsequent generations, from Cassiodorus to the Carolingians, sought to understand and learn from the words and emulate the pious lives and careers of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and other “Fathers,” who had provided their readers with the trusted keys and lamps (to borrow Tyconius’s metaphor, discussed in chapter 1) for unlocking the deeper, spiritual meanings of Paul’s letters and other ambiguous scriptural texts. When Radbertus repeatedly describes Adalhard as “our blessed ancient,” he is not merely alluding to Adalhard’s advanced age. He is also associating his beloved mentor with a deep and powerful tradition of the ancient Christian holy man, teacher, and writer, an “ancient” *forma vitae* that Adalhard embodied in the present age—much as Radbertus himself ably performed the role of Jerome in the *Cogitis me*. Careful study of the Fathers’ writings and sources describing their lives allowed the *viri illustrissimi* of the Christian past to be revived as imitable, and perhaps even inhabitable, models for the Carolingian present, thus closely connecting ninth-century holy men with the ancient authority of saintly patristic exemplars.

For men like Paschasius Radbertus, Adalhard, and Benedict of Aniane, following in the footsteps of the ancient fathers led them to the *summa paupertas*. Many other Carolingian Christians attempted to follow the same path, broadly conceived, without ever taking a formal vow of monasticism or living according to a defined *regula*. The *forma vitae* exemplified by the lives and ideas of the Fathers was, to a point, quite flexible and open to variation. This manner of life was typically marked by ascetic qualities and centred around scripture and the standards established by “ancient” (or simply earlier) Christian “tradition.” But such an ideal was as achievable for dutiful, conscientious bishops or priests—even, at least in theory, for

exceptionally pious lay leaders—as for monks or canons. Beyond the practical necessities of needing different kinds of roles for governing and administering the Church, this diversity was also possible because Christian tradition itself was so rich in variety, from the scriptural examples of Paul and Peter (who, notwithstanding the combined, formulaic power ascribed to the *concordia apostolorum*, nonetheless stood for different types and ideas of Christian leadership and ministry) to later figures like Augustine, Jerome, Benedict of Nursia, Cassiodorus, and Bede: none very much alike in term of the trajectory of their lives and careers, each to some extent a product of their specific time and place. What mattered was that all of these men were understood to have lived in a manner that was thoroughly consistent with their own lofty, written expectations of devotion, leadership, and/or scholarship. Their respective ideas about Christian society, practice, and belief were considered by later readers, including those of the Carolingian era, as harmonious, congruous, and wholly orthodox. At the same time, “orthodoxy” itself was determined in large part through reference back to the writings of these most “catholic” men, paired together with the “universal” church councils in which some of those men also participated. In other words, as I shall discuss in the Conclusion, the complex and sometimes divergent views of various revered Christian writers were compressed and merged into a *consensus patrum*: “that which is believed everywhere, always, and by everybody.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium*, 2.3, ed. Reginald Moxon (Cambridge, 1915), 10: “In ipsa item catholica ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.” This text will be discussed in the next chapter.

**Conclusion:**  
**Progress toward the Past?**  
**Antiquity, Orthodoxy, and Consensus among Authorities**  
**in the Carolingian *Reformatio***

Just a few years after Augustine's death, Vincent of Lérins, a monk in southern Gaul, from much the same cultural milieu as Gennadius, famously wrote, "We must take extreme care, in the catholic Church, that what is held is that which is believed everywhere, always, and by everybody."<sup>1</sup> Modern scholars have at times assumed that this was the very definition of orthodoxy throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as one of Vincent's modern editors observed, "It is a strange fact that, in spite of the literary excellence of the *Commonitorium* and its value in dogmatic theology, in spite of the fact that it has been at nearly all times widely known and read, yet as far as is known, only four manuscripts of this treatise have survived."<sup>3</sup> Of those four manuscripts, only two can be confidently dated before the year 1000: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris lat. 13386 (an eighth- or ninth-century manuscript from Corbie comprising other patristic or pseudo-patristic texts, as well as John Scottus Eriugena's *De praedestinatione* added in a later hand), and BN, Paris lat. 2173 (a later ninth- or tenth-century manuscript, from which Pierre Pithou derived his edition of 1586<sup>4</sup>). Given this paucity of early medieval manuscript witnesses

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<sup>1</sup> Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium*, 2.3, ed. Moxon, 10: "In ipsa item catholica ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est."

<sup>2</sup> Éric Rebillard, "A New Style of Argument in Christian Polemic: Augustine and the Use of Patristic Citations," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 560, suggests that "[s]uch a definition was more or less adopted in the practice of the Catholic Church, until a definition was officially formulated at the Council of Trent." On modern scholars' interpretation of this so-called "Vincentian Canon" and its long influence in Christian thought, see Thomas Guarino, "Tradition and Doctrinal Development: Can Vincent of Lérins Still Teach the Church?," *Theological Studies* 67 (2006), esp. 35–38. See also, for example, Jason Robert Radcliff, "The *Consensus Patrum*: An Historical Overview," in *idem*, *Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers* (Cambridge, 2014), ch. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Reginald Stewart Moxon, *The Commonitorium of Vincent of Lérins* (Cambridge, 1915), lxxvii.

<sup>4</sup> Vincentius Lerinensis et al., *Veterum aliquot Galliae theologorum scripta quorum nonnulla ex veteribus libris emendatius, aliqua nunc primum eduntur*, ed. Pierre Pithou (Paris, 1586).

for Vincent's text, it should not necessarily be taken for granted that his maxim was itself well-known "everywhere, always, and by everybody" in the Carolingian era.

Instead, ninth-century notions of orthodoxy and universality, insofar as they seem consistent with Vincent's aspirational definitions, derive more generally from Carolingian intellectuals' widely shared, though malleable and variable, perceptions of an idealized and often homogenized "ancient Christian" past wherein, they presumed, something like Vincent's vision of orthodoxy as broadly maintained harmony had always held true. Writing in the 430s, Vincent acknowledged his primary criteria of "universality, antiquity, and consensus" were only fully reliable "if we in no way depart from those interpretations which our ancestors and fathers manifestly proclaimed."<sup>5</sup> Similarly, deviation from "tradition" in Christian belief and practice was recognized usually, though not always, as a serious problem by Carolingian writers in the age of *correctio*. Universal orthodoxy was a lofty ideal to which many of these reformers still aspired, not a condition that they recognized in their own, or immediately preceding, ages.

At the same time, Carolingian reformers' efforts at imposing uniformity and standardization across all spheres of life had its limits, both because of the practical limitations of the Carolingian "state" to ever implement such fully standardizing measures and because, as some Carolingian writers recognized, customary diversity in some areas of Christian society was inevitable and even tolerable.<sup>6</sup> We should recall Walafriid Strabo's acknowledgement

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<sup>5</sup> On Vincent and the *Commonitorium*, see Karl Morrison, *Tradition and Authority in the Western Church, 300–1140* (Princeton, 1969), 4–7; Thomas Guarino, *Vincent of Lérins and the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 2013); Mark Vessey, "Opus Imperfectum: Augustine and His Readers, 426–435 A.D." and "Peregrinus against the Heretics," both reprinted in *Latin Christian Writers*; and Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge, Mass., 1959), 409–412.

<sup>6</sup> On the practical limits of the Carolingian "state," see esp. Jennifer R. Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Cambridge, 2015), who argues that Charlemagne's mode of governance was ad hoc and adaptive, rather than consciously programmatic.



in his *De exordiis et incrementis* (discussed in chapter 6) that diversity of liturgical practices is to be expected on account of the historical development of the liturgy, and that it need not be always eradicated or corrected. In a certain sense, Walafrid follows from the provocative ideas of Tyconius, Augustine, and the early medieval exegetes whom they influenced (discussed in chapters 1 and 2). In accounting for the diversity of peoples and their customary practices, these writers point to the ultimate mystery and obscurity of God's providential plan for mankind.<sup>7</sup> Yet, as we have seen, Walafrid elsewhere, in his earlier poetic works (considered in chapter 5), emphasized the universal applicability of moral and spiritual truths and virtues across all time and space.

The Christian society that Walafrid and other prominent Carolingian intellectuals sought to “reform,” and thereby eventually perfect, was fundamentally rooted in a powerful, adaptable vision of “ancient Christianity” forged through their own creative and pragmatic connections of antiquity with authority. This was, crucially, a world that might *not* end anytime soon. Its constant correction, and thus improvement, were thus possible, and indeed deemed vitally necessary. By the later period of Charlemagne's reign and throughout that of Louis the Pious, it was not enough to amend the texts of biblical books, to improve the quality of Latin education, and to correct certain aspects of the liturgy, though all of these were important early initiatives of the Carolingian *reformatio*. What had to be reformed, too, perhaps above all, were the very *lives*

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<sup>7</sup> Consider again Walafrid Strabo, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, ed. and trans. Alice L. Harting-Correa (Leiden, 1996), 104–105 (discussed in chapter 5, pp. 273–274): “[M]ortals should not try to reason why He, who is always the same and can never be altered, should have ordered or commanded these things or those, at this or that time, which seem diverse and contradictory. For the Author and Ordainer of those times arranges whatever is done in time, not by His wisdom's temporal plan, but by the eternal one, justly, suitably, and beneficially, although often obscurely”; “Non est autem discutiendum ratione mortalium, cur haec vel illa, isto vel illo tempore quasi diversa et discrepantia ille, qui semper idem est et mutari non potest, statuerit vel iusserit, cum ipsorum conditor et ordinator temporum, quicquid in tempore fit, non temporali sapientiae suae ratione, sed aeterna iuste, convenienter et utiliter, quamvis saepius occulte, disponat.”

of Christians—one's manner of living in the world and of performing one's social role, whether as a bishop, priest, monk, or a leader among the laity. To this end, the "Fathers" of the "ancient Christian" past served as exemplary guides and models (as discussed in chapter 8), not only in their capacity as supremely "orthodox" authors of doctrine but also as pious and powerful leaders of Church and society.

In a classic study, Gerhard Ladner defined the "idea of reform" in ancient and late antique Christian thought as "free, intentional and ever perfectible, multiple, prolonged and ever repeated efforts by man to reassert and augment values pre-existent in the spiritual-material compound of the world."<sup>8</sup> Ladner contrasted this distinctive notion of reform with other conceptions of "cosmological renewal," "vitalistic renewal," and "messianic-millenarian-utopian renewal," visions of cultural rebirth or change that flourished at particular moments in Late Antiquity and found proponents in later contexts like the Italian Renaissance.<sup>9</sup> Between the periods of the "Theodosian Renaissance" and the later Italian one, the leading figures of the Carolingian era built directly from the above-defined, patristically derived idea of Christian reform. Although the Carolingians turned with interest to the cultural context and model of imperial rulership offered by the Christian Roman Empire and the greatest Christian emperors, Constantine and Theodosius, the far greater interest of Carolingian reformers was in drawing from the brilliant writings and pious examples of the Fathers themselves, the architects of the idea of reform traced by Ladner. Indeed, as Lawrence Nees has rightly argued, if the Carolingian era does qualify as a "renaissance" of sorts, its true focus was squarely on the Fathers, not simply

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<sup>8</sup> Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Ladner, *Idea of Reform*, 10–34; observations regarding the Theodosian and Italian Renaissances as examples of "vitalistic renewal ideas" at 17–20.

on the Christian Roman Empire itself, much less the earlier Latin classics.<sup>10</sup> What Carolingian intellectuals sought to restore in their own times was the general milieu of pristinely orthodox Christian learning and living that the Fathers, collectively, were understood—and *made*—to represent. The patristic age was often imagined as both a direct continuation, and a more securely orthodox improvement, of the earlier apostolic, early Christian world of the New Testament scriptures. These different eras of the past—*different* not only temporally, but culturally, socially, and intellectually—were subtly compressed and homogenized into a powerful conception of “ancient Christianity.”

### **Two Senses of Carolingian “Reform”**

At the outset of her new study on the *Liber pontificalis*, entitled *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy*, Rosamond McKitterick notes that “the title of this book ... uses the word ‘invention’ in the original Latin sense of *inventio* (discovery), as well as the more recent one of an original creation with a function.”<sup>11</sup> In a very similar manner, what I have tried to suggest across the overlapping cases presented in these chapters is that Carolingian “reform” was always both backward-looking—specifically, toward an “ancient Christianity” epitomized by the ideas, works, and lives of the Fathers—and also, more subtly, forward-looking, adapting the resources of the past for the purposes of fashioning the still more perfectly Christian world that the Carolingians hoped to bring into being. Although different Carolingian writers and thinkers used those resources in markedly different ways and for different specific ends, most of them shared in this distinctly Janus-faced view of reform. Their *reformatio*, in other words, sought “reform”

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<sup>10</sup> Lawrence Nees, *A Tainted Mantle: Hercules and the Classical Tradition at the Carolingian Court* (Philadelphia, 1991), 3–12.

<sup>11</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber pontificalis* (Cambridge, 2020), 1.

in both the patristic-Christian sense delineated by Ladner and something closer to the modern notion of “reform” as something that is “progressive,” correcting social or political problems in the present in order to foster a superior society in the future. In planning for this foreseeable future, the Carolingians sought a kind of “progress toward the past”—a decidedly idealized past that was at least partly of their own making.

If there was such a “progressive,” future-oriented dimension to the Carolingian reform project, it was an imagined future that was always fundamentally rooted in the Christian past. The Carolingians knew, of course, that the Fathers of the Church, and before them the sacred texts of the Old and New Testaments, were products of real times and places, of particular moments in humankind’s history. This basic, shared understanding of Christianity’s essential—indeed, constitutive—historicity and of the general circumstances of Christianity’s development over the centuries served to inspire in Carolingian intellectuals a voracious appetite for learning about the past, particularly, when possible, from trusted sources of Christian erudition (as we have seen in examining annotated manuscripts of Augustine’s *De civitate Dei* in chapter 3). In his massive, two-part narrative of “universal history,” Frechulf of Lisieux (considered in chapter 4) explicitly sought to provide instructive examples, whether positive or negative, from which his readers should learn perennially, proverbially valuable lessons of the past as they sought to shape the world of their present and future.<sup>12</sup> As Frechulf’s dexterously constructed synthesis

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<sup>12</sup> The instructive, exemplary value of *historia* in Frechulf’s work fits aptly in a cultural context wherein the biblical Proverbs and the *Disticha Catonis* ranked among the most popular and widely studied texts. On the importance of proverbs, especially the “Distichs of Cato,” in medieval thought and culture, see, e.g., “Proverbs and Epigrams,” in F.A.C. Mantello and A.G. Rigg, eds., *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide* (Washington D.C., 1996), 569–573; Veronika von Büren, “Membra Disjecta: Paris Bnf Lat. 8093 (Viii) + Paris Bnf Lat. 8318 (iii), Un témoin complet des *Disticha Catonis*,” *Aevum* 90 (2016), 333–350; Richard Hazelton, “The Christianization of ‘Cato’: The *Disticha Catonis* in the Light of Late Mediaeval Commentaries,” *Mediaeval Studies* 19 (1957), 157–173. For a provocative consideration of the nature of proverbial reasoning and its cultural functions, see Steven Shapin, “Proverbial Economies: How an Understanding of Some Linguistic and Social Features of Common Sense Can Throw Light on More Prestigious Bodies of Knowledge, Science for Example,” *Social Studies of Science* 31 (2001), 731–769.

shows—and indeed as we have seen across all the preceding chapters—the pasts available to Carolingian readers and writers were purposefully selected from, subtly reshaped (even while professing an aversion to novelty and a total deference to past authorities), and often compressed into a more homogeneous and harmonious “ancient Christianity.” As such, this compressed vision of the Christian past was readily useable as a rock-solid source for sacred precedent and “tradition,” through which Carolingian reformers justified their own initiatives and actions ranging across all spheres of Christian life and society.

The tradition of the “Fathers” to which the Carolingians ubiquitously referred was an immensely powerful discursive tool. If it may arguably be termed an “invented tradition” – defined by one modern historian as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, *which automatically implies continuity with the past*”<sup>13</sup> (my emphasis) – it was not a Carolingian “invention,” but a much more gradual development. This “tradition,” as such, was gradually fashioned across many generations and discrete cultural contexts between Late Antiquity and the Carolingian era, building from Augustine and Jerome to Vincent of Lérins and Eugippius, to Cassiodorus and Gregory the Great to Isidore of Seville and Bede, to Alcuin and the continental Christian culture that he decisively shaped and firmly directed toward the *veterum vestigia patrum*. In the ninth century, then, the Latin patristic tradition achieved a more reified, adamant form, which would by and large endure across subsequent medieval centuries. Yet, at no point between the age of the Fathers and that of their Carolingian admirers

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<sup>13</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983; repr. 2012), 1. More recently, see the wide-ranging studies of invented religious traditions in Stefania Palmisano and Nicola Pannofino, eds., *Invention of Tradition and Syncretism in Contemporary Religions* (Cham, Switzerland, 2017); and Jonathan D. Teubner, *Prayer after Augustine: A Study in the Development of the Latin Tradition* (Oxford, 2018), esp. 4–21, 213–222 on rethinking the “Augustinian tradition” and its relation to the “Latin Tradition” concerning the practice of prayer.

was there ever any officially established, universally agreed-upon canon of patristic authors or texts; nothing resembling, say, the canon of scriptural texts or the ecumenical, “universal” councils of the late antique Church.<sup>14</sup> Although the category of “the Fathers” eventually constituted a comparable source of “ancient” Christian authority, its relatively unfixed nature allowed for more flexibility in selection and interpretation from among this expansive canon. Consequently, lesser figures historically connected to, or associated with, the major Fathers could be invoked when needed, to provide useful statements not found in the major Fathers’ works or as corroborating “patristic” opinions cited together with the major Fathers. Lists and short biographical sketches of significant Christian writers connected together this expansive constellation of “Christian literature.” Efforts ranging from Jerome and Gennadius’s short lives of “illustrious men” to Alcuin’s poetic listing of important authors and Notker Balbulus’s Cassiodorus-inspired treatise on essential Christian literature (considered in chapter 7) evince both learned efforts at effecting canon formation and revealing reflections of the state of the “patristic tradition” at particular moments in its historical development.

What may seem to have taken shape in the early Middle Ages is something very much like the conception of a *consensus patrum* encapsulated in Vincent’s *Commonitorium*, noted above. Yet, given the evidently limited transmission of Vincent’s text, it may be the case instead that his ideas were themselves reflective of ideas about harmony and consensus among “orthodox” Christian writers that had gained considerable traction within the late Roman world he shared with eventual “Fathers” like Augustine. Late in his career, and not long before Vincent composed his *Commonitorium*, Augustine sought reliable sources of authority outside scripture

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<sup>14</sup> On the gradual and contested development of Christian “tradition” and “orthodoxy” between Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see esp. Morrison, *Tradition and Authority*; and Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom, A.D. 200–1000*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Malden, Mass./Oxford, 2003).

in order to settle debates with Pelagian opponents like Julian of Eclanum concerning the interpretation of particularly difficult scriptural passages.<sup>15</sup> Earlier, Augustine had expressed his reluctance to accept the assertions of individual, extra-scriptural Christian writers, however prominent or “holy,” simply on the basis of their authoritative status, except where their arguments proved persuasive and reasonable to him and appeared sufficiently concordant with scriptural authors. At loggerheads with the Pelagians and concerned about the profound spiritual and soteriological implications of their divergent readings of scripture, Augustine turned not to the opinions of certain individual authorities to bolster his position, but rather to the consensus among major Christian authors speaking with “one heart, one voice, one faith” (cf. Acts 4:32;

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<sup>15</sup> Consider, for instance, Augustine’s remarks to Jerome in their epistolary quarrel regarding the Incident at Antioch (Gal. 2:11–14) and Jerome’s references to extra-scriptural authorities supporting his interpretation, that Paul’s rebuke of Peter was a sham-fight meant to educate their group of followers. Augustine argued instead that the Incident was a genuine dispute, as Galatians represents it, and thus Paul really admonished Peter. In *ep.* 82 (ca. 404/5), trans. Carolinne White, in *The Correspondence (394–419) between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo* (New York, 1990), 146, Augustine writes, “I confess to you that I have learned to respect and honour only those books of the Scriptures now referred to as canonical. I firmly believe that none of the authors of these books has erred in writing, and if I should find fault with anything in them which appears to conflict with the truth, I am sure that the reason must be that there is some textual error or that the translator did not follow what was said or that I do not understand it properly. When I read other authors, however holy and learned they may be, I do not think something is true just because they believed it but because they can persuade me either by referring to those canonical authors or in view of a reasonable probability that their opinion is not at odds with the truth. I am sure, my brother, that you are of the same opinion; furthermore, I do not think that you want your books to be read as if they had been written by prophets or apostles, whose writings we must believe are free from all error. Such a thought would conflict with your attitude of pious humility and with your true opinion of yourself – if you did not have these qualities you would not have said, ‘I wish that I might deserve to embrace you and to converse with you, so that each of us might learn and teach something.’”; Augustine of Hippo, *ep.* 82 (ad Hieronymum), *CCSL* 31A, ed. K.D. Daur (Turnhout, 2005), 98: “Ego enim fateor caritati tuae solis eis scripturarum libris, qui iam canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honorem que deferre, ut nullum eorum auctorem scribendo errasse aliquid firmissime credam ac, si aliquid in eis offendero litteris, quod uideatur contrarium ueritati, nihil aliud quam uel mendosum esse codicem, uel interpretem non assecutum esse quod dictum est, uel me minime intellexisse non ambigam. Alios autem ita lego, ut quantalibet sanctitate doctrina que praepolleant, non ideo uerum putem, quia ipsi ita senserunt, sed quia mihi uel per illos auctores canonicos uel probabili ratione quod a uero non abhorreat persuadere potuerunt. Nec te, mi frater, sentire aliud existimo; prorsus, inquam, non te arbitror sic legi tuos libros uelle tamquam prophetarum uel apostolorum, de quorum scriptis quod omni errore careant dubitare nefarium est. Absit hoc a pia humilitate et ueraci de temet ipso cogitatione, qua nisi esses praeditus non utique diceres: ‘Vtinam mereremur complexus tuos et collatione mutua uel doceremus aliqua uel disceremus.’” On Augustine and Jerome’s divergent interpretations of the Incident at Antioch, see Jason A. Myers, “Law, Lies and Letter Writing: An Analysis of Jerome and Augustine on the Antioch Incident (Galatians 2:11–14),” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 66 (2013), 127–139; Geoffrey D. Dunn, “Augustine’s Use of the Pauline Portrayal of Peter in Galatians 2,” *Augustinian Studies* 46 (2015), 23–42.

Eph. 4:4–6).<sup>16</sup> This ideal of pious Christians collectively communicating *una voce* across the ages is drawn at once from the apostolic *ecclesia primitiva*, or *vita communis*,<sup>17</sup> as described in Acts, and from the more recent model of the ecumenical Church councils attended by the episcopal “Fathers” who decided upon fundamental issues of scriptural canonicity and Christian orthodoxy. It would prove to be an immensely and very broadly influential ideal among early medieval ecclesiastical reformers, who turned to the imagined harmony of the ancient Christian past, and its concordant authorities, to correct present society.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> See Éric Rebillard, “A New Style of Argument in Christian Polemic,” building from the insights in Mark Vessey, “The Forging of Orthodoxy in Latin Christian Literature: A Case Study,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996), 495–513. See also Mark Vessey, “Augustine among the Writers of the Church,” in *idem*, ed., *A Companion to Augustine* (Chichester, 2012), 240–254. I also discuss these points at greater length in Josh Timmermann, “An Authority among Authorities: Knowledge and Use of Augustine in the Wider Carolingian,” *Early Medieval Europe* 28 (2020), esp. 556–559.

<sup>17</sup> On early medieval conceptions of the *ecclesia primitiva*, see Glenn W. Olsen, “The ‘ecclesia primitiva’ in John Cassian, the Ps. Jerome Commentary on Mark, and Bede,” in Claudio Leonardi and Giovanni Orlandi, ed., *Biblical Studies in the Early Middle Ages* (Florence, 2005), 5–27; Glenn W. Olsen, “Bede as Historian: The Evidence from His Observations on the Life of the First Christian Community at Jerusalem,” *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982), 519–530. On idealized views of the *vita communis* and the influence of Acts 4 in Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, see Luc Verheijen, *St. Augustine’s Monasticism in the Light of Acts 4:32–35* (Philadelphia, 1979); Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), esp. 10–18, 33–61; David Ganz, “The Ideology of Sharing,” in Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre, eds., *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1995), 17–30; Glenn W. Olsen, “One Heart and One Soul (Acts 4.32 and 34) in Dhuoda’s ‘Manual,’” *Church History* 61 (1992), 23–33.

<sup>18</sup> As just one illustrative example, Jonas of Orléans—one of the most active episcopal participants at Carolingian church councils and probably one of the primary authors of the Paris 825 and Paris 829 conciliar *acta*—draws upon an idealized vision of the early Church, rooted in Acts of the Apostles, to lament the debased state of present Christian society, a world in need of serious and radical reform. Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione laicali* 1.20, *PL* 106, col. 164, “In primordio igitur sanctae Dei Ecclesiae circa credentes ardor fidei ita vigeat, ut perseverarent in doctrina apostolorum, et communicatione fractionis panis, et orationibus, et haberent omnia communia; et sumerent cibum cum exultatione, et simplicitate cordis, collaudantes Deum. Nunc autem devotio Christianitatis apud plerosque longe aliter se habet: quoniam a quibusdam doctrinae apostolorum praeponitur amor terrenorum negotiorum; communicationi fractionis panis, tenacitas; frigus charitatis, et cupiditas ambiendae rei alienae, potius quam propriae largiendae; orationibus delectatio carnis, curiositas rerum, sollicitudo mundi, et multimoda mentis in diversa vagatio. Quae autem illis erant communia, nunc quibusdam ita sunt propria, ut perraro in alterius ex his quidquam retorqueatur usum”; trans. R.W. Dyson, *A Ninth-Century Political Tract: The De institutione regia of Jonas of Orléans* (Smithtown, N.Y., 1983), 41: “Thus, in the early days of God’s Holy Church, the ardour was so strong amongst those who believed that they persevered in the teaching of the apostles, in coming together to break bread, in prayer, and in possessing all things in common; and they took their food with exultation and simplicity of heart, greatly praising God. But most people now are very far from any display of Christian devotion: love of earthly affairs is preferred to the teaching of the apostles, and meanness to the sharing in the breaking of bread. Their love has grown cold; they would rather covet the property of another than be generous with their own; and their minds are distracted from their prayers by carnal loves, idle curiosity, worldly anxieties and many other things. Those things which were once held in common are now so much made their own by certain persons that is most unusual for any benefit from them to be directed towards a neighbour.” (This passage from Jonas’s *De institutione laicali* also appears in his later *De institutione regia*, ch. 11.)



The Carolingians inherited this Acts-derived sense of an ancient, patristic consensus not only from Augustine, of course, but also from many prominent Christian writers after him who stressed their rigorous adherence to “the Church Fathers” as a unified collective entity. Writers like Cassiodorus, Isidore, and Bede, as I have repeatedly emphasized, were often themselves absorbed into the Carolingian clustering of “ancient Fathers,” despite their relative distances from historical antiquity. At the same time, though, and notwithstanding the importance of these intervening influences, the Carolingians’ constant reference to purported consensus among patristic authorities is also directly reflective of the late-eighth- and ninth-century reformers’ profound desire to themselves effect unity and concord—or at least the appearance thereof—across all social and ecclesiastical spheres. The well-ordered, near-universal consensus that they attributed to the revered “ancient” authorities was in practice a mirror and a model for the type of consensus that Carolingian leaders of *Ecclesia* and *imperium* hoped to achieve in their own society. In other words, the Carolingians’ ambitious aspirations for their own more perfect *imperium Christianum* of the future both served to coalesce and reify an idealized, compressed “ancient patristic past” and was also thoroughly influenced and informed by the unimpeachable *beati patres*, who had been made to speak *una voce* through the active interventions of their early medieval readers, writers, editors, and compilers.

### **Shaping and Using “The Fathers” as a Unified Source of Authority**

Perhaps this complex relationship of past, present, and future can be most clearly discerned in the *acta* of the Church councils or synods dating from the later reign of Charlemagne through that of Louis the Pious, a period that includes arguably the most intensive

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phases of the Carolingian *reformatio*. In these conciliar texts, the Fathers, even when cited or quoted individually, are often referred to as a uniform collectivity—a special, limited category of authorities, much like the sacred text of scripture or the binding precedents of the great late antique Church councils going back to Nicaea. As Janet Nelson has argued, such assemblies of clerical and lay elites were the key sites where consensus and “connectivity” on matters of present concern were forged. These councils, which became more frequent and larger in scale during the later decades of Charlemagne’s reign, connected secular clergy, monks, and lay leaders from distant regions of the empire, and were, Nelson observes, “the one thing that held [early medieval] political systems together”; each was ‘a court [in the legal sense], an occasion, and a shared experience that surely reinforced participants’ sense of themselves as a group.’”<sup>19</sup> As at the famous fourth- and fifth-century councils that served as the ancient, Roman model for Carolingian assemblies,<sup>20</sup> bishops were especially significant players, purportedly uniting the “secular” political sphere with the sacred orders of the Church through their unique, pastoral authority and self-styled identity as “watchmen unto the house of Israel.”<sup>21</sup> It was at and through

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<sup>19</sup> Janet L. Nelson, “How Carolingians Created Consensus,” in Wojciech Fałkowski and Yves Sassier, eds., *Le monde carolingien: Bilan, perspectives, champs de recherches* (Turnhout, 2009), 67, here quoting herself: Janet L. Nelson, “Rulers and Government,” in Timothy Reuter, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. III, c. 900 – c. 1024 (Cambridge, 1999), 124. On the Church councils and their role in fostering consensus, see also Cristina La Rocca and Francesco Veronese, “Cultures of Unanimity in Carolingian Councils,” in Serena Ferente, Lovro Kunčević and Miles Pattenden, eds., *Cultures of Voting in Pre-modern Europe* (New York, 2018), 39–57; Steffen Patzold, “*Consensus - Concordia - Unitas*. Überlegungen zu einem politisch-religiösen Ideal der Karolingerzeit,” in Nikolaus Staubach, ed., *Exemplaris imago. Ideale in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Frankfurt, 2012), 31–56. Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989) remains the foundational, indispensable work on the Carolingian Church councils.

<sup>20</sup> On this point, see Michael E. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, D.C., 2011), who also argues for the importance of the fifth- and sixth-century Gallic councils in formatively shaping Carolingian conciliar practices. See also, on the earlier Frankish conciliar tradition, from the Merovingian era up to the start of Charlemagne’s reign, Gregory I. Halfond, *The Archaeology of Frankish Church Councils, A.D. 511–768* (Leiden, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> On the notion of bishops as “watchmen unto the house of Israel,” drawn from Ezekiel 3:17–19, see Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, 2009), esp. 114–118; Michael H. Hoeflich, “The Speculator in the Governmental Theory of the Early Church,” *Vigiliae Christianae* 34 (1980), 120–129; Christine Mohrmann, “*Episkopos-Speculator*,” in *eadem*, *Études sur le latin des chrétiens* (Rome, 1977), 4:232–252; Conrad Leyser, “Let Me Speak, Let Me Speak: Vulnerability and Authority in Gregory’s Homilies on Ezekiel,” in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo* (Rome, 1991), 2:169–182.

these councils that an “episcopal consciousness,” a shared sense of the special duties and privileges of the episcopal office, or *ministerium*, gradually developed. This distinctive episcopal identity was increasingly solidified between the five “reform councils” convoked by Charlemagne in 813 and the councils of the late 820s and 830s, at which the Carolingian episcopate established its relationship to a ruler who, according to some critics, had fatally transgressed the bounds of ideal Christian rulership.<sup>22</sup> The *acta* of the Council of Paris in 829, just before the rebellions against Louis the Pious in 830 and 833, stands arguably as the apotheosis of this seemingly supremely confident episcopal status, rooted in the gravitas of the Fathers—many of whom were also bishops—and the ancient tradition of the Church councils. As Rutger Kramer has recently shown, the Carolingian councils were arenas for “neverending conversation,” and for the ongoing negotiation of the reform program among powerful figures who shared certain general aims but differed on many particulars.<sup>23</sup> The *reformatio* in which these actors participated was not a simple, unidirectional program imposing uniformity from the top down. “Reform” was a field for continuous debate among diverse actors operating with a

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<sup>22</sup> On the development of this shared episcopal identity and sense of authority, see Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus: Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankenreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008); Michael E. Moore, “Carolingian Bishops and Christian Antiquity: Distance from the Past, Canon-Formation, and Imperial Power,” in Alasdair A. MacDonald, Michael W. Twomey, and R.J. Reinink, eds., *Learned Antiquity: Scholarship and Society in the Near-East, the Greco-Roman World, and the Early Medieval West* (Leuven, 2003), 175–84; Hans Hubert Anton, “Zum politischen Konzept karolingischer Synoden und zur karolingischen Brüdergemeinschaft,” *Historische Jahrbuch* 99 (1979), 55–132. But see also Janet L. (as “Jinty”) Nelson, “Charlemagne and the Bishops,” in Rob Meens, Dorine van Espelo, Bram van den Hoven van Genderen, Janneke Raaijmakers, Irene van Renswoude, and Carine van Rhijn, eds., *Religious Franks: Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms: Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong* (Manchester, 2016), 350–369, who argues that such a self-confident collective identity among Carolingian bishops was a slow and fairly late development, not discernible before the five reform councils of 813 that were convened by Charlemagne near the end of his life and reign.

<sup>23</sup> Rutger Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire: Ideals and Expectations during the Reign of Louis the Pious (813–828)* (Amsterdam, 2019), quotation at p. 24, but see esp. 59–121 on the Church councils. More broadly, on the maneuvering and arguing amongst actors gathered at medieval assemblies, see Leidulf Melve, “Assembly Politics and the ‘Rules-of-the-Game’ (ca. 650–1150),” *Viator* 41 (2010), 61–90; Timothy Reuter, “Assembly Politics in Western Europe from the Eighth Century to the Twelfth,” in Janet L. Nelson, ed., *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities* (Cambridge, 2006), 193–216.

common “discourse community”<sup>24</sup>—a community in which antiquity, tradition, orthodoxy, and consensus were of fundamental importance. But the pursuit of these general, often ambiguous reforming ideals could motivate different Carolingian actors to adopt very different views or positions. Thus, while much of the conciliar debate stemming from such substantive differences was constructive in nature and fraternal in tone, it could be acrimonious, igniting fierce rivalries among influential, court-connected ecclesiastical leaders (as in the well-known case of Alcuin and Theodulf<sup>25</sup>). If the resulting *acta* present a picture of broadly shared harmony and agreement among the Carolingian ecclesiastical elite, this image is at least partly deceiving. It is a deliberate, performative projection, not of the on-the-ground reality of the conciliar experience, but of the “*una voce*” unity that the Carolingians strove to will into being—a unity that joined them powerfully as part of a sacred ancient Christian tradition going back to the great Fathers of the Christian Roman Empire and even the apostles, the authors of scriptures, and founders of the early Church.

Many of the Carolingian writers considered in the preceding chapters were participants at Church councils, and texts they composed independently could serve to inform the proceedings. Influential churchmen like Alcuin of York, Theodulf of Orléans, Amalarius of Metz, Agobard of Lyon, Jonas of Orléans, Frechulf of Lisieux, Benedict of Aniane, and Paschasius Radbertus helped to shape, and were in turn shaped by, the ever-evolving discourses of “correction” and “reform.” At the councils they attended, measures for solving problems of disunity, discord, deviance, and corruption were continuously discussed and debated. The definition and ordering

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<sup>24</sup> On these points, reassessing the nature of Carolingian *reformatio*, as well as the term itself, I follow Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire*, 43–49.

<sup>25</sup> On the conflict and rivalry between Theodulf and Alcuin—at least initially more a dispute about legal jurisdiction rather than any substantive theological difference—see Samuel W. Collins, *The Carolingian Debate over Sacred Space* (London, 2012); Rob Meens, “Sanctuary, Penance, and Dispute Settlement under Charlemagne: The Conflict between Alcuin and Theodulf of Orléans over a Sinful Cleric,” *Speculum* 82 (2007), 277–300; and Johannes Fried, *Charlemagne*, trans. Peter Lewis (Cambridge, Mass., 2016), esp. 312–313.

of the *ordines*, the orders or modes of life within Christian society, were a perennial matter of concern. This is a particular point of emphasis from 813 forward, beginning with the five reform councils called by Charlemagne at Arles, Rheims, Mainz, Chalons, and Tours. At these and later councils under Louis the Pious, each *ordo* was assigned certain authoritative sources after which to model its manner of life and service to *ecclesia* and *imperium*. Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis* was the normally prescribed source for bishops, frequently cited in conjunction with advice on balancing the active and contemplative lives and the virtuous administration of Church property from Julianus Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa* (though often misattributed to Prosper of Aquitaine, a figure closely associated with Augustine).<sup>26</sup> For canons, Chrodegang of Metz's *Regula canonicorum* was the normal exemplar. Composed in the mid-eighth century, amid the transition from the Merovingian to the Carolingian dynasty, Chrodegang's Rule was a skillful interweaving of "ancient Christian" sources, including Augustine, Gregory the Great, Benedict of Nursia, and Julianus Pomerius.<sup>27</sup> Monks were admonished to follow more fully and faithfully the precepts of the *Regula Benedicti*. They could also draw from the exemplary works of Benedict of Aniane to help guide and refine their understanding and performance of the earlier Benedict's Rule. Lay leaders, meanwhile, were instructed to better familiarize themselves with the legal pronouncements of Charlemagne—most famously, his *Epistola de litteris colendis*, the *Admonitio generalis* of 789, and the "programmatic capitulary" of 802—wherein the sovereign drew explicitly from the hallowed authority of Old Testament kings and the secular precedent of

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<sup>26</sup> See Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789–895* (London, 1977), 13–14; Josh Timmermann, "Beati patres: Use of Augustine and Gregory the Great at Carolingian Church Councils, 816–836" (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 2015), 20–22. On the influence of Pomerius on conciliar *acta*, see Josh Timmmernan, "Sharers in the Contemplative Virtue: Julianus Pomerius's Carolingian Audience," *Comitatus* 45 (2014), 1–44; Abigail Firey, *A Contrite Heart: Prosecution and Redemption in the Carolingian Empire* (Leiden, 2009), esp. 138–139, 181–182.

<sup>27</sup> On Chrodegang and his Rule, see Martin Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church: Chrodegang of Metz and the Regula canonicorum in the Eighth Century* (Cambridge 2004).

the Christian Roman emperors in his efforts to improve the condition of his realm.<sup>28</sup> As deployed, to engender harmony, unity, and correction among the various orders of Carolingian society, all of these sources for the respective *ordines* combine the wisdom and authority associated with the “ancient Christian” past with the subtle interventions and interpretations of more recent figures, who endeavoured to make that distant past speak more directly to present concerns. The 813 councils, for instance, drew from the *Admonitio generalis*, naming the emperor himself as their source, while combining Charlemagne’s pronouncements that consciously invoke the Old Testament figure of Josiah with carefully selected passages from the Fathers and scripture.<sup>29</sup> The *acta* from the Council of Arles, for example, lists among its aspirations for ecclesiastical participants that they “instruct by pious preaching, furnish with saintly morals, and build with the example of blessed lives” (*pia praedicatione instruant, moribus sanctis exornent ac beatae vitae exemplis aedificent*).<sup>30</sup> Such aims were broadly shared by the reform-minded congregants at all the 813 assemblies, and the most powerful authorities from different, “ancient” strata of the Christian past—scriptural, conciliar, patristic—as well as the present were harnessed, purposefully selected from, and compiled together in service of these ambitious objectives.

In these texts and those resulting from later councils, during Louis’s reign, the Church Fathers are constantly invoked but to different ends in different textual settings. The Augustine

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<sup>28</sup> See McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 1–44; and on guiding conceptions of the Christian Roman emperors, see Janet L. Nelson, “Translating Images of Authority: The Christian Roman Emperors in the Carolingian World,” in *eadem*, *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), 89–98.

<sup>29</sup> On the *Admonitio generalis*, the 813 councils, and the use of the Church Fathers in the conciliar documents, see McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 1–15. On a common Christian ethical program – derived especially from the work of Gregory the Great – for both lay and ecclesiastical leaders of the Carolingian era, see Geoffrey Koziol, “Leadership: Why We Have Mirrors for Princes but None for Presidents,” in Celia Chazelle, Simon Doubleday, Felice Lifshitz, and Amy G. Remensnyder, eds., *Why the Middle Ages Matter: Medieval Light on Modern Injustice* (London/New York, 2011), 183–198, esp. 189–193.

<sup>30</sup> *Concilium Arelatense* (813), ed. Albertus Werminghoff, *MGH, Conc.* 2:1 (Hannover, 1906), 249; adapted from trans. in Kramer, *Rethinking Authority*, 73.

of the Carolingian Church councils, for instance, is above all the pastoral Augustine of his sermons and his exemplary career as a bishop. At the reforming council held at Aachen in 816, Augustine is represented through *serm.* 46, in which he emphasizes the leadership qualities that must inhere in an effective pastor; and also *ss.* 355 and 356 (merged together under the early medieval title *De vita et moribus clericorum suorum*), wherein Augustine draws from the apostolic example of Acts 4, evoking an ideal image of the ancient Christian *vita communis*. It is the Church's responsibility to safeguard this tradition of the common life—of all Christians, sharing “one heart and one mind,” equally entitled to its wealth of resources—and the Aachen *acta* underscore this point by including Julianus Pomerius's statement that “the possessions of the Church are but the vows of the faithful, the ransom of sinners, and the patrimony of the poor,” a recurring mantra at Carolingian councils.<sup>31</sup> Also, demonstrating that Augustine's pastoral leadership was fully consistent with his message as an eloquent preacher, the *acta*, which may have been written in part by Amalarius of Metz,<sup>32</sup> includes a short excerpt from Possidius's *Vita Augustini* on the manner of life shared by the canons of Hippo, under Augustine's dutiful guidance and pastoral care.<sup>33</sup> Such a mode of common life, whether among canons specifically or maintained by all Christians, then, bears the prestigious marks of both patristic precedent and apostolic origin. This was the ancient tradition, of the early Church through to the Fathers, which Carolingian reformers sought to restore in their own times. If these *acta* were indeed composed partly by Amalarius, as seems plausible, they are certainly consistent

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<sup>31</sup> Julianus Pomerius, *De vita contemplativa* 2.9, *PL* 59, col. 454: “...nihil aliud esse res ecclesiae, nisi vota fidelium, pretia peccatorum, et patrimonia pauperum...”; trans. Mary Josephine Suelzer, *Julianus Pomerius, The Contemplative Life* (Westminster, Md., 1947), 73. On the significance and popularity of this quotation from Pomerius, see Timmermann, “Sharers in the Contemplative Virtue,” 10–11.

<sup>32</sup> On the authorship of the Aachen 816 *acta*, see Hartmann, *Die Synoden*, 159, where it is suggested that Amalarius may have collaborated with Benedict of Aniane and perhaps others.

<sup>33</sup> On the presence of this distinctly “pastoral” Augustine and the complementary use of Pomerius's quotation and Possidius's *vita* in the Council of Aachen (816) *acta*, see Timmermann, “*Beati patres*,” 30–32.

with his emphatic concern for seeking out the origins and authoritative precedents for Christian practices, and for improving the present-day Church by returning it to those earlier, superior forms, distinguished by their impressive “ancient” pedigrees.

The chiefly pastoral Augustine presented in the Aachen 816 *acta*, eminently useful for establishing ancient, patristic bases for the reforming objectives of that council, stands in contrast to the towering doctrinal authority summoned up in the *Libellus synodalis* of the Council of Paris in 825. Unlike most of the “domestic,” reform-oriented Carolingian councils of this period, the 825 council was both smaller in scale and larger in scope. The Church leaders assembled in this case were probably few in number, compared to the scores of archbishops, bishops, abbots, and other leaders who travelled from distant parts of the empire to attend other councils. Most likely among the participants involved in drafting the *Libellus synodalis* were Amalarius of Metz, Frechulf of Lisieux, Jonas of Orléans, Halitgar of Cambrai, and Jeremias of Sens, all credibly believed to have been present in Paris in November of that year, when this small but important “council” was held.<sup>34</sup> Rather than addressing issues related to the reforming of Christian practices or beliefs within the Carolingian realm, this council was chiefly concerned with producing an articulate Carolingian response to the resurgence of controversy over the veneration of icons in the Byzantine world. To this end, with an elite, theologically sophisticated Byzantine audience in mind, as well as perhaps the pope and Church leaders at Rome, the authors of the 825 *acta* summon up the most impressive patristic texts known to them to support their moderate position on icons and images, neither excessively praising nor vehemently

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas F.X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009), 266–270, suggests that in this instance the term “council” is a misnomer, given the differences between this “colloquy” (his preferred term) and the more typical Carolingian conciliar format. It is possible, as Noble suggests, that these were the *only* five participants at the 825 meeting, part of his argument for why this was not a “council” in the typical Carolingian form.



rejecting them, but rather recognizing their limited utility and function for directing Christians' attention to more profound spiritual truths. Augustine is front and centre here, but it is not the pastoral Augustine represented at Aachen in 816, held up there, for Carolingian Christians, as a pious example of the apostolic tradition of modesty and the continuation of the *vita communis*. The Augustine of the 825 *Libellus synodalis* is the master theologian and immensely learned Roman philosopher, with quotations drawn from the *De civitate Dei*, *De Trinitate*, *De vera religione*, and *De quantitate animae*, among numerous other authentic works.<sup>35</sup> In addition to standing as a theologian as formidable as any from the Greek East, Augustine is invoked as a reliable authority on Christian and ancient history pertinent to the debate over icons and images<sup>36</sup>—a distinctive use of the *De civitate Dei*, as a source for information about the past, that we have repeatedly seen in the annotations in Carolingian manuscripts, in Hadoard's *florilegia*, and in the *Historiae* of Frechulf, likely one of the contributing authors of the Parisian *Libellus synodalis*.

The conciliar *acta* of Aachen 816 and Paris 825, as just two examples, suggest another distinctly illustrative case evincing the malleability and adaptability of the patristic “tradition” for Carolingian writers and compilers. These *acta* present discernibly different Augustines for different intended purposes and audiences. Augustine is almost always situated among other “patristic” authorities, whether cited in conjunction with writers like Gregory the Great, Isidore, and Pomerius/“Prosper” in the *acta* of the reforming councils of this period or with major Greek Fathers like Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, and Athanasius of Alexandria in the more theologically ambitious *acta* of Paris 825. In these synodal texts, even when individual Fathers,

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<sup>35</sup> On the extensive use of many of Augustine's major works at this council, see Timmermann, “*Beati patres*,” 39–42. On the Council of Paris (825) texts and context, see also Ann Freeman, “Carolingian Orthodoxy and the Fate of the *Libri Carolini*,” *Viator* 16 (1985), 65–108; and Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm and the Carolingians*.

<sup>36</sup> Timmermann, “*Beati patres*,” 41; Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians*, 271.

like Augustine, are cited as brilliant doctrinal authorities, their words are usually clustered together with those of other patristic writers so as to demonstrate, most importantly of all, the purported agreement among these “Fathers.”

In all of the conciliar *acta* from this period, the greatest emphasis is, again, on the Fathers speaking *una voce*.<sup>37</sup> Much like the Evangelists, their individual words may differ or even occasionally seem to diverge or disagree, but they are always, finally concordant and harmonious—as the orthodox, ancient Christian tradition was itself understood to be. Such patristic consensus is readily evident in the *florilegia*-like arrangement of patristic quotations across nearly all Carolingian *acta*; these passages fit together neatly and congruously precisely *because* the writers of the *acta* have gone to great lengths to carefully ensure this is so. Even if the Carolingian councils themselves were sites of debate, and sometimes heated contention, regarding the course of the *reformatio*, their textual records (nothing like the minutes of modern meetings) generally suggest agreement and cooperation among the empire’s ecclesiastical elite, much like the consensus among (retrospectively) “orthodox” churchmen who together crafted the unifying, “catholic” creeds at the ecumenical councils of the fourth and fifth centuries.<sup>38</sup> The patristic corpus had been similarly chiseled down into a textual unity, a type of specially authoritative source that brilliantly, emblematically reflects the spiritual unity of Christian tradition. Yet, Carolingian reformers’ efforts at molding and paring down patristic literature in this way always derived from their genuine perception, or assumption, of harmony among the great Fathers of the Church. Just as Augustine found imaginative ways to locate spiritual

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<sup>37</sup> Kramer, *Rethinking Authority*, 63, underscores Carolingian ecclesiastical leaders’ efforts to show, through their conciliar legislation, that they, too, were speaking “with one voice” for the greater good of the Church and its flock.

<sup>38</sup> On the enormous importance of the fourth-century Church councils and the creeds they formulated for the construction of an established orthodoxy and authoritative ecclesiastical tradition, see especially Thomas Graumann, “The Conduct of Theology and the ‘Fathers’ of the Church,” in Phillip Rousseau, ed., *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Chichester, 2009), 539–555; and Morrison, *Tradition and Authority*, 244ff.

consistency and concord among all the apparent contradictions in scripture because he truly believed that all of scripture was uniformly truthful and true,<sup>39</sup> early medieval readers of his works and those of other writers (consistently or occasionally) regarded as “Fathers” sought out fundamental agreement, glossing over or downplaying differences of opinion among “patristic” writers. Some, like Walafrid Strabo in the *De exordis et incrementis*, allowed for a reasonable, inevitable level of customary diversity in certain areas of the Christian past, but, on the most important matters of belief and performance of the Christian faith, unity was imperative. This was the general view shared by all the leading figures of the Carolingian *reformatio*. Gathered together at the councils, they sought ways to mold Christian society of their time after the image of the harmonious ancient Christian tradition embodied by the Fathers as the rightful heirs of the apostles.

The Carolingians’ conception of such a coherent *patristic* tradition is most strikingly apparent in the many references in conciliar texts to “the Fathers” as a unified group and their “canonical” writings as a singular, congruous textual body. For example, the Council of Mainz (813) *acta* asserts that canons should live in a cloister “to the extent that human frailty permits” (*quantum humana permittit fragilitas*) according to “the doctrine of divine Scripture and documents of the Holy Fathers” (*observantes divinae scripturae doctrinam et documenta sanctorum patrum*).<sup>40</sup> These two constructed bodies of texts, the Bible and the patristic corpus, together form the core of “Christian literature,” with both presumed to be internally consistent on

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<sup>39</sup> See, for example, on Augustine’s *De consensu evangelistarum*, his ambitious attempt to resolve, or harmonize, apparent discrepancies among the four gospels, Henk Jan de Jonge, “Augustine on the Interrelations of the Gospels,” in Frans Van Segbroeck, et al., eds., *The Four Gospels. Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (Louvain, 1992), 2409–2417; Goulven Madec, “Le Christ de païens d’après le *De consensu euangelistarum* de saint Augustin,” *Recherches augustiniennes et patristiques* 26 (1993), 3–67; David B. Peabody, “Augustine and the Augustinian Hypothesis: A Reexamination of Augustine’s Thought in *De consensu evangelistarum*,” in W. R. Farmer, ed., *New Synoptic Studies. The Cambridge Gospels Conference and Beyond* (Macon, Ga., 1983) 37–64.

<sup>40</sup> *Concilium Moguntinense* (813), ed. Werminghoff, *MGH, Conc.* 2:1, 262; translated in Kramer, *Rethinking Authority*, 83.

this issue. Similarly addressed to canons, but with principles applicable to other *ordines*, the *Institutio canonum* compiled with the Aachen 816 *acta* states:

It is clear that the Holy Church is bound to follow the example of the Fathers we have quoted, whose writings showed that she flourished abundantly under the teachings of the Apostles; superiors are therefore bound to take pains always to imitate the Fathers, as subordinates are to obey, for it is by following their example and their teaching that they may attain to that blissful joy where the Fathers have gone before.<sup>41</sup>

Here, the lived examples of the Fathers, not only their written texts or statements therein, are also presented as a unity, and as collectively worthy of emulation, as the Fathers themselves had faithfully carried forward the original teachings of the apostles. Contemporary church leaders are likened here to “subordinates” of their more illustrious, accomplished predecessors. Later, in the Paris 829 *acta*, the *sancti sacerdotes* of the present age are held up as the *successores apostolorum*, heirs of the sacred duties of ministerial leadership first held by the earliest followers of Jesus. The Church Fathers—bishops, priests, and monks of types generally recognizable to Carolingian Christians—are the essential, connecting link between the apostolic *ecclesia primitiva* and the ninth-century Roman–Frankish *Ecclesia*. The use of the Fathers as both doctrinal authorities and models of pious living and leadership (considered at length in chapters 7 and 8) is also evident in the conciliar texts. In a striking instance of this reference to the *verba* and *vitae* of Fathers, a passage in the Paris 829 *acta*, asserting that monks should not interact with women, refers its readers to “the lives of blessed Augustine and blessed Ambrose and the sayings of Saints Cyprian and Jerome and of many others” (*vita beati Augustini et beati*

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<sup>41</sup> *Concilium Aquisgranense* (816), *Institutio canoniorum*, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH, Conc.* 2:1, 394: “Quia ergo constat sanctam ecclesiam praedictorum patrum exempla sequi debere, quorum noscitur documentis post apostolica instituta ubertim coruscare, debent non solum praelati imitando, verum etiam subditi obsequendo usquequaque studere, qualiter eorum exemplis et doctrinis parentes ad felicitatis gaudia, quo illi praecesserunt”; translated in Kramer, *Rethinking Authority*, 106.

*Ambrosii et dicta sanctorum Cipriani atque Hieronimi et aliorum plurimorum*).<sup>42</sup> One can hardly imagine a clearer testament to the special status of the Fathers as exemplars of a correct Christian mode of life and as wise and eloquent writers whose words are transtemporally valuable and applicable. The “lives” of Augustine and Ambrose—presumably, the flattering *vitae* produced by their contemporary biographers, Possidius of Calama and Paulinus of Milan—are cited as evidence of authoritative precedent on this issue (monks mingling with women) that is fully compatible with, and comparable to, the written statements of Cyprian and Jerome.

With or without direct knowledge of Vincent of Lérins’ *Commonitorium*, Carolingian ecclesiastical writers who assembled at Church councils and composed the subsequent *acta* texts were deeply predisposed to recognizing such an orthodox *consensus patrum* already inhering in their ancient Christian sources. The Fathers, like the apostles before them, were understood as being of “one heart and one mind,” in word and in deed. Carolingian reformers also crucially depended on such a patristic consensus as one of their primary sources of authority, particularly where scripture was silent or too ambiguous. As in other genres of Carolingian writing, the *acta* writers’ careful, deliberate selections from the Fathers served to increasingly cement this idealized notion of harmony and unity among a limited, though only loosely defined, canon of “ancient” Fathers of the Church.

### **Reformatio, Renovatio: Nonne tertium quid?**

In 1957, the French historian Jacques Le Goff, providing a survey of *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, argued against the view of a dynamic and learned “Carolingian Renaissance,” writing:

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<sup>42</sup> *Concilium Parisiense* (829), ed. Werminghoff, *MGH, Conc.* 2:2, 641; discussed in Timmermann, “*Beati patres*,” 45–46.

Beyond recruitment of managers for the monarchy and the Church, the intellectual movement of the Carolingian period manifested neither a zeal for propagating new ideas nor disinterest in their use of their newly acquired intellectual tools, or in their general outlook...What was more, [Carolingian manuscripts] were not produced to be read. They were meant to enhance the collections of churches, or of rich individuals. They were an economic, rather than a spiritual possession. Some of the scribes, copying the words of the ancients or of the Fathers of the Church indeed asserted the superior quality of the works' spiritual content. But owners only took their word for it. And that only added to their material worth. Charlemagne sold a few of his beautiful manuscripts to distribute alms. Books were considered only as precious decorative objects. The monks who copied them laboriously in the *scriptoria* of the monasteries were only marginally interested in their content—for them what was essential was the effort spent, the time consumed, and the fatigue endured in writing them.<sup>43</sup>

Earlier, in 1949 (though an abbreviated English translation would appear in 1957), the Austrian medievalist Heinrich Fichtenau submitted a similarly scathing assessment of Carolingian achievements, asserting that “all creative effort was replaced by the wish to pass on a tradition, and to hold fast to the authority of earlier Christian authors.”<sup>44</sup> Fichtenau singled out writers like Alcuin, Hrabanus Maurus, and Frechulf of Lisieux as exemplifying this distinctly uncreative approach, “linking quotation to quotation, without attempting to express [his] own views or to reconcile inconsistent quotations.”<sup>45</sup> To a certain extent, such a pessimistic view of Carolingian intellectual culture takes Carolingian writers themselves at their word when they insist on the unoriginality and utter fidelity of their works. They are mere emulators of an infinitely superior past, and their only notable achievements are their prolific copying and compiling of texts from the more creative and interesting ages and authors that preceded them.

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<sup>43</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages*, trans. Teresa Lavendar Fagan (Cambridge, Mass., 1993; first published in French, 1957), 7–8.

<sup>44</sup> Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire: The Age of Charlemagne*, trans. Peter Munz (Oxford 1957; adapted and translated from *Das karolingische Imperium*, first published 1949), 98. On Fichtenau's work, written in the wake of the Second World War and implicitly concerned with modern German and Austrian mythologizing appropriations of Charlemagne and his empire, see Janet L. Nelson, “Why *Das Karolingische Imperium* Still Needs to Be Read,” in Andreas Schwarcz and Katharina Kaska, eds., *Urkunden – Schriften – Lebensordnungen, Neue Beiträge zur Mediävistik* (Vienna, 2015), 111–123.

<sup>45</sup> Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire*, 98.

However, this damning verdict, rooted in the modern presupposition that creativity and originality are desirable virtues, fails to recognize the ways that Carolingian intellectuals—whether acting as authors, editors, compilers, or some combination of these overlapping roles—did “express” their “own views” by fashioning particular, selective versions of the Fathers from among the diverse and unwieldy *corpus patrum*. In many cases, Carolingian writer-compilers did not need to “reconcile inconsistent quotations,” in part because the subtly creative work of selection and compilation had already minimized such inconsistencies;<sup>46</sup> and in part, too, because Carolingian assumptions about the essential unity of the “ancient” Christian past predisposed them to perceive general harmony, if acceptable difference, to presume agreement among “ancient” authorities wherever they possibly could. “The quality of a [Carolingian] theological treatise depended on the degree to which it was based on the teaching of the Fathers,” observed Fichtenau.<sup>47</sup> But the “teaching of the Fathers” (note that “teaching” here is singular), understood as something coherent and unified, was to a great extent a Carolingian creation, continuing the work of figures like Bede, Isidore, and Cassiodorus even while these key early medieval intermediaries were often enshrined among the “ancient Fathers.”

In contrast to the negative view of Le Goff and Fichtenau, a picture of Carolingian culture has emerged among a school of Carolingian specialists since the late 1980s that emphasizes its creativity, invention, relatively widespread literacy, and its familiar, sophisticated appropriations of both the Christian and pagan classics. This influential school of thought is rightly critical of the Carolingians’ own insistence upon total fidelity to Christian and/or Roman “tradition,” and has revealed many of the purposeful and pragmatic “uses of the past” made by

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<sup>46</sup> Consider, for instance, the work of early medieval intermediaries like Taio of Saragossa and Defensor of Ligugé, discussed in my Introduction, pp. 5–6 and n. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire*, 98.

prominent Carolingian writers, as well as by more modest and anonymous compilers, editors, and copyists of texts. Yet, while the work of modern scholars loosely connected to this “school” is often acutely perceptive and critical in explicating political and social discourses, it is, at times, susceptible to seduction by Carolingian estimations of the great triumph of their *renovatio* and/or *reformatio*, and the magnificence of the kings and erudite courtiers who brought forth such a rebirth of learning out of the supposed murk and corruption that had preceded the Carolingian dynastic ascent. Consequently, this revisionist approach, championing a creative and innovative Carolingian intellectual culture, can occasionally overplay its hand, overstating the Carolingian achievement or framing it in too singular a light, while glossing over some of the deeper continuities and pervasive intellectual currents transmitted across the centuries between the last iteration of a western Roman Empire and the Carolingians. For example, as Mark Vessey pointedly asked in his review of Rosamond McKitterick’s *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (1989): “[W]hy draw a line between late Roman and ‘barbarian’ Europe, unless the ‘transformations’ of the fifth century can be supposed to have swept away all consciousness of the value of writing? McKitterick is well aware of the role of classical and late antique models in early medieval literary theory and practice, yet in her desire to enlarge the ‘Carolingian contribution’ to western culture she seems momentarily to forget how much of it was made with materials from the past.”<sup>48</sup> Where the scholarship following in the wake of McKitterick’s pivotal, highly influential study refuses to take Carolingian writers at their word when they insist on the total lack of novelty and invention in their texts, it is, at times, tacitly accepting of Carolingian rhetorical representations of the corruption, disorder, and decline that marked the ages preceding

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<sup>48</sup> Mark Vessey, “Literacy and *Litteratura*, A.D. 200–800,” *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* N.S. 13 (1992), 155.



their own.<sup>49</sup> While not without some semblance of truth, such statements by Carolingian writers were also, almost always, ways of deliberately emphasizing the “distance” between their times and the “ancient” past(s) that they most revered and sought to emulate and recreate in the present.

The image of Carolingian culture that I have tried to present here, through the “mosaic” of these chapters, is something in between these polarized extremes of active/constructive/creative and passive/emulative/traditional. I have tried, cautiously, to navigate a middle course, recognizing moments of invention and purposeful appropriation, while acknowledging, like the Carolingians themselves, their deep debts to the past—including the not-so-ancient past—as well as their largely sincere reverence toward it. When Carolingian writers claimed that they endeavoured to follow piously the path of the “ancient fathers” and encouraged their readers to do the same, they really meant it. But the Carolingians also played a very significant part in establishing that “traditional,” “patristic” path; in making it delimited and demarcated enough to clearly identify and follow along (in order to “follow in the footsteps of the Fathers,” one first must be able to discern those footsteps); and in building in connective routes that linked it back continuously to the shadowy, more culturally alien context of early, apostolic Christianity.

It is thus my contention that the Carolingians, tremendously interested in the past and in the rich and varied inheritance of the Roman world, subtly shaped and redeployed the materials they found into something more readily useable, chiseled down by selecting and excerpting from

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<sup>49</sup> On the rhetoric of decline, both in the early Middle Ages and in the work of modern historians, see Courtney M. Booker, *Past Convictions: The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009); Mayke de Jong, “The Empire That Was Always Decaying: The Carolingians (800–888),” *Medieval Worlds* 1 (2015), 6–25; and Paul E. Dutton, “Awareness of Historical Decline in the Carolingian Empire, 800–887” (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1981).

it what was most needed. Carolingian intellectuals were certainly sincere in their professed commitment to the “tradition(s)” of “ancient Christianity.” They habitually downplayed their active, and occasionally truly novel, interventions in molding, creatively appropriating, and repurposing that “tradition” for their own contemporary aims—above all, for the continuing improvement of their world until its inevitable, but perhaps not too imminent, End. The Carolingians ambitiously aspired to the cultural achievements, intellectual heights, and exemplary Christian modes of living that they encountered in the books of the past. But they also desired, at least implicitly, to improve upon that past—namely, to create a more truly and faithfully Christian society than had ever actually existed in the imperfect times of the Christian Roman emperors of Late Antiquity.<sup>50</sup> The righteous critiques of the temporal world—of Roman state and society, of its sinful rulers acting from worldly concerns and its inevitably imperfect sense of “justice,” of the outsized significance that some Christians attributed to the stability and endurance of the Roman Empire—in the writings of the Fathers who lived during those times were strong evidence of that imperfection.

This aspirational use of the past for ameliorating the present world is nowhere more evident than in the Carolingians’ efforts in shaping an authoritative, suitably “ancient” canon of patristic authors, texts, and orthodox ideas, while at the same drawing from the categorical

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<sup>50</sup> Walter Pohl, “Creating Cultural Resources for Carolingian Rule: Historians of the Christian Empire,” in Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder, eds., *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), 15–33, suggests, for example, that in both earlier histories that were read in the Carolingian era and in those composed by Carolingian writers, there were “surprisingly varied views of Christian Roman history” (p. 33) and of the institution of the empire, including sometimes ambivalent representations of figures like Constantine. He credits these views in part to the “variety of precedent that could be used, deliberately or without realising a choice had been made” to inform their judgments on the past, including “the Old Testament kingdom of Israel, the legendary exploits of Alexander the Great, pagan Rome, the Christian empire of Late Antiquity and its direct heir in Constantinople, and, of course, the Merovingian kingdom in its glory days” (16). Pohl ultimately argues that Carolingian-era historical texts suggest that “Christian empire...was a form of government that had not yet been successfully put into practice for any considerable period of time, due to human weakness and the workings of the devil. Things could be done better” (p. 33).

authority of the Fathers as something already stable, essentially fixed, fundamentally harmonious and congruous, and nearly as incontestable as scripture itself. Closely connected to this subtle construction of and deferential appeal to the Fathers, the Carolingian vision of reform, as I have suggested here, was always something *between*, on the one hand, the ideal of recreating a pristine, idealized “ancient” Christian past while shunning all corrupting novelty, and, on the other hand, the more modern conception of reform as a “progressive” movement toward a better future. At the same time, *between* the extremes of an absolute, strictly imposed uniformity and an unregulated, potentially heretical diversity of beliefs and practices were harmony, consensus, and unity among the orders and members of Christian society.<sup>51</sup> It was precisely these same virtues that the Carolingians perceived in the “ancient Christian” and “patristic” traditions that they helped to construct, and upon which they depended to guide their present world and their hopes for the future.

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<sup>51</sup> On harmony, or concord, as opposed to absolute uniformity, as a Carolingian cultural ideal, see esp. Karl Morrison, “‘Know thyself’: Music in the Carolingian Renaissance,” in *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell’alto medioevo occidentale*, *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo* 39 (Spoleto, 1992), esp. 380–392; and building from the insights in Morrison’s work, Rosamond McKitterick, “Unity and Diversity in the Carolingian Church,” in R. N. Swanson, ed., *Unity and Diversity in the Church, Studies in Church History* 32 (Oxford, 1996), 59–82 and Yitzhak Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald (877)* (London, 2001), esp. 83–89.

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