

HINCMAR, ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS,  
HIS YOUTH AND PREPARATION  
FOR A CAREER

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## ABSTRACT

### HINCMAR, ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS, HIS YOUTH AND PREPARATION FOR A CAREER

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There is a widely felt need for a penetrating biography of Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, one which would relate the various areas of his activity as the product of a highly original and forceful mind facing the serious problems of the declining Carolingian monarchy and church in the ninth century. Although detailed and accurate biographies of this important figure have been written, none of them have really gone much beyond Hincmar's overt behavior into an analytical investigation of his personality. The present thesis develops an analytical scheme for the investigation of the experiences of Hincmar's earlier years in order to determine the relevance of those experiences for his later behavior as Archbishop of Rheims.

The methodological approach of this thesis is derived from the configurationalist interpretation of personality, which sees behavior as the product of an actor's world view. Furthermore, a world view is understood to be a selection and integration of the elements of an actor's cultural and social situation, which he fuses into a unique configuration (Gestalt) of thought. By means of such an interpretation of the creative aspects of personality, Hincmar's mature behavior can be related to the experiences of his youth. This study of his first forty years makes clearer which aspects of his background were significant and to what degree Hincmar made use of his experiences to meet the challenges of later life. It is realized that while this approach to Hincmar's youth yields conclusions which lack the certainty obtainable by scientific historiography, it at least permits a more rewarding evaluation of it than the limited documentation would ordinarily allow.



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## CHAPTER I

The Carolingian period has long attracted the interest of historians, for here was preserved much of ancient culture which would otherwise have been lost and here also were laid the foundations of western civilization. In the eighth and ninth centuries, the leading churchmen and aristocracy sought to create a new order based upon the remains of preceding ages, which they transformed by a compelling desire for unity and coherence. Three figures of the latter century most influential in this endeavor were King Charles the Bald (840-877), Pope Nicholas I (858-867) and Hincmar (ca.806-882), who became the archbishop of Rheims in 845.

As the intimate counselor of the kings and leading churchmen of West Francia, Hincmar sought to discourage them from their selfish and shortsighted contentions and unite them in a spirit of mutual understanding and love of God in order to realize His will for mankind. However, Hincmar reveals in his copious writings a personality which is far from being mild and ingenuous. Impatient of delay, merciless

with his opponents, he drew upon a vast array of patristic and legal precedents to urge what he considered to be proper courses of action. A man of contradictions, he sought to rationalize political life, yet clove to the naive superstitions of his age; he searched for peace and order, often by means which were anything but temperate and just; and he resorted to precedent to justify points of view which represented a sharp break with the past.

It is no wonder then, that in spite of all the writings of Hincmar which have survived the centuries, little has been done to understand the man himself. Today, although there are numerous books and articles dealing with his activities, there is yet wanting a description of Hincmar's personality.<sup>1</sup> In part, this is due to his inconsistencies, but also, it results from a vagueness as to just what personality is or how it might be deduced from the limited data found in medieval sources. It is hardly satisfying for the modern historian that the medieval writer found in what a man said and did a sufficient explanation for what he was and saw no reason to describe what we would call

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<sup>1</sup>This lacuna has been noted by Louis Halphen, Charlemagne et l'Empire Carolingien (Paris, 1947), p. 365, n. 6, and Carlrichard Brühl, "Hinkmariana," Deutsches Archiv, XX (1964), 48, n. 1.

psychological characteristics. Yet, it is from a limited knowledge of his behavior alone that Hincmar's personality must be reconstructed.<sup>2</sup>

The relationship between culture and personality has been studied in the United States with some intensity in recent years. Of the various interpretations put forward, there is one which appears to be particularly useful for the historian's purpose.<sup>3</sup> This is the configurationalist interpretation of personality, which sees behavior as the consequence of an individual's conception of the world and of himself. A world view is a unique configuration of concepts by which a person relates his experience of life and his society's cultural traditions to himself. The response to his cultural and social situation represents a transformation and integration of diverse traditions and experiences into a unique and personal world view which is called his personality. Behavior is understood to depend

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<sup>2</sup>Endre von Ivanka, "Die Problematik des 'Menschseins' in der modernen Existenzanalyse und im Denken der Kirchenväter," Jahrbuch für Psychologie und Psychotherapie, I (1952), 117-121.

<sup>3</sup>E. Sapir, "Culture, Genuine and Spurious," The American Journal of Sociology, XXIX (1924), 401-429. Melford E. Spiro, "Culture and Personality, The Natural History of a False Dichotomy," Psychiatry, XIV (1951), 19-46.



on both personality and the situation in which an individual finds himself. Therefore, personality can be delineated by noting the differences between an initial situation and subsequent behavior. If this difference is abstracted by an elimination of its concrete content, there remains a personality type or complex which provides a conceptual scheme for relating a person's various activities into a coherent whole. To reconstruct an historical personality, one must first determine the effect which the subject had upon his age by noting the difference between his own creative activity and the cultural and social situation into which he was born.

The present study will trace Hincmar's early life up to the age of about thirty nine, when he became archbishop of Rheims. It will seek to find in his environment and experiences those elements which relate to his subsequent activity as archbishop. Although this will not yield an estimate of his personality, it will serve as the initial step toward such an enterprise.

## CHAPTER II

### HINCMAR'S CHILDHOOD AND FRANKISH ARISTOCRATIC TRADITIONS

Modern biographers tend to emphasize the initial conditions of a person's life and view the activities of the mature individual as an expression of factors beyond the subject's control, such as advantage of birth, education and natural ability. Conversely, medieval hagiographers oriented their accounts toward the subject's death, when his acts which he had freely chosen and for which he consequently was fully responsible were weighed in the balance of God's judgment. Symbolic of this difference is the medieval concern for ascertaining the exact date of death, while we just as carefully document the moment of birth.

This lack of concern for the early years of a person's life has made Hincmar's original home and date of birth difficult to establish. Even Flodoard, the tenth century historian of the diocese of Rheims who wrote of Hincmar's life not so very long after it had come to an

end, tells us nothing of his subject's background. Hincmar's acquisition of an education near Paris, in the monastery of Saint Denis, implies that his family lived in northern France, but the only fact that we can be certain of is that he did not live in the bishopric of Rheims itself.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that since Hincmar's nephew, Bishop Hincmar of Laon, was born in the Boulogne area, there is some probability that this city was also Hincmar's place of birth.<sup>2</sup>

The year of Hincmar's birth is even more difficult to ascertain than his original home. The majority of his biographers, including the authoritative Schrörs, suggest a date of about 806, but without corroborative evidence. The basis for this estimate rests upon the assumption that when Hincmar entered the royal chapel in 822, he must have been at least fifteen.<sup>3</sup> Since it will be later shown that

<sup>1</sup>A letter from the Lotharingian bishops to Hincmar refers to Hincmar of Rheims and his nephew, Hincmar of Laon, "Quorum neuter ex illa fuit ecclesia, in qua ambitione atque favore potentatus inthronizatus easse dignoscitur," (Mansi, Sacrorum Conciliorum [Paris, 1901-1927], XV, 645).

<sup>2</sup>Mabillon, Annales O.S.B. (Paris, 1703-1739), II, 451. Hincmar, Adversus Hincmarum Laudunensem, cap. 1, (Sirmond, Hincmari Opera [2 vols.; Paris, 1645], II, 391): "Bononia, ex cuius territorio es [Hincmar of Laon] natiuus, . . ."

<sup>3</sup>Heinrich Schrörs, Hinkmar, Erzbischof von Rheims (Freiburg, 1884), p. 10.

his entry into court could have taken place as early as May of 819 and possibly as late as the early 820's, it is best to describe his birth date as being before 807.

Of more interest than the exact place and date of his birth are the conditions under which Hincmar was raised. Flodoard informs us that Hincmar gained access to the court, "due to the renown of his intelligence as well as his noble birth." This was at that time an important *de facto* qualification for political advancement.<sup>4</sup> Not only was Hincmar's family of noble lineage, but it was also wealthy, for when his mother died in 859, both he and his nephew, Hincmar of Laon, received a sizeable inheritance. The latter's sudden affluence led his more suspicious associates to surmise that he had helped himself to the church's treasury, but at the subsequent investigation of the matter, he was able to clear himself of the charge.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning Hincmar's relatives, very little is known. His nephew, Hincmar of Laon, was born in Boulogne, as has

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<sup>4</sup>Flodoard, Historia Remensis Ecclesiae, III, 1 (M.G. H., SS., XIII, 475): "pro sui tam generis quam sensus nobilitate . . . ." Joseph Fleckenstein, Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige, I. Die karolingische Hofkapelle (Stuttgart, 1959), pp. 88-89.

<sup>5</sup>Concilium Duziacense, cap. 5 (Mansi, XVI, 665).

been noted, and was taken under the wing of his uncle, who "presented him with property and a livelihood and vested him in the church of Rheims, in which he had him shorn, raised and ordained through each ecclesiastical grade."<sup>6</sup>

Hincmar not only provided a career for his nephew, but he also concerned himself with the interests of his nephew's brother-in-law, Sigibert.<sup>7</sup> We also find that he had a sister, Hildegund, whose son or son-in-law possessed an allod in Alemannia.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Counts Bertram of Tardenois and Bernard of Toulouse were in some way related to Hincmar.<sup>9</sup>

Without doubt, Hincmar's outlook was influenced by his aristocratic background, not only during the ten years when he resided with his family, but also while he underwent a formal and practical education at the monastery of Saint Denis and at the royal court, where he was in daily contact

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., (Mansi, XVI, 664): "Nam avunculus suus eum de rebus et facultatibus pascebat et vestiebat Rhemensis ecclesiae, in qua eum totondit, et nutrit, et per singulos gradus ecclesiasticos ordinavit."

<sup>7</sup>Hincmar, Epistolae, VIII (Mansi, XVI, 834).

<sup>8</sup>Flodoard, op. cit., III, 28 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 553).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., III, 26 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 543, 545). For an identification of Bernard, see Leon Levillain, "Les personnages du nom Bernard dans la seconde moitié du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle," Moyen Age, LII (1947), 202-204.



other members of the aristocracy. But if Hincmar's personality was to some degree formed in response to aristocratic traditions, it must be shown how they relate to his later activity as archbishop of Rheims. This chapter will seek to demonstrate that Hincmar responded to eighth century aristocratic traditions because he sought the same power, function and status objectives for the ninth century episcopacy as the eighth century aristocracy had tried to maintain for itself in the face of Carolingian monarchy's efforts to centralize power and administration.

Just what these traditions were at the turn of the ninth century is often disputed. Especially troublesome is the problem of whether the particularism of the eighth century nobility was really a continuing Germanic trait or merely the product of political conditions in this and previous centuries. With the exception of Dagobert I's reign (628-638), there developed after the death of Queen Brunhilda (614) an increasing independence of both ecclesiastical and landed aristocracy. While the latter accumulated power in terms of estates, originally granted as compensation for royal administrative and military service as trustis, the Church managed to obtain a certain independence of elections and administration. With the decline of the Merovingian

dynasty, there arose not a nobility in the legal sense, but a group of powerful hereditary landholders accustomed to local autonomy and to participation in royal elections. It is they upon whom the king depended not only for his proper election and local administration, but also for the military support so necessary for the carrying out of royal policy.<sup>10</sup>

It has recently been argued that the particularism which developed in the seventh century was a result rather than a cause of the collapse of central power.<sup>11</sup> But whatever the origin, the collapse involved the transfer of political and economic power into the hands of local laymen and bishops. The so-called nobles who held this power were not a legal class, but simply those who possessed an administrative function and a concomitant benefice. The Carolingian effort to draw the resources of Francia into support of a unified and centrally directed policy meant an attempt to restrict this aristocratic particularism.<sup>12</sup> Not only

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<sup>10</sup> Georg Waitz, Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte (3rd ed.; Berlin, 1883-85), II, 167-170, 367-69; Gustav Eiten, Das Unterkönigtum im Reiche der Merovinger und Karolinger (Heidelberg, 1907), pp. 16-17.

<sup>11</sup> Rolf Sprandel, "Struktur und Geschichte des Merovingischen Adels," Historische Zeitschrift, CXCI (1961), 33-70.

<sup>12</sup> Eiten, op. cit., pp. 211-13, points out that Carolingian local administrators were completely dependent upon the king for their position.

was the church's local administrative autonomy at stake, but also its wealth, for ecclesiastical property formed a good part of the fisc lands which the Carolingians had inherited from their predecessors.<sup>13</sup> Any attempt by the crown to seize the income from these properties, once they had been freed of lay control, would naturally kindle the resentment of the higher clergy. Charlemagne's elevation to the emperorship in 800 was a culmination of the Carolingian monarchy's tendency to look upon itself as the Church's proper governor, and in fact, many churchmen identified both the unity and objectives of the spiritual and secular realms. This was, of course, contrary to particularist traditions, where the direction of affairs could only arise from a consensus of opinion.

An assessment of how the particularism of the Frankish nobility influenced Hincmar's policies as archbishop involves essentially two areas, both reflecting his considerable ability as a canonist. One has to do with political theory and the other relates to the strictly ecclesiastical matters of episcopal election and church property and is

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<sup>13</sup>James Westfall Thompson, The Dissolution of the Carolingian Fisc (Berkeley, 1935), pp. 4-5.

germane to the ethos of the eighth and ninth century aristocracy. Both areas will be considered in some detail in order to confirm Hincmar's responsiveness to the aristocratic ethos.

The episcopal insistence on the right of free election of bishops in the eighth and ninth century paralleled aristocratic demands for autonomy. Both churchmen and laymen sought to preserve local autonomy in the face of the desire of the Carolingian monarchy to centralize the control of administration and exercise of power. Just as the aristocracy was ensured local autonomy through immunities received in exchange for service to the king, the episcopacy also obtained immunities to ensure their control of diocesan administration. However, the immunities in this case consisted of the right to hold a free election of bishops.<sup>14</sup> Any bishop, then, who insisted on the right of free election reflects an aristocratic ethos. If Hincmar stepped forward as a champion of episcopal autonomy, it can be taken as evidence that an aristocratic background was a factor in the formation of his personality.

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<sup>14</sup>Georg Weise, Königtum und Bischofswahl im fränkischen und deutschen Reich vor dem Investiturstreit (Berlin, 1912), p. 56.

The right of free episcopal election was not challenged by the Carolingians until the time of Louis the Pious. That is not to say, however, that a curtailment of this privilege was a radical innovation, for occasionally Merovingian kings had freely bestowed bishoprics or at least insisted that a bishop elect obtain a royal praeceptio.<sup>15</sup> The right of a truly free election, which had been achieved by the Church in the seventh and eighth centuries, was partially curtailed as a part of Louis the Pious' reform program. Taking upon himself the responsibility of ensuring ordo within the Church, Louis assumed the right to approve of elections as canonical once they had taken place. By 828, in the diocese of Sens, he went so far as to assert his concessio as a necessary prior condition to an election.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>In 549, the Council of Orleans (canon 10) insisted that the bishops be made "cum voluntate regis iuxta electionem cleri ac plebis," (M.G.H., Conc., I, 103).

<sup>16</sup>Louis' desire to ensure ordo is reflected in the Ordinatio Imperii of July, 817, cap. 3 (M.G.H., Capit., I, 271): "Volumus ut hi duo fratres qui regis nomine consentur in cunctis honoribus intra suam potestatem distribuendis propria potestate potiantur, tantum ut in episcopatibus et abbatiis ecclesiasticus ordo teneatur et in ceteris honoribus dandis honestas et utilitas servetur." For the Sens election, see M.G.H., Epist., V, 285-86.



The growing resentment of the Frankish church to what it considered an interference into its own province was expressed by Count Wala, the chief spokesman of the church reform party.<sup>17</sup> As for Hincmar, he considered Charles the Bald's insistence on the use of the concessio regis as a mere formality, although he strongly objected to the right of the monarch to name a candidate of his own for a vacant bishopric.<sup>18</sup> The only case where the king refused to approve of a suffragan bishop elected canonically under Hincmar's jurisdiction was that of Noyen in 879. Flodoard's account is too fragmentary to permit a full reconstruction of the outcome, but the evidence indicates that Hincmar ignored the king and proceeded with the consecration.<sup>19</sup> Although Charles the Bald and his successor, Louis the Stammerer, insisted in theory upon a concessio regis, Hincmar proceeded to have his bishops elected without royal consent. His clear insistence upon the right of free election

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<sup>17</sup>Weise, op. cit., pp. 28-30.

<sup>18</sup>Henry J. G. Beck, "Canonical Election to Suffragan Bishoprics According to Hincmar of Rheims," Catholic Historical Review, XLIII (1957), 140.

<sup>19</sup>Henry J. G. Beck, "The Selection of Bishops Suffragan to Hincmar of Rheims," Catholic Historical Review, LXV (1959), 299-302; Flodoard, op. cit., III, 19, 23, 24 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 510-11, 533-34, 537).

reveals Hincmar's interest in preserving diocesan autonomy and consequently it also suggests that he was very much a part of the aristocratic traditions of the Frankish nobility.

It is interesting to note that unlike the West Francian church the church of East Francia (modern Germany) did not need the king's concessio to elect bishops. The implication of this difference between the two realms for the role of the West Frankish bishops and for Hincmar's position will be dealt with after considering his attitude toward church property.<sup>20</sup>

To trace the crown's use of property belonging to the Carolingian Church is not to our purpose here, but a few points will help clarify Hincmar's later activity as both the head of a very wealthy diocese and a participant in the internecine political struggles of the ninth century. As has already been mentioned, the collapse of the Merovingian dynasty resulted in the transfer of a considerable amount of land and political power into the hands of the nobility. With the re-establishment of viable government under Charles Martel, the Church was quick to realize that

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<sup>20</sup>Weise, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

the monarch would draw upon ecclesiastical property as beneficii for royal trustis. This should not obscure the fact that the advent of the Carolingian house occurred simultaneously with a major transfer of land into the hands of the Church. A statistical analysis of property transfers has shown that, between 751 and 825, the amount of such property held by the Church nearly tripled, and by mid-century, it held almost a third of all the arable land in Francia.<sup>21</sup> From the mid-ninth century and into the tenth, despite a certain deterioration of its holdings due to the avarice of the local nobility, the Church continued to be the largest single holder of landed wealth in Europe.

The conflict of interests between Church and state in regard to property reached a climax at the reform council held in Aachen in 828. Here, the leader of the reform movement, Count Wala, supported the right of the crown to make reasonable use of church land in case of dire need. This proposal, however, met with the firm resistance of a number of the leading churchmen, who felt that their property was for the support of the Church rather than of the King's political schemes. The reform council ended in

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<sup>21</sup>David Herlihy, "Church Property on the European Continent, 701-1200," Speculum, XXXVI (1961), 86-87.

February of 829 without having come to any firm decision.<sup>22</sup> Actually, as it turned out, it was not so much the royal grant of church lands in benefice as it was the increasing utilization of incomes from those lands that supplied the later Carolingians with a needed power base. Along with the extensive alienation of the royal fisc went a greater dependency upon income derived from royal abbeys and churches, until the situation developed where almost the total burden of the danegeld was paid for by the Church.<sup>23</sup>

When Hincmar was elevated to the see of Rheims in 845, he was faced with particularly severe problems in regard to his church's property. Not only had much of the diocesan land become alienated during the vacancy preceding his election, but subsequent to the Treaty of Verdun (843), his diocese was split in half by the boundary line established between the realms of Charles the Bald and Lothaire.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Lorenz Weinrich, Wala. Graf, Mönch und Rebell (Lübeck, 1963), pp. 64-68.

<sup>23</sup>Ferdinand Lot, "Les tributs aux Normands et l'Église de France au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle," Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, LXXXV (1924), 78.

<sup>24</sup>Hincmar, Vita Remigii (M.G.H., S.R.M., 324): "Quando tres fratres reges Hlotharius, Hludowicus et Karolus regnum inter se diviserunt, episcopium Remense, post patris suidbitum Karolus inter homines suos divisit; quot tenebat Fulco presbiter, . . ."

The villa Douzy, and properties in the Vosges, in Provence, Cisalpinus, Limoges, and in the provinces of Vienne and Aix drew the archbishop of Rheims into the disputes between the Carolingian kings.<sup>25</sup> From the moment he became archbishop, Hincmar spent a good deal of his energy trying to maintain control over his widely distributed holdings, and for this reason he was forced to seek a privilege from Pope Nicholas I in order to ensure his continued possession of them.<sup>26</sup> Such a request strengthened his legal position without any sacrifice of diocesan autonomy, for the pope could hardly be expected to interfere in diocesan internal affairs.

The foundations of diocesan autonomy were the freedom of episcopal election and control of church property. Without the former, the authority of the bishop could be

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<sup>25</sup>For Vosges, see Flodoard, op. cit., III, 20, 21, 26 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 513, 514, 524). For Douzy, ibid., III, 20, 26 (pp. 513, 539). For Vienne, ibid., III, 18 (p. 510). For Provence, ibid., III, 21, 26, 27, 28 (pp. 514, 540, 550, 553). For Limoges, ibid., III, 21 (p. 514). For Cisalpinus, ibid., III, 21 (p. 515). For the political consequences, see Émile Lesne, "Hincmar et l'Empereur Lothaire," Revue des questions historiques, LXXVIII (1905), 5-58.

<sup>26</sup>M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 216: "Privilegia autem sedis apostolicae non ideo petii, . . . quia non solum dioecesis, verum et parochia mea inter duo regna sub duobus regibus habetur divisa . . ."



wielded by someone whose interests were inimical to those of the Church, and without the latter, the Church would find itself deprived of the material power to achieve its objectives. Hincmar's effort to ensure diocesan autonomy in both of these areas reflects that an aristocratic ethos was very much a part of his personality.

Thus far has been noted Hincmar's quest for the freedom of episcopal elections and maintenance of his church's property. With the growth of the immunities which had come into general use by the time of Charlemagne, the Frankish episcopacy was free to assume the direction of political administration in the later ninth century in order to ensure its own welfare and that of the realm. During Charlemagne's later years, the administrative machinery had already begun to break down, opening the way for the Church to take the burden of local administration upon its own shoulders.<sup>27</sup>

Starting with the Council of Metz in 859, Hincmar took a lead in this revolution of administration. What must be considered here, though, is how this relates to Hincmar's aristocratic background. Similarities between the eighth century nobility and ninth century episcopacy are to be

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<sup>27</sup> Heinrich Fichtenau, Das karolingische Imperium (Zürich, 1949), pp. 185 ff.

be seen in a number of ways. Both groups received their status from administrative function rather than birth, both held extensive land holdings for the support of their political responsibilities, both preserved a local autonomy because of the weakness of the monarchy and neither their titles nor their properties were hereditary. But most important of all is the Church's assumption of the administrative responsibility once held by the Frankish aristocracy.

It is interesting to note the contrast between East and West Frankish administrative developments. The regional structure of Roman Gaul as well as historical and geographical factors tended to make the peoples of West Francia much less tightly knit together.<sup>28</sup> While Charlemagne managed to send loyal court-trained clergy into the recently acquired eastern region, he was never able to overcome the traditional particularism of the aristocratic clergy of the West.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps here is the reason why Hincmar's complaints regarding the inroads made on the property of Rheims were directed to the western monarch, although his church's lands

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<sup>28</sup> Heinrich Mitteis, "Der Vertrag von Verdun in Rahmen der karolingischen Verfassungspolitik," in Der Vertrag von Verdun, 843, ed. T. Mayer (Leipzig, 1943), pp. 90-91.

<sup>29</sup> Fichtenau, op. cit., p. 135.

lay on both sides of the border. It was here in the West that the loss of property had political as well as economic consequences.<sup>30</sup> Hincmar clearly acted in response to aristocratic traditions of local autonomy and political authority, but in a way which was transformed by the new conditions and aspirations of the ninth century.

That little is known of Hincmar's formative years does not make impossible an estimation of their importance for his later career. The discussion of his concern for free episcopal elections and for the integrity of his church's property has revealed objectives and attitudes similar to those long held by the Frankish aristocracy. In all likelihood this aspect of Hincmar's personality was developed while he was yet a boy, for his parents were members of the minor aristocracy.

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<sup>30</sup>Wolfgang Metz, Das karolingische Reichsgut (Berlin, 1960), p. 223.

### CHAPTER III

#### HINCMAR'S ENTRY INTO THE MONASTERY OF SAINT DENIS

The historian Flodoard relates that "Hincmar had been raised from childhood as a monk at the monastery of Saint Denis under Abbot Hilduin and taught in the study of letters."<sup>1</sup> It was not at all unusual for early ninth century parents to send their progeny off to be raised and educated in a cloister. Thus, children of all ages crowded the monasteries to the dismay of the church fathers who discouraged accepting youngsters below the age of seven or ten, considering them unmanageable and a threat to monastic functions. In the medieval period, children often experienced a harsh discipline which their parents were wont to inflict upon them, as they were considered inherently evil and in need of firm correction. The monasteries, in closer accord

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<sup>1</sup>Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Is siquidem Hincmarus a pueritia in monasterio Sancti Dyonisii sub Hilduino abbate monasteriali religione nutritus et studiis litterarum imbutus . . . ."

with Christian teaching, regarded younger children as innocent and hence deserving of some leniency.<sup>2</sup>

Flodoard's account does not at all make clear at precisely what age Hincmar left his parents' home, and neither is Hincmar's own recollection very helpful. In a letter written to Pope Nicholas I in 867, he observed that, "from earliest childhood I was educated in a monastery in canonical habit."<sup>3</sup> The term infantiae was generally the equivalent of puer, and apparently of Flodoard's pueritia as well, and most often meant the ages between seven and fifteen.<sup>4</sup> Since Hilduin succeeded Walton as abbot of Saint Denis late in 814, this would be the earliest possible date for Hincmar's leaving home and beginning his formal education.<sup>5</sup> A youth of such an age, upon entering his new surroundings, normally was assigned to a group of ten other children who were being taught the rule by an older monk. Once the neophyte had sufficiently advanced in his training

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<sup>2</sup>Pierre Riché, Éducation et culture dans l'Occident barbare (Paris, 1962), pp. 500-506.

<sup>3</sup>"Qui in monasterio, ubi ab ipsius rudimentis infantiae sub canonico habitus educatus . . . ." (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 210).

<sup>4</sup>Riché, op. cit., p. 500.

<sup>5</sup>Gallia Christiana (Paris, 1715-1865), VII, 358.

to enter the community formally, his education began in earnest. On the elementary level, this usually involved learning to read and write, memorization of psalms, singing and simple arithmetic.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout his life, Hincmar preserved a high regard for the monastery of Saint Denis, as is seen in his donation of property to support a hospital for its sick monks and in his letters of advice sent when internal difficulties arose.<sup>7</sup> As was often done in this period, the church of Rheims and Saint Denis joined together in an ecclesiastical confraternity (societas precum), wherein each would offer its prayers in honor of a common patron. In a letter to the abbot of Saint Denis, Archbishop Hincmar reveals his attachment to the monastery by urging that this practice be observed.<sup>8</sup>

Of particular concern are the unique history and traditions to which Hincmar was exposed at Saint Denis. More than any other institution, this monastery provided a major thread in the long history of the Merovingian and Carolingian dynasties, particularly where Frankish and

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<sup>6</sup>Riché, op. cit., pp. 499-503, 510-520.

<sup>7</sup>See M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 202-203.

<sup>8</sup>Flodoard, op. cit., III, 25 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 538): "petensque, ut apud communem patronum beatissimum Dionisium in sacris orationibus sui memoriam iugiter haberent, . . . ."

Christian traditions met and became fused. Without doubt it was an ideal place for an impressionable youth to learn of Frankish history and of the Carolingian belief that the Franks were God's chosen people as had been the Israelites of the Old Testament.

A basilica was built about 475 A.D. by Saint Genevieve in order that a group of clerks under the direction of an abbot venerate the memory of Paris' first bishop, Saint Denis, and of his associates, Saint Rusticus and Eleutherius, who assisted him in the conversion of Gaul. Genevieve herself was a friend of Clovis and of Saint Remi, and her influence contributed to the close association of the Frankish monarchy with the Christian religion. In the sixth century, a new church was consecrated which was to become the sanctuary of the Frankish kings, and it was here that they were most often educated, anointed, and buried. Except for a nearby cell where a few devout monks practiced a monastic rule, the church of Saint Denis continued as a non-regular foundation until the ninth century in spite of an attempted Columbano-Benedictine reform in the seventh century.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Léon Levillain, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque mérovingienne, II," Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, LXXXVI (1925), 5-99.

The advent of the Carolingian dynasty saw no change in the close relationship between the monastery and the crown, for Charles Martel followed Dagobert's example by having himself buried there. The official sanction which the papacy gave to the Carolingian line as the proper kings of Francia took place in the chapel of Saint Denis in 754.<sup>10</sup> Pope Stephan II's anointment of Pepin, Carolman, and Charlemagne at Saint Denis must have given Hincmar a sense of being in close touch with the events which gave the Carolingian dynasty its mandate to realize God's will on earth.

Not only was Saint Denis a major focal point of dynastic ideas, but it was also in close contact with all corners of the realm. From the seventh century, the crown had poured out gifts of land and immunities for the benefit of the monastery, and by Charlemagne's time, it was the wealthiest house in Francia, having widely scattered properties and trade connections. Contributing greatly to the income of Saint Denis as well as to that of the crown was the famous fair of Saint Denis, which brought merchants from various parts of Francia to trade their cloth and wool for the wine and produce grown on the monastery's lands.

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<sup>10</sup>Clausula de Pippino (M.G.H., Script. rer. Mer., I, 2, 465-66).



For the monks at Saint Denis, this activity must have brought an awareness of not only a diversity of peoples and lands, but also the unity which Christianity and the Frankish monarchy had created among them.<sup>11</sup>

The fruit of the long years of royal association with Saint Denis can be seen in the important political role which its abbots played during the eighth century. Abbot Maginarius served both as Carolman's chaplain and later as a diplomat for Charlemagne. Abbot Fulrad served as head chaplain under Pepin and Charlemagne and a key figure in Carolingian relations with the papacy. Abbot Fardulf served Charlemagne as royal chaplain.<sup>12</sup> These men, as they traveled back and forth between the court and various parts of the realm on official royal business, gave Saint Denis a cosmopolitan air. A sense of renovatio, the desire for a new and better Rome, must have been felt here in this centrally located monastery. The men of this age set out self-consciously to explore what might be of value in the past or in their present situation in order to create

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<sup>11</sup>For the fair and commercial privileges, see Léon Levillain, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint Denis à l'époque mérovingienne, IV," Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, XCI (1930), 5-65, 264-300. For royal grants and immunities, Jules Tardif, Monuments historiques (Paris, 1866), no. 4 ff.

<sup>12</sup>Fleckenstein, op. cit., p. 106.

out of it a better world for themselves.<sup>13</sup> When Hincmar came to Saint Denis, he entered this charged atmosphere and breathed of it deeply, for long after the aura of the Carolingian monarchy had begun to fade, he continued his struggle to bring coherence and order into a fragmenting world.

The education of the Carolingian lay aristocracy was one which did not go far beyond the practical requirements of political life. As is exemplified by Charlemagne's own intellectual limitations, military prowess was considered to be the fundamental qualification for administrative posts. The relatively cultured Romano-Frankish nobility which continued under the Merovingians had passed out of existence by the middle of the seventh century. To compensate for this loss of men who were literate and also trained to administer, there occurred a century later an "administrative revolution," whereby the ascendant Carolingian monarchy turned to the abbeys for educated clerks.<sup>14</sup> But in

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<sup>13</sup>Arguing for a self-conscious renaissance is Paul Lehmann, "Das Problem der karolingischen Renaissance," Erforschung des Mittelalters, II (Stuttgart, 1959), 109-138. That this is not simply a belief that the Franks were reviving the Roman Empire, is demonstrated by Josef Fleckenstein, Die Bildungs-reform Karls des Grossen (Bigge-Ruhr, 1953), 94-97.

<sup>14</sup>Riché, op. cit., pp. 475-76.

particular, it was the monastery of Saint Denis which in the eighth century provided a major source of clerks sufficiently educated for diplomatic purposes and service in chancellory. Charles Martel made further use of Saint Denis when he sent his two legitimate sons, Pepin the Short and Carolman, to be educated there.<sup>15</sup> While the use of the monastery's abbots for royal missi has already been noted, it seems this house also provided the court with the notaries who raised the quality of the early Carolingian chancellory far above what it had been under the Merovingians.<sup>16</sup>

The close association of Saint Denis with the royal chapel, which was the Carolingian bureaucracy, meant that its more promising monks would have a good opportunity to enter a career in royal service. While many chapel clerks returned to obscurity after serving a period of time, a few proved themselves so valuable that they were given bishoprics or royal abbeys and thus provided the realm with loyal and experienced local administrators. This in fact is what happened to Hincmar, and it would be useful to know whether

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<sup>15</sup> Pippin recalled (M.G.H., Dipl. Kar., I, 13): "Monisterium beati domni Dioninisae, ubi enotriti fuimus [sic]."

<sup>16</sup> Riché, op. cit., p. 496.

the expectations for such a role encouraged him to strive for excellence and to make his abilities known. Flodoard erroneously states that Hincmar entered Saint Denis as a monk and gives little information regarding his devotion to a religious life. But a letter from Hincmar to Pope Nicholas I in 867, which was probably the source of Flodoard's information, clearly states that he entered "under canonical habit."<sup>17</sup>

Schrörs suggests that Hincmar had little choice in the manner of his existence, for Saint Denis was a community for clerks only, rather than monks.<sup>18</sup> It is true that there had been a serious deterioration of the religious life in Saint Denis, to the degree that it was not at this time a place for a person seeking to withdraw from worldly affairs.<sup>19</sup> However, a number of the monks chose to draw apart into a nearby cell at Mours, where they could "devote themselves

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<sup>17</sup>"Qui in monasterio, ubi ab ipsius rudimentis infantiae sub canonico habitu educatus . . . ." (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 210).

<sup>18</sup>Schrörs, op. cit., p. 10 n. 2.

<sup>19</sup>In 806, life in Saint Denis was described as, "Ubi monasticae vitae regulam admodum distortam, fratresque secularis potius quam spiritualis vitae sequaces inveniens . . . ." (Ex Translatione Sanguinis Domini, 12 [M.G.H., SS., IV, 447]).

to the monastic life and habit."<sup>20</sup> Certainly, if Hincmar was interested in a purely monastic existence, he could have joined them there at Mours. But his continued residence among the less religiously oriented clerks indicates that he was not, at first, primarily concerned with his spiritual life. However, as will be discussed, a reform took place under the direction of Benedict of Aniane, which eventually brought the whole monastery to the Benedictine rule. Hincmar's cooperation in this reform reveals that by this time religious matters had taken a more prominent place in his range of interests. In 867, Hincmar told Pope Nicholas that after the reform he "continued to live without hope or appetite for becoming a bishop or other prelate."<sup>21</sup>

Although Hincmar could speak of a period under Charles Martel when the pursuit of studies and a concern for books had fallen into neglect, there is ample evidence that

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<sup>20</sup>Diploma of Louis (M.G.H., Conc., II, 2, 685): "Pars denique quaedam eorum, illi scilicet, qui . . . in sanctae religionis proposito et habitu adprime absque ulla refragatione aut interpolatione elegerunt viriliter permanere et in cella eiusdem maioris monasterii, postquam ceteri monasticam vitam et habitum deseruerunt . . . ." De Partitione Bonorum (M.G.H., Conc., II, 2, 691): "Murnum, ut antiquitus vocabatur, nunc autem [a.832] cella sancti Dyonisii."

<sup>21</sup>Letter to Nicholas, a.867 (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 210): "in illud saeculum fugiens sine spe vel appetitu episcopatus aut alicuius praelationis diutius degui . . . ."

intellectual life revived in the ensuing years.<sup>22</sup>

Examples of works produced for Saint Denis in the eighth century survive, such as the famous Gelasian Sacramentary.<sup>23</sup>

A copy of one of Jerome's treatises was written here between 793 and 806, under the direction of Abbot Fardulf.

Intellectual activity is further reflected in the gift of books which was made to the monastic library by the monk Sichelmus.<sup>24</sup> In light of Hincmar's later activity as an

historian, it is noteworthy that the Liber Historiae Francorum was written at Saint Denis in the early eighth century.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Miraculis Dionysii, Prol. (Mabillon, Acta SS. O.S.B., III, 2, 311): "Quippe sapientiae studium multos apud nos neglectum est annos; liberalesque artes diu sunt intermissae." Also, Vita Remigii (M.G.H., Script. rer. Mer., III, 252). Riché, op. cit., p. 495.

<sup>23</sup> Antoine Chavasse, Le Sacramentaire gélasien (Vaticanus Reginensis 316) (Tournai, 1958), p. viii.

<sup>24</sup> Emile Lesne, Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France, IV: Les livres, "scriptoria" et bibliothèques (Lille, 1938), p. 205.

<sup>25</sup> Godefroid Kurth, Études franques (2 vols., Paris, 1919), I, 31-65. If Riché's suggestion (pp. 495-96) that the prologue to the Lex Salica was also written here could be proved, we would have further evidence that Saint Denis was a home of Frankish "national" sentiment and a reason for Hincmar's firm support throughout his life of West Francia's interests.

To what extent the school of Saint Denis contributed to Hincmar's learning is a matter of conjecture, for the content of its library is unknown. What little is known of secondary education in this period indicates that it involved a greater dependence upon memorization and learning by oral instruction than extensive reading. In the eighth century, a limited study of biblical exegesis and of Latin grammar and vocabulary from glosses was the usual extent of general education. Until the Carolingian educational reform reached fruition, the classics and Church Fathers were not part of the curriculum of monastic schools.<sup>26</sup> In light of these general observations, it would appear that Hincmar's extensive knowledge of canon and secular law was gained at court, and his great familiarity with the writings of the Fathers was also acquired after his early education had already been completed. His court training was practical, designed to equip him for secular or episcopal tasks, rather than being a philosophic, speculative, or literary.<sup>27</sup> He received a monastic rather than practical training while at Saint Denis because of the unwillingness of the

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<sup>26</sup> Riché, op. cit., pp. 520-29.

<sup>27</sup> Max Manitius, Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters ( 2 vols., Munich, 1911), I, 340-41.

monasteries in West Francia to adopt the Carolingian educational reforms. It was the schools of East Francia which produced a higher clergy well trained in practical matters.<sup>28</sup>

However, there are other features of the life in Saint Denis which are enlightening in regard to Hincmar's experiences during these years. We know, for instance, that he was engaged in the copying of texts, for he related that his master Wandelmar, knowing him capable of the task, had him transcribe in a clear hand a deteriorated manuscript of the life of Saint Sanctinus, of which the letters were nearly effaced.<sup>29</sup> This must have been a more pleasant task than the schooling itself, which involved a lashing if one failed to memorize the little verses composed by an Irish master.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Stachnik, Die Bildung des Weltklerus im Frankenreich von Karl Martell bis auf Ludwig den Frommen (Paderborn, 1926), pp. 62-63.

<sup>29</sup> De SS. Sanctino et Antonio, I, 8 (AA. SS., Oct. V, 587): "Isdem autem Vuandelmarus in loco sibi commisso quaterniunculos valde contritos, et, quae in eis scripta fuerunt, pene deleta, de vita et actibus beati Sanctini reperit: quos propter notitiam familiaritatis, et quia me sciolum putabat, ad exhaustiunda ea, quae in iisdem quaterniunculis contineri videbantur, et ad transcribendum aperte in nova pergamina mihi commisit."

<sup>30</sup> The identification of the poet Hibernicus Exul with Dungal of Saint Denis is made by Ludwig Traube, "O Roma nobilis: philologische Untersuchungen aus dem Mittelalter," Abhandlungen der Münchener Akademie, XIX (1892),



There is good reason to think this Irish master was none other than Dungal of Saint Denis, whom Charlemagne consulted on astronomical questions and who subsequently led the revival of north Italian education under Lothair.<sup>31</sup> Dungal's association with Saint Denis would reinforce that monastery's role as the center of a mystique surrounding the Frankish nation, for he wrote a poem in epic style which described its origins:

O majestic nation, which set out from the old ramparts  
Of Troy, depositing our fathers on these coasts,  
And conveyed to them as ruler of the world these lands,  
Placing the Frankish people under just laws.<sup>32</sup>

It seems most likely that the experience of being raised and educated in Saint Denis meant for Hincmar an

331-33. *Hibernicus Exul, Carmina*, IX (*M.G.H., P.L.A.C.*, I, 403): "Magister exortans discipulos."

Quemlibet hic segnem levitatis culpa remordet,  
Aut puer aut iuvenis nullus inultus erit,  
Grande vi torquendi dulci carendo lyeo,  
At pigri infantes seva flagella ferent.

<sup>31</sup>Traube, *op. cit.*, pp. 331-33. Wattenbach, *Levi-son, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter; Vorzeit und Karolinger* (Weimar, 1952-1963), p. 242 n. 270.

<sup>32</sup>*Hibernicus Exul, Carmina*, II (*M.G.H., P.L.A.C.*, I, 398): "Hos Karolo Regi versus Hibernicus Exul:"

O gens regalis, profecta a moenibus altis  
Roiae, nam patres nostos his appulit oris,  
Tradidit atque illis hos agros arbiter orbis,  
Subdidit et populos Francorum legibus aequis, . . . .

exposure to both the traditions of the Frankish monarchy and to the belief that the Franks were a chosen people with a unique destiny. It would not be long, though, before he would be taken to the royal court by his abbot, Hilduin, to receive training in preparation for a career. Here he would be able to observe closely the translation of ideas into practice.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ROYAL COURT AND HINCMAR'S INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL LIFE

Hilduin was designated by a charter of 1 May, 819, as "abbot of the monastery of Saint Denis and head chaplain of the royal palace." This document is the earliest which alludes to his function at court.<sup>1</sup> Hincmar's biographers assume that he joined the court circle at the time his abbot became head chaplain, but it is unlikely that he held an official position in 819. The date in question is probably somewhat later, as Hincmar himself told Charles the Bald in 876: "neither had your father [Louis], who for about eight years unhesitatingly entrusted me with his confidences, been in need [of my support], nor have you so far in these thirty-six years been in need [of it]."<sup>2</sup> Since

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<sup>1</sup>Tardif, op. cit., no. 112, p. 79: "vir venerabilis Hilduinus, abbas de monasterio Sancti Dyonisii, summus sacri palatii capellanus."

<sup>2</sup>Sirmond, Hincmari Opera, II, 837: "quod nec pater vester in vita sua, qui mihi per octo circiter annos secreta sua indubitanter credidit, requisivit, nec vos per triginta et sex annos hactenus requisistis."

it will later be established that Hincmar served Louis the Pious for about six years after 830, in all likelihood Hincmar's status at court changed in 828 from being merely Hilduin's protégé to holding an official position as chaplain. Just how long before 828 Hincmar began his court training is not at all certain.<sup>3</sup> It seems apparent that he did go through an initial training period, since he recollected that from Saint Denis "I was brought up in Louis the Pious' palace, where I remained an appreciable length of time."<sup>4</sup> Flodoard noted that "due to his noble birth and the renown of his intelligence, [Hincmar] was taken to the palace of Louis the Pious and received interested attention."<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly, this attention took the form of a training.

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<sup>3</sup>Schrörs (op. cit., p. 12), overlooking Hincmar's role as chaplain from 834 to 840, maintains that the "octo annos" referred to the years 822-830. Believing 822 to be the year of Hilduin's becoming head chaplain, Schrörs sees Hincmar's entry into court to be coincident with his becoming chaplain. Since Schrörs holds ca.806 to be the date of Hincmar's birth, there follows the situation of a 16 year old newcomer to the court being in the position of counseling Louis the Pious.

<sup>4</sup>Letter of Hincmar to Nicholas, a.867 (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 210): "eductus in palatio domni Hludouici imperatoris, non modico tempore mansi."

<sup>5</sup>Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "pro sui tam generis quam sensus nobilitate in palatium Ludouici imperatoris deductus et familiarem ipsius noticiam adeptus fuerat; . . ."

Near the end of his life, Hincmar recalled that under Louis the Pious was found a school, where "pupils were brought together according to their court function."<sup>6</sup> This implies an apprenticeship rather than the general education he had previously received in Saint Denis. It will later be shown that Hincmar led and saw to the proper functioning of the realm's synods. This task and his profound knowledge of Roman and canon law make it likely that his earlier years at court were devoted to the study of law. Hincmar once recalled, in the course of an inquiry concerning his nephew, Hincmar of Laon, that as a youth at court he had read the synodal decrees of Charlemagne. This study of canon law may well have been a major part of his court training.<sup>7</sup>

Although Hincmar revealed a considerable legal knowledge as archbishop, his experience of court life certainly

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<sup>6</sup>Hincmar, De Ordine Palatii, 28 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 3, 526): "Alter ordo per singula ministeria discipulis congruebat, qui magistro suo singuli adhaerentes et honorificabant et honorificabantur locisque singuli suis, prout opportunitas occurrebat, ut a domino videndo vel alloquendo consolarentur." For the court school in the ninth century, see Émile Lesne, Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France, V: Les écoles de la fin du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle à la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Lille, 1940), pp. 33-43. For Hincmar's pedagogical ideas, see Epistola Synodi Carisiacensis, 12 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 436).

<sup>7</sup>Sirmond, Hincmari Opera, II, 457: "volumen [of synodal decrees], quod in palatio adolescentulus legi, . . ."

meant more for his development than merely a legal training. It was here at court that he not only met the political and religious leaders of the realm, but also observed the development of political ideas and the effort to translate such ideas into practice. One person whom Hincmar recalls having seen at this time was the venerable Abbot Adalard of Corbie, who after 821 led the forces which sought religious and political reform.<sup>8</sup> But a person who deepened Hincmar's understanding of the political factors at work in the realm was his abbot, Hilduin. Therefore, it is worthwhile to look more closely at Hilduin's political life and thought.

At the time Hilduin became head chaplain (819), the functions of the post were not at all clearly defined, although there had been precedent under Charlemagne for the chaplain to act as head of the royal chapel and chancellory, as the representative of the Frankish church in the king's council, and as the pope's representative (apocrisiarius) in Francia. Altogether, these tasks made the head chaplain the chief coordinator between the realm's religious and secular fields of activity. This potentially all-important role

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<sup>8</sup>Hincmar, De Ordine Palatii, 12 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 522): "Adalhardum . . . in adolescentia mea vidi."



which the head chaplain had in the administration was largely curtailed after 840, leaving many of the functions to devolve on Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims. In that Hincmar was the leader of the West Frankish church, a chief advisor to Charles the Bald and papal legate in the North, he inherited the tasks once held by Hilduin.

What seems to have distinguished Hilduin from his predecessors was his greater realization of the powers inherent within the functions of head chaplain, without an increase of the formal authority of the office itself. He invented a more impressive title, "archchaplain," which made its first certain appearance in 825, at the time when Hilduin's position in the realm took on greater importance. Also reflecting Hilduin's rise in power were the incomes awarded him from the monasteries of Saint Médard of Soissons, Saint Germain des Près and Saint Ouen in Rouen and Salones.<sup>9</sup> Such gifts were presented to the more important royal functionaries to provide them with an income and status commensurate with their rank.

Hilduin's contemporaries, including Hincmar, disclose in their writings the archchaplain's personality and

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<sup>9</sup>Fleckenstein, Die Hofkapelle, pp. 48, 51-53, 171.



position of power. In 826, Agobard of Lyons noted that both Hilduin and Count Wala frequented the court, the former always, the latter often, and both apparently had a major influence on political events in the latter part of the decade.<sup>10</sup> Writers closer to Hilduin give the impression that his was the chief position in the realm, second only to the king. For instance, at the reform council held in 829-830 at Saint Denis, the author [Hincmar?] of its proceedings gave Hilduin the "chief responsibility for the care of the Frankish church."<sup>11</sup>

Hincmar's De Ordine Palatii places Hilduin in a position of extraordinary power; "The apocrisiarius, whom we designate as chaplain and palace guardian, has the particular care of all ecclesiastical matters and the church's court dignitaries." "The apocrisiarius is the person who takes care of all matters of religious faith and practice, canonical and monastic disputes, as well as any one coming

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<sup>10</sup>Agobard, Epistolae, 6 (M.G.H., Epist., V, 2, 179): "et propterea in palatio esse unum [Hilduin] semper et alterum [Wala] frequenter, . . . "

<sup>11</sup>M.G.H., Conc., II, 2, 684: "Hilduinum, memorati monasterii religiosum abbatem sacrique palatii conspicuum archicapellanum et non solum eiusdem monasterii strenuam praelationem, sed etiam totius ecclesiae istius imperii illustrissimi curam principem gerentem, . . . "

to the royal palace on the church's business."<sup>12</sup> This hierarchical structure of administration was not, in fact, a hierarchy of power, for the dominant mode of potestas and auctoritas after Charlemagne was that of consensus found through a synod of bishops or a council of nobles.<sup>13</sup> It is interesting to note that Hincmar's definition of apocrisiarius encompasses many of the responsibilities which Hincmar was later to meet as archbishop of Rheims.

Hilduin's important position at court, as revealed in a wide correspondence which sought his intercession with the king, was probably a result of Louis the Pious' dependence on counsellors and Hilduin's forceful personality.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Hincmar, De Ordine Palatii, 19 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 2, 524): "apocrisiarius, qui vocatur apud nos capellanus vel palatii custos, de omnibus negotiis ecclesiasticis vel ministris ecclesiae, et comes palatii de omnibus saecularibus causis vel iudiciis suscipiendi curam instanter habebant. . . ." Ibid., 20 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 2, 524): "Apocrisiarius quidem de omni ecclesiastica religione vel ordine necnon etiam de canonicae vel monasticae altercatione, seu quaecunque palatium adibant pro ecclesiasticis necessitatibus, sollicitudinem haberet . . . ."

<sup>13</sup>Karl F. Morrison, The Two Kingdoms; Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought (Princeton, 1964), especially chapter III. An interesting question is to what degree a hierarchization of administration is Dionysian. As Morrison points out, though, Hincmar firmly held to the consensus principal for the source of potestas and autoritas.

<sup>14</sup>Odilo, Trans S. Seb., 1 (M.G.H., SS., XV, 380): "Hilduinum . . . in tantum amavit et extulit, ut ei specialius quicquid secretius tractandum esset committeret eumque archicapellandum in omni imperio suo constituerat."

His position is also suggested by his nickname, Aaron. There had been a tradition of giving the leading figures at court names reflecting their personalities or roles. Walafriad Strabo wrote concerning Archchaplain Hilduin that "in the wonderful company forthwith advanced the great Aaron, wrapped in the cloak of honor."<sup>15</sup> Aaron was the eloquent assistant of Moses and was the high priest who neglected his official duties because of the popular demand for idol-worship. Certainly those churchmen who wrote Hilduin, expecting him to capture Louis' ear in their behalf, were counting on his eloquence. To a certain degree, he was a "high priest," for the apocrisiarius was then the highest ranking churchman in the realm. Furthermore, he also served a "New Moses," as the Franks were wont to call their monarch. Another striking parallel was his participation in a revolt against the king in 830 and, like Aaron, he subsequently repented his foolish deed. It is of interest to note in this connection that Hincmar later became the eloquent advisor to a "New Moses," Charles the Bald, and as bishop of Francia's leading diocese, he was in a sense its high priest.

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<sup>15</sup>Walafriad Strabo, Carmina (Migne, PL., CXIV, 1094): "De Hilduino archicapellano. Protinus in magno magnus procedit Aaron ordine mirifico, vestis redimitus honore, . . ."

One of the tasks which Hilduin undertook when he became head chaplain was to continue the royal annals (Annales regni Francorum). Over the years, this task had tended to be the chaplain's responsibility: Angilramn compiled the annals from 741-791, Angilbert and Hildebald from 792-801 and clerks under the direction of Chaplain Hildebald from 801-818. A careful analysis of the text reveals Hilduin as their author from 819 to 829.<sup>16</sup> The annals served the daily needs of the court for a record of past events and were probably looked upon as a means of preserving the fama of the Carolingian dynasty.<sup>17</sup> Hilduin's historiographical activity is one more facet of his political life, in that he acted as the eloquent spokesman of the "New Moses" for future generations. Once again, Hincmar followed in Hilduin's footsteps, for he later wrote the Annales Bertiniani, which were in effect a continuation of the royal annals for the West Frankish realm.

A discussion of the experience which a young chaplain might have had at court under Louis the Pious is made

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<sup>16</sup> Gabriel Monod, Études critiques sur les sources de l'histoire carolingienne (2 vols.; Paris, 1898), I, 135-142.

<sup>17</sup> Einhard, in his preface to the Vita Caroli (Migne, PL., XCVII, 26), states that if one is not remembered in the future, one may as well have not lived at all.

difficult by the fact that little information regarding the personnel and their duties has survived. Nevertheless, the occasional references and recollections of ex-chaplains has permitted a partial reconstruction of palace life. The designation "chaplain" merely indicated that a person was in royal service; it tells us nothing of his rank or function at court. What little is known of the apparently large number of clerks who were under the head chaplain's direction indicates that there was a wide variety of services performed. While some of these clerks spent much of their time far removed from the court, engaged in legal or administrative tasks, others seemed to have been constantly there, having duties in the royal chapel taking care of the relics or leading the chapel choir. They also staffed the chancellory and otherwise provided any one of the numerous specialized skills required at court, such as biblical exegesis.<sup>18</sup>

Although the royal chapel theoretically opened careers for the talented youth of Frankish commoners, as was the case with Ebbo, Hincmar's predecessor at Rheims, it appears that in practice an aristocratic background facilitated entry into the chapel, and certainly, it was of

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<sup>18</sup> Fleckenstein, Die Hofkapelle, pp. 56-74.

importance if one aspired to the rank of archchaplain. Flodoard's observation regarding Hincmar's noble birth as helpful in the latter's gaining access to court has already been noted. Most of the chaplains about whom something is known left court to take charge of a royal abbey, which the king hoped would enhance the unity of his realm. The number of those who became bishops, such as did Hincmar, was appreciably less. Only seven of Louis the Pious' chaplains ever achieved this rank. This represents less than a quarter of the ex-chaplains whose careers are known.<sup>19</sup>

Although far more paleographical and art historical research must be undertaken before the cultural position of the court in relation to Francia as a whole can be assessed, there emerge certain areas where the court took an active lead. Here, under royal patronage, there is found a strong interest in music, liturgy, calligraphy, illumination (Ada School), book collecting and the composition of annals. Probably here too were realized the political potentialities of historiography which later found expression in Hincmar's Annales Bertiniani, where his outspokenly subjective account became a weapon against his enemies.<sup>20</sup> A large number of

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 86-109.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 231-34. M. L. W. Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western Europe (new ed., Ithaca, 1957), p. 263.

chaplains, although not directly engaged in building projects, teaching, or liturgical work while at court, were sufficiently influenced by their experiences there to undertake such programs when they had their own abbeys and dioceses. Hincmar was no exception, for he seems to have been directly or indirectly involved in many of these areas as archbishop of Rheims.<sup>21</sup>

The royal court was at times compared to a "New Athens," but it would be a mistake to assume that a devotion to duty and intellectual or cultural pursuits completely characterized the life there. It seems that the chaplains and clerks were often too conscious of the material wealth and power which surrounded them at court and were led away from their proper concerns by its influence. Abbot Heito, in his Visio Wettini, complained about the striving of the court chaplains for possession just at about the time Hincmar entered royal service.<sup>22</sup> Hincmar himself once expressed

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<sup>21</sup>Fleckenstein, Die Hofkapelle, pp. 235-39. For Hincmar's school at Rheims, see Émile Lesne, Les ecoles, pp. 276-77; F. M. Carey, "The Scriptorium of Reims during the Archbishopric of Hincmar," Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of E. K. Rand (New York, 1938), 41-60. His architectural activity will be discussed in chapter five, below.

<sup>22</sup>Heito, Visio Wettini, 7 (M.G.H., P.L.A.C., II, 270): "Sacerdotum, inquit angelus, maxima pars mundanis lucris inhiando et palatinis curis inserviando, cultu vestium et pompa ferculorum se extollendo questum putant esse pietatem."

a severe criticism of the worldly chaplains and wrote to them: "Indeed, I hear that you consent to these pillagings [of church property], because you maintain yourselves by them and thereby feed your men and horses."<sup>23</sup>

But beyond this rather uninhibited life at court, Hincmar was in a position to observe closely the changing concepts of the state and of the church's role within it. In 821, probably some time before Hincmar entered the royal chapel, Louis' chief counsellor, Benedict of Aniane, died. This reformer, who had long been an associate of Louis in Aquitaine, was a moderating influence because he did not push religious reform so strongly as to challenge the holding of church property by laymen. This situation, though, radically changed when the elderly Adalard of Corbie was recalled from exile to succeed as royal advisor.<sup>24</sup> Adalard "at length arrived at the palace, where everyone ambitiously approached him and questioned him as to how he would serve the emperor, for they were afraid to incur the future disfavor

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<sup>23</sup> Hincmar, *Epistolae*, 127 (*M.G.H., Epist.*, VIII, 1, 66): "Et etiam de vobis audio, quia illis rapinis consentitis, ut videlicet qui de illis vivitis et vestros homines atque caballos exinde pascitis."

<sup>24</sup> *Hist. Trans. S. Viti* (*M.G.H., SS.*, II, 579): "revocaret venerabilem virum Adalhardum senem, et restituerat ei omnem priorem honorem, et multo eum amplius quam unquam antea fuerat sublimaret."



of such a man."<sup>25</sup> In fact, it soon became clear that this awesome figure was about to institute a period of radical reform, which a few hoped would lend to the "rebirth of a new Frankish order."<sup>26</sup>

The first concrete manifestation of this new reform movement was the Diet of Attigny, held on August 22, 822. Here not only did Louis the Pious do public penance for the harsh treatment he had dealt out earlier to rebels, but a reform program was outlined which sought to reverse the intellectual and moral decline of the clergy and to restore the Church's lands lost to the grasping lay nobility.<sup>27</sup> Since the effort of those laymen who wished to resist decrees of the council was directed toward challenging the authority of the Frankish councils to legislate without papal sanction, the ecclesiastical reform party sought a

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<sup>25</sup> Ex Vita Adalhardi, 47 (M.G.H., SS., II, 529): "Ille vero . . . tandem pervenit ad palatium, ubi suscepto eo ambitiose ab omnibus, quaesitum est, quomodo ei celsitudo regia satisfaceret, quia timebant pro tanti viri iniuria futurum discrimen incurrere."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 52 (M.G.H., SS., II, 530): "Qui cum ita satageret indefessus, ut perfecti omnes et Deo digni invenirentur, videtur demum novus renasci francorum ordo, et aurora iustitiae quasi ab ortu surgere."

<sup>27</sup> Hefele-Leclercq, Histoire des conciles (Paris, 1911), IV, 1, 34-36.

theoretical justification for their position.<sup>28</sup> This amounted to the claim that the unity of the Empire rested on a unity of faith, and that therefore, the reform objectives entailed the general welfare of the realm.<sup>29</sup> This was not a startlingly new attitude, for the fate of the Carolingian dynasty had always been intimately connected with that of the Church, but here the idea was expressed more explicitly and constituted one more step toward the Church's direct interference in secular politics, as was to occur at the deposition of Louis the Pious in 830.

This change in political thought reached full development at the reform council of Paris, held in 829.<sup>30</sup> Since it was maintained that the welfare of Church and state were interrelated, the troubles of the realm were in part

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<sup>28</sup> Agobard's De Dispensatione Ecclesiasticarum Rerum, 4 (M.G.H., Epist., V, 167-68), points out the need to make full use of canon law and synodal authority.

<sup>29</sup> Halphen, Charlemagne, pp. 247-250.

<sup>30</sup> For this council, see Louis Halphen, "L'Idée d'état sous les Carolingiens," Revue historique, CLXXXV (1939), 64-66; Étienne Delaruelle, "En relisant le 'De Institutione Regia' de Jonas d'Orléans," Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen (Paris, 1951), pp. 185-192; Theodor Mayer, "Staatsauffassung in der Karolingerzeit," Historische Zeitschrift, CLXXIII (1952), 467-484; and Lotte Knabe, Die gelasianische Zweigewalten-theorie bis zum Ende des Investiturstreits (Berlin, 1936), pp. 45-64.

due to Louis' failure to achieve his promised reform. To justify the Church's censure of Louis, the bishops rejected the Germanic Eigenkirche principle and made explicit the concept of the res publica, where everyone, including the king himself, was responsible for the well-being of the state and was subject to its law. For precedent, the bishops quoted Pope Gelasius to the effect that there are two authorities, each distinct within its own province, the religious and the secular. The superiority of the ecclesiastical, according to Gelasius, is "much the more important, for even these mortal kings return to God at death," and thus the sacerdotal auctoritas takes precedent over the royal potestas in religious matters. But in its commentary on Gelasius, the council went beyond him and developed a corporate view of the state where "the whole body of God's holy Church is divided into two select personalities, the priesthood and kingship."<sup>31</sup> Since the king's

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<sup>31</sup> Episcoporum ad Hludowicum Imp. Relatio, 3 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 1, 29): "Principaliter itaque totius sanctae Dei ecclesiae corpus in duas eximias personas, in sacerdotalem videlicet et regalem, sicut a sanctis patribus traditum accepimus, divisum esse novimus; de qua re Gelasius Romanae sedis venerabilis episcopus ad Anastasium imperatorem ita scribit: 'Duae sunt quippe,' inquit, 'imperator auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur, auctoritas sacrata pontificum et regalis potestas; in quibus tanto gravius pondus est sacerdotum, quanto etiam pro ipsius regibus hominum in divino reddituri sunt examine rationem.' Cum haec quippe ita se habeant, primum de sacerdotali, post de regali persona dicendum statuimus."

activity, whether religious or secular, took place within the Corpus Christianorum, the Church had the responsibility to pass judgment. There is in this event an instance of the utilization of the past as a spring for a new formulation of political thought. Hincmar later quoted Gelasius, but even further strengthened the theoretical auctoritas of the sacerdotal function by giving it an outward manifestation in the coronation ceremony. He noted that "the importance of the priesthood is greater than that of the king for, while the king is ordained the head of the realm, priests cannot be ordained by kings."<sup>32</sup>

Another objective of the reforming council, the particular concern of Count Wala, was the correction of the disgraceful situation at court. What shocked him was "particularly the gang of palace clerks, who are commonly called chaplains because they do not belong to any religious order, but better denoting that they are subject to nothing but themselves, unless it be ecclesiastical posts and mundane

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<sup>32</sup> Hincmar, Ad Episcopos Regni, Admonitio altera pro Carolomanno, 2 (Sirmond, Hincmari Opera, II, 217): "Sed tanto gravius pondus est sacerdotum, quanto etiam pro ipsis regibus hominum in divino reddituri sunt examine rationem: et tanto est dignitas pontificum major quam regum, quia reges in culmen regium sacrantur a pontificibus, pontifices autem a regibus consecrari non possunt."

advantage, or the pleasure of gain without official sanction, or worldly ambition. And they live neither under monastic rule nor serve under a bishop as canons."<sup>33</sup>

Being the object of one of the major thrusts of the reform party, the palace clerks could hardly fail to be aware of what was going on in the Paris council. For Hincmar, the emerging position of the Church as director of the realm's destinies was of particular importance, as he would eventually be the one who would seek to bring the political and religious objectives of West Francia into harmony.

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<sup>33</sup>Ex Vita Walae, II, 5 (M.G.H., SS., II, 550): "Praesertim et militiam clericorum in palatio, quos capellanos vulgo vocant, quia nullus est ordo ecclesiasticus, denotabat plurimum, qui non ob aliud serviunt, nisi ob honores ecclesiarum et quaestus saeculi, ac lucri gratiam sine probatione magisterii, atque ambitiones mundi; quorum itaque vita neque sub regula est monachorum, neque sub episcopo militat canonice . . . ."

## CHAPTER V

### HILDUIN AND HINCMAR'S RELIGIOSITY

Thus far considered have been Hincmar's upbringing in the monastery of Saint Denis and his contact with political life and thought at the royal court. In both cases, he received an education as the protégé of Hilduin. There is another aspect of Hincmar's early association with his abbot which is to be considered here. This is the ambiguous situation of his pursuit of worldly ends by religious means and religious ends by worldly means. This characteristic, found in both Hilduin and Hincmar, is central to their personalities. In Hincmar's mind there failed to take place a thorough integration of the various cultural and intellectual traditions to which he was exposed, and often his ideas were not sufficiently elaborated for their contradiction with his other concepts to become apparent.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>In terms of Gestalt psychology, what is here being suggested is that Hincmar and his age had a poor Gestalt, in that their world view lacked closure and Prägnanz, that is, it was neither integrated nor yet fully elaborated. For a definition of good Gestalt, see George W. Hartmann, "The Gestalt View of the Process of Institutional Trans-

Herein lies the reason for the failure of Hincmar's rational powers to dispel the superstitions of his day, for the inconsistencies of his thought, and for the contradictions of means and ends noted above. This chapter will reveal that both Hilduin and Hincmar had similar inconsistencies in their personality. Although this facet of Hincmar's character may be due to his close association with Hilduin, a more fundamental source may lie in the society into which he was born.

Hilduin's contemporaries described him as, " a most reverend abbot, and a man who was thoroughly upright, of modest comportment and all wise, endowed with industry, conspicuous in justice, and outstanding in holiness."<sup>2</sup> Although Hincmar seems to have venerated his memory, this characterization tends to obscure some of the less endearing traits which modern and more critical authors have attributed to Hilduin.<sup>3</sup> Max Buchner called Hilduin "eine durch und durch

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formation," Psychological Review, LIII (1946), 282-89. Carolingian art well illustrates this observation.

<sup>2</sup>Bouquet, Recueil, VI, 320: "Hilduinum Abbatem reverentissimum, virum quoque omni probitatis genere permodes-tum, omnique sagacitate et industria praeditum, iustitia conspicuum, sanctitate praeclarum."

<sup>3</sup>Letter to Hincmar from Bishops Gunthar and Arduicus (Mansi, Conc., XV, 645): "ille [Hilduin] tuus domnus et nutritor fuerit carus, . . ."

politische Persönlichkeit, mehr Staatsmann als Priester, mehr weltlicher Herrscher als Diener Gottes."<sup>4</sup> How very similar this is to Dümmler's characterization of Hincmar: "stolz, gebieterisch, ja hart, . . . geht er stets seinen Zielen nach, die bei aller Beimischung persönlicher Zwecke doch immer mit den höchsten Zielen des Reiches und der Kirche zusammenhängen, und von grossartigen Anschauungen getragen sind."<sup>5</sup> Hincmar's life was one of unending struggle and ambition, not only for his own benefit, but also in behalf of his see and his king. Rarely can these motives be separated, and to do so would be to wrench the man from his historical setting. Fortunately the ends he often sought were not mutually contradictory.

An example of the compatibility of his diverse aims is the trial of his suffragan bishop, Rothad of Soissons, who had taken advantage of the confusion in the see of Rheims prior to Hincmar's elevation in order to relax his church's discipline. Finding in Rothad's unorthodox theology an excuse to attack him and to assert more firmly his archepiscopal

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<sup>4</sup>Max Buchner, Das Vizepapsttum des Abtes Hilduin von St. Denis (Paderborn, 1928), p. 53.

<sup>5</sup>Ernst Dümmler, Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches (2nd ed.; Leipzig, 1888), III, 212.



authority, Hincmar called a synod and summarily had him deposed. Confident of the propriety of his ends, Hincmar did not hesitate, as Rothad tells us, to "lead and direct as if lord of all, hastening in a violent and headlong manner to hurl a sentence of damnation upon me." Putting aside the niceties of trial procedure, he was at one time, "accuser, witness and judge."<sup>6</sup> This matter soon involved Pope Nicholas I, for Rothad had called upon him for support against the unyielding archbishop. Hincmar found that his authority was being challenged both from within his diocese and from without. Although Nicholas achieved the reinstallation of Rothad, he was unable to bring Hincmar to admit that to do so was canonically justified.

An aspect of Hilduin's life which relates to Hincmar's subsequent activity as archbishop and the ambivalence of his religious and political objectives is revealed by his ambition to increase both his own and his monastery's religious status in Francia, the basis of his political aspirations.<sup>7</sup> To achieve this, Hilduin made use of the growing

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<sup>6</sup>Rothad, Libellus Proclamationis (Migne, PL., CXIX, 747, 750): "ipse quasi omnium dominus praesidens ac praevalens, sententiam in me damnationis violenter ac praecipitanter iaculari acceleraret, . . . Factusque est gratis meus ipse accusator, ipse testis, ipseque iudex: . . ."

<sup>7</sup>For Hilduin's ambitions in the realm, see Max Buchner, op. cit.; Wilhelm Levison, "Zu Hilduin von St. Denis,"

cult of relics, especially in their contribution to the primacy of the monastery of Saint Denis in Francia.

Although there had been some effort on the part of the papacy in the seventh century to take better care of the saints' tombs outside Rome, interest in such matters declined in the eighth century only to be revived by the activities of Pope Pascal I in 817.<sup>8</sup> The purist views of such iconoclastic writers as Agobard of Lyon did not interfere with the cult of relics, and the superstitious belief in their efficacy for the curing of ills and obtaining heavenly intercession was generally accepted.<sup>9</sup> To advertise the presence of relics and to encourage pilgrims to come for their veneration, accounts of translations made note of the numerous miracles which had resulted from the introduction of saints' remains.<sup>10</sup>

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in Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit (Düsseldorf, 1948), pp. 517-529; Levillain's review of Buchner's book in Moyen Age, XXXIX (1929), 85-95; and Buchner, Die Areopagitika des Abts Hilduin von St. Denis (Paderborn, 1939), pp. 37-41.

<sup>8</sup> Marguerite Bondonio, La Translation des Saints Marcellin et Pierre (Paris, 1907), p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> Allen Cabaniss, Agobard of Lyons (Syracuse, New York, 1953), p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> Bondonio, op. cit., p. 54, n. 2, notes that, unlike examples found in Merovingian translations, Carolingian beneficiaries of healing miracles were of low condition, mendicants, serfs and clerks.

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The efficacy of relics to produce miracles and obtain God's intercession was readily believed in an age when a simple naïveté was an almost universal characteristic. Hincmar himself reveals a profound credulity when, for instance, he maintained that there was a form of incubus (dusius) which could make a woman its concubine.<sup>11</sup>

Although the title of archchaplain made him protector of the relics contained in the royal chapel, Hilduin first reveals a strong personal interest in these matters in circa 825, as a result of a diplomatic mission to Rome. The Pactum Ludovicianum of 817, which had been arranged between Louis the Pious and the Papacy, sought to restore to the latter a greater degree of autonomy, both in the Italian administration and papal elections, but this "hands-off" policy came to an end with the Constitutio Romana of 823-24. The young King Lothair, with the able support of Count Wala, now assumed the direction of Roman affairs. Acting in 824-25 as

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<sup>11</sup>Sirmond, op. cit., I, 654: "Quaedam etiam feminae a Dusiiis in specie virorum, quorum amore ardebant, concubitus pertulisse inventae sunt." Hincmar's source is Isidori Etymologiorum, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), VIII, xi. 103: "Saepe enim inprobi existunt etiam mulieribus, et earum peragunt concubitus: quos daemones Galli Dusios vocant, quia adsidue hanc peragunt inmunditiam." For Hincmar's belief in ordeal by water, see Hincmar, Epistolae, 25 (Migne, PL., CXXVI, 161 ff.)

adviser to Lothair and mediator between the Emperor and Pope Eugene II was Hilduin.<sup>12</sup> The abbot carried out his assignment so well that "the pope's love and devotion abounded for the venerable father, and with the greatest devotion, the curia of the whole church prayed that he long remain in the rank of this high office."<sup>13</sup> This apparently refers to Hilduin's assuming the title of apocrisiarius. Also at this time he changed his title as head of the royal chapel, for in 825 he first appeared as "archchaplain," rather than merely summus capellanus.<sup>14</sup> Since the change in title did not bring a change in his formal duties at court, it reflects a rise in ambition and theoretical position.

One of the benefits of Hilduin's trip to Rome was his acquisition of the bones of Saint Sebastian in order to enhance the status of his monastery, Saint Medard at Soissons, given him when he entered imperial service.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Lorenz Weinrich, op. cit., pp. 48-51. Odilo, Translatione S. Sabastiani (M.G.H., SS., XV, 380).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., (M.G.H., SS., XV, 381): "pontificis amor ac devotio erga venerabilem ubertim succrescit patrem, et ut in huius dignitatis honore longo tempore, senatus omnis ecclesiae summa implorat devotione."

<sup>14</sup>Fleckenstein, Die Hofkapelle, p. 52.

<sup>15</sup>Vita Hludowici Imp., 40 (M.G.H., SS., II, 630).

At about this same time (827), Einhard had the relics of Saint Marcellinus and Peter stolen from their tombs outside Rome and taken to Mulheim. The competition between these two powerful figures is seen in Hilduin's attempt to steal the same relics for himself at Einhard's expense, but in this he was not altogether successful.<sup>16</sup> The fact that no mention of the translation of Marcellinus and Peter is made in the Annales Regni Francorum is a result of Hilduin's being their author at this time. The number of holy relics translated by Hilduin was considerable. In 826, in addition to Saint Sebastian, there were also Saints Tiburtius, Cucufatis and Innocentius. He later added in 836 with Louis' permission, relics of Saint Vitus and the martyr Lucan.<sup>17</sup> These relics went into altars and reflect the tendency in this period to augment the number of saintly remains in the churches. Facilities for performing an array of liturgies, each devoted to one of the church's altars, contributed to the outward expression and articulation of ninth century religion. When one also considers the role of translation

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<sup>16</sup> Einhard, Translatio et Miracula SS. Marcellini et Petri (M.G.H., SS., XV, 238-264). For a detailed analysis of Einhard's and Hilduin's adventure, see Jean Guiraud, "Le Commerce des reliques au commencement du IX<sup>e</sup> siècle," Mélanges G. B. de Rossi (Paris, 1892), pp. 73-95.

<sup>17</sup> Trans. S. Pusinnae (M.G.H., SS., II, 682). For the latter two, Hist. Trans. S. Viti (M.G.H., SS., II, 581).

literature, of a new liturgically influenced architecture, of the greater opportunity for confraternities, of popular legends of miracles, and of pilgrims' excursions to important shrines, there is seen the emergence of a great configuration of thought and activity which symbolically expresses the ninth century view of the world. The importance which Hilduin gave to the association of particular saints with his monastery is perhaps best seen in his falsified account (834) of Pope Stephen II's visit to Saint Denis in 754. This is the Revelatio Stephano papae ostensa, which tells of Stephen's consecration of an altar at Saint Denis to Saints Peter and Paul and of his laying on the altar a pallium and keys.<sup>18</sup> Mac Buchner has long argued the thesis that Hilduin's objective in composing the Revelatio was to create for himself the role of vicepope, that is, to assume the powers of "binding and absolving" for himself as head of an autonomous Frankish church.<sup>19</sup> But even if we are not justified in

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<sup>18</sup> Revelatio Stephano (M.G.H., SS., XV, 3): "et super altare, quod consecravit, pallium apostolicae dignitatis pro benedictione sancti Petri reliquit, et claves ob venerationem praerogativae eius, qui in ligandi ac solvendi pontificio claves regni caelorum a domino Ihesu Christo accepit, his in memoria et honore atque reverentia principis apostolorum dimisit."

<sup>19</sup> Buchner, Das Vizepapsttum, pp. 25-47. The belief that Buchner is making too much out of his evidence is expressed by Levison, in "Zu Hilduin von St. Denis," and in Levillain's review of Das Vizepapsttum in Moyen Age, XXXIX (1929), 85-95.





reading so much into the motives behind Hilduin's forgery, it is at least clear that he brought into being this association of Saint Denis with the names of Peter and Paul to enhance his own power and prestige in Francia. Another factor which Buchner points out as indicative of Hilduin's intentions is that of Stephen's consecration of a monastery of Greek monks in Rome in honor of Saint Denis. Furthermore, Buchner sees Hilduin's being called "papa" and his archchaplain's palace the "Lateran" as evidence of Hilduin's ambitions.<sup>20</sup> Hincmar was certainly a witness to the evolution of these ideas which sought to increase the autonomy of the Frankish church. In his Gesta Dagoberti Hincmar noted that "Saint Peter together with certain apostles and the holy and most worthy Denis deserve being both united in heaven and venerated on earth."<sup>21</sup> Hilduin's rather unethical use of a forgery to support the independence of the Frankish church finds an interesting parallel in Hincmar's use of the cult of Saint Remi for the same end.

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<sup>20</sup> Buchner, Das Vizepapsttum, pp. 72-75.

<sup>21</sup> Gesta Dagoberti, (M.G.H., Script. rer. Mer., II, 396): "ut quia eius [St. Peter] ceterorumque apostolorum simul et sancti ac pretiosissimi Dyonisii merita sunt juncta in caelis, eorum memoriae pariter venerarentur in terris." For the question of Hincmar's authorship of the Gesta (with some possible assistance from Hilduin), see Max Buchner, "Zur Entstehung und zur Tendenz der 'Gesta Dagoberti'," Historisches Jahrbuch, XLVII (1927), 252-274.

While discussing Hilduin's use of the symbolic content of hagiography to further his ambitions, note should be made of Hincmar's eventual position in Saint Denis as protector of the monastery's treasury and relics. Flodoard tells us that after 830, "he continued as a monk in the monastery without complaint as guardian of both the holy relics and the church of the martyred saints."<sup>22</sup> This must have been the new chapel, built by Hilduin and consecrated on 1 November, 832, which extended eastwards from the eighth century apse and crypt of Fulrad. This new chapel, initially in honor of the Virgin, was further dedicated to All Saints on 20 January, 833.<sup>23</sup> Another chapel dedicated by Hilduin was the first example in the West of an oriental architectural style known as the ecclesia triplex, and quite appropriately, was consecrated in honor of the Trinity.<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that Benedict of Aniane, who had played

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<sup>22</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Sique deinceps in monasterio sine querela custos sacrorum pignorum ecclesiaeque sanctorum martirum conversatus extiterat, . . ."

<sup>23</sup> Jules Formigé, L'Abbaye royale de Saint-Denis (Paris, 1960), pp. 169-172.

<sup>24</sup> De Miraculis Dionysii, II, 32 (Mabillon, Acta SS. O.S.B., III, 2, 323): "altare, quod Hilduinus abba insigni admodum opere sanctae Trinitati, inter alia quae multa et praecipua ecclesiae ornatui contulerat, statuit, . . ."

the leading role in the diffusion of the cult of the Trinity in the West, had come to Saint Denis personally to undertake a reform of this important royal monastery.<sup>25</sup> This indicates that Saint Denis continued to play a key role in the history of religious ideas in the ninth century.

The life of bishop Denis was the object of a biography, usually known by its incipit, Post beatam ac salutiferam, written in ca.835-840 by Hilduin and Hincmar and included in what is now called the Dionysian Corpus. The apostolicity of Saint Denis, the first bishop of Paris, had been partially recognized as early as the fifth century, but this biography went much further by seeking to identify Bishop Denis and the Greek Denis the Areopagite, the protégé of Saint Paul. Hincmar and his abbot did not hesitate to make use of patently false documents and to reject others which contradicted their "areopagite thesis." The attempted identification of the two Denises would greatly increase the age, apostolicity and therefore the independence of the Gallican church. Furthermore, it would encourage the view that the abbot of Saint Denis was its natural head.<sup>26</sup> It has been convincingly

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<sup>25</sup>Sumner McKnight Crosby, L'Abbaye royale de Saint-Denis (Paris, 1953), p. 19.

<sup>26</sup>G. Théry, "Contribution à l'histoire de l'Aréopagisme au IX<sup>e</sup> siècle," Moyen Age, XXXIV (1923), 111 ff. For the details of the construction of the Dionysian Corpus, see G. Théry, Études dionysiennes, Tom I: Hilduin, traducteur de Denys (Paris, 1932), pp. 10-22.

argued that Hincmar himself had a part if not the leading role in the composition of the Post beatam ac salutiferam, and consequently took part in the deliberate falsification of the evidence of history to broadcast a theory designed to enhance the position of his abbot and his monastery.<sup>27</sup> In 834, after his restoration to the Frankish throne, Louis the Pious wrote Hilduin, asking him to produce copies of some of the materials which went into the composition of the Dionysian Corpus. Consequently, in late 834 or early 835, Hincmar wrote the Miracula Sancti Dionysii, describing the miracles which took place under Hilduin and the four preceding abbots of Saint Denis. Shortly thereafter, Hincmar produced a second work, dependent like the first on a patchwork of reliable and false sources, which was entitled Gesta Dagoberti Regis. This had as its primary objective an exposition of the close relationship between the monastery of Saint Denis and the Merovingian monarchs, Dagobert I and Clovis II. There is also the possibility that the Gesta is an allegory based on the political events and especially the

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<sup>27</sup>For the identification of Hincmar as the author of the Miracula Sancti Dionysii, Gesta Dagoberti, and the Post beatam ac salutiferam, see Léon Levillain, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque mérovingienne, I," Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, LXXXII (1921), 58, 88-114.

revolts against Louis which took place during the years 830-835. In any case, these two works are understood to represent Hincmar's attempt to reconcile Louis and his abbot, Hilduin, after the revolt of 830, and also to encourage Louis to take a greater interest in this monastery which had for so long been close to the Frankish monarchs.<sup>28</sup> While both of Hincmar's objectives were admirable, certainly his free use of falsified documents to attain them was not.

When Hincmar became archbishop of Rheims, he carried with him the realization that the cult of saints could play an important role in his church, for reasons both religious and secular. Shortly after his installation, he obtained ordinances from Charles the Bald to continue and to complete the restoration and expansion of his church buildings. Part of this enterprise was the relocation of Saint Remi's relics in a new crypt which he was then constructing.<sup>29</sup> By making

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<sup>28</sup> Levillain, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis, I," pp. 71-114. Max Buchner, "Zur Entstehung und zur Tendenz der Gesta Dagoberti," Historisches Jahrbuch, XLVII (1927), 252-274, probably makes too much of the ambitions of Hilduin as reflected in the Gesta.

<sup>29</sup> C. Cerf, Histoire et description de Notre-Dame de Reims (2 vols.; Reims, 1861), I, 25-28. Flodoard, op. cit., III, 5 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 479): "ubi ad urbis huius totius tutamentum multorum sanctorum pignera recondidit."

a second relic of the wrapping which had held the saint's remains, he could be venerated in a specially designed crypt such as the one which had been constructed at Saint Denis, and at the same time be the object of a liturgy taking place in the main church.<sup>30</sup>

Since Hincmar as a young man had cooperated with Hilduin in the falsification of past history, what should be expected of his handling of the Vita Remigii which was composed during the last years of his life? The integrity of this work was hotly debated late in the nineteenth century by the German Historian, Bruno Krusch, and the Frenchman, Godefroid Kurth, but neither had arguments which were overwhelmingly convincing.<sup>31</sup> More recent, though, is the

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<sup>30</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., I, 21 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 437): "integrumque illud cum brandeo, quo prius repertum fuerat involutum, in argenteo locello transposuit. Sudarium vero, quod super caput ipsius erat, cum parte predicti brandei scriniolo reconditum eburneo Remis abinde reservature in ecclesia beati Dei genitricis Mariae." Jean Hubert, "'Cryptae inferiores' et 'cryptae superiores' dans l'architecture religieuse de l'époque carolingienne," Mélanges d'histoire du Moyen Age dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen, ed. C. E. Perrin (Paris, 1951), p. 355.

<sup>31</sup> Krusch places earlier suspicion of Hincmar's veracity on more scientific footing in his introduction to the Vita S. Remidii (M.G.H., AA., IV, 2, xxii-xxiv). Kurth managed to discover flaws in Krusch's logic and came to Hincmar's defense in "Les sources de l'histoire de Clovis dans Grégoire de Tours," Revue des questions historiques, XLIV (1888), 385-447. In his introduction to Hincmar's Vita Remigii (M.G.H.,

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the country at that time. The President talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the President of the United States, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

2. The second part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the Treasury at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the Treasury, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

3. The third part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Interior to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the Interior at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the Interior, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

4. The fourth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Navy to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the Navy at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the Navy, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

5. The fifth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the War to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the War at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the War, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

6. The sixth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the State to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the State at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the State, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

7. The seventh part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Education to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the Education at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the Education, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

8. The eighth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Agriculture to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the Agriculture at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the Agriculture, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

9. The ninth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Commerce to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the Commerce at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the Commerce, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

10. The tenth part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the Marine to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very long letter, and it contains a great deal of information about the state of the Marine at that time. The Secretary talks about the war with Mexico, and about the situation in the South. He also talks about the economy, and about the need for more money. He ends the letter by saying that he is very proud to be the Secretary of the Marine, and that he will do his best to serve the people.

is the realization that much of the material once considered mere fabrication in fact has some basis in liturgical, oral and hagiographic traditions.<sup>32</sup> The worst that can be said of Hincmar's methods in this case is that, feeling the necessity of bolstering the reputation of Saint Remi and the primacy of his diocese, he was not particularly scrupulous in his choice of materials or their synthesis.<sup>33</sup>

Although ignorance curtails any serious challenge of his sources, Hincmar clearly recognized the value of vision literature as a powerful tool in his various political struggles. His Visio Eucherii, one of the more famous ninth century examples of this genre, uses a series of events which took place under Charles Martel to reveal the fate of

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Script. rer Mer., III, 239-250), and in "Reimser Remigius-Fälschungen," Neues Archiv, XX (1895), 509-568, Krusch fully elaborates his argument, but as Kurth pointed out in his Clovis (3rd ed.; Brussels, 1923), I, 287-291, his attack is not wholly successful.

<sup>32</sup>F. Baix, "Les sources liturgiques de la 'Vita Remigii' de Hincmar," Miscellanea historica in honorem Alberti de Meyer, I (Louvain, 1946), 211-227. J. van der Straeten, "Saint Montan, ermite honore en Thiérache," Analecta Bollandiana, LXXIV (1956), 370-404. A. H. M. Jones, P. Grierson and J. A. Crook, "The Authenticity of the 'Testimentum S. Remigii,'" Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, XXX (1957), 356-373.

<sup>33</sup>Recognizing that the Vita Remigii's purpose is to provide a theoretical basis for Rheim's primacy is Max Manitius, op. cit., I, 344.



kings who rob church property. Hincmar brought this vision to public notice at the synod of Quierzy in 858, when he tried to forestall Louis the German's efforts to make use of both West Frankish church properties and episcopal support for his attack on Charles the Bald.<sup>34</sup> Although there is some doubt as to whether Hincmar was actually the author, the Visio Raduini nevertheless provided him with a theoretical basis for the primacy of Rheims and its prerogative for royal coronation.<sup>35</sup> In the vision, "Christ has given over to [Saint Remi] the continuing rule of the Franks." "He possesses the inalienable right of making their king and emperor."<sup>36</sup> Whether forged or not, Hincmar certainly was able to use hagiography to further his authority and that of his diocese.

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<sup>34</sup> Wilhelm Levison, "Die Politik in dem Jenseitsvisionen des frühen Mittelalters," Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit (Düsseldorf, 1948), pp. 240-41.

<sup>35</sup> Levillain, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis, I," 101, attributes the authorship to Hincmar, but without concrete evidence. He bases his conclusion on the fact that its effect is to discredit Hincmar's bitter rival, Ebbo, and justify Hincmar's coronation of Charles the Bald at Rheims.

<sup>36</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., II, 19 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 471): "En, huic . . . auctoritas est a Christo tradita Francorum perseveranter imperii. Donum semper inviolabila possidet eis regem vel imperatorem constituendi."

To pass off ninth century forgeries and manipulation of sources as merely hypocrisy would be to evade the the question of how such contradictory characteristics as religiosity and worldly ambition were so often united in the same person. This period saw a great expansion and elaboration of the non-doctrinal aspects of religion, which generally avoided the theological questions occupying the early Church. The arts, liturgy, music and cult of the saints represented an articulation of religious life along lines which failed to impinge upon questions of ethics and morality. Because Hincmar's world-view was not well integrated, such contradictory behavior seldom disturbed him or his contemporaries. And yet, as the next chapter will reveal, when religious ideals were applied to a specific area of activity, the change brought about within that area might well be profound.

Hilduin's religiosity is not only a way of explaining a characteristic of Hincmar's psychology, but it is also the description of a major part of the religious environment and training of the future archbishop. Important in this context were the various techniques for translating one's beliefs into an outward expression such as the veneration of relics and composition of vision literature, From

Hilduin, Hincmar could observe not only how the outward manifestations of religious life could satisfy the need to express theological truths and pious emotions, but also how these same activities could serve political objectives.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE REFORM OF SAINT DENIS AND HINCMAR'S RETURN TO MONASTIC LIFE

Thus far, the major aspects of Hincmar's earlier education and experience have been considered: his youthful contact with royal Frankish traditions at Saint Denis; his association with Hilduin, the chief intermediary between Francia's religious and secular government; and his training for royal service in the palace chapel. Not to be lost sight of, though, is his unmistakable devotion to the spiritual objectives of the Church, manifest even in these earlier years. Before his elevation to the archbishopric of Rheims, Hincmar's formal connection with the Church had been his membership in the community of Saint Denis. Already noted has been the fact that the great majority of the Dionysian monks were actually following a canonical rule, leaving the more spiritually motivated brothers to withdraw into a nearby cell at Mours. Furthermore, the discussion of Hincmar's training at court has made clear that neither his presence nor his chief interest could have been centered in Saint

Denis. Yet, certain events taking place both here in Saint Denis and in the larger sphere of political life drew him back into a deeper involvement with purely religious concerns and to an assumption of a monastic existence which he believed would be permanent. After some consideration of the background of the monastic reform of 829, our attention will be drawn to its implications for Hincmar's life and the reason for his intermittent association with the monastery of Saint Denis after 829-830 and ultimately his complete abandonment of monastic life.

Although the Benedictine rule as formulated by Benedict of Nursia was normative for Frankish monasteries, there existed a considerable variety in practice due to changed conditions and new religious attitudes. Chief among these was the recognition that to enter a monastery was no longer to renounce the pleasures of this world and labor for one's salvation, but rather, to turn away from the uncertainty and harsh realities of agricultural, military, and political life. toward a more regulated and often less burdensome existence. By Charlemagne's time, the monasteries had become centers of art, culture, wealth, and communications, for which reasons, entrance into a cloister would certainly be attractive for those of a gentle or intellectual nature. As commentaries

on the Benedictine practice reveal, the Carolingian monasteries had left far behind the austerities of an earlier age.<sup>1</sup> This may be a contributing factor in the monastic decline of the period, at least as far as the spiritual life was concerned, for as one contemporary noted, "There were finally many monasteries which at one time were regularly constituted, but indeed, a gradually cooling enthusiasm for the rule ruined order."<sup>2</sup> Another cause of spiritual decline was the increasing tendency in the Carolingian period for the monasteries to substitute for the Benedictine rule a considerably less formal manner of life based on the canonical rule of Chrodegang of Metz.

Charlemagne, who saw himself the leader of the Frankish church, recognized the great need for reform, but his initiative bore fruit in only a few houses. His son, Louis the Pious, was the first to visualize a program of general church reform as an essential part of his role as the realm's gubernator. The church's acceptance of responsibility for its own governance is perhaps reflected in

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<sup>1</sup>Sister M. Alfred Schroll, Benedictine Monasticism as Reflected in the Warnefrid-Hildemar Commentaries on the Rule (New York, 1941).

<sup>2</sup>Ardo Smaragdus, Vita Benedicti, 36 (M.G.H., SS., XV, 215): "Multa denique monasteria erant, quae quondam regulariter fuerant instituta; sed paulatim tepescente rigore regularis pene deperierat ordo."

Louis' dependence upon the monk, Benedict of Aniane (d.821), for guidance in religious matters. On 10 July, 817, there was called at Aachen a council of abbots and monks which made clear the intentions and methods of the desired general reform. To ensure his major objective, Benedictine unity, Louis ordered inspectors sent out to various houses to see to the actual institution of the reform as the relatively severe regulations of the Benedictine rule were not likely to be welcomed.<sup>3</sup>

Louis' especial concern for the reform of Saint Denis is indicated by his choosing Benedict of Aniane as one of the two inspectors. Louis later recalled: "For straightening out the monastic rule, we appointed two holy and honorable men, Abbots Benedict and Arnulf [of Saint Philibert, Hermoutier], who by God's will acting through us zealously entered upon this commission."<sup>4</sup> However, the reform ended in failure: "Those good and devoted but

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<sup>3</sup>Vita Hludowici Imp., 28 (M.G.H., SS., II, 622).

<sup>4</sup>Diploma of Louis, 26 August, 832 (M.G.H., Conc., II, 2, 685): "ad monasticae institutionis normam corrigendam duos religiosos et venerabilis vitae viros, Benedictum et Arnulfum abbates, constituimus, qui per nostrum a Deo . . . huic negotio studiose insisterent." For a general discussion of the reform of Saint Denis, see Levillain, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint Denis, II," pp. 35-43. This initial reform took place sometime between the Council of Aachen, July, 817, and Benedict's death in February, 821.

terribly naive fathers, diverted by the cunning and cynicism of the above mentioned monks and by their own simplicity, [carried out] not an intense investigation, but one less discriminating than was necessary. Those who followed the caprice of their imagination rather than virtue, cleverly threw off from their neck the yoke of the rule, loosened the harness of a regular life and endeavored to seek heaven by a broader path."<sup>5</sup> It should be remembered that this probably occurred shortly before the time when Hincmar entered the monastery as a canon.

Following the death of Benedict of Aniane in February of 821, little was accomplished by Louis the Pious in matters of reform. The major reasons for his ineffectiveness were the serious threat from invading Bulgars and, more significantly, a general revolt in the South and in the Spanish march by Frankish vassals united with Saracens.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., "Idem vero boni et devoti, sed simplicissimi patres supra memoratorum fratrum calliditate et duritia suaque simplicitate abducti, non studio, sed minus subtili et necessaria investigatione . . . illos, qui propriae voluntatis libitus non virtute, sed versutia quaesierunt ac collo de sub iugo regulae excusso loco disligationis vitae soluti ampliori itinere caelestem patriam petere sunt conati, . . ." Levillain proves, however, that the Benedictine Rule was not generally followed in Saint Denis until after the reform of 829.



Seeing in these events a reflection of God's disfavor, Louis published a letter early in 828 to all his bishops, calling a three day meeting for general penance and promising a placitum generale to undertake the reform program so strongly urged by his clergy and so long neglected. This letter probably resulted from the council of Aachen held in February of 828. However, renewed invasions of both Norse and Bulgars frustrated the holding of a placitum generale, and there followed only a placitum cum quibusdam fidelibus in the winter of 828-829 for the church's benefit.<sup>6</sup> It was here that the important four regional church synods for the year 829 were arranged, which signified the king's transference of the governance of religious matters to his bishops. If the regional council of Paris, on 6 June, 829, reflects the other three councils, of which the records have not survived, the church reform party suddenly found itself given a free hand to initiate programs long awaited. Wala's desire to reform the palace chapel, where Hincmar was then occupied, has already been discussed, and here the reform will be considered only in its relation to Saint Denis.

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<sup>6</sup>Hefele-Leclercq, op. cit., IV, 1, 54-60, straightens out the chronological difficulties in the events here described.

The unsuccessful reform of Saint Denis by Benedict of Aniane was on the minds of the bishops assembled in Paris, for Louis later noted that "an assembly having been held at Paris, [the bishops] carried out a vigorous and devoted investigation, and among other things, it was realized that in the monastery of the holy martyr Denis there was the need of a thorough-going reform and correction."<sup>7</sup> Much of the initiative for this concern came from Hilduin himself, for he had brought to Louis the Pious' attention the monastery's privileges, especially that of Bishop Landri of Paris, which specified the Benedictine rule as requisite.<sup>8</sup> Levillain has shown that the documents supporting the antiquity of the Benedictine rule in Saint Denis were falsified and that, as Hincmar's case makes clear, the monastery was following a canonical rule. Furthermore, there is some indication that Hincmar joined in encouraging this reform at Saint Denis.

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<sup>7</sup>Diploma of Louis, 26 August, 832 (M.G.H., Conc., II, 2, 684): "conventu apud Parisius iussione nostra habito strenua et devota perspicacitate tractarent, inter cetera visum est illis, ut monasterium . . . martyris beati Dionysii . . . magna emendatione et correctione opus haberet, . . ."

<sup>8</sup>Partitione bonorum (M.G.H., Conc., II, 2, 689): "Qui pius . . . privilegia perlecta seu firmationes ipsius congregationis perspectas, maxime autem privilegium Landrici religiose Parisiorum episcopi sollicitè consideratum, quem ut his regularis ordo inviolabiliter conservaretur, . . ."

Flodoard states that from the royal court Hincmar "worked as best he could in conjunction with the emperor and [Hil-  
duin] under the guidance of the bishops so that monastic  
order be restored to [Saint Denis], which for a long time  
had declined due to a worldly faction."<sup>9</sup> Hincmar must have  
known that a Benedictine reform of Saint Denis would prob-  
ably entail his having to maintain a status loci and return  
to a monastic existence. His abandonment of a stimulating  
court life is a good indication of religious sincerity.<sup>10</sup>

The Council of Paris decided to send a delegation  
of bishops to hold a synod at Saint Denis for the purpose  
of thoroughly examining the relevant documents in the mon-  
astic archives and questioning the monks themselves. The  
selected bishops, Aldric of Sens and Ebbo of Rheims, held  
the necessary synod with their suffragans late in 829 or

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<sup>9</sup>Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475):  
"ibique, prout potuit, cum imperatore et prefato abbate sub  
episcoporum auctoritate laboravit, ut ordo monasticus in pre-  
dicto monasterio quorundam voluptuosa factione diu delapsus  
restauraretur."

<sup>10</sup>The Council of Paris specified that monks should  
not desert their order nor live away from the monastery.  
Concilium Parisiense, a.829, cap. 28 (M.G.H., Conc., II, 2,  
630): "Conperimus igitur nonnullos praesbiteros et monachos,  
desertores ordinis sui, . . . Quod vero ab huiusmodi inli-  
cito actu uterque ordo, et sacerdotalis et monasticus, se  
cohibere debeat, . . ."

early in 830. They believed the monastery's charters to be in order, unaware that they were not in all cases genuine. However, when the monks cognizant of conditions prior to Hilduin's abbacy were questioned, the bishops were dismayed to discover that many denied the existence of the Benedictine rule. Perhaps made sceptical by Benedict of Aniane's unfortunate experience here, they discounted the monks' testimony and forced the recalcitrant ones to convert to a regular life and to confess their apostasy. A confirmation of the rule's introduction was written up in two acts (now lost), and the bishops left in full confidence that matters were settled once and for all.<sup>11</sup>

Hincmar's change from a canonical to the monastic habit must have been subsequent to the synod held at Saint Denis in late 829 or early 830 and previous to the revolt in the spring of 830 leading to Hilduin's exile. "So that he fulfill in deed what he was advocating in word, he submitted to a monastic way of life along with the others, chastening his body and putting himself into spiritual

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<sup>11</sup> Since a number of the immediately relevant documents have not survived, these events must be reconstructed from a diploma of Louis, dated 832 and the decrees of the synod held at Saint Denis, in 829-830.

solitude."<sup>12</sup> Hincmar later put forth in a letter to Pope Nicholas his sincere intention to permanently retire from public life, for he said: "The brothers in the monastery of Saint Denis, where I was nourished, changed to a regular life and habit. Fleeing from a worldly existence, I continued to live without hope or appetite for becoming a bishop or other prelate."<sup>13</sup> When in the spring of 830 Hilduin was sent into Saxony in exile, Hincmar immediately followed him there. Finding it necessary to obtain permission from his bishop confirms his having already assumed the more circumscribed condition of a monk.<sup>14</sup>

Although a palace clerk of little importance, Hincmar's ability and religious sincerity seem to have been recognized by this time. He was sympathetic with the aims

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<sup>12</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Et ut opere quoque adimpleret quod sermone suadebat, etiam ipse religiose conversationi cum aliis se subdidit, castigans corpus suum et spiritali subiciens servituti."

<sup>13</sup> Letter of Hincmar to Nicholas, 867 (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 1, 210): "Conversis autem ad regularem vitam et habitum fratribus in monasterio sancti Dionysii, ubi nutritus fueram, in illud saeculum fugiens sine spe vel appetitu episcopatus aut alicuius praelationis diutius degui . . . ."

<sup>14</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Processu vero temporis cum prememoratus Hilduinus abbas, . . . ablatis sibi abbatiis, in Saxoniam fuerit exilio religatus, iste [Hincmar] per licentiam proprii episcopi cum benedictione fratrum illum secutus est in exilium."

of the church reform party and, as has been noted, had already become an advisor to Louis the Pious. Furthermore, it was Hincmar who enabled Hilduin to return from exile. The accomplishment of this task also reflects his rising position. "[Hincmar] combined the nearer acquaintance of friendship with the great esteem which the Emperor and nobles had for him, so that he could work in his mentor's behalf up to the time when he was recalled from exile and restored as abbot of two monasteries."<sup>15</sup>

Any ambitious plans Hincmar might have had as Hilduin's protégé were frustrated by the revolt of 830. In addition, he seems to have sincerely undertaken a monastic existence which would have made any such political post unlikely. This revolt also had a disturbing influence upon Saint Denis, for during Hilduin's absence, the monks who had unwillingly taken the cowl joined in a conspiracy to protest the injustice and violence of their conversion. Their appeal to Louis may also help explain his readiness to recall Hilduin from exile, which probably took place in May of 831.<sup>16</sup> If

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., "Cui pro familiaritatis propiore noticia tantam Dominus apud imperatorem proceresque contulit gratiam, ut studere pro suo nutritore quiverit, donec ab exilio revocatus duarum fuerit abbatiarum prelationi restitutus."

<sup>16</sup> Schrörs, op. cit., p. 21.

Louis really felt that his condemnation of Hilduin had been hasty, he would have reappointed him as archchaplain, but this was not the case. In January of the following year, Hilduin was ordered to convene the bishops and reopen the case once thought to have been settled. Again, Aldric and Ebbo arrived to rummage through the monastery's archives, again the propriety of the Benedictine rule was affirmed, again the monks realized that resistance was impossible and they acquiesced in their new state. Confirmatory acts were written, and the monastery was at last freed of the internal discord which for many years had disrupted its life.<sup>17</sup>

However, if in 832 Hincmar expected to remain indefinitely bound to a monastic life within the walls of Saint Denis, he was not taking into account the fact that his talents were inevitably to draw him back into public affairs. In 833, only a year or two after the constitutional crisis had been settled in the monastery, he was recalled by Louis to put his talents to the realm's service.

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<sup>17</sup> Levillain, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint Denis, II," pp. 40-43.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BEGINNING OF HINCMAR'S POLITICAL CAREER

The discussion of the revolt of 830 suggested that Hincmar was a supporter of the church reform party, although his influence on the course of events was then negligible. Of the two factions which challenged Louis in 829-830, our attention has been drawn to the reforming element because of Hincmar's lack of political power at this time. On the other hand, Hilduin's motives for participation are perhaps best interpreted in respect to the Einheitspartei, which sought to uphold the constitutional arrangement of 817 in the belief that Louis was resorting to the old Germanic tradition of dividing political authority among his sons, rather than continuing the unifying title of emperor. In 833 there occurred a second revolt, and once again Hilduin showed an inclination to participate, although Hincmar discouraged him from doing so. In order to comprehend Hincmar's position in regard to this latter revolt, it is best to review the political factors which contributed to the mounting unrest of Louis the Pious' reign.



By an act of July, 817, Louis divided the realm into sub-kingdoms, subject only to the authority of the emperor. Accordingly, his two youngest sons, Pippin and Louis, were granted Aquitaine and Bavaria, and Lothaire was made an associate emperor with his father. On 13 June, 823, much to his sons' chagrin, Louis' second wife gave birth to a boy, named Charles (Charles the Bald), who was also to be given a portion of the realm when he came of age, as was decided at the general assembly of Worms in August of 829. Charles' lot was to include Alemania, Rhetia, Alsace, and part of Burgundy, which neither infringed on his older brothers' kingdoms, nor represented a block of lands in any way superior to theirs.<sup>1</sup> This unexpected turn of events did not substantially change the settlement of 817, since the lot of each son remained the same. Nevertheless, it provided a rationale for the members of the nobility who were jealous of their positions of power and prestige to join in revolt. United in the conspiracy were a number of counts from the realm's southern portion who anticipated that a collapse of Louis' authority would permit a greater autonomy within their own counties. Joining them were the nobles at court,

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<sup>1</sup>Halphen, Charlemagne, pp. 268-69.

who saw their influence threatened by the evident sway which the beautiful Queen Judith had over her husband and by the introduction of other members of her family (the Welfs) into important court positions. While church reform elements gathered to the standard of Count Wala, Lothaire found he could unite in support of his overweening ambitions the realm's various dissatisfied political factions.

In 829, Louis revealed the degree to which he supported Judith and her Welf associates by sending Lothaire off into Italy as its king and depriving him of the rights of associate emperor. The pressure for rebellion found vent in the sons' refusal to attend a general assembly at Rennes, which Louis called in April of 830, thereby signaling their defiance. Lothaire, again in possession of the imperial title, immediately had Judith put into the monastery of Poitiers and saw to it that Louis the Pious and the young Charles preserved only a constricted freedom of action (sub libera custodia).

Not to be put down so easily, Louis left Neustria, where his supporters were few, and called for an assembly at Nijmegen in October of 830 with the hope of rallying all available support to his cause. Among the first to be summoned

to accounts were Hilduin and Wala. "The emperor accused Abbot Hilduin, asking why he approached in a hostile manner, although he had been ordered to come openly. Unable to answer satisfactorily, he was forthwith commanded to leave the palace and spend the winter with only a few men in a campaign tent near Paderborn."<sup>2</sup> The following spring, after joining his abbot at Corvey, Hincmar wrote Louis the Pious and convinced him that his abbot be permitted to return to Saint Denis.<sup>3</sup>

With the leaders disposed of, the revolt had little chance of success. By 831, Louis was back in power and Lothaire was once again deprived of his imperial title. The settlement, made at Aachen on 2 February, 831, stipulated that after Louis' death, the title of emperor was to be dropped, leaving the sons as kings of independent realms in the old Germanic tradition.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Vita Hludowici Imp., 45 (M.G.H., SS., II, 633): "Imperator . . . Hilduinum abbatem culpans interrogavit, cur, cum simpliciter venire iussus sit, hostiliter advenerit. Qui cum negare nequiret, continue ex palatio exire iussus est, et cum paucissimis hominibus iuxta Patrisbrunnam in expeditionali heimare tabernabulo." Also, Thegan, Vita Hludowici Imp. (M.G.H., SS., II, 597).

<sup>3</sup>Historia Translationis S. Viti, 12, 14 (M.G.H., SS., II, 580), makes clear that his place of exile was at New Corbie, that is, the monastery Corvey in Saxony. Flodoard's account of Hincmar's role in the recall of Hilduin was discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>4</sup>Regni Divisio, 831 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 20-24). Halphen, Charlemagne, pp. 275-77.



The dissatisfied elements in the realm were not to be so easily dealt with though, and in 833 those most eager to see the empire continued joined forces. The church reform party, which equated Christian unity with that of the realm, supported Agobard of Lyon's vehement attack on Louis' revisionist policy.<sup>5</sup> Lothaire, who naturally resented being deprived of the imperial title and relegated to the kingship of Italy, proved himself an astute interpreter of the forces at work. He managed to convince Pope Gregory IV that his object in revolting was to restore unity and peace to the realm. Consequently, in the spring of 833, Gregory wrote the Frankish bishops, demanding that they heed their duties to pope and empire and not support Louis' unsettling policy. And then, "Gregory secretly left [Italy] and came into Francia with Lothaire to oppose [Lothaire's] father, and there was no peace afterwards in Francia, just as before."<sup>6</sup> Gregory's entrance into the arena caused consternation among Louis' supporters, and at the "Field of Lies," they deserted his cause. Although the rebellious elements were disunited

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<sup>5</sup>For Agobard's role in the revolt of 833, see Cabaniss, op. cit., pp. 84-90.

<sup>6</sup>Letter from Hincmar to Hadrian II (Sirmond, op. cit., II, 695): "Gregorius subreptus cum Lothario patre suo repugnante in Franciam venit, et pax postea in Francis ut antea non fuit, . . ."

by their own selfish expectations, Lothaire did manage to have Louis deposed. Such a drastic move was in need of higher sanction, and so the bishops of the realm met on 1 October, 833, at Soissons, and under the direction of Archbishop Ebbo of Rheims, pronounced that it was God's will for Lothaire to assume full direction of the empire.<sup>7</sup>

Although Lothaire's younger brothers, Pippin and Louis the German, had supported him in the revolt, they realized that they were merely working for the substitution of one master for another, and by February of 834, Lothaire fled their armies. Dropping Louis the Pious off for safe-keeping at Saint Denis, Lothaire sought to evade capture by racing south. On the following day, 1 March, 834, Louis took advantage of an upsurge of popular support in the Paris vicinity by having himself absolved of the sins of which his sons had accused him. "The people, having received the king, joined with the bishops and all the clergy in the church of Saint Denis, and devoutly praising God, they placed the crown and arms upon their king."<sup>8</sup> By the end of

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<sup>7</sup>Louis Halphen, "La Pénitence de Louis le Pieux à Saint-Médard de Soissons," A travers l'histoire du Moyen Age (Paris, 1950), 58-66.

<sup>8</sup>Nithard, Historia, I, 4 (M.G.H., SS., II, 653): Plebs, . . . rege recepto basilicam sancti Dyonisii una cum episcopis et omni clero confluunt, laudes Deo devote referunt, coronam et arma regi suo imponunt, . . ."

the year, Lothaire realized that his position was hopeless and resigned himself once again to being merely the king of Italy.

Looking now at the position taken by Hilduin and Hincmar in relation to these events, it is possible to understand more fully their motives and expectations. Either deeply concerned with Louis' inability to carry out a general reform, or, more likely, believing the rise of the Welf fortunes at court a threat to his position of power and influence, Hilduin took part in the first revolt and joined forces with the Einheitspartei. Since the revolt of 833 was not primarily concerned with religious matters, and furthermore, since Hilduin had been deprived of any basis of power at court after the first revolt, there is some doubt as to why he would become involved in the present one. Yet, Flodoard tells us, "when Pope Gregory came into Gaul and the Frankish realm had revolted from [Louis], [Hincmar's] abbot sought to draw him into his conspiracy against an adherence to the emperor, but was by no means able to lead him away from him."<sup>9</sup> Because there is every indication

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<sup>9</sup>Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Deinde quando Gregorius papa in Galliae venit regiones, et regnum Francorum a prefato defecit imperatore, voluit eum prememoratus abbas suus in obsequium suum contra fidelitatem imperatoris ducere; quod nequaquam potuit ab eo exigere."

that Hilduin did not at this time lose favor with Louis, Schrörs has come to the conclusion that Flodoard is here mistaken.<sup>10</sup> If this account is correct, however, we then have an early example of Hincmar's later attempt to counter papal influence in Frankish political life.

Hincmar was yet a monk at Saint Denis when on 1 March, 834, Louis was again recognized by his church. Later, he recalled how Louis "was restored to the Holy Church before the sepulcher of Saint Denis by the unanimity of the bishops and the loyalty of the people, . . . and just as we who were present observed, the royal crown was returned to the emperor in the church by the Lord's priests and by the acclamation of the faithful."<sup>11</sup>

Even after these moving events, Hincmar continued as a monk at Saint Denis without hope, as he informs us, of becoming a bishop or other prelate.<sup>12</sup> As already noted,

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<sup>10</sup> Schrörs, op. cit., p. 23, n. 57, bases his argument on the fact that Hilduin was commissioned in 835 to write the biography of Saint Denis.

<sup>11</sup> Hincmar, Karoli II Coronatio in Regno Hlothari (M.G.H., LL., I, 514): "unanimitate episcoporum et fidelis populi ante sepulchrum sancti Dionysii, . . . ecclesiae sanctae est redditus, et in hac domo, . . . per Domini sacerdotes, acclamatione fidelis populi, sicut vidimus qui adfuimus, corona regni est imperioque restitutus."

<sup>12</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Restituto postea imperatore, prout potuit, abbati



Hincmar was quite sincere in his willingness to retire from the world into a monastic existence, but events were not to permit him this choice. He relates: "Thence I was taken up with familiar labors, directing the assemblies of the emperor and bishops, as the single task assigned to me."<sup>13</sup> This return to the royal chapel must have taken place between 1 March, 834, and February of the following year, for at the latter date he was in attendance at the important council of Thionville.<sup>14</sup>

It was here that the bishops of the realm met to repudiate formally the accusation which Louis had been compelled to accept in October of 833 at Soissons. Reconciled once again with the whole church, Louis received the crown and completed his return to the full dignity of emperor. More significant, though, for Hincmar's future career was the decision taken at Thionville to depose Archbishop Ebbo

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suo prodesse studuit." Letter of Hincmar to Nicholas, 867 (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 1, 210).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., "exinde adsumptus familiaribus obsequiis praefati imperatoris ac episcoporum conventibus pro sola oboeientia mihi iniuncta . . . ."

<sup>14</sup>Hincmar, De Divortio Loth. et Tetb., Resp. II (Sirmond, op. cit., I, 579): "Unde nos, qui in eodem concilio fuimus, . . . ."

THE (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) (IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA)

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF JAMES EARL RAY, DECEASED

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER, JR., Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, et al., Plaintiffs,  
vs.  
JAMES EARL RAY, Defendant.

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER, JR., Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, et al., Plaintiffs,  
vs.  
JAMES EARL RAY, Defendant.

of Rheims, who had been the leader at the excommunication of Louis at Soissons. As Hincmar himself informs us, the diocese was then placed under the administration of a simple priest named Fulco.<sup>15</sup>

It is most likely that Hincmar was present at other important councils, although there is no certainty as in the case of Thionville. Flodoard states that after the restoration of Louis, "he continued thereafter as a monk," unaware of the fact that Hincmar had once again become a chaplain in royal service.<sup>16</sup> Hincmar expressly says, however, that he served "a few years" away from the monastery, and as we have elsewhere mentioned, had been a confidant of Louis the Pious for about eight years before the emperor died (840).<sup>17</sup> This implies that his service was far more extensive than can be gathered from Flodoard's account. Occurring at this time were two major councils which must have drawn Hincmar's close attention. The first was that

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<sup>15</sup>Hincmar, De Praedestinatione, 36 (Sirmond, op. cit., I, 324-25), describes the proceedings of the council in detail. For an analysis of this council, see Hefele-Leclercq, op. cit., IV, 1, 87-92.

<sup>16</sup>Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Sique deinceps in monasterio sine querela . . . conversatus extiterat, . . ."

<sup>17</sup>Letter of Hincmar to Nicholas, A.867 (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 1 210): "inserviens post aliquot annos [as director of the assemblies] monasterii quietem repetii."



of Aachen, in February of 836, where the church reform movement once again found voice after the preceding years of turmoil. Asserting the important role which the church had in guiding the realm according to the will of God, the council took upon itself the task of formulating a general reform of matters both religious and secular.<sup>18</sup> Such a role for the Frankish bishops was certainly far more congenial to Hincmar's way of thinking than having the pope undertake the initiative for reform or political guidance, as Gregory IV had done only three years before.

Since Hincmar directed the assemblies of the bishops and the emperor, it can be assumed that he was in attendance at the general assembly at Aachen in October of 837. Here, the young Charles, who was to become Hincmar's king in three years, received as his patrimony the lion's share of the realm, leaving his three older brothers only the kingdoms of Aquitaine, Bavaria, and Italy.

When Louis the Pious died on 20 June, 840, Hincmar apparently assumed that his position as ~~director~~ of the realm's councils had come to an end, for he returned to his old monastery, "as guardian of the saintly relics and the Church

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<sup>18</sup> Hefele-Leclercq, op. cit., IV, 1, 93-99.

of the Holy Martyrs."<sup>19</sup> Yet, the royal chapel represented the fundamental basis of continuity for the Carolingian monarchy, and it was probable that someone who had proven himself as useful as Hincmar would be recalled by the new king into his own service.<sup>20</sup>

In 876 Hincmar recalled having served Charles the Bald as confidant for thirty-six years, and therefore it appears that he re-entered royal service not long after Charles' succession in 840.<sup>21</sup> However, as was the case with most chaplains, the exact nature of his duties is rather uncertain. He himself said that, "after the death of the Emperor Louis, I labored in accordance with my limited ability by frequent trips, by word and writing, in the service of those who were at that time seeking concord among the king's sons."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "deinceps in monasterio sine querela custos sacrorum pignerum ecclesiaeque sanctorum martirum conversatus extiterat, . . ." Letter of Hincmar to Nicholas, 867 (M.G.H., Epist., VIII, 1, 210). That Hincmar was Louis' counselor for eight years suggests that he left the royal chapel not long before the king's death.

<sup>20</sup> Fleckenstein, Die Hofkapelle, I, 94-95.

<sup>21</sup> Hincmar, Iuramentum (Sirmond, op. cit., II, 837): "nec vos per triginta et sex annos hactenus requisistis . . . ."

<sup>22</sup> Hincmar, De Ordine Palatii, 1 (M.G.H., Capit., II, 3, 518): "post obitum etiam domni Hludowici imperatoris

One of the points of contention between Charles and Lothaire, neither of whom were altogether satisfied with the division of the realm made at Worms in May, 839, was the question of Ebbo of Rheims. A leading advocate of Lothaire's cause at the Penance of Soissons (833), he soon found himself under censure and deprived of his see when, at Thionville in 835, the leading clergy of the realm shifted their support from Lothaire to Louis the Pious. Ever mindful of the service rendered him by Ebbo, Lothaire made his first objective as self-styled emperor the vindication and restoration of Ebbo to the see of Rheims. Naturally, Lothaire violated canon law by not having even a single bishop of the Rheims diocese take part, resulting from the fact that Rheims lay entirely within the realm of his enemy, Charles the Bald.

The higher Frankish clergy, for the previous decade and particularly now that the unifying force of the emperor was absent from the western realm, saw itself as the chief agency working for peace and unity.<sup>23</sup> The church's sense of responsibility is clearly reflected in a series of councils held in November of 843 at Coulaines, in October of 844

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in eorum obsequio, qui pro filiorum eius, tunc temporis regum nostrorum, concordia sategerunt, pro modulo meo frequentibus itineribus, verbis et scriptis laboravi, . . ."

<sup>23</sup>Halphen, Charlemagne, pp. 307, 317-322.

at Yütz and in December of that same year at Verneuil. At the first, where presumably Hincmar was present, the leading churchmen gathered for the sake of peace in the realm and concord between the brother kings. The doctrine of the Paris council of 829 was more fully developed, by proclaiming the king subject not only to divine law, as expressed by the canons and church councils, but also subject to secular law.<sup>24</sup> How very congenial this was with Hincmar's later writings!

As was the usual Carolingian practice, important members of the royal chapel were given abbeys to provide them with steady sources of income. Just as Hilduin had been made the abbot of three monasteries in addition to Saint Denis, Hincmar was put in charge of Saint Germer du Flay and Saint Marie, near Compiègne. Flodoard observed that Hincmar continued as a monk at Saint Denis, "up to the time when he undertook to rule the monastery of Saint Mary, mother of God, and Saint Germer, by royal and episcopal order and that of his abbot, the Deacon Louis."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "donec . . . regimen monasterii Sanctae Dei genitricis Mariae det Sancti Germani regali et episcopali atque abbatis sui Ludowici dioconi iussione suscepit." Deacon



Schrörs feels that Flodoard's expression, "regimen suscep-  
it" does not imply that Hincmar actually became an abbot.  
However, it is more likely that Hincmar's remaining a monk  
at Saint Denis "until the time when" he took charge of Saint  
Germer suggests that he did indeed take on the greater re-  
sponsibility of abbot.<sup>26</sup> This interpretation is strength-  
ened by Hincmar's concern for the reconstruction of Flay.  
He wrote a letter "in behalf of the cell or monastery of  
Flay, given him while in the king's service, prior to be-  
coming a bishop. He restored the religious life of the  
monastery as best he could and reconstructed it, since it  
had been destroyed by some usurper."<sup>27</sup> The sincerity of  
Hincmar's religious motivation has already been suggested,  
but such a profound concern indicates that his relation to

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Louis succeeded Hilduin as abbot of Saint Denis in 840.  
Schrörs notes (p. 26, n. 71), that Flodoard should have  
written "Geremani" rather than "Germani."

<sup>26</sup> Schrörs, op. cit., p. 26, n. 71.

<sup>27</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 18 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 509): "Item pro cella vel monasterio Flaviaco, quod idem rex sibi, dum in ipsius ante episcopatum moraretur servitio, donaverat, . . . quodque a quodam invasore destructum re-  
struxerat et religionem, prout valuit, in eo restauraverat; . . ." In 831, the state of Flay was: "Oratorium virginum coenobium erat a sancta Angadrisma olim inhabitatum, nunc destructum . . ." (Mabillon, Annales O.S.B., II, 505).

Flay was closer than that of absentee landlord. In this same letter is found the information that shortly after Hincmar's appointment to the see of Rheims, in spite of his having title to the monastery for life, "the king unjustly tried to take it away from him," apparently without success.<sup>28</sup>

Another sign of Hincmar's increasingly important position in the royal chapel was Charles' granting him some properties east of Chartres to contribute further to his support. In a charter of 12 August, 844, Charles the Bald made known that, "wherefore, in our bountiful generosity, we hand over into the possession of the worthy priest Hincmar, certain of our properties located in the pagus Pincer-ais, which are situated in the places called Ad-illum-mansum, Frotmiri-villa, Toloniacas and Fraxinido."<sup>29</sup> Ever mindful

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<sup>28</sup> Flodoard, op. cit., III, 18 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 509): "et ut in vita sua illud teneret precepto confirmaverat . . . quod postea rex idem conabatur iniuste a iure ipsius auferre." Schrörs (op. cit., p. 26, n. 71), dates this letter from 845-849.

<sup>29</sup> Tardif, op. cit., no. 145, pp. 96-97: "quia venerabili viro Hincmaro, presbitero, largitatis nostrae munificentia, quasdam rex proprietatis nostrae sitas in pago Pinciacinse, in proprium concedimus, quae coniacent in locis, quorum sunt vocabula: Ad-illum-mansum, vel Frotmiri-villa, seu Toloniacas, ac Fraxinido; . . ." Flodoard, op. cit., III, 1 (M.G.H., SS., XIII, 475): "Rerum quoque ac mancipiorum possessionem quandam regia liberalitate percepit, quam

of his indebtedness to Saint Denis, Hincmar later "generously conferred" part of this property, "the town called Mansus-Adalingi, situated in the pagus Pinceraiis," upon Saint Denis for the relief of its sick monks.<sup>30</sup>

One aspect of the charter of 844 which is particularly intriguing is the reference to Hincmar as priest. Since he was to become archbishop of Rheims in April of the following year (845), would this not be an indication that he was well aware of his future elevation and was, in fact, by the fall of 844, going through the prerequisite steps for becoming archbishop?

The first test of this hypothesis was the assembly held at Verneuil in December of 844, where Charles the Bald called together the higher clergy of his realm in order to undertake measures to encourage a closer cooperation of the king and church in a general reform. It is significant that the presiding churchmen were Ebroin of Poitiers, Wenilo of

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consecratus iam presul monasterio Sancti Dyonisii, ubi Christo militaverat, per testamenti paginam tradidit."

<sup>30</sup> Confirmation of Charles the Bald of Saint Denis' property division, A.862 (Tardif, op. cit., no. 186, p. 118): "villam quoque quae vocatur Mansus-Adalingi in pago Pinciacinse sitam, quam Hincmarus . . . a nostra largitate in ius proprium, per regale praeceptum, consecutus fuerat, idemque per nostram licentiam fratribus in eodem loco informis benigne contulerat, ordine quo in praecepto a nobis ipsi largito continetur."

Sens, Abbot Louis of Saint Denis and Hincmar, since one of the major topics discussed was the urgent necessity of providing Rheims with an archbishop, so that the spector of Ebbo could be dismissed.<sup>31</sup> When only four months later, in April of 845, the council of Beauvais met to install Hincmar in his archepiscopal seat, he was once again referred to as the Priest Hincmar.<sup>32</sup> It seems likely then, that preparations for elevating Hincmar to Rheims extended back at least as far as August of 844.

The Council of Beauvais in 845 is often taken as the starting point in a discussion of Hincmar's career, but the foregoing should make it evident that his elevation was merely a new phase of a career already well under way. Lothaire saw Ebbo's vindication as a vindication of the

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<sup>31</sup>Concilium Vernense (M.G.H., LL., I, 383): "Ubi praesedit Ebroinus Pictavorum episcopus, et Venilo Senonum archiepiscopus, nec non et Hludouvicus sancti Dionusii abbas, et Hincmarus post Rhemorum episcopus, . . ." Ibid., p. 385: "obsecramus, ut tam foede lacerata ecclesia redingretur, atque iuxta venerabilium canonum constitutionem dignus ei celeriter quaeratur et praeficiatur episcopus, . . ."

<sup>32</sup>Concilium Belvacense (Mansi, XIV, 810-811): The eight capitulae which survive from this council are republished as capitulae 17-24 of the Council of Meaux, held on 17 June, 845 (Mansi, XIV, 822-24); and are a plea that the new bishop, his diocese and the churches within it are protected from unjust usurpations of their property. Hefele-Leclercq, op. cit., pp. 119-120, believe these capitulae are the work of Hincmar himself.

Einheitspartei and, therefore, of his right to possess the imperial title carrying with it the ascendancy over his younger brothers. Charles knew that if Ebbo returned to Rheims as its archbishop, it would have serious political implications, to say nothing of the discomfort of having an enemy at the helm of West Francia's principal diocese. Hincmar was well suited to fill the vacant post, for not only had he proven his devotion to both Louis the Pious and to the interests of the realm, but also, his legal experience and patristic knowledge made him a formidable enemy for anyone who might try to challenge his right to the episcopal chair.

What is remarkable about this point in Hincmar's eventful life is the element of continuity rather than a sudden rise to power. He had long been in royal service in a variety of functions and had risen to a position of importance even before 845. In the years previous to his election, he had busied himself with trying to lessen the points of conflict between the brothers; his election was itself a thread of that story, and the years to follow would be largely concerned with the matter of Ebbo and the peace of the realm. Even the necessity of having to administer a diocese was not a complete break with the past, for he had long dealt with episcopal matters at various councils

and more recently had been the head of two monasteries. Although it is true that his becoming archbishop of Rheims placed him at the very center of events in the years to come, his apparent leap from obscurity into public light is perhaps due more to the fact that after 845 his letters were carefully preserved in the diocesan archives.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

Although it is rather difficult to recount in detail Hincmar's earlier years, enough is known of them to estimate the experiences which contributed to the formation of his personality. Born probably before circa 807 into a wealthy family in the Boulogne area, Hincmar was exposed to an aristocratic ethos which found a reflection in his later activity as archbishop. Particularly in regard to matters of episcopal election and church property, he transformed the aristocratic desire for local administrative autonomy into its episcopal equivalent.

When he was between seven and fifteen, Hincmar was sent by his parents to be raised and educated as a canon in the important monastery of Saint Denis, near Paris, under the tutelage of Abbot Hilduin. This occurred sometime after 814 when Hilduin assumed the direction of the monastery. His experiences here were probably not especially religious, as a "worldly faction" had contributed to the spiritual decline of the house over the past few years. However,

Saint Denis possessed a rich cultural and historical tradition which impressed the young boy. Working in the scriptorium, he undoubtedly read many of the volumes contained in the library and was exposed to the rich literary, liturgical and theological heritage of the Carolingian epoch. More important, he also became aware of the unique mystique which surrounded Saint Denis. This was the belief that the association of the Carolingian house with the Christian Church gave the new dynasty the responsibility to lead the Franks as God's chosen people toward a realization of His will on earth. In the eighth century some of the important events by which the Carolingians rose to the head of the realm took place in Saint Denis.

Hincmar's noble birth and exceptional ability encouraged Hilduin to bring the lad to court sometime after 819 as his protégé. Here the boy was given a practical training in canon law in preparation for a career in royal service. By 828 he had become a member of the court chapel and a trusted advisor to Louis the Pious in matters where his legal and patristic knowledge would be of use. Although the chaplains were notoriously lax in their spiritual responsibilities, Hincmar was brought into contact with the leading minds of the age, such as Hilduin, Agobard of Lyons,



and the radical reformer, Adalard of Corbie. After 825 Hilduin rose to a position of considerable power and prestige, where he could influence the course of political events. In many ways Hilduin's activities and objectives at this time corresponded to Hincmar's later performance as archbishop of Rheims.

It appears that in 829-830 Hincmar responded to the new reforming spirit and gave his support to the church reform party. He reveals his sincere concern for the spiritual well-being of Saint Denis by working at court to promote its reform. When the monks changed over temporarily to the Benedictine rule, Hincmar returned as a monk to his monastery and resigned himself to a life devoted to religious matters. He avoided being implicated in the revolt against Louis the Pious in 830 which resulted in Hilduin's exile to Corvey. The respect which Hincmar had earned at court enabled him to obtain permission from Bishop Landri of Paris to follow Hilduin into Saxony and finally to procure the abbot's release from exile. The young monk returned to Saint Denis with Hilduin in May of 831 and in the following year observed the final settlement of the constitutional crisis which had disrupted life in the monastery for so many years.

Again in 833 the realm was shaken by revolt, and although Hilduin probably was again implicated, Hincmar remained faithful to Louis the Pious. Without doubt, it was with considerable joy that Hincmar saw the people of Paris region flock to the king's support and restore him to his royal dignity at Saint Denis in March of 834. Abbot Hilduin apparently regained the king's trust, for he received a royal commission to write a biography of Saint Denis, which encouraged royal support of the monastery and argued for the autonomy of the Gallican church. The latter objective was one which Hincmar carried with him throughout his life and it is interesting to note that he assisted Hilduin in the writing of this biography. Hincmar also undertook to write the Miracula Sancti Dionysii and Gesta Dagoberti, which enhanced the importance of Saint Denis by falsified documents. An important part of Hincmar's personality is revealed by his use of dishonest means to achieve worthwhile gains for his church, one of Hilduin's characteristics.

Although resigned to a monastic life, Hincmar's intelligence and reliability were much in need at court, and by February of 835, he once again undertook the direction of the assemblies of the realm's bishops, where his knowledge of canon law was in demand. It is certain that he

performed this duty at the council of Thionville in 835, where Louis was formally reinstated as emperor and absolved of the charges which had been brought against him.

Louis' death in 840 meant only a temporary interruption in Hincmar's service to the realm, for his return to Saint Denis lasted but a short time. During this period he was appointed guardian of the monastery's relics and of the chapel of All Saints. Louis' successor, Charles the Bald, recalled Hincmar to court in 840 to undertake various diplomatic missions to resolve the conflicts between the brother kings. This task not only reflects the high estimation which the realm's leaders had for Hincmar, but also the beginning of his political career. In recognition of his services, Hincmar received from the king two monasteries and some property for his support.

The see of Rheims was a serious point of contention between the rival kings and thus Charles the Bald would seek out a reliable man to occupy it. The one best suited to fill this archepiscopal chair was Hincmar. His proven loyalty, legal ability, and firm resolve made him an obvious choice, and there is some indication that he was chosen to fill this critical role at least a year before his elevation. It was as a priest rather than monk that he attended the

Council of Verneuil, where the vacancy in the see of Rheims was recognized to be in need of immediate correction. In April of the following year, at the Council of Beauvais, Hincmar was made archbishop of Rheims. He was now at the head of the West Frankish church and in a favorable position to influence greatly the course of its political life.

This study of Hincmar's earlier years has tried to show that his experiences, training, and personality made him the natural candidate for the key role which he played in ninth century religious and political developments. But more important, the life which he began after his elevation to Rheims in 845 was but a natural extension of a career already begun years before in service to Louis the Pious.

# ABBREVIATIONS USED FOR SOURCE COLLECTIONS

- AA. SS.: . . . . . Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur, . . . (70 vols.; Antwerp, Brussels, 1643-1940).
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## BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

The study of Hincmar's earlier years is justified if it reveals the origins of his personality. However, the paucity of source materials for this period in his life deters one from doing little more than to conjecture what elements of the social and cultural situation in which he grew influenced his later life as archbishop of Rheims. Such speculation, though yielding an estimation of Hincmar's personality, would be considered suspect by historians trained in the tradition of nineteenth century scientific history. For this reason, the two most detailed and comprehensive biographies of Hincmar briefly review the limited information which is available for the bishop's earlier years and make only a few casual and rather obvious generalizations about the probable influence of various situations in which Hincmar found himself. Heinrich Schrörs' Hinkmar, Erzbischof von Rheims (Freiburg, 1884) and Karl von Noorden's Hinkmar, Erzbischof von Rheims (Bonn, 1863) provide no objective criteria whereby the reader can distinguish which elements of Hincmar's early environment were influential. They do

not penetrate deeply enough to evaluate the relative importance of his earlier experiences. To such a synthesis of Hincmar's life no author has seriously directed himself since the appearance of Schrörs' fundamental work. Schrörs did an important service by bringing together what was then known of Hincmar's life and works and ably synthesizing the interpretations of Hincmar's life then current, but a comprehensive biography of this key figure of the ninth century has yet to be written.

As for the factual data relating to Hincmar before he ascended the archepiscopal throne, the most reliable source of information is the works of Hincmar himself. The standard source collection for his writings (though long out of date and not without errors) is that of Jacob Sirmond (Hincmari Opera [2 vols.; Paris, 1645]). The more recent Migne edition of Hincmar's writings merely transmits and adds to the errors found in Sirmond's volumes. Hincmar's conciliar writings are to be found in Mansi. The letters which Hincmar wrote before 867 have been well edited in the yet incomplete edition of the Monumenta Germaniae historica epistolae, volume VIII. Most of the remainder of his letters either found their way into Sirmond's collection if they are extant or were cited and quoted by Flodoard, the tenth century



historian of the see of Rheims. Unfortunately, Hincmar rarely mentioned the events of his youth, and little information regarding it can be gleaned from his writings.

Flodoard devoted a paragraph of his history to Hincmar's background, but his major source of information was the episcopal letters preserved in the archives of the cathedral of Rheims. The present study of Hincmar's youth has shown that Flodoard's compression of his material resulted in ambiguities, though he is generally a reliable source of information. His brief account of Hincmar's upbringing does serve, though, to confirm and enrich what little the bishop does reveal to us concerning his background.

Important in the present study was the nature of Hincmar's environment in Saint Denis and at court. For the former, there are a number of charters and other documents which permit the historian to reconstruct the constitutional crisis which occurred in the early ninth century and to evaluate daily life in the monastery. These documents have been edited by Jules Tardif in Monuments historiques (Paris, 1866). The life Hincmar led at court is more difficult to assess, but here the reform councils of the period yield some information. Hincmar's De ordine palatii, if used with caution, presents some idea of court organization and

Hilduin's important role within it, or at least, what Hincmar considered to be normative for the time.

Of particular interest among secondary works for a better understanding of the life at Saint Denis and at court are Léon Levillain's series of articles in the Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, entitled, "Études sur l'abbaye de Saint-Denis à l'époque mérovingienne," and Josef Fleckenstein's comprehensive investigation of the court organization, Die karolingische Hofkapelle (Stuttgart, 1959). Hincmar's cultural environment is much harder to evaluate, for little is known of education either at Saint Denis or at court during the reign of Louis the Pious. Works which were particularly helpful were Émile Lesne's Les Écoles de la fin du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle à la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> (Lille, 1940), Pierre Riché's Education et culture dans l'Occident barbare (Paris, 1962) and Josef Fleckenstein's Die Bildungsreform Karls des Grossen (Bigge-Ruhr, 1953).

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