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Louis the Pious and Judith Augusta : in defense of sacral kingship in the imperium christianum of the early ninth century.

Jane Swotchak Ourand
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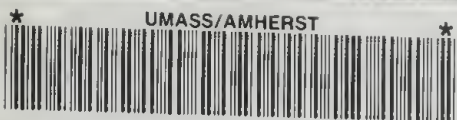
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LOUIS THE PIOUS AND JUDITH AUGUSTA:
IN DEFENSE OF SACRAL KINGSHIP IN THE *IMPERIUM*
CHRISTIANUM OF THE EARLY NINTH CENTURY

A Dissertation Presented

by

JANE SWOTCHAK OURAND

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1998

Department of History

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For my parents
Louis and Julia Rura Swotchak
in loving gratitude for their
abiding love and support

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been an exacting taskmaster. For such a scholar, teacher, mentor -- and friend -- I have only the greatest respect, admiration and appreciation.

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ABSTRACT

LOUIS THE PIOUS AND JUDITH AUGUSTA:
IN DEFENSE OF SACRAL KINGSHIP IN THE *IMPERIUM*
CHRISTIANUM OF THE EARLY NINTH CENTURY

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This dissertation seeks to answer two important questions about the reign of Louis the Pious: What was Louis' personal and intellectual conception of the nature of kingship? What political and moral role did his second wife, Judith Augusta, play in support of her husband's position? The author contends that Louis' reign was beset by a power struggle of epic proportions, one that pitted the monarch against the most influential lords of the realm and against the political aspirations of the Frankish Church hierarchy. The root of this struggle was the contradiction between Louis'

conviction of the priestly nature of royal power, a concept bequeathed to him by his father Charlemagne and one to which he held tenaciously, and that of the Frankish hierarchy that sought to interpose itself between the monarch and God. Judith supported her husband's position with unstinting loyalty. Her historic reputation is nothing more than the result of personal attacks launched by spokesmen of the Frankish Church in an effort to undermine her credibility, and thus the position of Louis. Only in this century have historians begun to view Judith in a more benign light. The author, however, sees Judith as a more active participant in the affairs of state, as one who wielded real power in support of the Frankish monarchy.

The Franks viewed the power of the king to be of a sacral nature; the adoption of that concept by Charlemagne provided the foundation of the *renovatio* in the Frankish realm. During his reign, the Papacy and the Frankish Church were clearly subservient to the will of the monarch and both were cleverly employed to promote the ideas and policies of Charlemagne's *imperium christianum*. The reign of Louis the Pious is treated in an episodic manner in keeping with the presentation of that period in the sources. Emphasis is given to the role of the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817 since that document, viewed initially by all as a guarantee of imperial unity,

provided the Frankish bishops and their allies with a weapon against the monarch. Louis' marriage to Judith and the subsequent birth of their son Charles were the events that endangered the role of the Frankish Church as the arbiter of power in the kingdom. The catalyst came when Louis attempted to provide his new son with a portion of his royal inheritance, a move that contravened the *Ordinatio*. The author presents a detailed account of the efforts of the Church hierarchy to undermine the concept that the monarch embodied the *imperium christianum*, not by attacking Louis directly, but by willful attempts to sully the reputation of the monarch's most loyal supporters, especially the empress Judith. In this 'dress rehearsal' for that most infamous of all Church-crown confrontations, the Investiture Controversy, Louis was forced to his own 'Canossa' on three different occasions.

The victor of this struggle, the author contends, was undoubtedly Louis, for the duration of his reign and that of Charles II the Bald. The images in contemporary manuscripts from both reigns show the king in direct contact with God; Frankish bishops are not represented in portraits of the king. Even Judith, the empress and indefatigable supporter of the king.

sacral nature of her husband's position, is represented positively and without any reference to the Church hierarchy.

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*An earlier abbey church was rebuilt with the aid of Louis the Pious in the 9th century.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Annales Bertiniani</i>
<i>AF</i>	<i>Annales Fuldenses</i>
<i>AH</i>	<i>Annales Hildesheimenses</i>
<i>AL</i>	<i>Annales Lauresheimenses</i>
<i>AMpr</i>	<i>Annales Mettenses priores</i>
<i>AX</i>	<i>Annales Xantenses</i>
<i>Cap.</i>	<i>Capitularia Regum Francorum</i>
<i>CC</i>	<i>Carolingian Chronicles</i> , trans. Scholz and Rogers
<i>CH</i>	<i>Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious</i>
<i>Conc.</i>	<i>Concilia</i>
<i>Epist.</i>	<i>Epistolae Karolini Aevi</i>
<i>FC</i>	J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, <i>The Frankish Church</i>
<i>Liber</i>	Agobard of Lyon, <i>Liber Apologeticus</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
Nithard	<i>Historiarum Libri IIII</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina, Cursus Completus</i>

<i>PLAC</i>	<i>Poeti Latini Aevi Carolini</i>
<i>Poet.</i>	<i>Poetae Latini Media Aevi</i>
<i>RFA</i>	<i>Royal Frankish Annals</i>
<i>SRG</i>	<i>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, Series in Folio</i>
<i>Thegan</i>	<i>Vita Hludowici Imperatoris</i>
<i>Vita</i>	<i>Astronomer, Vita Hludowici Imperatoris</i>
<i>Wala</i>	<i>Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium Arsenii (Vita Walae)</i>

PROLOG

The tumultuous reign of Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's heir, is a watershed in the history of western Europe in several important ways. Most obviously, it forms the link between the "glorious reign" of Charles the Great and the reigns of his grandsons and beyond. It contains elements of both the unity of Charlemagne's reign and the divisiveness of those that followed. The outward appearance of Charlemagne's empire persisted as did the apparatus of imperial government, but powerful disruptive forces were at work beneath the surface, forces that had already been active in the later years of Charlemagne's reign. Overshadowing all else was a deepening mood of spirituality and piety that dominated men's minds and glossed over the growing troubles in the empire.¹ These observations may not be original, but they serve to illustrate both the continuity with the past and the disruption to come. But Louis' reign was more than a link between Charlemagne and the sub-Carolingians; it need not be defined by what came before and after it chronologically, nor criticized for what it was not. The reign can boast of many accomplishments, which were virtually ignored until

the last half century, while the alleged failures have been portrayed as transcendent. What *can* be said of Louis that both distinguishes his rule and characterizes the problems that beset him? And what is the role of his consort Judith?

I believe the answer lies in Louis' personal and intellectual conception of the priestly nature of kingship, a conception inherited from his father Charlemagne and tenaciously held by him through all the troubled years of his reign.² I also believe that he would have been unable to maintain this conception had he not have been married to Judith. Their alliance was unquestionably strong and durable, as extant records show: there is no mention of discord between Judith and Louis. Despite all the accusations of disloyalty, adultery, manipulation and other scandalous behavior hurled at Judith by her enemies, Louis never wavered in his devotion to his empress. When in 830 he was compelled by his bishops to pronounce her guilty of adultery, he did not believe the allegation and reconciled with her just as soon as he was able.³ Louis' loyalty to Judith gave her a position of power in Carolingian politics in the first half of the ninth century, and her support of her husband throughout his troubled reign was crucial to his kingship.

The aim of this dissertation is to explain the important events of Louis' reign from the vantage point of his conception of sacral kingship, and to show that Judith had a very definite and positive role to play as the king's wife. At the same time, I hope to demonstrate that the conflict of Louis' reign was at heart an outright confrontation between Church and state, the outcome of which staved off Church domination of the state for more than two centuries. In his book *Civilisation: a Personal View*, Lord Kenneth Clark observed that the characteristic tension between Church and State vitalized western European culture during the Middle Ages and prevented it from stagnating.⁴ No doubt that tension had been visible since late antiquity, certainly since Ambrose forced the emperor to remove the statue of Victory from the Senate,⁵ but the Church-state struggle did not disrupt the king's ability to govern until the reign of Louis the Pious.

Louis came to the throne in January of the year 814. At the time he was married to the Empress Irmingard and was the father of three legitimate sons. Louis took up the burdens of empire and proceeded to carry on the reforms that his father Charlemagne had initiated, and he fought long and hard to protect the borders of the empire he had inherited. At the end of a difficult campaign in Brittany in the fall of 818, he returned to Francia only

to find Irmingard on her deathbed. She died two days later. It seemed to Louis that fortune had deserted him. The duties of office were onerous and he was beset with problems from within and without; these were not happy times. His loyal supporters feared that he might abdicate and enter a monastery, as his great-uncle Carloman had done over seventy years previously. Within a few months, however, Louis was persuaded by his magnates to marry again. The contemporary *Vita Hludwici*, an anonymous life of Louis written in the last decade of his reign, records that the daughters of the nobility were paraded before Louis for his inspection, and from among them he chose Judith of Bavaria. They were married in February 819.⁶

By all accounts Judith was beautiful, as even her bitter enemies conceded.⁷ Indeed, Judith was well suited to become queen. Her exact age is unknown, but she was probably fourteen or fifteen years old, the usual marriageable age at the time. She had been carefully educated, could converse knowledgeably on a variety of subjects, including matters of philosophy, was musically talented and was interested in poetry and art.⁸ She possessed a charm that captivated many, providentially including her new husband. Judith came from a wealthy and influential family, the Welfs

of Bavaria. Her father, Count Welf, was of Frankish blood and had come to Bavaria from Alemannia where most of his family had settled.⁹ Her mother Heilwich was of Saxon nobility. For the Frankish royal house, she was a perfect candidate. It was also a propitious alliance, given the previous trouble in Bavaria that had culminated in Charlemagne's deposition of Duke Tassilo in 788, and also because Bavaria was east of the Rhine, on the frontier and outside the Frankish heartland.¹⁰ The connection between the Frankish court and Bavaria was further strengthened in 827 when a marriage was arranged between Louis' third son, known as Louis the German, king of Bavaria, and Judith's sister Emma.¹¹

Shortly after the marriage, the new bride was duly crowned queen and empress, and received the acclamation of the people. Henceforth, she would be known as Judith Augusta.¹² Her actions were destined to influence events during the remainder of her husband's reign, arguably some of the most turbulent years in Carolingian history. Whether her power was wielded for good or ill has been the source of much speculation and until fairly recently the argument for a negative influence has predominated.¹³ Judith has been regularly portrayed as the quintessentially ambitious mother, an unscrupulous and conniving woman who plunged the kingdom into

bloody civil war in order to carve out a place in the succession for her son Charles. Such a portrait, however, relies chiefly on the evidence of her enemies, much of which may be disregarded as the product of relentless propaganda intended to discredit her, and ignores the realities of the extraordinarily complex political situation in the reign of Louis the Pious. Important issues were at stake, and Judith was involved in them. The fact that Judith figures so prominently in the records of the time cannot be explained by mere maternal ambition. A brief examination of scholarship on Judith will give a context for this dissertation.

Although twentieth-century historians have rejected an explicitly pejorative characterization of Judith, they have not really acknowledged the position of power she occupied in Louis' reign. She has been left rather curiously adrift in the history of the time, almost an embarrassment, as if no one knows precisely what to do with her. While conceding that Judith may not have been solely bent on establishing her son on the throne at any cost, historians persisted in regarding her influence in generally negative terms. It was not until some fifty years ago that the French historian Louis Halphen questioned the bland acceptance of Judith's putatively evil intentions in his

1947 book *Charlemagne et l'Empire Carolingien*.¹⁴ It was enough to rekindle interest in the reign.

Two very important articles dealing with Louis' reign appeared about forty years ago. F. L. Ganshof's "Louis the Pious Reconsidered" sounded the clarion call to a reassessment of the reign, and Theodor Schieffer's "Die Krise des Karolingischen Imperiums" focused on the critical importance of the document of succession, the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817, and its ideal of imperial unity though he failed to acquit Judith of her destructive role.¹⁵ In his essay "Judith Augusta," Allen Cabaniss traced Judith's career but he also emphasized her negative influence.¹⁶ Gradually, however, her position began to be recognized. David Herlihy noted that Judith was "in her own right, a famous lady," because her son Charles could be identified in charters by reference to her alone, and Jo-Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple pointed out the fact that Judith was highly enough regarded to be able to purge herself of charges of adultery by means of a public oath.¹⁷

Three important studies dealing exclusively with the role of women in the early Middle Ages have helped dispel many lingering misconceptions about women in general and about selected women in particular, including Judith. They are now essential to any study on the subject. Silvia Konecny's

dissertation considers the lives of women of the Carolingian royal house and fills a notable hiatus in the scholarship of the era.¹⁸ Pauline Stafford's *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers* establishes a solid foundation for research about women with power in the early Middle Ages,¹⁹ and Suzanne Wemple's study of Frankish women traces the development of Frankish society through the experiences of women in the home and in the cloister.²⁰

Elizabeth Ward's essay on Judith in *Charlemagne's Heir* is the first important study to focus on Judith herself, and it should dispel forever the portrait of the evil empress.²¹ Ward's scholarship is impeccable and her objectivity readily apparent. In her examination of Judith's activities in the 820's, Ward demonstrates that Judith indeed had a role to play, but concludes that "what Judith had was influence, not power."²² This distinction seems overly subtle. As Louis' wife she had the most intimate access to him, and she had official duties as mistress of the king's household, an important position. It should be evident that these two roles already endow her with power. But Judith's "influence" on Louis went far beyond the traditional queenly attributes. Prolific evidence of her importance lies in the sources for the period, and that evidence surely indicates Judith wielded real power.²³

Undeniably a number of sources paint a less than laudatory picture of Judith, depicting her as an unscrupulous adventuress, which is scarcely surprising since it was written by her avowed enemies.²⁴ On the other hand, a notable portion of the surviving record shows Judith in a positive light but, curiously, these sources have generally been dismissed as mere flattery. It should be unnecessary to add that one works with extant sources and, barring other qualification, one might argue that if the positive evidence may be suspect, so may also be the negative. Cannot the positive evidence of those well-disposed toward Judith be accepted without undue prejudice? It is at least necessary to strike a balance, inasmuch as there were no impartial observers during the reign of Louis the Pious. All contemporary accounts were vigorously partisan, leaving the evidence open to interpretation. Source materials are not always what one would wish, as C. R. Dodwell notes in his excellent study of Anglo-Saxon art, where he observes that "our sources are always fitful and there are times when, like guttering candles, they seem to throw more shadows than light."²⁵ Those who have depicted Judith in a dark light dismissed evidence from extant sources that tells a different tale. There is no good reason for doing so.

Obviously, Judith is but one character in a larger drama, one that includes Louis the Pious and the various feuding factions, all involved in a struggle for power. For the purposes of this dissertation, I propose to define what I consider to be the basic framework within which Judith, Louis and the others played their historic roles. The foundation of the power struggle rests on two distinctively different perceptions of royal authority, the dichotomy between Louis' conception of his own power and that of the opposition. Within this structure, I believe that the chief events of his reign can be best understood. Both sides consisted of multiple factions, each with its alignment of members from the Frankish clergy and the Frankish nobility, and one or more of Louis' sons from his first marriage. The composition of these parties as well as their goals constantly changed during Louis' reign. For Louis' loyal supporters, or those who wished to see monarchical power remain in the hands of the king, Judith became the rallying point. For the reformers, or those who were attempting to gain control over the monarchy and establish a Church-dominated hierarchy, Judith was plainly an obstacle. The thread that runs throughout the entire conflict is the concept of the *imperium christianum* and who would determine the hierarchy of power. Did the bishops stand between God and king,

thereby making royal power subservient to the Church, or did the king stand directly under God, with complete authority over both Church and state?

Both sides believed in unity, that the empire was an entity and it was identical to society. Louis believed the ideal was embodied in his person and his opponents believed the Church embodied the ideal.²⁶

Most of the reign of Louis the Pious was characterized by this extended power struggle between clergy intent on interpolating themselves between the king and God, the king's ultimate source of power, and the proponents of traditional Frankish kingship as redefined by Charlemagne and embodied in Louis. To be sure, the lines of opposition did not fall neatly between ecclesiastical and lay persons. On the contrary, the whole period was characterized by shifting loyalties as the Carolingian state attempted to come to some sort of equilibrium in the wake of Charlemagne's comprehensive reform of society, but without Charlemagne's controlling hand.

In his creation of the Carolingian Empire, Charlemagne, like the Sorcerer's apprentice, had summoned a force only the most powerful monarch could control. He had forged the Frankish church into an instrument of reform in order that it might carry out his policies, for it was

the only institution in the realm with the resources to implement the reform program whose keystone was educational policy.²⁷ Under Charlemagne, however, the Church remained the servant of the state. But Charlemagne's was a very personal kingship, and Louis was not Charlemagne.²⁸ Indeed, by strengthening the church hierarchy, Charlemagne endowed it with influence sufficient to challenge his son for control of temporal power.

Matters were further complicated by Louis' earlier history. Since his accession to the throne of Aquitaine as a young boy, Louis had been in the hands of clerical advisors who had become accustomed to forming the inner circle of power. When Louis became emperor, he brought these men with him to Aachen, where they, allied with some of Charlemagne's supporters, dominated the imperial administration.²⁹ Not content merely to form the inner circle at court and rule through Louis, these men sought to gain direct control by interposing the Church hierarchy between the king and his source of power, God. In effect, it was they who would interpret the will of God for the king. Religious matters were not for the king to decide. That was the God-given right of the Church.

Involved with setting himself firmly on his father's throne and assuring that the kingdom would remain stable under the new rulership, Louis was

able to leave the mechanics of government chiefly as they were, or even to improve them. Many administrative offices and their activities were streamlined and became more efficient under Louis. For instance, the system of dispatching *missi dominici* throughout the kingdom was considerably expanded; a greater number of *missi* made more frequent trips. The importance of the central administration is attested by the number of official documents preserved in churches around the kingdom.³⁰ Since things were running smoothly, the reformers continued to dream their dreams. Their crowning achievement was the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817, which, in their eyes, guaranteed a unified Christian empire because it bound whoever was on the throne to its articles.³¹ Louis signed the document with his own hand³² and agreed to its principles because it reflected the situation at the time. As has been mentioned, he too believed in the ideal of unity. Thus, it suited his purposes for the time being to approve the *Ordinatio*; he could simply change things later as he wished, or so he believed.³³ However, the right of succession became the instrument by which the reform party sought to impose a more permanent control over the king. Neither Louis nor the bishops could have foreseen the disastrous results that would ensue. It is indeed ironic that the issue of succession -- what would happen *after*

Louis died -- plagued his entire reign and nearly destroyed it by crippling his capacity to rule. Ironical as well is the fact that most of the men responsible for the damage were motivated by what they thought to be good intentions.³⁴ Of course, the self-seekers were there in abundance, first among them Lothar, Pepin and Louis, the sons of Irmengard, but even they had their virtuous moments. Most deeply ironic, however, is that the actions of the men intent on preserving the unity of the empire ensured that it would be torn apart by partisan factions.

Charlemagne, whatever he had thought about Pope Leo III's intention to crown him emperor in Rome on Christmas day, 800, had kept power firmly in the hands of the monarchy when, in 813, he crowned Louis emperor.³⁵ Louis gave away this advantage, at least in the eyes of the reformers, when he allowed the pope to recrown him in 816; it could be argued that anointing made him emperor. Recent scholarship, however, seems to indicate that that Louis himself did not consider this ceremony constitutive.³⁶ Charlemagne, in the *Divisio Imperio* of 806, adhered strictly to Frankish tradition in dividing the royal patrimony equally among his three sons, declining to give any one of them the ascendancy by passing on the imperial title. This document may or may not reflect Charlemagne's final

intentions, since he always kept his eldest son Charles in his household, but we will never know.³⁷ In any event, both Charles and his brother Pepin, king of Italy, predeceased their father, and Charlemagne decided to strengthen Louis' position by including him in the emperorship. In the *Ordinatio Imperii*, Louis again worked to his own disadvantage by allowing the reformers to dictate the succession.

Even for a religious age, as noted by J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, the *Ordinatio Imperii* stands out in its solemnity and heavily religious overtones; it is clearly meant to represent the will of God, *not* the will of the king, and to contravene it would be "literally to dismember the body of Christ," for the temporal unity is but a reflection of the heavenly unity.³⁸ Thus the idea of imperial unity no longer resided in the person of the king, but in the document of succession. Frankish tradition had been set aside as well; one son, Lothar, was made imperial successor, with ascendancy over his brothers, who became sub-kings in the empire. On paper, at least, power to control the succession now resided with the bishops, who were the interpreters of God's will.

Frankish succession policy was not historically as divisive as it appears on the surface. The entire kingdom was thought of as a unit, the

regnum francorum, and the individual patrimonies assigned to the king's legitimate heirs were considered *sub-regna*.³⁹ If the Franks were threatened from without, they combined forces to repel a common enemy. Of course, there was always civil strife, but it was intermittent and never divided the Franks as a nation. Occasionally, as under Charlemagne or Louis, the various parts were reunited as a whole. Though no provision for an imperial successor was made in 806, the intent of the *Divisio* was not three entirely separate kingdoms. The reality may not have reflected this situation, but it was nevertheless the way the Franks conceived it.

The ideal of imperial unity that played such a prominent role in the reign of Louis the Pious had taken root and flowered during the reign of Charlemagne, an era that had more than its share of visionaries, and none with a greater vision than the king. This issue will be addressed more fully in chapters one and two. Suffice it to say here that no one of any importance in the early ninth century would have opposed this ideal. They were all enamored of the *imperium christianum*. They were not all responsible, however, for its subversion toward more temporal ends, i. e. control of power. This was the work of the bishops, who placed their own interpretation of imperial unity above all else.

Unity of empire in the eyes of the churchmen, then, was in fact dependent on depriving the king of his right to control the succession because the *Ordinatio Imperii* was a sacred document and could not be broken by man. They also believed that the Church had the right to interpret God's will as expressed in the *Ordinatio*. This belief was strengthened by the fact that Louis agreed to the sanctity of the document and swore that it would not be possible that "a partition made by man, out of tenderness or consideration for one of his sons, could break the unity of the empire created by God."⁴⁰ Louis' possible reasons for agreeing to this will be discussed below. It is clear, however, that none of his actions at the time indicates that he believed his power to be diminished. Rather, he continued to believe that he alone embodied the unity of the empire and its God-given authority.

The paradox at the center of this agreement is that to create a strong and unified state, the Church would have to stand between the king and his source of power. In other words, the Church would ultimately have control over the state. This act, in effect, divested Louis of his legitimacy as ruler. The subsequent actions of the churchmen certainly indicate they believed that legitimacy to be questionable. That having been done, it is no wonder

that, in accepting the churchmen's interpretation, Louis' sons rose up against him. Louis was not a weak monarch; the Church undercut his authority and thereby gave legitimacy to the rebellious actions of his sons. In fact, important members of the Frankish episcopate openly sanctioned the rebellions. It was not unity of empire that Louis and Judith were fighting, but the attempt to wrest temporal power from the king. The churchmen insisted that, in order to have a stable and strong state, the Church must have the higher authority. In adhering to his own conception of royal power and to the sacred and inviolate nature of his God-given destiny, Louis was compelled to fight.⁴¹ He was strengthened in this not only by his unshakeable belief in his sacral kingship but by the unfailing loyalty and support of his empress Judith.

The unique tension between Church and State so characteristic of the Middle Ages in general became constant in the reign of Louis the Pious. It was not, however, the classic opposition between the king and the pope. During this period the institutional church was represented by two distinct groups: the local clergy, that is, the Frankish episcopate, and the papacy. These two groups did not often act in accord with each other. The bishops were in Francia; the pope was not. The struggle for power, then, was

between Louis and the reforming clergy. The pope played a role in local Frankish politics only when called on by the antagonists themselves.⁴² The conflict between the reformers and those who wished to maintain the king's authority untrammelled by bishops constituted the fundamental opposition. The interests of all other groups, including Louis' three sons from his first marriage, revolved around that fundamental issue. It is, therefore, in slightly different form, a dress rehearsal for that most famous of all Church-state confrontations, the Investiture Controversy. Louis was, in effect, three times brought to Canossa: at Attigny in 822, in the rebellion of 830 and at the "*Lügenfeld*," or "Field of Lies," in 833. But he always emerged victorious, and his conception of royal power was not modified in any way. The struggle, I believe, may have been decided very early in the reign, had it not been for Louis' marriage to Judith and the subsequent birth of their son Charles.⁴³ It was the proof of Judith's fertility, a daughter born around 820,⁴⁴ that precipitated the opposition into action in 822 -- the penance at Attigny -- and set into motion forces that caused continuous civil strife in Carolingian lands during Louis' reign and were to have repercussions into the next century and beyond.

Contrary to established opinion, then, Judith was not the villainess, but the heroine of her age. By focusing the efforts of Louis' loyal supporters, she staved off church domination of the monarchy for some time to come. The civil wars of Louis' reign were caused chiefly by the attempted usurpation of power on the part of the bishops and not by the struggle for control of the succession. Succession was a part of the fight because they made it so, and they certainly had willing accomplices in Louis' three older sons, but this was tangential to the main issue -- the power struggle between Church and state.

Some may see Louis' reign as the beginning of the end, but it was in reality a time of consolidation and continuity. One need only look at the prodigious output of Louis' chancery to see that the business of state was being carried on, and in an unbroken manner.⁴⁵ Once the foundations were secured, the future shape of western Europe was determined by this continuity between the reigns of Charlemagne and his son Louis. Unfortunately, this shape was obscured for a thousand years by the disastrous division of the Carolingian Empire among Louis' sons after his death. With the creation of a middle kingdom, Lotharingia, and the elevation of Lothar to co-emperorship over his brothers, two very great

mistakes, the *Ordinatio* set the stage for disaster. Combined with the subsequent birth of Charles the Bald, the document unleashed destructive forces that culminated in the Treaty of Verdun in 843 and the splintering of Europe. However, the shape of the empire of Charlemagne and Louis was never lost. "It cannot be altogether accidental," writes Philippe Wolff, "that the old structure built up since the Middle Ages on Carolingian foundations should have emerged again in the mid-twentieth century as a practicable base on which to build a new Europe."⁴⁶

It has been said that "the mutual interaction of intellectual ideals and social realities is arguably history's most abiding theme."⁴⁷ This theme -- the clash of ideal with reality -- underscored the political turmoil that characterized the entire reign of Louis the Pious. In one sense, both Louis and Judith were victims of fate. Given the calamitous events with which they had to contend, and the unending struggle for power that shaped the world of practical politics during this period, they had difficult roles to play. I hope to show that they played them very well indeed. A fitting metaphor for the reign of Louis the Pious can be found in *Chartres: The Masons Who Built a Legend* by John James, describing the mortar used in medieval times; it was not made of cement but of lime and stayed green for a long time.

Some thirteenth-century mortar above the vaults at Soissons was found not fully set after it was damaged in the 1914 war, and that was after seven centuries. Yet without weak mortar, paradoxical as it may seem, many of these mediaeval buildings would have collapsed year ago. They have all settled and moved over the years, and these mortars have cracked easily, and then proceeded to re-set in the new position. Alive and adaptable, the buildings would adjust themselves to the stresses placed on them to a surprising degree, so that circumstances that would have destroyed a stronger building would merely have bent a mediaeval one.⁴⁸

ENDNOTES

1. The pronounced spirituality of the early ninth century is incisively invoked in J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), ch. 13.
2. This will be discussed in depth in chapter one.
3. Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici Imperatoris*, ed. G. Pertz. *MGH SS*, v. 2, III, 44:2.
4. Kenneth Clark, *Civilisation: a Personal View* (New York, 1969), p. 20.
5. Despite the eloquent plea for tolerance of Quintus Aurelius Symmachus in 382, the statue was removed from the altar in the Senate. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, threatened to deprive the emperor Valentinian II of Christian support if he agreed with the pagan senators.
6. Details of the marriage of Louis and Judith can be found in Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. G. Pertz. *MGH SS* v. 2, ch. 26; Thegan, *Vita Ludiwici imperatoris*, ed. G. Pertz. *MGH SS* v. 2, ch. 32; and in the various annals *s. a.* 819.
7. Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hludowici pii*, ed. E. Dümmler. *MGH PLAC*, v. 2, IV, 763, says "*pulcheriuna*;" Thegan, ch. 26, "*pulchra valde*"; *AMpr*, ed. B. Simson *MGH SSRG*, *s. a.* 830, "*pulchram nimis*," for example.
8. Walahfrid Strabo, *De imagine Tetrici*. *MGH PLAC*, v. 2, 202-204, 376; *AMpr*,
s. a. 830.
9. K. F. Werner, "Important Royal Families in the Kingdom of Charlemagne," in T. Reuter, ed., *The Medieval Nobility* (North Holland, N.Y., 1973), pp. 161-65.

10. *Annales Regni Francorum*, ed. G. Pertz. *MGH SRG* 7, s. a. 818-823 are full of accounts of the Pannonian revolt of Lieudwit until he died in 823. Louis could surely use the assistance of the Bavarian forces of Welf in this struggle. All during the reign of Louis, the frontier areas were constantly being threatened by encroaching enemies. Louis did not continue the policy of conquest of his father. Hence he had no new lands with which to reward followers and had continually to alienate the royal fisc.
11. *Annales Xantenses*, ed. B. Simson. *MGH SRG*, s. a. 827.
12. *AMpr*, s. a. 830, "semper Augusta."
13. This negative influence was unforgettably portrayed by Ernst Dümmler in *Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches* (Berlin, 1862): Judith "...lit the torch of fraternal civil war in the imperial house."
14. Louis Halphen, *Charlemagne et l'Empire Carolingien* (Paris, 1947), pp. 175-76.
15. F. L. Ganshof, "Louis the Pious Reconsidered," in *The Carolingians and the French Monarchy* (London 1971), pp. 261 ff.; T. Schieffer, "Die Krise des karolingischen Imperiums," in J. Engel and H. M. Klinkenberg, eds., *Aus Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für G. Kallen* (Bonn, 1957), pp. 10 ff.
16. Allen Cabaniss, *Judith Augusta: A Daughter-in-Law of Charlemagne and Other Essays* (New York, 1974), pp. 7-50.
17. David Herlihy, "Land, Family, and Women in Continental Europe, 701-1200," and Jo-Ann McNamara and Suzanne F. Wemple, "Marriage and Divorce in the Frankish Kingdom," in Susan Mosher Stuard (Philadelphia, 1976), pp. 19-20 and p. 106.
18. Silvia Konecny, *Die Frauen des karolingischen Könighauses: Die politische Bedeutung der Ehe und die Stellung in der fränkischen Herrscherfamilie von 7. bis 10. Jahrhundert* (Diss. University of Vienna, 1976).

19. Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, Ga., 1983).
20. Suzanne Fonay Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister 500-900* (Philadelphia, 1985).
21. Elizabeth Ward, "Caesar's Wife: The Career of the Empress Judith, 819-829," in Godman and Collins, eds., *Charlemagne's Heir* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 205-27.
22. Ward, "Judith," p. 227.
23. The sources, whatever their bias, portray a strong and determined lady. P. Stafford, *Queens*, pp. 93-94 discusses Judith's case and observes that "palace politics are central to all politics."
24. Judith's most avowed enemies were Archbishop Agobard of Lyon and Paschasius Radbertus of Corbie, a disciple of Wala, one of Louis' chief opponents in the power struggle. They will be quoted at length in chapters three and four. P. Stafford, *Queens*, p. 3, is eloquent on the unfair treatment of women in this period: "Every form of bias and distortion enters in: malicious gossip, political propaganda, deliberate suppression of facts, inadequate knowledge, blatant antifeminism, even simple lies." And, further, "Character assassination was a perennial weapon in their armory: great men...could always be attacked through their wives and mothers. As easy targets, royal women became scapegoats for the actions of their men." She also points out the insidious distortions deliberately utilized regarding images of females and their actions. All of these weapons were brought to bear against Judith, as we shall see.
25. C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New Perspective* (Ithaca, 1982, repr. 1985), p. 15.

26. It is apparent throughout the Astronomer's account that he accepts Louis' conception that the Christian empire was a single entity under the rule of a *rex gratia Dei*. Others who supported wholeheartedly this conception of kingship were Jonas of Orléans, *De Institutione Regia*, in J. Reviron, ed., *Jonas d'Orléans et son «De Institutione Regia»* (Paris, 1930), pp. 138, 157, and Hrabanus Maurus, *Epistolae*. *MGH Epist.*, v. 5.16, pp. 416-420. Perhaps the very term *imperium christianum* is an oxymoron!

27. The most important capitularies concerning education are *Admonitio Generalis*, no. 19, pp. 33-34, and *Epistola De Litteris Colendis*, nos. 19 and 29, pp. 33-34, pp. 52-53. in *MGH Cap.*, v. 1. The latter was a mandate sent to the bishops of the kingdom.

28. Charlemagne's conflation of church and state is clearly stated in his famous letter to Pope Leo III, which is quoted in full in ch. 1. Charlemagne was the boss, and Leo his helper. On the other hand, Louis speaks of himself and the pope as partners.

29. The alliances will be discussed fully in ch. 2.

30. K. F. Werner, "Hludovicus Augustus: Gouverner l'empire chrétien - Idées et réalités," in *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 6-8. See also E. Müller, "Beiträge zu den Diplomen Ludwigs des Frommen," *Neues Archiv*, 40 (1916), p. 379. Werner contrasts the constant peregrinations of Charlemagne to the far-flung areas of the empire with Louis' very infrequent ones, that he made to attend assemblies. Therefore, the chancery had to be operating very efficiently indeed. See also Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family who Forged Europe*, trans. M. I. Allen (Philadelphia, 1983), p. 147.

31. *Ordinatio Imperii*, in *MGH Cap.*, no. 136. Also J. Böhmmer and E. Mühlbacher, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter den Karolingern 751-918*, 2nd ed. (Innsbruck, 1908, repr. 1966), no. 650.

32. The term used was *propiis manibus*.

33. cf. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 235-36, "It may surely have been Louis's [sic] conviction that he and nobody else encapsulated this [imperial] unity that enabled him to go back on his own *Ordinatio* without feeling that any principle had been abandoned."

34. Agobard, *Liber Apologeticus*, ed G. Waitz, in *MGH SS*, v. 15, pp. 274-279. Agobard is an excellent example of what the Germans would call a *Prinzipienreiter*, a moralist who adheres to his ideal with no thought of the potential cost. His avowed intention was to avoid bloodshed and secure peace in the empire, and this could only be accomplished through preservation of the imperial unity.

35. *RFA s. a.* 813 says: "The lord emperor Charles placed the crown of empire upon his son Louis." Trans. in P. D. King, *Charlemagne: Translated Sources* (Lancaster, UK, 1987), p. 166. Astronomer, *Vita*, writes: "...he crowned him with the imperial diadem...", trans. P. D. King, *Life of Louis*, p. 179.

36. When Louis was crowned by his father in 813 and was made co-emperor, it was considered constitutive, but it is questionable whether the churchmen considered it to be so. When Louis was deposed in 833, anointing was not mentioned as an impediment. Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1969), p. .

37. *Divisio Regni*, ed G. H. Pertz, *MGH Cap., Legum Sectio II*, v. 1, no. 45.

38. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 231, calls the ideal of unity the most significant concept of the Renaissance, and the *imperium christianum* "...the Corpus Christi, indivisible and sacred."

39. Werner, "Hludovicus Augustus," p. 27. Nithard's account, accepts the premise of a set of *regna* ruled by brothers in peaceful coexistence. Charlemagne's *Divisio Regni* of 806 anticipated just such an arrangement, for he did not pass on the imperial title and so did not raise one son above the others.

40. *Ordinatio*, *MGH, Cap.* no. 136.

41. Ermoldus Nigellus, *Carmen in Honorem Hludowici Christianissimi Caesaris Augusti*, ed. E. Faral, *Les Classiques de l'histoire de France* (Paris, 1942), writing no later than 828, saw the fulfillment of Charlemagne's *imperium christianum* in Louis' reign. Louis was head of Christendom and liken to one of Christ's apostles. Although Ermoldus was probably writing his panegyric to gain favor, he nevertheless reflects the thinking of the time and knew how to portray Louis as he would like to be seen.

42. Pope Gregory IV was persuaded by Lothar to come to Francia in 833, supposedly to help keep the peace. Astronomer, *Vita*, III, 48:1.

43. K. F. Werner, "Die Nachkommen Karls des Grossen bis um Jahr 1000," in W. Braunfels, ed., *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben* (Düsseldorf, 1967), v. 4, p. 447. The exact date of Gisela's birth is not known, but the consensus seems to be before 822. Cabaniss, *Judith Augusta*, p. 10, wrongly names Judith's daughter Hildegard. The source is not cited.

44. Louis called himself *Divina ordinante providentia Imperator Augustus*. Also, see Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), p. 229, "... the unity of his Christian Empire was encapsulated in his person."

45. *MGH Cap.*, for the capitularies and Riché, *The Carolingians*, p. 147, notes that documents from Louis' chancery had better organization and expression than previously. Werner, "Hludovici Augustus," pp. 6-7, notes the great activity of the reorganized chancery and the improvement in quality of its documents.

46. Philippe Wolff, *The Awakening of Europe*, trans. Anne Carter (Harmondsworth, 1968, repr. 1985), p. 19.

47. P. Wormald, foreword to *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald, with D. Bullough and R. Collins (Oxford, 1983), p. xi. Wormald points out that Wallace-Hadrill never let students or friends forget this basic tenet.

48. John James, *Chartres: The Masons Who Built a Legend* (London, 1982; repr. 1985), p. 43.

CHAPTER I

REX GRATIA DEI

The nature of royal power has been among the most widely debated topics in history, most especially in the history of the Middle Ages. In fact, the concept of kingship is central to any study of the medieval period because it permeates not only the political structure but the social, religious and artistic worlds of medieval man as well. For western European civilization, the archetypal figure of kingship has always been Charlemagne. It was he who combined the power of the Roman emperor and the power of the Germanic war leader/king together with the transcending ideals of Christianity and established the paradigm for royalty throughout the Middle Ages. Charlemagne began his career as joint king of the Franks with his brother Carloman and ended it as master of virtually all of Christian Europe

in the West. By the time of his death, Charlemagne had transformed not only the political configuration of Europe but every aspect of society and culture as well. No other figure approaches him in impact and influence, and those who tried followed his model.¹ The two monarchs who adhered most faithfully to Charlemagne's conception of kingship were his son Louis the Pious and his grandson and namesake, Charles, known to posterity as Charles the Bald. Integral to this conception in all three reigns was the formation and maintenance of a specific society and culture dependent on the king. The flowering in society and the arts known as the Carolingian Renaissance was a royal endeavor, sponsored and funded by the king.² It began in the reign of Charlemagne, flourished in the reign of Louis and reached its culmination under Charles the Bald. Louis and his second wife Judith are the focus of this dissertation. In order to demonstrate the continuity of Carolingian sacral kingship, their son Charles will be treated in the conclusion. The first chapter is therefore concerned with Frankish history and Charlemagne's fashioning of the prototype.³

In following Charlemagne's model, Louis the Pious was very much his father's son. Both saw their power as absolute; the earthly king was a reflection of the heavenly king. Their kingship was sacral; there was no

distinction between temporal and ecclesiastical power. As long as royal power was wielded on God's authority and for God's purposes, and in this Charlemagne was every bit as pious as Louis, it was absolute. For the Carolingians the best models were from the Old Testament. David, the warrior king, was perhaps the favorite image, and Charlemagne was in fact called David by those in his court circle. Another model was Solomon, for his wisdom as judge. So too was the lawgiver Josiah, who assumed a religious as well as secular role among his people. Following these models necessitated, most importantly, the recognition that God-given authority demanded a corresponding responsibility to God for its proper usage.

The sacral nature of Louis' conception of kingship and the strength he drew from his faith in it have unhappily been obscured by the long shadow cast by his father. Merely being heir to Charlemagne was cause for invidious comparisons, and such was the case with Louis the Pious, both in his own lifetime and in historical accounts of subsequent ages. No monarch, however capable, could have survived comparison with Charlemagne. Representations of Charlemagne as *imperator gloriosissimus* abound in the art and literature of the Middle Ages,⁴ and these give us insight into the medieval ideal of sacral kingship that Louis took for granted. In the two

centuries after his death, the image of Charles gradually achieved sacred status. In the *Song of Roland*, for example, Charlemagne is portrayed as a king/priest, the ideal Christian monarch and the direct vassal of Christ. He has the power to give absolution for sin with the sign of the cross and to bless the twelve peers before battle.⁵ At the end of the poem, Charlemagne exacts vengeance for the deaths of his knights at Roncevalles; he has the power to act for God.

According to legend, in the year 1000 the Saxon emperor Otto III opened Charlemagne's tomb in the chapel at Aachen. He found the uncorrupted body of the great king seated on his throne, under a golden arch, holding the symbols of both political and sacerdotal authority -- the orb and a model of his church.⁶ In these accounts, the palatine chapel iconographically represents an enormous reliquary, synecdoche for the Tomb of the Holy Sepulcher, and Charlemagne is *fons et origo* of the Holy Roman Empire as Christ had been for Christianity.⁷ He was even canonized, albeit by an antipope, in 1165 during the reign of the emperor Frederick Barbarossa.⁸ Early thirteenth-century stained glass windows at the cathedrals of Chartres and Strassburg portray Charlemagne in Majesty, directly beneath the hand of God, a king/priest iconographically derivative of

the Romanesque figure of Christ in Majesty (as at Moissac, for instance), with cross nimbus and crown and bearing the imperial orb with cross as Christ bears the host.⁹ The Carolingian Empire becomes the metonymy for Christendom. By the end of the Middle Ages Charlemagne had in fact reached apotheosis.

When the great German artist Albrecht Dürer received a commission in 1510 from the city of Nuremberg for two portraits to be hung in the chamber where the imperial regalia were displayed -- one of the emperor Sigismund, who had entrusted the regalia to the city for safe-keeping in 1424, and the other of Charlemagne, traditionally the first to have worn them -- he painted a true likeness of Sigismund, but he portrayed Charlemagne as God the Father.¹⁰ Dürer's portrait represents the culmination of the development in the Middle Ages of a tradition reaching back to Charlemagne's lifetime. There was scarcely a king after Charlemagne who did not attempt to establish a genealogical or traditional relationship with him. Both the German and French dynasties hailed him as progenitor. Again and again, whenever Europe was faced with a crisis, Charlemagne appeared in the guise of Savior: his image was constantly resurrected and refurbished to fit new circumstances.¹¹ Like the British King Arthur,

Charlemagne became a "once and future king." The tradition continues into the twentieth century. In 1965, marking the nine hundredth anniversary of Charlemagne's canonization, the Charlemagne Prize was established to recognize those who make major contributions to the cause of European unity.

From this tradition there emerges a historical Charlemagne and a legendary Charlemagne, and both figures are larger than life.¹² Historians have traditionally drawn a distinction between the two, but in many ways the Charlemagne of legend is not the creation of later centuries but of Charlemagne himself. Not only did he fashion his rulership in his own time, but he also created, from a *tabula rasa* at his accession, a new model of sacred kingship hitherto unknown in the West that contains many of the elements of the subsequent legend. The idea of self-fashioning was not alien to those in the early Middle Ages: churchmen wrote mirrors of princes precisely for that purpose. The first such *speculum principis* known, in fact, was written for Charlemagne by the poet Smaragdus in the early ninth century.¹³ Alcuin wrote no *speculum principis* for Charlemagne because he truly believed Charlemagne did not need one; he inherently knew exactly how to be the ideal Christian monarch.¹⁴ However it was created, the historical/legendary

figure of Charlemagne, embellished and amplified, became the ideal of Christian monarchy.

Simultaneously, and scarcely surprising, the greater Charlemagne became, the weaker Louis became. Unfair comparisons to Charlemagne prompted later historians to name him, at best, "the great man's lesser son."¹⁵ But the intentional thrust of Louis' reign was continuity with all that Charlemagne had established, and that continuity, as mentioned above, rested chiefly on Louis' conception of his own power after the model of his father. The divisiveness of Louis' reign was caused not by any inherent weakness in Louis but by religious issues, in which the priestly nature of Frankish kingship played a crucial role. To understand why, it is necessary to examine the nature of Charlemagne's kingship and the influences that shaped its components. These were embedded in the Frankish past.

The formation of medieval Europe resulted from the expression of an internal vitality too often dismissed or obscured by the persistent usage of the pejorative phrase "the dark ages." Far from being a dark age, the early centuries of the medieval millennium were a dynamic and creative era that determined the pattern that prevailed for an entire epoch in the life of western Europe. The collision of the Germanic with the Roman, and the

Christian with both, produced cultural interminglings that left no aspect of life unchanged. Before Charlemagne, the Germanic peoples of Europe absorbed the remnants of the world of classical antiquity they had helped to bring down, but the cross-fertilizations of diverse cultural strains imposed, of themselves, no new direction on society. Charlemagne combined the most dynamic and vital elements in these varied cultural strains, turning society from what Richard Sullivan has called the "idle drifting of the 'dark ages'" to a conscious awareness of itself.¹⁶ By the scope of his achievement, Charlemagne justly deserved to inherit Roman *auctoritas*.

Such was Charlemagne's achievement, in fact, that never before or since has so much of Europe come under the domination of a single mind and purpose. Charlemagne's conception of kingship and what he believed to be the power inherent in it were central to this achievement. His appreciation of kingship and the portentous responsibilities he associated with it incorporated ideas of kingship derivative from his Germanic heritage, from the Roman concepts of *auctoritas* and *potestas*, *imperium* and *lex*, and, from Christianity, a philosophy of God-given power and accountability, as well as a Christian sense of purpose. What followed from Charlemagne's amalgamation of these ideas was a degree of absolutism that was unique,

since, unlike others before and after him, he truly dominated Church and state.

Absolute power in itself, however, is not remarkable. Frequently it has been synonymous with capricious government and gratuitous inhumanity, power abused, misused and rarely beneficial. Charlemagne's uniqueness consists in self-imposed restraints on the exercise of his own power, restraints that he could have lifted had he chosen. But he did not so choose, because his sense of power, however Germanic in origin, was clearly Christian in inspiration and universalist in scope. Universalism derived in varying measure from both Roman law and the universal brotherhood of Christian souls. "He was a realist who governed his kingdom in an autonomous way, in which the Christian element in its Roman complexion played a vital role."¹⁷ As king, Charlemagne saw himself as God's deputy, father of his people, bearing responsibility for their welfare. The destiny of his subjects, of course, was the destiny of Christian souls, and responsibility for this destiny rested as much with Charlemagne as with the Church; more so, in fact, because his was the ultimate responsibility for salvation, and he never ceased exhorting both churchmen, including the pope, and lay subjects to Christian behavior.

In any event, in their own conception of the *via regia*, churchmen themselves drew parallels between God and king. In the Carolingian era, moreover, the Church emphasized God the Father, almighty ruler, king of heaven. Christ was perceived in equally exalted form, as Christ Pantocrator,¹⁸ conqueror and creator, not the suffering and crucified God who humbly accepted his fate. The earliest *laudes regiae* reflect the position of churchmen: "*Rex regum, Christus vincit; Rex noster, Christus vincit.*"¹⁹ The king and Christ held corresponding positions within an overarching hierarchy and the *laudes regiae* consciously evoked the parallel. Given these several identifications and the multiple cultural strains that combined both to confer and legitimate royal authority, it is evident how Charlemagne could perceive himself as leader of western Christendom in both a temporal and religious way. We will see later that his son Louis accepted this mantle without question.

A sacral aura has always surrounded kingship. In traditional Germanic society, the king was not separate from the community. Rather, the king and the people together composed the *Volk*, a Germanic conception, vague and ill-defined and permeated with religious significance.²⁰ The traditions of the *Volk* were embodied in the law, ancient authority that could be

interpreted but never created. Even as the expressed wish of the king, law was thought to arise through the people, for kingship itself arose from the people and was one with the people under the law. The good fortune of the *Volk* was governed by the relationship of the king to the deity, good fortune constituting evidence that the king, and thus also the people, enjoyed divine favor.²¹ Moreover, the king's god was the people's god. The unitary nature of the community precluded religious pluralism.²²

The sacral function of the Germanic king was more important than either his political or military functions, even though success in battle was both a prerequisite to kingship and a contingency upon which the sacral nature of kingship rested. Sacral aura, therefore, was partly at least a reflection of success, particularly as warrior. Such a king enjoyed a kind of absolute power and might pursue his ends using whatever means he desired so long as his efforts were attended by success.²³ A king who failed to bring good fortune to the *Volk*, however, either as warrior or in the exercise of some other function vital to the well-being of the community, had obviously experienced a fundamental failure bound up with his sacral nature.²⁴ This meant he could no longer serve as protector of the community, since he had

fallen out of divine favor. A king whose god had failed him was removed through what has been called "the Germanic right of resistance."²⁵

Both the principles of heredity and election were brought with the migrating peoples into western Europe. Being of a specific bloodline conferred an inherent right to be considered for the kingship, while acclamation by the community conferred the title. In reality, the selection of king probably fluctuated between true election and simple recognition by the people.²⁶ At what point the power of the community to elect its king freely underwent restriction of "king-worthiness" to a specific family is uncertain, but that it occurred is confirmed by linguistic evidence. Words for king that derived from the Indo-European stem *reg-s*, to rule or protect, were supplanted by words denoting "of the kinship," as in the old Germanic word *cuning*.²⁷ Writing to Charlemagne in the year 798, Alcuin of York summed up the essence of the transformation of society from the Germanic to the medieval: "Populus iuxta sanctiones divinas ducendus est non sequendus; et ad testimonium personae magis eliguntur honeste. Nec audiendi que solent dicere 'Vox populi, vox Dei,' cum tumultuositas vulgi semper insaniae proxima sit."²⁸ The people are to be led, not followed. The ascending order of Germanic society had been replaced by a descending,

hierarchical order, in accordance with Christian cosmology and Roman practice. In the new definition of kingship, the king derived his power, not from the people, but from God. He was *rex gratia Dei*, a term Charlemagne was the first to use.²⁹ He was certainly the first to understand fully the implications of the new power.

The sacral nature of Germanic kingship had expedited the acceptance of Christianity among the people. It was, after all, the god of the successful king who visited good fortune upon the people ruled by that king, and the people dutifully adopted the king's god as their own. The conversion of the people followed directly upon the king's conversion, to be sure nominally, but in the case of conversion to Christianity, ritual conversion undertaken by missionaries would not have been possible without the king's active cooperation and support.³⁰ The role of the king in the new religion was analogous to his position in the old. The sacral function of the Germanic king may have been altered by the Church to fit the needs of the new Christian society, but it remained the essential component of the definition of kingship. For some while, the king still served as the link between the deity and the people; only the source of his power had changed.³¹ The Christian god, however, was far more powerful than any Germanic pagan

deity had been, for He came with the organization of the Church behind Him. Bad fortune was no longer an excuse for the people to remove the king; it had become a just punishment for their own sins.

Conversion of the Franks occurred under Clovis at the end of the fifth century, nearly three hundred years before Charlemagne came to the throne.³² As head of a loosely-knit Frankish confederation in Gaul, Clovis sought a way to consolidate his power. The long decline of Roman imperial government left what remained of authority in the hands of local bishops, more or less by default.³³ Therefore, the Church hierarchy, which mimicked the Roman, emerged from the process as the sole local governing agency still functioning in Gaul. Conversion gave Clovis allegiance of the bishops and control over whatever political structure they had maintained, and it gave him sanction to extend Merovingian power at the expense of the Arian Germans around him.³⁴ As a result, Clovis built a kingdom that was not equalled by any of his dynastic successors.

To their ultimate misfortune, the Merovingians were more ambitious than farsighted and they remained tied to their Germanic past. Although Christian kings, they gave only nominal support to the repression of paganism among the people.³⁵ Additionally, they treated the Frankish

Church as a national church, neglecting relations with Rome. Their kingship had been built on successful war leadership and wealth brought in by political expansion, but this base of power gradually eroded through the dispersion of the royal fisc to buy support among the growing numbers of magnates and by repeated divisions of the kingdom as part of the family patrimony. The incessant internecine warfare that characterized Merovingian times resulted in a steady, though uneven, decline in central authority, and power increasingly passed into the hands of the mayors of the palace, whose position originally entailed management of the king's household but which assumed political functions with the expansion of the kingdom.

The rise of the Arnulfings, or Carolingians as they came to be known after their most famous son, resulted as much from their astute political maneuverings as from the ineffectuality of the later Merovingians. As mayors of the palace in Austrasia, they were able to pursue a policy of patronage of the most important churches and monasteries, a policy that gave them a permanent base of power. Charles Martel's victory over the Moors near Poitiers in 733,³⁶ and his newly-won control over the mayor's office in Neustria, assured the political and military ascendancy of his family.

Although nominal conversion of the Franks took place under Clovis, in point of fact the Carolingians presided over the systematic absorption of the Frankish kingdom into the Christian orbit.³⁷ By the reign of Pepin the Short, all the dioceses and most of the abbeys of the kingdom were in Carolingian hands.³⁸ Charter evidence for the period suggests that "the last Merovingian royal charters only confirm privileges whilst those of the Arnulfings make new grants."³⁹ Their loss of power did not necessarily diminish the Merovingians in Frankish eyes; shadow kingship had some precedent in Germanic tradition.⁴⁰ So long as the nation itself prospered and enjoyed military success, all in the name of the king, divine favor had evidently not been lost. That the Carolingians ruled *de facto* and not *de jure* for several decades before they finally claimed the throne suggests several things: that usurpation of the title of a living king was unusual; that the Germanic "right of resistance" was not taken lightly, and shadow kingship was preferable; and that the role of the people in the selection of kings was changing owing to Christian influence. Pepin undoubtedly had the support of important Franks, but he needed further justification for claiming the kingship. In actual fact, the fall of the Merovingians and the accession of Pepin to the Frankish throne were not accomplished according to Germanic

tradition, but with the intervention of the Church. Adherence to Germanic tradition was no longer enough; the world was changing and the Merovingians failed to change with it. When the papacy turned to the Franks for help, it had no use for a powerless dynasty. The Lombard threat to Rome was increasing day by day, and the pope could no longer rely on the Byzantines for military assistance. The compact arranged by Pepin and Pope Zacharias in their famous exchange of letters sealed the fate of the Merovingians. Their downfall can be seen in the same context as their ascendancy: the Church deserted them in 751 just as it had embraced them 250 years earlier.⁴¹

Given the sacral nature of Germanic kingship, the change from one ruling dynasty to another was an event of uncommon religious significance. Christianity had already been building on a solid Germanic foundation when Fortunatus wrote that the Merovingian Childebert, "justly called king and priest, though a layman, carried out the work that pertains to religion."⁴² Now, ritual acts attended the introduction of the new order. Long hair, emblematic of Merovingian kingship, vanished with the tonsuring of the last of the *reges criniti*. More important, however, to the old Germanic traditions of kingmaking was added a new Christian ritual -- anointing. As Samuel had

anointed Saul, so the popes now anointed the Frankish kings. By anointing Pepin, St. Boniface and later Pope Stephen II made him the elect of God as well as the elected of the people.⁴³ Pepin himself later wrote, "It is manifest to all men that, by anointing, Divine Providence has raised us to the throne."⁴⁴ Pope Stephen reinforced this notion when he anointed Pepin's sons Charles and Carloman, quoting from the first epistle of Peter: "You are a holy race, and a royal priesthood."⁴⁵ Not only was the king elevated to a new status, however; so also the entire Frankish nation. The Franks became the new Israelites, the Chosen People of God, destined to lead western Europe into a new world order.⁴⁶

Of all the Germanic peoples of Europe, the Franks proved to be most receptive to the Romano-Christian cosmology. Part of this susceptibility no doubt followed from extended exposure to the superior numbers of Gallo-Romans among whom they lived, part to the work of St. Boniface and others in the reorganization of the Frankish episcopate.⁴⁷ It may also have been the result of the "intellectual stagnation" that characterized Frankish lands throughout the first half of the eighth century. There were no literary achievements worthy of mention, and the educational level of even the clergy was minimal. Certainly there was no cultural achievement to compare with

that of the Visigoths of Spain or the Anglo-Saxons in Northumbria, Mercia and Kent.⁴⁸ Christianity merged with the Frankish national mythology and gave the Franks an ideology and a sense of purpose they had hitherto lacked. It also propelled them to the center of European affairs.

The transformation of Frankish society into Christian society in ideological terms signified the transformation of the Frankish people into the *populus Dei*, the Chosen People of God. Although the beginnings of the new society can be traced to the agreement between Pepin and Pope Zacharias, it was Charlemagne who fully realized the implications of that agreement. Charlemagne alone grasped the meaning of *rex gratia Dei*: God had chosen him to rule. It was no longer the role of the people to choose, but merely to obey.⁴⁹ Pepin had needed the assistance of the Church and the consent of Frankish magnates to seize power. Charlemagne needed neither help nor consent to maintain it. He regarded his actions as part of a divinely-given mission, and he had the power to enforce them. Ganshof says that Charlemagne's reign represents "the first conscious effort to shape the character of society on ideological grounds" in the West.⁵⁰ The merging of the aims of Church and state transformed not only society, but kingship as well, and it was this concept of priestly kingship that Louis inherited.

Charlemagne may have accepted the role that the Church assigned to him, but he enlarged that role to a far greater extent than the Church would have wished. In Charlemagne's mind, and in good Germanic tradition, there was no separation between temporal and ecclesiastical power. This is evident in the *Capitulare Generale*, issued scarcely a year after he came to power, and it is echoed in almost every promulgation that bears his name.⁵¹ Charlemagne's conviction of the unlimited nature of his power is most evident in a letter to the newly-elected Pope Leo III early in 796: "My task, assisted by the divine piety, is everywhere to defend the Church of Christ - abroad, by arms, against pagan incursions and the devastations of such as break faith; at home, by protecting the Church in the spreading of the Catholic faith. Your task, holy father, is to raise your hands to God like Moses to ensure the victory of our arms."⁵²

The tone of royal authority in this letter gives not the slightest hint that the king owes obedience even to the pope; rather the reverse. The letter is clearly from master to subordinate; Charlemagne had no reservations about the nature of his power. Evident as well is the identity of secular and religious spheres. It is the king that is "assisted by the divine piety," who receives his power directly from God. The pope is assigned a

ritual function, no more: he is to lead an exemplary life and be an example to all Christians. Matters of doctrine, details of theology, order of liturgy, disposition and direction of churches and religious houses, all were the king's to ordain. The efforts of both king and pope were directed toward the same goal -- the well-being of the *populus christianus*. The letter makes clear the essence of Charlemagne's conception of kingship and what most distinguishes it from others: absolute power, to be sure; but, additionally, the conviction that power implies responsibility. Charlemagne's power is limited only by his own accountability to God for its proper exercise.

In Charlemagne's vision, the Franks had a divinely-given destiny that he was responsible for guiding. The documents and literature of Charlemagne's reign convey a sense of urgency, as if there were so much to be done and not enough time to do it all. Implicit in the writings is the intellectual awareness that the gap between ideal and reality can be bridged for the betterment of society. The king is the prime mover, the focus of all activity. He holds center stage by the sheer force of his personality and his intellect, and he inspires those around him. There is no aspect of the administration of his realm that escapes his supervision. Even in a religious age, the religious nature of Charlemagne's kingship stands out in high relief.

In his reform of society he strove for both unity and uniformity, so that, ultimately, harmony, the *pax christiana*, would ensue.

The major elements of Charlemagne's conception of kingship were derived from diverse cultural and religious influences, but none was greater than Saint Augustine's *City of God*.⁵³ Charlemagne took the paradigm of Christian society as defined by Augustine and grafted it onto Germanic and Roman traditions to create a new, prototypical model of kingship for the Middle Ages. Augustine and Charlemagne stood, respectively, at the beginning and end of an era. Augustine saw the darkness descending and attempted to create a Christian world system of order and purpose that would survive the difficult times ahead. Who better than Augustine, with barbarians at the gate, could appreciate the need for potent authority amidst disorder, could anticipate that in the world after the Fall, men were corrupt and prone to disorder and needed the stern discipline of law and authority.⁵⁴ Charlemagne, nearly four centuries later, sought to dispel the darkness and to bring an end to disorder by realizing the Christian society that Augustine had envisioned. Moreover, Charlemagne embraced Augustine's notion that history was Christian, that it was purposive, guided, however obscurely, by the hand of God, and that history was universal, embracing ultimately all

mankind. A Christian king with a Germanic heritage of a royal sacral aura, inspired by Augustine's view of history, could easily assume that his authority was all-embracing both inside *and* outside his kingdom.

According to Augustine, everything proceeds according to God's plan, however obscure this may be.⁵⁵ (Clearly, Augustine's desire for order added somewhat to Scripture.) In this respect, *all* rulers, even "bad" ones, must be obeyed, for what appears to be evil may not in fact be evil; it is merely our perception that is imperfect. Thus, Paul the Deacon could easily embrace Charlemagne as the savior of Christendom even though Charlemagne had conquered his own people, the Lombards. Paul saw their subjugation as a "necessary evil" because Charlemagne was implementing God's plan.⁵⁶ As Augustine had written, "If God's reasons are inscrutable, does that mean that they are unjust?"⁵⁷

If Augustine could provide support for absolute rulership, he could also impose conditions, at least applicable to the ideal. According to Augustine, the ideal ruler concerns himself with the welfare of his people, and Augustine's *imperator felix* is very much a part of Charlemagne's kingship.⁵⁸ His power may have been absolute, but it was not despotic. The king's power comes directly from God and elevates him to a status above all

others (including the clergy and the pope), but by its very nature that power is limited by his accountability to God for its proper exercise. Later, Louis the Pious would find this very authority undercut by the assertion of the bishops that *they* were accountable to God *for the king*. Louis never agreed with them. Rather, like his father, *he* was accountable to God not only for his own salvation but that of everyone else. With the pope, however, Louis was not quite as unequivocal as his father had been in his famous letter to Leo cited above, but not much less. After his anointing by the pope, Louis said: "Therefore... we must care for the people ...; you are the priest and I am the king of Christians: let us serve the people in doctrine, law and faith."⁵⁹

Charlemagne's vision of Christian society was recorded in the *Libri Carolini*, the Carolingian refutation of the Byzantine position on image worship as the Franks understood it.⁶⁰ The *Libri* constitute a political program based directly on the model of Augustine's *City of God*. The Franks are placed into the historical progression delineated by Augustine, so that they become a part of universal Christian history, which moves from the Creation through Christ's birth, passion and death, and thence to the *imperium christianum*. In this sense, history eventually reaches the new

Israelites and their king, Charlemagne, who is the true successor to the holy empire of Constantine.⁶¹ The Byzantine Empire, because of image worship, has forfeited its right to the imperial position.

The position taken in the *Libri Carolini* prepares the way for the coronation, which, in fact, can be understood only in this context.⁶²

Charlemagne and Alcuin had been moving toward the idea of the Frankish monarchy as the protector of Latin Christendom for some time. The papacy as well no longer regarded the Frankish king as merely the military protector of the Holy See, but as the defender of all Christendom. Both the pope and Charlemagne agreed that the Frankish kingdom had a sacred mission and was heir to the Christian Roman empire of Constantine and not the pagan empire of Augustus.⁶³ The Byzantines lacked legitimacy in Frankish eyes in both the political and religious realms: the throne was occupied by a woman, Irene, who had deposed her own son, and, further, she and her supporters seemed to advocate the worship of images. True Christianity gave Charlemagne legitimacy. In a letter to Charlemagne in June, 799, Alcuin wrote of the three great powers of Christendom -- Charlemagne, the pope and the Byzantine emperor -- and gave Charles the ascendancy:

... The third is the royal office in which you have been ordained as the *rector* of the Christian people by the dispensation of our Lord Jesus Christ, surpassing the aforementioned dignitaries in the excellence of your power, the lustre of your wisdom and the loftiness of your dignity as ruler. Behold, upon you alone rests the entire health... of the churches of Christ! It is you who punishes the wrong-doers, corrects the errant, comforts the sorrowing and raises up the good." on you alone depends their safety, on you, the avenger of sinners, guide to those who err, consoler of the afflicted and exalter of the good.⁶⁴

It is hardly surprising that Charlemagne was called "the Great" in his own lifetime, not out of mere flattery, but because the people around him realized that something out of the ordinary was happening. Those at court were very conscious of creating a new world. Capitularies and other documents are full of words like renewal, reform, regeneration and rebirth.

The *imperium christianum*, then, was inevitable to Charlemagne and those around him. Augustine had said that if the teachings of the Gospels and faith in Christ entered the heart and mind of every inhabitant of a city, it could not fail to prosper, for a good Christian is by definition a good citizen.⁶⁵ The unity of western Christendom was the highest ideal in both the reign of Charlemagne and the reign of Louis, but there was no one strong enough to challenge Charlemagne's interpretation of that ideal as embodied in the emperor. The emperor spoke directly to God, without the intervention of the Church. Unfortunately, this was not the case for Louis.

He was indeed challenged again and again on the issue of supreme authority in the temporal sphere.

Both Charlemagne, and later Louis, conceived of their duties in terms of a *ministerium*.⁶⁶ After 800, Charlemagne's sense of Christian purpose increased, and Augustinian universalism became a fundamental part of his conception of kingship. More capitularies for all peoples under him were promulgated, for they were now the *populus christianus* and not separate groups under their own laws, as had been the custom. The national codes were copied and codified or even consigned to writing for the first time with the goal of standardization and uniformity.⁶⁷ After all, kingship and law were inextricably combined and had been from earliest times. Without a doubt, the priestly nature of his kingship became the more important characteristic in his later years. Louis too began to sound more and more admonitory as his reign progressed and became ever more aware of the need to propitiate God for the forgiveness of sins and for the salvation of his soul and the souls of his people, for whom he was responsible to God. Both Charlemagne and Louis felt an enhanced responsibility toward their obligations as God's chosen deputy to care for the *populus christianus*,

especially the poor and the weak, those who most needed protection. These aims were understood in Augustinian terms.

Charlemagne's conception of kingship was grandiloquently described by Alcuin, who defined for his contemporaries and for his spiritual descendants, including Louis and those at his court, the sacred nature of the king's role:

It is to govern the realms, dispense justice, renew the churches, correct the people, guarantee their rights to all people and all ranks, to defend the oppressed, to give laws, to comfort pilgrims, to show to all and in all places the way of justice and of heavenly life, so that all may be comforted by your holy coming....⁶⁸

"Happy is the nation, said the Psalmist, whose lord is God, happy the people raised up by a leader and upheld by a preacher of the faith whose right hand wields the sword of triumph, whose mouth sounds the trumpet of catholic truth."⁶⁹

It is no great leap of faith to extrapolate from these words Louis the Pious's own conception of kingship, nor to understand why he rejected the damaging efforts of his churchmen to delimit his power and of his sons to take it away from him.

Thus there was a natural flow of power and authority between the reigns of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. Charlemagne had seen to it that Louis was tutored in his duties, and Louis willingly accepted these when the

time came to take them up. Louis was at the same time acutely aware of the awesome responsibility he was assuming and the sanctity of his office; he was no less aware that he was *rex gratia Dei* than his father had been. In all the comparisons between Louis and Charlemagne, the differences have been magnified and the similarities overlooked. The ongoing reassessment of Louis' reign during the past fifteen years has shown that Louis' reign was a time of accomplishment administratively, militarily and culturally, as we shall see. Moreover, many of the problems he faced were inherited from the latter years of his father's reign, when they had not been properly addressed because of Charlemagne's advancing age and intensified spirituality and piety.

ENDNOTES

1. The literature on Charlemagne is, of course, overwhelming, and he is fortunately not the focus of this dissertation. He was, however, the topic of my master's thesis, for which most of the research for this chapter was done. Therefore, there are many books and articles on Charlemagne in the bibliography. One must always begin with Wolfgang Braunfels ed., *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben* (Düsseldorf, 1965), 4 vols. An excellent one volume study is Jacques Boussard, *The Civilization of Charlemagne*, trans. Frances Partridge (London, 1968, repr. ed. New York, n.d.). For the accomplishments of the reign, see Donald Bullough, *The Age of Charlemagne* (London, 1965, repr. ed. New York, 1966). For Charlemagne in the context of the early Middle Ages, the works of J. M. Wallace-Hadrill are always essential, especially his *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971, repr. 1980) and, for a wider context, *The Barbarian West: the Early Middle Ages A.D. 400-1000*, second revised ed. (London, 1962, repr. ed. New York, 1962).
2. An interesting interpretation of the financing of the Carolingian Renaissance can be found in Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis* (Ithaca, 1983, repr., 1986).
3. It is my contention that Charlemagne himself defined many aspects of the legendary image of him that emerged in the centuries after his death. I have given a paper on this topic and intend to expand it to an article.
4. For the apotheosis of Charlemagne, see Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., *Romanesque Signs: Early Medieval Narrative and Iconography* (New Haven, 1983), ch. 3.

5. The *Song of Roland* was probably committed to writing in the eleventh century, although it had been in currency long before then. The poem contains feats of Charlemagne in which he performs religious rituals and miracles executed by God for him, including the stopping of the sun in the sky, as God had done for Joshua at the battle of Jericho. The twelve peers are synonymous with Christ's twelve apostles. Patricia Terry, ed. and trans., *The Song of Roland* (New York, 1992). The story of Charlemagne and Roland is lavishly illustrated with illuminated manuscripts, stained glass and other medieval works of art by D. D. R. Owen, *The Legend of Roland: A Pageant of the Middle Ages* (London, 1973).

6. Nichols, *Romanesque Signs*, pp. 66-67 for a description of the event and pertinent primary sources. The orb of the king is analogous to the host held by Christ in Majesty portraits. Thus orb and scepter represent the conflation of *regnum* and *sacerdotum* in the person of the king. The king's body is uncorrupted after two centuries, as are the bodies of saints in early medieval hagiographies. In addition, the discovery was supposed to have taken place on Pentecost, the day of the Trinity, when the Holy Spirit ascended into heaven. It is the fulfillment of the Resurrection, the central act in the drama of salvation.

7. This is another analogy of Charlemagne to Christ, demonstrating that the earthly hierarchy reflects the heavenly one. Otto III is using this event to prove that Charlemagne was progenitor of his dynasty. The Holy Roman Empire began with Otto the Great's coronation and anointing at Rome in 962, not with Charlemagne's in 800, as is often mistakenly claimed.

8. Charlemagne was canonized by Rainald of Dassel, archbishop of Cologne, with the approval of Pope Paschal III (1164-68), an antipope set up by the emperor Frederick Barbarossa. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (New York, 1986, repr. 1988), p.179 (8 January, 1166, by our reckoning). The 800th anniversary celebration in Aachen was in 1965.

9. This is clearly a conflation of the temporal and heavenly spheres. For a study of the Chartres window, see Clark Maines, "The Charlemagne Window at Chartres Cathedral: New Considerations on Text and Image" (*Speculum* 52, 1977), pp. 801-23), as well as Nichols, 1983, pp. 95-105, and for the Strassburg window, Nichols, p. 88. Charlemagne's christological image is discussed in detail in Nichols, pp. 82 ff.
10. The portrait is in the Germanisches National-Museum in Nuremberg. See Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer* (Princeton, 1955), p. 177 for Charlemagne, p. 172 for God the Father.
11. The nineteenth-century German historians, among them Ernst Dümmler and Leopold von Ranke, who disparaged Louis refurbished Charlemagne's image to represent something new, i.e. a united Germany.
12. For a study of the Charlemagne legend, see Robert Folz, *Le Souvenir et la Légende de Charlemagne dans l'Empire germanique médiéval* (Paris, 1950).
13. Smaragdus, *Via Regia* in J. P. Migne, ed. *PL*, v. 102, cols. 933-70. Wallace-Hadrill says this was probably in gratitude for the abbey of St. Mihiel. See Hans Hubert Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit* (Bonn, 1967), pp. 132-78.
14. H. H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*. pp. 98-103. Also see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 100-06.
15. For a discussion of historians' treatment of Louis, see Nikolaus Staubach, "Des grossen Kaisers kleiner Sohn:" *Zum Bild Ludwigs des Frommen in der älteren deutschen Geschichtsforschung*, in Godman and Collins, eds. *Charlemagne's Heir*, pp. 701-21.
16. Richard E. Sullivan, *Aix-la-Chapelle in the Age of Charlemagne* (Norman, Ok., 1963, repr. ed. 1974), p. 206.
17. Walter Ullmann, *A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1965), p. 9.

18. The term Christ Pantocrator, although originally applied to Byzantine art, is used by art historians for portrayals of Christ as conqueror.
19. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "*Laudes Regiae*:" *A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley, 1946), p. 16.
20. The subject of Germanic tribal society and the sacral kingship associated with it is a difficult and often controversial topic about which no consensus exists among scholars. Conditions changed through time and across geographical distances, and they were always subject to outside influence, especially from the Romans whose lands they invaded and for whom they fought as auxiliary troops. The description in this chapter is a reasonable representation of general conditions. The starting point for research in this subject is Tacitus' *Germania*, although his motives, and therefore his conclusions, are suspect, and there is no evidence that he ever observed the Germans firsthand. He was most likely preaching to the Romans on moral grounds. Tacitus, *Complete Works*, ed. Moses Hadas, trans. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, the Modern Library (New York, 1942). Essential on the subject is Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship* and Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1969). Other seminal works include: Fritz Kern, *Gottesgnadentum und Widerstandsrecht im frühen Mittelalter: zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Monarchie*, 4th ed. (Darmstadt, 1967) and *Law and Constitution in the Middle Ages*, in S. B. Chrimes, trans., *Kingship and Law in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1939, repr. 1948), Part 2; Reinhard Schneider, *Königswahl und Königserhebung im Frühmittelalter: Untersuchungen zur Herrschaftsnachfolge bei den Langobarden und Merowingern* (Stuttgart, 1972); William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Berkeley, 1970); Daniel A. Binchey, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship* (Oxford, 1970); Patrick Wormald, "Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship: Some Further Thoughts," in *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. Paul Szarmach with Virginia Darrow Oggins (Kalamazoo, 1986), pp. 151-83; all chapters in P. H. Sawyer and I. N. Wood, eds., *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977); M. J. Swenton, *Crisis and Development in Germanic Society 700-800: Beowulf and the Burden of Kingship*; David Harry Miller, "Sacral Kingship, Biblical Kingship, and the Elevation of Pepin the Short," in Thomas F. X. Noble and John Contreni, eds., *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Richard E. Sullivan* (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 131-54.

21. Kern, *Gottesgnadentum*, p. 16.
22. Chaney, *Cult*, pp. 2-3.
23. Kern, *Gottesgnadentum*, pp. 16-18; Chaney, *Cult*, pp. 86-120.
24. Binchey, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, p. 9; Swenton, *Crisis and Development*, p. 3; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 16; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel*, p. 90; Chaney, *Cult*, p. 72.
25. Kern, *Gottesgnadentum*, pp. 4-5; Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, p. 67; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long Haired Kings* (London, 1962, repr. Toronto, 1982), p. 247.
26. Kern, *Gottesgnadentum*, pp. 13-15.
27. Binchey, *Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship*, p. 4; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 2-3; Peter Hunter Blair, *An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1965, repr. 1962), p. 195.
28. Alcuin, in Ernst Dümmler, ed. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, MGH, *Epist.* v. 4 (Berlin, 1895), no. 199.
29. Walter Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 44-46.
30. Chaney, *Cult*, pp. 156, 172; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 91, 99. See also Bede's description of the conversion of Kent and the role of Aethelberht, especially in the light of Pope Gregory's letters. The Venerable Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. and with intro. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), bk. 1, chs. 26-32.
31. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 105, points out that a bit of paganism creeps into Alcuin's description of Charlemagne's proper exercise of kingly duties, which will bring good fortune to his people.

32. For Clovis's baptism, see Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks* (Oxford, 1927, repr. London, 1976), trans. and intro. O. M. Dalton, bk. 2, chs. 30-31; also Fredegar, *Fredegari et aliorum chronica*, ed. B. Krutsch, *MGH SS*, v. 2, bk. 3, ch. 16. The best secondary sources are: Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long Haired Kings*, pp. 169-72; Patrick Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 84-95.
33. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Barbarian West*, 2nd. rev. ed. (London, 1962, repr. New York, 1962), pp. 28-30.
34. The Franks and the Anglo-Saxons were the only Germanic tribes converted directly to orthodox Roman Christianity. The Goths were converted by Ulfilas, who transmitted the Arian heresy to the Germans. Apparently he was already in the field when Arianism was declared heretical and therefore had no way of knowing what had happened.
35. Miller, "Sacral Kingship," p. 135.
36. Depending on what source one uses, it may be Poitiers or Tours, and either 732 or 733.
37. Miller, "Sacral Kingship," p. 131; Donald Bullough, *Age of Charlemagne*, pp. 129-130.
38. Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire: The Age of Charlemagne*, trans. Peter Munz (Oxford, 1957, repr. New York, 1964), p. 129.
39. David Ganz, "Bureaucratic Shorthand and Merovingian Learning," in Wormald, ed., *Ideal and Reality*, pp. 63-65.
40. Swenton, *Crisis and Development*, p. 16. The author points out that people fight for victory rather than for the king, although they generally show humility before the bearer of power, as with the Merovingian king in his oxcart. See also Edward Peters, *The Shadow King: "Rex Inutilis" in Medieval Law and Literature 751-1327* (New Haven, 1970), pp. 47-55.
41. *RFA*, s. a. 749, and *ALM*, s. a. 750, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH AC*, v. 1,.

42. Fortunatus, *Epistolae*, MGH, AUCT iv., 21.
43. RFA, MGH SSRG, s. a. 750-51.
44. Pepin considered the ceremony constitutive.
45. This ceremony took place at St. Denis in 754 while Stephen was on a mission to gain the support of Pepin against the Lombard king Aistulf. He forbade the Franks to choose a king from any other family.
46. Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 21-23; Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983, repr. New York, 1985), p. 166; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 100.
47. Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 78-93, is excellent on Boniface and the reform of the Frankish Church.
48. Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 130-31; Wolff, *Awakening*, p. 27; M. L. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe A. D. 500 to 900*, 2nd ed. (London, 1957, repr. Ithaca, 1976), p. 191; Jacques Boussard, *Civilization of Charlemagne*, pp. 120-21; Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, p. 2.
49. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 101.
50. Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, p. 7
51. MGH, *Cap.*, ed. G. H. Pertz, v. 1, no. 19, pp. 33-34.
52. MGH *Epist*, v. 4, no. 93; trans. in Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 186.
53. *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, MGH *SSus*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, 6th ed. (Hannover, 1911, repr. 1947), v. 25, ch. 24.
54. W. T. Jones, *The Medieval Mind, A History of Western Philosophy*, v. 2 2nd ed. (New York, 1969), pp. 120-25.

55. Jones, *Medieval Mind*, pp. 83-94. This is the clearest concise description of Augustinian philosophy that I have found.
56. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 201.
57. Augustine, *The City of God* trans. Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth, 1972, repr. 1986), bk. 5, ch. 21.
58. Augustine, *City of God*, bk. 5, ch. 24.
59. Ermoldus, *In Honorem Hludowici*, vss. 1028-31. "Ergo sacer plebum nostri est curare subactam,/Nobisquam Dominus pascere constituit;/Tu sacer antestis; ego rex sum christicolarum:/Servemus populum dogmate, lege, fide."
60. *MGH Con. Supplementa: Libri Carolini*, ed. H. Bastgen, *Legum Sectio III*, v. 2, part 2.
61. Bullough, *Age of Charlemagne*, p. 162, points out that the message in the *Libri Carolini* is that it is the duty of the Roman Church, whose doctrinal position is *de facto* defined by Charlemagne, to maintain the orthodoxy and unity of the faith. See also Ullmann, *History of Political Thought*, p. 69, who says that the empire was conceived almost wholly in religious terms, the political manifestation of the City of God. For the iconography of the Constantine-Charlemagne connection, see Nichols, *Romanesque Signs*, ch. 3.
62. The coronation of Charlemagne in Rome on Christmas, 800, is still (and probably always will be) a controversial topic, and not a matter for this dissertation. It has generated a vast literature, among which see Gunther Wolf, ed., *Zum Kaisertum Karls des Grossen* (Darmstadt, 1972); R. Folz, *The Coronation of Charlemagne* (London, 1974); Richard Sullivan, ed., *The Coronation of Charlemagne: What Did it Signify?* (Boston, 1959).
63. See n. 64 above.
64. Alcuin, *MGH, Epist.* v. 2, no. 174; written June 799.

65. Jones, *Medieval Mind*, p. 104, discusses man's behavior and prosperity. Everyone must take part. Augustine stresses that "saints" must not withdraw from society, for they are needed to show the way; *City of God*, bk. 1, ch. 10. The king must also be exemplary for this reason.
66. Charlemagne's responsibility for his subjects' salvation can be seen in many of his capitularies. *MGH Cap*, v. 1: *De Litteris Colendis*, no. 29, *Admonitio Generalis*, no. 30, Frankfurt (794), no. 34, Aachen (802), no. 43, and Thionville (805), no. 71. For Louis' *ministerium*, see *MGH Cap.*, v. 1, no. 30, for example.
67. *MGH Cap.*, v. 1, nos. 43, 53, 55, 57 and 64 all added to the national laws. Charlemagne added laws rather than updating the existing codes. The second Saxon capitulary, no. 35, gives Charlemagne precedence over local laws. No. 43 says: "*Ut iudices secundum scriptam legem iuste iudicent, non secundum arbitrium suum.*" His official stance honored the various national codes, however, because these were locked in Germanic traditions.
68. *MGH Epist.*, v. 2, no. 177, written July 799.
69. Alcuin, *MGH Epist.*, v. 2, no. 44, written 794 or 795.

CHAPTER II

HLUDOWICUS PIISIMUS IMPERATOR

The actual transition of power from Charlemagne to Louis was accomplished virtually without incident. No one challenged his right to his father's throne. Louis received the news of his father's death at Doué-la-Fontaine in Aquitaine and, after four days of religious ceremonies, he immediately began the journey to Aachen, gathering supporters as he went. Important men came out to meet him on his way. Among these were Theodulf of Orléans, distinguished member of the learned circle around Charlemagne, and Wala, Charlemagne's cousin, a close intimate of the emperor and his most powerful advisor.¹

Louis had been king of Aquitaine for thirty-three of his thirty-six years. He was battle-seasoned and experienced in the mechanics of

government, closely supervised by his father's carefully-chosen advisors.

Being the youngest of Charlemagne's three legitimate sons, Louis had had little reason to aspire to the emperorship. He had already been given his portion of the Frankish *regnum*, the kingdom of Aquitaine. Everything changed with the deaths in 810 of Pepin, king of Italy, and then in 811 of Charles, the eldest son and heir to the Frankish heartland. The succession was thus determined some three years before the death of Charlemagne: Louis was sole heir. Would that the issue of succession had been so straightforward for Louis.

It is difficult to discern the true nature of Louis' character. In contemporary or near-contemporary sources, literary and linguistic conventions of the time colored the language with which Louis was described and it is impossible to discern nuances of meaning. Opinions of Louis among his contemporaries covered the spectrum from outrageous flattery to bitter invective.² Until the reassessment of his reign that emerged from the conference on Louis in the spring of 1986 at Oxford,³ the picture accepted by historians had been almost universally bleak. Louis was cast as a hapless, monk-ridden weakling, unworthy to follow in his father's footsteps. He was held to impossible standards and found wanting, blamed

not only for his own alleged inadequacies, but for the ills that befell the entire Carolingian line after him. Obviously Louis had been judged harshly; how harshly is yet another question.

Among the relatively abundant sources, three lives of Louis survive: the so-called Astronomer's *Vita Hludowici Pii*, Thegan's *Vita Hludowici Imperatoris*, and the verse life by Ermoldus Nigellus, *In Honorem Hludowici*. Nithard's *Historiarum Libri IIII*, written for Charles the Bald, contains further material on Louis, and the *Annales Regni Francorum* were kept throughout the reign. Annals were also kept at Metz, St. Bertin, Fulda, St. Gallen, Xanten and other monasteries and churches.

German historians of the nineteenth century wrote the first modern studies of Louis' reign, embracing the negative picture of Louis painted by those who drew upon the sources left by his opponents in the power struggle.⁴ In addition, with the rise of German nationalism and the realization of German unification in the nineteenth century, the legend of Charlemagne was once again resurrected and magnified even further; who better to be Germany's heroic figure than *Europae Pater*.⁵ The luster of Charlemagne diminished further the already tarnished image of his son. It was not until F. L. Ganshof's article reconsidering Louis' reign appeared in

1957 that the misconception of Louis as an abject and utter failure under the domination of churchmen and an uxorious wife began to be challenged. Certainly he pointed the way for further research into the period. Thomas F. X. Noble's 1974 doctoral dissertation on papal relations during Louis' reign reinforced this positive reexamination.⁶ Finally, the conference at Oxford in 1986 succeeded in a complete reevaluation of Louis' reign, demonstrating that the accomplishments of Louis had been completely misjudged and offering simultaneously numerous possibilities for future scholarship.

Like any self-respecting Carolingian, Louis was interested in his books and in religious matters and shared his father's propensity for hunting. As a soldier, he acquitted himself well in Frankish campaigns against the Saxons and Avars, on campaign in Italy, and defending Aquitaine itself. His career as king of Aquitaine had been carefully supervised and circumscribed by advisors appointed by Charlemagne, and Louis remained a viceroy until his father's death.⁷

Charlemagne apparently had some ideas concerning the future disposition of his territories even before Louis was born in 778. The place of Louis' birth and later his installation as king of Aquitaine were planned in

advance and carefully orchestrated. Charlemagne, preparing for a campaign against the Saracens in Spain in 778, took his pregnant wife Hildegarde with him so that their baby would be born in Aquitaine.⁸ This child was the first Carolingian to be given the name Louis (Hludowic), a deliberate gesture meant to recall the Merovingian Clovis (a Latinized version of Hludowic), the conqueror of Aquitaine and the first Frankish king to rule there.⁹ Also, Clovis had been the strongest of his dynasty and was the king under whom the Franks were converted to Christianity. In addition, Ermoldus Nigellus tells us that the name Hludowic came from *hluto*, celebrated, and *wigch*, warrior.¹⁰ When Louis was sent to Aquitaine to be reared his father dressed him as a soldier in Aquitanian costume and had him ride over the border astride his own horse.¹¹

Like Charlemagne, Louis was accustomed to making decisions of a religious nature. He was an active participant in Benedict of Aniane's reform of monastic houses, both in Aquitaine and later at Aachen.¹² While in Aquitaine Louis was in constant contact with the great religious thinkers of his father's court. Angilbert, abbot of St. Riquier and lover of Louis' sister Bertha, sent him a copy of St. Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*. He received an inscribed copy of *De spiritu sancto* from Theodulf of Orléans, who

had also written the *Libri Carolini*, the Carolingian position paper on the iconoclastic controversy in Byzantium. Alcuin, the most famous scholar at Charlemagne's court, wrote to Louis' elder brother Charles that "your brother Louis has asked me to write often to give him my counsel...[and] this I have been doing, and, God willing, I shall continue to do. He reads my letters in great humility of heart."¹³

In spite of his monkish reputation and interest in religious concerns, Louis did not neglect secular matters. He exerted authority in both spheres. Married and the father of three healthy sons, Louis may have been spiritually inclined but not to the exclusion of secular pleasures. He seems to have been superstitious, like most men of his time, and therefore acutely sensitive to the evil portents associated with natural phenomena such as storms, comets, earth tremors, eclipses and the like.¹⁴ He was sufficiently imbued with a sense of impending disaster to fear, in good Germanic tradition, that fortune was not in his favor. He spent so much time praying and fasting and distributing alms that the bishops thought he was infringing on their sacred duty to propitiate God.¹⁵ In his nature as priestly king, however, Louis considered such matters to be naturally part of his office and, indeed, his duty. Additionally, he was a notable protector of the Jews (Israelites?), to

the extent that Archbishop Agobard of Lyon, one of his most vociferous critics, was inspired to write five anti-Semitic treatises.¹⁶

The situation that awaited Louis at Aachen was already complex before the addition of his own entourage complicated it further. Members of Charlemagne's inner circle who had managed the political, religious and cultural affairs at court had not dispersed; nor had those responsible for the administration of Charlemagne's government. Thus, the political stage was set for conflict at the very inception of Louis' reign. Factions and alliances between factions proliferated.

The obvious demarcation between Charlemagne's retainers and the men in Louis' retinue was soon eclipsed by an ideological alignment based on different interpretations of the nature of power in the ideal of imperial unity.¹⁷ As well, there were factions within interest groups that were not in agreement with one another, all attempting to be heard. At first, Louis was among the reformers led by Benedict of Aniane, his closest advisor and chief author of the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817. The opposition party, led by Charlemagne's cousins Wala and his brother Adalhard,¹⁸ strictly adhered to familiar Frankish traditions in the form they took under Charlemagne, though they too believed in the principle of unity. These men were without

their leaders for some time, since Louis had exiled the two brothers from the court. The reformers had higher ideals, perhaps, but were just as involved in political intrigues. It must be pointed out, however, that neither party was anti-Louis *per se*, not even the disaffected magnates and clerics who had spent years currying favor with Charlemagne's two older sons, Charles and Pepin, only to lose their champions in the eleventh hour. Both older brothers had been closer to the center of power than Louis; Aquitaine was a backwater compared to the Frankish heartland or even Italy.¹⁹

A major obstacle to imperial unity in the eyes of Louis and the reformers was the rival royal line that Charlemagne had established in Italy.²⁰ Charlemagne had allowed Pepin's son Bernard to succeed to the kingship on Pepin's death. Bernard himself already had a son, thus assuring the continuation of his line. The existence of this rival line caused Louis' followers to harbor bitter resentment against those of Charlemagne's advisors who remained at court, despite the fact that many of the same advisors were advocates of reform.²¹ The Frankish royal house had historically been suspicious of close relatives, no matter what their positions. Hence, the existence of Bernard's line was a impetus to the formulation of the *Ordinatio* with its attendant disposition of territories that left Bernard

out of the succession entirely. From the foregoing, it is evident that there were abundant reasons for alliances: partisan loyalties, familial associations, religious connections, ideological differences, bonds of power, and equally manifold grounds for disputation. The issues were so complex that each man involved in the struggle may have held conflicting beliefs.

The succession document, the *Ordinatio Imperii*, was at one and the same time the greatest achievement and the biggest calamity of the early part of Louis' reign. It would be difficult to overemphasize its transcending influence on the entire reign. The *Ordinatio* together with the subsequent birth of another son, Charles, made the situation explosive. Ideal and reality clashed with disastrous consequences. The idea of *imperium* had preoccupied men's minds since the closing decade of the eighth century. Charlemagne's coronation in Rome by Pope Leo III underscored the importance the idea had achieved. In the early ninth century, the idea of *imperium* had both political and religious implications. Politically, the Carolingian Empire became the legitimate successor of the Roman Empire in the West and the Frankish king the official protector of the pope, an arrangement that was of far greater benefit to the papacy than to Charlemagne.²² In reality, after a short time the idea of political hegemony beyond the *regnum Francorum* and

the conquered territories incorporated into it by Charlemagne (including Italy and jurisdiction in the Papal States) ceased to mean anything, a fact that was underscored by the *Divisio Regni* of 806, which reflects Charlemagne's thinking at the time, although in it Charlemagne indicated he would have more to say on the issue of succession.²³ We will never know what he had in mind because the deaths of Pepin and Charles obviated the necessity to divide the kingdom.

The religious aspect, that of *imperium christianum*, however, was a different matter. The ideal of unity transcended all practical considerations in the eyes of ecclesiastical thinkers around the court, and, augmented with like-minded men in Louis' entourage, they would become dominant. In Charlemagne's mind the *imperium christianum* and the *regnum Francorum* (and the conquered territories) had been identical, a belief that reflects his view that his power was sacral: absolute over both Church and State. There is no reason to suspect that his son Louis viewed his own imperial power any differently.²⁴

The terms of the *Ordinatio* carried to a logical and ideological conclusion demolished this conception of kingship because it gave the bishops a political role. These implications were not apparent to either side

in 817, but they were to become painfully obvious during the next decade. The Astronomer portrays Louis as believing in the concept of an *imperium christianum*, that is, both Church and state as one body under God's chosen representative, the king.²⁵ Since Louis ultimately discarded the *Ordinatio* and proclaimed a new succession policy in 829, the Astronomer's conviction seems justified. The rebellion that followed that decision, however, clearly shows that the opposition parties were in violent disagreement with the emperor. It appears, then, that neither Louis nor the reformers perceived the crux of the problem -- that the power and legitimacy of the king had been undercut in 817 -- at least through the crises of the 820's. The events of those years as well as the crises of the 830's are inconceivable without the assumption that Louis' authority was in question. Thus, there is another paradox at the heart of the problem.

The magnates in the realm who were unhappy with the situation in 818 had no opportunity to act until after the death of Irmengard in October of that year. The *Vita* conveys the impression that nobles all across Francia were concerned that Louis might enter a monastery and fulfill the *Ordinatio* by abdicating in favor of Lothar.²⁶ Among them were magnates who owed their fortunes directly to Louis' patronage; Lothar might see fit to call in all

obligations as Louis had indeed done in 814. Certainly such news would be most unwelcome among the followers of Pepin and Louis the German. Most Franks would have been opposed in principle to the abdication of God's anointed king. Such an action had no real precedent in Frankish history; the case of Carloman cannot be considered in the same light.²⁷ The authors of the *Ordinatio* would hardly be overjoyed by the arrival of a new queen and the possibility of another male heir, although their political opposition would welcome such a prospect. Despite the protestations that the document was sacred and could not be broken by man, it is clear that all sides believed Louis would adhere to Frankish tradition and include any additional son in the succession. Why else would the reformers oppose the marriage and the loyalists applaud it?²⁸ Louis himself believed he had authorized the *Ordinatio* and could therefore rescind it. In any event, besides the obvious, the aim of marriage after all was to beget sons.²⁹

A study of the prominent figures and of their interests in the first five years of Louis's reign will show their positions in the political intrigues of the period. From such an analysis it will be obvious that the distinction between religious and lay persons was blurred. Laymen held important Church positions and churchmen took part in affairs of state.³⁰ Almost

without exception, these men, both legitimate and illegitimate, belonged to the great Frankish noble families, and were therefore involved in multiple alliances and supported varying issues determined by familial, political and ideological bonds. It should also be noted that many of them changed sides over the course of the years in response to the crisis at hand. As has been noted above, the earlier clear opposition of Charlemagne's men and Louis' adherents dissolved as the parties realigned according to the issues.

The most important influence in Louis' life in Aquitaine and in the early years at Aachen was Benedict of Aniane.³¹ Born around 750, Benedict was a reforming monk, later sainted, who had enjoyed but little contact with the court of Charlemagne. As chief spiritual advisor he worked with Louis on a major reform of the Benedictine order in Aquitaine,³² so that by 813 nearly all the monastic houses there had accepted the Benedictine Rule. Benedict may be at least partly responsible for the characterization of Louis as pious, since his influence dominated both Louis' court in Aquitaine and the imperial court at Aachen in the early years. He had a reputation for austerity that is evident in his reform of Benedictine monasticism. Louis carried both Benedict and monastic reform with him to Aachen, which resulted in the reestablishment of strict enforcement of the Rule in all the

monasteries of Francia.³³ Benedict and others presided over the purging of the court of superfluous women, including Louis' sisters, who were forced to retire to convents on their own lands.³⁴ Louis built Benedict an abbey near Aachen at Inden, now Kornelmünster, so that he would always be close at hand to advise and counsel. Benedict was the leader of Louis' faction at court until he died in 821, and was therefore one of the chief authors of the *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817.

Louis' illegitimate brother Drogo replaced Benedict of Aniane as chief confidant of the king after Benedict's death, and he remained so for the rest of Louis' life. Louis appointed him archbishop of Metz in 822, a post he held until his own death in 844. Both Louis and Judith relied on Drogo's counsel throughout the reign, and he was with Louis at his deathbed. He administered the last rites of the Church to Louis and received the emblems of emperorship from Louis' own hands.³⁵ Drogo was Louis' chief supporter through all the crises of his reign.

Louis' foster brother Ebbo, who had been brought up with him in Aquitaine, was also an intimate of the king and supporter of Judith. As a child, Ebbo had been extraordinarily quick and intelligent and was therefore given a good education and ordained a priest.³⁶ Louis was much impressed

with his abilities and in due course summoned him to Aachen, where he worked in administration until 816. When Louis was crowned by Pope Stephen IV at Reims in 816, the old archbishop Wulgar was ailing and died by the end of the year. Louis proposed Ebbo for the office, and he was accepted at Reims and went on to found the famous school of Reims, an important center for the production of Carolingian books and art in the ninth century. Among its manuscripts are some of the most famous surviving masterpieces of Carolingian art: the books known as the *Utrecht Psalter*, the *Ebbo Gospels*, the *Grandval Bible*, the *Vivian Bible* and the *Lothar Gospels*.³⁷ At the time of her son Charles' birth, Judith gave Ebbo a ring from her finger along with a request for prayers for her son; Ebbo returned it to her after his ill-advised participation in the rebellion of 833 in hopes that she would intercede for him with Louis. Although Judith was moved to tears by this gesture, she could do nothing.³⁸ Ebbo had authored the bishops' manifesto against the king, which Louis saw as a betrayal by his foster brother, a disloyalty too great to pardon. Ebbo lost his office. By 833 Louis had learned a great deal about the folly of forgiving one's enemies. Ebbo received a bishopric east of the Rhine, a virtual exile.³⁹

The two chief administrators brought to Aachen from Aquitaine were Hilduin, abbot of St. Denis, who became archchaplain of the palace in 822, and Helisachar, who continued as chancellor in Aachen until 819. Both men wielded a great deal of influence throughout the 820's and played significant roles in the political intrigues of the reign. As chancellor, Helisachar attended chiefly to legal matters but also supervised the clergy of the imperial palace along with the then archchaplain, Hildebald, bishop of Cologne. Both Helisachar and Hilduin worked closely with Benedict of Aniane in the purging of the court in 814 and in the drawing up of the *Ordinatio* in 817. Although Helisachar became abbot of St. Riquier in 822, he remained influential at court until 830, when he was exiled for his participation in the rebellion of that year and deprived of his abbacies.

The most important figures to confront Louis at the Aachen court were the brothers Wala and Adalhard, cousins and close advisors of Charlemagne.⁴⁰ Adalhard, although abbot of Corbie, had spent much of his time in Aachen with Charlemagne; Wala was considered by many to be the emperor's second-in-command. Both were removed from the court by Louis in 814, as was their sister Gundrata, for obvious political reasons: they were related to Louis and they had a strong following. Adalhard was exiled to the

abbey at Noirmoutier, an island at the mouth of the Loire that was to be devastated by Viking raids, and Wala entered Corbie as a novice. Gundrata was sent to the convent of St. Radegund in Poitiers, where, interestingly enough, Judith would be exiled and forced to take religious vows in 830.⁴¹ Adalhard and Wala would play major roles in the opposition to Louis in the 820's after they were returned to court.

Supporters of Adalhard and Wala fought to have them returned to favor, but it was not until the death of Benedict of Aniane in 821 that they were successful. Benedict had been the only one strong enough to keep Charlemagne's remaining advisors from exerting their considerable influence at court. After Benedict was gone, the demands for reinstatement of Adalhard as abbot of Corbie and Wala at court were met by Louis. However, Wala was not satisfied. Ostensibly, he felt that as a close relative of the king he was entitled to a public act of contrition and recompense as well as reinstatement. In reality, he wanted power. As a result, his demands and the support of his followers provided an impetus to the penance at Attigny in 821, Louis' first great humiliation at the hands of the churchmen, his first "Canossa."⁴²

With the support of Adalhard from Corbie, Wala became the most vigorous proponent of the ideal of a unified empire and the greatest supporter of the *Ordinatio* of 817. He pursued his ends to the exclusion of all else, no matter what the consequences.⁴³ In a sense it could be said that he was the ringleader of the opposition, and his zeal was boundless; he was one of the chief causes of the troubles during Louis' reign. Wala gained more power when he assumed the abbacy of Corbie when Adalhard died in 826, and he lived on to lead the rebellion of 830, in consequence of which he suffered exile in Switzerland. Recalled to Corbie in 831 by an unwisely forgiving Louis, Wala took part in the rebellion of 833, for which he together with Lothar was finally banished in 834 to Italy, where he died of the plague in 836.⁴⁴

The position of Adalhard and Wala on the nature of royal power was recorded by Paschasius Radbertus of Corbie, of whom we shall hear a great deal more. In his *Epitaphium Arsenii* he recounted that at the assembly of 828 Wala reminded Louis, who was presiding, of his royal duties: let the emperor be king and serve his own office and the things that pertain to his own authority and leave the sacred things of God to bishops and ministers of the Church. As Charlemagne had lectured Pope Leo, Wala instructed

Louis: be diligent in your own work, for "unless, O king, you keep faithfully that which is bidden, the more cruel shall be your crucifying; and all men, if God turn from us, shall meet you in one and the same death. Therefore, neglect in no wise that which is your bounden care; for in you alone, as Solomon said, is established our whole realm."⁴⁵ In fact, Wala was so full of doom and gloom that he was characterized as a second Jeremiah by his contemporaries.

The most vocal of the opposition bishops was Agobard of Lyon, who received his see in 816 and was prominent in the promulgation of the *Ordinatio* in 817. Agobard had been a pupil of Archbishop Leidrad of Lyon, one of Charlemagne's more prominent churchmen, in the 780's.⁴⁶ His thinking was certainly influenced by Benedict of Aniane as well. Agobard was one of Louis' earliest episcopal appointees but often annoyed the emperor with his moralizing and blunt speaking. He was forthright in his denunciation of the evil practices of both court and churchmen and was considered too radical even by some of the reformers. He wrote to Louis in 829 after the new *Divisio* was announced and said that the *Ordinatio* must not be broken; this could only be done by God.⁴⁷

Agobard was a prolific writer, and one of his most famous treatises, the *Liber Apologeticus*, contained some of his violent attacks against Judith, whom he believed to be a Jezebel and to be most responsible for the divisiveness in the kingdom. He wrote a tract in support of Louis' sons and specifically against Judith as well, *Libri Duo pro Filiis et contra Iudith Uxorem Hludowici Pii*.⁴⁸ Agobard believed that Judith, in her quest to secure a place for her son Charles in the succession, had caused Louis to break his solemn oath given in the *Ordinatio*.⁴⁹ Like Wala, Agobard was an avid believer in the unity and sanctity of empire, no matter who was emperor. His belief in unity dictated that the king who broke faith could be king no longer. Such was Agobard's reasoning for his support of Lothar, who was already legitimately co-emperor. Agobard felt that Louis had to be removed from office in order to propitiate an angry God. His arguments stimulated Louis' own superstitions about God's displeasure: there was dissention among Christians, the moral fabric of society was broken and the enemies of the kingdom, most notably the Vikings and Saracens, were attacking from without.⁵⁰ Agobard, like Charlemagne and Alcuin, faithfully read St. Augustine and believed in his Antichrist. However, when Louis triumphed over his enemies, Agobard was Augustinian enough to believe that this, too,

was the will of God and must be supported. Had not Augustine said that "if God's ways are inscrutable, does that mean they are not true."⁵¹ Even the most rabid of the reformers ultimately bowed to the divine right of kings and the sacred nature of kingship.

Agobard was before everything else a moralist, and followed his own sense of morality at the expense of the finer distinctions. Although he was bright and eloquent, he had a very practical bent and never really understood the basic debate in the power struggle -- the dichotomy in the two conceptions of the nature of royal power. Self-righteous and arrogant he may have been, but he had the courage of his convictions. Agobard did not flee with Lothar and the other bishops in 833 but remained at his post in Lyon. When his name was called at the synod of Thionville in 834 and he did not appear, he lost his see for contumacy.⁵² He was restored when Louis reconciled with Lothar. Thereafter, Agobard supported Louis wholeheartedly; he died in 840 while helping Judith's son Charles put down the rebellion of Pepin's son in Aquitaine.⁵³ In Agobard can clearly be seen the dilemma of the reformers. He acted out of the purest of motives, yet his writings were responsible for much of the trouble of Louis' reign. He could despise Judith yet assist her son, the rightful king of Aquitaine, to

protect his patrimony. Much more will be heard of Agobard in the succeeding chapters.

The second chief antagonist was the aforementioned Paschasius Radbertus of Corbie. He was Judith's most vitriolic and relentless critic and, with Agobard, is chiefly responsible for the negative picture of Judith that has come down to us. Radbert was a brilliant theologian, and is best known for his treatise entitled *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* (831, revised 844), the first doctrinal monograph on the Eucharist, which contains the implicit idea of transubstantiation.⁵⁴ His chief opponent in this theological debate was Hrabanus Maurus, whom we shall encounter later as a supporter of Louis and Judith. As an inmate of Corbie, Radbert was naturally a partisan of Adalhard and Wala; he was the author of biographies of both.

Radbert presented his version of the views of the reformers and their actions in his life of Wala, called the *Epitaphium Arsenii*. Written in two parts, the first completed by 838, the second not finished until the early 850's, during the reign of Charles the Bald, this *vita* offered a polemic against Judith while exonerating the reformers of culpability in the crises of the 820's and 830's. Thus one can see how the enmity did not die; Louis' opponents were still trying to justify themselves even after his death. Wala's

life is not a conventional biography but takes the form of a lament for the ideal of unity that perished, Radbert believes, with Wala, never to be recovered. Wala is portrayed as the champion of the ideal of imperial unity, a man who dedicated his life to this cause. Radbert went to a great deal of trouble to state the case of the reformers, to magnify their virtues and good intentions, to underscore the righteousness of their cause and defend their position. In Radbert's eyes, the magnitude of the loss of the ideal of a Christian empire as visualized by the Church could not have been greater. Wallace-Hadrill believes Radbert to have been the only contemporary writer who actually understood fully the nature of the crisis that afflicted the reign of Louis the Pious and the pivotal question on which it turned.⁵⁵ Radbert, however, had the benefit of hindsight when he wrote.

Before Judith ever appeared on the scene there were those who would be predisposed to resent her: Lothar, Pepin and Louis the German, Louis' three sons by his first marriage to Irmengard. Irmengard's family, the Robertines, had ties to many other noble families among the Frankish magnates and exploited every last one of them in their rivalry with the Welfs of Bavaria throughout the ninth century.⁵⁶ The Welfs were, of course, Judith's family. Lothar in particular stood to lose the most if Judith

presented Louis with a son, since he was the chief beneficiary of the *Ordinatio* and already co-emperor with his father. Because of the terms of the succession, friction already existed between Lothar and his two brothers. In the event of Louis' death, Pepin and Louis the German would be subservient to Lothar, merely rulers of *sub-regna* under the dominion of the empire in Lothar's charge.

During the two rebellions of 830 and 833, Lothar was successful only when his brothers could be persuaded to side with him against their father. As well, Louis' returns to power were facilitated by the desertion of the two younger sons from Lothar's cause, for whatever reason. Lothar was his father's chief opponent, and in that sense the figurehead of the opposition to Louis because, according to the *Ordinatio*, he shared power as co-emperor. It was the alignment of those who supported him that changed. Lothar had direct support of enough clerics and magnates to embolden him in his attempted usurpations, but he was at the same time the tool of his supporters. Lothar was not as bright as his father, and he did not comprehend the subtleties of the two conceptions of royal power. In this respect, he was purely self-seeking in his attacks on his father. Further, any one of the brothers could be relied on to initiate hostilities and attempt to

engage the other two against their father whenever Louis took part of his patrimony to bestow on Charles.

The first casualty of the *Ordinatio* of 817 was Bernard, son of Louis' brother Pepin, who acceded to the kingship of Italy at Pepin's death and was confirmed in this office by Louis in 814. As we saw in the first chapter, Bernard was an obstacle to the reformers and stood in the way of a unified empire. Consequently, he was omitted in the new succession document. In addition, Bernard was severely resented by Louis' first wife Irmengard and her family, because they believed her sons were being cheated of their rightful patrimony. However, there were many who supported the rebellion of Bernard because they feared the power of Benedict and his supporters and the effect of their document on the power of the king.⁵⁷ One who lost his see for allegedly supporting Bernard was Theodulf of Orléans, exiled to the monastery at Angers until shortly before his death in 823, when he was finally forgiven by Louis. Theodulf maintained his innocence until his dying day. Louis could easily have pardoned him earlier, since Theodulf was in no position to threaten his power.

Supporters of Bernard potentially threatening to Louis suffered exile or blinding. Bernard himself was condemned to death. Although the

sentence was commuted to blinding, it made no difference since Bernard died within two days as a result of his injuries.⁵⁸ The suppression of the rebellion and its aftermath recalls the same mean spirit that inspired the purging of the palace of all "sinful" elements in 814. Both were harsh actions and both were ruthlessly carried out. It is difficult to apportion blame between Louis and his opponents for these acts. Louis could be ruthless if the situation demanded it, and he was wary of any potential threat to his power as he perceived it. At the same time, the reformers in both camps were also ruthless in the pursuit of the ideal of imperial unity. Although in one sense they were all fighting for the same cause of unity, the distinct interpretations of the nature of Louis' power that the opposing parties saw in the *Ordinatio* separated them ideologically. This, as noted, formed the foundation upon which all aspects of the ensuing power struggle rested.

The first five years of Louis' reign were more or less stable, then, compared to the years that followed. Louis was not opposed in his assumption of the throne in 814 and he was afforded sufficient time to consolidate his power and transform the court at Aachen to his own. Although many of Charlemagne's advisors remained, they offered no opposition to Louis as emperor. Indeed, they hoped Louis would build on

Charlemagne's foundations and enhance the *imperium christianum*. They viewed the imperial ideal differently than Louis' churchmen, although the differences were not apparent to either party in 817, nor that Louis held still another position entirely. Members of both groups were able to work together with Louis to formulate the *Ordinatio Imperii*. Little did they know that the ramifications of the *Ordinatio* would affect the course of the entire reign, for in it culminated ideas that had been in circulation for decades, and from it arose the divisiveness that dominated the remaining years of the empire of the Carolingians.

The stage was thus set for conflict because no one was fully aware of the diversity of interpretations as to the meaning of the succession document. Louis truly believed in the *Ordinatio* and the ideal of unity, but he also felt that he could set aside a document he had created through his power as king. Men who had been in his service at the court of Aquitaine were zealous reformers with ascetic principles, and they had always supported Louis, but their strict adherence to abstract Christian ideals prevented them from seeing what really was happening. Lastly, Charlemagne's men held fast to the imperial ideal as envisioned by the great man, but they failed to realize the extent to which Louis adhered to his

father's idea of the priestly nature of royal power and the fact that it was absolute. They also were besotted with the ideal of unity to the exclusion of practical considerations.⁵⁹ In 819, however, the real differences among those at Aachen were not yet readily apparent.

This, then, is the world in which Judith was about to make her debut. Her marriage to Louis took place in February, 819, and it was a cause for celebration among a great number of Frankish magnates. Contemporary sources indicate that Louis was captivated by his bride and made every attempt to please her.⁶⁰ Their relationship weathered all the crises of his reign, and Louis remained loyal to her until his death in 840. The impression obtained from the sources is that this was a successful marriage and that Judith more than adequately fulfilled her duties as wife and empress. The biased reports of Louis' opponents have obfuscated this picture and have overshadowed the accounts of the royal couple's supporters. Historians willing to accept the negative picture of Louis are perforce compelled to do the same with Judith, since her alleged machinations presuppose an inherent weakness in Louis. In fact, the sources written by Louis' supporters indicate that Judith was a positive influence on Louis and his greatest support throughout the reign. If Judith is seen to be an active

and powerful participant in the events of her husband's reign, the accepted image of the royal couple is effaced by a more realistic assessment not only of Louis and Judith, but also of the actual issues that plagued Louis' reign.

ENDNOTES

1. *Vita*, II, 21:2.
2. Some examples follow. In the *Vita*, prolog (2), the Astronomer writes: "I confess without pretence of adulation that the talents of everyone (I do not speak of my own, for it is very modest), even the talent of great writers, withers in the presence of so noble a theme. Translated in Allen Cabaniss, *Son of Charlemagne: A Contemporary Life of Louis the Pious* (Syracuse, 1961), p. 30. Agobard, *Liber Apologeticus*, PL, v. 104, col. 309, rants that everyone in the kingdom, indeed in the world, no matter what age, is laughing openly at the cuckolded Louis because of the alleged adultery of Judith and Bernard of Septimania, then chamberlain. Radbert called the palace a brothel and said that black magic was being performed there. *Epitaphium*, II, 8:6, 9:7.
3. Papers were published in *CH*.
4. For the work of nineteenth-century German historians, see N. Staubach, "Des großen Kaisers keiner Sohn," *CH*, pp. 701-21.
5. Donald Bullough, "Europae Pater: Charlemagne and his Achievement in the Light of Recent Scholarship" in *English Historical Review* 85 (1970): 59-105. Bullough makes it clear that the legend of Charlemagne and the later uses to which it was put have clouded the historical figure.
6. Thomas F. X. Noble, *Louis the Pious and the Papacy: Law, Politics and the Theory of Empire in the Early Ninth Century* (diss. Michigan State University, 1974).
7. *Vita*, I, 3, mentions his advisors. Werner, "Hludovicus Augustus," in *CH*, p. 8, mentions that the *missi* also kept an eye on Louis.
8. *Vita*, I, 2, 3.
9. See chapter 2 for connection to Clovis.

10. Ermoldus, *In Honorem*, 82:5, pp 10-11.

11. *Vita*, I, 4:1.

12. The Benedictine Rule was mandated for all monastic houses in Francia in 817, *MGH Cap.*, v. 1, no. 170, pp. 343 ff. There were two reforming synods under Benedict of Aniane's direction, one in 816 and one in 817, *MGH Con.*, v. 2, i, no. 39, pp. 307-464 and no. 40, p. 464, and *Con.*, v. 2, ii, p. 465. See also *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum*, VI (Siegburg. 1963). ed. K. Hallinger, pp. 433-56. Louis, however, exercised direct control over these proceedings as he had done in Aquitaine. Charlemagne had initiated monastic reform as early as the council of Frankfurt in 794, *Cap.* no 34, pp. 71-75. Other capitularies with clerical reform are from Aachen (802), no. 43, pp. 93-96, and Thionville (805), no. 71, pp. 131-35. In addition, there were capitularies dedicated to the outlining of clerical rules and regulations.

13. E. Dümmler, ed., *Epistolae Karolini aevi*. *MGHEpist.*, v. 4, no. 217, in the year 801.

14. *Vita*, II, 37:2, for example, tells of bad omens preceding the birth of Charles in 823.

15. Louis surely believed this was part of his sacral role. The proceedings of the 829 synod at Paris deal extensively with the nature of the king's *ministerium*, in *MGH Con.*, v. 2, ii, pp. 608-80. Other meetings were held but only Paris was recorded. Louis is reminded that his kingship is divinely ordained and the good fortune of society depends on his proper exercise of power.

16. For a treatment of Agobard's anti-Semitism, see Michael Minsky, *Agobard and His Relations with the Jews* (master's thesis, University of Massachusetts, 1971).

17. The natural antipathy of old retainers to newcomers lasted barely two years, although various alignments of men at court vying for the ear of the king would of course persist. The ideal of imperial unity was so strong that it obscured factional differences on many occasions. For instance, Benedict of Aniane and Hilduin, newcomers, worked perfectly well with Wala and Adalhard on the composition of the *Ordinatio* in 817, but by the next year they were on opposite sides concerning the rebellion of Bernard of Italy.

18. Wala and Adalhard were sons of Bernard, the son of Charles Martel and his third wife Ruodhaid. Therefore their geneology was impeccable.

19. Werner, "Hludovicus Augustus," p. 28, brings attention to the fact that the deaths of Pepin and Charles upset all plans for the empire's future and must have had a devastating effect not only on Charlemagne but on the magnates, both clerical and lay. All that Charlemagne had planned "was swept away in a flash by the hand of God." Louis' Aquitanian supporters interpreted this as an act of God as well, but one that confirmed their plans of reform.

20. Although Louis swore in 813 before his first coronation as emperor that he would protect Bernard and indeed reconfirmed him as king of Italy in 814, this did not stand in the way of the reformers, and Bernard may have been a thorn in the side of Louis as well. Peter Classen, "Karl der Große und die Thronfolge in Frankreich," in *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel zum 70. Geburtstag* (Göttingen, 1972), v. 3, p. 133, says, "Der Konflikt zwischen Ludwig und Bernhard had seine Wurzel noch im Karls Entscheidungen, und an diesen Konflikt knüpft die Kette der häuslichen Kämpfe der folgenden Jahrzehnte an." Further complicating the matter, a document has been found at St. Gallen attesting to Bernard's illegitimacy.

21. Werner, "Hludovicus Augustus," p. 34, points out that Louis' followers resented the fact that his freedom of action was limited before he even came to the throne, "avant qu'il ne commence son règne."

22. Charlemagne waited twelve years for recognition of his emperorship from the Byzantine emperor; envoys from Constantinople proclaimed him "Basileus" in 812, *RFA*, s. a. 812.

23. *Divisio Regni*, MGH Cap., v. 1, no. 45. In chapter 20, Charlemagne reserves the right to make future changes as part of his sovereignty. Is it possible that he may have continued to ponder about passing on the emperorship?

24. Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, p. 45, talks about the king's ecclesiastical power.

25. Although Louis eschewed the long list of titles used by his father in documents, his own designation was just as powerful: "Divina ordinante providentia Imperator Augustus."

26. *Vita*, II, 32:1,2.

27. *RFA*, s. a. 746. Carloman went to Rome to be tonsured and built a monastery in honor of St. Sylvester, then moved to Monte Cassino and became a monk. Carloman was not king; Pepin was anointed in 751.

28. *Vita*, II, 32.2, speaks of magnates urging Louis to marry again, but no names are mentioned. We presume they were the loyalists who feared the churchmen's growing power.

29. Most queens had no assurance of influence or power unless they bore their husbands a son. Afterwards their fortunes were tied to those of their sons. Judith was a notable exception, which surely underscores her importance to Louis from the very beginning.

30. A good example of this is Angilbert, lay abbot of St. Riquier under Charlemagne, who had an irregular marriage with Charlemagne's daughter Bertha. Alcuin, abbot of Tours, was never ordained priest, although he is thought of as a religious magnate. As well, some of Louis' closest advisors in governmental administration were Benedict of Aniane, a monk, and Hilduin, abbot of St. Denis and chancellor at the same time.

31. Benedict, later sainted, was the subject of a life: Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis et Indensis*, ed. G. Pertz, MGH SS v. 15.1, pp. 198-220.

32. The success of his efforts was noted at the 813 council of Chalon, *MGH Conc.*, v. 2.1, no 37, p, 278.

33. *MGH Cap.*, v. 1, no. 170, pp. 343 ff., *Conc.*, v. 2, nos. 40 and 41, pp. 464-65.

34. Charlemagne kept his daughters at court and did not allow them to marry legally; therefore, they contracted "irregular" marriages according to Frankish tradition. Louis' clerical advisors were aghast. *Vita*, II, 21:2, 23:1.

35. *Vita*, III, 64:2,3.

36. Ebbo was a commoner who had shown such great promise as a young boy that he had been educated. Charlemagne wanted education for children not of noble birth. Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 39-41 discusses parish schools, and *Notker Babuli Gesta Karoli Magni imperatoris*, ed. H. F. Haefele, *MGH, SSNS*, v. 12, bk. 1, ch. 3, tells us that Charlemagne chastised the sons of the nobility for lacking the zeal for learning demonstrated by the sons of the common people.

37. *Utrecht Psalter*: Utrecht, Bibliothek der Rijksuniversiteit, Cat. Cod. Ms. Bibl. Rhenotraiectinae, I, Nr. 32. *Ebbo Gospels*: Épernay, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 1. *Grandval Bible*: London, British Museum, Add. Ms. 10 546. *Vivian Bible*: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1. *Lothar Gospels*: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1.

38. Charles the Bald recounted this to the pope. *PL*, v. 124, cols. 872-73.

39. At Thionville in March, 835, Ebbo was forced to convict himself of error and sentence himself to penance and loss of office. Ebbo said he was "unworthy of the priesthood." *Vita*, III, 54:1.

40. Radbert wrote *vitae* of both Adalhard and Wala. *Vita Sancti Adalhardi*, *PL*, v. 120, cols. 1507-56; *Epitaphium Arsenii*, *PL*, v. 120, cols. 1559-1650.

41. Wala was the rebel leader in 830, which probably explains why Judith was sent there. His sister would be able to keep watch over Judith and possibly intercept any communication between the king and queen.

42. *Vita*, II, 35:1.

43. In the *Epitaphium*, his life of Wala, Radbert casts Wala as the foremost champion of the ideal of unity. Radbert is, of course, an apologist but he does convey sincere conviction in his subject. Another one with good intentions.

44. It seems altogether fitting that the man who plagued Louis for so many years should die of the plague.

45. Radbert, *Epitaphium*, col. 1569.

46. There was a cordial rivalry between Alcuin and Leidrad, which may account for some of his resentment of the loyalists, most of whom had been pupils of Alcuin.

47. Cf. his letter to Louis, the so-called *flebilis epistola*, *PL*, v. 104, cols. 287-92.

48. Ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS*, v. 15.1, pp. 274-79.

49. See Charles E. Odegard, "The Concept of Royal Power in Carolingian Oaths of Fidelity, in *Speculum* 20 (1945), pp. 279-89.

50. Agobard, *Liber Apologeticus*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS*, v. 15, pp. 274-79.

51. Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth, 1972, repr. 1986), bk. 5, ch. 21.

52. *Vita*, III, 54:1.

53. At Saintes in Aquitaine.

54. See Patricia McCormick Zirkel, *The Divine Child in Paschasius Radbertus' "De Corpore et Sanguine Domine"* (diss. Fordham University, 1989).

55. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 234.

56. Werner, "Medieval Nobility," pp. 172-73, discusses the Frankish origins of the Robertines.

57. *Vita*, II, 29:2, names the rebel bishops: in addition to Theodulf, Anselm of Milan and Wulfold of Cremona. There were many other clerics and laymen who rebelled, but they are not named here.

58. *Vita*, II, 30:1.

59. I wish I could think of a different word than besotted, but that seems to say it best. They were blinded by their ideal and thus ignored the real problems around them, thereby worsening the situation.

60. Agobard later wrote in the *Liber Apologeticus*, col. 308, that Louis was a good husband to Judith, and rightfully so.

CHAPTER III

IUDITH UXOR CARISSIMA HLUDOWICI SECUNDA

In the years between the marriage of Louis and Judith in 819 and the assembly at Worms in August, 829, when Louis first included Charles in the succession, the activities of the royal family are documented chiefly in the various annals. The only *vita* of Louis written during these years is Ermoldus Nigellus' *In Honorem Hludowici*. Both the Astronomer and Thegan wrote in the 830's and Nithard even later. The polemical writings of Agobard of Lyon and Paschasius Radbertus, however, including some of their most scathing denunciations of Judith, appeared just after this period.¹ Of the literary material, some poetry of Walahfrid Strabo dates from this period, but the works of Hrabanus Maurus with their dedicatory epistles to both Louis and Judith were yet to come. The *Chronicon* of Bishop Freulf of Lisieux, a

universal history written for Charles' education, was written by 829 and sent to the palace along with platitudes for Judith.² There is no mention of a poet at court until 829 with the arrival of Walahfrid, well after the arrival of Judith. Therefore, it is necessary to rely, at least in part, on later sources to illuminate the years before the first of the two major rebellions against Louis.

The year of Judith's marriage was marked by troubles on nearly all frontiers of the kingdom: Viking raids in the north, an uprising in Brittany, and a major revolt by Liudewit in Pannonia on the eastern frontier.³ As well, the churchmen were nervous about the marriage, as evidenced by the fact that they had Louis reaffirm the terms of the *Ordinatio* in the same year. Again and again we will see evidence that, despite their protestations about the sanctity of the *Ordinatio*, the bishops fully realized how ephemeral their hold on Louis was. However, it was reported that Louis spent his time happily in the palace with Judith "rendering to her that which was due to a married woman," as Agobard of Lyon later remarked, quoting St. Paul.⁴ In the *Hildesheim Annals* it was recorded that, after the marriage, Louis did little for four years and nothing of importance happened in the kingdom.⁵ The annalist must have spent all of his time in the cloister, for there was indeed a

great deal happening in the kingdom. However, the importance of these observations lies in the fact that they bear witness to an obviously happy marriage and a contented husband. Judith even accompanied Louis on his annual autumnal hunting expeditions.⁶

The arrival of a new queen in the palace seems to have nudged Louis into arranging marriages for his sons by Irmengard. There was incipient hostility on their part toward the woman who had taken the place of their mother. This hostility spread throughout Irmengard's family, the Robertines, and the enmity between them and the Welfs, Judith's family, constitutes an important motive in the power struggles of the reign. The sons were well over marriageable age, in any case, but Louis had kept them in his household as a form of control. Charlemagne had done the same thing for his eldest son Charles, and had refused to allow his daughters to marry officially because he did not want to incur more obligations than he already had.⁷ At the assembly at Thionville in October, 821, Louis arranged an alliance for Lothar with Irmengard, daughter of Count Hugh of Tours. In 822, after the council at Attigny, he arranged a marriage for Pepin, king of Aquitaine, to Ingeltrud, daughter of Count Theotbert of Madrie, kin to both the Carolingians and the family of St. William of Gellone, former count of

Septimania. These alliances served to bind two important noble families to the royal house, although only the Septimaniens remained loyal to Louis. Hugh of Tours was always to side with his son-in-law in the civil wars and proved to be a treacherous enemy on more than one occasion. Perhaps Charlemagne had been judicious in not allowing his daughters to marry.

The first sign of real trouble for Judith appeared after the birth of a daughter, Gisela, in 820 or 821.⁸ At the diet of Nijmegen in May, 821, it was recorded that Louis again affirmed the terms of the *Ordinatio*, presumably at the urging of churchmen.⁹ Proof of Judith's fertility was potentially threatening to their plans, a fact they were quick to realize. Both Adalhard and Wala were in constant touch from exile with their influential supporters in Frankish politics at Aachen and elsewhere. These included churchmen, especially Agobard, archbishop of Lyon, Jesse, bishop of Amiens, Helisachar, abbot of St. Riquier and former chancellor for Louis, Hilduin, abbot of St. Denis and archchaplain of the imperial court, and Bishop Jonas of Orléans, as well as some magnates, chiefly Hugh, count of Tours and father-in-law to Lothar, and Matfrid, count of Orléans, with ties to both Jonas and Agobard.¹⁰ All were busy plotting ways to return Wala and Adalhard to Aachen so they could bolster the cause of imperial unity as they

saw it and help suppress any efforts of Louis to slip the noose of the *Ordinatio*. The birth of Gisela agitated the reformers further, and the death of Benedict of Aniane, surprisingly enough, removed a moderating influence. Benedict had never been a political radical, and his loyalty to Louis had been unimpeachable.

Following the birth of their daughter Gisela, Louis and Judith began to be pressured by the reforming churchmen. Despite Louis' reaffirmations of the *Ordinatio* in 819 and 821, and despite the fact that the terms of the *Ordinatio* were supposed to be sacrosanct, the prelates were still apprehensive that Louis would change the succession should Judith give birth to a son. Their fears again betrayed the fact that they were fully aware that Louis *could* go back on the terms of the *Ordinatio* at any time, and they knew not only that changes would be major but also that such changes would invalidate the document.¹¹ In other words, the churchmen knew that the document was no proof against the king reverting to the Frankish tradition of partitioning the kingdom among the legitimate sons. The self-righteous pronouncements of the bishops concerning the sanctity of the document were hypocritical; the language of the *Ordinatio* was deliberately intended to pressure the emperor into conforming to terms that were radical and alien to Frankish

tradition.¹² Their actions belie their words. One cannot protest that the document is unbreakable before God yet proceed as if it could be broken at any moment. By now the bishops knew that Louis had realized his mistake in naming Lothar co-emperor.

The anxieties of the bishops and their allies drove them to precipitate action -- the demand for public penance by Louis for his sins. Wala and Adalhard, who had been recalled from exile by the king, together with their henchmen, began to increase pressure on Louis.¹³ They wanted further insurance against the invalidation of the *Ordinatio* and, I believe, they wanted to show the power of the Church over the emperor. It is highly likely that Wala was arrogant enough to want to demonstrate his own power as well. In any case, Wala used his leverage as leader of a powerful group to demand more than just recall from exile for himself and Adalhard; he insisted that, as cousins of Louis' father Charlemagne, they deserved a more outward and visible sign of apology from Louis and recompense commensurate with their importance.¹⁴ The king's public penance at the diet of Attigny in August, 822, left an indelible impression on both Louis and his young wife.

Louis' penance at Attigny was the first time the king was brought to his knees by churchmen -- his first "Canossa" and the worst humiliation ever

suffered by an emperor until Henry IV fell to his knees in the snow outside the walls of the historical Canossa before Pope Gregory VII in January of 1077. The Investiture Controversy was of course concerned with the issue of lay investiture of clerics; the pope insisted that the Church had the sole authority to bestow the emblems of office. In 822, the bishops forced penance on Louis to protect the terms of the *Ordinatio* under which they believed the Church had the higher authority to control the succession. The succession assured a unified empire, and the empire was identical to Christendom. Louis did public penance not only for his own sins but for those of his father as well.¹⁵ The fact that the bishops professed public penance at the same time served, I think, to mask the enormity of the king's humiliation.

There were multiple influences that led up to the penance at Attigny, and these must be explored. No doubt some of the blame can be laid on Louis himself.¹⁶ First of all, he seemed content to spend as much time as possible with Judith. Second, Judith bore him a daughter, proof of her fertility. Third, he was much affected by the death of Benedict of Aniane and sorely missed not only his counsel but the influence he wielded in court politics. Louis did not become close to Drogo until after 822. Fourth, there

is no doubt he *was* pious and was aware of his awesome duty before God, the fact that he was responsible for the welfare of all Christian souls in his kingdom including, incidently, churchmen. Fifth, Judith was not yet the powerful support she was to become in the years after the penance at Attigny, which greatly affected the still young and impressionable queen and made her resolute in her support of her husband for ever after. And, lastly, Louis was undoubtedly still vulnerable to the influence of strong clerics and had not yet learned to what extent he had to oppose them in order to protect himself and maintain his conception of sacral kingship.¹⁷ To him it had always seemed they all had the same goal, namely the *imperium christianum*. None of these reasons necessarily implies that Louis was either inherently weak or excessively pious, merely that he was a man of his age, a very religious age, and he was following in the footsteps of a father who had endowed the Church with much power so that it could carry out his reforms of society.

In addition to the demands of Wala for a more outward sign of contrition from Louis, and indeed Louis' genuine remorse for having imposed the exiles, there was a general feeling that the punishments carried out against Bernard and the others involved in the rebellion of 817 had been

too harsh.¹⁸ Again, Louis had been appalled by Bernard's death as a result of his blinding. Although Louis had pardoned the rebels in 821, this action seemed inadequate. Louis' conscience was prodding him to make recompense in these matters. These two burdens proved heavy enough to tip the scales in favor of penance, but it is doubtful that Louis realized before the fact the enormity of the act of public penance or its implications to kingship. In any case, there seems to have been enough pressure to force Louis to agree with the proposal put forth by Wala and other churchmen.¹⁹ At this point Judith was not in a position to do anything, but after Attigny things would be altogether different.

At the diet of Attigny in August, 822, then, a dramatic event took place. Before his assembled magnates, both clerical and lay, and probably before his queen as well, Louis publicly and abjectly did penance for his sins and the sins of his father, which he believed had brought misfortune on the kingdom, as well as for the death of Bernard. Louis believed that this penance would appease God and the churchmen and contribute to peace in the land. Apologists for the king said the penance was voluntary and actually enhanced Louis' position because he willingly humbled himself to please God.²⁰ This is the same notion that turns Christ's great humiliation of

being put to death like a common thief into the great triumph of Christendom -- he chose to die for others' sins in order to prove that death was but a prelude to eternal life. However, implicit in some sources is the idea that the penance was forced on Louis by the episcopate. Agobard of Lyon, of course, takes the high road and insists that the penance was good for Louis.²¹

Such an abject humiliation had a profound effect on Louis as well as on Judith. It would certainly influence their future actions. Louis would not have been averse to doing penance voluntarily.²² However, this was not the case. By pressuring Louis to perform public penance, the Frankish prelates succeeded in positioning themselves between God and the king, thereby usurping his sacral power to interpret God's will. This conceptual conflict frames the fundamental power struggle between king and churchmen for the highest authority. With the birth of the future Charles the Bald, the tacit ideological conflict erupted into an open political issue. The dreaded event -- the birth of a son -- had come to pass and it, combined with the *Ordinatio*, determined the temper of the remainder of Louis' reign. If the *Ordinatio* was the fuse, the birth of Charles was the torch that set light to it.²³

The troubles to come were heralded by natural disasters. The annals and the *Vita* are filled with premonitions of doom: fire from heaven, terrifying storms, torrential rains, enormous hailstones, tremors rocking the palace at Aachen, sickness and plague throughout the land, thunder and lightning in clear skies, even strange sounds in the night (which seems to be a favorite omen of the time).²⁴ Louis himself was said to fear that calamity was about to befall the empire. In retrospect, the birth of the future Charles the Bald on June 13, 823, was an event of uncommon historical significance and presaged troubles to come. There is no doubt that Louis and Judith as well as the reforming churchmen at once realized the potential implications of this birth.²⁵ The reformers had indeed been fearing it, for they knew instinctively that the position of the *Ordinatio* was in danger. If the *Ordinatio* were abrogated, so too would be the supposed control the bishops thought they held over the king. During the reign of Charlemagne there had been no question as to who had the higher authority. But during Louis' reign, the situation was ambiguous because the churchmen believed they had in Louis a king over whom they could exert a measure of control.²⁶ They desperately wanted to preserve the unity of Charlemagne's empire, the idealized *imperium christianum*, and they believed they had embodied in the *Ordinatio* of 817 the

means to realize their goal. However, they were unsure of Louis because they knew his conception of the sacrality of kingship and rightly suspected he would revert to Frankish tradition to accommodate future sons in the succession. Their apprehension prompted them to maneuver Louis into accepting the necessity for a public penance at Attigny in August of 822.

At the same time, Louis knew the position of the churchmen and their regard for the *Ordinatio*, the fact that they believed God had sanctified the document and determined the succession. He also knew he had to seek a more advantageous position concerning the *Ordinatio* and the bishops. Recognizing Lothar's growing ambition for a more active role in governance, Louis dispatched him as king to Italy. Also aware of Wala's large base of power, Louis sent him along as Lothar's advisor.²⁷ To enhance his position, Lothar had Pope Paschal I crown him king of the Lombards before returning to Francia in the summer of 823.²⁸ Perhaps at the urging of Judith or with her support, Louis coerced Lothar into standing godfather to Charles. In this capacity, he declared under oath his acquiescence to the *de facto* abrogation of the *Ordinatio*, acknowledging Louis' right to give Charles any portion of the realm he chose and that he, Lothar, would protect his brother and defend him against all enemies in the future.²⁹ It may be assumed that

Lothar had no intention of honoring his promise, since he sought to defend the terms of the *Ordinatio* by seeking support for its provisions among lay and ecclesiastical magnates anxious to increase their own political power under the guise of defending the unity and peace of the empire.³⁰

Judith's place by Louis' side was assured with the birth of her son. One of the time-honored ways royal women had of protecting themselves was to produce an heir. However, the marriage of Louis and Judith was already secure.³¹ The humiliation of the penance at Attigny brought them closer together and seems to have reinforced their loyalty to one another. Whatever it may have been, they became an inseparable team. Judith's role at court was strengthened beyond that of imperial consort and mistress of the king's household.

By the mid-820's Judith had gathered a group of loyal supporters around her, including much of her family. Her brothers Conrad and Rudolf came to Francia and became influential in the circle around the emperor. Conrad became abbot of the famous abbey of St. Gallen and married Adelaide, daughter of Hugh of Tours and sister of Lothar's wife Irmengard. This was another attempt on Louis' part to secure the support of Hugh, and it, too, failed.³² Rudolf received both the abbeys of St. Riquier and

Jumièges, also important Carolingian seats. Around 825, her mother Heilwich, now a widow, was made abbess of the royal abbey of Chelles, where both Charlemagne's mother Bertrada and his sister Gisela had held the same position.³³ In 827, a marriage was arranged between Judith's sister Emma and Louis' son Louis the German, king of Bavaria by the terms of the *Ordinatio*. As well, Judith probably supported Louis in the appointment of his illegitimate brother Drogo to the see of Metz in 823, and it was apparent she had earned the loyalty and trust of the man who was to become the royal couple's closest advisor and Louis' intimate friend. Judith was later to gain even the admiration of Wala's brother Adalhard for her support of the new monastery of Corvey in Saxony.³⁴ A number of scholars and poets gathered around Judith at the court in Aachen and figured among her most loyal and trusted supporters, and they extolled her in verse and prose. Their contributions will be considered below.

Among those who praised Judith was Bishop Freulf of Lisieux, who wrote a chronicle of world history for young Charles' education. In the preface he addressed Judith with the words, "I can say without flattery that you surpass in beauty any queen I have ever seen or of whom I have ever heard."³⁵ Allowing for some hyperbole, as well as flattery, Freulf was

acknowledging Judith's importance by hailing her in such laudatory terms. Obviously this praise attests to Judith's importance at court in what was essentially a man's world. An articulate admirer like Freculf could benefit from the empress's favor.

As Judith's power continued to grow throughout the 820's, it appears that Louis became less dependent on the advice of others and drew away from the influence of the churchmen. This fact has been noted by many historians in a negative sense, as if Judith "seduced" him from good counsel and into her "nefarious clutches."³⁶ Rather, it should be considered in a positive light because, unlike the bishops, Judith had Louis' welfare at heart. That she was also interested in her son inheriting his due portion of the kingdom does not detract from her conjugal loyalty but is rather a natural and positive maternal instinct.³⁷ She does not deserve the pejorative epithet "ambitious mother" that was levelled against her. The sources contain many charming vignettes from the life of the imperial family, indicating that Judith and Charles were frequently at the emperor's side.

An important occasion that demonstrates the abilities of Judith to organize and provision a large-scale festivity was the baptism of the Danish king Heriold, his family and entourage in June of 826.³⁸ Louis and Judith

stood sponsor to the Danish royal couple, and Lothar did likewise for their son and heir. Extravagant gifts were showered on the converts in a great show of largesse. Judith presented the Danish queen with rich gifts of gold and precious stones -- necklace, coronet, armbands -- and wearing apparel made of sumptuous cloth-of-gold -- cincture, tunic, mantilla, etc.³⁹ This was undoubtedly intended to reflect not only the generosity of the empress but her nobility of character and spirit. The ceremonial mass and subsequent festivities took place at the church and great hall of the royal palace at Ingelheim, begun by Charlemagne and completed under Louis around 820.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, little survives. We know of the wall frescoes only from Ermoldus's account in his verse life of Louis.⁴¹

The description of the festivities marking the conversion of the Danes included a hunt, one of the favorite pastimes of the Carolingians and much celebrated in medieval art and literature.⁴² Louis' passion for the hunt probably arose from his habits in Aquitaine, where he had much free time to devote to this pastime, owing to the able advisors Charlemagne had sent with him. Every year the *Royal Frankish Annals* make note of the hunt, for nothing kept Louis from it. Judith often accompanied him. This hunt was special, however, for Ermoldus gives many details. Especially riveting is the

description of the participation of the three-year-old Charles, who slew a small deer brought forward just for that purpose. Judith's great pride in her son was noted by Ermoldus.⁴³

There were no dramatic changes in the imperial routine until 828, when Louis felt secure enough to reform his administration, a move the churchmen would neither like nor condone. Troubles throughout the empire plagued him: peasants in abject poverty were crying for relief from poor harvests and the tyranny of landlords; clerical discipline had been growing slack since the death of Benedict of Aniane; Bretons were as usual in revolt; Slavs as well as other peoples menaced the eastern frontiers and Vikings the northern.⁴⁴ The problems were most acute in Spain, where incursions by Basques and Saracens called for immediate military action. Helisachar had been dispatched with a force in 827 but met with no success. Louis then ordered Hugh of Tours and Matfrid of Orléans to the front. They deliberately held back for political reasons.⁴⁵ The defender of the Spanish March was Count Bernard of Septimania, loyal supporter of the emperor and an opponent of the reforming faction, which included Hugh and Matfrid. They would have been content to see Bernard go down in defeat. Louis' sons were no less duplicit; Pepin of Aquitaine disregarded his father's order to go

to Spain and went instead to Lyon to conspire with Lothar and Agobard. By this time, Lyon was a center of discontent.⁴⁶ Louis, more politically determined, however, dismissed Hugh and Matfrid and deprived them of their offices and lands. In any case, Bernard did not need help; after several months of fierce fighting to hold Barcelona, which was under siege, he repulsed the Saracens and earned the emperor's gratitude and confidence, to the dismay of Wala and company.⁴⁷

In point of fact, there had been rumblings in the opposition party for many months. Agobard had written to Matfrid in 827 that "...disloyalty has reached such a point of carefree recklessness that hardly anyone has any regard for justice. Reverence for kings and laws has died down in the minds of many; indeed, most people have come to think that no one now is to be feared."⁴⁸ Under pretense of loyalty to Louis, Agobard alleged that bribery was rife at the palace, and complaints were never heard.⁴⁹ This prompted Wala to compile a treatise for Louis on how he should behave. It was not written in the language of a *speculum principis* but, rather, delivered in the manner of an Old Testament prophet. In essence, he informed Louis to concentrate on governance and leave the spiritual matters to churchmen, lest God punish him and, indeed, everyone else in the empire, for whom Louis

was responsible.⁵⁰ He adopted quite a different tone than that expressed in Agobard's letter, but at least it was straightforward. Wala articulated the crux of the whole problem: Louis considered his kingship priestly and the bishops did not agree. The control over Louis the churchmen thought they wielded through the *Ordinatio* was crumbling, thanks to Judith and the group of loyalists gathered around her in support of Louis. By now the dissidents were sowing the seeds of rebellion in earnest. Their fears were justified.

The turning point of Louis' reign occurred in the year 829. He had tired of the insubordination of his magnates, his churchmen and especially his sons. Louis had learned much in the years since the penance at Attigny in 822 and fully intended to assert the absolute power inherent in sacral kingship.⁵¹ There can be no doubt that Judith contributed to this liberation. She had witnessed and shared in the insufferable humiliation of her husband at Attigny. As wife, companion and confidant to the king, Judith doubtless as well shared Louis' views of kingship and encouraged his growing impatience with the reformist bishops and their adherents.

Indeed, it is unreasonable not to assume that she bitterly resented the machinations of the bishops and their myrmidons that brought the royal household to the humiliation at Attigny. She had become a focal point at

court for Louis' loyalist following. The unbridled calumny of Judith by the bishops of the reform party, the eagerness with which they traduced her character and their subsequent attempts to separate the royal couple, attest to their grim appreciation of Judith's influence with the king and their determination to crush it as well as the influence of those of like mind.⁵²

Louis must have known that some of his oldest and most trusted advisors were numbered among the dissidents, such as Helisachar and Hilduin; since the goals of the latter conflicted with those of the king, since they wished to attenuate royal authority, they were in equal portion guilty of treachery. Louis, accused of being priest-ridden, was tired of priests and determined to rid himself of them.⁵³ He finally realized that he had placed trust in people who did not have his interests at heart and he, not unnaturally, determined to replace them with others concerned with his own well-being and whose appreciation of kingship coincided with his. House cleaning was in order. What followed was a sweeping reorganization of the imperial court or what Pierre Riché calls a "palace revolution."⁵⁴

At the assembly of Worms in August, 829, Louis announced several important changes. He summarily divested Lothar of his co-emperorship and erased his name from all official documents, thereby rectifying one of his

most serious miscalculations.⁵⁵ Louis should have adhered to his father's example and kept all of his sons subordinate to him. Although Charlemagne had made Louis co-emperor, it was at a time when Louis was the sole surviving heir. By establishing Lothar as co-emperor, Louis created an alternate leader for disaffected magnates and churchmen to follow. Therefore, Lothar was to be sent back to Italy, with only Italy to rule. This time Wala would not go with him; he was sent back to Corbie, to remain there and out of politics.⁵⁶ Additionally, Louis rearranged the succession, as he felt was his right according to his conception of kingship. Louis and Judith had decided that Charles, now seven years old, should take his place as son and heir to the king. From Lothar's lands, Charles was to have Alemannia, home to many of his mother's kinsmen, Rhaetia on the upper Rhine, Alsace and part of Burgundy.⁵⁷ Finally, Louis called to the palace as chamberlain one who had demonstrated fidelity as well as prowess in battle: Bernard of Septimania, son of his father's kinsman St. William of Gellone, of a family that had always been loyal to the Carolingian royal house.⁵⁸ Bernard was also to have charge of little Charles's education now that he was too old to be tutored by his mother. In addition, as chamberlain he would work closely with Judith in her duties as mistress of the king's household.⁵⁹

In all of this, many were convinced that Louis was fulfilling the role of king for which he was destined by God. Walahfrid Strabo, abbot of Reichenau, wrote about the euphoria of the royal family at the time. Louis was likened to Moses and was ushering in a new golden age; he was "a leader of his people in the midst of darkness." Judith was the beautiful Rachel of the court, and Charles was portrayed as Benjamin, her son.⁶⁰ It must have indeed been a euphoric feeling to have thrown off the shackles of all the advisors who, purporting to be Louis' loyal supporters, were telling him what to do, how to act and what a king should be. He had been constantly manipulated into situations of the churchmen's making. Louis' own motives, I believe, had been sincere from the beginning.⁶¹ He truly felt that they all were promoting the same cause and had the same concerns, but under *his* kingship, as he perceived it. It took him until now to realize his error. But he had the courage of his convictions and took the steps to correct his mistakes. Unfortunately, Louis' palace revolution was followed by an equally powerful reaction: rebellion. It was not yet time for the churchmen to step aside; they in fact refused to do so.⁶² They were accustomed to having a voice in the political affairs of state, and they still had the ambitious Lothar and his equally self-serving brothers behind whom to array themselves.

The disaffected churchmen and their cohorts carefully laid their battle plans. Their first tactic was to attack Louis through Judith, further demonstrating their appreciation of her influence and Louis' devotion to her. From his forced exile at Corbie, Wala initiated a relentless propaganda campaign intended to vilify Judith and at best to compel Louis to repudiate her. In this the churchmen were in a very difficult position because, in several reforming Church councils, they had reaffirmed the sanctity of Christian marriage in order to eliminate the old Germanic "quasi-marriages" that Charlemagne's daughters had contracted.⁶³ The purging from the court of all "superfluous" women in 814 was their first attack on marriages not sanctioned by the Church. So they made repudiation of wives nearly impossible, even in some cases of adultery. But open adultery and incest were grounds for dissolution. Therefore, Judith was accused of both,⁶⁴ with added charges of witchcraft and black magic. In addition, she and Bernard of Septimania were accused of plotting the assassination of Louis and his three sons by Irmengard in order to seize power themselves.⁶⁵

Wala's mouthpiece was Paschasius Radbertus, a monk at his abbey of Corbie. As mentioned earlier, Radbert was a brilliant theologian and was

endowed with better than average literary skills. His account of the events appears in the first book of his *Epitaphium Arsenii*.

Oh what a day that brought abiding shadows of crisis, that wrenched apart the peaceful and united empire and divided it into morsels, that despoiled fraternity, broke bonds of blood, and everywhere engendered enmity, that scattered fellows of one homeland, banished fidelity, destroyed charity, that so ravaged the church and corrupted all things.... Alas, a day of misfortune, a day followed by a still worse night. No day was more troubled than when that scoundrel Bernard was recalled from Spain, that wretch who abandoned every honor vested in him by his origins. He wallowed in self-conceit and gluttony. He came like an enraged boar; he overturned the palace, smashed the council, and cast down every principle of law and reason. He chased off and trampled all the clerical and secular advisors; he occupied the emperor's bed.... The palace became a sty where shame ruled, adultery reigned, where felonies, sorcery, and all manner of prohibited black arts abounded. The emperor went like an innocent lamb to the slaughter. That great and clement emperor was deceived by the woman against whom Solomon warned, still more deluded by the intrigues of that immoral being who led him toward death.⁶⁶

These vitriolic charges should have been dismissed out of hand, but many historians accepted these and similar oburgations as evidence against Judith while they simultaneously dismissed as flattery the writings of her supporters. Even Louis' reputation as a weak monarch should have been recognized as the invective of malcontents.

It is at least entertaining to analyze Radbert's contribution to the credulous. He is careful to separate the "great and clement emperor" from Judith, Bernard and others loyal to Louis and Louis' ideal of kingship. He

refers to "abiding shadows of crisis, that wrenched apart the peaceful and united empire and divided it into morsels," overblown rhetoric connoting Louis' compromising of the *Ordinatio* that does not reflect the political situation at the time. The actual execution of Louis' decisions is attributed principally to "Bernard...recalled from Spain" who "overturned the palace, smashed the council...[and] chased off and trampled all the clerical and secular advisors." Radbert acknowledges Judith's stalwart position among the loyalists and her relation to Bernard by making her equally culpable with Bernard for the shipwreck of their hopes. Since the "great and clement emperor" would not himself have done these things, nor, presumably, have allowed these things to be done, Bernard, Judith and party were compelled to resort to "sorcery, and all manner of prohibited black arts...."⁶⁷

Radbert's invective was far more outrageous than the so-called "flattery" that flowed from the pens of the poets. The portrait of Louis as a weak and ineffectual monarch arose chiefly from writings like Radbert's treatise and the implications in such phraseology as "...like a lamb to the slaughter." Louis was cast as a hopeless pawn before the collusion of Judith and Bernard. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. Bernard was loyal first to Louis, later to Judith as well. The charges of adultery were

certainly not believed by Louis. Indeed, although Radbert's vitriolic indictment explicitly exempts Louis from participation in the "crisis," unless one does subscribe to sorcery and prohibited black arts, only Louis could have ordered the events that constituted Radbert's "crisis." However, to admit that the emperor himself had turned against the bishops and their vision would have been to concede the defeat of their plans. Apart from treachery, which the bishops were perfectly willing to employ, there could be no *legitimate* response to the exercise of the emperor's will.⁶⁸ The bishops understood perfectly that the *Ordinatio* itself carried validity only as long as the emperor agreed to it. The truth of the matter is that Louis finally realized his was a very different conception of kingship than that of the bishops, and he was now aware that they would use any means to achieve their desired goal. He must also have wondered at some point how he had come to surround himself with scoundrels and knaves, since there was clearly no honor among the bishops and their fellows.

For the moment, the crisis continued, nor was Radbert's an isolated voice. Never one to sit out a crisis, Agobard hastened to join in the defamation of Judith. He accused her of having become openly lascivious; everyone at court, throughout the kingdom and even "the whole world" knew

of her lubricity and of her pairing with Bernard, all, that is, except the poor cuckolded Louis. According to Agobard, Louis had become an object for scorn; people laughed at him behind his back. Radbert was moved to add more: the court was "a brothel, where adultery is queen and an adulterer reigns." Allegations of black magic were levelled at Bernard.⁶⁹ By this time Wala had a veritable network of spies in the palace who apprised him of court activities. Where facts were lacking, invention sufficed. Word was sent to Pepin in Aquitaine that his father, at the suggestion of Bernard, was planning to attack him, that Bernard hoped they both would be killed in battle.⁷⁰ Despite the laughable nature of all these allegations, the agitation of the dissidents resulted in revolt. The bishops were aided unexpectedly by an unfortunate decision on the part of Louis and Bernard to proceed immediately to quell an uprising of the Bretons, despite the fact that it was Holy Week -- the time for Christians to celebrate the most important event in the Christian calendar.⁷¹ In addition, travel was all but impossible with the spring thaw. The Frankish army refused to muster.

Emboldened by the army's refusal to march, the dissidents held a meeting in Paris and plotted treason against the "great and clement emperor" -- for it was nothing less.⁷² Among their number were the

ringleader Wala, Archchaplain Hilduin, Helisachar, and Bishop Jesse of Amiens, as well as Hugo of Tours and Matfrid of Orléans. Pepin arrived from Aquitaine, having come by way of Orléans, where he removed Count Odo, Bernard's cousin, from office and reinstated Matfrid. They travelled to Verberie, outside Compiègne, where they were met by Louis the German.⁷³ Lothar was overjoyed at the news. His partisans, the so-called champions of the ideal of a unified empire, were convinced he should rule in Louis' stead. Perhaps by this time, confronted with a very strong and determined Louis, they had more hope of controlling Lothar, because he would owe the throne to them.

Pepin of Aquitaine and Louis the German, with their henchmen Hugh and Matfrid, moved to "liberate" Louis from the suffocating clutches of the empress and Bernard.⁷⁴ When news of the events reached Louis, he hastily returned from Brittany to Aachen, sending Bernard and his family back to Septimania for safety. Hoping to protect Judith from harm, Louis had her seek asylum in the convent of St. Mary's in Laon. Her son Charles went with her. The opposition, however, did not honor her asylum. She was taken from the convent and made to confront the rebels, who threatened her with torture and death unless she did as they bade her and used her influence to

persuade Louis to enter a monastery. Out of fear for his wife, Louis acquiesced in Judith's incarceration at St. Radegund in Poitiers, where she was forced to take vows, but he asked for more time to make his own decision. Her brothers Conrad and Rudolf were also sent to monasteries in Aquitaine.⁷⁵ Having let others do the preliminary work, Lothar now arrived from Italy and assumed the mantle of power. He reversed the actions of the Worms assembly and placed Louis and Charles under guard at St. Denis, where monks were to persuade Louis to enter a monastery. Louis, however, resisted all pleas, although he was forced to reaffirm the terms of the *Ordinatio* and to vow that he would never again act without Lothar's counsel.⁷⁶ It is not difficult to discern the hand of the bishops here.

Several months passed before Louis was able to turn the situation to his advantage. Judith remained at St. Radegund's, where she impressed the nuns with her piety and devotion.⁷⁷ There is no doubt that Louis had partisans at court, and Judith may have had them as well. Louis learned from supporters that the churchmen of Germany were unhappy with present arrangements and anxious to assist him.⁷⁸ Lothar, meanwhile, was not a great success ruling on his own, and dissent soon began to creep in, along with remorse at the treatment that God's ordained emperor Louis had

suffered. In his account, Nithard later recorded: "The state of the empire grew worse from day to day, since all were driven by greed and sought only their own advantage."⁷⁹ Correctly reading the signs, Louis knew it was time to act. He sent a secret messenger to Pepin of Aquitaine and Louis the German promising rewards of territory if they deserted Lothar and supported him.⁸⁰ It probably was not difficult to persuade the two younger sons, who resented the overlordship of Lothar. Bolstered by the groundswell of support, Louis pressured Lothar into scheduling the fall assembly at Nijmegen, away from the centers of rebel power in Francia. According to the *Vita*, Louis stipulated that Hilduin, Helisachar and Wala were not to attend, and each magnate was allowed to bring only one retainer.⁸¹ Thus Louis arranged the situation to his own advantage. The weak and ineffectual monarch was able to manipulate matters from a virtual prison.

The assembly at Nijmegen in October, 830, was a triumph for Louis.⁸² Contingents from Germany flocked to the diet with Louis the German. The rebel churchmen, although vastly outnumbered, urged Lothar to open rebellion, but to no avail; Lothar knew when to admit defeat. The next day Louis regained sole power and arrested Lothar and his fellow conspirators. No doubt at Louis' urging, the loyal magnates and churchmen demanded

Judith's release, and she was brought under Drogo's special escort back to Aachen to face her accusers. None was forthcoming and, in a singular act of respect for his wife, Louis allowed her to purge herself of all charges, just as Charlemagne had allowed Pope Leo III to purge himself of charges in 800 because Alcuin had said that no one should presume to judge the pope.⁸³ In fact, Pope Gregory IV was invited formally to release Judith from her vows.⁸⁴

The denouement was rapid. At the assembly at Aachen in February, 831, the rebel churchmen and magnates were tried and sentenced to exile, and Lothar was officially deprived of co-emperorship and sent back to Italy, his only remaining territory. Pepin and Louis the German were rewarded for their support when Louis divided the Frankish *regnum* into three parts (not the first time all Gaul was divided into three parts) among them and Charles in a new *Divisio regni* that invalidated all previous ones. Louis demanded absolute obedience from his sons until his death. "If any one of our three sons by signal obedience and goodwill toward Almighty God and, secondly, towards ourselves, shall have earned merit in this desire to please, it will delight us to confer upon him yet greater honor and power, taking such increase from the portion of a brother who shall not have thus essayed to please."⁸⁵ Another mistake was rectified.

It would be three more years and another full-fledged rebellion during which Louis would actually be deposed before there would be a resolution. The conspirators refused to accept defeat, and Louis foolishly forgave many of them when they professed remorse. If Louis had had a problem, it was that he was too forgiving, as J. M. Wallace-Hadrill has pointed out.⁸⁶ Perhaps, however, he was the only one who *really* wanted peace and unity in the empire, since he went to great lengths to achieve it, putting himself and his family in danger each time he showed clemency. If the years 819-831 had tempered Louis and honed his skills as monarch, the next three years were to be the trial by fire in which he would be severely tested. Only his unshakable belief in the sacral nature of his kingship and the strength and loyalty of his empress, Judith, would enable Louis to triumph in the end, as we shall see.

ENDNOTES

1. Agobard was writing during this period, but his cruelest denunciations of Judith came from the time of the rebellions.
2. It would appear that Judith assumed the role of patroness of the arts. No court poet, however, was mentioned until Walahfrid Strabo came in 829.
3. *RFA s. a.* 819. The Pannonian revolt would continue until Liudewit died in 823. The Vikings are mentioned in nearly all years of the reign. Brittany too was a chronic problem. The rebellion of 830 was partly the result of the Frankish army's refusal to muster during Holy Week for yet another revolt of the Bretons.
4. Agobard, *Liber Apologeticus*, 2, col. 308.
5. *AH, s. a.* 819.
6. The Robertines, of course, had been loyal supporters of Louis until Irmengard died, after which their blood ties to her sons put them in opposition to Louis.
7. Einhard says that he loved them too much to let them leave him: "Strange to say, although they were very handsome women, and he loved them very dearly, he was never willing to marry any of them to a man of their own nation or to a foreigner, but kept them all at home until his death, saying that he could not dispense with their society." Einhard, *The Life of Charlemagne*, trans. Samuel Epes Turner (Ann Arbor, 1960, repr. 1966), ch. 19, p. 48. As a consequence, they were never legally married. Turner claims that Charlemagne legitimized the union of his daughter Bertha with Angilbert in 787. One of their sons was Nithard, author of the *Historiarum Libri IIII*.

8. See K. F. Werner, "Die Nachkommen Karls des Großen bis um Jahr 1000," in W. Braunsfels, ed., *Karl der Große: Lebenswerk und Nachleben* (Düsseldorf, 1967), v. 4, p. 447, for a treatment of Charlemagne's descendants. Ward, p. 209, believes as well that Gisela's birth and the confirmation of the *Ordinatio* in 821 are connected. Cabaniss says the girl's name was Himeltrud and that Gisela was born eight years after Charles, but I find this information nowhere else.
9. *RFA*, s. a. 821.
10. Jonas's tract for laymen, *De institutione laicali*, was addressed to Matfrid, and correspondence between Agobard and Matfrid survives.
11. I believe the churchmen had decided by this time that they were going to have to fight to maintain the *Ordinatio* and that indeed they were willing to do so, especially since they could use Lothar and his brothers to lead the charge.
12. It must be remembered that the document was called an *ordinatio* and not *divisio*, as had been customary. Never before had Frankish kings been told how to arrange matters in their wills. It is not possible to say exactly when the kingdom became allodial.
13. The power of Wala, Agobard and the other churchmen peaked after the death of Benedict of Aniane.
14. This is a sure indication of the confidence of the churchmen after the pardonings of 821.
15. "He also set aright whatever he could discover had been done amiss anywhere by himself or by his father by largesse of alms as well as by the urgent prayers of Christ's servants and also by his own personal reparation." *Vita*, II, 35:1. Trans. Cabaniss in *Son*, p. 73. According to Church teaching, it is not possible for a person to do penance for anyone other than himself.
16. These are my speculations.

17. Louis may have appeared weak because he was slow to realize how strong the attack on his kingship was. I think that he may have been surprised not only at the opposition in the episcopate, which should have been his to command, but also by the lack of loyalty on the part of his sons. Loyalty was a highly regarded virtue in medieval society, one that was crucial to rulership. Oaths of fidelity were common rituals. Cf. Charles E. Odegaard, "The Concept of Royal Power in Carolingian Oaths of Fidelity," in *Speculum* 20 (1945), pp. 279-89.

18. *Vita*, II, 35:1. The issue of fidelity enters here as well. Revolt is extreme infidelity and is usually resolved violently. Certainly no one intended that Bernard should die of his injuries. Louis had commuted the sentence of death to blinding as an act of clemency.

19. Louis had acted specifically to maintain peace in the empire when he pardoned those who had been involved in Bernard's revolt and brought Adalhard and Wala back from exile in 821. It may be that the churchmen believed it had been their influence that had prompted the pardons and not merely Louis' genuine desire for peace.

20. In his life of Adalhard, Radbert alludes to the fact that Louis was both willing and unwilling. Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita Sancti Adalhardi*, in *PL*, v. 120, cols. 1507-53.

21. In a sea of moralists, Agobard stood out above the rest. It is interesting to note that Charlemagne held the baptism of Widukind, the great Saxon chieftain, at Attigny on the Aisne.

22. This is another aspect of Louis' "piety," and one that he shared with his father as well as everyone else.

23. With apologies to Ernst Dümmler who said that Judith "lit the torch of fraternal civil war in the imperial house." In *Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches* (Berlin, 1862).

24. *Vita*, II, 37:2.

25. Nithard somewhat disingenuously remarks that, when Charles was born, Louis did not know what to do for him because the empire had already been apportioned among Irmengard's sons. Nithard, I, 3.
26. In fact, they did have a measure of control over Louis in the early years of the reign, not because Louis was weak but because he did not realize the bishops were capable of disloyalty.
27. When Louis assumed the throne in 814, he reconfirmed his nephew Bernard as king of Italy and sent Wala back with him as an advisor. This was undoubtedly deliberate, because Louis did not yet have Wala's measure; therefore, it was better to have Wala out of the kingdom.
28. *RFA*, s. a. 823. He also received papal confirmation as co-emperor.
29. Lothar reluctantly agreed that Louis had the right to give Charles any part of the empire he chose. *Vita*, III, 60. Nithard, I, 3; II, 3.
30. There seems to be a consensus among historians that Lothar was not passionate about the ideal of unity, but rather about his own ambitions.
31. I believe the sources firmly support this notion.
32. This is a rare alliance -- a Welf and a Robertine united in marriage.
33. This was a singular honor. Chelles, near Paris, was a prestigious convent because of its long association with the royal family.
34. Agobard chastised Adalhard for this, saying he was in his dotage.
35. Freulf, *Chronicon*, PL v. 106, cols. 1115-16, II, prefix.
36. There were absolutely no voices in support of Judith's position among historians, which is curious, given the fact that the writings of Judith's enemies are so obviously and blatantly partisan.

37. It was natural for Judith to expect an inheritance for her son. According to established Frankish tradition, she could expect nothing else. To me it seems that the dissident churchmen also assumed Louis to follow tradition, hence the machinations to limit his freedom of movement.

38. The event took place in June of 826 and is recounted by Ermoldus, II, 63-75. How ironic that Hugh of Tours and Matfrid of Orléans were prominent in the king's party, entering the church on either side of Judith.

39. *"Munera praeterea matronae regia Judith / congrua namque dedit gratificum que decus, / Scilicet ex auro tunicam gemmisque rigentem, / Conficit est qualem arte Minerva sua; / Aurea vitta caput gemmis redimita coronat, / Atque monile tegit pectora grande nova: / Flexilis obtorti per collum it circulus auri, / Armillaeque tenent brachia feminae; / Foemora lenta tegunt auro gemmisque peracta / Cingula, dorsum tegit aurea cappa suum."* Ermoldus, IV, 63-75.

40. Ingelheim was a favorite royal residence, begun by Charlemagne and finished by Louis ca. 820, and one of the great achievements of Carolingian architecture. Some sources say that the mass took place at St. Alban's in Mainz, but the descriptions are of the wall cycles at Ingelheim.

41. Similar cycles were painted at St. Gallen and elsewhere.

42. For a discussion of the significance of the hunt, see Peter Godman, "The Poetic Hunt: From St. Martin to Charlemagne's Heir," in *CH*, pp. 565-592.

43. It is interesting that many historians affect a tone of moral outrage at this display of "cruelty" by the young Charles and the approbation of his elders. No one in the ninth century would have understood this attitude.

44. Problems with the Bretons, Vikings, Saracens and Slavs were endemic to this period. The annals record them with relentless regularity. It says a great deal about Louis' military leadership that no territory he inherited was lost during the reign. Indeed, he added some territory.

45. cf. *Vita*, II, 41:1, for the treachery of Pepin, Hugh and Matfrid in delaying their arrival in Spain. The animosity toward Bernard of Septimania apparent here should make one suspicious of the accusations against Bernard and Judith in 829.

46. The south, with its predominance of Gallo-Romans, was different from the north where the Frankish heartland lay. The Franks were always suspicious of southerners. Aquitaine never ceased to be a troubled territory. Charlemagne put Franks in charge of conquered territories so that the one with political power would be less likely to have a local following.

47. The Septimanians were related to the royal family and were loyal supporters of the king. They were a renowned family because of the holiness of Bernard's father, Saint William of Gellone, whose spiritual guide had been Benedict of Aniane. Those who supported the sacrality of the monarchy were not popular with the dissidents.

48. *MGH, Epist.*, v. 5, pp. 150-59.

49. Undoubtedly Agobard was reacting to complaints from those at court who had been eclipsed by the loyalists.

50. *Wala*, II,5:1.

51. By 828, Louis was indeed capable of swift and decisive action. He summarily deprived Hugh and Matfrid of their offices for their failure to assist Bernard in the Spanish campaign and rewarded Bernard with the office of chamberlain. Had Wala not intervened, Hugh and Matfrid might have forfeited their lives for treason.

52. Women were often scapegoats for the actions of their men. There is a strong bias against women obvious in the churchmen's attitude toward Judith. Presumably any man who supports a woman's position is suspect. Pauline Stafford says that "...it is the celibate, desexualized woman who is most admired" in the early Middle Ages, the one who protects her chastity at all costs. Stafford, *Queens*, p. 26. I wonder why it never dawned on these clerics that men were the villains who threatened women's chastity.

53. The irony of this should have been apparent to anyone reading the sources for the period.

54. Pierre Riché, *The Carolingians: A Family Who Forged Europe*, trans. M. I. Allen (Philadelphia, 1993), p. 152, writes: "Wrought by the emperor himself, this palace revolution was destined to provoke a full-fledged revolt by his elder [sic] sons." Riché is one historian who realized that Lothar's ambition was a major cause of the civil wars of the reign.

55. By this time it was apparent that the dissidents considered Lothar a legitimate alternative to his father, so Louis was really forced to take action. Omitting Lothar's name in documents was a significant first step.

56. Unfortunately, Wala continued to exert political influence. He had spies at court to keep him abreast of activities there and was working behind the scenes to rally his forces in opposition to Louis.

57. Actually, this was a modest assignment of territory. Alemannia was not part of the original *regnum Francorum* and was a natural selection for Charles. Nithard, I, 3.

58. See note 47.

59. Nithard says that Louis made him second-in-command of the empire and the protector of Charles. Given his record, this is not surprising. Nithard, I, 3.

60. Walahfrid, *De Imagine*, I, 178.

61. The churchmen were no doubt also sincere, but their cause had become perverted; they were destroying what they purported to protect.

62. Though Louis had come into his own in reorganizing the imperial administration, the dissidents had committed themselves to their position and were now urged on by Lothar, rather than the other way around.

63. See chs. 1 and 2.
64. Since Bernard was Louis' godson, a union between Bernard and Louis' wife would be considered incestuous. *Vita*, III, 44:1, calls Bernard "an incestuous polluter of his [Louis'] bed."
65. *Wala*, II, 8:6, 9:3-4.
66. *Wala*, II, 8:6, Trans. in Riché, *Carolingians*, pp. 152-53.
67. All citations are from the quoted passage.
68. Again, since nothing could be done to the king, the queen became the scapegoat. The king is not held responsible for what is happening. It is ironic that the churchmen were forced to make Louis look weak because he was too strong, and historians accepted their propaganda and blamed Judith, not the churchmen, for the troubles of the reign.
69. Agobard, *Liber*, 2, 309.
70. *Wala*, II, 9:3.
71. It is difficult to say how much this was owing to the insidious work of the churchmen and their cohorts in fomenting discontent. The early spring was a difficult time, rainy and cold. After the revolt, it would be evident that Louis could rely on troops from German lands far more than on those from the Frankish heartland.
72. *AB*, s. a. 830.
73. *Vita*, III, 44:1.
74. See quote on p. 115.
75. *Vita*, II, 44:2; *AB*, s. a. 830.
76. *Wala*, II, 10:1.

77. I infer from this that the nuns were convinced that Judith's piety was sincere. It would be difficult to perpetrate a masquerade for seven months. Moreover, St. Radegund's had seen many noblewomen within its confines. Judith seems to have stood above the rest. The *Annals of Metz* record that the nuns wished they could equal Judith's devotion. *AMpr*, s. a. 830.
78. *Vita*, III, 45:1, says Louis mistrusted the Franks but trusted the Germans.
79. Nithard, I, 3. Trans. Scholz and Rogers, in CC, p. 131.
80. Nithard, I, 3.
81. *Vita*, III, 45:1.
82. *Vita*, III, 45:2.
83. *Vita*, III, 46:1. For Alcuin's letter to Archbishop Arno of Metz on judging the pope, see *MGH Epist.*, no. 179.
84. The purging was sufficient to acquit Judith of the charges, but the pope had to release her from her vows on the grounds that they were taken under duress.
85. Nithard, I, 3.
86. Wallace-Hadrill, *FC*, p. 236, says "...he forgave too easily. In the ninth century there was no future in forgiving rebels and expecting them to be grateful." This reinforces the notion that Louis could not believe the extent of the disloyalty among his sons, high churchmen and magnates. He assumed these would be his most loyal followers.

CHAPTER IV

E PLURIBUS UNUM

After his triumph over his enemies in the rebellion of 830 and his complete restoration to power, Louis was riding the crest of a wave. He had come through a major crisis that had proved his strength and determination. His wife Judith and favorite son Charles were once again at his side, and the royal family was surrounded by loyal supporters.¹ Most importantly, Louis' belief in the sacral nature of his kingship had been vindicated; God had chosen him to rule and God had seen to it that he resumed his rightful place as emperor. The power implicit in the notion of divinely ordained kingship over the minds of people of the ninth century should not be underestimated.² It played a part in 830 and it would have an even greater

effect again in 833. In opposition to this, the position taken in the *Ordinatio*, as noted, circumscribes the king's power.

It must be remembered that the *Ordinatio* was promulgated a mere three years into the reign of Louis the Pious, at a time when he was concerned with consolidating his power. A succession document was essential for the preservation of the *regnum francorum* at least, if not of the *imperium christianum*; at the beginning the form this document took was of less importance than the mere fact of its existence. Since the prevailing mood at the time was spiritual, it was natural for those writing the document to adopt an idealistic viewpoint with highly religious overtones. It was apparent that Louis was more or less indifferent to the method but was content with a religious document that he believed would enhance his sacral kingship. The *Ordinatio* was such a document, and it suited his purposes.³ He never for one moment felt that the succession or anything else pertaining to the governance of the realm was beyond his jurisdiction. Thus, we do not get the impression of enthusiasm in the emperor, but rather complacency and satisfaction with the religiosity of a document that could only enhance his stature. K. F. Werner believes it is perfectly comprehensible that Louis did not want his hands tied by a law of succession

drawn up too soon and in doubtful circumstances. "It is therefore proof of his will to assume completely his legitimate charge as the sole leader of the empire that he sought to recover his freedom of action, especially after the birth of a son to whom he gave the promising name of Charles."⁴

It must also be remembered that several of Alcuin's pupils were among the advisors of Louis the Pious, and they were enamored of the ideal of the *imperium christianum*.⁵ Alcuin himself had been impressed with Louis' grasp of and interest in serious religious matters, for in this Louis was like his father, who had never excluded himself from theological debate.⁶ Unfortunately, the empowered and reinvigorated Church vastly exceeded the role envisioned for it by Charlemagne. Under him the Church had been the instrument of the state, an integral part of society and, therefore, under the control of the king. However, in Louis' reign, ideal superseded reality, and practical considerations were swept aside in favor of ideological principles. The dangers of such a situation are obvious; the business of governance could not be conducted in this manner, and Louis did not intend that it should be. Unfortunately, it was not readily apparent to Louis at the time that the *Ordinatio* actually undercut his own legitimacy and made it possible for the churchmen to anticipate a determining role for themselves in the governance

and disposition of the empire. In the minds of the bishops, the earthly city and the heavenly city of St. Augustine had merged into one entity -- Christendom -- and the Church therefore held the higher authority.⁷ Like his father, however, Louis felt that the grace of the divinity was embodied in himself and the *imperium christianum* was identical to the *regnum francorum*.⁸ As king, Louis worked closely with churchmen, but the Church was still his responsibility and subordinate to his will. He had never ceded the power of defining his authority to the bishops or even the pope. Louis considered himself to be the principal guide of men and of the Church in striving for the admittedly inaccessible model of the City of God. He was the supreme leader, not merely an executive carrying out plans made by God and transmitted through the agency of the Church.⁹

It was not to be expected that Louis' opponents would be happy with the terms imposed by the emperor at Aachen in early 831. Not one of Irmengard's sons could be relied on to show either filial piety or loyalty to their father, and all were unhappy with the arrangements of the *Divisio Regni*. Both Louis the German and Pepin continued to press for more power, to which they believed they were entitled according to the agreement with their father.¹⁰ At the same time, Lothar was highly unlikely to remain

quietly in Italy after his dominion had been so radically truncated; since he was the most greedy, he was also the most dangerous. The fact that he had lost his co-emperorship and most of his territories did not make him less attractive as an alternative to Louis in the eyes of the dissident churchmen and magnates. On the contrary, ever since the bishops had undermined the legitimacy of Louis' kingship in the 817 *Ordinatio* by usurping his power to control the succession, they had given legitimacy to the rebellious actions of his sons, indeed encouraged them in their rebellious actions.¹¹ They believed that the unity of the empire was of overwhelming importance, and Louis was expendable if he stood in the way of their goal. Men like Wala, Agobard, Jesse and their cohorts were prepared to go to any lengths to achieve their ends. Lothar was one with them in desiring the return of the *Ordinatio* of 817, not from conviction but because it gave him a tactical means to secure his power as well as his preeminence over his brothers.¹² Louis, unfortunately, made their crusade easier when he pardoned the rebels of 830 and allowed them to return from exile and assume their old positions. It was a fatal mistake.

The new *Divisio* also turned out to be, if not a misjudgment, then at least premature on the part of Louis. He apparently overestimated the

strength of his supporters and the breadth of his popular support.¹³ The problems still festering beneath the surface had not really been addressed in the settlements of early 831, let alone solved, and the political climate of the empire remained volatile. It is not difficult to predict that under these conditions trouble would soon erupt.¹⁴ The fundamental opposition separating Louis, Judith and their supporters from Irmengard's sons, in various coalitions with magnates greedy for power and bishops who wanted to circumscribe the power of the king, was as forceful as ever. Bernard of Septimania now became engaged in the struggle; it is difficult to gauge his motives because his actions were reported by partisans of his enemies. Apparently disgruntled because Louis did not restore him to the office of chamberlain but sent him back to his own territories in the south, Bernard began inciting Pepin to revolt. It is not clear what he hoped to gain from such action; it may have been directed at Lothar and not at Louis, but it added to the troubles already brewing in the empire.¹⁵ It did not take much encouragement for any of Irmengard's sons to rebel.

Over the next few months Louis was constantly occupied with the insubordination of his older sons. Pepin had refused to comply with Louis' summons to the Thionville assembly and was therefore ordered to appear in

Aachen. When he finally arrived just before Christmas, Louis detained him, placing him more or less under house arrest. However, he escaped his confinement and fled to Aquitaine where he apparently conspired with Bernard to stir up trouble.¹⁶ Louis decided to hold the next assembly at Orléans and ordered Lothar and the younger Louis to come to Aachen and accompany him to the diet. Louis the German, however, urged on by Matfrid and other dissidents, invaded Alemannia, which was now part of Charles's endowment. The approach of the emperor and his army caused Louis the German to flee and eventually to surrender to his father.¹⁷ Having settled that matter, Louis crossed into Aquitaine to deal with Pepin. After chastisement, Pepin was sent to detention in Aachen and Bernard of Septimania was deprived of his privileges and exiled to Burgundy.¹⁸ Pepin again eluded his captors and rejoined his army in preparation for an armed conflict against his father. Louis reacted by declaring Pepin deposed from the throne of Aquitaine and reassigned it, with Lothar's agreement, to Charles.¹⁹ Further confrontation, however, was postponed by the onset of winter weather.

When Louis and Judith arrived in Aachen on the first of February, 833, they learned that all three older sons were again agitating and probably

planning a military campaign. At about this time, the propagandists among the churchmen launched their attack against Louis, or, more properly, against Judith. Agobard accused Judith of being a Jezebel, Athaliah and Delilah combined, and Radbert alleged that she was ruling the empire singlehandedly, banishing truth and justice and threatening the peace of the realm.²⁰ They obviously regarded Judith as the chief barrier between them and Louis, and they were attempting to clear the way by discrediting her. The viciousness of the attacks and their relentlessness attests to the powerful position Judith held in the political arena. If she were functioning merely in the usual queenly role, i.e. as mistress of the king's household with its attendant duties, she would hardly rate such attention. No, she was far more important than that.

By the spring of 833, Lothar, Pepin and Louis the German had joined forces and were openly conspiring against Louis. They were gaining considerable support, no doubt as a result of the activities of the dissident churchmen and the hunger for gain among the dissatisfied magnates. Above all, general conditions in the empire were not good. The frontiers were threatened on all sides, especially in the north. The annals of these years contain records of ever-increasing Viking raids.²¹ In addition to the

problems created by the general political instability of the previous decade and the ravages of intermittent warfare, bad weather had contributed to poor harvests and sickness across the land.²² Louis' triumph in 830-31 would be short-lived.

Given these conditions, the resumption of civil war was not surprising. Lothar was even able to persuade the pope to travel with him to Francia in an alleged attempt to help restore the peace.²³ The presence of the pope was most unusual. As noted in chapter one, the Church-state power struggle of Louis' reign was not between the king and the pope, but between the king and the Frankish episcopate. The concurrent power struggle between Louis and his sons only surfaced once the bishops became involved. The two struggles were intricately intertwined. There is no doubt that the churchmen wielded great influence, but alone they would not have been successful in challenging the authority of the king. The dissatisfaction and greed of the elder sons lent political and military support to the bishops' efforts, and the bishops' support bestowed legitimacy on their rebellious actions. The overthrow -- even an attempted overthrow -- of a reigning monarch was a rare and dangerous action and would not have been remotely possible without the justification provided by the churchmen. It must be

remembered that the Carolingians, or Arnulfings, including the powerful Charles Martel and Pepin the Short, ruled *de facto* and not *de jure* for decades before Pepin actually deposed the last of the Merovingians, and they had needed a new coronation ritual to legitimate their action.²⁴ It salved their consciences and convinced the people that God was on their side. The position taken by the bishops in Louis' reign provided the same kind of legitimacy for the actions of Lothar, Pepin and Louis the German. The rebellion of 833 and the subsequent deposition and reinstatement of Louis as king and emperor formed the apex of the fifteen-year power struggle. The confrontation was intense and bitter, and both sides were prepared to risk everything to gain the ascendancy.

The explicit position of the bishops is articulated in a predicative letter to Louis from Archbishop Agobard of Lyon.²⁵ It demonstrates the arrogance and presumption of the Church's position, and the insufferable sanctimoniousness of the bishops in their attempt to reestablish control over the succession and thereby delimit the power of the emperor.

All men owe loyalty to their king. And how can one be faithful to you if, seeing the danger in which you stand, he does not give you such warning as he may?

We are living in a year of conflict and tumult, of troubles which no man can number. And yet no necessity has compelled this affliction. Had you, Sire, only willed it, well might you be living now

with your sons in that same peace and quiet in which your father and your grandfather passed their days.

No! This is the reason of your ills. You yourself, in 817, gave to your son Lothar, with fast and prayer and the consent of all men, and by the inspiring of God Himself, a fellowship in your Imperial name and title. Your two younger sons, Pepin and Louis, received from you portions of your empire; but with this provision. To make sure that there should be one realm of Empire and not three, you preferred in power above his brothers that son, Lothar, to whom you gave it to share with you during your life-time the imperial and sovereign dignity.

This ordinance you signed and sealed, and bade all men swear to keep it with loyalty; this you sent to Rome for assent and confirmation from the Holy Father himself.

And now this ordinance is overthrown, and the name of your fellow emperor has disappeared from your imperial charters and capitularies. Without any reason, unbidden of God, you have repudiated him whom you chose under God's guiding hand.

God knows that we who live in the light of truth love you with sincerity and faithfully desire for you eternal happiness. For this very reason we grieve over the crimes which during this year have followed upon your action; we greatly fear lest the anger of God be raised against you. We have known the fervor of your religious zeal in days past. There is danger now, it may be, lest this be waning, growing cold.

Lastly, it were not wise to hide from your Excellence how widely men are murmuring among themselves through these diverse and contrary acts of yours. Yes, and not only murmuring. We see their sullen mien. We hear the words in which they assault you openly.²⁶

There are important points to consider in this letter, for they illuminate the problems underlying the power struggle. The implication of the first paragraph is that Louis is responsible for breaking the peace, a cardinal transgression that would normally lead to his forfeiting the right to

rule.²⁷ Next, Agobard is careful to point out that Louis' actions in 817 had been guided by God, and to repudiate those actions was to go against God's will. Note that it is a bishop, with the approval of the pope, who is stating the will of God. "We who live in the light of truth" are warning the prodigal king of the danger that God's hand will be raised against him. Signs of God's disapproval were already manifest. Agobard does not fail to point out the importance of the unity of empire, the desired *imperium christianum*. It is clear that the king is obliged to listen to the bishops, for they stand between him and God. Such was the arrogance of the bishops. The disaffected and greedy sons of Louis and Irmengard provided the armies for the waging of the bishops' crusade.

Now that Agobard had articulated God's will for the king, he was obliged to provide a path for Louis to return to God's favor. This was accomplished by demonstrating that the emperor's sins were not of his making; he had been led astray.²⁸ Therefore, Agobard reopened the attack on Judith and penned his most vitriolic invective against her. The *pro Hludowici filii et contra Iudith uxorem* declared that Louis had allowed himself to be deceived by the machinations of a wicked woman and was therefore to be placed in the company of "impious and faithless kings." As a result,

"countless treacheries and unmeasured ruin have been brought to pass: manslaughter, adultery, and incest." Louis is advised to "return to his own heart and do penance, humbled beneath the mighty hand of God." And further, "...majesty in this world of time is not for him who has brought his own house and heart into distraction, who by divine justice and judgment has lost his place on earth." Louis' only option in this life is do to penance so that God will exalt him in eternal life. His throne is forfeit and has now been given "...not to an enemy or a stranger, but to his beloved son."²⁹ For this, Louis should be content.

After the pope had come to Francia in the company of Lothar, Agobard once again wrote to the emperor, telling him that the will of God would become manifest. That is to say, the truth of Agobard's words would be proven. If Pope Gregory were coming merely to fight, wrote Agobard, then he would soon leave because his cause lacked justice. But if he came to work for peace and harmony he was not to be resisted.³⁰ Upon his arrival, the pope called upon the clergy of Francia to assemble to meet him. Louis' loyal prelates refused the pope's summons on the grounds that they were obligated to obey the king above the pope.³¹ They were severely chastised:

Do you not know that the rule over souls, committed to us as Pontiff, is higher than the rule of an emperor, which belongs but to time? If I did not declare the emperor's sins against the unity of his realm, I should be committing perjury. You say that the division made by him in 817 has now been changed by him because of timely need, brought about by changed circumstances. This assertion, I tell you, is utterly untrue and false. Not in season is this change, but out of season; seeing that it is the cause and origin of tumult and discord, of turbulence and robbery and of more evils than may here be told?³²

Is this not the heart of the problem? Where does the higher authority reside? First, the bishops had asserted that they possessed it, as they were the Church's identity in Francia. Now the pope does the same, as an even higher authority than the bishops. In the midst of the worst crisis of Louis' reign, the essence of the fundamental power struggle over temporal authority between Church and state was articulated clearly and in writing.³³ The representatives of the Church denied the sacrality of the king's power. This is no ordinary struggle, but a momentous confrontation between the two great powers of western Christendom. The forces for sacral kingship arrayed with Louis and Judith were determined to stop the Church from gaining control over the monarchy. It is no exaggeration to state that this conflict was pivotal to the future of western European civilization.

The importance of the struggle can be inferred from the participation of the pope.³⁴ There is no doubt that the pope was unsure of his reception

in Francia, and was probably loath to face the emperor. Ever since the pact between Pope Zacharias and Pepin the Short in 751, the Frankish king had been the protector of the pope. However, because of the arrangements made by Louis for the governance of the empire as a whole, Lothar, as king of Italy, acted in his stead. Under these circumstances, the pope had little choice but to accompany Lothar. It has been said that he was embarrassed to be there and that he was brought there under false pretenses.³⁵ Louis clearly thought the pope had no business there, and the pope, after his strong admonition to the loyal bishops whom he could, after all, lecture with impunity, seemed not to know what to do. He was obliged to cross the "Field of Lies" at Rotfeld and meet with Louis. "You come strangely, and therefore strangely must you be received," said Louis. Gregory protested that he came only to restore peace. The meeting was chilly and produced nothing, and negotiations were broken off.³⁶ However, as the rebel bishops had anticipated, the mere presence of the pope had its desired effect. It was enough to induce most of Louis' magnates, "...partly won away by bribes, partly induced by promises, partly terrified by threats," to abandon Louis.³⁷ Only Judith and Charles, Drogo and Hugh and the truly faithful would not betray the king. Louis finally told his loyal allies to leave him, so that their

lives would not be wasted for a lost cause.³⁸ Now only Judith and Charles remained with Louis.

The confrontation at Rotfeld, the "Field of Lies," was one of the most dramatic and tragic events of the ninth century.³⁹ Louis played his part with dignity and honor, embodying all the noble characteristics of a great king and doing full justice to the sanctity of his office. Never was he more awesome or impressive, and this in all humility. Louis acquitted himself flawlessly as God's chosen deputy; his confidence in his mission had never been greater. His courageous act should long ago have been recognized for what it was -- the heroic moment of a man truly worthy of the office of king. He asked only for mercy and for protection for Judith and Charles.⁴⁰ Never did the churchmen and his sons look worse, for through treachery were Louis, Judith and Charles induced to cross the field in defeat.⁴¹ Rotfeld was forever after known as the "Field of Lies," not in disparagement of Louis but to his honor, and to the dishonor and shame of the bishops and Irmengard's three sons.

The pope undoubtedly realized he had played a less than honorable role in the affair as well, even if he was dismayed because his "peacekeeping" efforts had come to naught.⁴² The fact that Lothar immediately arrested

Louis and took Judith and Charles into custody despite his promise of safe passage may have been the source of the pope's uneasiness. He discovered he was no more successful at influencing the son than the father. Even Wala was portrayed as sorrowful by Radbert, his apologist and lackey, but this should be recognized for what it was, a calculated piece of propaganda written after the fact in an attempt to acquit Wala of his grave sins against the sanctity of kingship.⁴³ Fifteen years later Radbert was still struggling to explain the churchmen's position.

The pope himself escorted Judith to incarceration at Tortona in Italy, possibly at Lothar's urging, but more probably to protect her life.⁴⁴ The display of consideration on the part of the pope does not erase his complicity in this shameful affair nor disguise the fact that he was too weak to take independent action. Either way, his actions do not redound to his credit. Louis was arrested and incarcerated in the abbey of St. Médard at Soissons, and Charles was sent to Prüm in Germany in the hope that he could be convinced to enter a monastery. When this was accomplished, Pepin and Louis the German returned to their lands, as the *Ordinatio* of 817 had once again been reaffirmed, and Lothar went hunting, apparently with unconcern.⁴⁵

In October of 833, an assembly convened at Compiègne for both clerical and lay magnates. This was the place of Louis' third and last public humiliation, the final "Canossa." The worst treachery of all was that his foster brother Ebbo of Reims became the spokesman for the opposition. Ebbo had been shamelessly enticed, possibly with the collusion of the pope, to join the rebels, convinced that he was following God's will and doing God's work.⁴⁶ A manifesto was issued by the victorious bishops, authored supposedly by Ebbo, recalling the provisions of the Synod of Paris in 829, at which the bishops had sanctimoniously told Louis to attend to temporal matters and leave spiritual matters to the Church.⁴⁷ In a united statement, the bishops reaffirmed this position and chastised the king for his grave transgression of countermanding the will of God. The bishops declared once again the nature and power of their sacred ministry: they were the *vicars of Christ, the keepers of the keys of heaven, and those who properly watched over the souls of men*. They added that a great deal had happened under Louis that was detrimental to the Church, and therefore his imperial power had been taken from him by "divine judgment." All that was left to him was to do eternal penance for his sins.⁴⁸ This manifesto was placed upon the altar at St. Médard, along with the imperial regalia, and Louis received the hair shirt of

the penitent. After such transgressions, no man could aspire to be emperor. Despite everything, however, they could not get Louis' promise to enter a monastery.⁴⁹ He continued to assert the sacral nature of his kingship and his selection as emperor by divine grace, and could never lay down his duties under God. Later his son Charles was to write to the pope that his father "neither made confession nor was convicted of sin," and at the scene there had been churchmen "who looked with keen reluctance upon this scene."⁵⁰

Irmengard's sons and their clerical cohorts had, however, once again underestimated Louis' abilities and the strength of his priestly kingship, as well as his loyalty to Judith and little Charles. By December, 833, barely two months later, rumblings of dissatisfaction began to be heard. The sources say little about Louis' activities after his imprisonment in 830 and again in 833, so that his restoration to power each time appears to have been the result of divine intervention. This was perhaps deliberate on the part of those writing at the time, as if God were intent on restoring justice.⁵¹

However, it is clear that Louis was working assiduously in secret and that he had numerous supporters. Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that the results achieved imply vigorous action by Louis, who still saw himself as emperor with no diminution of his priestly authority; he did not consider

himself deposed, rather it was his sacred duty to regain his position and punish the perpetrators of this offense against God's anointed.⁵²

The first indication of trouble to reach Lothar was the urgent message of his brother, Louis the German.⁵³ Lothar's harsh treatment of his father offended even the co-conspirators, indicating that perhaps there remained some vestige of filial loyalty. Or there could have been genuine fear on the part of the two younger brothers that they had offended God. Lothar's treatment of their father was uncalled for and unnatural behavior in a son.⁵⁴ Perhaps their feelings were summed up centuries later by Shakespeare: "Not all the waters of the rough rude sea, Can wash away the balm of an anointed king."⁵⁵ Besides, they should have realized by now an obvious precept: when the legitimacy of duly constituted authority has been undermined, the stigma is communicated to all those in authority, so that eventually their hold on power becomes even more tenuous than that of the deposed, who was, after all, *rex gratia Dei*.

Having met with no success, Louis the German returned to Bavaria but sent messengers to his brother Pepin in Aquitaine to complain of the treatment their father was suffering. Even a former king deserved more dignity and respect.⁵⁶ In early January, 844, Louis sent representatives to

Speak with his father at St. Médard, but Lothar refused to let them see Louis alone. The men managed to transmit their message, however, and that was sufficient for Louis to act.⁵⁷ Once Lothar was isolated from his brothers he would not be able to maintain his position. Louis' efforts were beginning to bear fruit. From June, 833, at the "Field of Lies" to February, 834, Louis had consistently refused to enter a monastery and had persisted in his belief that he was still king and emperor, in duty bound by the will of heaven, whatever his sins. Apparently, others began to feel the same. Almost like a repeat performance of three years earlier, a groundswell of indignation at Lothar's treatment of Louis and support of Louis' cause turned into open protest against Lothar.⁵⁸ Drogo and Hugh, Louis' half-brothers, began to work actively to channel the upsurge of loyalty. Even Bernard of Septimania, once again changing sides, spearheaded resistance to Lothar, who was forced to flee with Louis to St. Denis where he was met by more resistance. Faced with such openly hostile opposition, Lothar lamely tried to exonerate himself by saying that it was not he but the *bishops* who had forced Louis to do penance.⁵⁹ At the assembly at St. Denis in late January, Lothar was confronted by overwhelming opposition, and, facing defeat, he fled.⁶⁰ It was time for Louis to triumph once again. Begged by the people to resume the

accoutrements of his office, Louis replied: "Bishops of the Church have taken these from me under their authority. By that same authority will I be reconciled with the Church and restored to my sacred office."⁶¹

The force of Louis' sacral kingship had played no small part in his reinstatement. Men of the ninth century enjoyed an ancient tradition of sacral kingship. It may seem quaintly superstitious to us; for them, it was a natural assumption. Louis had been the duly constituted monarch, the son of the great Charles and, consequently, the true heir to the crown and the imperial title. While he was alive, his sons were properly subordinate to him. It was unnatural that they were not, and it was unforgivable that Lothar had dared to treat Louis with such disrespect and scorn.⁶² Lothar was arrogant and had surrounded himself with men of dubious integrity and limited competence; they could be expected to look first to their own interests. Therefore, the mechanics of governance had disintegrated, and men regarded this as a judgment of God against Lothar.⁶³ People identified more with the authority of the monarch than with that of the Church. As in Charlemagne's time, the Church was part of society and therefore subordinate to the king. This concept of kingship was to live on in the reign of Louis and Judith's son, the future Charles the Bald.

The triumphal scene is worth lingering over.⁶⁴ On March 1, at St. Denis, Louis was restored to office with great ceremony and the acclamation of the people. The *Vita Hludowici* reports that even nature had protested the terrible miscarriage of justice against Louis. A mighty storm that had been raging for days, so much so that the Seine was overflowing its banks and no one could cross it, miraculously stopped at the moment the regalia were restored to the king.⁶⁵ Hrabanus Maurus, abbot of Fulda, put into words the moral lessons to be derived from these events: sons owe respect and obedience to their father; greed and avarice are sinful; those who are innocent should not be falsely accused. He also explained the justice of Louis' actions after the revolt of Bernard of Italy in 818. At the end of his long defense of Louis, Hrabanus begged him to pardon Lothar if Lothar would but admit his sins and ask forgiveness.⁶⁶

Several months passed before the issues were resolved. At first Louis was disinclined to pursue Lothar, believing that Lothar would see the folly of his ways and surrender. However, Lothar continued to ravage the countryside, eventually besieging and taking Chalon-sur-Saône, plundering it and imprisoning or killing its leading citizens. He also committed two particular acts of brutality as vengeance against Bernard of Septimania.

Bernard's sister Gundrata, a nun, was accused of black magic, tied into a cask and thrown into the river and Bernard's brother Gozhelm was beheaded on orders from Lothar.⁶⁷ Louis was compelled to give pursuit. The *Annals of Xanten*, *sub anno* 834, record that "Emperor Louis *and his wife* [emphasis added] pursued Lothar."⁶⁸ He was eventually captured by the combined armies of Louis, Pepin and Louis the German. Louis, as usual, in his ill-advised magnanimity, forgave him and ordered him back to Italy under strict orders to remain there. Although the details were not recorded, Louis assuredly took stringent measures to ensure that Lothar would heed his orders.⁶⁹ His co-conspirators, Hugh, Matfrid, Wala, Jesse, and eventually Agobard all followed him to Italy, and only Agobard would ever return to Francia. The rest died of the plague in Italy in 836-37. Lothar was afflicted as well, but managed to survive.⁷⁰

At the assembly of Thionville on February 2, 835, held on the Feast of the Purification (was this conscious? - one hopes so), the Frankish episcopate was ordered to declare Louis' deposition null and void and to sign and seal written assurance that Louis was now restored to his crown and his proper majesty.⁷¹ On February 28, at St. Stephen's at Metz, a solemn mass was celebrated with Drogo presiding and witness of reconciliation with the

Church was chanted over Louis as he knelt before the high altar. His crown was ceremoniously restored to him by Drogo.⁷² On March 4, Ebbo, as the official author of the bishops' manifesto, was indicted for causing Louis' humiliation and forced to do public penance.⁷³ Agobard was accused of contumacy and condemned *in absentia* to forfeit his see.⁷⁴ As the perpetrators were being punished, Radbert once again took poison pen in hand to vilify Judith, blaming her for the punishment meted out to the rebel bishops. He compared her to the fierce Queen Brunhilde who had driven St. Columban and his monks from Luxeuil in 610 because Columban had rebuked the royal family. Both queens "were alike in wickedness... [and] although separated in time, they were associates in one crime of irreligion; alike in jealousy, intolerant of holy men who rebuked their like unmentionable wickedness and who might oppose them in any way."⁷⁵ Judith was cast as vengeful, capricious and willful. This effort, like those before it, failed to achieve its desired goal of discrediting the empress. Instead, it became yet another testament to Judith's importance in the reign.

In fact, Judith's importance in her husband's reign never diminished. There are charters in which Louis makes grants to religious houses at Judith's behest. Judith's mother's convent at Chelles received support from

Louis, as did some of her retainers. Judith joined with her husband in protecting the Jews in the kingdom, even donating clothing and other raiment to Jewish women.⁷⁶ Her importance can be seen in letters of instruction to royal vassals. When a certain vassal is summoned to appear before Louis, he is ordered, in Louis' absence, to discharge his mission to Judith, "our dear spouse."⁷⁷ Judith was scion of a very important and influential noble family, the Welfs, and was therefore important in her own right. The Welfs had connections all over the empire, which helped them to contain the ambitions of their chief rivals, the Robertines, Irmengard's family. As mentioned earlier, the Robertines were perhaps Louis' chief antagonists among the nobility after the Etichonids, the family of Lothar's wife Irmengard, whose father, Hugh of Tours, was Lothar's chief supporter.⁷⁸

Louis' and Judith's major concern in the last years of the reign was to consolidate a patrimony for their son Charles. At the Aachen assembly in 837, Louis gave Charles the lands extending from Frisia to the Meuse River as well as Burgundy and required the magnates and prelates of these territories to pledge their fealty to Charles. In 838, upon the death of Pepin of Aquitaine, Louis conferred that kingdom on Charles, excluding Pepin's two sons from the succession.⁷⁹ As had happened with previous divisions of

the realm, these measures were met with dismay and opposition. Louis the German, as well as Pepin of Aquitaine's heirs, were once again incited to rebellion.⁸⁰

At the same time, Louis was faced with serious problems on all frontiers. Not to be outdone, the forces of nature unleashed yet more omens of catastrophe as well: cyclones, comets, Northern lights, raging floods, fierce storms, eclipses of the sun and moon, earthquakes and fire in the sky, not to mention the inevitable strange sounds in the night.⁸¹ Louis, therefore, summoned Lothar to Aachen in May, 839, in order to elicit guarantees for Judith's and Charles' protection after his death. Lothar had been obedient and had remained in Italy since 834, and he was, after all, the oldest son and godfather to Charles. Louis now granted him all the lands east of the Meuse River, while Charles retained those to the west. Louis the German was to keep his kingdom of Bavaria. Both Lothar and Charles, who had by now reached his majority, promised to aid and support each other, and, although Lothar was to have the imperial title, the brothers were to hold their lands with equal status.⁸² Thus, although the years between 834 and Louis' death on June 20, 840, were hardly peaceful, Louis never again was

confronted by a concerted rebellion of his older sons. He and Judith remained together to the end.

Judith was to outlive her husband by only three years.⁸³ The years between 840 and 843, perhaps the most tumultuous years of Carolingian history, are outside the purview of this dissertation. However, a brief summation is called for.⁸⁴ After Louis' death, Lothar, as was his wont, reneged on his promises to his father and claimed the whole empire for himself, launching yet another protracted period of civil war among the three sons. Lothar initially established a strong base of support by means of bribery and threats, and it took the combined efforts of Charles and Louis to put an end to his tyranny. The armies met on the field at Fontenoy on June 24, 841, and fought the bloodiest battle in Frankish history, "a massacre whose equal no one could recall ever before witnessing among the Franks."⁸⁵ Although thousands perished, the battle did not put an end to the strife. On February 12, 842, Louis and Charles cemented their alliance in the so-called *Oaths of Strassburg*, which were recorded in the two languages of the empire, the Germanic of the East Franks and the Romance (incipient French) of the West Franks.⁸⁶ It was to be another year and a half before the three brothers finally met and agreed upon *their own partition* [emphasis added] of

the empire, and the Treaty of Verdun was concluded in August, 843.⁸⁷

Judith did not live to see it come to pass. She died at Tours on April 13 of that year.

ENDNOTES

1. Bernard of Septimania, although cleared of all charges, did not return to the office of chamberlain. Louis gave the office to the monk Guntbald, who had carried his secret communications to Pepin and Louis the German when he was under house arrest, and to whom he had promised the job if all went well. From this point on, Bernard's loyalty to Louis begins to waver.
2. See chapter one on the sacrality of kingship. Superstition played a large role among the Franks, and, when things did not go well under Lothar, men feared that God had been offended by Louis' detention. Judith had been anointed queen and empress, a practice begun with Charlemagne's mother Bertrada, and her removal could offend God as well.
3. It has been said that a close brush with death prompted Louis to forge a succession document, but it is more probably that the churchmen feared that the unity of the empire would be threatened if Louis died intestate.
4. Werner, *Hludowicus Augustus*, p. 54.
5. It was Alcuin who had been the first to associate the Frankish realm with the *imperium christianum*, even before the coronation. I believe this comes from the influence of Bede, because Bede's kings were intimately involved in promoting the Christian religion. The notion of the king as *dux et doctor* of his people came from the Old Testament, and this was how Alcuin saw Charlemagne.

6. Charlemagne's involvement in church councils at times frustrated his theologians, but they had to obey him. His piety was no less intense than that of his son; perhaps he seems less pious because of the lively manner in which he pursued secular matters. Louis was more sober than Charlemagne, although, in recording his desire to marry again, the Astronomer indicates that Louis looked over the women presented to him carefully and chose well. *Vita*, II, 32:2. Regarding his first marriage, it is quite plain that Louis had sexual needs. *Vita*, I, 8. However, both times Louis made propitious alliances.

7. In return for prosecuting the enemies of the Church, i.e. pagans and heretics, Augustine gave the ruler what amounted to absolute power, because the *imperator felix* would inherently know his responsibilities. Rulers *must* be obeyed because to revolt against them was considered a revolt against God, since God is responsible for everything. Bad rulers may be a just punishment for the sins of society. *City of God*, bk. 5, ch. 21, bk. 22, ch. 22.

8. Because of the Frankish national mythology, discussed in chapter one, the *imperium* is identified with the *regnum*, but in an abstract way. In this case the *regnum* means the Carolingian empire.

9. Church intervention in politics may be implied in the *Ordinatio*, but in the sense of support for the king. The only time the churchmen could come between Louis and God was at the Last Judgment, when they had to answer for his sins.

10. Nithard, I, 3.

11. Nithard, I, 4. Recording events after Louis took Aquitaine away from Pepin and gave it to Charles, Nithard writes: "This event infuriated the malcontents...[and] they let it be known that the government was poorly run and incited the people to demand fair rule." And further, they "urged Lothar to seize power." Trans. Scholz and Rogers, CC, p. 133.

12. Nithard, I, 4: "Pepin and Louis saw that Lothar intended to seize the whole empire and make them his inferiors, and they resented his schemes." Trans. Scholz and Rogers, CC, p. 134.

13. It must be remembered that all three older sons could muster armies from their kingdoms, and this fact, along with the ill-advised release of the rebels from exile, was a potent combination. Louis would not make the same mistake in 834.
14. I believe the bishops saw this as their last chance to regain some measure of control. Their influence had been steadily decreasing since the penance at Attigny, and, out of desperation, they were making one last concerted effort to dethrone Louis.
15. *Vita*, III, 47; *AB*, s. a. 832.
16. Again we see the effects of shifting allegiances. In such a complex situation, it is impossible to pin down any specific "party."
17. *AX*, s. a. 832. Louis had been goaded by Matfrid, another new alignment.
18. *Vita*, III, 47:1 and 49:2.
19. Nithard, I, 4, and the annals.
20. Agobard, *Liber*, 11, 5 and 12, 6, 318-19; Radbert, *Wala*, II, 16:1 and 16:5; *Vita*, III, 48:1.
21. Mention of the Vikings can be found in the annals of every year.
22. This was a recurrent problem, exacerbated by the constant marching of armies across the land. Also, men at war could not tend their crops.
23. Nithard, I, 4: "Under the same pretext [that the government was not doing its job] and by continual petitions, they [Lothar and company] also won over to their side Gregory, pontiff of the supreme Roman See, so that his authority would help them do what they planned." Trans. Scholz and Rogers, *CC*, p. 133. The involvement of the pope in Frankish affairs underscores the desperation of the opposition. Normally they would resent such an intrusion.

24. See ch. one.
25. Once again, Agobard is the spokesman for the dissidents. Radbert will have his say after the fact, but no less damning.
26. Agobard, *MGH, Epist.*, v. 5, pp. 50 ff.
27. The influence of Augustine is clear regarding breaking the peace, but Augustine would have said the bishops had no right to remove the king, that unjust rulers were punishment for men's sins.
28. *Libri Duo Pro Filii et contra Iudith Uxorem Hludowici Pii*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS*, v. 15.1, pp. 274-79. It is hard to believe that Agobard still believed at this late date that he could separate Louis and Judith. Agobard was somewhat detached from the political center and got much of his news second-hand, which could explain his ill-founded expectations.
29. This statement underscores Louis' grave error in making Lothar co-emperor, enabling the bishops to see Lothar as a legitimate alternative. By the time Louis realized his mistake, it was too late. However, after his restoration in the following year, he would be able to keep Lothar out of imperial politics.
30. Agobard is using Augustine to his own ends, but, again, Augustine would not have agreed with him, for Augustine believed that church councils should govern, not the pope.
31. They were no doubt outraged that the rebels had involved the pope in internal Frankish affairs. It was natural for them to side with the king. The desperation of the dissident churchmen is evident in so radical a move.
32. *MGH Epist.*, v. 5, p. 230,
33. Gregory's real motives are difficult to determine. The reasons given by contemporaries are noted below, but one should add that, alternatively, he could have been the tool of the bishops in their desperation.

34. It is the pope's presence that raises this rebellion above the others and reminds one of Canossa.
35. *Vita*, III, 48:1; Nithard, I:4,
36. *Vita*, III, 48:2.
37. *Vita*, III, 48:2.
38. *Vita*, III, 48:2.
39. It came to be known as the "Field of Lies" after the fact because of the dishonor shown the emperor. However, I use the term because it is more recognizable than Rotfeld or Colmar.
40. *Vita*, III, 48:2.
41. Nithard does not indicate treachery, but the Astronomer is quite clear on the subject.
42. *Vita*, III, 48:3.
43. *Wala*, II, 14, 15.
44. Riché, *Carolingians*, p. 155.
45. *Vita*, III, 48:3.
46. Thegan, 44.
47. *AB*, s. s. 830.
48. Agobard, *Cartula de poenitentia ab imperatore acta*, *MGH Cap.*, v. 2, p. 56.
49. They tried once before in 830, as noted above, but Louis remained firm in his refusal. He only agreed to Judith's incarceration at St. Radegund's because he feared for her life.

50. Translated in E. S. Duckett, *Carolingian Portraits* (Ann Arbor, 1962), p. 47.

51. Upon his restoration at St. Denis, "...the joy of the people increased so greatly that even the weather, which seemed to suffer with him as he endured injury, now rejoiced with him as he was relieved. For up to that time the force of tempests and violence of rains had beat so heavily that waters had flooded beyond wont and winds had rendered the channels of rivers impassible. But at his absolution the elements seem to have conspired, so that soon the raging winds became gentle and the face of the sky reverted to its ancient and long-impeded serenity." *Vita*, III, 51:2, trans. in Cabaniss, *Son*, pp. 102-103.

52. Although he was forced to accept the garb of the penitent, Louis steadfastly refused to consider tonsure.

53. *AB*, s. a. 833.

54. Jonas of Orléans had said that God would not tolerate sons who rose up against their fathers. *Epistola ad Pippinem*, *MGH Epist.*, v. 5, pp. 349-53.

55. Shakespeare, *King Richard II*, III, ii, ll. 54-57.

56. *AB*, s. a. 834.

57. *Vita*, III, 49:2.

58. *Vita*, III, 49:2. "All during the winter the people of Frankland and of Burgundy, of Aquitaine and of Germany, assembled in throngs to express indignation at the emperor's misfortune." Trans. Cabaniss, *Son*, p. 99.

59. *Vita*, III, 51:1. Lothar said he carried out the sentence imposed by a judgment of the bishops. The fact that he acted on episcopal action demonstrates that he did not share Louis' view of sacral kingship. Louis would have refused to obey bishops. There is, of course, an exculpatory tone, but it does not mask his intent.

60. *AB*, s. a. 834.
61. *Vita*, III, 51:2; Nithard, I, 4.
62. For a discussion of the legalities of the deposition, see Ullmann, *Renaissance*, pp. 65-70.
63. As noted above, the omens found in natural phenomena exerted great influence on men's thinking. The weather was nasty when Louis was imprisoned.
64. Louis was now "emperor by the grace that God has restored," or "*divina clementia repropriante imperator augustus*." This nomenclature appeared on charters, i.e. a charter of Feb. 4, 836, in the records of Fulda.
65. *Vita*, III, 51:2.
66. *Epist.*, v. 5, pp. 456-75.
67. *Vita*, III, 52:3.
68. *AX*. s. a. 834.
69. Lothar would continue to be troublesome for the rest of the reign, but he had no churchmen left to bolster him.
70. *Vita*, III, 55:1, 57.
71. *AB*, s. a. 835.
72. *Vita*, III, 54:1.
73. *Vita*, III, 54:1.
74. *Vita*, III, 54:1.
75. *Wala*, II, 23:3.

76. Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 5, *PL*, v. 104, col. 74:3.

77. *MGH Epist.*, v. 21, pp. 129 ff.

78. Werner, "Noble Families," p. 158, gives the origins of the Etichonids.

79. *AB*, s. a. 839. In the same way, Charlemagne had excluded his brother Carloman's sons on their father's death, when he reunited the entire Frankish kingdom under his rule and forced Carloman's wife and family to flee to the kingdom of the Lombards. Both considered the thrones "vacant" at the time.

80. *AB*, s. a. 838 and 839.

81, *AX*, s. a. 834-39. If one were to list the *dramatis personae* for these years, Mother Nature would top the list.

82. Nithard, I, 7.

CHAPTER V

SPECULUM PRINCIPIS ET SPECULUM REGINAE

The portraits of Louis and Judith painted in this dissertation are based on a close reading of contemporary historical sources, such as annals, *vitae*, letters, charters and other *diplomata*, keeping in mind the interpretations of other historians working with the same sources. These sources lend themselves to varying interpretations for many reasons: most were written by partisans in the power struggle of the reign; they form an incomplete record and they were written by people with a very different *Weltanschauung* than our own and one that we imperfectly understand. Fustel de Coulanges observed of past times: "Rien dans les temps modernes ne leur ressemble. Rien dans l'avenir ne pourra leur ressembler."¹ We are looking at the ninth century through twentieth-century eyes, through a glass darkly, further obscured by the shadows cast by Dodwell's "guttering candle." Our

values, so different from theirs, can cloud our interpretation. Perhaps the greatest problem is determining how representative of the age our extant records are. How does one decide whether or not that which survives is typical or unique, or somewhere in between. John Jones writes that the past must remain "desperately foreign" to us or, even more dangerously, "accessible to us in a superficial way."² Perhaps with similar considerations in mind, the philosopher Carlos Santayana observed that the task of history is simply "to fix the order of events throughout past times in all places."³

But history is not just about events and places, it is about people. We are compelled to consider our past, perhaps because, as Ortega y Gasset observed, "man has no nature; all he has is a history."⁴ The great classical historian Sir Moses Finley, however, believed that these problems were not insurmountable, if we are aware of them. His answer to Jones is: "All interest in the past is a dialogue, and the more precisely we listen and the more we become aware of its pastness, even of its near-inaccessibility, the more meaningful the dialogue becomes."⁵

The common bond that unites us all, of course, is the search for order and the attempt to find meaning in that order. Through the centuries, only the definition of order changes. It makes no difference whether that order

is illusionary or real; so long as it is perceived to be meaningful, it serves its purpose. Political institutions are agents conceived to impose the order defined by the thought of an age, and the success or failure of such institutions cannot be determined by their usefulness in times of political stability, but rather ought to be measured by how well they function in times of crisis. There can be no better proving ground than the early ninth century.

In a very real sense, the reign of Louis the Pious was one extended crisis, defined by the struggle between factions holding conflicting conceptions of high political authority. The records of this struggle that survive were written by partisans of those factions and reflect the temper of the age, one of conflict on all levels of society. Works of art and literature are also integral to their age, however, and they often illuminate aspects that are not always apparent in other extant records. In fact, the story told by Carolingian art and literature in Louis' reign supplements in an important way the historical records. Therefore, this chapter will consider the iconography of the artistic and literary images of Louis and Judith and will demonstrate that they were portrayed to contemporaries in ways that support the interpretation of them in this dissertation.

The only image of Louis the Pious that survives is a page from the oldest surviving copy of a dedicatory edition of *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis* by Hrabanus Maurus, a pupil of Alcuin who became abbot of Fulda in 822 and was later named archbishop of Mainz.⁶ It takes the form of a *carmen figuratum*, or figured poem, a common device during this period, consisting of a picture and accompanying text.⁷ It is the oldest surviving Carolingian emperor portrait in manuscript illumination and therefore the first portrayal of the Carolingian age's conception of what an emperor represented and is not meant to be a physical likeness of Louis. Its importance derives from the fact that it is a contemporary image, and from the fact that it portrays a stalwart figure, standing tall and proud and vested with both authority and holiness.

Louis is painted as a soldier, no ordinary soldier but a *miles Christi*, a soldier of Christ.⁸ He stands alone as Christ's militant protector on this earth; he needs no one else to support him in that role. There is a halo around his head and he holds a cross staff in his right hand and a shield in his left. A striking feature of the portrait is that it depicts a soldier without an ordinary weapon; in place of the lance is the Christian cross staff. The

emperor's shield is the shield of faith and, as the text reveals, he wears the breastplate of justice and the helmet of salvation. Louis, crowned with a halo by Christ, is "armed with faith" and "shown to be a universal victor." ⁹ Christ, the deity, is Louis' protector on earth and the source of his power. The portrayal was probably copied from a late antique representation of a Roman emperor. ¹⁰

The entire page is covered with Carolingian minuscule letters, and the letters form patterns that contain various messages. Carolingians loved clever constructions, especially acrostics and riddles,¹¹ and the letters relate like pieces of a puzzle; Hrabanus's text and the pictorial representation are closely connected. They can even be put together in different sequences to produce different messages. For instance, in the halo is spelled out "You Christ crown Louis," and the cross staff contains the line "The true victory and salvation of the king are all rightly in your cross, Christ."¹² These words follow the patterns dictated by the forms. But the letters can also be read in other ways. Elizabeth Sears's description of part of the puzzle serves to illustrate the complexity of the pattern: "As the reader, collecting letters, proceeds from the emperor's head to his shoulders, from his right hand to his elbow, across his chest line after line to the tips of the fingers on his left

hand, across his thighs, down his left foot, and then his right, he discovers verses which provide a commentary on the imperial image."¹³ Hrabanus also composed a *carmen figuratum* for Judith, which will be discussed below.

This special edition of *De laudibus sanctae crucis* is difficult to date, but it is thought to have been written either after the restoration of 831 or, more probably, that of 834.¹⁴ The significance of the portrait page thus becomes obvious. Louis has triumphed over his enemies and has once again assumed his rightful place as king. His fight for his throne is consciously portrayed as a struggle with the devil, the force of evil. Therefore, by extrapolation, Louis' enemies are evil and have been justly vanquished by God himself. Part of the verse contains the wish that "... all the emperor's power may remain firm and save for ever and ever."¹⁵ Taken together with Hrabanus's letter to Louis that was written after the restoration in 834, in which he points out that sons do not inherit in their father's lifetime, and they and the Frankish people owe obedience to their king, the poem indicates that God was displeased by their illegal deposition of Louis. Louis is portrayed as a strong and independent leader who alone receives the grace of God and is *rex gratia Dei*. The military accoutrements indicate that he is actively and eternally defending Christ and the Church, as is his sacred duty.

Louis has been equipped with spiritual arms, and they are superior to real weapons. The text that accompanies the picture explains it; it is called the *declaratio figurae*.

After having received *De Laudibus*, Louis requested more on the same subject from Hrabanus, and Hrabanus complied with Biblical texts on the duty of subjects to render obedience to the king.¹⁶ The theme of raising the humble and bringing down the proud weaves throughout the citations.

"They labor in vain who envy your high office, most pious emperor, and pursue you with vicious slander, since the power of almighty God brings about a sure victory for the man who believes in him and rightly puts down the arrogance of the proud."¹⁷ Hrabanus included long lists of virtues and vices, expostulated in scripture and probably intended to serve as a sort of *speculum principis* to the newly-reinstated monarch.¹⁸ By identifying just causes, Hrabanus produced a hierarchy that placed all Christians in the scheme of things, subject to the king in the service of God. Elizabeth Sears notes that Hrabanus "...raised the emperor's struggles for supremacy to a moral plane."¹⁹ Opposition to the devil is the duty of all Christians, therefore all are soldiers of Christ, but most especially the king, because he receives his power directly from God. There is clearly a priestly function for

the king as God's deputy and chief defender of the Church, and this elevates the power struggle of the reign to an epic conflict with evil.

This image is echoed in Nithard's account of Louis, in which the very pious, self-righteous and sanctimonious churchmen and their allies in the power struggle are portrayed as doing the work of the devil. "The enemy of mankind did not endure this holy and worthy devotion of the emperor to God, which pursued him everywhere and waged war against him from all the ranks of the Church."²⁰ The opposition of the king to the devil consciously echoes the same opposition between God and the devil that is present in the Bible. There could be no greater proof of the sacrality of Louis' kingship than this: the devil himself acknowledges Louis as his greatest enemy and as the leader of all Christendom.

Another affirmation of Louis' sacral status can be found on the sarcophagus in which he was buried.²¹ It no longer exists, but we have eighteenth-century drawings and engravings of it before it was destroyed in the French Revolution. Only fragments remain in Metz, where Louis' body was interred by his half-brother Drogo in the church of St. Arnulf after his death on June 20, 840. The sarcophagus was not specially constructed for Louis but was chosen for its specific iconography from an array of surviving

sarcophagi from late antiquity.²² Robert Melzak has noted the strong antiquarian flavor of Louis' court; there were collections of late antique works that were either reused or served as inspiration for copies or new works based on them. Although there is no documentation on the placement of the sarcophagus in St. Arnulf's, it was probably situated in an arched wall niche, as was customary at the time; the arch is an ancient symbol of triumph.²³

The pictorial cycle on the sarcophagus is of Moses and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, while the waters close over Pharoah's troops. As was mentioned earlier, Walahfrid Strabo compared Louis to Moses in his poem "*De Imagine Tetrici*;" Louis was also ushering in a golden age.²⁴ The figure of Moses is especially riveting because his most important moment was the reception of the ten tablets from God. At that moment God spoke directly to Moses from the burning bush. Moses' priestly function was clear; he needed no one to translate God's message for him. We can extrapolate this image to Louis, then, and underscore once again the sacral nature of his kingship as perceived by contemporaries. Louis was linked by Walahfrid Strabo to other Old Testament kings as well, such as Josiah, Solomon and David, who possess the same kingly attributes -- wisdom, courage, Godliness,

and, when necessary, humility. Similar images were used in the wall frescoes at Ingelheim, both in the church and the great hall, as we shall see. In the poem, Walahfrid compares Judith to Miriam leading the Israelites with her drums, no doubt an allusion to Judith's purported musical talent, for her music is far sweeter than Miriam's.²⁵ The poem can be linked to the sarcophagus, for Miriam's image appears there as well. Judith is included as a leader of her people, carefully shepherding them in the right direction, for the Franks of course were the reincarnation of the ancient Israelites.²⁶

The wall frescoes at Ingelheim offer another reinforcement of the strong nature of Louis' kingship and his place in the Carolingian line as depicted in the *Libri Carolini* of Charlemagne's time.²⁷ In the palace church, the left wall frescoes depicted Old Testament kings and leaders and the right wall contained the Christological cycle; the Old Testament episodes paralleled and predicted New Testament themes, with scenes of, among others, Abraham, Joseph, Joshua, Solomon and Moses. Similarly, the palace walls showed scenes of the great men of antiquity, among them Romulus and Remus, Alexander the Great, Cyrus of Persia and Hannibal, directly parallel to the opposite wall's depictions of great Christian and Frankish kings, including Constantine, Theodosius, Charles Martel, Pepin the Short and

Charlemagne.²⁸ This sequence placed Louis in the most august company possible: the greatest men of antiquity, the Old Testament, the life of Christ, early Christianity and Frankish history. The message is clear: we are confronted with greatness in Louis; we are given to understand that Louis is *worthy* to be in this select group and can take his place without hesitation.

The figure of Judith as Miriam contains some extremely meaningful iconological imagery. On the sarcophagus, Miriam's drum displays the chi-rho symbol; Miriam, leading the Israelites, can be construed as prefiguring Christ leading Christians to salvation.²⁹ It also echoes an image of Mary carrying the child Jesus on an ivory casket now in the Louvre. Mary is portrayed in the same position as Miriam on the sarcophagus, and she holds Jesus at the same angle that Miriam holds her drum.³⁰ Additionally, the name Miriam is translated as Mary in the Vulgate Old Testament text. Linking Judith to Miriam clearly demonstrates not only Judith's importance in the reign but even suggests that she may have shared in rulership. The obvious interpretation of the Judith-Miriam connection is that Judith is also a leader of her people and at least partly responsible for their welfare. God looks with favor on Judith because she adheres to Christian principles and is therefore worthy to participate in rulership. This image clearly reinforces

the interpretation of Judith as a resolute force for good in the service of God.³¹

Hrabanus wrote two dedicatory letters to Judith and also made a *carmen figuratum* for her, complete with a complex field of letters containing various verses conveying wishes for her well-being. The letters accompanied his commentaries on the books of Judith and Esther from the Old Testament, and the intention is that Judith can learn from the travails of these biblical queens. In the special verses of the *declaratio*, Hrabanus asks God to protect Judith and bestow on her sacred gifts, such as the crown from on high shown in the medallion portrait. The verses praise Judith for having defeated most of her enemies and prays that she will triumph over them all. It is interesting to note that both biblical books have political and military themes, and their heroines, with God's protection, vanquish their enemies absolutely. Hrabanus believes Judith should take heart from the victories of the biblical queens because her cause is as worthy as theirs. The choice of books elevates Judith to the company of these holy women, for she shares in the name of one and the dignity of the other.

The comparison of Judith with her Biblical counterpart gives her ongoing political struggles a higher meaning by turning them into a sacred

cause whose outcome has national implications. The Biblical Judith is one of the strongest women in the Bible. She is clever, she is brave, she is able to initiate action herself, thereby defeating a great enemy of her people and save them from destruction. This is analogous to defeating the devil, and the result is the salvation for her people. She is dedicated to her mission; her life is a small thing to risk to save her people. Linking the two Judiths alludes to the analogy between the ancient Israelites and the Franks that was fostered by Alcuin in Charlemagne's reign. Obviously, the Frankish national mythology was flourishing during the reign of Louis the Pious and its mission depended not only on the king, Louis, but on the queen as well.³² This is a unique configuration in Carolingian history. No other queen ever reached such exalted status as Judith.

Hrabanus also links Judith to the biblical figure of Esther, another strong and resourceful woman of the Bible, who played a role in the salvation of her people, again prefiguring the salvation of mankind by the Messiah.³³ Esther reveals to her husband, the Persian king Xerxes, a plot against the Jews, especially against her adoptive father Mordecai, who had performed a great service for the king. The king was not aware that the decree of Haman he had approved would result in the deaths of both Judith and Mordecai.

When he learns of the nefarious plot, Xerxes executes Haman on the very gallows he has constructed for Mordecai. There is a distinct parallel in the Book of Judith, for Judith uses his own scimitar to behead Holofernes, the Assyrian commander who is threatening the Jews. Thus, not only is the strength and bravery of the queens iconographically important, but also their resourcefulness, for in both cases the enemy was killed either by his own weapon or a device of his construction. Evil is as evil does. The women are able to use the very wickedness of their enemies to defeat them and save their people.

A favorite theme in Carolingian art and literature is the prefiguration of the New Testament in the events of the Old Testament. The frescoes at Ingelheim mentioned above are an example; similar cycles appear at St. Gallen. In the writings of Alcuin and other churchmen, the analogy between the Franks and the ancient Israelites is made explicit: as Christ was responsible for the salvation of the world, the Frankish sacral king acted as his deputy on earth, preparing the way for salvation. He was specially chosen by God for this role, and all his actions were directed at this one goal. Nothing can erase the position of the anointed king. And, in this case, we seem to have an anointed queen as well. Judith's *carmen figuratum*, a

cameo stylistically akin to portraits from antiquity, depicts her image directly below the hand of God, clearly a divine sign that she has been specially chosen by God for her role in the destiny of the Frankish nation.³⁴ Thus she shares in the sacrality of rulership. These various dedications to Judith by leading figures of the Carolingian Renaissance are enormously important. Taken as a whole, they may be interpreted as a program for her to follow, a veritable *speculum reginae*,³⁵ for if she continues to serve God, she is destined to triumph over her enemies. Hrabanus acknowledges that Judith does indeed have enemies, but he advises her to persevere in her mission, which is critical to the survival of her people and will preserve the sacral kingship of her husband Louis.

These images of Judith are far more compelling than those invoked by her enemies, who were the king's enemies as well and therefore in league with the devil. Judith battles evil and wins, just as the great queens of the Bible saved their people through their heroic acts. Judith's triumph is prerequisite to the success of her husband's mission. She is noble, she is brave, she is resolute, dedicated and a paragon of Christian virtues. More than that, she is worthy to participate in the perennial struggle against the forces of evil because she loves God.³⁶

The annals reinforce this image as well, for Judith is constantly at Louis' side through all the crises of his reign, the very embodiment of loyalty and love. She above everyone else has Louis' interests at heart. It may be argued that her status depended on that of her husband, and this loyalty was therefore in her own self-interest, but this is not necessarily motivation for her actions.³⁷ It no doubt plays a part, as does her desire to see Charles get his *fair share* of the realm (never does she press for more than that, so she cannot be construed as trying to push Irmengard's sons aside), but it plays a supporting role, no more. There can be no doubt that there exists genuine loyalty and devotion between the king and the queen, and it never wavers.³⁸ Indeed, this may also be a great love story. Judith never dimmed in her husband's eyes nor in the eyes of the poets to whom she was beautiful, talented and intellectually superior. Neither did she ever fail Louis. Without exception, the images of Louis and Judith are strong and positive. Even her enemies chose very forceful images to portray her -- Jezebel, Delilah, the Merovingian queen Brunhilde. Certainly the biblical models chosen by Judith's enemies are considered evil women, but the fact remains that, except by the churchmen that she "hounded out of the kingdom,"

Judith was considered a model queen, wife and mother, important in her own right because of her virtues.³⁹

The connection of Judith to Mary through Miriam serves another purpose, and that is to show Judith as the personification of the ideal mother who combines all the best characteristics of motherhood and womanhood in her person.⁴⁰ She is exalted as a paragon for all to admire. A further example of her achievement as mother is seen in Walahfrid's linking of Judith to Rachel, beloved second wife of Jacob. Rachel's loyalty to her husband superseded her loyalty to her own father. The poet has found yet another means of demonstrating Judith's undying loyalty to Louis.⁴¹

Judith was also compared to the prophetess Huldah, whose advice was sought by the king Josiah concerning the discovery of the book of the law in the temple. Huldah's response boded ill for the people of Israel but predicted that no harm would come to the pious king. He was still protected by God's favor.⁴² Like Esther, Judith and Miriam, Huldah was exceptional, in the august company of Deborah and Hannah, the rare women prophets of the Bible. All these women had knowledge and power which placed them above other women around them. They were responsible for the salvation of their people or their king in some way and were chosen by

God for special missions. They possessed sacrality. This sacrality, therefore, carries over to Judith and elevates her to a position of power and importance among her people. Her people need her, just as they need their anointed king.

Judith's erudition and intelligence are reflected in her comparison with Sappho by Walahfrid.⁴³ Although it was highly unlikely that the Carolingians knew Sappho's poetry, they had knowledge of her and recognized her to be an exceptionally gifted woman. By extrapolation, Judith's learning impressed those around her. As mentioned above, her association with Miriam indicated that she had musical ability. It appears that she was an unusually well educated young woman, capable and talented, even able to hold her own in philosophical discussions, as noted in the Metz annals: she was "well versed in the flowers of philosophy."⁴⁴ It is obvious that Judith can hold her own in a court dominated by men. Her nobility of person placed her in direct contrast to the women expelled from court in 814. Judith is worthy to grace the court, and she has earned through her own merits a place among the court intelligensia.⁴⁵ Ermoldus Nigellus alluded to her importance in the power structure with these words: "And you most beautiful Judith and worthy wife, Who rightly hold the reins of the

empire with him...." Note: *rightly hold the reins of the empire with him....*⁴⁶ This is a positive interpretation of Judith's power, as opposed to Radbert's accusation that Judith is running the empire single-handedly and thereby destroying it.⁴⁷ Which appears to be the more reasonable and which the exaggeration? Judith's influence is further attested by the fact that her name appears as intercessor in petitions to the king. The petitioners clearly recognize her position of power.⁴⁸

The purpose of this chapter is to show through art and literature the images of Louis and Judith that were most familiar to contemporaries. These portrayals do not support the interpretations of nineteenth-century historians, who promoted German nationalism by glorifying Charlemagne and blaming Louis for the destruction of the empire his father had created. Further, the sacral nature of Louis' kingship is evident in the artistic and literary works, from the *carmen figuratum* of Hrabanus and the wall frescoes at Ingelheim through the literary portraits of the poets to the choice of sarcophagus in which to bury him. His dominant characteristics, in addition to sacrality, are strength, courage, fortitude, king-worthiness and honor. He is portrayed as God's chosen king, and it is the devil that opposes him through the work of his enemies. At his side is his consort

Judith, sharing in his sacrality and in his rule, worthy of her exalted position as queen and empress. Both possess the same special characteristics, and both have been chosen by God for their roles. It cannot be expressed any clearer than that.

ENDNOTES

1. Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité antique* (Paris, 1864), intro., p. 6.
2. John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (London, 1962, repr. Stanford, 1980), p. 85.
3. George Santayana, *Dominations and Powers* (Rome, 1951), p. 124.
4. José Ortega y Gasset, *What is Philosophy?* (New York, 1960), p. 22.
5. M. I. Finley, *Aspects of Antiquity* (New York, 1968), intro., p. 6.
6. Hrabanus Maurus, *De Laudibus Sanctae Crucis: De Imagine Caesaris*, PL, v. 107, 144B. Manuscript: Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana, Reg. lat. 124, fol. 4. See Florentine Mütherich and Joachim E. Gaehde, *Carolingian Painting* (New York, 1976). Several copies are pictured among the illustrations in CH, figs. 35, 39-46.
7. For a complete treatment of the *carmen figuratum*, see Elizabeth Sears, "Louis the Pious as *Miles Christi*: The Dedicatory Image in Hrabanus Maurus's *De laudibus sanctae crucis*," in CH, pp. 605-28.
8. Hrabanus recognizes Louis' interest in exegetical texts and is anxious to demonstrate that the political and religious spheres come together in him.
9. "*Stans armata fide victorem monstrat ubique.*"
10. For the uses of ancient art and symbols in Carolingian art, see Robert Melzak, "Antiquarianism in the Time of Louis the Pious and its Influence on the Art of Metz," in CH, pp. 629-40.
11. Circulating acrostics and riddles was an important activity among the intelligentsia around Charlemagne's court in the 880's and 890's.

12. All translations are by Peter Godman, from Sears, "*Miles Christi*."
13. Sears, "*Miles Christi*," p. 606.
14. Given the dedication of "universal victor," I believe it was 834. The second rebellion included the deposition and involved the pope in Frankish politics, and resulted in a far more significant victory for Louis.
15. Sears, "*Miles Christi*," p. 606.
16. Hrabanus's letters are in *MGH Epist.*, v. 5, ed. E. Dümmler, pp. 403-15.
17. Hrabanus certainly recognized Lothar's ambitions. Trans. in Sears, "*Miles Christi*," p. 622
18. No one went unscathed by the political turmoils of these years, and all those who commented on events concerned themselves with the attributes of rulership, because everything that happened hinged on the actions of the king. God worked through the king, so that his behavior was of the utmost concern to all.
19. Sears, "*Miles Christi*," p. 623.
20. *Vita*, III, 48:1. Trans. in *Son*, p. 95.
21. Melzak, "Antiquarianism," pp. 629-632.
22. Charlemagne's coffin was selected in the same way; it was decorated with the Persephone cycle.
23. J. A. Schmoll, "Das Grabmal Kaiser Ludwigs des Frommen in Metz," *Aachener Kunstblätter*, 45 (1974), pp. 75-96, contains a complete analysis. He believes the sarcophagus was placed in an arched niche, which was common at the time. There is no contemporary record of its placement.

24. For the imagery of the Red Sea crossing, see K. Wessel, "Durchzug durch das Rote Meer," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* (Stuttgart, 1959), v. 4, 387-88.
25. Walahfrid, *De Imagine*, p. 376.
26. This evokes the Frankish national mythology discussed in chapter one. The dual roles are emphasized again and again, leading back to the fact that both Louis and Judith had been anointed.
27. For a thorough discussion of the frescoes, see W. Lammers, "Ein karolingisches Bildprogramm in der Aula regia von Ingelheim," in *Festschrift für Hermann Heimpel*, pp. 226-89. For the *Libri Carolini*, see chapter one.
28. The surviving description is in Ermoldus, *In Honorem*, IV, ll. 179-622.
29. As mentioned above, Judith is associated with salvation.
30. This is most interesting. Melzak says he knows of no parallel to this configuration of the flight into Egypt in medieval art. "Antiquarianism," p. 633.
31. The connection of Judith through Miriam to the Madonna must certainly be unusual, if not unique, concerning Carolingian queens.
32. I hope I am not being overzealous in making this comparison.
33. This is a superb example of the power a queen has because of her unique access to the king. The fate of her people rests on the strength of her influence.
34. Hrabanus, *De Laudibus*, dedicatory epistle.
35. Sears also observes the mirror image. At one time, I considered using *speculum reginae* as part of the title of this dissertation.

36. Indeed, Walahfrid makes it clear that Judith has already vanquished most of her enemies and, because of her love for God, she shall vanquish them all.
37. I believe the sources offer ample proof that Judith was motivated by devotion to her husband and her people.
38. I have found no criticism of Judith on the part of Louis in any of the sources.
39. Hrabanus, *Carmen* VI, *MGH PLAC*, v. 2, 166.
40. Motherhood is the one exception to the favored image of the desexualized woman in the early Middle Ages. However, motherhood was probably considered the only virtue in women.
41. The analogy to Rachel is inexact, because she died giving birth to Benjamin.
42. In addition to the comparison of Judith to Huldah, there is also the theme of the king triumphing even when his people were sinning.
43. This is august company indeed, for even today Sappho is considered one of the greatest women poets of all time.
44. *AMpr*, s. a. 830.
45. The only parallel I can think of is of Charlemagne's wife Hildegard in the palace school as a pupil of Alcuin.
46. Ermoldus, *In Honorem*, prefix.
47. *Wala*, II, 16:1.

48. For example, see Lupus of Ferrières on an imperial conference in 836, after which, as a result of Judith's influence, he received a promotion, "gratia Iudith...regina quae, plurimum valet," *MGH Epist*, v. 4, 18. Konecny, *Die Frauen*, pp. 99-102, 208, notes that the proof of Judith's high level of culture is that she corresponds with the men of letters of the era.

EPILOG

Recent reassessment of the reign of Louis the Pious has shown that there was more continuity than disruption between his reign and that of his father Charlemagne. Louis advanced the reforms begun in his father's reign, and the imperial government not only continued to function but was actually streamlined, and this in admittedly difficult times. The sources from Louis' reign emphatically attest to an active and efficient administration as well as to the participation of the king in governance. Extant documents from the first year of Louis' reign outnumber the entire surviving production of the imperial chancery under Charlemagne.¹ There is evidence as well that the empress Judith functioned more than simply as mistress of the king's household. The documentation for the reign is certainly open to interpretation regarding the characters of Louis and Judith. The artistic and

literary survivals are less ambiguous because they rely on biblical models that are familiar to us, at least from a historical perspective. Art historians and literary scholars of course have varying interpretations according to their own criteria, but historians use such evidence to broaden the historical context and illuminate aspects that may be vague in other sources.² The legacy of Louis and Judith, however, may be seen in their son Charles, a true "Renaissance Prince."³ The surviving manuscripts from his reign give proof of the continuity of sacral kingship and support a positive assessment of the roles played by Louis and Judith.

Charles was given the name of his illustrious grandfather by his parents, which tells us something about their aspirations for him.⁴ None of Louis' sons by Irmengard was so honored, and they had been born in Charlemagne's lifetime, when such a gesture might have been expected. Although Judith has been universally condemned for her ambitions on behalf of her son, the sources indicate that Louis was as anxious to find a place for Charles as was Judith, possibly more so. His first step in that direction came at Charles's baptism, when Louis pressured Lothar to be godfather and to swear to protect his brother from harm. Lothar was also forced to acknowledge his father's right to create a patrimony for Charles.⁵ This

agreement would seem to demonstrate that both Louis and Lothar recognized that the *Ordinatio Imperii* was provisional and derived its validity from the authority of the emperor. Despite the supposedly ironclad terms of the *Ordinatio*, there was no indication that Louis felt constrained by a document of his own making. For that matter, there is ample evidence in the fears of the churchmen for the survival of the succession document that they recognized the reality of the situation as well. Not only were they unsure of Louis, they were actually anticipating his reversion to traditional Frankish custom. Otherwise there would have been no need for action to thwart such a possibility (or should I say probability?). The penance at Attigny in 822 was only the first and probably the most egregious example of their paranoia.⁶ By the time of the rebellions in 830 and 833, after Louis had changed the succession, their actions amounted to treason.

The reign of Charles the Bald as king and emperor provides ample proof of the continuity from Charlemagne through Louis to him. It also offers evidence that Charles understood the power struggle of his father's reign and took steps to avoid a like situation.⁷ Charles's belief in the sacrality of kingship is richly illustrated in the illuminated manuscripts produced under his patronage or by those attempting to please him.

Written records are no less voluble on the subject. The connection with Charlemagne's reign is continuously evoked, emphasizing that Charles not only has his grandfather's name but also his aura, related by blood and by purpose.⁸ He is a worthy heir of Charlemagne, and his authority is described in the same exalted terms.⁹ Most importantly, however, Charles recognized the special legacy of his mother; he referred to himself as the son of Louis *and* Judith, or even simply as the son of Judith.¹⁰

The recurrent themes of Charles's capitularies are the rule of law, both civil and canon, as established by his forebears, and the pursuit of justice, reason, moderation and peace as bulwarks of a stable Christian society.¹¹ His was the responsibility for *correctio* -- the eradication of infidelity and sin. The priestly nature of his kingship is evident in the same overtones of *ministerium* that characterized the reigns of both Charlemagne and Louis. His models were Old Testament kings, such as David, Solomon, and Josiah; he rejected the asceticism he saw in his father.¹² Such was Charles's view of society and his place in it that he regarded kingship as a special form of Christian life, one that began at birth and ended only with death. His conception of kingship embraced both secularity and piety, and he regarded his authority as God-given, without intervention of the Church. His reign

was a natural extension of that of his grandfather, as conveyed to him by his father.¹³

One theme dominates in the literature and art of the reign of Charles the Bald: the king receives his power directly from God. Walahfrid Strabo reminded Charles of this. His predecessors had needed no clerical mediation to talk with God. Lupus of Ferrières advised him to rule with an iron hand as Charlemagne had done, and he warned Charles of the dangers in relying on other men's counsel, which had sometimes misled his father.¹⁴ Like his predecessors, Charles was intimately involved with the theological problems of his day. It was he who made the final decision in the eucharistic controversy of the 840's, a strictly religious matter; there was no question that he had that right.¹⁵ Judith had ensured that Charles received an excellent education from his earliest years, and Louis had seen to the rituals of manhood, such as the girding with the sword. No aspect of his training had been neglected.¹⁶ Both his erudition and his conception of kingship are evident in the books that he loved.

The *Vivian Bible* from Tours,¹⁷ where Judith spent her last days, has some splendid examples of Carolingian manuscript painting. The page that interests us portrays Charles on his throne, surrounded by monks. The hand

of God protects the king. There are no bishops. In his personal psalter,¹⁸ Charles is pictured among the kings of the Old Testament, again directly under the hand of God. The inscription reads: "*Iosine similis parque Theodosio*" -- like Josiah and Theodosius, one a reformer and the other a lawgiver. In the Bible of San Paolo Fuori Le Mura,¹⁹ there is a page with scenes from the life of Solomon and an image of Solomon enthroned in the center. There is virtually no difference in substance between this depiction and the manuscript depictions of Charles the Bald. Solomon is crowned like a Carolingian king and seated on a dais under a baldacchino, surrounded by his nobles. The symbolic connection between Old Testament kings and Carolingian kings could hardly be more explicit.

The most sumptuous depiction of Charles in manuscript illumination is in the Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram,²⁰ which he commissioned and for which he provided the gold for the decoration. His image is deliberately placed opposite a page portraying the Adoration of the Lamb, the central ritual of the Christian mass.²¹ The lamb stands on an open scroll within a framed medallion, indicating that the Revelation has been fulfilled, and the presence of the chalice, confirmed by the inscription in the frame, alludes to Christ's sacrifice on the cross and the celebration of the Eucharist. Charles

gazes upon this scene, pointing to it with his outstretched hand, from the opposing page. The connection between the king and God is explicit. In addition, the verses of the inscription at the top of the page link Charles to David and Solomon. It is the portrayal of Charles, however, that dominates the page. He sits enthroned under the hand of God and protected by guardian angels on clouds above the ornate baldacchino. To either side of Charles are smaller male figures that hold the king's weapons for the struggle against the enemies of God. Next to the arm bearers are female figures personifying the provinces of Francia and Gothia giving homage to the king. The presence of elaborate golden crowns under the lateral arches alludes to the sacrality of the king, who rules under divine protection. This sacrality is further enhanced by Charles's prayerful attitude and by the fact he is witnessing the revelation of the lamb, as indicated in the inscription at the bottom of the Adoration page. The depiction of Charles is not unlike a Christ in Majesty, but without the mandorla.

Many other manuscripts further the theme: the Carolingian king rules in all his God-given glory. The heavenly order is reflected on earth. Charles wants this made very clear. He never forgot the humiliation of his mother and father at the hands of the churchmen, nor the unique position of his

mother in the reign. His oath of fidelity was "*Karolo, Hludowici et Iudit filio*" -- [to] Charles, son of Louis and Judith.²² He was secure in his priestly kingship. This was reflected in his statement that "...we kings of the Franks are not the surrogates of the bishops..., we are the lords of the earth."²³ He learned well the lessons of the power struggle of his father's reign.

Ever mindful of the importance of *nomen*, Charles named his first child Judith. It was a name that had never been seen in Carolingian genealogies, but it proliferated thereafter.

ENDNOTES

1. K. F. Werner, "*Hludovicus Augustus*," pp. 6-7.
2. These are my own interpretations of the connections between Louis and Judith and the literary and artistic survivals. I am using the models to support my thesis only.
3. See J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *A Carolingian Renaissance Prince: The Emperor Charles the Bald*, Raleigh Lecture on History, from the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, London, v. 64 (Oxford, 1980).
4. Historians have often credited (or blamed) Judith for the selection of the name, citing it as evidence for her unholy ambitions.
5. Nithard, I, 3.
6. *Vita*, II, 35:1.
7. In Hincmar of Reims' writing, we find Charles saying that the kings of the Franks are lords of the earth -- *terrae domini* -- not the surrogates of bishops. *PL*, v. 124, cols. 878, 886.
8. Nithard, I, prolog.
9. This was recognized by contemporaries. In 845 he received a copy of Boethius's *De Arithmetica*, with a dedication to the emperor who has the unconquered name of his grandfather Charles. Bamberg, Staatliche Bibliothek, MS Class. 2. Other gifts of books reflect the connection.
10. *MGH Cap*, v. 2, pt. 2, p. 278: his oath of fidelity was to "*Karolo, Hludowici et Iudith filio*."

11. Like his grandfather, he was utterly sincere in his desire for peace, despite the fact that he constantly waged warfare to that end. Smaragdus pointed out to Charlemagne that God was a God of war, under whom the king fought his battles for the propagation of Christianity. It seems a dichotomy, but in Carolingian thinking it was not. *Via Regia, PL*, v. 102, 931-70.
12. Wallace-Hadrill, *Renaissance Prince*, p. 183.
13. Although Charles always emphasized the continuity with the reign of his grandfather, he was careful not to slight his father, no matter what he may have thought.
14. *The Letters of Lupus of Ferrières*, trans. G. W. Regenos (The Hague, 1966), no. 31, pp. 47-48.
15. Wallace-Hadrill, *Renaissance Prince*, pp. 160-61, points out that Charles was determined to be involved in theological issues, and he wanted to understand them; therefore, he solicited theological tracts on issues such as the presence of God in the Eucharist.
16. Allusions to Charles's training are numerous in the *Vita*.
17. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 1.
18. Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Bibl. fol. 23.
19. Rome, Abbazia di San Paolo Fuore le Mura.
20. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 14000.
21. "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world" has been part of the Roman Catholic mass since the liturgical revision under Charlemagne.

22. See note 10 above.

23. See note 7 above.

APPENDIX: FIGURES



1. Charlemagne as a secular God the Father



2. Emperor Sigismund with imperial regalia



3. Detail of God the Father from the Adoration of the Trinity



4. Louis the Pious as *Miles Christi*

Summa es a torreru qui uerbo cuncta creasti
Te opus omne tuum ex te uirtute parasti
Luminibus caelestibus et terrestribus
Ornans sic quod tuum deus tuus
Dignus super omnia et omnes creaturas
Atque praesens semper tibi Christus
Filius tuus noster et dominus
Per quem omnia sunt creata
Tu deus es homo tuus
Propter quem iustus et pius
Sexus personae et aetates
Omnes deus tuus propter
Te quod deus tuus
Regis in aeternum
Tuus facis fortis
Istius est quod pol
Quod dignus et
Quam hic memores
Illius quod al
Nec iam fit
Quod tenet
Ambit quod
Arbitrari
Nec tuus
Quod sal
Rex iustus
Fac nos
Condit
Quod sed
Saland
Quod ubi
Corate
Quod
Paruos
Omni

In hac pagina sparsis litteris conscripta sunt xxxv uersus ex eadem heroica
 in dextera autem dñi quae supra depicta est & in imagine subter formata: diu uersus
 a sepiadeo modo conscripti. hoc modo DEXTERA DEI SUMMITATIS TIBI
 IPSE TIBI O DEUS ALTUS ET MOR In circulo autem qui cingit ipsam magni
 in uersus sunt in dextera eius istiusmodi DOXA PATRI PATRIS VBI NON EST



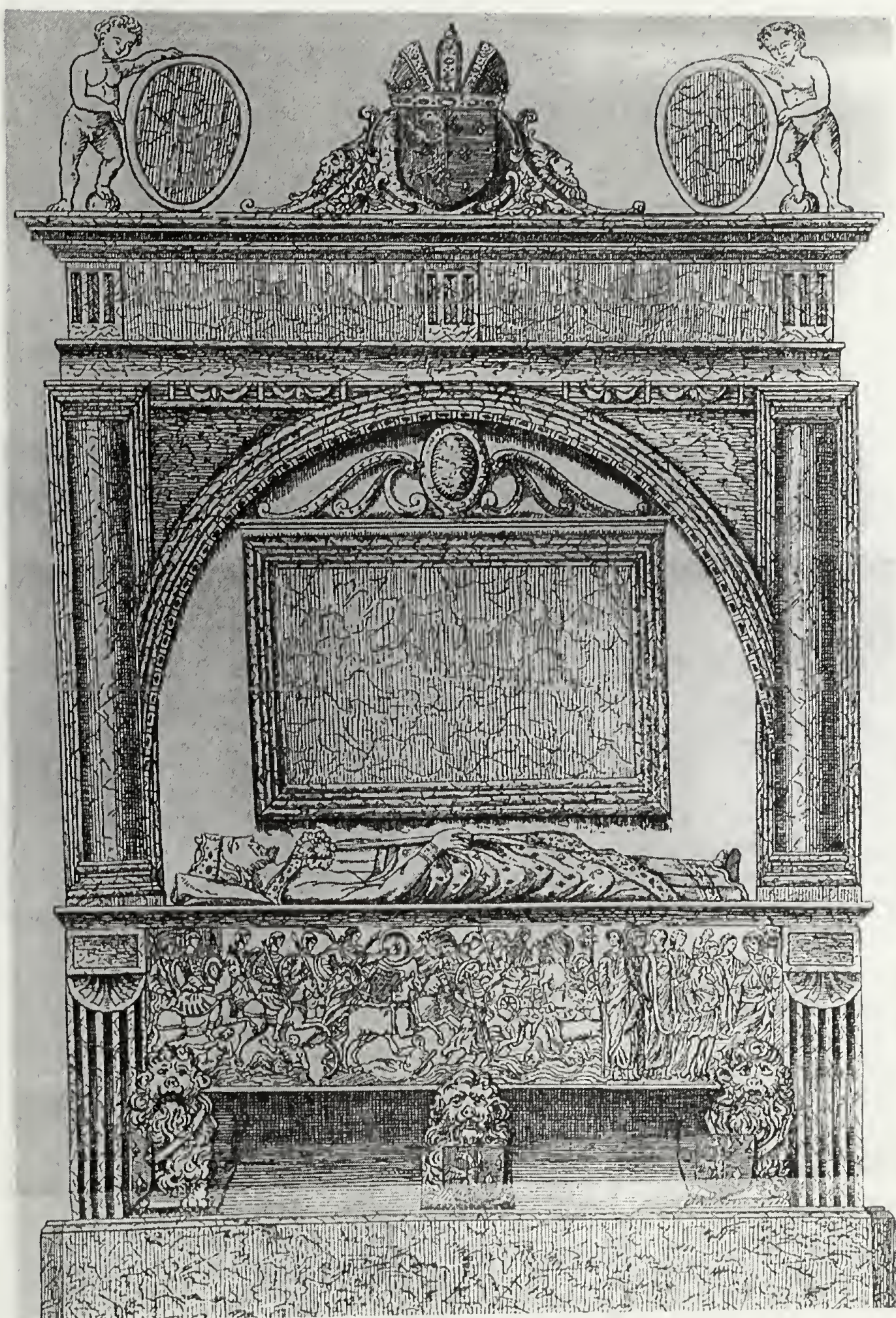
6. Detail - Cameo Portrait of Empress Judith



7. *Crossing of the Red Sea*: sarcophagus of Louis the Pious, left half



8. *Crossing of the Red Sea*: sarcophagus of Louis the Pious, right half



9. Tomb of Louis the Pious



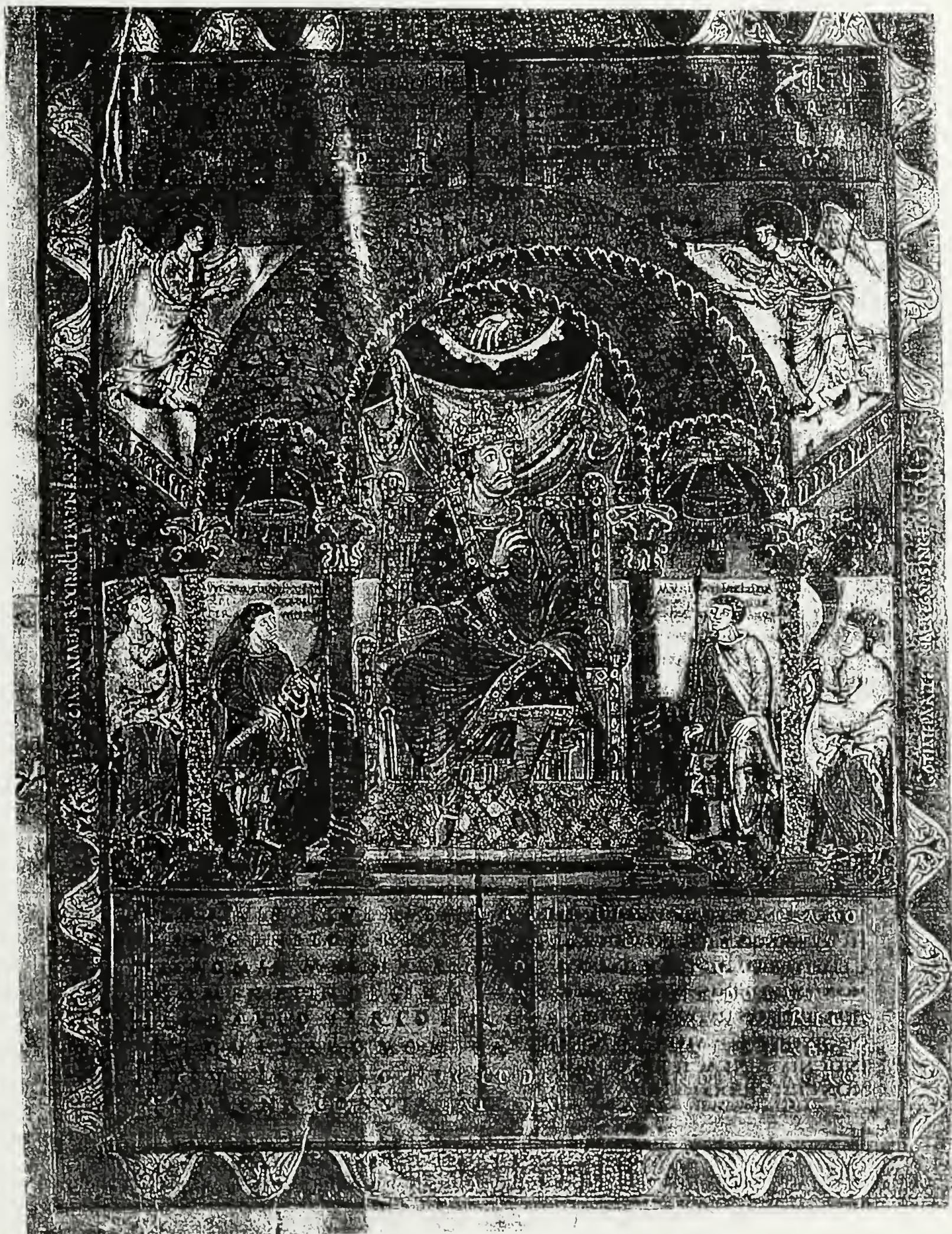
10. *Flight into Egypt*



11. Detail of tympanum: *Christ in Majesty*



12. Christ in Majesty - Frontispiece to the Gospels: Vivian Bible



13. Throne Effigy of Charles the Bald: Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram



14. The Adoration of the Lamb: Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram



15. Charles the Bald - Frontispiece to Proverbs

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