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**Church property and the Carolingian political order in the last years of
Louis the Pious (834-840)**

Contested property, rebellions, and the ordering of Carolingian society

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is set within the reign of Louis the Pious, emperor of the Carolingian empire from 814 to 840, and focusses specifically on the understudied period of 834 to 840, after the empire had to endure serious rebellions in 830-833. Traditionally, historians of the Carolingian period have seen the rebellions and the subsequent public penance of the emperor in 833 as the turning point in the unity of the empire, after which everything went downhill, the emperor had lost his authority and the Carolingian empire was destined to break apart. Because they have given much weight to the rebellions, scholars have often neglected the period after these tumultuous events. Therefore, through the contextualization, analysis and application of a treatise on the sacrosanctity of church property, the *De rebus ecclesiasticis non invadendis*, written in 836 by Bishop Jonas of Orléans, this dissertation tries to shed light on this understudied period of 834 to 840, and focusses on the question whether the rebellions of the 830s had indeed any impact on the political discourse on the stability of the political order. By analysing the mode of argument in the *De Rebus*, it argues for continuity, rather than discontinuity with regard to this political discourse, and shows that the issues discussed in and the purpose of the *De Rebus* are in direct line with those of the Church synods of the 820s, before the rebellions. Moreover, it argues that the destination of the *De Rebus* shows that the bishops in 836 still considered the Carolingian empire as a unified realm, instead of cracking down after the tumultuous events of the early 830s, as is traditionally argued.

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Introduction

After having endured serious uprisings from his imperial sons and rebellious magnates in the beginning of the 830s and being deposed and subjected to a public penance in 833, only to be reinstated a couple of months later in the Spring of 834, the Carolingian emperor Louis the Pious (r. 814-840) summoned his bishops in 836 to his palace in Aachen in order to discuss how to restore the Carolingian Empire to its former state and glory.¹ Despite being one of the biggest Church Synods held under Louis the Pious's auspices, this episode of restoration in the aftermath of the rebellions is severely neglected by modern scholars. Usually simply discarded as “an unimportant epilogue”² to a supposedly truly traumatic event in the history and fate of the Carolingian Empire, the period 834-840 has generated only very little interest among scholars of this period. The purpose of this dissertation is to argue that this neglected period deserves the spotlights.³

My way in to the period 834-840 is a little studied treatise called *De rebus ecclesiasticis non invadendis*, written in 836 by Bishop Jonas of Orléans on behalf of the bishops gathered together at the reform synod held in Aachen in that same year.⁴ This treatise was addressed and sent to King Pippin of Aquitaine (r. 817-838), son of Louis the Pious, and is dedicated to emphasise the sacrosanctity of church property, an issue that by 836 had generated increased notice among the churchmen working within the Carolingian Empire. Through a close analysis of its mode of argument and by setting its argument within the historical and ideological context of the period 829-836, I hope to show that this treatise is much more than just about church property. In fact, I will argue that it can tell us much about the state of affairs in the aftermath of the rebellions and penance. Although the issue of church property is its subject, the *De Rebus*, as I will call it from hereon, addresses far bigger issues like the relationship between the ruler and the Church, the responsibilities of both sides for the spiritual and earthly wellbeing of the people, and the position of the bishops and the institutional Church in general within the Carolingian Empire, all of which reached their high point in the first half of the ninth century. Through a study of how the *De Rebus* related to these wider issues, I intend to show that nowadays scholars may have given too much importance to the rebellions and the public penance and that, if one would only look further than the traditional end point of 834, the period 834-840 may be much more a period of continuity than discontinuity. Put differently, I will argue that the debates on and motivations for the bigger issues mentioned above, already on its way since 829, were

¹ *Conc.* II.2, no. 56, pp. 704-724; *AB.*, s.a. 837, p. 13

² A phrase coined by Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State. Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 2.

³ In this dissertation I will not be much concerned with the rebellions in much detail. For a good historiographical overview of the crisis of the 830s, see Martin Gravel, “De la crise du règne de Louis le Pieux. Essai d’historiographie”, *Revue Historique* 658:2 (2011), pp. 357-389.

⁴ For the edition of the text see *Conc.* II.2, no. 56B, pp. 724-767 (= *De Rebus*) See below for a discussion of the problems with the title.

not significantly altered by the rebellions of the early 830s and the penance of 834. In so doing, we may discern from 834 onward a continuity in the episcopal and royal concern for the wellbeing of the Carolingian state and the Frankish people, so fervently discussed under Louis the Pious's reign pre-830. It is therefore that a study and contextualization of the *De Rebus* is important, for not only can it shed more light on the period after 834, but also on the impact and state of the political and religious discourse during Louis's entire reign.

In what follows, I will divide my dissertation in three chapters. In Chapter 1, I will provide the historiographical context within which the *De Rebus* ought to be approached. First of all, I will discuss the historiography on the "last years of Louis the Pious."⁵ Secondly, I will be concerned with, what I would call, the "synodal context", in which I focus on two major themes that are nowadays very much in the centre of attention: the use of the term *sancta ecclesia* by Carolingian authors to describe their (political) order, and the development of the self-consciousness of the bishops. Both themes were fervently discussed and elaborated on in the Church Synods of the first half of the ninth century, hence the "synodal context". Lastly, because the *De Rebus* is specifically concerned with the issue of church property, I will very briefly discuss the history of church property under the Carolingians up to 836.

In Chapter 2, I will analyse the mode of argument as presented in the *De Rebus*. In his argument, Jonas focused specifically on two major elements, reflecting the concept of the *ecclesia* itself. As I will describe below in more detail, the concept of the *ecclesia* was used by Carolingian authors in the ninth century to make sense of their political system, a system that existed of two orders. The secular order, headed by the ruler, and the ecclesiastical order, presided over by the bishops. Jonas divided his argument in accordance with this structure. On the one hand, he discusses the role of the ruler with regard to church property while, on the other, he sets out the role of the Church, most specifically the bishops and their priests. He is most elaborate about the role played by the Church with regard to church property. This is not surprising, as his main point in the *De Rebus* is that church property belonged, belongs, and should always belong to the Church and the Church alone, for the sake of the stability of the Empire, with the bishops as the overseers and the priests as the main beneficiaries. The ruler, on the other hand, was supposed to donate lavishly to the Church, protect its possessions from getting harmed by greedy men, and honour the cult of God by safeguarding its material upkeep. Put differently, according to Jonas, church property belonged to the institutional Church for the sake of providing the servants of God their material resources, so that they could exercise their God-given ministry, that is praying for the spiritual wellbeing of the ruler, his family, his kingdom and the Frankish people, unconstrained and unburdened by material needs.

⁵ A phrase coined by Janet Nelson in her contribution to the massive volume on the re-evaluation of Louis the Pious's reign: J.L. Nelson, "The Last Years of Louis the Pious", in R. Collins and P. Godman (eds), *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 147-159.

As the text was written from the perspective of the Church, we should be careful to assume that its ideas were universally shared by the secular and ecclesiastical order alike. Moreover, it should be noted that the Church itself under Louis the Pious should not be seen as a monolithic institution. Far from that, the Carolingian Church was divided due to clashing loyalties, personal ambitions and political circumstances. During the rebellions and the penance of Louis the Pious in the early 830s, for example, we find bishops supporting the emperor as well as bishops supporting his sons. Bishops were just as well part of the Carolingian elite, subject to political fickleness. Therefore, “the Church” in my dissertation stands more for a specific group of bishops joined together in a synod than anything that resembles a unified body of clergy across the span of the Carolingian Empire. Even though the names of those bishops are not always conveyed to us, we should always ask ourselves when studying Carolingian synodal texts whether the decrees of a Synod represented a wide-spread sentiment or the ideas of a select few. Thus, the ideas we find in the *De Rebus* can hardly be seen as representing the mind of a unified institution. Rather, although generally speaking we should see this text as the Church’s side of the story, it would be better to approach the *De Rebus* as, in the strictest sense, the ideas of its author, and, in the widest sense, those of the bishops gathered together at the Synod of Aachen in 836, who commissioned the text.

How the *De Rebus* could be applied to the political and religious discourse of the period 829-836, will be food for thought in Chapter 3. The main purpose of this chapter is to show that the ideas in the *De Rebus*, set within a wider context, attest for continuity rather than discontinuity in the general ideas about the ordering of society, the responsibilities of both orders, and the position of the bishops. More specifically, I will argue that the *De Rebus* was part of a long process of rebalancing the political order, which started already in 829, and that the rebellions and penance did not do much to disrupt this process.

I end my dissertation with a short conclusion, in which I will provide an answer to the question whether the period 834-840 was indeed an unimportant epilogue or rather “business as usual”, in which the course that the bishops and the emperor embarked on in 829 was carried on after 834. In other words, should we consider the period after the rebellions and penance as a period of continuity or discontinuity with regard to the political and religious discourse on the spiritual and earthly wellbeing of the Carolingian Empire and the Frankish people, so fervently discussed from 829 onward?

Chapter 1

Contextualizing the *De Rebus*

§1.1. *The last years of Louis the Pious: a success or failure?*

The cause of the crisis of the 830s have been explained in the preceding century and a half in many different ways. On the one hand, historians have given “circumstantial” reasons such as the clergy undermining the imperial power which resulted in the unravelling of the emperor’s authority, opening up the doors to disputes, or clashes among the members of the highest echelon of society as a result of conflicting ambitions and ideas about the design, the exercise and the transmission of imperial power. On the other, however, we find more “structural” reasons such as the transition from offense to defence undermining the relationship between the ruler and his warrior elite due to lack of material rewards, or, most persistent of all, the failure to implement a well-oiled institutional machinery.⁶ Whether those propagating these theses were driven by a nineteenth-century anti-clericalism, blaming ambitious churchmen for using their control of religion to achieve their aims, or by a hope to find in the Carolingian era the equivalent of the modern state, or otherwise, the predominant view of Louis the Pious’s reign has been a negative one for a long time. Only recently has the period after the great Charlemagne received positive reviews and have historians questioned if Louis the Pious was indeed “Des großen Kaisers kleinen Sohn.”⁷ Very recently a still on-going international project, with the tantalizing title *Produktivität einer Krise*, tries to determine in what way the reign of Louis the Pious and, more specifically, the crisis of the 830s contributed to a political and social transformation of the Carolingian empire.⁸

These reviews, however, more often than not fail to include the period after 834, or do so only passingly.⁹ More importantly, there seems to be no doubt in the minds of most historians whatsoever about the massive impact of the rebellions and the penance of 833 on the fate of the Carolingian empire. As justly observed by Janet Nelson, the last years of Louis the Pious have been eclipsed by

⁶ For these and more theses on the end of the Carolingian Empire, all divided into “circumstantial” and “structural” reasons, see Gravel, “Essai d’historiographie”, pp. 359-363.

⁷ A phrase coined by Nikolaus Staubach, “‘Des großen Kaisers kleinen Sohn’: Zum Bild Ludwigs des Frommen in der älteren deutschen Geschichtsforschung”, in *Charlemagne’s Heir*, pp. 701-721.

⁸ <http://www.flsh.unilim.fr/Rech/hludowicus/> (last visited 17-06-2012)

⁹ E.g. Louis Halphen, *Charlemagne et l’empire carolingien* (Paris, 1947); Heinrich Fichtenau, *Das Karolingische Imperium* (Zurich, 1949); Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians, 751-987* (London, 1983), pp. 106-139; Françoise-Louis Ganshof, “Louis the Pious Reconsidered”, *History* 42 (1957), pp. 171-180; Thomas F.X. Noble, “Louis the Pious and his Piety Reconsidered”, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire* 58 (1980), pp. 297-316; and most recently, Courtney M. Booker, *Past Convictions. The Penance of Louis the Pious and the Decline of the Carolingians* (Philadelphia, 2009). For notable exceptions to this disregard for the period 834-840 and a positive re-evaluation of this period, see Nelson, “Last years” and Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State. Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 52-58.

the rebellions of 830-833, not only in the quantity of historiographical works on Louis's reign, but also in the arguments.¹⁰ Because the events of the early 830s were considered as decisive for the fate of the Carolingian monarchy, indeed "a trauma from which neither the Carolingians nor the Franks ever recovered,"¹¹ the period of 834-840 has been discarded as "an unimportant epilogue."¹² Whether this is true or not remains to be seen. Was the rebellion and Louis's public penance indeed the turning point in the Carolingian period, after which everything went downhill, leading eventually to the breakup of the Empire? Or was it not as disastrous as has been argued; that is to say, can we agree with Mayke de Jong that Louis's penance did not radically change the Emperor's position and authority in the realm, and that the period of 834-840 can be simply characterized as "business as usual"?¹³ The question of whether the Carolingian Empire returned to normal, to a pre-crisis state, after Louis was reinstated as emperor in 834 will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Recent scholarship that does pay attention to the period 834-840 is in general positively inclined towards the last years of Louis the Pious. Whether it was his successful attempt to subject his sons to the paternal authority once more, his concern for rebuilding consensus, his taking up again the spirit of reform, or his attempt at carving out a significant share in the patrimony for his youngest son Charles, the last years of Emperor Louis have been re-evaluated and put in a favourable light.¹⁴ Most recently, a more or less moral dimension is added to the list of successes. Mayke de Jong convincingly argued that the crisis of the early 830s was caused by an "overheating" of a so-called "penitential state", defined as "a political community governed by the consciousness of having sinned, and by the search for strategies of atonement."¹⁵ The machinery of this penitential state, as she argued, "spun out of control" in the early 830s as political adversaries were eager to search out virtuous or sinful behaviour and the need for atonement, for the betterment of their own position.¹⁶ That is not to say that sin and atonement were merely political instruments. As de Jong makes very clear in her book, these political adversaries firmly believed in the "penitential state." In fact, the Carolingian elite shared a "moral high ground" that was governed by such concepts as sin, atonement and salvation. After the "moral onslaught" of the penance of 833, however, and especially after the Synod of Thionville in 835, where Archbishop Ebo of Reims was designated as the main culprit of the earlier

¹⁰ Nelson, "Last years", p. 148.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 148, referring to Theodor Schieffer, "Die Krise des karolingischen Imperium", in *Aus Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für G. Kallen* (Bonn, 1957), pp. 1-15.

¹² As observed by de Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 2; she included Egon Boshof in this group, which I find surprising, considering that he, of all scholars, pays most attention to the last years of Louis the Pious.

¹³ De Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 250ff.

¹⁴ E. Boshof, *Ludwig der Fromme. Gestalten des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Darmstadt, 1996), pp. 215-251; Nelson, "Last years"; eadem, "The Frankish Kingdoms, 814-898: the West", in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 2: 700-900* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 119; De Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 54-57.

¹⁵ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 6.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 249.

deposition of Louis the Pious, de Jong concludes that “authority and atonement were once more the emperor’s business.”¹⁷

Another reason for the lack of interest in the last years of Louis the Pious, which is important to point out here, is the absence of any capitulary evidence from 834 onward, so rich in quantity in the period before the crisis, which has led historians to suggest a loss of imperial authority. Yet, this view does not take into account the possibility that important documents simply did not stand the test of time. In fact, when one reads the contemporary sources, in the period 834-840 Louis the Pious resumed his summoning of (general) assemblies and church synods, dealing with the affairs of the realm, just like he did before the crisis. Although we may not have the acts or capitularies of these meetings (if there ever were such texts), that is no reason to assume that Louis did not continue where he left off in 830.¹⁸ Furthermore, as argued by Mayke de Jong, this pessimistic view makes too sharp a distinction between capitularies and synodal acts. According to her, the Synod of Aachen 836 for example “was as much a sign of the emperor’s continued vigour as any capitulary.”¹⁹ Capitularies are not the only form of royal communication and any lack of capitulary evidence does not necessarily have to suggest a weak government.²⁰

§1.2. Synodal context:

In order to understand the ideology propagated in the *De Rebus* and the impact the text might have had, we now need to turn to the synodal context. For it was at these synods that some major themes were discussed, which can now be found holding an important place in the more recent historiography of Louis’s reign: first, the concept of the *ecclesia* as a model for the Carolingian state and, second, the developments in the self-consciousness of the episcopacy with regard to its position in the realm and its relationship with the ruler. We shall see that the *De Rebus* was firmly grounded within the political and religious discourses on these two themes.

It is recognized that the Carolingian period saw a marked increase in synodal activities when compared to either the Merovingian period or the post-Carolingian period. Between 742 and 911, a total of hundred-eighty synods were summoned in the Frankish kingdoms alone, compared to the

¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 259.

¹⁸ *AB*, s.a. 834-839, pp. 7-23; 834, pp. 8-10: Paris (no text survives), Attigny (no text survives); 835, pp. 10-11: Thionville (*Capit.* II, no. 199, p. 57; *Conc.* II.2, no. 55, pp. 696-703), Tramoyes near Lyons (no text survives); 836, p. 12: Worms (no text survives), Aachen; 837, pp. 13-14: Nijmegen (probably, no text survives), Aachen (considering the presence of both secular and ecclesiastical magnates, no text survives); 838, pp. 15-16: Nijmegen (no text survives), Quierzy (*Conc.* II.2, no. 57, pp. 768-782); 839, pp. 16-23: Ingelheim (no text survives), Chalon (no text survives), Worms (*Capit.* II, no. 200, p. 58). Cf. Astronomer, cc. 53-62, pp. 496-546, who omits some of the aforementioned assemblies, mixes up the years with regard to Worm 836 (he places it in 835) and Tramoyes 835 (he places it in 836), and had Worms 839 take place twice (cf. c. 60 with c. 62).

¹⁹ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 53.

²⁰ Ibidem, p. 53; Nelson, “Last Years”, pp. 147-148.

sixty-odd synods held in Merovingian times. More specifically, between 742 and 842, fifty-three synods were summoned in the Carolingian empire at the order of the ruler alone, not to mention the provincial synods summoned by the archbishops themselves.²¹ Not only the amount of synods marks the Carolingian period out as unique, also the comprehensiveness of the evidence, whether or not disseminated by royal capitularies, and the versatility of the themes discussed make this period important.²² It is in the synodal acts that we find most clearly expressed the views of the Church as an institution on the organization of the realm, the various duties of those holding an office, the responsibilities of both the ruler and the bishops towards the Church itself as well as to the practical matters of running an Empire. Although the effectiveness of the synodal acts can be questioned at times, they nevertheless are a rich and vital source for our understanding of the Carolingian world and the perception of the churchmen of the organization of the world around them and their position therein, and we should therefore treat them as such.

In a profession where narrative texts generate the most attention, synodal texts are easily forgotten, or simply done away with as “viele Gesetze, wenig Wirkung.”²³ The importance of synods is therefore often neglected or downplayed based on the lack of distribution of their acts or their effectiveness. However, as rightly argued by Wilfried Hartmann, the significance of synods should not only be assessed by their aftereffects. Synods in themselves were important forums for the representation of the rulers, the bishops and, in case of papal synods, the pope.²⁴ It was at such meetings that bishops could express their feelings, whether positive or negative, about the course of action taken by the ruler and the Church as an institution. And it was at these meetings that ideology took shape. In short, one could argue that synods were platforms for negotiation between the Church and the ruler. Therefore, synodal texts should be put (back) in the spotlights and considered as a serious tool for our study of the Carolingian world. One of the undercurrents of this dissertation is to do just that and to see how the message conveyed in the treatise sent to Pippin in 836, which culminated from the Synod of Aachen in that same year, either undermines, supplements or modifies the message conveyed in narrative texts.

²¹ Wilfried Hartmann, “Konzilien und Geschichtsschreibung in karolingischer Zeit”, in A. Scharer and G. Scheibelreiter (eds.), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 32 (Vienna, 1994), pp. 481-482.

²² Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), pp. 1-4.

²³ This phrase is coined by Hartmann, *Synoden*, p. 28.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 33; cf. de Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 24 for the perspective of the ruler.

§1.2.1. *The ecclesia as a model for the Carolingian state.*

The historiography on the Carolingian state is rich, very rich, indeed too rich to be discussed here.²⁵ Therefore, here I would like to focus on the recent re-evaluation of the concept of the *ecclesia* as a blueprint for the Carolingian “state”, as presented by Mayke de Jong.²⁶ In her publications on the *ecclesia*, de Jong argues against the traditional view of the so-called “otherness” of early medieval Christianity, that is one which did not have the universality of late antique Christianity and one which was completely detached from the state. Historians have long argued that the awareness of belonging to a universal Christendom had given way in the post-Roman kingdoms to loyalty to the king and the people, in so doing replacing the universal Church with one restricted to its *gens*, its “nation”, creating a multitude of so-called *Gentilkirchen* in no way related to each other and lacking any integration of religion and politics.²⁷ In contrast to such an antagonistic dualism between Church and State, however, Mayke de Jong argues for a re-evaluation of the use of *ecclesia* in Carolingian political and religious discourse and, instead, convincingly shows that by adopting the term *ecclesia* in this period the Franks did have a strong sense of universality that encompassed a Frankish *populus christianus*, denoting a Christian polity in its own right. This concept of the *ecclesia* was furthermore transpersonal and could therefore survive despite any division in the Carolingian empire (e.g. in the 840s).²⁸ As such, she argues against the view of Johannes Fried who, in 1982, argued that, although the Carolingian elite did familiarize themselves with the concept of the *ecclesia*, this could by no means qualify as an abstract term for a state, simply because the Carolingian thinkers were incapable of a political discourse in abstract and transpersonal terms.²⁹

It is observed by de Jong, however, that by adopting the concept of the *ecclesia*, most forcefully implemented at the Synod of Paris 829, the Carolingian leaders did have a sense of a unified Christian polity, a “state of the Church” if you will. At Paris 829 two definitions of the *ecclesia* were recognized. A broad definition, comprising the universal Christian community of the faithful, as such transcending political boundaries, and a restricted definition, incorporating the church hierarchy whose members safeguarded a divinely approved order by serving as intermediaries

²⁵ This is not the place to provide a full list of the bibliography on the early medieval state, which would be far too substantial. For the most recent evaluation on this topic, see the excellent volumes published in Vienna: S. Airlie, W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*. Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 11 (Vienna, 2006); W. Pohl and V. Wieser (eds.), *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat- europäische Perspektiven*. Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 16 (Vienna, 2009).

²⁶ For what follows, see Mayke de Jong, “The empire as *ecclesia*: Hrabanus Maurus and biblical *historia* for rulers”, in Y. Hen and M. Innes (eds.), *Using the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 191-226; eadem, “*Ecclesia* and the early medieval polity”, in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*, pp. 113-132; eadem, “The state of the Church: *ecclesia* and early medieval state formation”, in *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat*, pp. 241-254; eadem, *Penitential State*.

²⁷ De Jong, “*Ecclesia*”, pp. 116-117

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 119; eadem, *Penitential State*, p. 28.

²⁹ See Johannes Fried, “Der karolingische Herrschaftsverband im 9. Jahrhundert zwischen Kirche und Königshaus”, *Historische Zeitschrift* 235 (1982), pp. 1-43.

between God and the Frankish people. The *ecclesia* in the broad sense was governed by two complementary orders, or *eximiae personae*, the sacerdotal and the royal order. This division was influenced by the doctrine of dualism of the fifth century pope Gelasius (d. 496), set out in a letter to the East Roman Emperor Anastasius I (430-518).³⁰ At the same time, however, the *ecclesia* in the broad sense was also equated with the Pauline model of the *corpus Christi*, in which the body signified the *ecclesia* with Christ at its head and the two *personae* as its limbs.³¹ In so doing, the bishops at Paris implemented a mixture between the Gelasian and the Pauline doctrine in order to describe their political order.³²

As the two *personae* or limbs that made up the body of the *ecclesia*, the ruler and the bishops had to work closely together. Both, after all, had the responsibility to provide for the wellbeing of the Christian people. The bishops, on their part, were responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of the inhabitants of their diocese as well as for that of the ruler. The ruler, on his, was responsible for the protection of the Church and the stimulation (and correction, if need be) of the proper exercise of the *cultus divinus*, which lay at the basis of a well-oiled *ecclesia*. Louis the Pious had already said as much with regard to the division of labour and mutual responsibilities in his *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines* of 825. There Louis decreed that the bishops should live an exemplary life for the people entrusted to them. They were furthermore held responsible for guiding their flock on the road to eternal life. Moreover, through preaching, admonition and correction, the bishops were to assist the ruler in the proper conduct of his *ministerium* and provide for the wellbeing of the entire Christian people.³³ Louis's deep involvement in the proper functioning of the two limbs of the *ecclesia* and the spiritual wellbeing of his people also explains his interest in Biblical commentaries where this "self-assigned role (...) as the [guardian] of the correct interpretation of God's law and the correct cult" was emphasized.³⁴ Assemblies and synods were therefore ideal platforms for a ruler to publicly display himself as a true Christian ruler and the protector of the Church.³⁵ Hence, as already pointed out above, the importance of capitularies, which did not fall short of being public pronouncements of the ruler's voice.³⁶ It was through his capitularies that the emperor could articulate his contributions to this redefinition of the episcopal office.

³⁰ *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, i, c. 3, pp. 610-611; de Jong, "State of the Church", p. 243; eadem, "Ecclesia", pp. 119-123; eadem, *Penitential State*, p. 28; Hans-Hubert Anton, "Zum politischen Konzept karolingischer Synoden und zur karolingischen Brüdergemeinschaft", *Historisches Jahrbuch* 99 (1979), pp. 62-65.

³¹ See 1 Cor. 12:27, Rom 12:4-5 and Col. 2:19 in *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, i, c. 2, p. 610.

³² De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 182; Steffen Patzold, *Episcopus. Wissen über Bischöfe des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008), pp. 155-157; Anton, "Politischen Konzept", pp. 58-62.

³³ *Capit.* I, no. 150, pp. 303-307, esp. cc. 3-4, pp. 303-304.

³⁴ De Jong, "State of the Church", p. 243; eadem, *Penitential State*, pp. 23-24; Anton, "Politischen Konzept", pp. 64-65; Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 155-157; for the rulers' interest in Biblical commentaries, see de Jong, "Empire as *ecclesia*", pp. 192-226, p. 200 for quote.

³⁵ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 24.

³⁶ Cf. J.L. Nelson, "The voice of Charlemagne", in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds.), *Believe and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 76-88.

However much the ruler and the bishops were supposed to work together, this mutual reliance only worked as long as there were clear boundaries between the secular and the ecclesiastical sphere. As expressed by Hans-Hubert Anton, synods provided a platform for the Church to create an ecclesiastical “Eigen- und Sondersphäre”, that is to say a sphere dedicated to the *ecclesia* in the restricted sense within the *ecclesia* in the broad sense, also described as the *libertas episcopalis*, distinct from the *auctoritas principalis*.³⁷ Therefore, one way to approach ecclesiastical reform is as a redrawing of the boundaries that, along the way, may have been blurred. This blurring of the boundaries is important to keep in mind for the rest of this dissertation, for these boundaries and the balance between both orders was precarious, indeed they were areas of tension throughout the Carolingian period. It has been suggested that these boundaries signified an attempt to avert a *Staatskirchentums* or to divide Church and State. However, considering the vital importance of the cooperation of both spheres for the stability of the realm and the king as the glue that held both orders together, the drawing of boundaries should rather be seen as assigning an “action field” to both sides or a division of labour necessary to secure the wellbeing of the Frankish people.³⁸ One of these divisions, as we shall see, concerned the right to dispose of church property, which the bishops at Paris 829 had already drawn into the orbit of the ecclesiastical sphere by invoking the *canonica auctoritas* rather than the *principalis auctoritas*.³⁹

As de Jong has clearly shown in her most recent book, the *Penitential State. Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814-840*, any transgression or neglect of these boundaries and of the responsibilities of both spheres would have been considered a sin, through which the people of the Franks would incur the wrath of God. If such a thing would happen, atonement was the only answer. It was the self-assigned duty of the bishops to impose this penance. In order to understand this position of the bishops, we now need to turn to the second theme of importance here: the development of the self-consciousness of the bishops in the ninth century.

§1.2.2. The self-consciousness of the bishops in the ninth century.

Up until very recently, historians still considered the Carolingian episcopacy to be completely in the service of the ruler. Holding on to the concept of a *Reichskirche*, they argued that the king dominated the episcopacy and made use of them according to his politics. That is to say, the king influenced the

³⁷ See e.g. *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, i, c. 26, p. 628; iii, c. 1, p. 668; iii, c. 27, p. 680; Anton, “Politischen Konzept”, pp. 66-67.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 66; de Jong, “State of the Church”, pp. 243-244; Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 165-166; for a practical solution to these boundaries, one can consider the construction of a physical space of seclusion in monasteries, the *claustrum*, which was solely accessible for the monks, in a world where the monasteries functioned as central meeting points of the secular and ecclesiastical sphere. For this, see de Jong, “Carolingian monasticism: the power of prayer”, in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 2: 700-900* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 622-653, esp. pp. 636-640.

³⁹ *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, i, c. 15, p. 622; Anton, “Politischen Konzept”, p. 66.

election and installation of bishops as well as the synods, he used them as royal legates, assigned them military duties, used them as counsellors, and deployed them in the peripheral areas in order to integrate these regions in the realm. Furthermore, the bishops were personally bound by the king through oaths.⁴⁰ It should be noted, however, that this view has mainly been the business of German historians, focusing on the East Frankish kingdom and the transition to the Ottonian period.⁴¹ The period of Louis the Pious and his descendants in the West is largely omitted from this discussion.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, this view started to be questioned, and this time the reign of Louis the Pious was also included in the debates. In 2000 Monika Suchan voiced her critique on the *Reichskirche* model as an explanation for the relationship between the king and the episcopacy in the age of Louis the Pious. According to her, Louis had exercised a “Kirchenpolitik” in which he, as the Lord’s anointed, envisaged himself as the dominating power, that is the single head of a world order, in which the Church was in the ruler’s service. Yet, when during the crisis of the 830s this position started to crumble and Louis’s “Herrschaftstheologie” seemed to fail, a power-vacuum opened up. As Suchan argues, the bishops made use of this situation in a pragmatic way, that is, because of the “Spielraum” created by the situation as well as by the bishops’ spiritual and ecclesiastical authority, they could and would exercise a so-called “Königspolitik” to fill up the vacuum that had arisen. In so doing, they altered the “Herrschaftstheologie”, which had formulated an exclusive claim by the emperor on the secular power, and instead returned to the afore mentioned Gelasian doctrine of dividing the ecclesiastical and secular sphere. This does not mean that the bishops wanted to dominate imperial authority, as the nineteenth-century historians would have suggested. Instead, the bishops recognized the need for cooperation between the king and the episcopacy and emphasized that their intention was to repair the political order of the realm. In other words, the crisis of the 830s had tipped the Empire out of balance and the bishops had to enforce a “crisis management” necessary to rebalance the scale, but this time on their own terms.⁴²

It is through the study of synodal acts that we can follow the development of these terms, that is through the representation and perception of the episcopal office, the duties of the bishops and their place in the political order.⁴³ Where the bishops in the eighth century were usually depicted as acting in the service of the ruler, the events of the 820s and 830s changed their position radically. Through close analysis of the synodal acts of this period, Steffen Patzold has recently convincingly shown how a new “Bischofsmodell” came into being that redefined the bishop’s duties on earth and his position in the political order. Although the capitularies of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious from before 829

⁴⁰ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 22-24; Monika Suchan, “Kirchenpolitik des Königs oder Königspolitik der Kirche? Zum Verhältnis Ludwigs der Frommen und das Episkopats während der Herrschaftskrisen um 830”, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 111:1 (2000), pp. 1-3.

⁴¹ See for critique on this view, Timothy Reuter, “The ‘Imperial Church System’ of the Ottonian and Salian Rulers. A Reconsideration”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982), pp. 347-374, reprinted in idem, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 325-354.

⁴² Suchan, “Kirchenpolitik”, pp. 26-27.

⁴³ For what follows, I relied heavily on Patzold, *Episcopus*.

had paved the way for this, the Synod of Paris 829 should be seen as the high point in this development in which a new repertoire of categories were developed that made up a new “Bischofsmodell.”⁴⁴

Until the mid-820s, the duties and functions of the bishops were denoted by more or less practical terms as *subiectio*, i.e. the relationship within the church hierarchy (archbishop-suffragans; bishops-monks; bishops-secular clergy) , *oboedientia*, i.e. the obedience owed by those subject to the bishops, and *potestas*, i.e. the episcopal authority over the people in the diocese as well as the authority over church property.⁴⁵ This changed from 825 onward. As we have seen, in his *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines* of 825, Louis the Pious made significant contributions to the position of the episcopacy in the Empire and the relationship between the bishops and the emperor by articulating in a royal capitulary a moral redefinition of the episcopal office, already discussed at the Synod of Attigny 822. The duties and functions of the bishops were now described in moral terms of a God-given *ministerium*, through which the bishops should be an example for the people in their diocese, whom they ought to admonish and correct through preaching and to lead on the road to salvation. In the proper conduct of their episcopal office, they were to be aided by their *adiutoria*, that is the counts and other office-holders, who were now subjected to the bishops’ *auctoritas*. Furthermore, the bishops, together with their *adiutoria*, were supposed to assist the ruler in his proper conduct of his *ministerium*.⁴⁶ This moral redefinition did not mean that the previous practical terms were rendered useless. Both sets of terms, the practical as well as the moral, would be employed next to each other.

Based on this definition of the episcopal office, the bishops’ responsibility for the wellbeing of the ruler, indeed of the entire Christian people, came to hold centre stage more and more throughout the subsequent years. During the two synods held in Francia somewhere between 825 and 829, the bishops for example stated they were responsible for the *status regni* and that “we [i.e. the bishops] sanction that the care and passion for the matters of the Church [*ecclesiasticarum res*] and the support of the faithful, both by virtue of just government and by a careful reading of the Sacred things [*sacra res*], belong to the episcopal office.”⁴⁷ *Admonitio*, as enshrined in texts and enforced during synods, was their central instrument in exercising their episcopal office. Especially under the rule of Louis the Pious, *admonitio* became the primary tool for moral correction for the bishops to speak up against *iniquitas* and to watch over the Frankish people.⁴⁸ In the ninth century, the use of *admonitio* to express a concern for the wellbeing of the king, the realm and the Frankish *populus* and a sense of responsibility for the common good, all of which were based on biblical texts, patristic

⁴⁴ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 104-135.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 129-131.

⁴⁶ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 141-142; *Capit.* I, no. 150, pp. 303-307; for the Synod of Attigny 822, see *Conc.* II.2, no. 47, pp. 468-472 and, for a discussion thereof: Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 147-148.

⁴⁷ *Conc.* II.2, no. 48, c. 3, p. 590.

⁴⁸ For what follows, I relied heavily on de Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 112-148.

writings and synods of yore, became part and parcel of the political and religious discourse.⁴⁹ Although, in the Carolingian era, *admonitio* became largely the area of expertise of the churchmen, who considered it their duty, or God-given *ministerium*, to save the Christian people and, above all, the ruler from committing immoral behaviour through which they would incur the wrath of God, Louis himself also made use of *admonitio* to express his royal authority during assemblies and in his capitularies.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, most admonitory texts of the ninth century were written by churchmen.

Within this shared concern for the moral wellbeing of the Carolingian realm and all its inhabitants, the bishops carved out a very special place for themselves. The appropriation of the use of *admonitio* by the bishops and their moral duties within the realm had a profound effect on their self-consciousness of their position in the political order. As we have seen, at the Synod of Paris in 829, an elaborate model was developed that envisaged the political order as the *sancta Dei ecclesia*, in which the two orders, the sacerdotal and the royal, cooperated together to work for the wellbeing of the realm and the salvation of the Frankish people. At this same synod, the definition of the sacerdotal *persona* was reshaped and given full force, based on biblical and patristic thought. Within the *ecclesia*, despite the cooperation between the two orders, it was decreed at Paris that the sacerdotal order bore the largest responsibility, for the bishops were responsible for the salvation not only of the people as a whole but also of the royal *persona* in particular. Through the ideas of the fifth/sixth century Bishop Fulgentius of Ruspe, that in the *ecclesia* no one was more powerful than the bishops, while in the world no one stands above the emperor, the Synod of Paris defined the episcopacy as the *only* group responsible for the salvation of all those gathered together within the *ecclesia*.⁵¹ In fact, as the self-assigned guardians of the faithful and of the moral behaviour of the entire order of the Empire,⁵² they described themselves as “the vicars of the Apostles and the lights of the world,”⁵³ who had received from Christ the power to bind and to loose, that is the authority to excommunicate one from the Christian community and to reconcile that person with God through penance and forgiveness.⁵⁴ Louis was admonished to make known to everyone, his sons and magnates alike, the *nomen, potestas, vigor et dignitas sacerdotalis*.⁵⁵ The bishops ought to be respected and listened to, for they were “the interpreters of God’s will” and the holders of the keys to Heaven.⁵⁶

This self-consciousness of the bishops and the redefinition of their position in the realm should not be seen as an attempt at hegemony of the Church or any claim to a hierocracy. Rather, it

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 131.

⁵⁰ A good example is the *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines* of 825; *Capit.* I, no. 150, pp. 303-307.

⁵¹ *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, i, c. 3, pp. 610-611; cf. Fulgentius of Ruspe, *De veritate praedestinationis et gratiae Dei*, Migne PL 65, ii, c. 38, col. 647D

⁵² *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, i, c. 1, pp. 609-610.

⁵³ *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, praefatio, p. 608.

⁵⁴ *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, praefatio, p. 607ff.; cf. Matt. 16.19.

⁵⁵ *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, iii, c. 8, p. 673; cf. the Synod of Aachen 836 for the same admonition, *Conc.* II.2, no. 56, iii, c. 5, p. 716.

⁵⁶ *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, III, c. 9, p. 673; cf. Julianus Pomerius, *De vita contemplativa*, Migne PL 59, II, c. 2.1, coll. 444D-445B; cf. the *Relatio episcoporum* of 829, *Capit.* II, no. 196, c. 22, p. 36 and the Synod of Aachen 836, *Conc.* II.2, no. 56, iii, c. 5, p. 717 for a repetition of this statement.

was an attempt to describe and make sense of the complex relationship between the ecclesiastical and secular sphere and, maybe more importantly, of the boundaries between both spheres.⁵⁷ Within this relationship, however, the bishops carved out a special position for themselves, one which would resonate in the next decade. Moreover, as pointed out by Mayke de Jong, it was not an attempt to undermine royal authority. Instead, it was to reaffirm the bishops' own authority by depicting themselves as the only valid mediators between an angry and vengeful God and a penitent Carolingian ruler.⁵⁸

As Patzold points out, the public penance and deposition of Louis the Pious in 833 put into practice the bipolar model postulated at Paris 829. For here, by employing their God-given power to bind and loose, the bishops took the responsibility for the wellbeing of the Empire and the entire Christian population entrusted to them by God. In particular, they took the responsibility for the salvation of the Emperor. In the *Relatio episcoporum*, a document in which the bishops set out the reasons for Louis's penance, they followed neatly the model set out in Paris 829. In fact, as Patzold argues, without the Parisian model, the penance of Louis could never have happened the way it did.⁵⁹ In the Autumn of 833, the bishops "loosened" Louis from the Christian community. A couple of months later, Louis asked to be reinstated by the bishops in the church of St-Denis, and the bishops complied, "binding" him again to God and taking him back into the fold. Not all bishops agreed with this, however. The exile and deposition of those bishops who had acted against Louis in the events of the early 830s shows that the Carolingian episcopacy was far from monolithic and that the bishops never were of one mind.

Thus, when the bishops were summoned to Aachen by Louis the Pious in 836, could they build upon a well-developed model of the *ecclesia* and the episcopacy in particular? Put differently, could this model of a coherent body of bishops within a well-defined political order survive the troubles of the early 830s? I will argue that, despite the fact that the Church was far from monolithic, the *De Rebus* and its purpose show that by 836 the bishops still thought of themselves as a corporate body, united by their shared responsibilities and duties.

§1.3. A brief history of church property.

When studying any ideology, however, whether of church property or otherwise, one always has to consider to what extent this ideology either reflected, corresponded and/or responded to practical issues that the ideology tried either to reify or to counter. It should however be taken into account that,

⁵⁷ Patzold, *Episcopus*, p. 158; cf. Anton, "Politischen Konzept", p. 68, who argued that with the vision postulated at Paris 829, the bishops set a clear course away from a *Staatskirche* by envisaging the primacy of the spiritual, the superiority of the clergy in the Empire, the kingdom as a part of the Church and, most important of all, a closed and compact concept of a hierocratic community.

⁵⁸ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 177; eadem, "Ecclesia", pp. 129-131.

⁵⁹ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 189-191; for the *Relatio episcoporum*, see *Capit. II*, no. 197, pp. 51-55.

in the words of the American sociologist Robert Wuthnow, “ideology is neither assumed to be an accurate reflection of reality nor accused of distorting reality, only of bearing a relation to the specific context in which it appears.”⁶⁰ According to Wuthnow, ideologies were shaped by their social situations and yet manage to disengage from them, in the sense that they had to “articulate” with their social context, so that it would be recognizable to others, while at the same time “disarticulate” from it, in order to provide an alternative.⁶¹ Therefore, as ideology was born from practical issues, any thoughts on the purpose of this treatise should involve a quick look at the history of the laws of church property that most likely provided the impetus for the ideas in the *De Rebus*.

The history of church property in the early Middle Ages is a long one, too long to be discussed here in much detail.⁶² Any attempt to recount this history will be incomplete. Important to note is that the ideas in the *De Rebus* should be seen as only one aspect of a massive and complex world of property rights, lordship and inheritance practices. It is by no means a general representation of this world. In the context of this dissertation, therefore, it suffices to briefly zoom in on two issues of the history of church property: on the one hand, the *potestas* of the bishops over the properties of the Church, and, on the other, the royal lordship of the Carolingian rulers. Most debates about church property in the Carolingian period revolved around clashes between these two powers. Whereas the late antique and early Frankish bishops were able to carve out so-called ‘episcopal states’ by assuming full right to the properties in their dioceses, from the late seventh century onward resistance to this episcopal power grew exponentially, as faithful people started to found their own churches and monasteries on their own lands over which they themselves held full proprietary right. At the same time, as bishops found their power being undermined by local landowners, the powerful family of the Pippinids were able to profit from this development by driving bishops out of their dioceses and confiscating church properties, which they then handed out as boons of favour for loyal followers or put them under their protection against other aggressive lay magnates. Soon these founding fathers of the Carolingian dynasty, after assuming the throne in the face of a weakened Merovingian power, found themselves in the centre of attention, as both lay landowners as well as monasteries were looking towards the new kings to protect their precious lands. In return for protection, the new rulers were able to assume lordship over the properties and use them to reward faithful followers or to buy the support of soon-to-be-followers. As a result, royal lordship was not so much a precondition to become king but rather a result from the secularization of church lands that led to the rise of the

⁶⁰ R. Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and social structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge, MA, 1993), p. 16.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 3-6.

⁶² For excellent studies, to which I am heavily indebted in my own account, see W. Goffart, *The Le Mans Forgeries. A chapter from the history of church property in the ninth century* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), esp. pp. 6-22 and S. Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006).

Carolingian dynasty. The Pippinids simply came out on top in a large scale struggle for power in time of political weakness.⁶³

In the face of growing royal lordship, the bishops saw theirs wane. Yet, there was not much they could do. As convincingly argued by Walter Goffart, the current laws of (church) property did not allow them to effectively vindicate their rights to the properties in their diocese. Not only did the Church (both dioceses as well as monasteries) have to deal with royal encroachment on church lands, as was the ruler's right, they also had to cope with claims of descendants of donors, who wished to retract the former donations of their parents. They could do so as the state of property law did not extinguish the rights of the donor's natural heirs the moment a gift of land was made. Therefore, for abbots or bishops to prevent their properties from being granted out or seized by the heirs of donors, they increasingly requested from the ruler confirmations of landholding and privileges, as well as the grant of royal protection and immunity, which would either override the rights of the heirs or abolish the ruler's agents to exercise the king's justice on the designated church lands. Such negotiations of space, as Barbara Rosenwein described it, were important in the consolidation of royal power in the localities. By granting immunity to designated lands, the ruler may lose his immediate control over these lands but, at the same time, strengthen his power as the source of authority.⁶⁴

That did not mean that the faith of church property was completely left to the fickleness of the ruler. Ever since the reform synods of the early 740s, the use of church property and the position of the bishop with regard to it were regulated through royal capitularies as well as Church synods. Boundaries were set and powers were more or less demarcated as part of the attempt to purify a stained Church, impoverished after the massive spoliation of church lands in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. Regulations about the payment of rents and tithes on church properties held by laymen, as well as decrees on the restoration of church lands in the case of impoverishment were laid down under Carloman, Pippin and Charlemagne in order to recompense the Church.⁶⁵ However, the practice of alienating church property to laymen was never fully condemned, let alone abolished. In fact, despite the instruction of Louis the Pious that any division or loss of church property was no longer permitted, he never stopped granting out church property himself as so-called *precaria verbo regis*, or 'church land granted out at the order of the king.'⁶⁶ It is suggested that an increased royal pressure on church land was caused because Louis, more than his ancestors, had to rely more heavily on the lands within the Carolingian realm to reward his warriors, as under his rule the Carolingian

⁶³ De Jong, "Carolingian monasticism", pp. 625-626; Wood, *Proprietary Church*, pp. 191-244; see for an excellent study on the rise of bishops in post-Roman society, R. van Dam, "Bishops and society", in A. Casiday and F.W. Norris (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity, vol. 2: Constantine to c. 600* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 343-366.

⁶⁴ For the development of the laws of church property, see Goffart, *Le Mans*, pp. 6-22; for the importance of immunities, see B. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space. Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca/London, 1999).

⁶⁵ *Capit.* I, nos. 10-12, pp. 24-30; *Conc.* II.1, nos. 34-38, pp. 245-306.

⁶⁶ *Capit.* I, no. 138, c. 1, p. 275; Goffart, *Le Mans*, p. 13; Wood, *Proprietary Church*, 790-791.

empire turned from expansion to defence. This would have had serious consequences for the flow of booty and spoils of war, with which warrior chiefs rewarded their followers in earlier times.⁶⁷ Whether this is true or not merits a serious study. Whatever the case, an interesting development can be seen, as criticism of churchmen on royal encroachment of church lands increased exponentially from the last years of Louis the Pious into the reign of Charles the Bald, coming to a climax in the early 840s. As a result, the ruler was always balancing a tight rope between the expectations and interests of both the secular and the ecclesiastical order. Moreover, political circumstances could influence the choice of a ruler either to grant out or protect church lands. When in 828 Pippin of Aquitaine issued a charter to the Abbey of Saint-Maixent in Poitiers, he specifically stated that he could not restore the abbey's properties, once alienated together with the abbey and granted to a lay abbot, because of "imminent necessity for our kingdom."⁶⁸ In other words, political circumstances prevented Pippin from restoring properties once granted to a layman, whose support Pippin needed in times of turmoil. This balancing of the ruler seems to be what put church property at the heart of the political order.

Therefore, as they could not fully rely on the laws of church property to protect their hold over the possessions of the Church, and because rulers could not always oblige to the requests of supplicants, bishops had to adopt other strategies to vindicate their claims against royal lordship, greedy laymen (and ecclesiastical magnates for that matter) and volatile heirs. One of these strategies was to forge property rights in favour of a diocese, as in the example of the Le Mans forgeries.⁶⁹ Another was to go back to the most fundamental and incontestable law of the Frankish people: the Bible. By retracing the practice of endowing the Church and the right of the Church over its properties as far back as the biblical times, one could hope to create a convincing history of tradition that would make any contemporary attempt to wrest property away from the Church futile. It is to the latter strategy that we shall now turn, as we will analyse the *De Rebus* sent to Pippin.

⁶⁷ T. Reuter, "Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35, 5th series (1985), pp. 75-94; *ibidem*, "The End of Carolingian Military Expansion", in *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 391-405.

⁶⁸ *Recueil*, no. 8, pp. 27-31.

⁶⁹ Goffart, *Le Mans*; for more ideologically charged texts arguing for integrity of church properties, see Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, ed. E. Dümmler, *Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, phil.-hist. Cl. 2* (Berlin, 1900), ii, c. 2, pp. 62-63; Agobard of Lyons, *De dispensatione rerum ecclesiasticarum*, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp. 5* (Berlin, 1899), no. 5, pp. 166-179.

Chapter 2

Analysing the *De Rebus*

In this chapter, I am mainly concerned with Jonas's mode of argument in the *De Rebus*, that is with how he went about stating his case, defending the Church's right to its properties. First I will introduce the *De Rebus* by discussing its manuscript tradition, the issue of authorship and audience. After that, I will continue with the main part of this chapter, the analysis of the text, by focussing on the two major themes as they are presented by Jonas. First, the role of the ruler, and, second, the role of the Church in relation to church property. After having set out Jonas's argument, I will briefly discuss his use of authorities, focussing specifically on what purpose the Bible and the Church Fathers fulfilled in the *De Rebus*.

For this analysis, I could only rely on very little support from the modern historiography, as only a few scholars have actually looked at the *De Rebus*. In fact, despite some honourable mentions by other authors, only Steffen Patzold in 2006 has analysed the treatise for his research on the Frankish bishops in some detail.⁷⁰ The *De Rebus* is thus a highly understudied text, that still merits a closer analysis and contextualization, both of which I hope to provide in this dissertation.

§2.1. The letter to Pippin. An introduction.

§2.1.1. The manuscript tradition.

We have two versions of the text, transmitted to us in a total of six manuscripts. The first version is found in three manuscripts dated to the ninth/tenth century (Cologne, Bern and London), while the second version has been found in three manuscripts of which two are equally dated to the ninth/tenth century (Beauvais and Berlin) while one is dated to the eleventh/twelfth (Metz). Both versions contain three *opuscula*, divided into 96 chapters.⁷¹ In contrast to the second version, however, the first version of the text also includes an index of the chapters and, in the preface of the first book, two names of bishops Aldric of Le Mans (832-857) and Erchinrad of Paris are mentioned. The second version, although it does not include the index and the two names, does include a passage from Homily no. 11 of Origen on Leviticus 19:2, which is omitted in the first version. Interestingly, while the Beauvais manuscript placed this passage in chapter 9 of the third book, the Berlin manuscript put it completely at the end of the codex. Even more interesting is that the Metz manuscript, which includes the second

⁷⁰ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 218-221.

⁷¹ An *opusculum* is generally translated as “a little work”, see e.g. the dictionary of classical Latin of Lewis and Short, s.v. *opusculum*, p. 1274; according to the dictionary of medieval Latin of Niermeyer, however, *opusculum* meant “any literary work, even a major one”, see Niermeyer, s.v. *opusculum*, p. 742.

version of the letter, omitted this passage entirely, suggesting that its scribe either considered the passage uninteresting or made use of both versions and decided to follow the first version in the case of this citation of Origen.

Considering the title of the work, we are left with not much of a clue. The first version of the letter does not include any title whatsoever, while with regard to the second version only the first book in the Beauvais and Metz manuscripts is headed with a title. These, however, are quite different from each other. We are left with either *De rebus ecclesiasticis non invadendis*, as in the ninth century Beauvais manuscripts, or with *Libellus de religione oblationum Dei*, as in the twelfth century Metz manuscript. One wonders why the titles differ so much in meaning? It is possible, however, to make some educated guesses. First of all, it may be suggested that the title in the Beauvais manuscript, although put above the first book, may in fact have referred to the entire work, whose main theme is after all the spoliation of church property. The first book in itself, however, is indeed, as suggested by the title in the Metz manuscript, mainly concerned with the practice of offering to God, that is *de religione oblationum Dei*. In other words, in interpreting the title, we may need to decide whether the title refers to the entire work or the first book alone. Second, the difference may have been caused by alternate interpretations of the text and ideas about how one was supposed to approach it: either as a glass half full or a glass half empty. That is to say, the title of the Metz manuscript is markedly less accusatory than the one in the Beauvais manuscript. Considering the overall theme of the treatise, however, I am more inclined to the title *De rebus ecclesiasticis non invadendis*. Would this have been the original title of the work? It would definitely have been more appropriate to its time, considering, as we shall see, the text's emphasis on moral issues as well as the practical purpose of the treatise to retrieve lost church properties.

It is finally worth mentioning that, compared to the six manuscripts that transmitted the *De Rebus*, the acts of the Synod of Aachen 836, during which synod the *De Rebus* was commissioned, is only handed down to us in one tenth-century manuscript from Helmstedt. This suggests that, as far as we can ascertain, the *De Rebus* circulated separately from the act of the Synod of Aachen. In the MGH edition, both texts are put together under the header *Concilium Aquisgranense*. Yet, even though the *De Rebus* might have been a result of discussions held during this synod, the difference in transmission and the fact that both texts do not appear together in the same manuscript might be a good reason to question how much the *De Rebus* actually had to do with the Synod of Aachen 836 and whether we should treat them both as one.

§2.1.2. *Authorship*

Who the father of the work was is also not directly clear from the text itself, since in the entire text no name is given that would identify the author. This problem is however easier to solve than its title. First of all, we are again relying on the Beauvais manuscript, which alone names Bishop Jonas of

Orléans as its author. Secondly, in the London manuscript, the first version of the letter can be found in between the second and third chapter of Jonas's *De institutione laicali*. Although the content of the two chapters have nothing in common with the *De Rebus*, it does suggest that the scribe putting the manuscript together considered Jonas to be the author of the text. Thirdly, with regard to the content, the treatise has many similarities with both Jonas's *De institutione laicali* and his *De institutione regia*, the latter having been dedicated a few years earlier to the same Pippin of Aquitaine.⁷² Lastly, it is fairly reasonable to assume that Jonas of Orléans had also edited the acts of the Synod of Aachen in 836. Throughout the preceding years, Jonas had developed himself as an expert on writing synodal acts. Besides the Synod of Aachen 836, the acts of the Synod of Paris 825, Paris 829, and the *Relatio episcoporum* of 833 have been ascribed to his pen.⁷³ Jonas probably also dictated to Heli, the future bishop of Chartres, the so-called *Libellus resignationis* of Ebo of Reims at the Synod of Thionville in 835.⁷⁴ With such a track-record, Jonas obviously enjoyed a good deal of respect among his peers. It is therefore not surprising if the bishops at Aachen would have asked Jonas to undertake the task of writing such a treatise for Pippin.

It is important to realize what the implications of authorship could be for our understanding of the text. When studying and analysing texts like the treatise sent to Pippin, or any text for that matter, the individual behind the text is often forgotten. We should however always keep in mind that the content of the text might have been influenced by the ideas of the author, his position in the realm and his personal life. With this in mind, we should take a short look at the life and work of Jonas of Orléans.

As is almost to be expected, we can not be sure about the date of birth of Jonas. Alain Dubreucq puts it shortly after 760 but at least before 780.⁷⁵ It may be suggested, considering his interest in the monastery of Saint-Mesmin de Micy at the time he was bishop, that Jonas had taken the cloth there, before he attracted the attention of Louis the Pious when the latter was still king of Aquitaine.⁷⁶ When Louis became emperor, he left some of his advisors in Aquitaine to aid his son Pippin. Jonas was among them and became one of the closest counsellors of Pippin and quite possibly also his tutor.⁷⁷ However, Jonas did not stay in Aquitaine for long. In 818 he became bishop of Orléans after he had to leave Aquitaine. According to himself, he had to hasten back to Louis's court

⁷² Alain Dubreucq, *Jonas d'Orléans. Le Métier de Roi. Introduction, texte critique, traduction notes et index*. Sources Chrétiennes 407 (Paris, 1995), p. 34; cf. *De Rebus*, i, c. 35, pp. 742-743 = *De institutione laicali* (DIL), Migne PL 106, ii, c. 20, coll. 208-211; *De Rebus*, ii, c. 7, pp. 749-750 = *De institutione regia* (DIR), c. 10, pp. 232-236; *De Rebus*, ii, c. 18, pp. 752-753 = DIR, c. 13, pp. 260-266 = DIL, i, c. 11, coll. 143-144; *De Rebus*, iii, c. 27, p. 767 = DIR, admonitio, ll. 256-259, p. 168.

⁷³ Dubreucq, pp. 18-23, 35-42.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 41; Flodoard of Reims, *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, ed. M. Stratmann, MGH SS 36 (Hannover, 1998), II, c. 20, pp. 186-187; cf. the *Libellus episcoporum de Ebonis resignatione* in *Conc.* II.2, no. 55B, pp. 701-702.

⁷⁵ For what follows, I relied heavily on Dubreucq, *Le Métier de Roi*, pp. 9-42.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, pp. 15-16.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, p. 12; Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit* (Bonn, 1968), p. 211; cf. DIR, admonitio, ll. 34-36, pp. 150-151.

where apparently a plot was brewing against him.⁷⁸ However, as the Astronomer states, when Pippin became king of Aquitaine, he chased all the advisors of Louis out of the kingdom. It is thus possible that Jonas was simply put at the other side of the border.⁷⁹ His nomination as bishop had been so rapid, however, that it is likely that Jonas had enjoyed the emperor's trust.

As a bishop, Jonas was energetic and he took his *ministerium* very seriously. As a child of his time, Jonas's perception of his office was impregnated by the current political and religious discourses. In his *De institutione regia*, Jonas expressed a self-consciousness of his office as having the duty to supervise, mediate for and control the entire Christian community.⁸⁰ According to Dubreucq, Jonas was a typical representative of the Carolingian episcopate, concerned with the return to an Old Testament morality in both the public and private spheres. In fact, as Dubreucq states, "cette exigence morale de justice et de correction des abus caractérise toute son action pastorale."⁸¹ He not only took care of the wellbeing of the people, he was also known for taking care of the organisation of his diocese. He implemented the Rule of St. Benedict in the monastery of St-Bertin and he transferred the relics of St. Maximin to the monastery of Micy.⁸²

Despite his great care for his diocese, however, Jonas could not protect it from the atrocities of rebellion. When Count Matfrid of Orléans lost his office as a result of the disastrous campaign in Spain in 828, Odo, a nephew of Bernard of Septimania, took over. He then reportedly committed many atrocities in the county and seized property that belonged to the bishopric of Orléans.⁸³ Moreover, according to Nithard, Pippin and his army had caused much damage when he travelled through Orléans in order to reinstate Matfrid to the office of count.⁸⁴ After the rebellion, Jonas had devoted himself to the restoration of his diocese. It should be noted that from 834 until 838, the Orléanais was part of Pippin's kingdom. Therefore, Jonas had to turn to Pippin to obtain any restitution of lost properties. This is important to keep in mind when we analyse the *De Rebus* sent to Pippin in 836. Could this treatise be influenced by Jonas's personal experiences as the head of his diocese and his concerns for its restoration? Considering that Orléans is an extreme case, it could be argued that the *De Rebus* was Jonas's attempt to vent his own grievances, making this treatise highly personal. However, as I will show below, the *De Rebus* was much more than that. Although the atrocities in the diocese of Orléans may have been an incentive for Jonas, his arguments concern the

⁷⁸ *DIR*, admonitio, ll. 20-25, pp. 150-151.

⁷⁹ Astronomer, c. 61, pp. 536-538; Dubreucq, *Le Métier de Roi*, p. 12.

⁸⁰ *DIR*, c. 2, pp. 180-183; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 218.

⁸¹ Dubreucq, *Le Métier de Roi*, p. 15; cf. Joachim Scharf, "Studien zu Smaragdus und Jonas", *Deutsches Archiv* 17 (1961), p. 375, who has a somewhat old-fashioned view of Jonas as one of the representatives of a group of conservative bishops, in whom the tradition of the old Frankish *Landeskirche* lived on, as opposed to the "radical" and "revolutionist" Wala of Corbie, in 828 raising the problem of lay possession of church property. According to Scharf, this was too revolutionary for the conservative group and therefore he did not incorporate it in the acts of Paris 829.

⁸² Dubreucq, *Le Métier de Roi*, pp. 16-17.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, pp. 23-24; cf. Adrevald of Fleury, *Miraculi s. Benedicti*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hannover, 1887), c. 20, p. 487, who called Odo a "mad tyrant."

⁸⁴ Nithard, *Historiarum libri IIII*, ed. E Müller, MGH SRG 44 (Hannover, 1907), i, c. 5, pp. 7-8.

entire Carolingian realm. In any case, in 834 or 835 Pippin confirmed a charter issued by his father, conceding to the monks of Saint-Mesmin in Orléans the right to use warehouses along the river Tenu and places the monks under royal protection, whenever they travel to and from the monastery.⁸⁵ Moreover, Jonas managed to receive property back from Pippin, as we can learn from a charter issued by Charles the Bald in 841 to bishop Hermand of Nevers.⁸⁶ It is very tempting to think of this restitution as a result of the arguments made in the *De Rebus*, but unfortunately this is impossible to ascertain. Jonas died at an old age, somewhere around 843, and was succeeded by Agius (843-867).⁸⁷

§2.1.3. Audience

With regard to the audience, it should be noted that, although the *De Rebus* was primarily intended for Pippin, as it was addressed to him, he is only addressed directly at the very beginning and the very end of the treatise. The rest of the text seems to have an universal application, addressed to all who squandered church property. Jonas also does not distinguish between secular or ecclesiastical perpetrators. On the few occasion he did address his audience directly, it was the *lector* or *auditor*. This merits the question who may have read this treatise, besides the king, and whether Jonas had ulterior motives for writing this document. The fact that the *De Rebus* is handed down to us in at least five (near) contemporary manuscripts may indeed suggest that the treatise was sent around the realm for more to read. Furthermore, we have seen above that Jonas had problems of his own with regard to the loss of property and destruction of church possessions in his own diocese, as a direct result of the rebellions of the early 830s. Moreover, in his *De institutione laicali* he had already admonished his patron Count Matfrid of Orléans about the importance of church property and, in particular, the payment of tithes, a problem also addressed in the *De Rebus*.⁸⁸ Therefore, although it is difficult to ascertain, the relatively general audience to which the *De Rebus* is addressed suggests that Pippin may have not been the only perpetrator on Jonas's mind. Without pointing a finger to one person in particular, Jonas turned in his *De Rebus* to "the transgressors of the divine law and those dishonouring and plundering the Holy Church of God [on account of their greed]"⁸⁹ and those "who do not care for the ecclesiastical dignity, indeed who wish to satisfy their greed and promise in vain to keep the offers and properties consecrated to God safe from being snatched away."⁹⁰ Therefore, the text and its arguments may just as well be aimed at all landowners, be they secular or ecclesiastical.

⁸⁵ *Recueil*, no. 21, p. 77-80.

⁸⁶ *Recueil des Actes de Charles II le Chauve, Roi de France*, ed. M.G. Tessier, 3 vols. (Paris, 1943-1955), vol. i, no. 2, pp. 3-8.

⁸⁷ Dubrucq, *Le Métier de Roi*, pp. 25-26.

⁸⁸ *DIL*, ii, c. 19, coll. 204-208; cf. e.g. *De Rebus*, i, cc. 17-18, p. 734; i, cc. 22-23, pp. 735-736; i, c. 32, pp. 740-741.

⁸⁹ *De Rebus*, i, c. 1, p. 730.

⁹⁰ *De Rebus*, i, c. 2, p. 731.

§2.2 *Analysing the De Rebus ecclesiasticis non invadendis*

In order to understand Jonas's mode of argument, we first need to discuss the fundamental principle of his ideology of church property upon which his views on the role of the ruler and the Church were built. Jonas had inferred from the Old Testament that everything on this earth belonged to God. That is to say, he had given His people everything: power, riches, glory, victory. So too kingdoms and everything pertaining to them. From the air that one breathed to the land that one lived from, God was the ultimate proprietor, the true possessor of all things, when he gave His people the world as a gift. Because everything was God's, man could never claim ownership on the things he possessed. In fact, claiming ownership would arguably be an act of theft, stealing from God.⁹¹ Whatever one held, he held as a benefice from the Lord and He had asked for only one thing in return: to honour and obey Him. Jonas was very clear how one should do this. The proper way of obeying God's command was to return a share of one's possessions to Him. Throughout the *De Rebus*, but most explicitly in the first book, Jonas never fails to stress that the need to endow the Church was to fulfil God's command to offer Him what was already His.⁹² As such, it could be argued that this reciprocal relationship between God and mankind was the archetype of the gift-giving cycle, so common in medieval society. The keyword in this relationship with God was "free will", for, Jonas argued, He did not want anything to be offered to Him unless it was offered voluntarily.⁹³ Moreover, the offer could only be made from possessions acquired in a just fashion, that is from things received from the hand of God.⁹⁴ It stands to reason that alienated church property did not meet these requirements, as Jonas very clearly considered alienating possessions from the Church an act of theft.

§2.2.1. *The ruler and the integrity of church property*

Jonas's view on the role of the ruler vis-à-vis church property consist of two important elements: on the one hand, he was supposed to protect the integrity of church property while, on the other, he was urged to obey God's command and give lavishly to the Church. Central to these duties was the notion that the ruler's deeds would have immediate consequences for the entire people. That is to say that, if he would obey God's commands and honour His cult by exalting it with lavish gifts and protect the integrity of the Church's possessions, he and his people would prosper and receive many-fold blessings from the Lord. If, however, he would transgress His commands by violating the Church and

⁹¹ This is also the view of Gregory the Great, *Homiliarium in evangelia*, Migne PL 76, ii, no. 40, c. 3, coll. 1304-1305; Michael Wilks, "Thesaurus ecclesiae (Presidential address)", in W.J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds.), *The Church and Wealth*. Studies in Church History 24 (Oxford, 1987), p. xvii.

⁹² See most explicitly *De Rebus*, i, cc. 5-7, pp. 731-732, in particular his use of 1 Chron. 29:11-14 in c. 7, p. 732. Also *De Rebus*, i, cc. 17-18, p. 734 and c. 37, p. 745.

⁹³ *De Rebus*, i, c. 9, p. 732.

⁹⁴ *De Rebus*, i, c. 10, p. 732.

seize its properties for his own secular purposes, he would cause the entire Frankish people to be subjected by sin and provoke God's wrath, putting the salvation of all in jeopardy.

With regard to the just ruler who, on account of his good deeds, would merit blessings for himself and his people, Jonas could choose from a range of leaders of the People of Israel. All of them, be they Abraham, Moses or Jacob, had in common that, because they obeyed God's command by offering parts of their possessions to the Lord and worshipping His cult, they received blessings in the shape of the perpetuation of their dynasty, the promise of future kingdoms for their offspring, victory over their enemies and the prospect of living in peace.⁹⁵ Therefore, contemplating Abraham's act of offering tithes to Melchizedek, the high priest of Shilo, who was said to stand in direct line with Christ, because Abraham realised that he owed his land to God, Jonas pointed out that one ought to imitate Abraham by giving tithes to the priests of Christ.⁹⁶ In other words, it was the duty of the ruler to keep the flow of gifts going, honouring the *cultus divinus* by exalting the Church through offerings. In so doing, the ruler would not only stand in direct line with the founding fathers of the People of Israel, but he would also stand in the tradition of emperors, kings and other rulers of yore, who aided the Apostles and their successors in strengthening Christianity by elevating and enriching the Church through endowment, respecting its servants and their duties, and protecting them and their possessions from harm.⁹⁷ Moreover, it were the offerings made out of free will that counted the most, as the example of none other than King David, much revered in the Carolingian period, shows. After he told his son Solomon that he was to build a House of the Lord, the future Temple of Solomon, David had prepared the expenses for the construction of the Temple by putting all building material necessary at his son's disposal. Besides that, he had out of his free will given gold and silver from his private possessions. Subsequently, all the People of Israel, including the heads of the families, the princes of the tribes, captains and overseers, followed David's example and *willingly* offered their possessions to the Lord.⁹⁸ The point Jonas most likely wanted to make was that a good ruler should follow the example of David and give lavishly and, above all, *freely* to the Church. One should never be coerced in giving to the Lord, but should take the matter in his own hand from the start.

At the other side of the spectrum, one would obviously find the unjust ruler, who disobeyed God's command and, as a result, incurred divine punishment for himself and his people. In Jonas's mind, such a transgressor of God's command would be the antithesis of what Abraham, Moses or Jacob stood for. Truly, "the destroyer of the sacred altars and the robber of the sacred properties."⁹⁹ One of the most explicit examples of an unjust ruler in the *De Rebus* was that of King Achan, who had plundered Jericho and desecrated the Temple by taking away property consecrated to God and, as

⁹⁵ For Abraham, see *De Rebus*, i, c. 16, p. 734; for Jacob, see *De Rebus*, i, cc. 22-24, pp. 735-737; for Moses, see *De Rebus*, i, c. 25, pp. 737-738.

⁹⁶ *De Rebus*, i, cc. 17-18, p. 734.

⁹⁷ *De Rebus*, iii, cc. 19, 20 and 23, pp. 764-766.

⁹⁸ *De Rebus*, i, cc. 5-7, pp. 731-732

⁹⁹ *De Rebus*, i, c. 17, p. 734; cf. *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, ii, c. 9, pp. 660-661 and *DIR*, c. 10, pp. 232-236.

a result, had unleashed the wrath of God upon the People of Israel. On account of Achan's deeds, the Israelian army that wished to attack him for his crimes failed to do so because, as "Israel hath sinned and transgressed my covenant,"¹⁰⁰ God had left the side of His People. In other words, the acts of a ruler had consequences for the entire people. Admittedly, Jonas's use of the Bible is here somewhat confusing, since Achan was never the ruler of the People of Israel, but the point he wanted to make is that, "it [i.e. transgressing God's commands] ought to be avoided by you, lest you are guilty of transgression by seizing that what has been consecrated to the Lord, and others shall be under sin and troubled on account of you."¹⁰¹ Indeed, "it ought to be dreaded by all illustrious men (*omnes insigniti*) in the faith of Christ, lest, because of the misdeeds of others, indeed a sacrilegious deed, they [i.e. the Frankish people] shall not have God with them and shall fail to stand firm against their enemies."¹⁰²

The ruler was thus urged not to touch properties consecrated to God, for the sake of the salvation of himself and that of the entire Frankish people. In fact, it was the ruler's responsibility to preserve the integrity of the sacred properties, belonging to the houses of God, offered by the faithful for the sake of their salvation. Moreover, as Jonas never fails to stress that the ruler's kingdom was a gift from God and that everything pertaining to it he had received from His hands and His hands only, he should not presume that he could just do with it as he pleases. Instead, he should obey God's command and honour His cult by offering lavishly to the Church, as one of the most illustrious Old Testament kings, David, had done. In so doing, it seems that Jonas wanted to make Pippin aware that he should not be mistaken about how he had acquired his kingdom in the first place and what consequences this would have for his attitude towards the Church and its possessions. Pippin was most likely aware of this fact, considering that a few years earlier Jonas had already admonished him that "[his] kingdom was not given by men but by God, in whose hands all kingdoms remain."¹⁰³ Now, in the *De Rebus*, Jonas elaborated on this topic by focussing specifically on what consequences this would have for Pippin's responsibilities towards the Church. Instead of despoiling the Church, a ruler was strongly advised to meet God's condition for giving him his kingdom and endow the Church with properties while, at the same time, protect its possessions from greedy hands, whether these hands were the king's own or his magnates. In other words, alienating church property was antithetical to the responsibilities and duties of a ruler and it would without doubt provoke God to unleash His wrath upon the Frankish people.

¹⁰⁰ Josue 7:10 in *De Rebus*, ii, c. 1, p. 747.

¹⁰¹ *De Rebus*, ii, c. 1, p. 746.

¹⁰² *De Rebus*, ii, c. 1, p. 747.

¹⁰³ *DIR*, c. 7, pp. 216-218.

§2.2.2. *The Church and the importance of church property*

Central to Jonas's view on the role of the Church with regard to church property in the *De Rebus* was that the Church and its servants were responsible for the stability of the *sancta ecclesia* through the proper conduct of their *ministeria*, and that the integrity of church property and the proper endowment of the Church stood at the heart of this responsibility. His view can be divided into three elements: the responsibility of the servants of the Church, its consequences for the Church as an institution, and the responsibilities of the bishops.

In the *De Rebus*, the duties of the servants of the Church, the priests serving the Lord, by exercising the *cultus divinus*, were central to the stability of the *sancta ecclesia*. By praying for the wellbeing of the ruler, his family, the kingdom and the entire Frankish people, as well as taking care of the poor, the priests were the key to salvation and placating God. According to Jonas, the priests could only perform these duties properly, if they had the material resources to sustain themselves. Put differently, only when they were materially unrestrained could they properly exercise their God-given *ministerium* and pray on behalf of the Frankish people. Therefore, following very closely the examples given in the Old Testament, Jonas considered it of paramount importance that everything consecrated to God should pertain to the *ius* of the priests. After all, God had instructed that the offers made to Him could be used for the material wellbeing of His priests, "so that they, being sustained by the offers of the faithful, may pray for them to the Lord."¹⁰⁴ The notion that all church properties should revert to the *ius* of the priests serving the houses of the Lord did not imply ownership, however. After all, ideally, according to the teachings of Christ, all possessions ought to be held in common and shared by all. The priests thus shared in the wealth of the Church by making use of the gifts offered to it by the faithful. Therefore, the quality of their office, their *ministerium*, was at least for a large part dependent on whether they would be materially provided for. In fact, Jonas stresses, offers should be made to the Church, "so that the ministers of His sanctuary are able to exercise their sacred service more insistently, more honourably and more inexcusably, and to fulfil their service less constrained [by material needs]."¹⁰⁵ It stands to reason that withholding endowments or, worse, alienating properties of the Church would thus impede the priests' ability to provide for the salvation of the Frankish people, putting their spiritual wellbeing in jeopardy, as well as provoking God's anger by neglecting their duties. In other words, the material wellbeing of the priests provided for the spiritual wellbeing of the people, while, at the same time, the concern for their own spiritual wellbeing would ideally lead the people to provide for the material wellbeing of the priests. It was this virtuous circle, with the integrity of church property at its heart, that would secure the stability of the *sancta ecclesia*. After all, according to Jonas, it was only through the proper conduct of the *cultus divinus* that an *ecclesia*, fallen to ruin through the insolence of others, could be raised up again through divine

¹⁰⁴ *De Rebus*, i, c. 34, p. 742; see also *De Rebus*, i, c. 27, p. 739; i, c. 37, p. 744 and ii, c. 30, p. 758.

¹⁰⁵ *De Rebus*, i, c. 37, p. 744.

mercy and the intercession of God's servants.¹⁰⁶ And so, the stability of the *sancta ecclesia* depended on the quality of the *cultus divinus* which, in turn, depended on the proper endowment of the Church and these endowments to belong completely to the domain of the priests.

This consequently made the Church the proper channel to obey God's command and offer to Him as well as to safeguard the stability of the *sancta ecclesia*. Therefore, in imitation of the Tabernacle of Moses, the Temple of Solomon and the Church of Christ, the Carolingian Church was to be the treasury of the vows of the faithful, offered to God for the sake of their own salvation. Giving many examples from the Old Testament, Jonas points out that God had instructed that, in order to offer properly to Him, the offers ought to be made to one central point chosen by God, that is the Tabernacle of Moses and, later on, the Temple of Solomon.¹⁰⁷ With regard to the Church of Christ in the New Testament, however, Jonas could not fully rely on the biblical texts, for nowhere is it literally mentioned that Christ's Church was meant to be the depository of the vows of the faithful. Therefore, Jonas took refuge in the writings of the Church Fathers, who commented on the Gospels, equally concerned with the same issue of the Church being the proper channel to offer to God.

First of all, he used Bede to show that the Temple of Solomon was the prefiguration of the Church of Christ. According to the quotation from Bede from a yet unidentified text, Solomon, the peace-making king, prefigured Christ, the greatest peace-making king of all. Consequently, if Solomon prefigured Christ, then the Temple would prefigure the early Church.¹⁰⁸ That being determined, Jonas turned to Augustine to show why the Church of Christ was deemed to be the depository of the gifts of His followers. He cites verbatim passages from Augustine's commentary on the Gospel of John, where Augustine explores the story of Judas stealing from the purse of Christ.¹⁰⁹ This purse, according to Augustine, was sacred, which made Judas not just a thief but a sacrilegious thief. However, Christ had taught His followers to sell everything they had and give away the profits. Why then would he himself have a purse? According to Augustine there could only be one answer to this problem, which Jonas inserted in his *De Rebus*. The reason for Christ to have a purse was "to intimate that His Church was destined to be the repository for money," the *thesaurus ecclesiae*.¹¹⁰

Having determined that the Temple and the Early Church had been designated as the treasury of the offers of the faithful, Jonas turned to the Carolingian Church. He commented on the Old Testament treasury, saying "we should oppose them, who, by seizing the gold, the silver, and the other precious things consecrated to God from the treasury of the Holy Church of God (*sancta Dei*

¹⁰⁶ *De Rebus*, ii, c. 10, p. 750.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. *De Rebus*, i, c. 27, p. 738; i, c. 36, p. 743; ii, c. 1, p. 746; ii, c. 15, p. 752.

¹⁰⁸ *De Rebus*, ii, c. 31, p. 758; iii, c. 1, p. 759; on the possible source for his comment, see below p. 33.

¹⁰⁹ Augustine, *In evangelium Iohannis Tractatus*, Migne PL 35, no. 50, c. 10, coll. 1761-1762 in *De Rebus*, iii, c. 5, p. 760; see also *De Rebus*, iii, c. 6, p. 760 on Judas.

¹¹⁰ Augustine, *In evangelium Iohannis*, no. 50, c. 11, col. 1762 in *De Rebus*, iii, c. 7, p. 760; see for a more detailed study of Augustine's theory of property, G.J.M. Pearce, "Augustine's Theory of Property", *Studia Patristica* 6 (1962), pp. 496-500 and Wilks, "Thesaurus ecclesiae".

ecclesia), claim in vain that [those things] belong [to them],”¹¹¹ putting the Carolingian Church on a par with the treasury of the Lord. Similarly, he compared the Carolingian Church with the Church of Christ, as he commented on the aforementioned passages of Augustine, arguing that “after this, we shall not be unaware that Christ and the Church are one and that therefore what is of the Church is of Christ; and what is offered to the Church, is offered to Christ; and what is stolen from His Church, is without doubt stolen from Christ.”¹¹² In so doing, by using the Old Testament and the Church Fathers, Jonas determined that the Carolingian Church too was supposed to be the treasury of the vows of the faithful, that it was the proper channel to offer to God, and that those alienating church property were stealing from the treasury of God, just as Judas had done when he took the coins from the purse of Christ.

Now that Jonas determined the role of the priests and the Church as an institution, this left him with the last and probably most important group, the bishops. The bishops’ duties in the *De Rebus* were two-fold. First of all, they were responsible for the administration of the church properties. In imitation of their illustrious predecessors, the Apostles, the bishops supervised the proper distribution of the vows of the faithful, laid up in the treasury of the Lord, among the faithful people in their diocese. By copying verbatim passages from the Acts of the Apostles, Jonas shows that Christ had appointed His Apostles to distribute the possessions among the faithful and that He had put them in charge of the expenditure of Christ’s money. It was because of this access to the resources of the Church that the Apostles could spread the word throughout the provinces assigned to them, built new churches and attract a wider following.¹¹³ After the time of the Apostles, the responsibility was entrusted to their successors, as they passed on the baton to the bishops in the late Roman Empire to supervise the administration and distribution of the properties of the Church. Supported by the orthodox rulers and under the guidance and supervision of the bishops, the Church spread its wings even further over the entire world and was elevated and enriched by many-fold gifts from the faithful, both rulers and subjects alike, all the way up to the present time: Jonas’s time.¹¹⁴ In other words, ever since the apostolic era, the bishops (or their predecessors) have always had full control over the properties given to the Church by the faithful. They were the overseers, responsible for the proper distribution. The ruler was not. Therefore, church property should rightly be under the control of the bishops. It was part of their distinct office and subjected to their authority. Just as in Paris 829 the bishops had circumscribed the *libertas episcopalis*, it belonged to the restricted area of episcopal control.¹¹⁵

Moreover, as we have seen, Jonas argued that the priests of the Church shared in the vows of the faithful to perform their *ministerium*, the proper exercise of which was already firmly part of the

¹¹¹ *De Rebus*, i, c. 36, p. 743.

¹¹² *De Rebus*, iii, c. 7, p. 760.

¹¹³ *De Rebus*, iii, cc. 19-21, pp. 764-765.

¹¹⁴ *De Rebus*, iii, c. 23, p. 766.

¹¹⁵ Cf. *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, i, c. 26, p. 628; iii, c. 1, p. 668; iii, c. 27, p. 680.

political discourse of the 820s, most particularly of Paris 829 as we have seen. As the bishops were responsible for the distribution of the properties of the Church, they were also responsible for the material wellbeing of their priests, so that they could exercise their office without having to worry about material problems. In other words, the supervision of the bishops was crucial for the quality of the *cultus divinus* and, consequently, for the stability of the *sancta ecclesia*. The bishops should secure the pool of material wealth for their clergy who, in turn, with this pool secured the provisions of the poor, the maintenance of the church buildings and, most importantly, their own, through which they could exercise the *cultus divinus* and provide for the stability of the realm. If the ruler would alienate the properties of the Church, he would not only impede the duties of the priests, as I have argued above, but also that of the bishops, who would then be less able to support their own clergy, risking accusation of negligence. Therefore, what Jonas tried to say is that, as both the Old and New Testament attest, church property was, is and always should be controlled by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, for the sake of the stability of the realm and the salvation of the people.

The second responsibility of the bishops as presented in the *De Rebus* was that of admonishing the ruler and his people, in the case of the *De Rebus* about the moral and spiritual consequences of alienating church property. Central to Jonas's views on this was his idea that alienating church property was the gravest sin of all. Jonas distinguished between two types of sin. Sins made "unconsciously" and by mistake, and sins made "consciously" through greed and presumption. The former could be atoned for by offering to God and entreating priests to pray for the sinner. The latter, however, was so severe that one was unable to repent for such heinous act.¹¹⁶ In the *De Rebus*, the act of alienating church property fell squarely into the last category, as by taking away property consecrated to God, one would dishonour, despise and violate the *cultus divinus*, through which God was glorified.¹¹⁷ Thus, whosoever would alienate church property would commit a sin against God and for that not even prayers could save him, for "if one man sins against another, God may be appeased on his behalf, but if a man shall sin against the Lord, who shall pray for him?"¹¹⁸

It was the responsibility of the bishops to prevent the ruler and his people from committing such a grave sin through the use of admonition. The most telling example of this responsibility in the *De Rebus* is Jonas's incorporation of the story of the priest Eli, who failed to rebuke his sons for their sinful behaviour as they took away the best cuts of meat from the altar, which were supposed to be offered to God.¹¹⁹ On account of this story, Jonas concluded that it ought to be desired by the fathers to rebuke their sons for such illicit and indignant acts, while the sons, here referred to as the sons of the *sancta ecclesia*, should avoid such deeds altogether, "lest by any chance, may God forbid, through the imitation of them [i.e. Eli and his sons] and the trying of their souls, it shall come to the temporal

¹¹⁶ *De Rebus*, i, c. 28, p. 739; see also ii, c. 7, p. 749.

¹¹⁷ *De Rebus*, ii, c. 6, p. 749.

¹¹⁸ 1 Sam. 2:25 in *De Rebus*, ii, c. 6, p. 749.

¹¹⁹ 1 Sam. 1-3 in *De Rebus*, ii, c. 7, p. 750.

and eternal damnation of the entire people.”¹²⁰ Considering that this treatise was meant for the eyes of a ruler, at first sight one could argue that this admonition of the *patres* and *filii* simply referred to Louis the Pious and his sons and/or Pippin and his offspring. However, I believe that this would misinterpret the typological element in this story. Eli, as a priest, would not be a suitable *typus* for a ruler, nor would the sons of a priest be suitable analogies for royal sons. I believe that this passage refers to the responsibility of the bishops, the “fathers of the Church”, to prevent the rulers, the “sons of the Church”, from committing such sins. After all, as the bishops were held responsible for the salvation of the ruler, who was indeed considered as the *filius ecclesiae*,¹²¹ it was their duty to rebuke the ruler for alienating church property. If the bishops would neglect this duty, like a second Eli, they would not only put the salvation of themselves on the line, but also that of the ruler and the entire Frankish people. Thus, in line with the Synod of Paris 829, the bishops in the *De Rebus* are presented as the vicars of the Apostles and the guardians of the faithful and the moral behaviour of the entire Carolingian realm.¹²² In the *De Rebus*, however, this representation revolved around the correct appropriation of church property.

And so, according to Jonas, the spiritual wellbeing of the ruler and his people as well as the stability of the entire *sancta ecclesia* rested on the shoulders of the bishops and their clergy, and their having the disposal of the properties given to the Church by the faithful. The priests needed the material wherewithal to provide for their own upkeep as well as their duties inherent to their *ministerium*. The bishops had to provide for this wherewithal, taking care of their personnel, while, at the same, remind and rebuke the ruler about the dangers of touching church property for the spiritual wellbeing of himself and the people and the fate of the entire Carolingian realm. The ruler, on the other hand, was advised to stay clear of the possessions of the Church and not to do anything else but to augment the possessions as well as to protect them from greedy landowners (which included the ruler himself) and volatile heirs.

Ultimately, the stability of the *sancta ecclesia* depended (for a large part) on the integrity of church property and the flow of property going through the “correct” channels. The integrity of church property was presented by Jonas as standing in the absolute centre of a mutual responsibility of both orders for the wellbeing of the realm. We have seen in Chapter 1 how the *sancta Dei ecclesia* was made up of two *ecclesiae*: a wider *ecclesia*, that is the multitude of the faithful including both the secular and the ecclesiastical order, and a restricted *ecclesia*, which identified the institutional Church, that is the ecclesiastical order in itself. In the *De Rebus*, the restricted *ecclesia* had the responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing and the stability of the wider *ecclesia*. However, the ministers serving the restricted *ecclesia* could only do that if they had the means to do so. Therefore, the wider *ecclesia* had

¹²⁰ *De Rebus*, ii, c. 7, p. 750; cf. *DIR*, c. 10, p. 234 for the incorporation of the same story.

¹²¹ Anton, “Zum politischen Konzept”, p. 72.

¹²² Cf. *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, praefatio, pp. 607-608; i, c. 1, pp. 609-610.

the responsibility to grant their possessions to the restricted *ecclesia*, in order for the restricted *ecclesia* to conduct their *cultus divinus* unconstrained by material need and to take care of their responsibility of providing for the wellbeing and stability of the wider *ecclesia*. As such, Jonas perceived church property as standing in the absolute centre of the stability of the Carolingian realm, pivotal in this virtuous circle in which both *ecclesiae* needed each other and worked for each other. This is an intense clarification of focus, in which Jonas deepens the spearheads of the political discourse of the 820s, with its clear determination of “action fields”, in which each office had its own set of duties and responsibilities. In the *De Rebus*, Jonas focuses on the problem of contested church property to raise the same issues as were already discussed before the rebellions, notably in the *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines* of 825 and more forcefully during the Synod of Paris in 829. Jonas again brings up the proper exercise of a God-given *ministerium*, the relationship between God and mankind, the result of sinful behaviour, the way to placate an angry God, the relationship between the secular and the ecclesiastical order, and the division of labour to make sure the *sancta ecclesia* keeps running as smooth as possible. In other words, the political turmoil of the early 830s does not seem to have had much of an impact on the process of ordering society and securing the spiritual and earthly wellbeing of the Carolingian realm and the Frankish people. In fact, as I will explain in more detail below, it seems Jonas continued in 836 where the bishops of Paris 829 left off.

§2.2.3. *The De Rebus and the use of authorities*

The *De Rebus* was written in an age in which political and religious issues were phrased in terms of sin and in which the central debate revolved around those who had sinned, why they had sinned and how the offended God could be placated. The most important tool to convey answers to this debate was the Bible, especially when less pleasant answers needed sugar-coating.¹²³ One should never underestimate the power of the Bible in the Carolingian period. It was a mode of argument that would strike a sensitive cord in the hearts of the Frankish people because of the simple fact that what was written in the Bible was considered irrefutable. Moreover, it would give one's text more weight and made it highly authoritative, difficult to ignore and easily recognizable. How did Jonas use the Bible and other Christian texts in his *De Rebus*? What purpose did the many citations have for his mode of argument? Was he new and game-changing in his text or did he merely copy other's ideas? These are questions I will consider in the last part of this chapter.

Just as he had done in his *De institutione regia*, so too in his *De Rebus* did Jonas gather together a collection of biblical and patristic texts to convey his ideas. In fact, in its most direct way, the *De Rebus* was meant as a supplement to a previous admonition, which was sent to Pippin by the

¹²³ De Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 113-117.

bishops Aldric of Le Mans and Erchinrad of Paris.¹²⁴ As Jonas explains in the preface of his work, the *De Rebus* contains examples from the Bible and the Church Fathers which the two bishops were not able to include in their document for the sake of brevity.¹²⁵ This suggests that, for the earlier admonitions to have full effect, biblical texts were crucial. They could be a mode of argument in themselves. Without them, any admonition would be far less influential, if not impotent. Jonas realized the power of the Bible very well. He did not fail to stress that, what had happened in the Bible, happened for a reason: as an example for others and for the use of correcting one's behaviour.¹²⁶ That is how Jonas legitimated his treatise and the admonitions contained therein. By assuming a biblical voice, he presented himself as authoritative and all about moral correction and concerned for the wellbeing of the reader as well as the realm. As such, he would be difficult to ignore, especially for a ruler like Pippin, who was the son of an emperor that had encouraged such an environment, and who was brought up within a moral milieu that was the Carolingian order. Indeed, as we will see below, it is most likely that Pippin was susceptible to such admonitions. Moreover, by using the Bible and the Church Fathers and by appealing to notions of sin and atonement, Jonas set his *De Rebus* firmly within the machinery of the Penitential State.

The *De Rebus* mainly exists from a long string of quotations from the Bible (in the first two books) and the Church Fathers (in the third book) with comments of Jonas. Reading the *De Rebus* carefully, however, it becomes obvious how Jonas used his authorities. There are two ways one could use examples when writing a treatise like this. On the one hand, one could use passages and examples to strengthen one's argument, to put flesh on the proverbial bones. That way, the authorities function as corroborating one's conclusions. On the other hand, however, one could use examples as to draw his conclusions from. In so doing, the authorities rather function as the source of one's argument, instead of as corroborating evidence. Jonas's use falls squarely into the last category. His arguments are directly based on what is written in the Bible. He usually starts off with an example and then draws his conclusions from it, mostly using causal conjectures like "therefore...", "in so doing..." and "thus...", or conjectural phrases like "it is plain to see that...", "with these words it is made clear that...", "let this [i.e. the citation] be assessed carefully..." and "as the following passage shows..." In other words, Jonas argues from the inside out, that is, the Bible *is* his argument. It should be noted that this was a very common way of stating one's case in the Carolingian period. As Mayke de Jong has put it, "the perils of 'prior people' [i.e. the People of Israel] signified and illuminated the hazards of the present."¹²⁷ Therefore, the examples from the Bible had a more deeper function: the past contained lessons for the present. By creating precedents in biblical history, Jonas made the reader aware of the

¹²⁴ On this, see Chapter 3 below.

¹²⁵ *De Rebus*, praefatio, p. 730.

¹²⁶ *De Rebus*, ii, c. 31, p. 759.

¹²⁷ De Jong, "The empire as *ecclesia*", p. 226.

consequences of his behaviour if he wished to continue along these sinful lines, as well as of the responsibilities of the priests, the bishops and the ruler.

With regard to the Church Fathers, I have already noted above that Jonas turned to the patristic writings when the Bible did not provide him with the answers he needed, especially with regard to the translation of the early Church to contemporary times. The authors favoured by Jonas in the *De Rebus* are Augustine, Jerome and Bede. Within the context of the issues addressed in this dissertation, however, Augustine and Bede are the most interesting. It is not always possible, however, to ascertain the source of the quotations used in the text. Despite one untraceable reference to Augustine,¹²⁸ his other quotations are passages copied verbatim from Augustine's *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus*. With regard to Bede's explanation of the Temple of Solomon as the prefiguration of the Church of Christ, however, the source of Jonas's choice of quotation is obscure. According to Werminghoff, the MGH editor of the *De Rebus*, the passage can not be found literally in any of Bede's writings. He suggests a comparison with Bede's *Allegorical exposition of the Book of Songs*, which contains a similar passage.¹²⁹ However, to ascertain this, one would need to know what books Jonas had at his disposal in his library. For all we know, he may have had Bede's *De Templo Salomonis* on his desk, rather than his *In cantico canticorum*. All things considered, however, the fact that the passage is not copied verbatim from a source known to us may suggest that Jonas found the quotation from an indirect source, who perhaps had misquoted Bede himself.

Jonas's strategy of using the Church Fathers is basically the same as with regard to his use of the Bible. He draws his conclusions directly from what Augustine and Bede says. He took what they said for granted and inserted it directly into his text, which immediately raises the question whether we can consider Jonas's ideas as original or rather mere copies of older texts. Considering he never just incorporates the Church Fathers into his argument but took the patristic writings as the primary source according to which he stated his case, using similar conjectural phrases as we have seen above, forces me to suggest the latter. His idea of the Temple of Solomon as the prefiguration of the Church of Christ is Bede's idea. Also, his idea of the Church of Christ as the *thesaurus ecclesiae* is Augustine's idea. He never questioned them and he never presents alternatives. He stood on the shoulder of giants, who had already done the work for him.

This is not so surprising, considering that Jonas could not fully rely on texts written in his own time, as not many Carolingian authors by 836 had addressed the same issues of the sacredness of church property. There are two notable exceptions, however. First, in 822, Archbishop Agobard of Lyons wrote a treatise called *On the dispensation of ecclesiastical properties*, criticising the practice of granting church property to laymen and allowing laymen to rule monasteries and churches on their own lands, because of which local priests were economically strained or kept from the authority of the

¹²⁸ *De Rebus*, i, c. 2, p. 730.

¹²⁹ See *De Rebus*, iii, c. 1, p. 759, n.1; Cf. Bede, *In cantica canticorum allegorica expositio*, Migne PL 91, ii, c. 1, 1089A-B.

Church. He too made much use of biblical examples to state his case. However, this treatise fell on deaf ears, only resulting in him becoming *persona non grata* at the Assembly of Compiègne in 823.¹³⁰ Secondly, in 828, according to Paschasius Radbertus, abbot of Corbie and writing in the 850s, his predecessor Wala of Corbie told Emperor Louis the Pious and his magnates about the dangers of using church property for secular use, condemning the practice of appointing lay-abbots, and suggesting a dualist property system.¹³¹ According to Radbertus, Wala envisioned a two-fold system of two *respublicae*, which would encompass the entire *sancta ecclesia*. On the one hand, there should exist a worldly *respublica*, consisting of property subjected to the ruler, which he could distribute as he saw fit, for example for the rewarding of followers and soon-to-be-followers. On the other hand, however, there was the divine *respublica*, headed by Christ and supervised by the bishops, including all churches, monasteries and properties pertaining to these institutions, all of which were at the disposal of the bishops, instead of the ruler, because “if the properties are consecrated to the Lord, legitimized by the duty of almsgiving, they belong to His churches, because they have been legally given to His poor and, especially, for those serving Him.”¹³² In fact, if the ruler would decide to grant away church property or appoint a new bishop, he would exceed the boundaries of his *ministerium*, which would surely not be looked upon favourably by God. Being written in the 850s, however, it is difficult to ascertain whether this conversation indeed had taken place or whether it was the imagination of Radbertus, infused with his own concern for the material wellbeing of his monastery, that led to this account.¹³³ Whatever the case, even if Wala indeed had spoken out to the emperor about his concerns in 828, both his and Agobard’s attempt are solitary acts of individuals.

It was only after 840, however, that the criticism of the practice of alienating church property reached its climax, most particularly during the reform synods of the early 840s.¹³⁴ In other words, the concern for the integrity of church property was no longer that of individuals but it had become a concern of the entire body of bishops. Moreover, not only bishops worried about the integrity of church property, but also abbots. We already encountered Radbertus criticising vociferously in the early 850s the spoliation of church property and the appointment of lay-abbots, which may have had its roots in the political turmoil of the 840s. Also, another abbot was involved in a long term struggle for regaining lost properties. This abbot, Lupus of Ferrières, wrote a collection of letters to everyone who mattered in the West Frankish kingdom under Charles the Bald in the hope to regain St-Josse, a cell granted away by the king to a count in 841, only to receive it back from Charles somewhere in the early 850s.¹³⁵ In 841-842, Charles the Bald’s tutor Walahfrid Strabo wrote a treatise on the proper

¹³⁰ Agobard of Lyons, *De dispensatione*.

¹³¹ Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, ii, c. 2, pp. 62-64.

¹³² Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, ii, c. 2, p. 62.

¹³³ See most particularly the confirmation charter, drafted by himself and presented to the bishops at the Synod of Paris in 846; *Conc.* III, no. 13, pp. 140-149.

¹³⁴ *Conc.* III, no. 6, pp. 27-35; no. 7, pp. 36-44; and no. 11, pp. 61-132.

¹³⁵ Lupus of Ferrières, *Epistolae*, ed. L. Levillain, *Loup de Ferrières. Correspondance*. 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Paris, 1964), i, nos. 36, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 57.

exercise of the liturgy, in which he is also concerned with the proper payments of tithes, which were part of the sacred properties consecrated to God by the faithful.¹³⁶ Moreover, in 845, we find none other than Hincmar of Reims, recently appointed archbishop of the most important bishopric in the realm, involved in a struggle for recovering properties alienated from the bishopric of Reims in the previous decades.¹³⁷

This notable increase in criticism and attempts at regaining lost properties from the 840s onward, compared to the early years of Louis the Pious, may have been part of the development in the political awareness of the Church and its members, already on its way under Louis the Pious. Whether this is the case or not still merits a detailed study. Nevertheless, in 836, Jonas's *De Rebus* indeed should be considered as firmly part of this development, with its focus on the position of the Church, the responsibilities of the secular and ecclesiastical order, and its concern for the spiritual wellbeing of the people and the stability of the *sancta ecclesia*. Although the *De Rebus* was an intense clarification of focus, which makes this treatise unique, it was just as much part of the political discourse already on its way in the 820s. Although I have already lifted a tip of the veil above, in the next chapter we will see how the *De Rebus* fits within this discourse and whether this text indeed identifies continuity rather than discontinuity with regard to the concern in the 820s for the wellbeing of the Carolingian state and the Frankish people after the rebellions of the 830s.

¹³⁶ Walahfrid Strabo, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum*, trans. A.L. Harting-Correa (Leiden/New York, 1996), c. 28, pp. 182-184.

¹³⁷ *Conc.* III, no. 9, pp. 47-55.

Chapter 3

Applying the *De Rebus*

In this chapter, I will be mainly concerned with placing the mode of argument of the *De Rebus*, analysed in the previous chapter, in a wider context of the political discourse of the first half of the ninth century. In order to do that, I will need to address the question how the *De Rebus* fits within the agenda of the Synod of Aachen 836, whose bishops after all commissioned this treatise. Why did the bishops commission it in the first place, and how does it relate to the issues addressed at the Synod of Aachen itself? Having determined that, I can trace back the concerns of 836 to that of 829 and see whether there is a measure of continuity or discontinuity. Other questions that needs answering, whose answers, as we shall see, are closely related to the previous question, are why this text was sent to Pippin of Aquitaine, and why it was sent on behalf of bishops *outside* the kingdom of Aquitaine. I will argue that the key word that combines all these questions and answers together is “action field.” That ultimately was at stake here. Central to the debates on the *sancta ecclesia* is the designation of proper “action fields” for both orders, each with their own set of responsibilities and duties. As I will try to show, the *De Rebus* was intricately bound up with this concern for a division of labour.

Yet, this immediately raises the question why in 836 and not earlier? I have already pointed out that the attempt of Agobard of Lyons in 822 to raise similar issues met with enough resistance from both orders to make himself unwanted at court. Moreover, Agobard’s attempt in 822 as well as Wala’s presumed attempt in 828 were acts of individuals. How come that in 836 these issues were taken up again so forcefully, but this time by a collection of bishops and were now most likely supported by the same emperor who, in 823, barred Agobard from participating in the assembly at Compiègne? What made them renew this effort? This first needs clarification.

§3.1. *The De Rebus, the rebellions and the kingdom of Aquitaine.*

This concern for the integrity of church property, now on a wider scale, was most likely taken up again in 836 for very practical reasons. For it can be suggested that the rebellions of the early 830s had put too much of a strain on the Church and its possessions, as each son was in need for sufficient political support to bring this rebellion to a successful conclusion, so that the Church saw their hold over their possessions slacken each time one of the sons decided to reward or buy loyalty. This is very difficult to ascertain, however, as we lack sufficient charter evidence to support this suggestion. If, for example, we look at the charter evidence of Pippin of Aquitaine, we find only one charter issued to a

layman, the Count of Bourges, in the period of rebellion.¹³⁸ Yet, there is reason to believe that the rebellions did cause the pressure on church lands to increase. First of all, the diocese of Orléans can be seen as a case in point. We have seen that, after 833, Jonas was very much concerned with the restoration of the Church in his diocese, after the rebellions had caused destruction and loss of church property. Secondly, the very fact of admonishing Pippin about the integrity of church property may in itself suggest that Pippin indeed had made more use of church property during the rebellions than before 830. Moreover, he was not alone in this. According to the Astronomer, Louis had also admonished his oldest son and co-emperor, Lothar I, king of Italy, in 834 about him squandering the properties of the Church of St-Peter. This, as we learn from the Astronomer, went against the *ministerium* of a king and the promises made by Lothar to continue the tradition of his ancestors and protect the Holy See. Louis was reportedly so embittered by this news that he sent Lothar an admonition to uphold his promises and defend the Holy Roman Church against adversaries, instead of plundering its lands himself.¹³⁹ Admittedly, the Astronomer does not connect the alienation of church properties in Italy to the rebellions. Yet, the timing is striking.

If we return to the *De Rebus*, we learn that it was not the first time Pippin was admonished to return alienated church property to the Church. For in the preface of the treatise Jonas mentions that the *De Rebus* was sent to Pippin in order to complement another *scaedula*, or a document, sent earlier to Pippin by the bishops Aldric of Le Mans and Erchinrad of Paris, containing some “fruitful” admonitions with regard to church property.¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately, we do not have this document, nor do we know when it may have been presented to Pippin. We can be fairly sure that Pippin had received it though, considering the very purpose of the *De Rebus* to complement this document with quotations from the Scriptures and the Church Fathers. It would be a rather cumbersome enterprise if there was no document to complement in the first place. However, all things considered, the *De Rebus* reads like an independent text, with its own argument, and in which no further reference is made to any previous admonition. Thanks to Louis the Pious’s biographer, the Astronomer, we may also have some lead to when Pippin may have been admonished before 836. According to the Astronomer, in November 834, Louis the Pious had summoned an assembly at Attigny in order to repair certain abuses of both the secular and the ecclesiastical orders. We have no record of what was discussed here, but according to the Astronomer, among other issues, one of the most important points on the agenda was the emperor’s request, through a certain Abbot Ermold, that Pippin would restore all properties to the Church in his kingdom that he had granted to his followers or were taken by them during the years of rebellion.¹⁴¹ It is impossible to ascertain whether the document presented to the king of Aquitaine by the two bishops had its origin in this meeting. It seems unlikely, since the *De Rebus* specifically

¹³⁸ *Recueil*, no. 16, pp. 58-59.

¹³⁹ Astronomer, c. 55, p. 509.

¹⁴⁰ *De Rebus*, praefatio, p. 730.

¹⁴¹ Astronomer, c. 53, pp. 498-499; see also *AB.*, s.a. 834, p. 10.

singles out the two bishops and makes no mention of any Abbot Ermold. It nevertheless does give some credence to the statement that Pippin had already been admonished about the integrity of church property before 836, as a result of an increase in royal encroachment on the properties of the Church in times of political upheaval.

A likely reason for Pippin to make more use of church property in times of political turmoil was that, according to Roger Collins, Aquitaine was divided in factions, among which the northern part of Aquitaine proved to be staunch supporters of Louis the Pious, as to which the emperor's intervention in the Aquitanian succession after Pippin's death in 838 may attest. Pippin's son, Pippin II, failed in making good his claim to the throne after the death of his father, when his grandfather decided to disinherit him in order to put his youngest son Charles the Bald (born in 823) in charge of the emperor's former kingdom. According to Collins, half of the kingdom of Aquitaine supported Louis and Charles in this political turnover, which left Pippin II bereft of sufficient political support to follow in his father's footsteps.¹⁴² If this division of loyalty in 838 is indeed representative for the political situation in Aquitaine in the preceding years, especially during the rebellions, it would explain the necessity of admonishing Pippin about the integrity of church property. For if Pippin's base of support was as fragile as Collins would have us believe, he would indeed have had much need for church property to buy himself sufficient political and military support.

This leaves us with the question whether Pippin would have been willing to accept such admonitions in the first place and whether they have had any success. With regard to the first, Collins has argued that Pippin reacted with a remarkable passivity to the *De Rebus* for two reasons. First, it could have been "a response to a more generally conciliatory and tactful policy on the part of Louis the Pious and his advisers."¹⁴³ Whereas, in the previous years, Louis's constant change of policy towards his sons may have contributed to the hostilities between father and sons, we have seen that the last years of Louis were characterized by repairing the father-son relationship and bringing back harmony to the realm. Secondly, Collins argues that, because of the division of loyalty in the Aquitanian kingdom, Pippin could never rely on a unified kingdom to effectively resist his father's meddling in Aquitanian affairs and thus, like a beaten dog, he just let it happen.¹⁴⁴ Although Collins's arguments are interesting, I believe that Pippin's "passivity" may have been the cause of something much simpler. For there is reason to believe that Pippin was susceptible to admonitions about his relationship with the Church and its properties, as presented in the *De Rebus*, simply because he himself was actively involved in the promotion of religious life in his realm, just as his father had been when he was still king of Aquitaine. This is not immediately visible in the contemporary narrative sources, in which

¹⁴² Roger Collins, "Pippin I and the Kingdom of Aquitaine", in R. Collins and P. Godman (eds), *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)* (Oxford, 1990), p. 386; cf. Astronomer, c. 61, pp. 534-537.

¹⁴³ Collins, "Pippin I", p. 386.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 386.

Pippin is usually more of an extra in a play, if not one of the villains of the story. In Thegan's biography of Louis the Pious, Pippin plays a marginal role and, when he is referred to, he is described as faithless and treacherous as opposed to Thegan's hero of the story, Louis the German.¹⁴⁵ Even stronger is the verdict of the Astronomer, in whose biography of the emperor Pippin is described as an immoral, disobedient, cowardly son, who had it in for the Church, whose properties he had snatched away during the rebellion, and who had to be admonished multiple times for his moral offenses and attack on church lands.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, there are no evidence of any Church Synod held in Aquitaine under Pippin. Of course, we have to take into account that the Aquitanian evidence transmitted to us leaves much to be desired. There is, for example, a slight indication, albeit from an eleventh century source, that synods did take place in Aquitaine.¹⁴⁷ Moreover, again from a more recent source, we learn that in the tenth century, Pippin was reputed to be an *edificator monasteriorum*.¹⁴⁸ Regardless, the evidence of Pippin's church politics is scant and we have to turn to his charters to get some idea of his attitude towards the promotion of religious life.

It is worth noting that Pippin's characterisation as *edificator monasteriorum* comes from a tenth century charter from the abbey of Saint-Maixent in Poitiers. From the forty-three charters extant from the reign of Pippin, the abbey of Saint-Maixent, together with the abbey of Saint-Hilary, both of which were situated in Poitiers, and the cathedral church of Angers, received the most charters.¹⁴⁹ Apart from his preference for two abbeys in Poitiers, his interest in this county is furthermore shown in the fact that Pippin was buried in another abbey situated in Poitiers, the abbey of Ste-Croix. This may suggest that the labelling of Pippin as a "builder of monasteries" could have been biased, based on a strong relationship with the dynasty. Nevertheless, throughout his reign, Pippin had shown his interest in the betterment of religious life in the kingdom entrusted to him by founding, re-founding, endowing and benefitting many monastic foundations. As recognized by Roger Collins, although some of these acts were made at the request of others, most were acts of royal generosity.¹⁵⁰ Pippin had put monasteries and their lands under royal protection,¹⁵¹ granted them immunity from royal interference,¹⁵² granted property to ecclesiastical institutions or issued confirmations of property

¹⁴⁵ Thegan, c. 36, pp. 221-223.

¹⁴⁶ Astronomer, cc. 46-47, pp. 465-473 for Pippin being disobedient, committing "very many moral offenses", fleeing in the dark of the night; cc. 53 and 56 on Pippin and his squandering of church properties.

¹⁴⁷ Falco of Tournus, *Chronicon Trenorchense*, ed. R. Poupardin, *Monuments de l'histoire des abbayes de Saint-Philibert* (Paris, 1905), c. 18, p. 83.

¹⁴⁸ *Gallia christiana: in provincias ecclesiasticas distributa*, ii, ed. D. Sammarthani (Paris, 1720), *Instrumenta ecclesiae Lemovicensis*, no. 10, col. 171.

¹⁴⁹ *Recueil*, nos. 5, 9 and 42 (Saint-Maixent); nos. 7, 14, and 24 (Saint-Hilary); nos. 26-28 (Angers).

¹⁵⁰ Collins, "Pippin I", pp. 367-370 on Pippin's church politics.

¹⁵¹ *Recueil*, nos. 10, 22, 23, 30, 36 and, if the right to take grievances to the royal court could also be included within the privilege of royal protection, nos. 25 and 34.

¹⁵² *Recueil*, nos. 1, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 34, 40 and 42.

rights,¹⁵³ benefitted monasteries with the privilege of free abbatial election¹⁵⁴ and restored property.¹⁵⁵ Although it is not always clear how much independent power royal sons had under Louis the Pious, it is evident here that they were able to develop their own church politics. They could do so, because they had the right to dispose of various economic resources, among which were fiscal properties and church lands.¹⁵⁶ Considering Pippin's interest in the quality of the *cultus divinus* in his realm, it is not unlikely that he was susceptible to the ideas propagated in the *De Rebus*. Moreover, as already pointed out above, the *De Rebus* was not the first admonition addressed to Pippin. Jonas himself had already sent the king a treatise on the right conduct of the royal *ministerium*, which may have had a profound impact on the way Pippin perceived his own office. If so, considering that the *De Rebus* has much similarities with the *De institutione regia*, admonitions about the proper attitude of a king towards the Church and its properties may not have fallen on deaf ears at the court of Aquitaine.

If Pippin would have been willing to receive such admonitions, was he then also willing to act upon it? That is very difficult to ascertain. When, in 836, Pippin was admonished again, the Astronomer emphasizes that Pippin had taken the warnings of the synod to heart and "with the seal of his ring he ordered all invaded properties to be returned."¹⁵⁷ The reference to "all properties" should not be taken too literal and may well have been an exaggeration on the part of the Astronomer. Although Pippin did restore some properties to ecclesiastical institutions, the fact that there are only three charters extant issuing a restitution of property after 836, of which two were granted to the same episcopal church of Saint-Maurice in Angers, it could never add up to "all properties."¹⁵⁸ Moreover, it is not clear whether these restitutions were a result of the admonitions of 836. The first restitution, issued on 25 December 837 to Saint-Maurice in Angers, comes closest to a direct relation to the *De Rebus*. It restored properties, among which were *precariae verbo regis*, which had been "snatched away and plundered" through the "illicit presumption of some of our men."¹⁵⁹ If this charter is a direct result of the *De Rebus*, with which it shared a certain style of writing about the act of alienating property, one wonders why it took Pippin almost two years to comply with the admonitions. Four months later, on 23 April 838, Pippin issued another restitution charter for the monastery of Saint-Peter in Jumièges, through which property was restored to the monks as a result of a certain admonition from Louis the Pious.¹⁶⁰ Is this a reference to the admonitions of 834 or 836? That is very difficult to ascertain, considering that the charter was issued four and two years respectively after the

¹⁵³ *Recueil*, nos. 2, 4, 8, 13, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 31, 32, 35, 39, and 42. No. 38 is interestingly the only charter granting property to a layman, a certain royal *fidelis* called Heccardus. It is worth noting that this charter dates from after the *De Rebus*.

¹⁵⁴ *Recueil*, nos. 14, 30, 32 and 34.

¹⁵⁵ *Recueil*, nos. 5, 20, 26, 27 and 29.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Brigitte Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit*. MGH Schriften 44 (Hannover, 1997), pp. 171-172, 348-351, 354-356.

¹⁵⁷ Astronomer, c. 56, p. 517; cf. *AB.*, s.a. 837, p. 13.

¹⁵⁸ *Recueil*, nos. 26, 27 and 29, pp. 107-114, 124-127.

¹⁵⁹ *Recueil*, no. 26, p. 109.

¹⁶⁰ *Recueil*, no. 29, pp. 126-127.

two meetings. For all we know, this admonition of which the charter makes mention is just another example of Louis reprimanding his son and letting him know that he was still in control. Although, as I said, it is not always clear how much independent power royal sons exactly had in their respective kingdoms, it is striking that, despite the decision in the *Ordinatio imperii* of 817 that the royal sons had full power in disposing of *honores* in their kingdoms, Louis the Pious still kept a hand in the distribution of fiscal land in his former kingdom. Out of eight extant charters that Louis issued for the kingdom of Aquitaine, six were dated after Pippin became king of his father's former kingdom.¹⁶¹ That Louis was concerned with the material wellbeing of the Church in each of the kingdoms within the Carolingian empire is not only attested by the charter material of Pippin, the earlier admonition of Louis in 834 and the *De Rebus* which, although ordered by the bishops present at Aachen, most likely needed the approval of the emperor. Moreover, we have seen that Louis had also admonished his other son, Lothar. Roger Collins's question why Pippin alone was singled out for admonitions about the integrity of church property is, therefore, inaccurate.¹⁶² It just so happened that only the admonition addressed to Pippin is transmitted to us, which creates the risk that we give too much importance to the text. Nevertheless, it does beg the question why Pippin's admonition was so elaborate and a clear statement of the bishops. It is to this statement that we now have to turn and to see how the mode of argument presented in the *De Rebus* fits within the wider discourse on the designation of "action fields" within the *sancta Dei ecclesia*.

§3.2. *The De Rebus and the political discourse of the 820s and 830s.*

If one reads the synodal acts and capitularies of the 820s and 830s carefully and analyses the political ideology, one may recognize one theme that can be considered the denominator of the political discourse of this period: the determination of "action fields." Ever since Louis the Pious promulgated his *Admonitio ad omnes regnis ordines* in 825, the political discourse revolved around the division of labour that would benefit the spiritual as well as the earthly wellbeing of the Frankish people, placate a vengeful God, and rebalance the political order, the *sancta ecclesia*. It is with this division of labour, the demarcation of "action fields", in which each order that functioned within the *ecclesia* had their own duties and responsibilities, that I will be concerned here. I will not go into too much detail about the acts of the synods of the 820s-830s, because I have already discussed that in Chapter 1. Here I will mainly focus on the purpose of the synods held in this period. What did they try to achieve? After that I will return to the *De Rebus* and see how the mode of argument propagated in this treatise fits within the overall aim of the synods. Based on that I will then conclude this dissertation with the question

¹⁶¹ See Jane Martindale, "The kingdom of Aquitaine and the 'dissolution of the Carolingian fisc'", *Francia* 11 (1984), pp. 176-179.

¹⁶² Collins, "Pippin I", p. 372.

whether the period after 834 was a period of continuity or discontinuity, whether everything went downhill after the tumultuous events of the early 830s or not.

Above we have seen that the context of the rebellions most likely formed the impetus for a renewal of the debate on the integrity of church property. However, the mode of argument in the *De Rebus*, analysed in Chapter 2, suggests that this context was more of a platform that allowed the bishops, through the pen of Jonas of Orléans, to address far bigger issues, issues that have been on the agenda of the Carolingian synods and assemblies at least since 825, when Louis enacted his *Admonitio ad omnes regnis ordines*. Ever since 825, the main focus of the political discourse, discussed during these big meetings and disseminated through capitularies and synodal acts, was the reordering of a morally confused and disordered society, that had angered God in the process, putting the salvation of all in jeopardy. The central question of all synods held in the 820s and 830s was how to placate such an easily offended God.¹⁶³ The answer lay in clearing up the blurred boundaries between the two main constituents of the *sancta ecclesia*, the secular order and the ecclesiastical order. By making clearer agreements on who was responsible for what and who controlled what, the emperor and his bishops hoped to prevent that boundaries were transgressed and duties and responsibilities neglected, the sin of *negligentia* being one of the main incentives for provoking God in the ninth century.¹⁶⁴ Besides the need for cooperation between both orders, this redrawing of the boundaries, the division of labour or designation of proper “action fields”, was vital for the wellbeing of the *ecclesia*. Without it, the *sancta ecclesia* simply would not work.¹⁶⁵ I have already noted in Chapter 1 that the boundaries and the balance between both orders was a precarious one, indeed areas of tension throughout the Carolingian period. They were also never static but constantly in need of redrawing due to political circumstances. In this light, it could be suggested that the rebellions were one of those ‘political circumstances’ that required a further demarcation of the boundaries, and thus, in so doing, being part of the process of restabilising the *sancta ecclesia*. But before I get to that, let me first turn to the relationship between the Synod of Paris 829 and the Synod of Aachen 836.

Although, in 825, Louis the Pious had already made a head start with the division of labour, admonishing each order and office holder within the Carolingian realm about the proper exercise of his *ministerium*, this was most thoroughly formulated at the Synod of Paris in 829. As I have described in Chapter 1, the bishops envisaged a Christian polity made up of two orders, the secular and the ecclesiastical, headed by two *eximiae personae*, the ruler and the bishops. The synodal acts of Paris 829 are completely dedicated to describing in detail the duties and responsibilities of each order and each *persona*. The ruler was deemed responsible for the protection of the Church and the stimulation and correction of the proper exercise of the *cultus divinus*, which lay at the basis of a well-

¹⁶³ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 183.

¹⁶⁴ See on *negligentia*, De Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 121-122, 181-183, 238-239.

¹⁶⁵ See above, Chapter 1.2.1.

oiled *ecclesia*. The bishops, on their part, were responsible for guiding the Frankish people, both the ruler and his subjects, unto the road to salvation. Moreover, they had the responsibility to assist the ruler himself in the proper conduct of his own *ministerium*, out of which flowed the frequent use of admonition, as inherently part of that responsibility. We have also seen how the self-consciousness or political self-awareness of the bishops developed itself as a result of this redrawing of the boundaries. They came to see themselves as the key to the stability of the *ecclesia* and the moral and spiritual wellbeing of the entire Frankish people, including the ruler himself. In fact, they were the *only* group responsible for the salvation of the entire people. As the self-assigned protectors of the Christian faith and the moral behaviour of the faithful, they were the vicars of the Apostles. They needed to be listened to and respected, for the sake of everyone's deliverance.

This division of labour, enacted in the synodal acts of the Synod of Paris 829, was then almost literally taken up in the acts of the Synod of Aachen 836, which existed for a large part of verbatim copies of the acts of Paris 829, the *Relatio episcoporum* of that same year and the *De institutione regia* of 831. According to the acts, the main purpose of the synod was, indeed, the reordering of a society thrown into confusion and the reaffirmation and expansion of the acts of Paris 829, which apparently had been "surrendered to oblivion" by certain "obstacles".¹⁶⁶ One may wonder whether these "obstacles" referred to the rebellions, although no mention is made in the synodal acts of the events of the early 830s. The division of the *ecclesia* in two orders was in 836 extended to three orders, with the lay people being assigned their own order with their own set of duties and responsibilities. Nevertheless, the basic programme remained the same, and so did the self-awareness of the bishops. Again, both the emperor and episcopacy shared the responsibility for the wellbeing of the *ecclesia*, with the bishops having an extended responsibility for overseeing the proper conduct of the royal office. Again, the question came up of what was necessary for the salvation of all. More specific questions were asked about what a bishop ought to know and to do, and without what the bishops could not exercise their episcopal *ministerium* except for offending God.¹⁶⁷ The episcopacy was again presented as the founding stone of the *sancta ecclesia*.¹⁶⁸ The ruler, on the other hand, was responsible for the protection of the Church, assisting the bishops in leading his people to salvation, and to never forget that his office was a God-given *ministerium*, subjected to the power to bind and loose of the bishops.¹⁶⁹ In other words, despite some slight changes, the acts of Aachen 836 were pretty much the same as those of Paris 829, confirming that the Synod of Aachen 836 was part of the process of ordering the *ecclesia*, started by the bishops gathered together in Paris in 829. Here we come back to the *De Rebus*, commissioned by the bishops at Aachen in 836, sent to Pippin of Aquitaine and bringing to light the sacrosanctity of church property and the dangers of alienating it

¹⁶⁶ *Conc.* II.2, no. 56, praefatio, p. 706; for the reference to the acts of Paris 829, see c. 66, p. 723.

¹⁶⁷ *Conc.* II.2, no. 56, praefatio, p. 706.

¹⁶⁸ *Conc.* II.2, no. 56, c. 45, pp. 716-717.

¹⁶⁹ For the office of the ruler, see *Conc.* II.2, no. 56, cc. 41-47, pp. 714-718; on the episcopal power to bind and loose, see c. 45, p. 717.

for secular purposes. If the Synod of Aachen 836 is inherently part of a long process of rehabilitation, placating a vengeful God, provoked by the neglecting of duties and God-given *ministeria*, how should we approach the *De Rebus*?

I believe that the *De Rebus* was very much part of this concern for reordering a confused society by assigning specific “action fields” to each order. The preface of the *De Rebus* already says as much, as it clearly links the treatise to the Synod of Aachen 836. The Synod of Aachen was convened “for the sake of attending to the honour and glory of the Holy Church of God (*sancta Dei ecclesia*) and the ecclesiastical dignity, largely fallen to ruin and darkened, and (...) to restore them to the former state and glory, desiring the happiness of eternal blessedness.”¹⁷⁰ In other words, out of concern for the salvation of all, the *ecclesia* had to be re-stabilised. The preface then continues with stating the motivation for sending the present treatise, saying,

“Therefore, we, your most faithful *oratores* and most devoted lovers of your salvation, have sent to Your Highness [i.e. Pippin of Aquitaine], through the venerable fathers our fellow bishops Aldric of Le Mans and Erchinrad of Paris, a certain document, containing some salutary admonitions by reason of the authority (*auctoritas*) of our ministry. Because, with regard to the matters about which we have admonished Your Highness, we were unable to add testimonies from the Holy Scripture in order to prevent it from becoming too elaborate, we judged it profitable and necessary, that in this little work (*opusculum*) we would briefly jot down these testimonies and send it to Your Resourcefulness, in order that, if whoever would like to object to that, what we wrote to you, that it does not rest on divine authority, but rather that it was fabricated by our own head, in fact [arising from] desire and imagination, once he read and weighted carefully [what we have written], he shall admit that we have put together Divine things, both for your salvation in this world as well as in the world to come, and for safeguarding of your kingdom, and that he himself evidently talks of such things that belong to the world and are esteemed by lovers of the world, and that are both in all respect opposite to Divine will and lead to the ruin of the soul.”¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ *De Rebus*, praefatio, p. 729.

¹⁷¹ *De Rebus*, praefatio, p. 730; *nos igitur, fidelissimi oratores vestri salutisque vestrae amatores devotissimi, misimus celsitudini vestrae per venerabiles fratres, Aldricum videlicet Cenomannicae urbis et Herchinradum Parisiorum coepiscopos nostros, quandam scaedulam, quaedam ex auctoritate ministerii nostri salutaria monita continentem. Cui quia de negotiis, unde vestram magnitudinem admonuimus, testimonia sanctorum scripturarum, vitantes illius prolixitatem, adnecetere nequivimus, utile necessariumque iudicavimus, ut in hoc opusculo ea breviter adnotaremus vestraeque prudentissime sollertiae legenda mitteremus, ut, si forte quispiam obicere voluerit haec, quae vobis scripsimus, non ex auctoritate divina constare, sed potius arbitrio cordis nostri, immo cupiditate et quadam adinventione commentata esse, his lectis atque perpensis evidenter agnoscat nos quae Dei sunt et ad vestram salvationem hic et in aeternum et ad regni vobis commisi stabilimentum, se autem ea, quae mundi sunt eiusque amatores diligunt et Dei voluntati usquequaque contraria existunt et ad animarum interitum pertinent, absque dubio loqui*; see for the same expression of self-awareness of the bishops as *oratores* the Synod of Paris 825, equally written by Jonas; *Conc.* II.2, no. 44, p. 481. Italics are my own.

This passage is interesting for multiple reasons. First of all, the use of the causal conjunction *igitur* at the very start of the passage implies that the treatise was firmly part of the purpose of the Synod of Aachen 836 to restore the *ecclesia* to its former state and glory and, thus, that we should see the mode of argument within the *De Rebus* as at least having a relation with the synodal acts. Second, as we have already discussed above, it tells us that Pippin had already been admonished before the bishops had commissioned the *De Rebus*. Thirdly, and more importantly for this chapter, the passage indicates that the bishops had admonished Pippin by reason of the *auctoritas* of their office. As we have seen above, the bishops were responsible for the salvation of the ruler. As a result of that responsibility, they had the authority to admonish him if need be. This concern for the ruler's salvation and the stability of the realm, equally stressed in this passage, was therefore crucial for Pippin not to be offended by the admonitions included in the *scaedula* sent earlier as well as in the present treatise. It legitimated Jonas's warnings. As we can read in the conclusion of the *De Rebus*, Jonas again stipulates that the treatise was sent for the sake of the salvation of Pippin's soul, the protection of his kingdom and the prolongation of his dynasty. Furthermore, Jonas made very clear that "it is evident that it [i.e. the *De Rebus*] did not flow out from an impure fountain of ostentation or from the glorification of whatever kind of presumption, but that it is rather collected and written by reason of the soundness of the most genuine and sincere faith and the authority (*auctoritas*) of the bishops, incomparably bearing the care for your soul."¹⁷² In other words, the *De Rebus* was not just part of the purpose of Aachen 836, it was written by a bishop very well aware of his position and duties in the realm and therefore firmly part of the development of the self-awareness of the episcopacy.

When we turn to the content of the *De Rebus* and Jonas's mode of argument, we too get the sense that the treatise was very much part of the political discourse of its time. In this case, church property was the main focus, aggravated by the increased pressure on church lands in the times of rebellion. In order to protect the Church's hold over its properties, in the face of increased royal encroachment, Jonas drew its properties within the orbit of the bishops' "action field". By arguing that the integrity of church property is vital for the proper exercise of the *ministeria* of the bishops and their clergy and, consequently, for the wellbeing of the Frankish people and the stability of the *sancta ecclesia*, Jonas appealed to the political discourse of its time and drew the debate on the integrity of church property firmly within the orbit of the discussion about the ordering of society, the demarcation of "action fields" and the division of labour, the duties and responsibilities of each order and each office-holder within their respective "action field", and the danger of neglecting one's office. According to Jonas, church property belonged under the control of the bishops, it was inherently part of their "action field" and crucial for the proper exercise of their responsibilities. The restoration of the *ecclesia* was for a large part dependent on the ability of the bishops to provide for the spiritual wellbeing of the entire Frankish people, both the ruler and his subjects, as was already stated in Paris

¹⁷² *De Rebus*, iii, c. 27, p. 767.

829 and Aachen 836. In order to do this, according to Jonas, they needed the material wherewithal to provide for their clergy and to take care of their flock. Church property was presented as central to the quality of the *cultus divinus*. Therefore, without it, the stability of the *ecclesia* would be put in jeopardy, the bishops and the other servants of Christ would be forced to neglect their duties, and God will be provoked, risking the salvation of all gathered together under one faith. Therefore, it was the responsibility of the ruler (and other magnates), as part of *his* “action field”, to endow the Church with more property, protect it from harm and safeguard the integrity of its possessions from greedy landowners and volatile heirs, so that the bishops and their servants could do their jobs, the quality of the *cultus divinus* will be secured and, consequently, the *ecclesia* restored to its former state and glory.

As a result, the debate on the integrity of church property in 836 not only became part of the debate on the ordering of the Carolingian state, but also of the development of the self-consciousness of the bishops within the empire. As the integrity of church property was pivotal in the proper functioning of the *sancta ecclesia*, by arguing that the possessions of the Church should pertain wholly to the *potestas* of the bishops, they, through the pen of Jonas, assumed the role of those on whose shoulders the future of the Carolingian realm lay. They, as the successors of the Apostles, should alone have access to the vows of the faithful, so that they could secure the fate of the empire. The bishops were the exclusive mediators between God and mankind, for the sake of the salvation of all, both the ruler and his subjects. Church property, as the *De Rebus* tried to drive home, was crucial for this mediation and should therefore pertain wholly to the *libertas episcopalis* to which the bishops in 829 aspired.¹⁷³ If this episcopal responsibility was compromised by royal fickleness as the ruler would use church property for other (secular) purposes, the bishops had the duty to admonish the ruler, for any compromise of a God-given *ministerium* would incur divine punishment which, in turn, would result in the Carolingian *ecclesia* to topple down to ruins as God would abandon them. Therefore, in the *De Rebus*, just as had been discussed at the synods of Paris and Aachen, the bishops ought to oversee the proper exercise of the royal office and, if need be, remind the ruler of the dangers of the choices he made, as well as secure the spiritual wellbeing of the Frankish people as a whole.

§3.3. Conclusion

Having analysed the *De Rebus ecclesiasticis non invadendis* and determined that its mode of argument was intricately bound up with the process of ordering and rebalancing the Carolingian society, can we consider the rebellions and the penance indeed as destructive for the stability of the Carolingian Empire, after which everything went downhill, as has traditionally been argued?

I hope to have shown that the mode of argument of the *De Rebus* and its close relationship with the process of ordering a society, a process already on its way since at least 829, suggests that the

¹⁷³ For the *libertas episcopalis*, see e.g. *Conc.* II.2, no. 50, iii, c. 27, p. 680; *Capit.* II, no. 197, p. 51.

rebellions never altered the already existing widespread concern for the spiritual and earthly wellbeing of the Frankish people and its relationship with God and that we can, indeed, as Mayke de Jong has put it recently, see the period after the rebellion and the imperial penance as “business as usual.” The rebellions may have been a hiccup, an unforeseen bump in the road, or a temporary stop in the process of rebalancing the Carolingian order, but after 834 the ruler and his bishops seem to have continued where they left off in 830, albeit infused with the (material) consequences of the rebellions. It is argued by Janet Nelson that in the last years of Louis the Pious, the Church “took a low profile.”¹⁷⁴ Although I am not quite sure what she means with this enigmatic remark, I believe that, considering the active involvement of the bishops to order the *ecclesia* and the very presence of a text like the *De Rebus*, so intricately bound up with this concern, the Church was as much in the centre of attention as before 830-834. Therefore, I hope to have shown that the mode of argument in the *De Rebus* points to continuity rather than discontinuity with regard to the authority of the Church and the ruler and their mutual concern for the proper workings of their political order. There is no reason to believe that, after 834, everything went downhill, nor was the political turmoil of the early 830s a watershed in the unity of the Carolingian Empire, supposedly showing its first cracks after 834, only to break apart completely after the civil war of 840-843. In 836, the Carolingian Empire was just as much a unified empire as it was before 830. Here again we return to the *De Rebus* by going back to the question why the bishops at Aachen in 836 decided to admonish Pippin with such an elaborate statement of episcopal power.

By sending Pippin the *De Rebus*, the bishops of Francia, through the words of Jonas, energetically involved the kingdom of Aquitaine in their concept of the *ecclesia* and the duties of the bishops to provide for the spiritual wellbeing of all people encompassed in the Frankish empire. That included the *regna inter regnum* and their kings. The Frankish bishops considered the Aquitanian kingdom as much part of the *ecclesia* and their “action field” as Francia proper. Therefore, it was possible for bishops *outside* the kingdom of Aquitaine to admonish the Aquitanian ruler, which here can be seen as a powerful tool of integration, rather than tension. In so doing, in the *De Rebus*, Jonas still saw a universal Christian community, transcending political boundaries, binding centre and locality, empire and kingdoms, emperor and kings, and father and sons together by one common faith, whose stability was fully dependent on the quality and reverence of the cult of God, underpinned by the fundamental significance of the integrity of church property. Therefore, the very presence of the *De Rebus* clearly indicates that in 836 the stability of the *ecclesia* as well as the success of the bishops and the emperor, ever since the 820s, to secure this stability by rebalancing a morally confused political order was as much dependent on the wellbeing of the kingdom of Aquitaine as of any other part of the Carolingian Empire. The Carolingian Empire was not yet divided and neither did the bishops consider it as such.

¹⁷⁴ Nelson, “Last years”, p. 156.

Abbreviations

<i>AB</i>	<i>Annales Bertiniani</i> , ed. G. Waitz, MGH SRG 5 (Hannover, 1883). Trans. by Nelson, Janet L., <i>The Annals of St-Bertin</i> . Ninth-century Histories 1 (Manchester, 1991).
Astronomer	Astronomer, <i>Vita Hludowici imperatoris</i> , ed. E. Tremp, MGH SRG 64 (Hannover, 1995), pp. 279-554.
<i>De Rebus</i>	Jonas of Orléans, <i>De rebus ecclesiasticis non invadendis</i> , ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH Concilia 2.II (Hannover, 1908), no. 56B, pp. 724-767.
<i>DIL</i>	Jonas of Orléans, <i>De institutione laicali</i> , Migne PL 106, coll. 121-278B.
<i>DIR</i>	Jonas of Orléans, <i>De institutione regia</i> , ed. and trans. A. Dubreucq, <i>Jonas d'Orléans. Le Métier de Roi. Introduction, texte critique, traduction notes et index</i> . Sources Chrétiennes 407 (Paris, 1995).
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
<i>Capit</i>	<i>Capitularia regum Francorum</i> , ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, 2 vols. (Hannover, 1883-1897).
<i>Conc</i>	<i>Concilia</i> 2, ed. A. Werminghoff, 2 vols. (Hannover, 1906-1908); 3, ed. W. Hartmann (Hannover, 1984).
<i>Epp</i>	<i>Epistolae karolini aevi</i> , 6 vols. (Hannover, 1892-1939)
<i>SRG</i>	<i>Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi</i> , 75 vols. (Hannover, 1871-2002).
<i>SS</i>	<i>Scriptores</i> (in folio), 30 vols. (Hannover, 1826-1924).
Migne PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1841-1864).
<i>Recueil</i>	<i>Recueil des Actes de Pépin Ier et de Pépin II, rois d'Aquitaine (814-838)</i> , ed. L. Levillain (Paris, 1926).
Thegan	Thegan, <i>Gesta Hludowici imperatoris</i> , ed. E. Tremp, MGH SRG 64 (Hannover, 1998), pp. 167-277.

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