

AGOBARD OF LYON: AN EXPLORATION OF CAROLINGIAN JEWISH-CHRISTIAN  
RELATIONS

by

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Agobard of Lyon has usually been studied because of his writings about Jews. This dissertation likewise began from a desire to understand Agobard's anti-Jewish writings, their content, motives, and impact. Approaching that topic from the basis of Agobard's whole corpus of writings, however, forces an acknowledgment that Agobard cannot be reduced to simply "Agobard and the Jews," although the subject clearly created a great amount of anxiety for him. Also, by beginning with Agobard's own works, this dissertation discusses him on his own terms first, without relying on the historiographical tradition which defines him as a Visigoth, a tradition ultimately found wanting. This dissertation effectively dismantles the model of Agobard as a Visigoth working in the Carolingian world, and replaces it with a model of Agobard as a Carolingian. As such, this study explores his anti-Judaism in terms of his immediate historical context and links it with his other anxieties and the Carolingian desire for a perfect, Christian, society. Doing so also opens the door for a re-evaluation of the traditional interpretation of the Carolingian period as the last "golden age" of European Jews outside of Muslim Spain. At its conclusion, this study argues that the Carolingians, by deliberately attempting to create a Christian society, however "well" they treated Jews in their own time, laid some of the ideological groundwork for the later isolation and persecution of Jews in Europe.

The introduction begins the exploration of Agobard's historical context by discussing the history of both Louis's empire and Agobard's Lyon. The first chapter provides a quick summary of his life and works. From there, the dissertation turns to its in-depth study of Agobard in the second through fourth chapters. An analysis of his main anti-Jewish work, *De iudaicis*

*superstitionibus et erroribus* in Chapter 3 is prefaced by a study of the character and possible roots of his anti-Judaism in Chapter 2. The last chapter looks at Agobard's other concerns, how they relate to his writings on Judaism, and finally how his great amount of worry around Judaism can help shape our understanding of medieval Jewish-Christian relations.

## Acknowledgments

I must first thank Professor John Corbett for suggesting Agobard to me as a potential thesis subject. Agobard has been a fascinating and fulfilling topic of study. I also thank Professors Mark Meyerson and Nick Everett, who kindly agreed to co-supervise. Professor Meyerson helped this dissertation keep some focus on Jewish-Christian relations. Professor Everett lent his expertise on the complexities of Carolingian Empire as it existed after Charlemagne.

Also needing thanks are my intrepid readers, who willingly slogged through the initial drafts of chapters and helped me get them into respectable shape before my committee even saw them. My parents in particular offered a great deal of support and served as sounding boards for many of the ideas developed in this thesis.

Finally, I owe much to my partner Aleda, for providing technical and emotional support (often both at once) throughout this entire process. Quite simply, this dissertation would not exist if it were not for her steady encouragement.

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## List of Abbreviations

<i>AB</i>	<i>Annales Bertiniani</i> , ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1826)
<i>ARF</i>	<i>Annales Regni Francorum</i> , ed. Friedrich Kurze (Hannover: Hahn, 1895)
<i>CCCM</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i> , various series:
	<i>Capit.</i> <i>Capitularia regum Francorum</i>
	<i>Conc.</i> <i>Concilia</i>
	<i>Epp</i> <i>Epistolae</i>
	<i>Form.</i> <i>Formulae Merovingici et Karolini aevi</i>
	<i>LL</i> <i>Leges</i>
	<i>LL Nat. Germ.</i> <i>Legum Nationum Germanicarum</i>
	<i>Poet.</i> <i>Poetae Latini medii aevi</i>
	<i>SRG</i> <i>Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum</i>
	<i>SS</i> <i>Scriptores</i>
	<i>SSRM</i> <i>Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1855)

## Introduction

### The Empire and Lyon

This study must begin with a simple question: Why an examination of Agobard of Lyon? The primary reason is his anti-Jewish work. His unusual approach to the subject, as well as the information he uncovered on medieval Jewish practice and belief, make him too important a figure to ignore as scholarship on medieval Jewish-Christian relations continues to evolve. If that were not enough, Agobard also participated in the rebellions against Louis the Pious during the 830s, writing several pieces in defence of Lothar and his brothers and losing his see once Louis returned to power in 834. Moreover, the corpus of Agobard's writings proves wide-ranging enough to allow a clear picture of what concerned him, as well as an outline of his personality. Examining his entire corpus also makes it possible to place his works on Jews within the constellation of anxieties that drove him to write. This examination, taken with new understandings on the Carolingian period and on medieval Jewish-Christian relations, in turn allows us to question some long-held conclusions about Agobard, particularly his supposed Visigothic origins and the depth of his anti-Jewish sentiments.

Even given these reasons, Agobard has not received much in the way of major scholarly attention. The last monograph on Agobard, which is the form best suited to truly understanding him and his context, was Boshof's biography of him written in 1969.<sup>1</sup> The intervening decades have seen scholarly reappraisals of the historiography of both medieval Jewish-Christian relations and of the Carolingian period,<sup>2</sup> which clearly have a significant impact in how Agobard's writings are interpreted. His anti-Judaism can now be considered an aberration,

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<sup>1</sup> Egon Boshof, *Erzbischof Agobard von Lyon, Leben und Werk* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1963).

<sup>2</sup> See for example: *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), which emphasised Carolingian dependence on and use of classical models. *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*, eds. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), set out to pull back scholarship from simply considering Louis a failed emperor who caused the demise of his father's empire, with mixed results. Elukin encouraged reorienting the discussion of medieval Jewish-Christian relations from a story of increasing persecution to one of resilience and continuity. Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart: Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

rather than one more step in the unrelenting deterioration of Jewish-Christian relations. His efforts on Lothar's behalf can now be placed in the complex politics of Louis's reign, instead of simply one more part in the inevitable dissolution of the Carolingian empire. However, Agobard has yet to be touched by this environment of reassessment.

Nor has the interpretive work on him really begun. The biographies of Agobard written by Boshof and Cabaniss remain the standard works on Agobard. However, the main purpose of their works was the establishment of the course of Agobard's life and writings, and they did not delve too much into the deeper reasons for Agobard's efforts. This is not to say that no interpretation has been offered by various scholars. Boshof noted both Agobard's disregard of practicality in some matters, particularly regarding Jews, and that the concept of *Verchristlichung der Welt* (the incorporation of all people into the *corpus Christi*) drove his actions.<sup>3</sup> Cabaniss, on the other hand, emphasised Agobard's rationality and common-sense approach to topics.<sup>4</sup> Cohen noted that many Agobard's concerns, including those about Jews, seem to be connected by an over-arching anxiety about disunity.<sup>5</sup> Zuckerman, for his part, linked Agobard's conflict about the baptism of Jews' slaves with his efforts to restore secularized church property.<sup>6</sup>

At present, no one has attempted to fully decipher why Agobard acted and wrote as he did. The examples given above only highlight some of the major concerns or themes in his works, not the reasons behind them. What drove Agobard to demand the return of former church property? Was the motive economic, as Zuckerman argues, or was there another, additional, reason? What type of unity did Agobard desire, and why did it matter to him? If all of his

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<sup>3</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 43-44, 127.

<sup>4</sup> Allen Cabaniss, *Agobard of Lyons: Churchman and Critic* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1953), 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 136.

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Zuckerman, "The political uses of theology: The conflict of Bishop Agobard and the Jews of Lyons" *Studies in Medieval Culture* 3 (1970): 49.



worries were somehow linked, has his place within the story of medieval Jewish-Christian relations been overemphasised?

This thesis sets out to truly begin the conversation about Agobard's motives and desires, and to set his anti-Judaism within the context of his time and his anxieties. The principle source for this investigation is Agobard's own writings, critically edited by Van Acker for the *Corpus Christianorum* series in 1981.<sup>7</sup> This thesis also seeks to mitigate the influence of two perceptions of Agobard that have affected scholars' understanding of him for too long, namely, his Visigothic origins and his virulent antisemitism. Scholars have largely ignored Boshof's warnings on both of these points to the extent that the idea of Agobard as an antisemitic Visigoth has become completely entrenched in scholarship, propagated by books and articles where Agobard is mentioned, no matter how briefly, or how centrally.<sup>8</sup> Agobard's supposed Visigothic origins in particular have led scholars to expound some interesting theories. Cabaniss, quite independent of any sources, decided that Agobard was a war orphan and refugee from Spain, and so always considered himself a rustic.<sup>9</sup> Albert saw similarities between Agobard's arguments against Judaism and the provisions in Visigothic canons.<sup>10</sup> However, I will show in Chapter 1 that the evidence of Agobard's Visigothic heritage is highly tenuous. Moreover, this entire thesis

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<sup>7</sup> *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera Omnia*, ed. Lieren Van Acker (Turnhout: Brepols, 1981). This study relies exclusively on Van Acker's edition, and references will thus give his chapter (where applicable), line, and page enumeration. Van Acker's edition came nearly a century after the last editions of Agobard's works, scattered throughout various volumes of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, though that series did not edit Agobard's *oeuvre* as a whole, but different editors concentrated on various genres, e.g. letters, poems, etc. Thus the only editors to look at all of Agobard's works as a whole were Masson and Baluze, who published in 1605 and 1665, respectively, with Migne incorporating Baluze's edition of Agobard's works into the *Patrologia Latina*. Neither Masson nor Baluze, according to Van Acker's own claims in explaining the necessity of his edition, used all of the available manuscript witnesses. Discrepancies also existed between the Masson and Baluze editions, giving Van Acker further reason for his own work (introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, v-ix, lxi). All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

<sup>8</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 30, 127; For examples of the scholastic entrenchment of Agobard's origins and antisemitism see Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 675; Paul Dutton, "Thunder and hail over the Carolingian countryside" in *Agriculture in the Middle Ages: Technology, Practice, and Representation*, ed. Del Sweeney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 114; Albert Castes, "Lyon et sa région au travers des écrits de l'archevêque Agobard, 814-840" in *Provinces, régions, terroirs au Moyen Age de la réalité à l'imaginaire* ed. Bernard Guidot (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1993), 15-16.

<sup>9</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 27.

<sup>10</sup> Bat-Sheva Albert, "Adversus Iudaeos in the Carolingian Empire" in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* ed. Ora Limor and Guy Strousma (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 138.

will show how Agobard's positions, on Jews and other subjects, make sense within his Carolingian context, making recourse to Visigothic precedent at best unnecessary, and otherwise misleading. As for Agobard's reputation as an antisemite, that proves a far more difficult subject to unravel. Yet I will argue in Chapter 2 that, as far as such terms are helpful, anti-Judaism provides a more fitting label.

This thesis begins with the larger picture of the empire. A sketch of the history of Louis's reign will provide information on the political issues and machinations of that time. The church's role in the empire and relations with the emperor comes tied in with this history. Of even greater importance for this study, a discussion of Louis's policies and attitudes towards Jews will give the background for Agobard's conflict with Louis on this matter, as well as the reasons for some of Agobard's works on Jews. I will then examine Agobard's immediate context of Lyon, beginning with Leidrad, Agobard's predecessor, and the work he did to restore the city and its church. This section also looks at some of the monastic institutions in Agobard's diocese and their relations with the episcopal institutions. What is known of rural Christianity at the time is also included to give a fuller picture of Agobard's church. Finally, the manuscript collection of Lyon provides some of the intellectual background of Agobard's writings.

Besides providing context, this information will begin to highlight how Agobard is best understood as a product and proponent of the agenda of renewal and reform begun under Pippin III and continued through Louis's reign. The conception of Agobard as a Visigoth has led some scholars to look for Visigothic symptoms or sentiments in Agobard's works. Yet Agobard's anti-Judaism, the trait usually used to identify him as a Visigoth, and the only one setting him apart from his colleagues and explored in depth in Chapter 2, proves no more Visigothic than Carolingian, and so does not deter from viewing Agobard as thoroughly Carolingian. In short, this introduction will provide the basis for the argument that Agobard can be best understood as a

product of the Carolingian reform efforts and as a Carolingian thinker in competition and conflict with other Carolingians.

### Louis's Empire

The traditional historiographic interpretation of Louis the Pious's reign paints him as the lesser son of a great father.<sup>11</sup> Basing their views on the rebellions of the 830s and the break-up of the empire following Louis's death in 840, most historians have declared Louis a failure. Certain sources from the time have encouraged this point of view, particularly those written by men active in Charlemagne's court towards the end of his life and reign. Dutton has suggested that "these men did not go gently down into their old age, they went complaining and would take their world with them."<sup>12</sup> Likewise, several of the major historical works from the period, including the *Annales Regni Francorum*, painted the eighth century as the golden age of the Franks, leaving the ninth century to pale in comparison.<sup>13</sup> Historiographically speaking, then, Louis began his imperial career already at a disadvantage, making the rebellions during his life and civil war after his death seem inevitable.

The historiographical "rehabilitation" of Louis began just over fifty years ago, though the efforts have not completely undone centuries of considering Louis a failure.<sup>14</sup> This more recent scholarship has argued, among other things, that it is important to recognize that Louis and

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<sup>11</sup> Staubach has helpfully sketched out the history and threads of this argument. Nikolaus Staubach, "„Des großen Kaisers kleiner Sohn“: Zum Bild Ludwigs des Frommen in der älteren deutschen Geschichtsforschung" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 701-21. See also Philippe Depreux, "Louis le Pieux reconsidéré? À propos des travaux récents consacrés à 'l'héritier de Charlemagne' et à son règne" *Francia* 21:1 (1994): 181-212; Heinz Löwe, "Die Apostasie des Pfalzdiakons Bodo (838) und das Judentum der Chasaren" in *Person und Gemeinschaften im Mittelalter*, ed. Gerd Althoff et al. (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1988), 161-62; Boshof, *Agobard*, 216.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Dutton, *Charlemagne's Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 156.

<sup>13</sup> e.g. *ARF* an.774 vs. an.814 in *MGH SRG VI*, ed. Friedrich Kurze (Hannover: Hahn, 1895), 38-40, 140-41; Rosamond McKitterick, "Political ideology in Carolingian historiography" in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew McInnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 168-69.

<sup>14</sup> Staubach, "Kleiner Sohn," 721; Depreux, "Louis le Pieux reconsidéré?" 181-212; also Dunbabin's review of *Charlemagne's Heir*, in *English Historical Review* 107 (1992), 116-119.

Charlemagne played very different roles. To Louis fell the task of maintaining an empire whose borders Charlemagne had stabilised and of continuing the reform of realm and church begun by his predecessors.<sup>15</sup> These scholars have likewise counselled a more cautious approach to sources too often taken at face-value and usually used to show Louis's inabilities to rule properly.<sup>16</sup>

Also, because the perception of Louis as a failure hinges so much on the dissolution of the empire after his death, we must remember that it is only through accidents of deaths and survivals that we can speak of a Carolingian empire at all. If his brother Carloman had not died so early into their joint reign, Charlemagne would not have had the entire realm to himself to govern and expand for such an extensive period of time.<sup>17</sup> Even after enjoying decades of such rule, however, Charlemagne divided his lands between his three sons and left the title of emperor to die with him.<sup>18</sup> Had all three sons survived, they would have each inherited roughly a third of Charlemagne's holdings as kings of kingdoms. Yet through the accident of his longevity and two of his sons' early deaths, only Louis remained to take as emperor all of the lands his father had conquered and ruled. By the time Louis died in 840 a single individual ruler had ruled over most of western Europe for nearly seventy years, that is, for far longer than anyone could remember. Taking the long view of early medieval political history, however, it seems that the unity maintained by Charlemagne and Louis is the historical aberration, not the divisions and wars which followed Louis's death.

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<sup>15</sup> Timothy Reuter, "The End of Carolingian Military Expansion." in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 391-92; Julia Smith, "Fines imperii: The marches" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume II: c.700-c.900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 170-71; Philippe Depreux, "Ambitions et limites des réformes culturelles à l'époque carolingienne" *Revue historique* 307:3 (2002): 722-25; Josef Semmler, "Renovatio Regni Francorum: Die Herrschaft Ludwigs des Frommen im Frankenreich 814-829/830" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 128.

<sup>16</sup> e.g. Matthew Innes, " 'He never even allowed his white teeth to be bared in laughter': The politics of humour in the Carolingian Renaissance" in *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Guy Halsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 134-35; Janet Nelson, "The last years of Louis the Pious" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 147-48, 157.

<sup>17</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, I.3 in *MGH SS II*, ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 445.

<sup>18</sup> *Divisio regnorum* in *MGH Capit. I*, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), 126-30.

## Politics

The factors just mentioned in no way mitigate the difficulties Louis encountered during his reign. The arrangement Charlemagne devised for his sons' inheritances fell within the Frankish and wider Germanic tradition of dividing a patrimony between all legitimate sons, which was a political necessity for the Carolingian family, the best guarantee they had of remaining in power over such a great amount of land.<sup>19</sup> Given the size of this particular patrimony, each son would receive enough land to maintain a royal livelihood and, perhaps more importantly, have land to grant to nobles in return for service, thus ensuring continued dependence on the royal family.<sup>20</sup> However, as both Pippin and Charles predeceased their father, Charlemagne had to summon Louis to Aachen in 813 and, once Louis had sworn to follow his father's precepts in ruling, crowned Louis as emperor.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Thegan recorded that Charlemagne's decision regarding Louis was met with universal approval,<sup>22</sup> and even though Louis was doubtless Charlemagne's son and only remaining legitimate heir, Louis's "Frankishness" was more questionable. Louis had been born in Aquitaine, and as a child had been crowned King of Aquitaine at his father's request by Pope Adrian I.<sup>23</sup> So, while born to a Frankish father and a Swabian mother, Louis was, by coronation

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<sup>19</sup> *Divisio regnorum* (MGH Capit. I, 126-30); Egon Boshof, "Einheitsidee und Teilungsprinzip in der Regierungszeit Ludwigs des Frommen" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)* ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 171; Karl Ferdinand Werner, "Hludovicus Augustus: Gouverner l'empire chrétien – Idées et réalités" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 18.

<sup>20</sup> Stuart Airlie, "Charlemagne and the aristocracy: Captains and kings" in *Charlemagne: Empire and Society* ed. Joanna Story (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 93-96; Janet Nelson, "The Frankish Kingdoms, 814-898: the West" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume II: c.700-c.900* ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 113; Matthew Innes, "People, places and power in Carolingian society" in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 437; Pierre Taubert, "The Carolingian moment (eighth-tenth century)" in *A History of the Family. Volume I*, ed. André Burguière et al. and trans. Sarah Hanbury Tenison et al. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 392.

<sup>21</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, c.6 in MGH SS II ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 591-92; ARF, an.814 (MGH SRG VI, 140).

<sup>22</sup> "Illi omnes exultando responderunt, Dei ammonitionem esse illius regi." Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 6 (MGH SS II, 591).

<sup>23</sup> Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, c.4 in MGH SS II, ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 608-09.

and by birthplace, an Aquitanian. He had been intended to be the Aquitanian king of Aquitaine and the western portion of the empire, not an Aquitanian emperor of the Franks. By the time he became emperor, Louis had been an established ruler long enough to have his own cadre of followers to reward with imperial *honores*. Nobles and clerics who had joined themselves to Charles or Pippin, or even to Charlemagne, faced the very real possibility of losing their places to Louis's "westerners." It was a risk every noble faced, yet that fact did not always make for gracious losers.<sup>24</sup>

Louis therefore spent a portion of his early years occupied with the transfer of power. He replaced many of his father's councillors with men of his own choosing, particularly men like Benedict of Aniane and Helisachar, who had served him in Aquitaine.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, he ordered all charters reviewed and renewed, and dispatched *missi* not only to execute his justice as emperor, but to actively seek out and correct instances of injustice. Such actions helped to establish Louis as a legitimate ruler, able to correct the mistakes of his father.<sup>26</sup> In this environment of ensuring his power and place Louis called two great councils at Aachen in August of 816 and July of 817, the first major events of his administration. They set the tone and the agenda for the early portion of Louis's reign. During these councils, Louis and Benedict of Aniane, his spiritual advisor, set out to reform monastic life, as discussed below. These actions showed that Louis intended to continue his family's oversight of ecclesiastical matters.<sup>27</sup> Also at the council of 817, Louis determined the division of the empire in the *Divisio imperii*. The

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<sup>24</sup> Airle, "Charlemagne and the aristocracy," 100-01; Janet Nelson, "Kingship and Empire in the Carolingian world" in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 71; Paul Fouracre, "The origins of the nobility in Francia" in *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations*, ed. Anne Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 18-20.

<sup>25</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians: 751-987* (London: Longman, 1983), 125.

<sup>26</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.10, 13 (*MGH SS II*, 593); Rosamond McKitterick, "Perceptions of justice in western Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries" in *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1997), 1084; Werner, "Gouverneur," 83.

<sup>27</sup> e.g. the preface to the *Admonitio generalis* in *MGH Capit. I*, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), 53-54; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms, 789-895* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 2-3.

tripartite division with Lothar as emperor over his brother kings was billed as “divinely-inspired,” and the best way to ensure the continuity and unity of the empire.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously the conception that Louis and his advisors, raised in the rhetoric of empire developed in Charlemagne’s court,<sup>29</sup> held of the realm was different than that of their predecessors. As Wallace-Hadrill explained it, the *Divisio imperii* “rested upon the most significant concept of the Renaissance, not yet elaborated but generally felt: namely, that the empire was a Christian unity, and more than that, was itself the Corpus Christi, indivisible and sacred.”<sup>30</sup> Pippin III and Charlemagne had both found themselves as sole rulers of their kingdoms, yet both chose to divide those lands between sons. For the third generation in a row, Louis likewise became a sole ruler. The changed and evolving concept of empire caused Louis to divided his empire differently than his predecessors had. Louis clearly named his eldest son Lothar as his successor as *emperor*, even crowning him co-emperor at the 817 gathering. As noted at the beginning of this section, Charlemagne made no provision in his *Divisio regnorum* for the continuation of his imperial title. By 817, those called to Aachen clearly considered the continuation of the realm as an empire with an emperor an important enough concept to break with traditional inheritance schemes by placing one brother in authority over the others.<sup>31</sup>

In the constant struggle for power and prestige this arrangement turned Lothar’s supporters into winners who had attached their hopes for gain to the “right” son. The supporters of Pippin and Louis the German who remained loyal to those two sons, while not exactly losers in this scenario, would have known that their prospects for advancement had just been capped, since their patrons would only ever “just” be kings. Though presumably lauded by clerics, who recognised that the safety of the church lay in the unity and stability of the empire, the *Divisio*

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<sup>28</sup> “. . . nutu omnipotentis Dei ut credimus, actum est, ut et nostra et totius populi nostri in delicti primogeniti nostri Hlutharii electione vota concurrerent.” *Divisio imperii* in *MGH LL I*, ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1835), 198.

<sup>29</sup> Nelson, “Kingship and empire,” 70-71; Werner, “Gouverneur,” 62.

<sup>30</sup> J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 231

<sup>31</sup> Semmler, “*Renovatio*,” 131-32; Boshof, “Einheitsidee,” 179.

*imperii* set the stage for a great deal of competition within the nobility. Supporters of Louis the German and Pippin had a vested interest in causing Lothar to lose favour with Louis the Pious, and perhaps even the imperial title. Lothar's supporters of course had to work for the exact opposite, while waiting for the elder emperor to die so that Lothar could assume the title alone. Meanwhile, those who had attached themselves to Louis himself would work to ensure that their patron stayed very much in charge of sons and empire for as long as possible.

It is tempting to read the agreement reached at Aachen in light of the civil wars following Louis's death. The kind of competition and factionalism among magnates it created probably increased the centrifugal forces which finally came to the fore in 840.<sup>32</sup> Ironically, then, the arrangement of 817 could have helped contribute to the end of the very ideal it tried to protect. However, while historians may be able to "see where this is going," Louis and his advisors clearly did not. Their ideals of unity, their inherited task of keeping whole the empire their fathers and grandfathers had built, drove them to break with custom, and try to guarantee through Lothar that the empire would survive for another generation.

Even in 817, however, the *Ordinatio imperii* had problems. The presence of Pippin of Italy's son Bernard as King of the Lombards complicated Louis's start as emperor and the neat division of power decided on in 817. Charlemagne had made it clear that the sons of his sons could inherit their respective divisions of the empire, should their subjects so desire. He had confirmed Bernard as king, despite his illegitimacy, when he had likewise crowned Louis emperor.<sup>33</sup> Louis himself also appeared to confirm Bernard's right to rule in Lombardy when he accepted Bernard's fealty soon after taking the imperial throne.<sup>34</sup> The *Divisio imperii*, however, made no mention of Bernard, but rather explicitly stated that Lombardy should belong to

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<sup>32</sup> Nelson, "Last years," 159, Smith "*Fines imperii*," 179; Régine Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VII<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècle): Essai d'anthropologie sociale* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1995), 141.

<sup>33</sup> *Divisio regnorum*, c.5 (*MGH Capit.* I, 128); *ARF* an.814 (*MGH SRG* VI, 140-41).

<sup>34</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.12 (*MGH SS* II, 593).



Lothar.<sup>35</sup> Bernard rebelled later that year, though there are no mentions of battles. Despite the lack of violence, Louis showed little mercy in dealing with the rebels. Following Easter 818 Louis called a council in which Bernard and his co-conspirators (including some Franks) were judged guilty and nearly all sentenced to death. The three bishops involved, including Theodulf of Orléans, a Goth and the presumptive author of the *Libri carolini*, all lost their sees and were sent into monastic exile.<sup>36</sup> Bernard was blinded instead of executed, but he died of the wounds three days later. At the same time, Louis had his two half-brothers tonsured and presumably exiled to monasteries “in order to mitigate discord.”<sup>37</sup> Louis was clearly prepared to defend his plan of succession and his imperial prerogative by every means at his disposal. He would ensure that only one branch of the royal family had access to royal and imperial power and titles.

The business of running the empire and maintaining the borders seems to have occupied the next several years. Of great import in later years, however, Louis’s queen, Irmengard, died not too long after the affairs with Bernard and Louis’s brothers. Louis then contracted a new marriage to Judith, from the Welf family of Bavaria.<sup>38</sup> Irmengard’s family centred around the area of Liege in the Frankish heartlands. In marrying Judith, Louis gave clout to an eastern frontier family, perhaps to help solidify the eastern border against the Slavs even while much of his military efforts at the time were focused on the western frontier, particularly Brittany. An increase in factionalism and conflicts between the two families of interest were perhaps inevitable, as Louis’s three sons belonged to Irmengard’s family and would have guarded their

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<sup>35</sup> *Divisio imperii* (MGH LL I, 198-200).

<sup>36</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.22-23 (MGH SS II, 596); Freeman had no doubts about Theodulf’s authorship of the *Libri carolini*. Anne Freeman “Scripture and images in the *Libri carolini*” in *Testo e Immagine nell’alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1994). Likewise, id., “Einleitung,” 15-23 (MGH Conc. II.2.1).

<sup>37</sup> “. . . discordiam ad mitigandam.” Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.24, (MGH SS II, 596); Nithard, *Historiarum libri quator*, I.2 in MGH SS II, ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 651.

<sup>38</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.25-26, (MGH SS II, 596).

privileges.<sup>39</sup> Of more importance for this study, Judith later became a lightning rod for the rebellions against Louis, including in Agobard's own writings on the subject.<sup>40</sup>

The next significant event came at the council of Attigny in August of 822. Whatever the reason, Louis chose that forum to reconcile with his forcibly-tonsured brothers, and make public penance for the events surrounding Bernard of Italy's death. Contemporary accounts seem ambivalent towards this act. Thegan barely mentioned the council at all, because he either felt it unimportant or unseemly. He, in contrast with the *ARF* and the Astronomer, placed the blame for Bernard's blinding and death with Louis's councillors, and showed Louis displaying remorse immediately following those events.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps, then, public penance at a general assembly over four years after the fact crossed the line for Thegan into conduct unbecoming of an emperor. The *ARF* recorded the reconciliation, the penance, and the promise to amend whatever Louis or his father had done amiss, without comment.<sup>42</sup> The Astronomer had a definitely positive outlook on the proceedings, and credited Louis with imitating Theodosius in accepting his penance.<sup>43</sup>

Scholars have developed a variety of interpretations for Louis's actions at Attigny. Some theorize that the penance proved the power of clerics to pressure Louis, while others think it was an attempt on Louis's part to make the Carolingian family more cohesive.<sup>44</sup> Some have seen it as an expression of Louis's imperial power.<sup>45</sup> It seems more likely, however, that Louis, having gained full and firm control over his realm, could afford to display some princely humility and generosity to those he had previously punished so harshly.<sup>46</sup> The Astronomer's comparison of

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<sup>39</sup> Nelson, "Frankish kingdoms," 115, Werner, "Gouverneur," 53.

<sup>40</sup> Agobard, *Liber apologeticus* I and II (309-19); Elizabeth Ward, "Agobard of Lyons and Paschasius Radbertus as Critics of the Empress Judith" in *Women in the Church*, ed. W.J. Shields and Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 15.

<sup>41</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.22-23 (*MGH SS II*, 596); *ARF*, an.818 (*MGH SRG VI*, 148); Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.30 (*MGH SS II*, 623).

<sup>42</sup> *ARF* an.822 (*MGH SRG VI*, 158).

<sup>43</sup> Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.35 (*MGH SS II*, 626).

<sup>44</sup> For the former, Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 45. For the latter, Nelson, "Frankish kingdoms," 115-16.

<sup>45</sup> Semmler, "*Renovatio*," 142.

<sup>46</sup> Mayke de Jong, "Power and humility in Carolingian society: the public penance of Louis the Pious" *Early Medieval Europe* 1:1 (1992): 31-32.

Louis with Theodosius would indicate that, at least to some observers, this voluntary admission of guilt served to enhance Louis's prestige. Such an act could have shown the gathered assembly that Louis (and thus his line) had regained the moral upper-hand after his questionable treatment of Bernard.<sup>47</sup>

It was a moral upper-hand Louis needed. While the timing of Louis's penance could seem random or contrived, an investigation of the climatological record reveals a possible reason for Louis's choice of 822.<sup>48</sup> The weather in the 820s began with two harsh winters in 821-22 and again in 823-24, with the coolness extending into very wet and occasionally stormy summers. Such disturbed weather patterns naturally had a detrimental effect on crops and herds, leading in turn to wide-spread famine and illness among the empire's population.<sup>49</sup> The Carolingians took great pains to show divine approval for their rule, particularly in their historiography, yet such a string of bad weather and the deaths it caused could hardly be interpreted as anything other than God's judgement of the people's, and particularly the ruler's, sins.<sup>50</sup> As such, Louis could have viewed Attigny as an opportunity to try and reclaim divine favour. Unfortunately for Louis, volcanic activity, perhaps even one long period of activity from a single volcano, caused the meteorological troubles of the 820s, and delivered another cold winter and stormy summer in 823-24.<sup>51</sup>

Regardless of what Louis (or his clerics) had intended by his actions at Attigny, the next several years passed quietly enough, despite another bad winter and subsequent famine in 823-24 and continued political manoeuvring both within and without the empire. However, a rather significant wrench was thrown into the cogs when in 824 Judith gave birth to a son, Charles,

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<sup>47</sup> Boshof, "Einheitsidee," 181.

<sup>48</sup> Michael McCormick, Paul Dutton, and Paul Mayewski, "Volcanoes and the climate forcing of Carolingian Europe, A.D. 750-950" *Speculum* 82:4 (2007): 892.

<sup>49</sup> *ARF*, an.820-21, 823-24 (*MGH SRG* VI, 154, 157, 163-64, 166-67).

<sup>50</sup> Innes, "Politics of humour," 132, Élisabeth Magnou-Nortier, "La tentative de subversion de l'État sous Louis le Pieux et l'oeuvre des falsificateurs" *Moyen Age* 105:2 (1999): 335; Dutton, "Thunder and hail," 122.

<sup>51</sup> *ARF*, an.823-24 (*MGH SRG* VI, 163-64, 166-67); McCormick, Dutton, and Mayewski, "Volcanoes," 883.

known to history as Charles the Bald.<sup>52</sup> Realising that his late-born son could cause problems later, Louis had Lothar promise to act as Charles's guardian and defender.<sup>53</sup>

Louis apparently felt that he could not leave Charles without an inheritance however, and so in 829 he shifted the possession of Alemannia and part of Burgundy from Lothar to Charles.<sup>54</sup> In doing so Louis undid the arrangement of 817 and gave up on the ideal of disallowing further divisions of the empire. All of the rhetoric of unity was not enough to keep Louis from such a redivision.<sup>55</sup> Although Lothar had agreed five years earlier that his father could give Charles any land he wished, the area granted to Charles nearly cut off Lothar's Italian holdings from his possessions in the Carolingian heartlands. This did not please Lothar. In 830 he rebelled with the aid of some of his councillors and his brothers.

While the redistribution of the imperial inheritance would certainly suffice to explain the rebellion, it may have only been a catalyst. During the winter of 828-29 Louis and Lothar, still co-emperors, met in Aachen in the face of military defeats, famine, and portents, including a lunar eclipse on Christmas night. They then issued a letter, ordering a general fast and regional councils to consider how the leaders and the people might appease an offended God.<sup>56</sup> This led to councils in Lyon, Toulouse, and Mainz, as well as the much better known council in Paris, all in the summer of 829.<sup>57</sup> While the acts of the three other councils did not survive, we do have the decisions from the gathering at Paris. Scholars have often pointed to that council as the beginning of 'the Church' placing itself over 'the State,' yet those arguments may miss the point entirely.<sup>58</sup> The acts from Paris are replete with lists of sins of the leadership, both lay and

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<sup>52</sup> Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.37 (MGH SS II, 628).

<sup>53</sup> Nithard, *Historiarum libri quatuor*, I.3 (MGH SS II, 651).

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, (MGH SS II, 652); Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.35 (MGH SS II, 597).

<sup>55</sup> Boshof, "Einheitsidee," 186; Suzanne Wemple, "Claudius of Turin's organic metaphor or the Carolingian doctrine of corporations" *Speculum* 49:2 (1973): 228.

<sup>56</sup> *Hludowici et Hlotharii epistola generalis* (MGH Conc. II.2, 599-601); *ARF* an.828-29 (MGH SRG VI, 174-77); Mayke de Jong, "Ecclesia and the early medieval polity" in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 129.

<sup>57</sup> *Concilia anni 829* (MGH Conc. II.2, 596-97).

<sup>58</sup> Magnou-Nortier, "La tentative de subversion de l'État," 331-65; cf. de Jong, "Early medieval polity," 129.

clerical, as well as prescriptions for repentance and correction. It was hardly a case of a triumphant and self-righteous Church snatching power from a sin-laden and ineffective State.<sup>59</sup> Agobard, apart from the councils, informed Louis that the cause of the problems lay in Louis's own sin of disregarding the agreement of 817, and warned him against following his newly-made plan of redivision.<sup>60</sup> We do not know if Agobard's suggestions had any audience or impact, but recent events clearly had Louis and his elites worried. It would not have been a stretch for the sons and their supporters to decide that Louis no longer had the moral command necessary to rule. A point they proved when they accused the Empress Judith of adultery with Bernard of Septimania.<sup>61</sup> If Louis could not control his wife, he certainly did not have the power to govern the empire.

One should not ignore the economic incentives for rebellion as well. Lothar's supporters, who gained the most from the 817 division, also stood to lose the most from Louis's redivision in 829, since Charles's inheritance came out of Lothar's. The desire to protect their own lands and wealth alone could have driven Lothar's men in particular to push for rebellion. A change in power would have also provided Louis's other sons and their followers with opportunities to expand their own holdings through an empire-wide rebalancing of power. If the Carolingian economy contracted slightly under Louis, as the property list attached to Leidrad's letter may suggest,<sup>62</sup> and if internal expansion were the only method remaining for the elite to increase their lands and wealth, the appearance of a fifth patron (Charles) with his own people to reward would have made intra-elite competition even fiercer.<sup>63</sup> The economic threat posed by the 829 redivision, coupled with questions about Louis's morality (which would have also impacted the

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<sup>59</sup> e.g. *Concilium Parisiense* (829) c.16, 25, 57, 91 (*MGH Conc.* II.2, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover: Hahn, 1908), 623, 628, 653-54, 678; de Jong, "Early medieval polity," 129-31.

<sup>60</sup> Agobard, *De diuisione imperii*, 247-50.

<sup>61</sup> e.g. Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.36 (*MGH SS* II, 597).

<sup>62</sup> see pp 44-47, though McCormick argues for economic expansion under the Carolingians, e.g. his *European Economy*, 659-60.

<sup>63</sup> Reuter, "Military expansion," 405; Stuart Airlie, "Bonds of power and bonds of association" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious* ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 200; Fouracre, "Origins of the nobility," 23.

economy through the loss of divine favour), made a rebellion designed not only to remove Louis and his men from power but also to prevent Charles from becoming another patron seem a risky but viable option to a number of magnates.

The events of 830-833 are difficult to outline clearly from the sources. Lands and titles were lost and retaken, nobles were forced into monastic life only to be released from it later, various parties and apparently the population in general switched sides, and the empire itself passed from the hands of Louis to Lothar and back twice. The sources disagree on whether Lothar or Pippin began the initial rebellion, but it did not take long for them to gather enough force and supporters to send Judith to a convent on charges of adultery and deprive Louis of his title. Louis quickly regained it, however, and tried to resolidify his position without being overly harsh to the rebels. He did not need a repeat of Bernard of Italy. Despite his efforts, relations with his elder sons and their supporters remained unsettled and Louis soon faced rebellion again. Once again his sons and their supporters deprived him of wife, title, and even the majority of his supporters at the “Field of Lies,” where the rebels convinced many on Louis’s side to join theirs. Once again Louis managed to regain his office.<sup>64</sup> Louis faced minor revolts and rebellions from his sons for the remainder of his reign, as have many older rulers with grown children. However, Louis not only managed to avoid major conflict and retain his title until his death in 840, but remained very active and in control of the empire’s military and diplomatic activities and cultural life.<sup>65</sup>

While scholarship tends to focus on the conflicts of Louis’s reign, particularly his sons’ rebellions, the political world Agobard inhabited was probably no more fractious than that of the previous generation, and certainly less so than the generation following. This is all relative, however. One should neither concentrate so much on the problems Louis encountered as to

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<sup>64</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.36-48 (*MGH SS II*, 597-601); Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.44-53 (*MGH SS II*, 632-39); Nithard, *Historiarum libri quatuor*, I.3-5 (*MGH SS II*, 652-53); *AB*, an.830-834 in *MGH SS I*, ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), 423-28.

<sup>65</sup> Nelson, “Last years,” 149, 157.

make him and his government appear powerless, nor emphasise his strengths to the point that one ignores the real potential for rivalry from (and within) the magnates to destabilise the realm. Particularly as Louis aged, despite his continued vitality, an older monarch posed problems not just in terms of grown sons eager to rule without their father's oversight, but also in the ruler's decreased ability to maintain the peripatetic schedule so necessary to early medieval rulership.<sup>66</sup> Even before that, however, Louis had to contend with first establishing and then containing his sons, and with a nobility that was open, fluid, and therefore competitive, and growing in power.<sup>67</sup> Louis managed for most of his reign to keep magnates' competitions from creating chaos, though such did surface occasionally, due to a lack of opportunities for external expansion, inter-royal clashes, or both.<sup>68</sup>

### *The church*

There was more to Louis as emperor than the rebellions that overshadowed his rule. As his father before him, Louis concerned himself with the reform of the church in his realm and the Christianisation of the areas outside of it. Broadly speaking, while Charlemagne had directed his efforts at the church as a whole and particularly at diocesan and parochial life, Louis concerned himself with monastic life. As Charlemagne had wanted to unify the liturgy in his empire, so Louis wanted to regularize monastic observance.<sup>69</sup>

Thegan's description of Louis's piety painted the emperor as monk-like. He recorded that Louis prayed every single morning, sometimes with tears, that he was well-versed in Biblical study, and moderate in food and drink.<sup>70</sup> His interest in monastic life would thus seem

<sup>66</sup> Dutton, *Charlemagne's Mustache*, 161; Nelson, "Last years," 149, 157.

<sup>67</sup> Fouracre, "Origins of the nobility," 20,23; Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, 130-41.

<sup>68</sup> Reuter, "Military expansion," 405; Nelson, "Frankish kingdoms," 112-13; Smith, "*Fines imperii*," 179-80.

<sup>69</sup> For example, *Admonitio generalis* (MGH Capit. I, 52-62); cf. *Concilium Aquisgranense*, particularly the *Institutio canonicorum* and *Institutio sanctimonialium* in MGH Conc. II.1, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover: Hahn, 1906), 308-456; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 59-61, 109ff; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 263.

<sup>70</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.19 (MGH SS II, 594-95).

natural. Yet scholars must remember that Thegan's celebrated portrait of a monk-king and his assertion that Louis "never raised his voice in laughter. . . never showed the whites of his teeth in a smile"<sup>71</sup> should be met with caution. Writing in the aftermath of the sons' rebellions, Thegan had a keen interest in distancing Louis from the various accusations, like those levelled by Agobard,<sup>72</sup> of moral laxity at the court. This passage served that purpose, as well as being a direct response to and contention with Einhard's equally-celebrated and more humanist portrait of Charlemagne.<sup>73</sup> Louis's sobriety as portrayed by Thegan "signified the application of practices of ultimately monastic origin to the household of the king, who saw his mission in explicitly Christian terms and thus shaped his court as a Christian community."<sup>74</sup>

That interpretation of Thegan's description provides a suitable summary of the impetus for Carolingian church reforms – they formed a necessary part of creating a Christian society. The reforms thus stemmed from theological ideas about the role of the emperor and the meaning of empire.<sup>75</sup> These ideas took several forms. For instance, justice (*iustitia*), following and enforcing laws, seems to have been a fundamental quality and requirement for kings.<sup>76</sup> Also, in the 820s Louis and his advisers propagated, through the Council of Attigny and capitularies, the concept that rulership was a *ministerium*, a divinely-ordained task for the ordering and salvation of society.<sup>77</sup> Finally, although the concept had not yet been explicitly articulated, by 817 the

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<sup>71</sup> "Nunquam in risum exaltavit vocem suam. . . nunquam nec dentes candidos suos in risu ostendit." Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.19 (*MGH SS II*, 595).

<sup>72</sup> Agobard, *Liber apologeticus* I and II (309-19).

<sup>73</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, III.22-26 (*MGH SS II*, 455-57); Ernst Tremp, "Thegan und Astronomus, die beiden Geschichtsschreiber Ludwigs des Frommen" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814-840)*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 696; Innes, "Politics of humour," 135-38.

<sup>74</sup> Innes, "Politics of humour," 139.

<sup>75</sup> Steffen Patzold, "Die Bischöfe im karolingischen Staat" in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 160-62; Mayke de Jong, "What was *public* about public penance? *Paenitentia publica* and justice in the Carolingian world" in *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la sede del centro, 1997), 897-901; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 124.

<sup>76</sup> Janet Nelson, "Kings with justice, kings without justice: An early medieval paradox" in *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1997), 809; McKitterick, "Perceptions of justice," 1079.

<sup>77</sup> *Concilium Attiniacense*, c.1 in *MGH Conc.* II.2, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover: Hahn, 1908), 471; Semmler, "Renovatio," 136-37; de Jong, "Early medieval polity," 123.



empire was seen as the *corpus Christi* and as such had to be properly maintained and controlled, in order to allow everyone a chance at salvation.<sup>78</sup> This concept in turn fused neatly with the idea of the Franks as the “New Israel,” even if that designation is not without some question.<sup>79</sup> Taken together, these impressions of the Carolingian confluence of politics and theology provide scholars with a backdrop to understand how Carolingian rulers and the clerics around them viewed the ruler’s role, both as the leader of the peoples, and as a protector of the faith. It was this understanding of rulership that informed Agobard’s relationship with Louis, and his repeated calls for the emperor to emend one situation or another.

Scholars have had to do a great deal of conjecture on the matter, since the sources themselves rarely offer a clear glimpse of Carolingian political thought. Jonas of Orléans, however, provided a contemporary job description for rulers in his *De institutione regia*, written in 831.

The royal ministry is specifically to govern and rule the people of God with equity and justice, and to take care so that they have peace and concord. For he ought firstly to be the defender of the church and the servants of God. . . firstly that there may be no injustice; then, if it does happen, that he in no way allows it to continue, lest he abandon the hope of those being sheltered, or leave the impudence of whomever acted badly; but let all know that if it reaches his notice that they have done something wicked, it will remain in no way uncorrected or unavenged; but according to the quality of the deed, there will be a way of just correction. . . He also ought to know that the cause, which he administers according to the ministry given to him, is not of men but of God, to whom what he has received for the ministry is returned to account on that terrible day of reckoning. And therefore it is necessary that he, who is judge and judgement, make the cause of the poor apply to himself and diligently inquire, lest perhaps they who are established by him and ought to act as his alternate among the people, unjustly or negligently allow the poor to suffer oppression.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Theo Oberndorff, “Lodewijk de Vrome’s affzetting in 833 en de religieuze motivatie der opstandige bisschoppen” *Aanzet* 8:3 (1990): 222; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 231.

<sup>79</sup> Mary Garrison, “The Franks as the New Israel? Education for an identity from Pippin to Charlemagne” in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 114, 161; Mayke de Jong, “Charlemagne’s church” in *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 113.

<sup>80</sup> “Regale ministerium specialiter est populum Dei gubernare et regere cum aequitate et iustitia, et ut pacem et concordiam habeant studere. Ipse enim debet primo defensor esse Ecclesiarum et servorum Dei. . . primo ut nulla iniustitia fiat; deinde, si evenierit, ut nullo modo eam subsistere permittat, nec spem delitescendi, sive audaciam male agendi cuiquam relinquat; sed sciant omnes quoniam si ad ipsius notitiam pervenerit quidpiam mali quod admiserint, nequaquam incorruptum aut inultum remanebit; sed iuxta facti qualitatem erit et modus justae

We see in this description the centrality of justice and the idea of rulership as a God-ordained *ministerium* described above. Although church reform did not receive an explicit mention in this excerpt, the conciliar and capitulary evidence clearly points to the royal direction of church affairs, with clerics' blessing, or perhaps even at their behest.

Louis's involvement with reform efforts began when he was still ruling only Aquitaine and brought Benedict of Aniane into his circle of advisors. Benedict had served in the military and household entourages of both Pippin and Charlemagne, but swore himself to the monastic life after a narrow escape from drowning. Benedict served in and founded several monasteries before Louis placed him in charge of all the monasteries in Aquitaine, and Benedict proceeded to instruct all of them in his interpretation of the Rule of St. Benedict. Once Louis became emperor he promoted Benedict as well, giving him charge over all of the monasteries in the empire.<sup>81</sup>

Benedict's influence can be detected in the reform efforts of Louis's early reign, particularly in the proceedings from the councils held at Aachen in 816 and 817. These councils, in addition to detailing the division and succession of the empire as discussed in the previous section, laid out the major objectives and structure for the first portion of Louis's tenure as emperor. In them he sought to order not only monastic lives, but also those of canons and canonesses. Adherence to the Rule of St. Benedict was of tantamount importance. As in Aquitaine, though, it was the Rule as interpreted by Benedict of Aniane and so included some aspects unfamiliar to the original Rule, such as the organization of private prayer, a practice Benedict of Nursia had left to the individual.<sup>82</sup> The success Louis and Benedict had in effecting

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correctionis. . . Scire etiam debet quod causa, quam juxta ministerium sibi commissum administrat, non hominum sed Dei causa existit, cui pro ministerio quod suscepit, in examinibus tremendi die rationem redditurus est. Et ideo oportet ut ipse, qui Judex est judicium, causam pauperum ad se ingredi faciat, et diligenter inquireat, ne forte illi qui ab eo constituti sunt, et vicem ejus agere debent in populo, injuste aut negligenter pauperes oppressiones pati permittant." Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione regia*, 4 in *PL* 106, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1851) 291-92.

<sup>81</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti Abbatis Anianensis et Indensis*, c.1, 29, 35-36 in *MGH SS XV.1*, ed. Georg Waitz (Hannover: Hahn, 1895), 201, 211 and 215-16.

<sup>82</sup> *Concilium Aquisgranense*, (*MGH Conc.* II.1, 312-464); McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 112-120.

these decrees remains questionable however, and based on both the lessening of some of the 816 decrees in the 817 decisions and the survival of other rules and customs, scholars suspect it was limited.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, not too long after this initial reforming effort, both Louis and his church had other issues, such as the re-emergence of the Adoptionist heresy and iconoclasm within the Empire, to take their attention from monastic reform.

Adoptionism had first worried Charlemagne and his court early in the 790s. It proved a source of concern both because it was a heresy *within* the Empire and thus threatened its continued divine favour, and because it had the potential to attract followers, particularly among the large Gothic population of Septimania who would have understood the Christological language of Elipandus and Felix, thereby creating disunity and disharmony in the Empire. As such, Charlemagne and his court expended a great deal of energy combating the heresy.<sup>84</sup> The one vocal proponent of Adoptionism in Carolingian lands, Felix had lost his see of Urgell in the Spanish March and was placed in permanent custody in Lyon by Charlemagne. Upon Felix's death in 818 Agobard found writings which proved to him that Felix had continued to defend his beliefs and so still needed to be refuted.<sup>85</sup>

The understanding of the nature of Adoptionism itself, as taught first by Elipandus, archbishop of Toledo and thus Primate of Spain, and then by Felix, was dominated by the interpretation of it given by Pope Hadrian I and Alcuin. Their interpretation had the fundamental flaw of not recognising Adoptionism as an organic outgrowth of *Western* Christological discussions, but rather considering it a mangled version of fifth-century *Eastern* debates. They thus viewed Adoptionism as a confused version of Nestorianism, and therefore attacked it for

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<sup>83</sup> Richard Sullivan, "What was Carolingian monasticism? The Plan of St. Gall and the history of monasticism" in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History, Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, ed. Alexander Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 258-59; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 113, 121.

<sup>84</sup> *ARF* an.792 (*MGH SRG* VI, 90-91); Cullen Chandler, "Heresy and empire: The role of the Adoptionist controversy in Charlemagne's conquest of the Spanish March" *The International History Review* 24:3 (2002): 508, 516; David Ganz, "Theology and the organisation of thought" in *Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 763-64.

<sup>85</sup> Agobard, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, I (74).

creating two Sons of God, one by nature, and another by adoption. However, the Adoptionism of Elipandus and Felix grew out of a particularly Spanish reading of Paul's hymn in Philippians 2:6-11, one emphasising the self-emptying of the Word, rather than the Frankish emphasis on the exaltation of humanity. Due to this emphasis on the emptying of the Word, Elipandus and Felix taught that human nature of Jesus could not be *naturally* said to be God, but it was God by adoption and grace. It is a subtle teaching, insisting in a proper distinction between the natures present in the historical man Jesus, and seems to have been completely lost on Hadrian and Alcuin, and, through them, scholars from the ninth century to the present.<sup>86</sup>

This confusion extended to Agobard's own treatment of the subject. In his *Aduersum dogma Felicis* Agobard offered a quick summary of the fifth-century Eastern Christological debates, and then gave some teachings of Nestorius so that his readers could see that Felix taught the same heresy.<sup>87</sup> Agobard did seem to understand that Felix taught that Jesus was only a "true Son" according to his divine nature, however, like Hadrian and Alcuin, he understood it as creating two distinct Sons (X.5-11). Indeed, while Agobard does not seem to have pulled directly from Alcuin's writings, he may have known and been influenced by them since Leidrad, along with Nibridius of Narbonne and Benedict of Aniane, armed with Alcuin's writings, had been charged with conducting a preaching campaign in the Spanish March to combat the heresy.<sup>88</sup> It would be an interesting course of inquiry to compare the sources and language used by Agobard in *Aduersum dogma Felicis* with those used by Alcuin in his various anti-Adoptionist letters and works.

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<sup>86</sup> John Cavadini, *The Last Christology of the West: Adoptionism in Spain and Gaul, 785-820* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 5-6, 31-38, 73-76, 105-06, 114-18.

<sup>87</sup> Agobard, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, IV, VI.15-VII (75-78).

<sup>88</sup> e.g. Alcuin, ep.200 in *MGH Epp IV*, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 330-33; Chandler, "Heresy and Empire," 524. Boshof claimed that Agobard did not use Paulinus of Aquileia's work. Boshof, *Agobard*, 62, n.29. Ganz claimed Agobard did not even read either Paulinus or Alcuin's works before writing his *Aduersum dogma Felicis*. Ganz, "Theology," 765.

Adoptionism was not the only heresy or heterodoxy to appear during Louis's tenure, and certainly not the only one to attract Agobard's attention. Claudius of Turin sparked renewed debate about the proper place of images in church life around 817, when he destroyed the icons he found people worshipping in his city's churches.<sup>89</sup> Like the issue of Adoptionism, Charlemagne and his court had struggled with the potential problems posed by icons before the question resurfaced under Louis. The decision of Charlemagne's court, encased in Theodulf of Orléans's *Libri carolini*, came very close to banning icons outright.<sup>90</sup> The *Libri carolini* famously remained unpublished after Pope Hadrian I informed the Franks of their mistaken translation of the acts of the Second Council of Nicaea, which the Carolingian court had understood as prescribing the worship of icons, and of his own, more positive, outlook on icons.<sup>91</sup> The Council of Frankfurt in 794, where Charlemagne had probably intended to have the *Libri carolini* receive conciliar approval, instead merely condemned the "new synod of the Greeks" (*novam Graecorum synodum*) for its alleged prescription of image worship.<sup>92</sup>

Despite the dim view of icons taken by the *Libri carolini*, the Carolingians as a whole did not completely hold to an iconoclastic line. One segment of the ecclesiastical elite kept open a positive place for images in Christian life, both as tools for educating the illiterate about Biblical stories and lessons, and as a way to excite an emotional (and hopefully pious) response from the viewers. This thinking was typified, somewhat ironically, by Jonas, Louis's appointed successor at Orléans following Theodulf's dismissal after Bernard of Italy's rebellion. So a tension existed

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<sup>89</sup> Claudius of Turin, *Adversus Theutmirum* in *MGH Epp* IV, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 610 ll 27-32; Wemple, "Organic metaphor," 225.

<sup>90</sup> Herbert Kessler, "'Facies bibliothecae revelata': Carolingian art as spiritual seeing" in *Testo e Immagine nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1994), 533-35; Liz James, "Seeing is believing but words tell no lies: captions versus images in the *Libri Carolini* and Byzantine iconoclasm" in *Negating the Image: Case Studies in Iconoclasm*, ed. Anne McClanan and Jeff Johnson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 107; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 222.

<sup>91</sup> Bronwen Neil, "The western reaction to the Council of Nicaea II" *Journal of Theological Studies* 51:2 (2000): 535-36, 549; Michael McCormick, "Textes, images et iconoclisme dans le cadre des relations entre Byzance et l'Occident carolingien" in *Testo e Immagine nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1994), 133-35.

<sup>92</sup> *Concilium Francofurtense*, c.2 in *MGH Conc.* II.1, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover: Hahn, 1906), 165; Roger Collins, *Charlemagne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 135-36.

within the court culture between those who agreed with Theodulf, including Agobard and Claudius of Turin, and those who agreed with Jonas, including Walafrid Strabo.<sup>93</sup>

Louis, then, rather than having the chance to respond imperially to Eastern icon “worship,” had to deal with the literal icon smashing of Claudius, one of his own episcopal appointees, and a church hierarchy somewhat divided over the role of images. Claudius’s actions, when considered with a letter of 824 to Louis from the Byzantine Emperor Michael II signalling a return to iconoclasm in the Eastern Empire, may have tipped opinion in favour of Jonas’s more iconodule position.<sup>94</sup> Thus faced with an Eastern renewal of iconoclasm, iconoclasm within the ranks of Frankish bishops, active missions to northern pagans (idol-worshippers), and an iconodule Pope (Eugene II), Louis and the council of Paris in 825, under the leadership of Jonas of Orléans, settled with a compromise of advocating neither the worship nor the destruction of icons.<sup>95</sup>

Although Agobard did involve himself in the debate over icons, and made clear his dislike of them, his *De picturis et imaginibus* leaves no hint of whether he considered icons problematic in Lyon. Amalarius of Metz, however, who received authority over Lyon during Agobard’s exile following the sons’ rebellions, did cause problems during his tenure in Lyon. The council of Quierzy in 838 condemned Amalarius of heresy, which presumably left the way clearer for Agobard to return to his see.<sup>96</sup> According to Florus, among other things, Amalarius tried to teach the clergy of Lyon that Christ had three bodies and thus the Eucharist should be

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<sup>93</sup> David Appleby, “Instruction and inspiration through images in the Carolingian period” in *Word, Image, Number and Communication in the Middle Ages* ed. John Contreni and Santa Cascani (Firenze: SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2002), 95, 100, 102-04; Kessler, “Carolingian art,” 536-42.

<sup>94</sup> McCormick, “Textes,” 145. A copy of the Latin translation is included with the *MGH* edition of the Council of Paris (825) in *MGH Conc. II.2*, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover: Hahn, 1908), 475-80.

<sup>95</sup> *Concilium Parisiense* (825), (*MGH Conc. II.2*, 478-532); Ganz, “Theology,” 775; McCormick, “Textes,” 148, 154.

<sup>96</sup> Florus, *Relatio de concilio Carisiacensi*, VII in *MGH Conc. II.2*, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover: Hahn, 1908), 781-82.

understood in three parts.<sup>97</sup> Florus led the attack on these innovations, while Agobard wrote about various teachings of Amalarius he found offensive.<sup>98</sup> Good Carolingian clerics, Agobard and Florus remained on guard and fought against any possibly heterodoxy.

Other controversies cropped up throughout Louis's reign, but the major theological debates of the ninth century, those over predestination and the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, did not come to the fore until after his death.<sup>99</sup> This constant theological activity points to more than simple literary showmanship in the culture of court competition. Carolingian rulers saw their role as "guardians of the correct interpretation of God's law and the correct cult,"<sup>100</sup> a rectitude that would, in turn, keep safe the king's own power. Louis, like other Carolingians, had a circular, almost symbiotic relationship with the church, one where he defended the church's orthodoxy while the church helped legitimate his rule by that orthodoxy.<sup>101</sup> This relationship would have engendered a culture of constant vigilance against any possible threats to that rectitude. Additionally, Louis considered ruling a *ministerium*, but one in which all members of his administration participated.<sup>102</sup> Those ideas alone gave impetus to the seemingly constant awareness and protection of the empire's own, apparently fragile, orthodoxy.

Even though the previous section makes it seem like Louis and his church walked in lock-step, that was not always the case. One issue in particular served as a point of contention between rulers and clerical leaders for centuries, including during the reign of Louis, namely, the transfer of church property to lay control. The Carolingians had built their empire partially by

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<sup>97</sup> Florus, *Opuscula adversus Amalarium*, 2-4 in *PL* 119, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 73-74; cf. Florus, *Relatio*, V (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 779).

<sup>98</sup> Florus, *Opuscula adversus Amalarium* (*PL* 119, 71-96); Agobard, *Contra Libros Quatuor Amalarii* (355-67).

<sup>99</sup> Justo González, *A History of Christian Thought. Volume 2* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 112-30.

<sup>100</sup> Mayke de Jong, "The empire as *ecclesia*: Hrabanus Maurus and biblical *historia* for rulers" in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew McNnes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 200.

<sup>101</sup> Nelson, "Kingship and empire," 61; Chandler, "Heresy and empire," 507, 516-17.

<sup>102</sup> *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines* (825) in *MGH Capit.* I, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), 303-07; Semmler, "*Renovatio*," 136.

making grants of land to loyal followers, or those they wished to make loyal, both lay and clerical.<sup>103</sup> What the rulers granted, they could, and did, take away. The Carolingian family was not the first to build coalitions through land-grants, nor was it the first to do so with land held by church establishments. Already in the sixth century, the church in Gaul felt the need to defend itself through canons ruling against anyone who alienated church property.<sup>104</sup> Agobard, perhaps trying to soften his statement at Attigny, blamed Louis's predecessors rather than Louis himself for taking church property in order to reward lay followers.<sup>105</sup> Synods throughout not only Louis's reign but the ninth century criticized the practice. Among later councils, both those at Ingleheim in 826 and Paris in 829 passed canons disapproving of alienation.<sup>106</sup> The repeated calls against it seem to have been only slightly effective. Louis did stop the practice of giving church lands to laity in return for rent paid to the church, which in earlier times had been used to break up the holdings of aristocratic bishops while theoretically not depriving the churches themselves of all of the revenue. However, no ruler could ignore the wealth of land held by churches, and so the granting of church lands in a way similar to other honours and rewards continued.<sup>107</sup>

Agobard's interest in the subject probably went beyond the principle of church rights. A fragment attached to Leidrad's letter to Charlemagne, detailing his progress in improving the church at Lyon, gave the property holdings of three Lyon archbishops and some of the Lyon churches. It seems to indicate that the property belonging to the archbishop dropped significantly from Leidrad to Agobard, from 727 vested colonies and thirty-three *absas* to forty-

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<sup>103</sup> Nelson, "Frankish kingdoms," 110; Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, 110-11.

<sup>104</sup> e.g. *Concilium Aurelianense* (549) c.13 (de Clerq, 152).

<sup>105</sup> Agobard, *De dispensatione*, IV.40-46 (123).

<sup>106</sup> *Concilium Ingelheimense*, c.1 in *MGH Conc. II.2*, ed. Albert Werminghoff (Hannover: Hahn, 1908), 551; *Concilium Parisiense* (829), c.15-18 (*MGH Conc. II.2*, 622-25); Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 294.

<sup>107</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 122; Susan Reynolds, *Fiefs and Vassals: The Medieval Evidence Reinterpreted* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 89.



four vested colonies and four *absas*.<sup>108</sup> Should those numbers be accurate, and there is no guarantee that they are, as will be discussed towards the end of this chapter, they would represent an incredible reversal of fiduciary fortune for the see of Lyon. If some of that property had been lost as payment to Louis's lay followers, that alone could certainly explain why Agobard pressed for their return.

Although scholars sometimes overlook the ecclesiastical activities during Louis's reign in favour of the controversies of his father (Adoptionism and iconoclasm) and his son Charles the Bald (predestination and the Eucharist), the church clearly remained active and on the alert for potential problems during the nearly three decades of Louis's rule. Monastic reform, the defence of orthodoxy, and the Christian definition of empire all continued and evolved. Agobard of course remained involved, in writing certainly but probably also in person, with the ecclesiastical issues of the day. He even created a few, by alerting Louis and his court to the continued Adoptionist beliefs of Felix, and in his argument with Fridugis, abbot of Saint Martin of Tours, over the correct method to understand the Scriptures.<sup>109</sup>

### *Jews in the Empire*

While an understanding of the broad brush-strokes of the political and ecclesiastical world of Agobard and the Carolingians is necessary, of tantamount importance to this study is an understanding of the place Jews had in the empire. How Agobard compared with the anti-Jewish attitudes and writings of his clerical colleagues will be explored in Chapter 2. This introduction, therefore, considers the secular attitudes and policies towards Jews as revealed in Agobard's conflict with Louis about the Jewish community in Lyon. Since the conflict started as one

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<sup>108</sup> Leidrad, fragment to *Summo Carolo imperatori* (Epistolae variorum, 30) in *MGH Epp* IV ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 544; see pp. 44-47 for discussion.

<sup>109</sup> Agobard, *Aduersum dogma Felicis* (73-111); id., *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi* (283-300).

almost directly between Agobard and Louis, the emperor's own thoughts about Jews must be explored. What, then, can be known about Louis and the Jews?

The short answer is – not that much. The only sources on the subject from Louis himself are the so-called “Jewish charters,” which granted protection to certain Jewish merchants and Jews who had business with the palace, and all issued between 822 and 827, the very years of his conflict with Agobard about Jews.<sup>110</sup> In many ways the charters are similar to the others from Louis: address to the parties concerned, name and usually place of origin of the person receiving the charter, delineation of protections, and injunction against breaking the protections. The “Jewish charters” seem so ordinary that McCormick offered one of them as the template for all charters to merchants, and Zeumer entitled it *Praeceptum negotiatorum* when he edited it for the *MGH*.<sup>111</sup>

What seems to be unique about these “Jewish charters” however, is the protection they granted against having the merchant's slaves converted to Christianity without his permission. In the first charter containing this injunction, issued for a Rabbi Domatus and his nephew Samuel before 825, Louis addressed a wide range of those in authority, beginning with all bishops, and stated:

“These same Jews have also advised our highness about some people who, contrary to the Christian faith, persuade the slaves of the Hebrews to defy their masters under the authority of the Christian religion and to be baptised, or rather, they persuade them to be baptised in order that they may be free from the slavery of their masters. The sacred canons in no way establish this, on the contrary, they judge that those doing such things ought to be thrust away by the sentence of anathema. Therefore we wish, and you may consider it decided, that neither you presume to do this anymore to the afore-said Hebrews, nor allow those under you to do this to any, because anyone who has committed this and it is reported to us, will not be able to escape without danger to himself and the loss of his property.”<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup> The charters are no.30-32, 37, and 52 in *MGH Form.*, 309-11, 314-15, 325.

<sup>111</sup> *Praeceptum negotiatorum* in *MGH Form.*, no.32, ed. Karl Zeumer (Hannover: Hahn, 1882), 314-15; McCormick, *European Economy*, 666-67.

<sup>112</sup> “Suggesterunt etiam iidem Iudei celsitudini nostre de quibusdam hominibus, qui contra christianam religionem suadent mancipia Hebreorum sub autentu christiane religionis contemnere dominos suos et baptisari, vel potius persuadent illis, ut baptisentur, ut a servitio dominorum suorum liberentur; quod nequaquam sacri canones

Louis repeated the injunction in one other charter, likewise addressed to a wide variety of those in authority and dated before 825. He issued this second charter on behalf of David, Joseph, and their associates, Jews of Lyon. However, instead of giving the full reason for the ban on baptising Jews' slaves without the master's permission, Louis simply gave the ban itself.<sup>113</sup> The ban may have in fact been effective. Louis issued the last "Jewish charter," again a charter of protection for a merchant, in 828 on behalf of Abraham of Saragossa, and did not mention the ban at all, despite Abraham's status as a slave-trader.<sup>114</sup>

The ban, even with its apparently short life-span, and its relation to the conflict with Agobard proves interesting. The dating of the charters and Agobard's works cannot be determined precisely enough to know with certainty which pieces came in response to what particular action, or to establish an accurate timeline of events. However, we know from Agobard himself that a charter from Louis prompted *Contra praeceptum impium de baptismo iudaicorum mancipiorum*, since Agobard confessed to not believing that the order had actually come from Louis.<sup>115</sup> Van Acker gave the *Praeceptum Iudaeorum*, that is, the charter issued to Rabbi Domatus and Samuel before 825, and containing the reason for disallowing the baptism of Jews' slaves without the master's permission, as the charter to which Agobard referred. However, the information Agobard gave about the charter does not necessarily support such a conclusion, in fact, I believe it much more likely that Agobard reacted to the charter granted to David and Joseph sometime between 825 and 828. Agobard only stated that the Jews passed around a charter ordering "that no-one may baptise a Jewish slave without the permission of his

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constituunt, immo talia perpetrantes districta anathematis sententia feriendos diiudicant; et ideo volumus, ut neque vos ipsi praedictis Hebreis hoc ulterius facere praesumatis neque iuniores vestros ullis facere permittatis certumque teneatis, quia, quicumque hoc perpetraverit, et ad nos delatum fuerit, quod absque sui periculo et rerum suarum damno evadere non poterit." *Praeceptum Iudaeorum* in *MGH Form.*, no.30, ed. Karl Zeumer (Hannover: Hahn, 1882), 309.

<sup>113</sup> *MGH Form.*, no.31 ed. Karl Zeumer (Hannover: Hahn, 1882), 310.

<sup>114</sup> *MGH Form.*, no.52, 325.

<sup>115</sup> Agobard, *Contra praeceptum impium*, 19-23 (185).

master.”<sup>116</sup> That language is much more reminiscent of the ban as given in the charter granted to David and Joseph<sup>117</sup> than the charter granted to Rabbi Domatus and Samuel, as given in the text above. Furthermore, the charter specifically named David and Joseph as residents of Lyon, while the home of Rabbi Domatus and Samuel was not given. Also, it could be argued that if Agobard had been reacting to the *Praeceptum Iudaeorum*, with its canonical backing for the baptismal ban, he would have responded with canonical support for his position immediately, rather than leaving that evidence for *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*, and relying instead on apostolic precedent in *Contra praeceptum impium*.<sup>118</sup>

Accepting this chain of events, that the charter to David and Joseph prompted Agobard’s *Contra praeceptum impium*, leaves scholars with a question as to whose actions prompted the *Praeceptum Iudaeorum*. Agobard could have, since he had written to the palace clerics Adalhard, Wala, and Helisachar inquiring into what he could do about the slaves of Jews requesting baptism.<sup>119</sup> This would entail dating Agobard’s *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum* to before the *Praeceptum Iudaeorum*, an assumption which the two works themselves can neither confirm nor deny. Working from that assumption, however, it would seem that Agobard did not wait for an answer, but rather simply began baptising Jews’ slaves with or without the master’s permission and without knowing what, if any, support he could expect from court authorities. This would be a rather questionable course of action for a cleric who appears to have wanted to involve himself with the court agenda of reform. Also, it seems odd that Agobard bothered to ask the court, only to then proceed with the baptisms. While these considerations do not mean that Agobard could not have provoked the *Praeceptum Iudaeorum*,

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<sup>116</sup> “. . . ut mancipium Iudaicum absque uoluntate domini sui nemo baptizet.” Agobard, *Contra praeceptum impium*, 20-21 (185).

<sup>117</sup> “. . . et nemo fidelium nostrorum praesumat eorum mancipia peregrina sine eorum consensu et volante baptizare.” *MGH Form.*, no.31, 310.

<sup>118</sup> Agobard, *Contra praeceptum impium*, 24-58 (185-86).

<sup>119</sup> Agobard, *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum* (115-17).

one wonders if it were not some other, unknown cleric, perhaps not even a bishop, whose evangelising efforts triggered the charter.

The ban on baptising Jews' slaves formed an attempt on the part of Louis to protect Jewish slave traders and owners from having their slaves pilfered by conversionary efforts. Laws and then canons against the Jewish ownership of Christian slaves had been promulgated since the fourth century,<sup>120</sup> apparently with little success since there is no evidence of enforcement. However, by Louis's time it was technically both illegal and uncanonical for a Jew to own a Christian. Agobard himself cites one such canon, Mâcon (583) 16, in *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*.<sup>121</sup> Because of these laws, any cleric demanding the right to baptise Jews' slaves could then make more trouble if the Jewish master did not immediately relinquish the baptised slaves as they were supposed to. While someone could argue that the laws did not apply to traders since their ownership was temporary by nature, there could be no question about the application of the laws to permanent owners. This in turn could create more embarrassment for Louis. Depending on how vocal Agobard or any other cleric would be in demanding compliance with the laws and canons forbidding the Jewish ownership of Christian slaves, they could force Louis to compel the release of the slaves, leaving a section of his population without a work-force, while potentially glutting the market for another section. From this perspective, it would be far simpler to ban the conversion of Jews' slaves to Christianity.

Also behind the ban is the complicated gradations of freedom and unfreedom in the Carolingian world. The *Praeceptum Iudaeorum* clearly indicated that people were inducing slaves to convert and thus gain their freedom.<sup>122</sup> While it seems clear that the slaves of the

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<sup>120</sup> A perusal of the sections on the law collections and canons in Linder's *Jews in the Legal Sources of the Early Middle Ages* (200-331 and 459-560, respectively), will give a sense of the repetition of this injunction. Amnon Linder, *The Jews in the Legal Sources of the Early Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997).

<sup>121</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, VI.16-31 (203).

<sup>122</sup> *Praeceptum Iudaeorum* (MGH Form., no.30, 309).

charters were chattel slaves probably meant for sale outside of the Carolingian empire<sup>123</sup> (despite Louis's attempt to curb such traffic<sup>124</sup>), what sort of freedom they would have enjoyed after conversion and emancipation is far from certain. The practical implications of such situations are boggling. Given the patterns and volumes of human traffic in the ninth century, if such a baptism and freedom did occur the ex-slave would most likely be a Slav,<sup>125</sup> thus a foreigner and recently pagan. These persons would have no claim to any land, no kin to support them (unless the proselytiser managed to convert and free an entire family), and thus no way to take care of themselves. Potential courses of action from there would be limited. They could sell themselves into the sort of "half slavery" found in the formulas.<sup>126</sup> They could simply become dependents of the cleric who freed them. They could try to beg their way back home. Quite simply, any slave thus freed would have been essentially helpless and a potential drain on any given community's scant resources, as well as possibly upsetting local balances of power and patronage.<sup>127</sup> The problems created by this kind of back-door emancipation elucidate the desire on the part of Louis and others in authority to avoid the conversion and subsequent emancipation through the ban.

Whether or not Agobard had occasioned the *Praeceptum Iudaeorum*, by even asking about Jews' slaves he hit upon a whole complex of issues, such as the practical problems posed by emancipation given above, beyond the apparently simple injunction against the Jewish ownership of Christians. While his conflict with Louis may have begun with the issue of slaves, it did not stop there, and what Agobard added to the list of evidence for Louis's "favouritism" of Jews in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, written in 826 or 827, can tell us even more about the place of

<sup>123</sup> McCormick, *European Economy*, 738.

<sup>124</sup> *MGH Form.* no.52 ed. Karl Zeumer (Hannover: Hahn, 1882), 325.

<sup>125</sup> McCormick, *European Economy*, 761.

<sup>126</sup> Alice Rio, "Freedom and unfreedom in early medieval Francia: The evidence of the legal formulae" *Past and Present* 193 (2006): 31; Cristoph Sonnlechner, "New units of production in Carolingian times: Making early medieval sources relevant for environmental history" *Viator* 35 (2004): 36.

<sup>127</sup> Dutton, "Thunder and hail," 119, 129; Chris Wickham, "Rural society in Carolingian Europe" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume II: c.700-c.900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 528-31.

Jews in the empire. In it Agobard accused Louis of allowing Jews to build new synagogues and alleged that Louis's *missi* ordered the market day to move from Saturday to Sunday so as to not interfere with the Jewish Sabbath.<sup>128</sup>

It is difficult to determine the veracity of Agobard's claims, as he is the only source for them. Scholars who mention Jews' position in the Carolingian empire and who discuss "privileges" such as the building of new synagogues or the change of market day all cite Agobard's *De insolentia Iudaeorum*.<sup>129</sup> That Jews should not build new synagogues had been a law since emperors Honorius and Theodosius II issued the first prohibition in 415. Theodosius then reiterated the ban in a novella of 438, which also prohibited Jews (and Samaritans) from holding public office and Jewish proselytism, including converting their slaves. It was this version of the ban which made its way into the medieval reissuances of Roman law, including the *Breviarium* and the epitome of Roman law produced in Lyon between the mid-seventh and late-ninth century.<sup>130</sup> Since the Carolingians operated under the principle of personality of law, and since Jews were considered legally Romans, the prohibition against building new synagogues never technically lapsed. However, it is likely that rulers would have not enforced this law as Jewish communities spread across Europe and the need for new synagogues grew. It seems reasonable that Louis, who protected Jews' slaves from conversion, would have permitted the building of new synagogues.

Changing the market day from Saturday to Sunday is an entirely different issue however. That would involve Louis ignoring not a late-Roman law, but contradicting long-standing laws and traditions prohibiting work on Sunday, including Charlemagne's injunction against it and his own prohibition in the "Jewish charters" of the Christian servants of Jews working on Sundays

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<sup>128</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 124-128 (194).

<sup>129</sup> e.g. Bernard Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 86.

<sup>130</sup> Amnon Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 269, 326-27; id., *Legal Sources*, 227, 244.

or feast days.<sup>131</sup> Given that, as well as the Carolingian concern for proper Christian observance, it seems quite improbable that Louis would allow scheduling a market to conflict with Mass. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand why Agobard would lie about a policy which Louis could so easily investigate since his own *missi* allegedly ordered the change.<sup>132</sup> Agobard also informed Louis, at the end of *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, that he had just met a man who charged that he had been stolen by a Jew and sold as a slave in Cordoba (149-59).<sup>133</sup> Again, Louis obviously had contact with at least one Jewish slave trader from Muslim Spain, Abraham of Saragossa,<sup>134</sup> and could thus presumably investigate the matter himself or through his *missi*, so why would Agobard fabricate such a story?

The second story, that of Jews stealing Christians to sell in Muslim territories, could perhaps be explained more easily than the change in the market day. When Agobard reported the kidnappings, a not-uncommon method of acquiring slaves for market,<sup>135</sup> it came at the very end of *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, and has the definite feeling of a hastily-written postscript. Agobard seems to indicate that he had done some investigating himself, only to reveal similar stories of theft,<sup>136</sup> but, in essence, Agobard merely passed on the story he heard from others. He must have known that Louis would not let such a story go without at least making inquiries, and so I can only surmise that Agobard had believed the stories himself, and felt that Louis had to know.

The allegation about the change in market day proves harder to excuse. That accusation came at the end of a string of accusations about the troubles in Lyon, and so one could argue that Agobard included it, knowing it was false, in the hopes that only the tone rather than content

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<sup>131</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c.81 (*MGH Capit.* I, 61); *Praeceptum Iudaeorum* (*MGH Form.*, no.30, 309); Patzold, "Biscöfe," 153-60.

<sup>132</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 126-28 (194).

<sup>133</sup> Michael Toch, "European Jews of the Middle Ages: Slave-traders?" (Hebrew) trans. Mark Kowitt, *Zion: A Quarterly for Research in Jewish History* 64:1 (1999): 22.

<sup>134</sup> *MGH Form.* no.52, 325.

<sup>135</sup> McCormick, *European Economy*, 744.

<sup>136</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 154-57 (195).



would be noted. Except that Agobard highlighted the charge by saying that Louis's favouritism was "especially" (*maxime*) evident when the *missi* changed the market day (126). He clearly intended it to be heard and understood. We are left, then, with two equally unlikely things – that Louis would have allowed the market to take place on Sunday, or that Agobard, who was, after all, trying to convince Louis to change things, knowingly and purposefully lied about it. The only way to avoid that conundrum is to assume that the *missi* changed the market day without Louis's knowledge or permission. This would indicate that, while we only have a record of Agobard's conflict with Louis, the argument had begun as one between Agobard and the local secular authorities.

The main secular authority involved in the conflict was Evrard, the so-called *magister Iudaeorum*, a title for which Agobard appears to be the only source. Beginning with *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum* around 823, Agobard complained that the person "who is overseer of the Jews" showed a lack of respect and thoughtfulness in his dealing with Agobard.<sup>137</sup> By the time he wrote his *Contra praeceptum impium de baptismo iudaicorum mancipiorum* about three years later, the post had been "upgraded" to "the overseer of the unbelieving Jews," whom Agobard accused of constantly harassing him.<sup>138</sup> Evrard's name does not appear until *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, written around the same time as *Contra praeceptum impium*, but he is only called a *missus*, sent to Lyon by Louis along with Gerricus and Frederic.<sup>139</sup> Agobard did not identify any of the men as the troublesome *magister Iudaeorum*. Frederic is otherwise unknown, but Gerricus was Louis's falconer and had been with the emperor when Louis was still king of Aquitaine.<sup>140</sup> The Emperor therefore sent at least one old

<sup>137</sup> ". . . qui magister est Iudaeorum. . ." Agobard, *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum*, 62-69, at 63 (116).

<sup>138</sup> ". . . cum magister infidelium Iudeorum incessanter nobis comminetur. . ." Agobard, *Contra praeceptum impium*, 113-14 (188).

<sup>139</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 24-25 (191).

<sup>140</sup> Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.20 (*MGH SS II*, 617); Philippe Depreux, *Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux (781-840)* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1997), 198, 215-16; Stuart Airlie, "Aristocracy in the

and proven servant to deal with the situation in Lyon; he clearly did not take Agobard's trouble-making lightly.

Thus in *De insolentia Iudaeorum* Agobard named Evrard and placed him in Lyon in 826 in the role of *missus*, but it is not until *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*, written in 827-28, that he finally links Evrard and his putative title, stating that the *missi*, "and especially Evrard, who is now overseer of the Jews," were trying to undermine Agobard's efforts to separate Christians from Jews.<sup>141</sup> The use of *nunc* would certainly suggest that Evrard had just recently come into that post, leaving open the question of who had filled that position previously, and had presumably come to loggerheads with Agobard.<sup>142</sup> That is just one of the great many questions about this supposed office. Again, Agobard appears to be the only source for it, and everything he said about this *magister Iudaeorum* has been given in these two paragraphs. Scholars know equally little about Evrard, apart from his putative title. Yet scholars have given the *magister Iudaeorum* (and thus Evrard) varying degrees of power and responsibility. From a presumably local official to central government functionary who adjudicated disputes between Christians and Jews, and who would have either been an expert on Jewish law himself or had such an expert in his retinue, scholars seem to have engaged in speculation in order to make some sense of Agobard's comments.<sup>143</sup> Evrard himself, whatever his title or function in the court may have been the father of Bermond, the count of Lyon.<sup>144</sup> He also may have been Charlemagne's chamberlain, and he could have owned large amounts of formerly church land in

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service of the state in the Carolingian period" in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* ed. Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 105-06.

<sup>141</sup> ". . . et Eurardus maxime, qui Iudeorum nunc magister est. . ." Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu*, 73-74 (233).

<sup>142</sup> Bachrach likewise follows this line of reasoning, stating that Evrard had an unknown predecessor. Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 85.

<sup>143</sup> Solomon Katz, *The Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms of Spain and Gaul* (Cambridge, Mass.: Medieval Academy of America, 1937), 109; Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 84-85; Jean-Louis Verstrepen, "Raban Maur et le judaïsme dans son commentaire sur les quatre livres des rois" *Revue Mabillon* 7(68) (1996) : 23-24.

<sup>144</sup> Depreux, *Prosopographie*, 192; Boshof, *Agobard*, 105.

the Lyonnais.<sup>145</sup> Like the hypotheses about the role of the *magister Iudaeorum*, none of these can be definitely proven. Given the amount of supposition surrounding this theoretical office, I think it is time for scholars to take a fresh look at the evidence for the *magister Iudaeorum* and determine if such an office even existed, and if so, what role it played in the empire.

Although the evidence for the *magister Iudaeorum* may be less than conclusive, we can deduce that Jews were present at court because Bodo, a deacon raised there, converted to Judaism in 838. The *Annales Bertiniani* serve as the principle source for this rather unexpected turn of events. The annals tell the tale of an Alemannian youth brought up in the ecclesiastical education of the court who, under the pretext of making a pilgrimage to Rome, declared himself to be a Jew, was circumcised, grew a beard, grew out his hair, married a Jew, and took the name Eleazer. His nephew also converted, and they along with their Jewish companions escaped to Saragossa. When the news reached Aachen the following spring, the annals report that Louis could hardly be convinced of Bodo's actions.<sup>146</sup>

Once settled in Saragossa, Bodo/Eleazer took up the pen in defence of his new faith against Paulus Alvarus of Cordoba. Their correspondence survived in only one manuscript, from which Bodo/Eleazer's contributions have unsurprisingly been largely erased.<sup>147</sup> What remains of their written debate does not add anything to our knowledge of the contents of Jewish-Christian polemics. The circumstances of the people involved in the debate provokes more interest, however. Bodo/Eleazer, by fleeing to Spain after his conversion, displayed the limits of the ruling class's "pro-Jewish" sentiments.<sup>148</sup> He, his nephew, and the Jews who aided their conversion, knew, or at least suspected, that they could not safely remain in the Carolingian

<sup>145</sup> *MGH DD Kar.* I, 273; Depreux, *Prosopographie*, 192; Elukin, *Living Together*, 48; Johannes Heil, "Labourers in the Lord's quarry: Carolingian exegetes, patristic authority, and theological innovation, a case study in the representation of Jews in commentaries on Paul" in *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Buron Van Name Edwards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 91.

<sup>146</sup> *AB*, an.839 (*MGH SS I*, 433).

<sup>147</sup> Cordoba, Archivo de la Catedral, Paulus Alvarus, *Opera et alia opuscula*, a tenth-century manuscript written in Visigothic minuscule. Frank Riess, "From Aachen to Al-Andalus: The journey of Deacon Bodo (823-76)" *Early Medieval Europe* 13:2 (2005): 140 n.13.

<sup>148</sup> Verstrepen, "Raban Maur," 24.

empire. Alvarus, for his part, seems to have been raised as a Christian, but born to a Jewish family, a fact he uses to argue that he is more knowledgeable and better-placed to criticise Judaism.<sup>149</sup> Therefore, in addition to the usual tension inherent to such discussions, both men found themselves in the position of defending their own decisions, or those of their families. This can certainly help explain the increasingly hostile language used by the two men.<sup>150</sup> As much interest as their debates provoke, however, they took place outside of the Frankish world, had no impact on Jewish-Christian relations within it, and so can only be a side note to our main discussion.

The section above has given and discussed all of the direct evidence for the existence and place of Jews under Louis the Pious. Little more exists for the Carolingian period. We know from later canons and sources that Jews owned land and presumably worked it like their Christian neighbours, including using slaves or serfs tied to the land.<sup>151</sup> Jewish merchants appear sporadically in the sources.<sup>152</sup> Charlemagne sent Isaac, a Jew, along with Lantfrid and Sigimund to Baghdad as envoys to Harun al Rashid.<sup>153</sup> There seems to have been some demand for Jewish doctors in the eastern portions of the empire.<sup>154</sup> In general, however, Jews seem to have left little trace in the Carolingian world. Given the lack of evidence of any sort of violent confrontations, and the evidence from Agobard and other sources of close relations, I believe we must agree with Elukin that the Frankish world experience a *convivencia* which we can glimpse through the limited evidence.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Paulus Alvarus, *Epistola XVIII*, 5.13-21 in *Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum* I, ed. Joannes Gil (Madrid: Instituto 'Antonio de Nebrija,' 1973), I.249.

<sup>150</sup> See, for example, Alvarus's "salutation" for *Epistola XVIII* and the beginning of Bodo/Eleazer's reply, *Epistola XIX* (Gil, I.244, 269). Riess has provided an interesting and insightful discussion of these letters. Riess, "Aachen to Al-Andalus," 140-50.

<sup>151</sup> Zuckerman, "Political uses," 44-46; Rio, "Freedom and unfreedom," 8.

<sup>152</sup> McCormick, *European Economy*, 693.

<sup>153</sup> *ARF*, an.801 (*MGH SRG* VI, 116).

<sup>154</sup> *MGH Form.* no. 38, (448) is a formulaic request from the Salzburg collection for a Jewish or Slavic doctor.

<sup>155</sup> Elukin, *Living Together*, 136.

## Agobard's Lyon

Keeping in mind the general, historical, context given above, we may now turn to Agobard's immediate environment, the city of Lyon and its surroundings, which formed the background for his life and career. Like the context of the wider empire and church, learning as much as we can about the city in which Agobard lived and the church he governed is crucial in understanding him. Lyon and its Christian community had long histories, and by the Carolingian period the city and diocese of Lyon had already reached an apex of importance, had seen decline, and had recently begun reasserting its place in the Gallic church.

The Christian community in Lyon was founded in the middle of the second century when St. Polycarp of Smyrna, a disciple of St. John the Evangelist, sent St. Pothinus west to Gaul. A persecution of Christians in 177 produced Lyon's first martyrs. St. Irenaeus succeeded the martyred St. Pothinus as bishop, and Lyon's prestige soon spread throughout Gaul.<sup>156</sup> By the time of the Burgundian kingdom its schools were famous and the city served for a time as Burgundy's capital. Lyon became an archbishopric sometime in the sixth century, with authority over the sees of Autun, Langres, Chalon-sur-Saône, and Mâcon, all of which lay to the north of Lyon.<sup>157</sup> This ecclesiastical advancement came as the city itself began to face decline, and for the remainder of the Early Middle Ages, fires, plagues, and floods took their toll, as did the Muslim invaders of 725, rebellions, and the conquest by Charles Martel about a decade later, leaving Lyon in an undetermined state of disrepair.<sup>158</sup>

We come to the story of Lyon with the rebuilding begun under Leidrad, and the re-emergence of the city as an ecclesiastical power through its "Augustine experts" like Florus. As

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<sup>156</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical history*, V.1-5 (Lake, 406-451); Gregory, *Historiae*, I.29 (*MGH SRM* I.1, 21-22); Heribert Müller, "Die Kirche von Lyon im Karolingerreich: Studien zur Bischofslite des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts" *Historisches Jahrbuch* 107 (1987): 226-28.

<sup>157</sup> Alfred Coville, *Recherches sur l'histoire de Lyon du Ve siècle au IXe siècle (450-800)* (Paris: Picard, 1928), 472.

<sup>158</sup> René Fédon, "Les temps obscurs (Ve-Xe siècles)" in *Histoire de Lyon et du Lyonnais*, ed. André Latreille (Toulouse: Privat, 1975), 61-67; Patrick Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence: The Rhône Basin at the Dawn of the Carolingian Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 124; Fredric Cheyette, "The disappearance of the ancient landscape and the climactic anomaly of the Early Middle Ages: a question to be pursued" *Early Medieval Europe* 16:2 (2008): 158-60.

such, this section will look at what we know about Lyon during the Carolingian period, including its monastic institutions and the manuscript resources available, and the involvement of the city and its church in the wider context of the empire.

### *Topography*

Like many cities with histories stretching back to late antiquity, the topography of Lyon remains difficult to determine because the city has undergone consistent development throughout the ages, disturbing the archaeological record. Scholars have, however, been able to glean some information. The city centre, and thus the core of Lyon's urbanisation, grew up on the west bank of the Saône river, around the cathedral complex. The church of St. Nizier likewise formed a second hub of urbanisation on the peninsula created by the confluence of Rhône and Saône rivers.<sup>159</sup> The Place des Célestins, at the tip of the peninsula, appears to have supported dense habitation during the Early Middle Ages. This occupation happened despite routine flooding from the Saône throughout the entirety of the Middle Ages, which led the residents to keep the antique layout of the area, in order to avoid major damage or losses in the frequent floods. Storage pits, roads, movable goods (mainly pottery), and burials, all dateable to the seventh to ninth centuries, point to occupation throughout at least the early Carolingian period.<sup>160</sup> Along the east side of the peninsula the Rhône river served as the trade route for commodities, food stuffs (including salt), wine, slaves, and luxury items.<sup>161</sup>

Lyon as a place of trade is important, and so must be discussed here. Lyon's situation at the confluence of the Rhône (flowing in from Lake Geneva in the east) and Saône (coming from the Moselle valley in the north) rivers gave the city its importance. Heading south from Lyon,

<sup>159</sup> Catherine Arlaud, et al., *Lyon St-Jean: Les fouilles de l'Îlot Tramassac* (Lyon: Association Lyonnaise pour la Promotion de l'Archéologie en Rhône-Alpes, 1994), 13-14.

<sup>160</sup> Catherine Arlaud and J.M. Lurol, "Lyon (Rhône) Place des Célestins" *Archéologie Médiévale* 24 (1994): 395-6.

<sup>161</sup> René Fédon, "Personnalité de la Presqu'île dans le Lyon médiéval" in *Lyon et l'Europe, hommes et sociétés. Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Richard Gascon* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1980), 238; id., "Les temps obscurs," 68.

the Rhône ran down to the Mediterranean Sea. Thus for those wishing easy access to central Gaul from the sea, or vice versa, it only took a boat ride on the Rhône and then the Saône. In fact, with disruptions to over-land (Alpine) routes to and from Italy during the sixth and early-seventh centuries, the Rhône served as the connector between the northern, Rhenish heartland of the Franks, and the Mediterranean.<sup>162</sup> Whether a boat sailed out to sea or in-land, Lyon served as the first or last major city en route. Like other cities along such routes, toll-houses in Lyon ensured revenue to both state and church from commercial traffic.

However, during the eighth century, the trans-alpine routes stabilized, while the Rhône became destabilized during the Muslim invasions and subsequent retaking, as well as other political insecurities. The main artery connecting northern and southern Europe thus shifted east, to the Rhine and Switzerland.<sup>163</sup> While this significantly decreased Lyon's commercial standing, it did not end it, nor did the rivers cease serving that function. Around 815 Louis issued a charter to the monastery of St. Martin on the Ile-Barbe, an island in the Saône, granting them the right to have three boats in order to conduct necessary business along the Saône, Rhône, and Doubs rivers. Louis also specified that the monks' boats could operate toll-free, an indication that tolls continued to be collected along these rivers, something which seems unlikely if mercantile traffic had ceased entirely.<sup>164</sup>

Indeed, it is in Lyon's commercial capacity that slaves reappear. It is in the slave trade, particularly in the charter issued to Abraham of Saragossa and in the kidnapping claims Agobard made in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, that trade connections between the Carolingian empire and Muslim Spain become clear.<sup>165</sup> Given that the main slave-hunting grounds lay in Slavic lands,

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<sup>162</sup> Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence*, 123; McCormick, *European Economy*, 78.

<sup>163</sup> McCormick, *European Economy*, 79.

<sup>164</sup> no.38 (Martin Bouquet, *Recueil des Historiens des Gaules et de la France* (Paris: Palmé, 1870), VI, 483); McCormick, *European Economy*, 644-45.

<sup>165</sup> *MGH Form.* no.52, 325; Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 149-59 (195).

an over-land route to Spain would very likely take the slave trader right through Lyon.<sup>166</sup> It seems highly unlikely that Louis would have taken Abraham under his protection simply as a slave-trader, and thus commercial contacts with Spain must have extended beyond human wares. The contacts in fact appear to grow throughout the ninth century.<sup>167</sup>

Even as commerce continued along the older trading routes, and perhaps some new ones to Spain, one cannot deny that with the ascendancy of the Merovingian and then Carolingian families, with their holdings in the Rhineland and lowlands, the focus of those in power shifted north, away from the world of Mediterranean. Lyon's archiepiscopal boundaries did stretch up beyond Langres, to the heads of both the Marne and Meuse rivers. The former leads to the Seine, the latter to the North Sea just south of the mouth of the Rhine. This could have kept Lyon in contact with the northern seats of power. Agobard most likely used these and other routes in order to stay involved in events around the empire, sending works to Fridugis at Tours, Ebbo at Reims or Aachen, and Louis in Aachen. Yet there is no evidence that Agobard ever went north himself, except to assemblies, just as there is no evidence of Louis going south. His judgement of Bernard of Italy and his followers in 818 at Chalon-sur-Saône, a suffragan see of Lyon, proves the closest Louis, or indeed Charlemagne, ever came to Lyon itself.<sup>168</sup> It is therefore questionable how much the old *regnum* of Burgundy, of which Lyon was a principle part, was ever truly integrated into an empire led by a family whose power and therefore primary interests all lay to the north, in Austrasia, Neustria, and parts of Aquitaine. Agobard may have found himself at a competitive disadvantage, simply by heading a Southern see.

### *Leidrad*

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<sup>166</sup> Müller, "Kirche von Lyon," 244; McCormick, *European Economy*, 761.

<sup>167</sup> McCormick, *European Economy*, 674-78.

<sup>168</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.22 (*MGH SS II*, 596); Fédon, "Temps obscurs," 67; Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence*, 150.



Little remained of the glory that had belonged to the city of Lyon and its bishops when in 798 Charlemagne sent Leidrad there to be its archbishop and he began rebuilding the once-great church of Lyon.<sup>169</sup> Scholars have a relatively clear idea of what that rebuilding entailed, due primarily to the survival of Leidrad's report dating from about the year 814 outlining his progress in restoring the religious life of Lyon. The letter provided Charlemagne, its addressee, with a list of Leidrad's accomplishments. Leidrad apparently found the Lyon church in a fairly appalling state. He described the church as ruined "as much in the offices as in the buildings or other ecclesiastical ministries."<sup>170</sup> According to his letter, Leidrad restored the order of psalmody, brought the Lyon liturgy in line with the modified Roman rite in favour at the palace, created a school of cantors, and established a school of lectors, which trained readers not only in the divine office, but also in the "spiritual" reading of the Scriptures. Though Fédon's claim that Lyon's reputation for learning began to attract priests and monks from across the Empire may stretch the scanty evidence, it is worth noting that Claudius of Turin studied Scripture at Lyon under Leidrad, so the latter must have had at least some success in his restoration efforts.<sup>171</sup>

Regarding simply the fabric of the Lyon church, Leidrad's list of accomplishments astounds in its scope. He reportedly repaired the cathedral church of St. John the Baptist as well as the collegiate church of St. Stephen; rebuilt the churches of St. Nizier and St. Mary; restored the episcopal house; built a cloister for the clergy; restored St. Eulalia's, which also housed the convent of St. George; restored the house and the church for the convent of St. Peter; restored the monastery on the Ile-Barbe and the monastery of St. Regnebert; restored the parish church of St. Wibald.<sup>172</sup> Archaeological research supports at least part of Leidrad's report; namely his claim

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<sup>169</sup> Leidrad, *Summo Carolo imperatori*, (MGH Epp IV, 542); Müller, "Kirche von Lyon," 225-243; Fédon, "Temps obscurs," 61-67.

<sup>170</sup> ". . . tam in officiis quam in aedificiis vel in caeteris ecclesiasticis ministeriis." Leidrad, *Summo Carolo imperatori*, (MGH Epp IV, 542).

<sup>171</sup> Fédon, "Les temps obscurs," 68; Claudius of Turin, *Dructeramno abbati expositionem Geneseos* in MGH Epp IV, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 592.

<sup>172</sup> Leidrad, no.30, (MGH Epp IV, 543-544).

of building a cloister for canons in the church of St. John the Baptist.<sup>173</sup> The amount of construction work required to rebuild on this scale must have dominated the landscape of Lyon for decades. As Fédon expressed it, “A ‘building bishop,’ Leidrad transformed his city into a vast construction site.”<sup>174</sup>

The fragment mentioned above, giving the property holdings for the Lyon church under Amalbert, Leidrad, and Agobard, as well as the holdings of some of Lyon’s monastic institutions, came attached to Leidrad’s letter as given by Dümmler in the *MGH*.<sup>175</sup> The fragment indicates that during his tenure Leidrad held 727 vested colonies and thirty-three *absas*, a great deal more than both the thirty colonies and seventeen *absas* possessed by Amalbert, and the forty-four colonies and four *absas* possessed by Agobard. Though the two latter men possessed virtually equal holdings (at least in sheer numbers), it is worth noting the decrease in *absae*, untenanted land, from Amalbert to Agobard. This could possibly signal a growth in actual wealth for Agobard compared to Amalbert, though the evidence in the fragment should probably not be stretched that far.

It must be noted that the fragment could be a list of new acquisitions, rather than an inventory of all property held. That interpretation could explain why the fragment introduced Leidrad’s holdings with the phrase “for his work” (*ad suum opus*), perhaps an indication that whoever compiled the list intended it to provide a partial sense of the archbishops’ and monasteries’ relative wealth. Given the problems posed by the fragment, however, that

<sup>173</sup> Madeleine Vialettes, “Le bâtiment de la «Vieille Manécanterie» de la cathédrale Saint-Jean de Lyon” *Bulletin Monumental* 153:1 (1995): 47 and 57.

<sup>174</sup> “Evêque bâtisseur, Leidrad transforma sa ville en un vaste chantier.” Fédon, “Les temps obscurs,” 68.

<sup>175</sup> “Habet Leidradus episcopus ad suum opus inter totum colonicas vestitas DCCXXVII, absas XXXIII. Habet Amalbertus episcopus colonicas vestitas XXX, absas XVII. Habet Agobardus episcopus colonicas vestitas XLIII, absas III. Sunt in domo sancti Stephani canonici numero LII, habent colonicas vestitas LXXXIII, absas L. Habent in Sancto Paulo canonicas XXIII. Habent in beneficio colonicas vestitas XXII, absas XXI, et sunt pauperes numero XII, qui de suprascriptis rebus accipiunt tertiam portionem. Ad hospitale quoque sancti Romani habent colonicas vestitas XXII, absas X. Et ad hospitale sancti Genesii habent colonicas vestitas VI, absas II. In monasterio vero praedicto sancti Petri puellarum habent colonicas vestitas CLXXXVIII, absas XLVII. Et in coenobio Insulano sunt colonicae vestitae CV, absae LIII. Et in monasterio sancti Ragneberti habent colonicas vestitas XL.” Leidrad, *Summo Carolo imperatori*, (*MGH Epp* IV, 544).

interpretation is by no means necessary or assured. Regardless, it seems clear that Leidrad did have control over significantly more land than his predecessor or successor, though exactly how much is unclear.

The fragment is problematic at best. It is found in only two sources, a fifteenth-century manuscript from the monastery of Ile-Barbe, now Lyon 1448, and a late-twelfth-early-thirteenth-century manuscript from the convent of St. Peter, the oldest verified copy, which provided the exemplar for the Ile-Barbe copy. This means that less than half of the manuscripts and editions Coville used to create his own edition of Leidrad's letter attached the fragment describing Lyon's holdings.<sup>176</sup> Coville dated Leidrad's letter and the fragment to 809-14, preferring 809-12, while Dümmler, who edited the version in the *MGH*, suggested 813-14.<sup>177</sup> The fragment however, detailed the holdings not only of Leidrad, but also of Amalbert and Agobard, his predecessor and successor, respectively. Agobard was named as *Agobardus episcopus*, not *chorepiscopus* or *coepiscopus*, as he would have been until his canonical assumption of the see in 816. Yet, the dates offered by Coville and Dümmler would make Agobard's listed holdings those he controlled as Leidrad's subordinate. A confusion or simple mistake in Agobard's title, *episcopus* instead of *chorepiscopus*, could certainly explain the vast difference between the two men's possessions, but not those between Leidrad and Amalbert. Leidrad's rebuilding efforts may provide an explanation for the latter, however, the reason for the apparent spike in wealth under Leidrad remains essentially unsolved.

Moreover, a great deal of disagreement still exists as to the meanings and sizes of the terms used in Carolingian polyptychs and inventories. This makes comparisons difficult. That Leidrad had more material support than the other bishops of Lyon seems clear simply from the difference in the number of holdings. How Lyon's holdings compared to those of similar

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<sup>176</sup> Coville, *Recherches*, 266-96.

<sup>177</sup> *ibid.*, 296; Dümmler, *MGH Epp* IV, 542.

churches, however, is nearly impossible to decipher. “Vested colonies” (*colonicae vestitae*) appear to have been single tenancies, lands owned by a noble (or church or monastery) but farmed by *liberti*, former slaves who received partial freedom and were set to work a *colonica*. Assuming that the author of the fragment meant *colonica* as an equivalent of a *mansus*, as is found in a polyptych from Marseilles, we are presumably dealing with a single farmhouse and its arable land.<sup>178</sup> The *absae* mentioned, likely an orthographical variation on *apsta*, probably referred to land (possibly a *mansus*) which lay without a current occupant, but not necessarily uncultivated.<sup>179</sup>

Even if we knew exactly the area of land discussed, and even if we accept Goffart’s arguments that *mansus* is meant as a standard of value and production rather than a standard of size, we must be careful not to draw too many conclusions, or make too many comparisons based on this fragment.<sup>180</sup> The fragment is most certainly not a polyptych, it is barely an inventory. Nestled between the foothills of the Alps and the Jura mountains in the east, and the Massif Central in the west, most of the areas in and around Lyon were fairly hilly, and not ideal for large-scale farming. Of course some of the holdings could have lain outside the archiepiscopal boundaries of Lyon, but without knowing the locations of these various *colonicae*, it is impossible to even guess the extent of the activities on and productivity of the holdings, and the revenue they generated. These gaps in knowledge make any attempt to compare the wealth of the archbishops of Lyon against the wealth of other sees, or even abbacies, in the rest of the empire rather foolhardy.

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<sup>178</sup> Sonnlechner, “New units,” 43, 46; Walter Goffart, “The conversions of Avitus of Clermont, and similar passages in Gregory of Tours” in *“To See Ourselves as Others See Us”: Christians, Jews, and “Others” in Late Antiquity*, ed. Jacob Neusner and Ernst Frerichs (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 172.

<sup>179</sup> Jean-Pierre Devroey, “Elaboration et usages de polyptyque” in *Akkulturation: Probleme einer germanisch-romanischen Kultursynthese in Spätantike und frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Dieter Hägermann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), 457; Sonnlechner, “New units,” 36-39.

<sup>180</sup> Walter Goffart, “Frankish military duty and the fate of roman taxation” *Early Medieval Europe* 16:2 (2008): 170-71.

Essentially, the fragment is a difficult source and raises more questions than it answers. Taken at face-value, however, one cannot escape the thought that the see of Lyon experienced a sudden rise in land and wealth under Leidrad, only to lose it equally as suddenly under Agobard. Even if Leidrad's holdings had been temporary by design, simply financing for the vast rebuilding project, and Agobard's holdings represented a return to more normal levels (he still apparently controlled a bit more than Amalbert had), the sheer volume of the change could have been hard to take for Agobard. Especially operating from the principle that any property once held by the church should forever remain with the church, a principle Agobard argued for at Attigny and then in *De dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum*, such a loss would represent a diminishment of his episcopal dignity, as well as his diocesan coffers.

Despite these apparent monetary difficulties, Agobard continued Leidrad's rehabilitation of the church in Lyon. Agobard likely took up the church's literal rehabilitation – the amount of construction detailed by Leidrad and supported by archaeological findings very probably took longer than his sixteen years in office. It is certain, however, from works such as *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici* and *De antiphonario* that Agobard carried on his predecessor's reform of the institutional church in Lyon.

The pattern of growth, destruction, and rebirth has been the standard reading of the situation in Lyon both preceding and during Leidrad's tenure as archbishop. Thus historians of Lyon such as Coville and Fédon have mapped a succession of events in which the church of Lyon, as well as the city and the region, were devastated by various conquests and natural disasters from the late-seventh century on, and only recovered their former glory once Leidrad came and rebuilt.<sup>181</sup> However, some scholars have called into question both the destruction of Lyon during the eighth century and the renaissance brought about by Leidrad and Agobard in the

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<sup>181</sup> Coville, *Recherches*, 523-526; Fédon, "Les temps obscurs," 61-8.

ninth century. Tafel, in his exploration of the manuscript holdings and scriptorium activity of medieval Lyon said of the eighth century, “there was no complete upheaval, nothing to put an abrupt stop to the continuity of its culture.”<sup>182</sup> McKitterick concurred, “The Lyon manuscripts, if from Lyon, provide further evidence for the continuation, in some form, of learning and teaching in that city and region from the Gallo-Roman to the Carolingian periods;”<sup>183</sup> a continuity that would have been difficult to maintain in the face of the disasters outlined by Coville and others. For his part, Gauthiez argued that the urban renaissance many claim for Leidrad and Agobard did not in fact happen until the twelfth century.<sup>184</sup> These are minority views, however. As long as there continues to be a gap in archaeological research, which seems likely given the difficulties caused by Lyon’s constant development throughout the centuries, the tension between the standard archaeological reading of decay and restoration and the palaeographical evidence pointing toward continuity, will remain.

### *Monastic Life*

Yet it must be remembered that the church in Lyon consisted of more than the bishops, cathedral complex and parish churches. Lyon had, both within and without its walls, a number of monasteries and convents. These institutions would have had their own land holdings, some of which are given in the same fragment which listed Lyon’s episcopal holdings. Of those listed, some had lands to rival that of the archbishops’, especially Agobard’s. The convent of St. Peter’s reportedly held 188 vested colonies and forty-seven *absae*, while the monastery on Ile-Barbe purportedly had 105 vested colonies and fifty-three *absae*. Compared to Agobard’s

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<sup>182</sup> S. Tafel, “The Lyons Scriptorium” *Paleographia latina* 2 (1925): 67.

<sup>183</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, “The scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul: A survey of the evidence” in id. *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, Sixth-Ninth Centuries* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1994), 177.

<sup>184</sup> Bernard Gauthiez, “La topographie de Lyon au Moyen Age” *Archéologie du Midi Médiéval* 12 (1994): 15.

reported forty-three vested colonies and four *absae*, it seems that a few of Lyon's monastic institutions had little trouble matching at least the wealth of the archbishops.<sup>185</sup>

Some institutions compared favourably with the archbishops in more than just resources. At various points throughout Lyon's history abbots could almost match the bishops in terms of the power and prestige at their disposal, depending both on the personalities of the various clerics and on the favour of lay magnates. Likewise the monasteries or convents themselves could become more independent and powerful by receiving various levels of immunity from episcopal interference or diocesan obligations. The monastery of St. Martin on the Ile-Barbe, for example, received charters of immunity from Louis the Pious in 815, confirming its existing freedom from tolls and taxes. The monastery had to pay the bishop only one pound of silver per year and was free to elect its own abbot, though episcopal approval remained necessary.<sup>186</sup> Lyon's monastic institutions were also free to maintain relations with other institutions throughout the empire; for example, it seems that the convent of St. Peter's in Lyon had connections with the monastery at Reichenau.<sup>187</sup> During the Carolingian period, however, it seems that urban monasteries such as St. Martin or St. Peter served to enhance the prestige of the bishop, despite or perhaps because of their independence, and rural monasteries became increasingly intertwined with the world outside of their walls, serving as centres of social interaction, production, and the distribution of goods.<sup>188</sup>

Extant sources have not left much on the relations Agobard had with the monastic institutions under his care. Given that Louis spent time reviewing and reconfirming charters,<sup>189</sup> it is not surprising that he did so for St. Martin. The rights bestowed need not be read as a strike

<sup>185</sup> Leidrad, fragment to *Summo Carolo imperatori* (MGH Epp IV, 544).

<sup>186</sup> Coville, *Recherches*, 480 and 512-513; Theodor Sickel, *Acta regum et imperatorum Karolinorum, digesta et enarrata* (Vienna, 1867-68), L-66; Johann Böhm, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern, 751-915* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1908), Bd. I, entries 595 and 596.

<sup>187</sup> McKitterick, "Scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul," 14.

<sup>188</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, "Town and monastery in the Carolingian period." in *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1995), 98; Innes, "People, places, and power," 415-16; Sullivan, "Carolingian monasticism," 284-85.

<sup>189</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.10 (MGH SS II, 593).

against Agobard by either the monastery or Louis, especially since Louis issued the renewal before Agobard's canonical assumption of the see of Lyon. St. Martin was an ancient foundation, and had probably held privileges for most of its history. The only monastery mentioned by Agobard himself is that of Nantua, near Lake Geneva. He explained to Louis in *De insolentia Iudaeorum* that he was not in Lyon when the *missi* came because he was at the monastery of Nantua to help settle some dispute.<sup>190</sup> Thus Agobard could and did perform his episcopal function for at least that monastery. This is the only example extant which speaks to relations between Agobard and the monasteries under his archiepiscopal jurisdiction, however. Aside from that one trip to Nantua, Agobard simply did not mention monasteries in his writings. It seems plausible that the institutions under his care did not require much by way of episcopal oversight, and that they left Agobard free to focus his efforts in other areas.

### *Rural Christianity*

Just as the church in Lyon was more than the cathedral, so Agobard's responsibilities as archbishop extended outside the city of Lyon itself. Both Agobard's diocese and the dioceses under his authority would have included vast stretches of rural areas, essentially any area outside of city walls, the proper Christianization of which was a source of worry for Carolingian rulers and their clerics.<sup>191</sup> Little is known of rural religiosity, but there is the impression that rural populations had a greater chance of at least being vulnerable to, if not lapsing into, heterodoxy or outright paganism. Agobard himself alleged as much in *De grandine et tonitruis* (815-17). He reported that he was brought four people accused of being *tempestarii*, storm-raisers, though

<sup>190</sup> "Et ego quidem, indignus seruus uester, non eram Lugduni, sed aberam longe causa Nantuadensium monachorum, qui quadam dissimulate inter se laborant." Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 58-60 (192).

<sup>191</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c.65 (*MGH Capit.* I, 58-59); Dutton, "Thunder and hail," 115-116; Janet Nelson, "Women and the word in the earlier Middle Ages" in *Women in the Church*, ed. W.J. Shields and Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 77.



witnesses later admitted to not having caught the accused in the act.<sup>192</sup> Agobard did not say where he had come across this belief, but given that untimely storms are an especial worry for farmers, it was probably a rural area.

Castes argued that this concern over the beliefs of the rural population informed Agobard's duties when he was chorepiscopus under Leidrad, since he acted in Leidrad's stead. It continued as his responsibility after his episcopal election as well, as evidenced by his letter to Bernard of Vienne which argued against rural landholders forcing bishops to ordain "house priests," a practice that could take rural belief out of urban, episcopal control.<sup>193</sup> Like monasteries, however, Agobard did not concern himself much with rural religiosity as such. Rather, his works point to a concern for the orthodoxy of all rural and urban alike, since everyone seemed vulnerable to heterodoxy, as evidenced the *tempestarii* affair and by the following Felix of Urgell attracted while in Lyon.<sup>194</sup>

### *The Lyon Libraries*

Beyond the efforts to rebuild and reform, leaving aside the issues around property and even the problems of rural religiosity, there was another hallmark of Agobard's church – a high quality of learning and a steady amount of literary production by both Agobard himself and by others around him. The considerable material resources contained in the scriptorium and the library made Lyon's learning and production possible.

Agobard inherited a church with a long reputation of being a centre of learning and culture. As Tafel noted in his study of the Lyon scriptorium, Lyon's placement along one of the historic trade routes between the Mediterranean and northern Europe made it a "natural

<sup>192</sup> Agobard, *De grandine et tonitruis*, II, VII (4-5, 7-8).

<sup>193</sup> id., *De priuilegio sacerdotii*; Castes, "Lyon et sa région," 20; Michel Aubrun, "Le clergé rural dans le royaume franc du VI<sup>e</sup> au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle" in *Le clergé rural dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne*, ed. Pierre Bonnassié (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1995), 20.

<sup>194</sup> Agobard, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, II (74-75).

transmitter of culture.” Indeed he argued that Lyon was the centre which produced the first *Lex romana Burgundionum*, an assertion which, given that Lyon served as the capital of Burgundy under Gundobad, to whom the code is attributed, seems reasonable.<sup>195</sup> McKitterick declared that in Merovingian Lyon “the Roman tradition [of learning] appears to have been stronger, or that the degree of competence higher” than in other centres.<sup>196</sup> Though Lyon’s Merovingian scriptorium may have focused more on juridical writings, by the Carolingian era Lyon had turned to a largely theological focus.<sup>197</sup> What reputation it had as a centre of learning focused on the scriptorium and the library staffed and utilized by the Lyon clergy. Its library and scriptorium has also attracted the attention of modern palaeographers and historians.

The library (indeed, libraries, as the various monastic institutions surely had holdings of their own) in Lyon seems impressive. The lists compiled by modern scholars of manuscripts written or contained in Lyon by and during the early-ninth century include what seems to be a remarkable number of works. A close review of the manuscript lists confirms McKitterick’s assessment of the collection as one specializing in theological works, particularly those of Augustine and Jerome, and also her description of the collection as “businesslike. . .for use and constant consultation.”<sup>198</sup> Wallace-Hadrill asserted that by the Carolingian era, scholars in Lyon had gained the reputation of being “Augustine experts,” and were consulted for that church Father’s writings on predestination during that conflict.<sup>199</sup>

A full list of the fifty-nine manuscripts likely to have been in Lyon during Agobard’s time appears in the Appendix. They can be divided as follows: fourteen contain works of Augustine, including several works in which he considered Jews, though not his *Tractatus*

<sup>195</sup> Tafel, “Lyons scriptorium,” 66 and 68; cf. Elias Lowe, *Codices Lugdunenses Antiquissimi: Le scriptorium de Lyon, la plus ancienne école calligraphique de France* (Lyon, 1924), 7-8.

<sup>196</sup> McKitterick, “Scriptoria of Merovingian Gaul,” 177.

<sup>197</sup> Tafel, “Lyons scriptorium,” 68; Rosamond McKitterick, “Carolingian book production: Some problems” in id. *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, Sixth-Ninth Centuries* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1994), 11.

<sup>198</sup> McKitterick, “Carolingian book production,” 11.

<sup>199</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Churches*, 367; Michael Gorman, *The Manuscript Traditions of the Works of St. Augustine* (Firenze: SISMELE – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001), 343.

*aduersus Iudaeos*; nine of Jerome; eight collections of civil or canon laws, including the acts from the Council of Aachen in 817; eight bibles and liturgical works; three manuscripts of Origen translated into Latin, all of them commentaries on Scripture; three of Hilary of Poitiers's *In Psalmos*; three of Isidore, though not his *Etymologiae*; three of Bede; two of Eucherius of Lyon; three of other Fathers; two of Florus; one of logical works and creeds; Chalcidius's translation of Plato's *Timaeus*; one of Agobard; and the *Codex Agobardinus*, which contains works of Tertullian. It is interesting to note that, of the theological works (that is, the non-legal and non-liturgical manuscripts), twenty-four were either copies of the Scriptures or exegetical works, while twenty-one contained collections of letters, sermons, or polemical works. Lyon's holdings were not only overwhelmingly theological, but also slightly biased towards exegesis. The collection also contained relatively old manuscripts, with several from the fifth and sixth centuries, including the oldest extant work of Hilary of Poitiers.<sup>200</sup> In all, the manuscripts available in Lyon would have well served Agobard and other clerics to write on the issues of the day, scripturally and legally.

The list of manuscripts described above grew out of variety of methods used by scholars to determine provenance or ownership. A relatively secure indication lays in the *ex voto* mark found in manuscripts. Lyon had manuscripts with the *ex voto* of both Leidrad and Agobard.<sup>201</sup> There are also some common characteristics of manuscripts made in Lyon, namely the use of a particular blue ink and a specific interrogation mark.<sup>202</sup> Palaeographers also used the marks or corrections identified as belonging to Florus to determine if a manuscript had been in Lyon.<sup>203</sup> Tafel first connected the marks with Florus by studying the manuscript Berlin Phillips 1745, which Florus excerpted for his *De coertione Iudaeorum*, and determining which marks belonged

<sup>200</sup> Lowe, *Codices Lugdunenses*, Pl II.

<sup>201</sup> Tafel, "Lyons scriptorium," 51-52.

<sup>202</sup> Elias Lowe, "The Codex Bezae and Lyons" in *Palaeographical Papers: 1907-1965* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 184-185.

<sup>203</sup> For a discussion of Florus, deacon to Agobard and his successors until his death around 860, see pg. 119 ff.

to Florus on the basis of the contents of that work. Tafel then identified twenty-three manuscripts with signs of Florus's activity.<sup>204</sup>

Manuscript lists of course only name those manuscripts that are still extant or were still extant when earlier scholars such as Mommsen created their editions. The extent of sources available to Agobard either from the holdings of libraries in Lyon or through exchange with other churches or monasteries only increases when one considers the source list Van Acker provided as part of his edition of Agobard's works, a list of which is also provided in the Appendix. A consideration of that list boosts the number of manuscripts available to Agobard considerably, but otherwise only confirms the overall impression of the collection at Lyon given by the extant manuscript evidence. The sources as given by Van Acker were also overwhelmingly theological, and likewise gave preference to works by Augustine and Jerome. Works by other Fathers and some popes are also present, along with legal sources, works by Gallic authors, and some works by his contemporaries.<sup>205</sup> The collection in Lyon and other available sources appear to have been eminently suited to the general works and polemics of not only Agobard, but also of Florus and Amulo.

Even though the library at Lyon seems to have served its clerics well, it was by no means a leading library in the empire. Ganz estimates that Lyon had 100-plus manuscripts.<sup>206</sup> For comparison, he and Contreni estimate that St. Gall had between 264 and 395 manuscripts, Corbie between 250 and 300, Lorsch over 450, and Tours 350 of just Carolingian manuscripts.<sup>207</sup> Those numbers all come from monastery libraries, however, which arguably had a different role to play

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<sup>204</sup> Tafel, "Lyons scriptorium," 44-48; Célestin Charlier, "Les manuscrits personnels de Florus de Lyon et son activité littéraire" in *Mélanges E. Pothier: études de sciences religieuses offertes pour son éméritat* (Lyon, 1945), 72.

<sup>205</sup> Van Acker, index scriptorum to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, 405-414.

<sup>206</sup> David Ganz, "Book production in the Carolingian empire and the spread of caroline minuscule" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II c.700-900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 787.

<sup>207</sup> *ibid.*; John Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance: Education and literary culture" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II c.700-900* ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1995), 724.

in the production and dissemination of manuscripts than their cathedral counter-parts, and may explain the vast difference in numbers.<sup>208</sup> At a strictly episcopal level, Lyon's holdings were rivalled in number by more recent foundations such as Freising and Salzburg, even so, Lyon certainly did not count among the least of the centres.<sup>209</sup> Lyon's collection, with its antiquity and its emphasis on Augustinian works, helped Lyon, and Agobard, stay involved in the general Carolingian culture of learning and reform.

So then, this was the world Agobard inhabited. A city that probably still showed the signs of reconstruction. A see with less material support and more heterodoxy than he obviously hoped, but with a tradition of learning and with manuscript resources that made his work possible. A church intertwined, if not always in agreement, with the secular powers. An empire led by an emperor whose reign proved more tumultuous than anyone could have predicted, and whose death seemed to signal the empire's end. Agobard gave his see and his city a voice in this wider empire, even if it seems to have often gone unheard by those to whom it was directed. He also lived in a world that drew his condemnation and correction with relative frequency. A child of the reforms of Charlemagne, and the idealism and world-view they engendered, Agobard faced a world where, in his view, even imperial agents and the emperor himself acted against the interests of the Christian society the Carolingians tried to create. Having an idea of this context, then, it is time to turn to Agobard himself, and begin the thesis proper.

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<sup>208</sup> The monastery of St. Martin at Tours, for example, appears to have mass-produced Bibles for export around the empire. Rosamond McKitterick, "Script and book production," in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 221-22.

<sup>209</sup> Ganz, "Book production," 787.

## **Chapter One**

### **Life and Works**

We have seen the broad brush-strokes and some of the details of Agobard's world. This context will, quite rightly, continue to be referenced throughout this work, which begins in earnest with an exploration of Agobard's life and writings. This chapter details all of the works Agobard wrote, showing the breadth of his range far beyond the anti-Jewish tracts for which he is known. Indeed, a basic understanding of what he wrote, when, and for whom allows us to better contextualise his anti-Judaism. Aside from his works, this chapter includes a discussion of Agobard's known friends and acquaintances, and what we can know of his personality. I will also lay out my argument for why I believe Agobard was not a Visigoth, and how he can be understood better as a product of the Carolingian reform efforts.

This discussion of Agobard takes place through the lens of competition. As alluded to in the Introduction, Agobard, like so many others, was a cleric in competition. The ecclesiastical concerns of the Frankish rulers made it possible for clerics to affect thought and policy both at court and in the wider Frankish realm. A cleric who had the king's ear – Charlemagne's Alcuin, Louis's Benedict, Charles the Bald's Hincmar – could wield a great deal of influence. Although the opportunity for such a great amount of influence on and contact with rulers came to only a few, many others could hope for and try to win royal favours in one form or another. Also, archbishops, and abbots of large or royal foundations, could attempt to exert some control or influence over lower-ranking clerics in their areas. However, royal recognition and favour remained the main form of currency in marking a cleric's (or, indeed, a lay magnate's) success. Yet from Drogo's dismissal and then reinstatement, Ebbo's rebellion, and the fracas surrounding Bernard of Septimania, just to name a few examples, the positions of greatest power, those

closest to Louis (the German *Königsnähe*<sup>1</sup>) remained relatively fluid and open throughout his reign.

For his part, Agobard had the relationship of Leidrad and Charlemagne as a model of what he could hope for, perhaps even expect, from Louis. Leidrad had served as a *missus*, and had been commissioned and funded by Charlemagne to rebuild the church at Lyon.<sup>2</sup> Agobard appears to have been Leidrad's hand-picked successor, and since Leidrad had been Charlemagne's man, a line of patronage and service existed between Lyon and the emperor. Agobard could have assumed, and perhaps reasonably, that given the right effort on his part, he could at the very least expect warm relations with Louis and his administrators. However, Leidrad, perhaps unsure of his reception with the new emperor, retired upon Louis's ascension, and Louis for his part, had plenty of his own men from Aquitaine, and got rid of many of Charlemagne's advisors.<sup>3</sup> Although the council at Aachen in 816 approved of Agobard's election, he was Leidrad's choice for the post, not Louis's. Being Leidrad's man may have thus left Agobard in the position of having to prove himself to Louis and his new court.

Read in this light, Agobard's writings fit easily into this culture of competition. He sent tracts both to Louis, in an attempt to curry the emperor's favour, and to others close to him, such as the court clerics, Adalhard and Wala, to gain support at the court. He produced most of his works as "gifts," writings not sought by their recipients. Only two of his tracts, *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii*, and *De spe et timore* clearly came at the behest of their addressees, Bernard of Vienne, and Ebbo of Reims respectively. *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, written to Bartholomew of Narbonne, may also fall into this category, but it is less explicit and, written in

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g. Karl Schmid, "The structure of the nobility in the earlier Middle Ages" in *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Centuries*, ed. and trans. Timothy Reuter (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978), 51, 54-56; Gerd Tellenbach, "From the Carolingian imperial nobility to the German estate of imperial princes" in *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Centuries*, ed. and trans. Timothy Reuter (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978), 207-09; Innes, "People, places, and power," 436-37.

<sup>2</sup> Theodulf, *Ad iudices*, ll 117-124 in *MGH Poet.* I ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881), 496-97; Leidrad, *Summo Carolo imperatori*, (*MGH Epp.* IV, 542-544).

<sup>3</sup> Ado of Vienne, *Chronicon*, an.815 in *MGH SS* II, ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1829), 320.

828 or 829, shortly after Bartholomew's ascension to the see, the work may, in fact, have been meant as a gift to the new archbishop and neighbour. It is possible that Agobard wrote other pieces upon request, with the intended recipient later lost or struck from the copy. Even that possibility would not change the balance of writings from "gifts" to commissions, however.

As well as producing most of his tracts out of his own initiative, Agobard, as far as we can tell, generally worked alone. Again only two of his pieces, *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus* and *De quorundam inlusione signorum* list other authors. Bernard of Vienne and Faof, Agobard's suffragan bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône put their names to the former, while Agobard's deacon, Florus, and the priest Hildigius aided with the latter. Again, while it is possible that the names of co-authors became lost in later transmission, it is very unlikely that this would alter the picture of Agobard as a largely solitary worker. That is, if we only take into account the names given on the works. It seems impossible that Agobard would not have made use of either the deacon Florus or of the clerics working in the Lyon scriptorium and library. However collaborative this work was, Agobard still took sole responsibility for the majority of his pieces.

The idea of writings as competitive pieces would also help shed some light on the timing of Agobard's works. The bulk have been dated to the mid-point of his career, 822-830. This high level of literary output could be partially explained by the death of Benedict of Aniane in 821. Benedict had become Louis's spiritual advisor while Louis was still only king in Aquitaine, and had been brought to Aachen upon Louis's ascension to the imperial throne.<sup>4</sup> Benedict's death left the door open for someone to claim the coveted spot at the emperor's side, and for a more general repositioning of clergy around the court. Although Agobard had written several pieces and had participated in the reforming environment of Louis's early reign as emperor, the

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<sup>4</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c.29 (MGH SS XV.1, 211).



period following Benedict's death would have been an excellent opportunity for Agobard to assert himself at court.<sup>5</sup>

If Agobard did try, he failed. He did not fail completely, but if one considers his writings as an attempt to make a name for himself, or gain some standing at court, he lost. The only glimmer of success came when Ebbo of Reims, Louis's foster-brother, asked Agobard to write *De spe et timore*, probably sometime between 823 and 826. Beyond that, however, Agobard appears to have been roundly ignored, and in the case of his dispute with the Jews of his area, even ruled against, by Louis and the court. The only place Agobard may have had some real success was in the southern reaches of the empire, in the old *regna* of Burgundy and Septimania, and southern Aquitaine. We have no writings from the other archbishops (Bernard of Vienne, and Nibridius and then Bartholomew of Narbonne) from Agobard's area and time, so it seems that only Agobard had any extensive interest in addressing issues in their region and beyond in writing. That Agobard, Bernard, and Bartholomew all went into exile following Lothar's failed rebellion<sup>6</sup> suggests that these southern archbishops may have formed a bloc. Given Agobard's continued, if fringe, involvement with imperial affairs, he may very well have led his two colleagues into rebellion, but that is far from certain.

Competition and Agobard's failure in competing at the imperial level could, and will be used to, explain many aspects of his life and work. It cannot, however, explain everything. It is interesting to note that Agobard continued to write, continued to try to influence those in power, even though (aside from Ebbo's commission) we have no indication he was ever heeded. It seems likely that at least the tracts addressed to Louis would have been read out loud, in front of the court. However, the professional readers (the *lectores*) censored works as they read, so we must question what proportion of Agobard's works were actually heard, and by how extensive an

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<sup>5</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 83.

<sup>6</sup> Flodoard, *Historia Remensis ecclesiae*, II.20 in *MGH SS XIII*, ed. Johannes Heller and Georg Waitz (Hannover: Hahn, 1881), 472; Ado, *Chronicon*, an.840 (*MGH SS II*, 321).

audience.<sup>7</sup> Thus we are left not knowing how well Agobard's works would have been known by people at the court, but with evidence that his reception there was generally cool.

Given those factors, three options can explain Agobard's insistence on writing in the face of such a response. Firstly, Agobard may have received a much better reception than the record leads us to believe. He did impress Ebbo enough to receive a commission, and may have impressed others as well. Indeed, one must almost assume that Agobard received positive reinforcement from some quarter in order to continue writing in the face of imperial displeasure. Secondly, if the above supposition about Agobard taking the lead among the southern bishops is correct, he may have felt duty-bound as their "representative" to continue writing, regardless of the reception. Thirdly, he may have decided that the emperor and those around him needed to hear what Agobard had to say, and did not care how unpopular his declarations made him. Whatever the reason, Agobard continued to address the problems he saw until his death.

## Life

### *Origins*

The basic dates of Agobard's life stem from a short source entitled *Annales Lugdunenses*, found in an early-ninth-century Lyon manuscript containing Bede's work *De ratione temporum*.<sup>8</sup> From this source scholars determined that Agobard was born in 769, emigrated from Spain to the area of Narbonne in 782, and arrived in Lyon ten years later. Given this information, it would seem relatively straight forward that Agobard was born in Spain and later immigrated to the Frankish Empire as others, such as Benedict of Aniane had.<sup>9</sup>

However, the *Annales Lugdunenses* are not without problems. The records began in 769:

769. I was born in this year.

<sup>7</sup> de Jong, "Empire as *ecclesia*," 196; Michael Gorman, "The Commentary on Genesis of Claudius of Turin and biblical studies under Louis the Pious" *Speculum* 72:2 (1997): 282.

<sup>8</sup> Now Biblioteca Vallicelliana (Rome) E.26.

<sup>9</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c.1 (*MGH SS* XV.1, 201).

782. In this year I came into the Narbonne region from Spain.  
 792. Agobard first [came] to Lyon in this year.  
 804. Unworthy, I received ordination.  
 816. In that year he obtained the see in the eighth month.<sup>10</sup>

One is first struck by the fact that the entries for the years in question alternated between using the first and the third person. The entries for 769 and 782 described the author's birth and immigration to Narbonne, yet the entry for 792, which told of Agobard's coming to Lyon, used a third-person narrative. Moreover, Pertz, the editor of the *MGH* version, and Mabillon, who had edited the annals previously in his *Museum Italicum*, disagreed on whether Agobard was mentioned in this entry at all, based on their individual readings of the manuscript.<sup>11</sup> The next two entries, for 804 and 816, alternated between the first- and third-person. The annals then went silent until 840, when the content changed from the perfunctory entries given above, to paragraph-long descriptions of the year's events.

Considering the long pause and significant stylistic shift between the entries for 816 and 840, it appears likely that more than one person wrote these annals. The earlier, terser section concerns this study, since it has been used by scholars to argue that Agobard was of Visigothic origin. They then use that origin as an explanation for some of his attitudes, particularly those about Jews. Scholars could be correct in using the annals in this way. Indeed, it is plausible that Agobard himself, or someone writing on his behalf, recorded the early events of his life in these annals. It is also possible, however, especially if one follows Mabillon in not reading Agobard's name in the 792 entry, that some other Lyon cleric wrote the early entries about himself.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "769. Hoc anno natus sum. 782. Hoc anno ab Hispaniis in Galliam Narbonensem veni. 792. Hoc anno Lugdunum Agobardus primum. 804. benedictionem indignus suscepi. 816. isto anno cathedra potitur mense octavo." *Annales Lugdunenses* in *MGH SS I*, ed. Georg Pertz (Hannover: Hahn, 1826), 110.

<sup>11</sup> 792. *Annales Lugdunenses* (*MGH SS I*, 110); cf. Jean Mabillon, *Museum italicum seu collectio veterum scriptorum ex bibliothecis italicis* (reprint, Rome: Vivarelli and Gulla, 1964), t.1, 68.

<sup>12</sup> Given that Claudius of Turin studied in Lyon, relied on Bede's *De ratione temporum* for his own *Chronicle*, and that his handwriting displays Visigothic symptoms, it is interesting to entertain the idea that the *Annales Lugdunenses* may refer to him, not to Agobard. Claudius of Turin, *Dructeramno abbati* (*MGH Epp IV*, 592); Michael Allen, "The *Chronicle* of Claudius of Turin" in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History, Essays Presented to Walter Goffart* ed. Alexander Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 289-91.

Unfortunately, a satisfactory way of solving this conflict does not exist. As it stands, one must keep Boshof's warning in mind that it is "impermissible to label Agobard as a 'Spaniard' without further thought, and to pull. . . wider consequences from the so-called fact of his Spanish origins."<sup>13</sup>

As is too often the case with early medieval figures, because of a paucity of source material the facts about their lives become rather like a scholastic house of cards. In Agobard's case, the facts regarding his birth and origin have been based upon one source, and one which is less than completely clear and certainly open to question and interpretation. Had the *Annales Lugdunenses* not survived or never been linked with Agobard, scholars would have been left with a question about Agobard's origins instead of an assumption based on this one piece of evidence. Were that the case, they would have then had to develop a theory of his origin based on the most likely scenario considering what is known of Carolingian culture and their own readings of Agobard. As I will argue throughout this dissertation, no one piece of Agobard's thought is better explained through recourse to his supposed Spanish origin and world-view, than by the Carolingian program of reform and Agobard's own understanding of that program. Reading Agobard through a lens which supposes a Spanish origin can in fact be misleading, causing scholars to see Visigothic tendencies when really, Agobard's correspondence with Visigothic thought is tenuous at best. Essentially, while the annals may have been written about Agobard and he may in fact have come from Spain, that assertion is not necessary, and given the questions around the source it is better to at least use it cautiously, with a full awareness of its problems, or to look elsewhere for clues to his origins.

Rather than using the questionable passage from the annals to make Agobard a war orphan and refugee, as Cabaniss posited,<sup>14</sup> it is far more likely that Agobard was an oblate to the

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<sup>13</sup> “. . .damit ist es aber auch nicht mehr zulässig, Agobard ohne weiteres als „Spanier“ zu bezeichnen und aus dem angeblichen Faktum seiner spanischen Herkunft weitreichende Folgerungen. . .zuziehen.” Boshof, *Agobard*, 30.

<sup>14</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 27.

Lyon cathedral, was brought to Leidrad's attention when that man was archbishop, and then trained as his successor. This is based partly on how wide-spread and common oblates were in the Carolingian world,<sup>15</sup> and on Agobard's own writings, where one never gets a sense that he ever knew any life or any family other than the church. Also, if one studies Agobard's writings and other sources for the period, the *Annales Lugdunenses* remain uncorroborated in their assertion that Agobard came from Spain. Indeed, there is no mention of Agobard ever being anywhere but the area around Lyon before his exile in 833. While it was not at all unusual for upper-level clerics to move, sometimes great distances, in order to take over a see, as Leidrad himself did, the lack of mention of such for Agobard gives the impression that he was a "home-grown" cleric, as Amulo seems to have been after him. This impression could just stem from the fact that neither Agobard nor Amulo were court appointees to Lyon, but it seems unlikely that an archbishop would groom a successor not from the area.

Given that it is possible to develop a plausible thesis of Agobard's origins which contradicts the *Annales Lugdunenses*, it is imperative that throughout this study we remember that this source, like all medieval sources, cannot be simply accepted and then used to bolster arguments without further scrutiny. The questions surrounding Agobard's origins reinforce this caution. We cannot take for granted that we know where Agobard came from, much less where he was coming from. We must let Agobard stand on his own without assigning him a cultural label and interpretive framework. This study, while certainly arguing that he can be understood as a Carolingian, will approach Agobard only from what is given in his own writings, not from the "fact" of his Spanish origins.

### *Ordinations*

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<sup>15</sup> Mayke de Jong, "Imitatio Morum: The cloister and clerical purity in the Carolingian world" in *Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform*, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 60.

Regardless of how or when Agobard came to Lyon, it is clear that he became involved in the Lyon church before he became its archbishop. Agobard had served as a *chorepiscopus*, a suffragan bishop, under Archbishop Leidrad, who served Lyon from 798-814.<sup>16</sup> Cabaniss, following the *Annales Lugdunenses*, dated that position to 804.<sup>17</sup> As with Agobard's origins, no way to prove or disprove that assertion exists, and in the absence of objections and problems like those around his origins, it must be allowed to stand. Determining exactly what role Agobard played during this time does present problems, however. The definition of *chorepiscopus* as "suffragan bishop" is potentially tenuous. According to Boshof, *chorepiscopus*, *coepiscopus*, and *episcopus* were becoming synonymous at the beginning of the ninth century.<sup>18</sup> This confusion comes through in one of the other main sources for Agobard's life, Ado of Vienne's *Chronicon*, a history of the world modeled on Bede, begun in the 840s and continued until the author's death in 875. One manuscript copy of this work, the only source that explicitly stated Agobard served as *chorepiscopus* under Leidrad, named him instead as *coepiscopus*.<sup>19</sup> So, as it is with the beginning of his life, Agobard's exact position in Lyon before becoming archbishop remains unclear.

The dating of Agobard's consecration as Archbishop of Lyon is a little firmer. According to Ado, Leidrad retired when Louis the Pious became sole emperor in 814, having chosen Agobard as his successor. Agobard was then confirmed and consecrated in the post "with the emperor and all of the Gallic bishops consenting."<sup>20</sup> Although Ado gave 815 as the year of consecration, Boshof reasonably pointed out that the first time such a universal approval could have taken place would have been at the Council of Aachen in 816.<sup>21</sup> This would bring Ado into agreement with the *Annales Lugdunenses*, which recorded the archiepiscopal election

<sup>16</sup> Ado, *Chronicon*, an.815 (MGH SS II, 320).

<sup>17</sup> "804. benedictionem indignus suscepi." *Annales Lugdunenses* (MGH SS I, 110); Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 33.

<sup>19</sup> Ado, *Chronicon*, an.815 (MGH SS II, 320).

<sup>20</sup> "...consentiente imperatore et universa Gallorum episcoporum." *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 36.

for the year 816. That year also marked the death of Leidrad. His passing allowed Agobard's assumption of the see, which he had probably held *de facto* following Leidrad's retirement in 814, to finally be canonical.

### *Involvement in the Empire and Diocese*

The first councils held after Agobard's ascension to the see of Lyon were the great reforming councils of Aachen in 816 and 817. These councils set out to change and organise the empire in the way suited to Louis the Pious, who had only held the office of emperor since 814. At these gathering, Louis and his advisor on religious matters, Benedict of Aniane, broadened the reforms they had begun in Aquitaine, where Louis had been king, to the entire empire. The Aachen councils, at least according to the published decrees, concerned themselves with ordering the monastic life, including the lives and discipline of the canons, clergy who served at a cathedral.<sup>22</sup> It was also at the 817 council that Louis set forth the division of the empire under his sons.<sup>23</sup> In short, these were the councils that set the tone for the early portion of Louis's reign. The subscription list for the two councils is lost, meaning that we cannot know for certain that Agobard attended. However, the prologue to the decrees of Aachen called the gathering a "general and holy. . . assembly."<sup>24</sup> Likewise, the *Divisio imperii* noted that its decisions were made at a "holy and general assembly of our people."<sup>25</sup> This language makes it highly unlikely that any archbishop, especially a new archbishop needing to impress the emperor and his clerical entourage, would have not attended these meetings.<sup>26</sup> If Agobard did indeed receive the approval of all of the bishops for his election,<sup>27</sup> his presence in Aachen is all but guaranteed.

<sup>22</sup> *Concilium Aquisgranense* (816) (*MGH Conc.* II.1, 307-464). See the discussion in McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 112-120.

<sup>23</sup> *Divisio imperii* (*MGH LL* I, 198-200).

<sup>24</sup> ". . . generalem sanctumque. . . conventum. . ." *Concilium Aquisgranense* (816) (*MGH Conc.* II.1, 312).

<sup>25</sup> ". . . sacrum conventum et generalitatem nostri populi. . ." *Divisio imperii* (*MGH LL* I, 198).

<sup>26</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Ado, *Chronicon*, an.815 (*MGH SS* II, 320).

Just as Agobard did not need to wait long to become involved in imperial politics in the form of general councils, he also began his tenure by writing. Scholars have dated five of Agobard's works to the period between his assumption of the see of Lyon, and the Council of Attigny in 822, a period which can be called his early career.<sup>28</sup> Attigny may seem like an arbitrary cut-off date, but there are good reasons for using it to help form the periods of Agobard's career, as will be explained shortly. The five works in this early period – *De grandine et tonitruis*, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, *De diuinis sententiis contra iudicium Dei*, *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii*, and *Aduersum dogma Felicis* – as a group all fit easily into the culture of competition and patronage. Agobard wrote *De priuilegio sacerdotii* for Bernard of Vienne, his ecclesiastical neighbour and perhaps friend, as a way of furthering their previous conversations on the roles and rights of priests and the church.<sup>29</sup> They may have been neighbours and friends, but Bernard was the senior of the two, having been consecrated archbishop in 810, and it would have been appropriate for Agobard to seek his favour. The remaining four works would show the new emperor and anyone else who read them that Agobard was on guard against superstition (*De grandine*), heresy (*Aduersum dogma Felicis*), and customs that could lead people's souls into danger (*Aduersus legem Gundobadi* and *Contra iudicium Dei*). This was vigilance that Louis, with his concern for the church, would surely appreciate from one of his prelates.

From these five pieces produced during his early career we can see a newly-consecrated archbishop inserting himself into the literary culture of his time. It started with *De grandine et tonitruis*, written perhaps even before his ascension to archbishop became canonical in 816. In it, Agobard gave an outline of and dismantled as blasphemous the popular belief that people can work weather magic – bringing hail against enemies, sending a storm in order to steal grain, or

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<sup>28</sup> For the various dates offered for Agobard's works, please see the chart at the end of this chapter.

<sup>29</sup> Agobard, *De priuilegio sacerdotii*, I.3-11 (53).



defending against such an attack. The work began without salutation, which could suggest that Agobard intended it to be a sermon. If so, as with so many sermons, it is questionable whether or not *De grandine* was ever preached.<sup>30</sup> It is also possible that he wrote it as a letter to someone, perhaps even as a pastoral letter to his clergy, and the scribe who copied it into the manuscript<sup>31</sup> omitted the addressee. It is worth noting, that in his investigation of this belief and the four accused *tempestarii*, Agobard acted much like a *missus*.<sup>32</sup> If intended for Louis and the court, *De grandine* could have been Agobard's way to let Louis know that his new southern archbishop was on guard against forces which could threaten the salvation of the people. Whatever the audience, it is telling that Agobard began his archiepiscopal career by assailing a belief he claimed nearly everyone, from all walks of life, held.<sup>33</sup> He clearly did not shy away from a fight.

Agobard moved from superstition to law when, around 817, he wrote *Aduersus legem Gundobadi* and *De diuinis sententiis contra iudicium Dei*. These two works clearly belong together; Cabaniss described *Contra iudicium Dei* as the documentation for *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*.<sup>34</sup> It could equally be said that *Aduersus legem Gundobadi* served as an introductory letter to *Contra iudicium Dei* and provided the reasons for its writing, since *Contra iudicium Dei* contained no salutation and barely any preface, but instead launched immediately into its purpose. Regardless of the exact relationship however, both should be considered together. Agobard focused first on discrediting Gundobad and thus his law on the basis of his Arianism,<sup>35</sup> and then argued against the practice of trial by ordeal, particularly trial by combat. He addressed these to Louis, and asked him, at the end of *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, to put all people under

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Hall, "The early medieval sermon" in *The Sermon*, dir. Beverly Kienzle (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 206.

<sup>31</sup> Like most of Agobard's works, *De grandine* is extant in only one manuscript, Paris BN lat. 2853 a ninth or tenth-century Lyon manuscript. Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, li-lii.

<sup>32</sup> Henri Platelle, "Agobard, Evêque de Lyon (†840), les soucoupes volantes, les convulsionnaires" in *Apparitions et Miracles*, ed. Alain Dierkens (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1991), 88.

<sup>33</sup> Agobard, *De grandine*, I.1-2 (3).

<sup>34</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 39.

<sup>35</sup> Gregory, *Historiae*, II.32, II.34 (MGH SSRM I.1, 78-84).

one law, or, failing that, to ban the use of Gundobad's law.<sup>36</sup> Louis, like his father, concerned himself with the proper execution of justice within the empire.<sup>37</sup> Agobard in these two tracts alerted Louis to what he perceived as a gross miscarriage of justice, as well as a religious danger. Also, by requesting Louis put the entire empire under one law, Agobard provided him with an opportunity to expand on Charlemagne's desire to revise and reconcile the various Frankish law codes, even though the existence of these codes had become a "political principle," and thus likely to be jealously guarded.<sup>38</sup> However, since Frankish legal traditions made use of ordeals, and since Carolingian judges appear to have had the freedom to use a number of methods (such as customary law) to reach a decision,<sup>39</sup> Agobard's request that Louis put the entire empire under one law or at least disallow Gundobad's law makes little sense. He could have been asking Louis to put the empire under a form of Roman law, since that made no provision for ordeal, or he may have been suggesting that Louis needed to remove the use of ordeal from Frankish law. Yet what emerges from these pieces is not an appeal to Louis's might and right as emperor, but a critique of an aspect of law which existed across the empire, not just in Agobard's section of it. We know of no official response from the palace, assuming Louis heard of Agobard's concerns. That Louis did issue a (probably unenforced) ban on trial by water in 829 likely bears no relation to Agobard's prodding mostly about trial by combat.<sup>40</sup>

Agobard's other work addressed to Louis from this time, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, composed in 818 or 819 concerned the continued presence of Adoptionism in the empire. Felix, the ousted bishop of Urgell, had been condemned twice, once by a synod of bishops at Regensburg in 792, and again at the Council of Frankfurt in 794, at which point he was exiled to

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<sup>36</sup> Agobard, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, XIV.18-23 (28).

<sup>37</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.13 (*MGH SS II*, 593).

<sup>38</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, 29 (*MGH SS II*, 458); Fouracre, "Origins of the nobility," 21.

<sup>39</sup> e.g. *Lex Salica*, c.88-89 in *MGH LL Nat. Germ.* IV.2, ed. Karl Eckhardt (Hannover: Hahn, 1969), 154-157; Paul Fouracre, "Carolingian justice and the rhetoric of improvement and contexts of abuse" in *La Giustizia nell'alto Medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1994), 794.

<sup>40</sup> *Capit. missorum Worm.*, c.12 (*MGH Capit.* II, 16.)

Lyon.<sup>41</sup> Felix died, still exiled in Lyon, in 818. After his death, Agobard claimed to have found a tract by Felix which showed that he still held the Adoptionist beliefs for which he had been condemned.<sup>42</sup> Agobard therefore sent notice of this occurrence to Louis, as well as his own refutation of the heresy. This would seem to be a tailor-made opportunity for Agobard to show Louis and others at the court his due vigilance in maintaining the orthodoxy of the realm, and to showcase his knowledge of the Fathers and church history. Of course the opportunity only arose because the vigilance of Leidrad, who had initial custody, and then Agobard, had slipped. Their failure set up Agobard's opportunity. Also, even with the seemingly safe task of refuting an already-condemned heretic, Agobard found himself in conflict with others. He noted towards the beginning of the piece that some accused him of combating Felix's teachings out of jealousy, rather than faith (I.12-14).<sup>43</sup> Already then, Agobard had enemies at court, at home, or both.

Also during this early period, Agobard wrote *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii* for Bernard of Vienne probably around 817, when he likewise wrote to Louis about ordeals. Agobard introduced *De priuilegio sacerdotii* as a continuation of a conversation, and as a tool to help move it further.<sup>44</sup> He used the work to outline the tension between the inherent superiority of priests over the laity and the reality that too many priests, through their bad lives, insufficient training, or heretical doctrines, did not merit such authority. He also used it to share his frustration over "house priests," (*domesticus sacerdos*) whose ordination the wealthy demanded so that the priests could serve on their patrons' estates. As well as removing these priests from public, parochial duties, the circumstances of their ordination and service made it difficult to assert episcopal authority on the estates (XI). Although banned from appointing or removing

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<sup>41</sup> ARF an.792 (MGH SRG VI, 90-91); *Concilium Francofurtense*, c.1 (MGH Conc. II.1, 165), Ado, *Chronicon* an.794 (MGH SS II, 320).

<sup>42</sup> Agobard, *Aduersus dogma Felicis*, I.1-7 (74).

<sup>43</sup> "...sed simplicitate ingenii arbitrati sunt, me non id fecisse zelo fidei, sed zelo inuidentie, sicut moris est eorum."  
" (74)

<sup>44</sup> Agobard, *De priuilegio sacerdotii*, I.3-11 (53).

priests without a bishop's consent,<sup>45</sup> some of the powerful, it seems, were comfortable demanding that consent. This defiance of canonical and imperial rulings came in a region largely ignored by Carolingian rulers, and whose aristocracy had enjoyed a fair amount of autonomy because of that.<sup>46</sup> With its use of the relevant scriptural and patristic sources, and its refutation of a practice contrary to episcopal interests, *De priuilegio sacerdotii* was a fitting work to further commend Agobard to his colleague and neighbour, even while it pointed to an area of conflict with the region's magnates.

What happened after Attigny, rather than before, better explains its use as the turning point between Agobard's early and mid-career. It is after Attigny, indeed in Agobard's own account of and response to the council, *De dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum*, written between 823 and 825, that he began to record problems in ensuring that his works came to Louis's attention.<sup>47</sup> One could conclude that the works addressed to Louis from the early period, those on ordeal and Adoptionism, did, in fact, reach their intended audience. It seems rather a moot point, however, since we have no record of Agobard's works having any impact. What Agobard's admission about access does mean, however, is that we cannot assume, from that point on, that Louis read or was even made aware of the works Agobard wrote to him. This is an important point since around this same time Agobard began his conflict with Louis over the baptism of Jews' slaves. The hampered access and this conflict contributed to Agobard's growing disillusionment with Louis, culminating in his joining Lothar's side in the rebellion of 833. That year, in turn, marks the difference between Agobard's mid- and late-career.

Unlike Aachen, the first councils that took place during Agobard's tenure, no doubts at all exist for his attendance at the Council of Attigny, held in 822. Agobard recorded some of the

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<sup>45</sup> *Concilium Attiniacense*, c.5 (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 472); cf. *Capitula ad episcopos* (819), c.9 (*MGH Capit.* I, 277).

<sup>46</sup> Geary, *Aristocracy in Provence*, 150.

<sup>47</sup> "Vtrum uero audita retulerint domno imperatori, nescio." Agobard, *De dispensatione*, IV.54-55 (123).

proceedings of the council and his own participation in *De dispensatione*.<sup>48</sup> Agobard wrote that, following Adalhard's exhortation to Louis that the emperor should correct what he could, Agobard added, in what seems to have been a speech to the council, his own suggestions (III.7-IV.3). He wanted Louis to restore, as much as he could, church property taken by his predecessors to pay their followers. He commended Louis for his desire to understand and amend what was wrong in the empire (IV.4-10), and, for that reason, thought it necessary that Louis know about the danger in having church property taken "contrary to the prohibition and the canons," and used by lay men.<sup>49</sup> Agobard noted how bishops and rulers, "after the Church of God had spread throughout the whole earth,"<sup>50</sup> had been in agreement about the necessity of protecting sanctified property (IV.14-30). Despite this, land and goods had been taken. Agobard did not blame Louis for this, but rather his predecessors (IV.41-42). Yet for Agobard the temporary necessity, the need for lords and rulers to pay their followers, did not excuse anyone from the violation such a land-grab represented (IV.31-40). He recognized the impossibility of all property being returned, but insisted that Louis must do what he could in all fear and sorrow for his ancestors' errors, since the present situation violated God's will and the canons (IV.42-52).

Although Agobard was neither the first nor the last cleric to push for the return of church property, he used some strong language in his own argument on the subject. Principally, Agobard, in trying to avoid blaming Louis for the confiscated property, instead blamed his predecessors, yet left Louis with the responsibility of setting the situation right.<sup>51</sup> The move is somewhat surprising. True, Louis, having used the council as a forum to admit to and perform penance for his part in the death of Bernard of Italy and to become reconciled to members of his

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<sup>48</sup> Agobard, *De dispensatione*, II-IV (121-23).

<sup>49</sup> "Necesse est ergo, ut uestra industria magnanimitati eius suggerat pericula de rebus ecclesiasticis, quas contra uetitum et contra canones tractant, et in usus proprios expendunt homines laici." *ibid.*, IV.11-13 (122).

<sup>50</sup> "Postquam enim diffusa est Ecclesia Dei toto orbe terrarum. . ." *ibid.*, IV.14 (122).

<sup>51</sup> Agobard, *De dispensatione*, IV.41-46 (123).

family,<sup>52</sup> may have been open to such a blunt assessment of the situation. Again, following the death of Benedict of Aniane the previous year, this speech may have been Agobard's attempt to make known his availability as a replacement spiritual advisor. However, to do so by demanding the swift resolution of a highly complicated problem, and, in the course of making said demands essentially question the piety of the ruling family, seems, at best, a gross political miscalculation. The only mitigating factor is that Agobard did not know whether or not Louis heard of his speech.<sup>53</sup> From what he described in *De dispensatione*, it would seem that the clerics held discussions amongst themselves, and it was in these discussions that Agobard expressed his desire for the return of church property. Perhaps, then, Agobard did not seek to impress Louis so much as he wished to impress his colleagues.

From what we can tell, however, the speech apparently did not gain Agobard any favours or many friends, since after Attigny he became increasingly isolated from the court. Several of his works after this council mentioned his inability to access Louis or the court freely. Along with the mention in *De dispensatione* itself, Agobard wrote in *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum* (written probably in 822 or 823) that he had not been able to follow one of his addressees, a court official, near enough into Louis's presence to overhear what was said. Agobard also claimed that he could not find the man afterwards, which suggests that Agobard did not have absolute, and perhaps not even adequate, access to court officials.<sup>54</sup> After Attigny, Agobard appears shut out from power. His conflict with Louis over the baptism of Jews' slaves, and then over the place of Jews themselves in society, could not have helped matters.

That conflict ran from about 822 to 827 and provoked four works from Agobard, *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum*, *Contra praeceptum impium de baptismo iudaicorum mancipiorum*, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, and *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*. What

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<sup>52</sup> ARF, an.822 (MGH SRG VI, 158).

<sup>53</sup> Agobard, *De dispensatione*, IV.54-55 (123).

<sup>54</sup> Agobard, *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum*, 6-12 (115).

began on Agobard's end as a question to Adalhard, Wala, and Helisachar, all palace clerics, about the policy regarding the baptism of Jews' pagan slaves,<sup>55</sup> led to at least one charter of protection for a Jew from Louis,<sup>56</sup> and ended with Agobard penning *De iudaicis*, one of the most remarkable anti-Jewish tracts in the history of Jewish-Christian relations. These works will be discussed in much more detail in chapters 2 and 3, however, in this context it is worth noting that, at least on this topic, Agobard was not a cleric in competition, but rather a cleric in conflict.

The same cannot be said for the other works from this time. Agobard wrote *De spe et timore*, an exegetical tract on hope, fear, and sin, at the request of Ebbo of Reims between 823 and 826, thus after Attigny and while in the midst of his conflict with Louis. Ebbo was Louis's foster-brother, and before his fall from grace in the wake of the 833 rebellion against Louis, had also served as his librarian, and then his appointed Archbishop of Reims.<sup>57</sup> After his promotion to the see of Reims in 816, Ebbo had remained active in the life of the empire, particularly through manuscript production and the mission to the Danes. He maintained his loyalty to his foster-brother and patron until the rebellion of 833, when various annals recorded that he took the lead among the dissident clerics.<sup>58</sup> That Ebbo, connected and involved as he was with Louis, asked Agobard for *De spe et timore* shows that his speech at Attigny, while probably not politically savvy, did not cut him off entirely from those with influence at the court, despite his reported difficulty in gaining access to Louis himself. It is a reminder that we should not overstate Agobard's isolation from the court.

Likewise in the midst of his conflict with Louis, in 825 or 826 Agobard entered the fray created by Claudius of Turin's actions against the icons in the churches there. Yet while Jonas of

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<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, 22-30 (115).

<sup>56</sup> *MGH Form.* no.31, 310-11.

<sup>57</sup> Flodoard, *Historia*, II.19 (*MGH SS XIII*, 467-71); Peter McKeon, "Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (816-835): A study in the Carolingian empire and church" *Church History* 43:4 (1974): 437-39.

<sup>58</sup> Flodoard, *Historia*, II.20 (*MGH SS XIII*, 471-74); Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.56 (*MGH SS II*, 602); *AB*, an.835 (*MGH SS I*, 428-29); Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.54 (*MGH SS II*, 639-40).

Orléans later addressed his *De cultu imaginum* to King Charles,<sup>59</sup> Agobard's *De picturis et imaginibus* has come to us unaddressed. Jonas's work represented a restatement of the official stand taken at the Council of Paris in 825. Agobard, however, took a stand far more sympathetic to Claudius's iconoclastic leanings, arguing that the adoration of images is the devil's work, and that people should only think of icons as pictures.<sup>60</sup> Since Jonas argued just the opposite in his work,<sup>61</sup> Agobard choose the officially incorrect stance on this issue. Since the audience for *De picturis* remains unknown, it is possible that Agobard's thoughts on icons were not broadcasted to those in favour with the court, sparing him an additional front of conflict.

Despite his conflict with Louis, Agobard continued to assert himself throughout this mid-point of his career. It was by far the most active period of his life, in terms of writings produced, the only real measurement available. Scholars have dated fully half of his works to the middle third of his tenure, 822-30. His first work once he left off the conflict over Jews and their slaves, *De iniusticiis*, he sent, uninvited, to Matfrid, Count of Orléans, around 826 or 827. In it, Agobard warned him about his participation in the corruption of justice. Since Agobard's letter cannot be dated precisely, it is impossible to say whether his charges of corruption came before or after Matfrid's failure, along with Count Hugh of Tours (Lothar's father-in-law), to spare Barcelona and Gerona from a Muslim incursion in 827, and their loss of office the following year. Both men then helped lead the first revolt against Louis in 829/30.<sup>62</sup> It seems likely that the letter came before the Barcelona debacle, or perhaps between that and Matfrid's punishment, since Agobard assured him that God had chosen him to be a minister to the emperor and empire, an unusual choice of words had he already been stripped of office.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Jonas, *De cultu imaginum* in PL 106, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1851), 305B.

<sup>60</sup> Agobard, *De picturis*, XXXI (179-80).

<sup>61</sup> Jonas, *De cultu imaginum* (PL 106, 329C-330B).

<sup>62</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.36 (MGH SS II, 597); McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 130, 170.

<sup>63</sup> Agobard, *De iniusticiis*, 11-13 (225).



Agobard may have finished writing to Louis about Jews, but he produced one more work on the subject, *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*, addressed to Nibridius of Narbonne, another of Agobard's southern colleagues, sometime during 826-828. This work, like his other anti-Jewish writings, will be explored in more detail in Chapter 2 and 3. In this context however, it is important to note that Agobard felt fairly close to Nibridius, and comfortable enough with him to both complain about Jews and their secular supporters, and to enlist his help in the struggle to keep Jews and Christians separate.<sup>64</sup>

Also during this time Agobard, the deacon Florus and a priest named Hildigius wrote *De quorundam inlusione signorum* in 828 or 829 for Bartholomew, who succeeded Nibridius as archbishop of Narbonne in 828. Bartholomew had concerns over certain "miraculous" signs, seizures and apparent sulphur burns, that had recently taken place.<sup>65</sup> In response, the three Lyon clerics offered a short discourse on the nature of such signs, and how people should respond to them. The work was an appropriate gesture of aid to a new archbishop faced with a rash of mysterious events. It could also be read as a way to make Narbonne indebted to Lyon, but that would be more likely if Agobard had written the work alone. As it stands, *De quorundam inlusione signorum* is perhaps best understood as a neighbourly act.

It was after the piece for Bartholomew that Agobard once again addressed Louis with *De diuisione imperii* in 829 or 830, only two or three years after his last work about Jews had been sent to the palace. Agobard felt the need to write to Louis once again because of his concern over Louis's redivision of the empire in 829.<sup>66</sup> Agobard scolded Louis for abandoning the plan of 817 made in council and with God's help.<sup>67</sup> Agobard either still had allies in the court, or simply felt sure enough in his own assertions, to risk writing such a piece so soon after coming to loggerheads with the emperor.

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<sup>64</sup> Agobard, *De cauendo*, 73-75, 108-111 (233-34).

<sup>65</sup> Agobard, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, I.4-14 (237).

<sup>66</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.35 (MGH SS II, 597).

<sup>67</sup> Agobard, *De diuisione imperii*, IV-V (248-49).

During these same years Agobard penned a lengthy theological tract, *De fidei ueritate et totius boni institutione*, in 829 or 830, addressed to no one. It is a somewhat rambling work, moving from piety, to a discourse of the Trinity, to discussions on persecution, Hell, and the Antichrist. More importantly at this time, Agobard and Fridugis, abbot of Saint Martin of Tours, pupil, compatriot, and successor of Alcuin, and Louis's chancellor from 819-32, seem to have had a disagreement on theological matters. The only portion to survive, however, is Agobard's *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi*, written around 830. In it, Agobard took the abbot and chancellor to task for suggesting, among other things, that the patriarchs could not be Christian because Christ had not yet come.<sup>68</sup> In short, far from distancing himself after Attigny and his failed confrontation over Jews, Agobard continued to involve himself in the empire and address some of the leading figures of his day. This involvement continued during Agobard's late career.

### *The Rebellions, Exile, and Death*

Agobard took part in the rebellions against Louis the Pious in the 830s, as evidenced by his loss of his see following Louis's final recapturing of power, and especially by Agobard's three writings penned from the spring to the fall of 833: *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*, *Liber apologeticus I* and *II*, and *Cartula de Ludouici imperatoris poenitentia*. However, no evidence exists to indicate how deep, or how official, Agobard's involvement was. It appears that he was involved deeply enough to be deposed, but not so deeply as to exclude reinstatement several years later. His position was official enough to write up the account of Louis's deposition and penance at Compiègne in the fall of 833, but not so official that scholars can be sure of the audience or impact of his writings from the time.

The rebellions of the 830s were relatively well-documented and subsequently have been much-studied. Essentially, as discussed in the Introduction, Louis attempted in 829 to give his

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<sup>68</sup> Agobard, *Contra obiectiones*, XVI (295).

late-born fourth son, Charles, a place in the imperial inheritance scheme that had held since 817.

This action drove his other three sons, particularly the oldest, Lothar, to rebel.<sup>69</sup> Despite Agobard's warning to Louis in *De diuisione imperii* about this new scheme, no evidence suggests that Agobard took part in the first armed revolt against Louis in 829/30. He did, however, involve himself in the second revolt, three years later. When the rebellious brothers brought Pope Gregory IV into Gaul, for unknown but much-debated reasons, Louis and some of the bishops objected to Gregory's presence as meddling in Frankish affairs.<sup>70</sup> These objections caused Agobard to write *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*, where he reminded Louis of the Pope's supremacy, and included his own wishes that the situation would resolve peacefully.<sup>71</sup>

After the brothers succeeded in once again depriving Louis of his imperial office in 833, Agobard wrote justifications for that action. In his two short tracts, both entitled *Liber apologeticus*, Agobard described an emperor who failed to maintain control over his own household, particularly his wife, and an empire thus in danger of collapse.<sup>72</sup> He also wrote *Cartula de Ludouici imperatoris poenitentia*, which explained some of the rationale for the rebellion, similar to that given in the *Libri apologetici*, and also described some of the proceedings at Compiègne, where Louis was stripped of his office and forced to do penance.<sup>73</sup> This penance would have had the double effect of giving Louis a "pious" (non-lethal) way out of the conflict with his sons, and, to the benefit of his sons, canonically bar him from ruling.<sup>74</sup> That seems to have been the theory behind the act, though it obviously did not work.

<sup>69</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.35-37 (MGH SS II, 597-98).

<sup>70</sup> The letter of the Frankish bishops is lost, but we still have Gregory's response. Gregory IV, *Ad Francorum episcoporum epistolam* in MGH Epp V, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1899), 228-32.

<sup>71</sup> Agobard, *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*, I-III, V.6-9 (303-05).

<sup>72</sup> Agobard, *Liber apologeticus I and II* (309-19). On the threat of collapse, id., *Liber apologeticus I*, IV.11-16 (311).

<sup>73</sup> Agobard, *Cartula poenitentia* (323-24).

<sup>74</sup> Mayke de Jong, "Monastic prisoners or opting out? Political coercion and honour in the Frankish kingdoms" in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 293-94; id. "Public penance," 870-78; Jean Chelini, "Les 'remplois' liturgiques carolingiens" in *Ideologie e pratiche del reimpiego nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1999), 351; cf. the position of the Visigothic king Wamba in

The fact of Agobard's involvement in the struggle against Louis invites questions. When did Agobard turn against Louis? Did he truly support Lothar, or did he simply oppose Louis? The latter seems more likely from his writings. Agobard did not ever praise the sons for their actions. Instead, from the tone of the two *Libri apologetici*, Agobard considered the events the unfortunate outcome of Louis's own cowardice and the turning of his mind by his new wife Judith against his three, grown sons.<sup>75</sup> Given this, it seems that Agobard hoped in Louis for as long as he could, but once it became clear that the empire was destabilising, turned to Lothar as a possibility for maintaining order.<sup>76</sup>

By the time he wrote *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis* around Easter of 833, Agobard was probably already on Lothar's side in the conflict. If not, Louis's reaction to Gregory's presence could very well have been the final act which drove Agobard to Lothar's camp. Either way, Louis's reaction to Gregory's presence would have only provided further, and perhaps final, proof in Agobard's mind that Louis could no longer rule. Louis had already disappointed Agobard's expectations with the retention of Gundobad's law and the practice of ordeal, in the lack of political will to force the return of church property, and of course in Louis's continued protection of Jews despite Agobard's efforts to alert him to the threat Agobard felt they posed to society. Louis's questioning the authority of the pope on an ostensible mission of peace would have only further alienated Agobard from the emperor's side.

Whatever hope he may have had for Lothar, however, would have disappeared once the rebellion failed, and Lothar, in retreat, sacked Chalon-sur-Saône, one of Agobard's suffragan sees. Thegan and the Astronomer both stated that Lothar despoiled the churches there, and that he ordered Bernard of Septimania's sister Gerberga, a nun, drowned in the Saône.<sup>77</sup> Such a

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Roger Collins, *Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity* (Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1995), 119.

<sup>75</sup> Agobard, *Cartula poenitentia*, 14 (323); id., *Liber apologeticus I*, 23-25 (310).

<sup>76</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 251; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 232-34.

<sup>77</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.52 (MGH SS II, 601); Nithard, *Historiarum libri quatuor*, I.5 (MGH SS II, 653)

desecration went against everything Agobard had worked for since Attigny, if not before. Any expectations Agobard may have had that Lothar would be an improvement over Louis would have disappeared and made Agobard Lothar's partisan out of necessity only.

That Agobard may not have been a strong partisan for Lothar is also supported by what seems to be a low level of involvement. Only Ado, Flodoard, and the Astronomer mentioned Agobard at that time, and only his exile.<sup>78</sup> Instead Ebbo, Archbishop of Reims, seems to have been one of the main ecclesiastical participants, or at least to have taken the main portion of blame. Thegan recorded that the bishops chose Ebbo as their lead at Compiègne. Flodoard, Thegan, the Annals of St. Bertin, and the Astronomer all recorded that Ebbo alone was defrocked at the synod of Thionville in 835.<sup>79</sup> Yet Agobard is the only other cleric named in the Astronomer's account, mentioned as one of several bishops disciplined by the synod *in absentia*, having all fled to Italy.<sup>80</sup> As the Astronomer's account makes clear, however, Ebbo and Agobard were not the only clerics involved in the struggles against Louis. Thegan recorded that Jesse, Bishop of Amiens, Archichaplain Hilduin, and Abbot Helisachar worked with Counts Hugh, Matfrid, and Godfrey in the first rebellion in 829/30.<sup>81</sup> Flodoard, writing in the 900s and thus best use cautiously as a source, mentioned that in addition to Agobard, Jesse of Amiens, who Flodoard claimed had been recently reinstated, Herebold of Auxerre, and Bartholomew of Narbonne likewise fled with Lothar into Italy, though none of the sources specified exactly where. Also, Hildeman of Beauvais was caught attempting to flee.<sup>82</sup> Ado recorded that Bernard of Vienne likewise fled with Agobard.<sup>83</sup> Though most of the bishops in the various accounts were not involved enough to warrant mention in the main narratives of the rebellions, all felt

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<sup>78</sup> Ado, *Chronicon*, an.840 (MGH SS II, 321); Flodoard, *Historia*, II.20 (MGH SS XIII, 471-74); Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.54 (MGH SS II, 639-40).

<sup>79</sup> Flodoard, *Historia*, II.20 (MGH SS XIII, 471-73); Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.56 (MGH SS II, 602); AB, an.835 (MGH SS I, 428-29); Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.54 (MGH SS II, 640).

<sup>80</sup> Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.54 (MGH SS II, 640).

<sup>81</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.36 (MGH SS II, 597).

<sup>82</sup> Flodoard, *Historia*, II.20 (MGH SS XIII, 471-72).

<sup>83</sup> Ado, *Chronicon*, an.840 (MGH SS II, 321).

threatened enough to be compelled to flee rather than seek mercy. Agobard, like his colleagues, lost his see in retaliation for choosing the empire over the emperor, less than a year after applauding Louis's penance.

Theoretically disgraced, Agobard did not simply accept his exile and try not to attract attention to himself. However, his scope of writing became limited to the clergy and churches of Lyon. He addressed two writings of this period of exile from 834-39, *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici* and *De antiphonario* to the Lyon church, the abbots and priests of that church in the former,<sup>84</sup> and the cantors of the church of Lyon in the latter.<sup>85</sup> These two works are in fact the only in Agobard's corpus so addressed. It seems clear then, that Agobard felt his first duty was to the church he still considered to be under his care. While he had been in residence at Lyon, he could direct his attention to problems he saw in the wider empire. Forced away from his city, however, Agobard quickly readjusted to ensure that his clerics understood the proper motivation to be a cleric (*De modo regiminis*) and the proper mode of worship (*De antiphonario*).

Louis appointed Amalarius of Metz to administer the see of Lyon in Agobard's place. Amalarius at that point had a long tenure in both episcopal and imperial service. He became Archbishop of Trier in 812 or 813, only to be sent by Charlemagne to conclude the peace with Emperor Michael I in 813, along with Abbot Peter of Nonantula.<sup>86</sup> Louis the Pious sent Amalarius to Rome in 831 in order to investigate Roman liturgy.<sup>87</sup> Indeed he spent many years studying liturgy, but his revisions based on his studies in Rome did not please everyone. He attempted to introduce his reforms after taking over Lyon, and it did not go well. Lyon's traditions "were old and jealously guarded," and so he met with great resistance from Florus in

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<sup>84</sup> Agobard, *De modo regiminis*, XIV.3-6 (334).

<sup>85</sup> id., *De antiphonario*, I.1-3 (337).

<sup>86</sup> Hanssens, "Vita Amalarii," 63-65; *Gesta Treverorum*, XXV in *MGH SS VIII*, ed. Georg Waitz (Hannover: Hahn, 1848), 163; *ARF*, an.813 (*MGH SRG VI*, 137).

<sup>87</sup> Amalarius, *De ordine antiphonarii*, LVIII.3 in *Opera Liturgica Omnia*, t.3, ed. John Hanssens (Vatican: Apostolic, 1948), 94.

Lyon, and Agobard in exile.<sup>88</sup> Both clerics took up the pen to refute Amalarius's "innovations." Florus charged that Amalarius taught that Christ has three bodies, the body he received, the body in the faithful, and the body in those who have died.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps because of pressure from Florus, the Council of Quierzy in 838 declared Amalarius guilty of heretical teaching.<sup>90</sup> Agobard for his part filled his tract *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* with rebuttals of a wide variety of Amalarius's teachings.<sup>91</sup> Again, we see Agobard asserting himself from exile, only this time presumably to a wider audience than simply the Lyon clergy, though, as the work remains unaddressed, that is not certain. Regardless of the audience, exile certainly had not cowed Agobard.

It was probably after Quierzy that Louis restored Agobard to his see.<sup>92</sup> Why Louis consented to this remains unknown, though it may well have come with the general amnesty Louis offered Lothar and his supporters in 839.<sup>93</sup> Also, given the doubts that remained about the canonical validity of Ebbo's ousting from Reims and his successor's assumption of the administration of his post,<sup>94</sup> Louis probably did not want several sees mired in that kind of a canonical grey area. Whatever the reason for the restoration, Agobard clearly ended his life as Archbishop of Lyon. According to the *Annales Lugdunenses*, he died not long after returning to Lyon, on the sixth of June, 840, a mere two weeks before Louis also died.<sup>95</sup> Ado reported that Agobard died at Saintonge while on a royal mission.<sup>96</sup> He had been Archbishop of Lyon for

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<sup>88</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 326; Yitzhak Hen, *The Royal Patronage of Liturgy in Frankish Gaul to the Death of Charles the Bald (877)* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2001), 105.

<sup>89</sup> Florus, *Adversus Amalarium*, I.4 (PL 119, 74).

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*, II.3 (PL 119, 80). Florus provides the only record of this council. cf. *Concilium Carisiacense* in *MGH Conc.* II.2, 768-82.

<sup>91</sup> Agobard, *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* (355-67).

<sup>92</sup> Ado, *Chronicon*, an.840 (MGH SS II, 321).

<sup>93</sup> *AB*, an.839 (MGH SS I, 435).

<sup>94</sup> Janet Nelson, Introduction to *The Annals of St-Bertin*, ed. and trans. Janet Nelson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 6.

<sup>95</sup> "Hoc anno sancte memoriae Agobardus Lugdunensis episcopus obiit 8. Id. Iun. Ludowichus quoque imperator defunctus est 12. Kal. Iul. . ." *Annales Lugdunenses*, an.840 (MGH SS I, 110).

<sup>96</sup> Ado, *Chronicon*, an.840 (MGH SS II, 321).

twenty-four years, not including the nearly four years of Amalarius's leadership. He left the see in the hands of his successor, Amulo, and the deacon Florus.

### *Friends and Acquaintances*

The only sure way to determine who Agobard knew, or at least knew of, is to examine his correspondence. Addressees, where known, were included with the discussion of Agobard's works above. A quick review is in order here, however. Louis by far received the most of any addressee, seven works in all: *Aduersus legem Gundobadi* (and *De diuinis sententiis contra iudicium Dei*), *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*, *De diuisione imperii*, and *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*. Most other named recipients were only gifted with one work. Wala proves the only exception, being named on both *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum* (also addressed to Adalhard and Helisachar) and *Contra praeceptum impium de baptismo iudaicorum mancipiorum* (also addressed to Hilduin). Bernard of Vienne received *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii*. *De spe et timore* went to Ebbo of Reims. Agobard upbraided Matfrid in *De iniusticiis*, and warned Nibridius of Narbonne in *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*. He wrote to Nibridius's successor, Bartholomew of Narbonne in *De quorundam inlusione signorum*. He defended himself to Fridugis, abbot of St. Martin of Tours, through *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi*. Finally, he corrected the clergy and cantors of his church with *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici* and *De antiphonario*. Agobard wrote *De fidei ueritate et totius boni institutione* to "my brothers, the family of Christ"<sup>97</sup> and so it likewise seems meant for the clerics of his area. The designation of "the family of Christ" could be taken to mean the general population, but the length and rather circuitous structure of the work make such an intent unlikely.

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<sup>97</sup> ". . . fratres nostri, familia Christi. . ." Agobard, *De fidei ueritate*, I.1 (253).



Thus, Agobard sent works to five high-ranking court clerics (Wala, Adalhard, Helisachar, Hilduin, and Fridugis), four archbishops (Bernard, Ebbo, Nibridius, and Bartholomew), a count (Matfrid), and of course, the emperor Louis. In short, these men absolutely represented some of the elite of Agobard's day, and he made no apology for writing to them. Only in his works to Louis did Agobard ever offer the *pro forma* admission that the piece could be improved or corrected by others wiser than him.<sup>98</sup> He did use similarly *pro forma* self-deprecatory language with more people than just Louis. He not infrequently "beseeched" (*obsecro*) his recipients, particularly Louis, to read his work. Only in addressing his fellow archbishops (excepting Ebbo, since *De spe et timore* was a commission) did Agobard dispense with the formulas of unworthiness and servitude. However, since such phrases were formulaic, it is difficult, if not impossible, to tell how much a particular writer took such formulas to heart. It seems unlikely that Agobard ever meant the self-deprecation in any more than a superficial manner. For example, we have no record of Agobard and Matfrid ever interacting, and yet Agobard "beseeched" (*obsecro*) Matfrid to read a work, seemingly out of nowhere, in which Agobard upbraided the count for his alleged part in a culture of injustice and corruption. This was the style of a man who felt himself equal, if not superior, to those he wrote. An attitude that surely would not be mistaken by his recipients, and probably did not help his standing at court.

Although most of Agobard's writings were sent to particular people, a number of works remained unaddressed, either intentionally or through accidents of transmission. *De dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum* could fall into the latter category. It was written to a now-unidentified person who had informed Agobard of rumours spread about him as a result of his efforts to reclaim church property.<sup>99</sup> His writings from 833 could also belong in the category of mistakes in transmission. Agobard addressed the first *Liber apologeticus* to the general

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<sup>98</sup> e.g. Agobard, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, 15-17 (73).

<sup>99</sup> "Significauit mihi fidelis ac ueneranda dilectio tua, quod clari et honorati uiri per Septimaniam et Prouintiam consistentes de me incessanter obtrectando loquantur. . ." Agobard, *De dispensatione*, I.1-3 (121).

population of the empire.<sup>100</sup> It seems reasonable to assume that the second work of that title, as well as the *Cartula de Ludouici imperatoris poenitentia*, were likewise intended for as large an audience as possible, though an address no longer exists. Thus only three works (*De grandine et tonitruis*, *De picturis et imaginibus*, and *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*) remain without any address or clues as to the intended recipients. They may have been expanded sermons or instructive works for his clerics, or they may have been written for a particular person or group, but with the names later dropped. If *De grandine* and *De picturis* can be taken as works meant as sermons or instruction for his clerics, they would show that Agobard, even while sending works to people across the empire, by no means neglected his local duties as archbishop before exile seemingly forced him to narrow his focus. Agobard probably wrote *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*, on the other hand, for as wide an audience as he could manage from exile.

This exploration of Agobard's addressees gives a sense of who Agobard knew, and while the list may not be an extensive who's who of Louis's realm, it does show that Agobard was comfortable enough with some of the empire's leading men to write to them. The various court clerics, who received Agobard's first volleys in the fight over baptising Jews' slaves, have not yet been discussed in as much depth as the other addressees. Adalhard and Wala were brothers, illegitimate members of the Carolingian family, and held the abbacy of Corbie in succession. Both became monks and following the death of Benedict of Aniane Louis granted Adalhard, who had opposed Benedict's reforms, the abbacy of Corbie in 821, which he held until his death in 826. Both men, as illegitimate members of the ruling family, suffered changing fortunes throughout Louis's reign, later detailed by Paschasius Radbertus, who had been a monk under both men, in his *Vita Adalhardi* and *Epitaphium Arsenii*. For his part, Helisachar had been Louis's chancellor in Aquitaine and came with him to Aachen to continue his service there as

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<sup>100</sup> "Audite haec omnes gentes. . ." Agobard, *Liber apologeticus* I, I.1 (309).

archichancellor.<sup>101</sup> Hilduin likewise served at Aachen, becoming *sacri palatii archicapellanus* in 819. He and Helisachar, as mentioned above, supported Lothar in 830.<sup>102</sup> Thegan did not record their fate, nor mention them in the rebellion three years later. Yet when Agobard wrote to them, the four men represented some of the most powerful clerics in the empire. For example, the position of archichaplain, Hilduin's post, has been described as "the king's personal counsellor on all ecclesiastical matters, he had all the palace clergy under him and was thus also the ecclesiastical superior of the notaries in the writing office. . ."<sup>103</sup> Likewise, under Louis, chancellors, Helisachar's post, began being chosen from among the ruler's advisers and supporters, rather than from the ranks of notaries.<sup>104</sup> These clerics provide further evidence that Agobard did not shy away from approaching members of Louis's inner circle.

It is interesting to note the high percentage of Agobard's correspondents who were involved in the rebellions of the 830s. Two of them, Adalhard and Nibridius, died before the revolts broke out, but of the eight other addressees, only Fridugis remained loyal to Louis. Bernard of Vienne and Bartholomew of Narbonne are said to have fled, like Agobard, following Lothar's final defeat.<sup>105</sup> Ebbo received the brunt of the blame after 833 and was defrocked.<sup>106</sup> Matfrid, Hilduin, and Helisachar were three of the spearheads for the 829/30 revolt.<sup>107</sup> Wala's involvement is more difficult to categorize. The *Epitaphium Arsenii* does not spare its criticism of Louis, and, despite its difficulties as a source, does point to Wala working against the emperor.<sup>108</sup> That so many of Agobard's correspondents chose rebellion is striking. It suggests that Agobard had a peer group which shared some of his ideas about empire and were willing to

<sup>101</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 84-5, 125.

<sup>102</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.36 (MGH SS II, 597).

<sup>103</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 85.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, 84.

<sup>105</sup> Ado, *Chronicon* an.840 (MGH SS II, 321); Flodoard, *Historia*, II.20 (MGH SS XIII, 471-74).

<sup>106</sup> Flodoard, *Historia*, II.20 (MGH SS XIII, 471-74); Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.56 (MGH SS II, 602); AB, an.835 (MGH SS I, 428-29); Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.54 (MGH SS II, 639-40).

<sup>107</sup> Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.36 (MGH SS II, 597).

<sup>108</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii* (or *Vita Wala*) (MGH SS II, 533-69); David Ganz, "The *Epitaphium Arsenii* and opposition to Louis the Pious" in *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious*, ed. Peter Godman and Roger Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 537-40, 544-45.

act on those ideas. It is also possible, though the epistolary evidence does not exist to prove this, that Agobard wrote to some of the men involved about the state of the empire and their plans. Since the Astronomer only listed Ebbo and Agobard by name among a number of bishops disciplined at Thionville in 835, it is even possible that Agobard took a lead role in 833.<sup>109</sup> While that may be an unnecessary stretch of one source, it is obvious that Agobard was neither alone nor on the fringe in turning against Louis.

Indeed, while his interactions with the court point to Agobard's isolation from that body of power, and that isolation should in no way be discounted, he was also by no means completely cut off and alone in his see. I find it telling that Depreux, in crafting his *Prosopographie*, did not include Agobard in the main body of the text due to his lack of influence at court, but rather placed him at the front of the appendix of those just outside Louis' circle.<sup>110</sup> Agobard's own circle widens when one considers who Agobard likely knew, even if we have no evidence of correspondence or contact. For example, through Leidrad, Agobard could have known Alcuin and Benedict of Aniane, since they all participated in the fight against Adoptionism.<sup>111</sup> It also seems quite likely that Agobard knew Claudius of Turin, since, even accepting the dates given in the *Annales Lugdunenses*, they would have both been in Lyon under Leidrad at the same time.<sup>112</sup> Even if Agobard had spent a portion of that time out on episcopal circuit instead of assisting Leidrad in Lyon itself, Agobard and Claudius must have surely crossed paths. There could be a connection with Theodulf of Orléans as well, since both Leidrad and Theodulf had served as

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<sup>109</sup> Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c.54 (*MGH SS II*, 640). Poole stated that Agobard was a leader in the revolt, and one must assume the Astronomer's account of Thionville affected that assertion. Reginald Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1960), 42.

<sup>110</sup> Depreux, *Prosopographie*, 406-08.

<sup>111</sup> e.g. Alcuin, ep. 200 (*MGH Epp IV*, 330-33); Chandler, "Heresy and Empire," 524; Depreux, *Prosopographie*, 287-88.

<sup>112</sup> Claudius of Turin's letter to Abbot Dructramn on his exposition of Genesis is dated to 811 and mentions his study in Lyon (*MGH Epp IV*, 590, 592). The *Annales Lugdunenses* place Agobard's arrival in Lyon in 792 (*MGH SS I*, 110).

*missi* in the area, both witnessed Charlemagne's will, and Theodulf was friends with Agobard's suffragan bishop of Autun, Modoin.<sup>113</sup>

Agobard would have also made his own connections as archbishop, beyond those we know of from his correspondence or can guess from his relationship with Leidrad. There were, of course, his suffragan bishops – Alberic, bishop of Langres and from 825 a *missus* for the area of Lyon, Vienne, and east to Savoy,<sup>114</sup> Modoin who served Autun, Favo at Chalon-sur-Saône, and Hildebaud in Mâcon. All were in attendance to confirm Alberic's restoration of the monastery of Bèze, and all except Hildebaud signed their names to Ebbo's deposition at Thionville in 835, Hildebaud having died in 830 and no successor apparently named until 853.<sup>115</sup> Thus none of Agobard's suffragan bishops followed him into rebellion and then exile, suggesting that his sway over them may have been minimal, at least in political matters.

Agobard's connections would have also extended beyond his archiepiscopal borders. We know, for example, that he wrote *De spe et timore* for Ebbo of Reims. Through him and through general councils like those at Aachen or Attigny, Agobard could have cultivated relationships with any member of court or with other high-ranking clerics. Without more evidence of correspondence or contact, we cannot fully trace Agobard's social network. There is little question, however, that it did not include any real kind of influence or voice at Louis' court. However, those facts should not be taken to mean that Agobard did not participate in the horizontal relationships so important in maintaining magnates' power, only that it is harder for us to trace them since he largely operated outside of court circles, which are the only ones thus far mapped by scholars.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c.33 (*MGH SS II*, 461); Theodulf, *Ad Modoinum de exilio* in *MGH Poet.* I ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881), 563-65; Depreux, *Prosopographie*, 333-34, 383-85.

<sup>114</sup> *Commemoratio missis data* (*MGH Capit.* I, 308).

<sup>115</sup> *Concilium Lingonense* (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 681-82); *Concilium Theodonis-villam* (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 703).

<sup>116</sup> Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, 79.

Just as we cannot tell the full extent of Agobard's peer group, it is likewise difficult to tell how many of his addressees, the people we know for certain he had contact with, were more than just acquaintances. The two most likely candidates are Nibridius and Bernard. The manner in which Agobard approached his other recipients indicated only acquaintance. The salutations were formal, and showed no signs of more openness or intimacy. In contrast, the works addressed to both Bernard and Nibridius do show such signs. In the work for Bernard, *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii*, Agobard wrote how he and Bernard had spoken previously about the state of the church, and that the work was meant to further that conversation with quotes from the Bible.<sup>117</sup> As an additional sign of friendship, Bernard lent his name to *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*, as did Faof, Agobard's suffragan bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône. Agobard referred to Nibridius as his "father" in *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*, and expressed regret that they could not meet face-to-face more often, but instead had to rely on letters.<sup>118</sup> It would seem highly unlikely that Agobard had only two friends, but out of all of his correspondents, we can only speak with some confidence of Nibridius and Bernard as being more to Agobard than mere acquaintances.

### Works

Due to both the number of intervening years and the number of editions, scholarly disputes have arisen over the exact contents of Agobard's body of work.<sup>119</sup> Van Acker chose to exclude three works sometimes attributed to Agobard from his edition: two short poems entitled *Epitaphium Caroli Magni Imperatoris*, and *De translatione reliquiarum sanctorum martyrum*, and a short tract called *Liber de divina psalmodia*. He included three other disputed works in his

<sup>117</sup> Agobard, *De priuilegio sacerdotii*, I (53).

<sup>118</sup> Agobard, *De cauendo*, 1-11 (231).

<sup>119</sup> The arguments for or against the inclusion of the six works discussed in the following paragraphs can be found in Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xxii-xxxvii; Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 92, 99-108; Boshof, *Agobard*, 157, 282, 286, 318-19.

edition: two tracts entitled *De picturis et imaginibus*, and *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*, and the acrostic poem *Agobardo pax sit*. I have generally abided by Van Acker's decisions, though not always without reservations.

The exclusion of the two short poems hardly effects our understanding of Agobard. *De translatione reliquiarum sanctorum martyrum* did not make Van Acker's edition because the authorship remains a question, since scholars are not clear whether the work was written by Agobard, or for him. Towards the end of the poem, the author included a prayer that St. Cyprian protect Agobard.<sup>120</sup> Boshof interpreted the prayer for Agobard as an explicit naming of "our patron" (*patronus noster*) from several lines earlier, thus making Agobard's authorship impossible.<sup>121</sup> Dümmler and Van Acker both assigned the work to Florus, though without much by way of explanation as to why, while Cabaniss argued that Florus would not have known Leidrad, who also appeared in the poem, and instead offered it as Agobard's first work.<sup>122</sup> I would argue against Agobard's authorship of *De translatione* on the grounds that if he wrote *De picturis et imaginibus*, which I believe he did, *De translatione* would seem out of character when compared to the scepticism about images and relics expressed in *De picturis*.<sup>123</sup> The other poem left out of Van Acker's edition, *Epitaphium Caroli*, presents problems because the thirteen-line work in praise of Charlemagne is simply not substantial enough to allow for much investigation.<sup>124</sup> However, I find it highly unlikely that Agobard, with his strict distinctions between the sacred and the profane, would have ever declared that the skies at Charlemagne's death should be as golden as they were at Christ's birth.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> "O doctor sacer, o beate martyr  
 Serva pontificum pius Agobardum"  
*De translatione reliquiarum martyrum* (PL 104, 352A).

<sup>121</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 318.

<sup>122</sup> Dümmler, "Prooemium" (*MGH Poet II*, 509); Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xxiii; Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 19, 99-100.

<sup>123</sup> e.g. Agobard, *De picturis*, XVII.1-3 (166).

<sup>124</sup> *Epitaphium Caroli* (PL 104, 349C).

<sup>125</sup> "Aurea caelorum postquam de Virgine Christus  
 Sumpserat apta sibi mundi pro crimine membra,

As for the only poem included in the Van Acker edition, *Agobardo pax sit*, I am not entirely convinced of the reasons for its inclusion, which is why it was not discussed in the biographical section. Taken with the questionable authorship of *De translatione* and *Epitaphium Caroli*, it is possible that Agobard wrote three poems, or that he wrote none. Since poetry played such an important role in the life and competition of the court,<sup>126</sup> it is important to resolve this issue if at all possible. *De translatione* and *Epitaphium Caroli*, if Agobard's, would have easily fit into the culture of competition, since both praise Charlemagne as well as display linguistic skill. *Agobardo pax sit*, on the other hand, could not have been meant as a competitive piece. The poem focused on death and judgement, and used intensely personal language. The largely pessimistic tone of the work I think makes it unlikely that the author would have intended this poem to be read aloud as a way to display his learning. Of course displays of learning were not the only reasons for writing poetry. The author, who addressed the reader as "father," probably meant it as a gift for that reader alone.<sup>127</sup>

Attempting to unravel the authorship and the intended recipient of the poem is very difficult. The twelfth stanza, which seems to indicate authorship, appears to be incomplete. The manuscript reads: "Receive the little verses sent to you, father. Indeed you are called. Read mine in the first letters of the verses."<sup>128</sup> According to the form of the poem, there should be six more syllables in the stanza. Van Acker and Traube identified the gap as coming between *vocaris* and *tu*, that is, the second half of the second line of the stanza is missing.<sup>129</sup> They then make their case for Agobard's authorship, for if one fills the gap with the recipient's name, then

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Jam decimus quantus post centies octo volaba  
 Annus, fluctivagi meruit per fervida coeli  
 Aetheri Carolus, Francorum gloria gentis,  
 Aequora transire, et placidum comprehendere portum." *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Mary Garrison, "The emergence of Carolingian latin literature and the court of Charlemagne (780-814)" in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 114, 117, 119, etc.

<sup>127</sup> *Agobardo*, XII.1 (373).

<sup>128</sup> "Suscipe pater versiculos missos tibi vocaris tu vero meum in versuum primis litteris lege." Lieren Van Acker, "Notice sur le poème rythmique 'Agobardo Pax Sit'" *Revue Bénédictine* 88 (1978): 292.

<sup>129</sup> Van Acker, "Notice," 292; cf. *Agobardo*, XII.2 (373).



the following lines would be read as “read my [name] in the first letters of the verses” – Agobard. Dümmler, however, assumed that the poem was dedicated to Agobard. He therefore edited the stanza to read thus: “Receive the little verses sent to you, father. You are indeed named in the first letters of my verses. Read your name.”<sup>130</sup> While it seems more likely that the missing syllables came as a result of a dropped half-line, as Van Acker and Traube attest, the defect in the only witness<sup>131</sup> means that the question of authorship and dedication must remain unsolved.

Too many possibilities regarding these poems remain open. *De translatione* and *Epitaphium Caroli* could show a younger Agobard’s attempts to make himself known at court. They could just as easily belong to Florus, or another cleric entirely. Because of that uncertainty, one cannot use them as evidence for Agobard’s participation in that particularly Carolingian form of competition without serious hesitation. Likewise, *Agobardo pax sit* may contain Agobard’s feelings about his own hardships, or it may have been a gift from someone as a comfort for Agobard. Aside from the question of competition, however, the inclusion or exclusion of these works from Agobard’s corpus neither adds nor detracts significantly to our understanding of him.

The three debated prose works – *De picturis et imaginibus*, *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* and *De divina psalmodia* – prove slightly more complicated to decipher in terms of inclusion or exclusion. I have chosen to exclude *De divina psalmodia* for several reasons. As a short tirade against Amalarius’s liturgical “innovations,”<sup>132</sup> the piece could easily belong to Agobard as a companion to *De antiphonario*. It could also just as easily have come from the pen of Florus, or even of another Lyon cleric. *De divina psalmodia*, *De antiphonario*, and *Opuscula*

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<sup>130</sup> “Suscipe, pater, versiculos missos  
tibi, vocaris tu vero meorum  
in versuum primis litteris: tuum

lege iam nomen.” (*MGH Poet.* II, 119).

<sup>131</sup> Paris BN lat. 4841, 9th. Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, liii.

<sup>132</sup> *De divina psalmodia* (PL 104, 325C-330A).

*adversus Amalarium* are quite similar in language, tone, and message, including the denigration heaped on Amalarius. He is called “foolish and impudent” (*stultus et improbus*) in *De divina psalmodia*, Florus labelled his teachings an “insane and groundless error” (*errorem insanum et vanum*), and Agobard attacked the additions to antiphons written by Amalarius as “mendacious or blasphemous” (*mendacitas aut blasphemias*).<sup>133</sup> As the authorship of *De divina psalmodia* cannot be properly deciphered, and also since it matches so well with *De antiphonario*, I believe it can be safely excluded from discussion without changing any conclusions about Agobard’s thoughts on Amalarius, or on the divine office.

I have chosen to include both *De picturis et imaginibus* and *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* in my discussions. I believe *De picturis* belongs in Agobard’s corpus because it fits so well with the context of the dispute over images that took place in the mid-820s, when the work is dated. Writing *De picturis* would have served several purposes for Agobard. It would have involved him, invited or no, in the theological debate *du jour*. It would have once again displayed his learning and his command of the multitude of sources available to him at Lyon, but especially a command of Augustine. In these regards, it is also most likely that a cleric with something to gain, a bishop, archbishop, or abbot, wrote *De picturis*. The work would have also given Agobard the opportunity to question a practice which could so easily lead to (or even stem from) superstition rather than true belief. Given how often he attacked beliefs and practices he considered suspect, I find it hard to believe that he would not have had an opinion about icons, and that his opinion would not have been the largely negative one found in *De picturis*.

The work deployed Agobard’s usual list of supporting evidence. Augustine held pride of place among the patristic citations, to which he added canons and historical anecdotes. Agobard’s own thoughts on the subject, phrased with his usual bluntness and surety of his own

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<sup>133</sup> *ibid.* (PL 104, 325C); Florus, *Opuscula adversus Amalarium*, 2 (PL 119, 73B); Agobard, *De antiphonario* III.3 (339).

correctness, came interwoven with the citations. Agobard never left room to doubt his position on any given issue. In this particular case, after making it clear around the mid-point of *De picturis* that a faithful person should properly move from outward, worldly things to inward, godly contemplation, Agobard ended his tract by dismissing the argument that those who venerate icons do not worship the images but the saints with a simple quote from Isaiah, that God gives His glory to no other.<sup>134</sup>

A similar case can be made for the inclusion of *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*. Essentially, the tone and intent of the work are similar enough not only to *De antiphonario*, but also to *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi*, to be considered Agobard's. Both works written against those particular clerics used language of disparagement, leaving the reader with the impression that if Amalarius or Fridugis had bothered to actually reflect on what they were saying, they would not have made the mistakes which led to Agobard's attacks. *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* also fits with Agobard's common method of argument, that is, to argue against something by discounting it. In both *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi* and *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* Agobard began his rebuttal of each point by dismissing what either cleric had previously written. He repeatedly asked his readers, rhetorically, "Who does not know/see x,"<sup>135</sup> or, "Who has ever heard of such a thing."<sup>136</sup> He used the same tactic in the section of *De antiphonario* dealing with Amalarius's innovations.<sup>137</sup>

Also, while it is always possible that an anonymous Lyon cleric took up the pen in the cause against Amalarius, it seems more likely that Agobard, as well as ensuring the discipline and liturgical correctness of his church through *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici* and *De antiphonario*, would also directly attack the source of potential problems, Amalarius himself.

<sup>134</sup> Agobard, *De picturis*, XVI.1-9, XXXV.1-4 (165, 181); Is. 42:8

<sup>135</sup> "Quis enim fidelium ignorat. . ." Agobard, *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi*, II.18 (284); cf. ". . .quis non uideat. . ." id., *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*, II.40 (357).

<sup>136</sup> "Quis audiuit talem interrogationem?" id., *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi*, XV.4 (294); cf. "Quis audiuit umquam tale. . .?" id., *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*, XIV.28-29 (365).

<sup>137</sup> e.g. Agobard, *De antiphonario*, V (340).

Not least because the only way Agobard could possibly return to his see would be for Amalarius to be ousted from it. Amalarius, through his innovations, left himself open to charges of heresy,<sup>138</sup> and both Agobard and Florus quickly exploited the opportunity. Taken together, these factors make a strong case for Agobard's authorship.

Like the disagreements around the specific contents of Agobard's corpus, issues exist for the dates of his works, as outlined in brief in the table at the end of this chapter. For most of the works, the proposed dates are within a few years of each other. For only two pieces, *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii* and *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici*, is the gap between hypotheses large enough to warrant discussion.<sup>139</sup> Even more so than the disputes around the inclusion of a particular work, the evidence marshalled in favour of a specific date of composition is largely subjective, such as what environment a scholar thinks most likely produced the work. In the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary, I have chosen to follow Van Acker's dating of *De priuilegio sacerdotii* to 817-22, and *De modo regiminis* to 834-39. Cabaniss dated both works to 826-27, a theory which makes little sense to me given that those years included the climax of Agobard's dispute with Louis about Jews as well as several other pieces. An acceptance of those dates would push the number of works produced by Agobard during those two years to seven, which seems an improbably high level of output.

### *Personality*

A reading of Agobard's works has led scholars to a variety of conclusions about his approach and personality. For Cabaniss, Agobard displayed "clear-headed rationality." Poole

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<sup>138</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 148-52.

<sup>139</sup> The arguments are given in Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunenses*, xl, xlv; Boshof, *Agobard*, 76; Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 103-104.

saw a powerful cleric and idealist, others, a committed anti-Jewish activist.<sup>140</sup> All have a certain amount of truth to them, but they also all over-simplify. Agobard certainly used a great deal of logic and rationality, yet he was not always “clear-headed,” as his refusal to believe that Louis ruled to prevent the baptism of Jews’ pagan slaves shows.<sup>141</sup> I certainly agree with Poole in his assessment of Agobard as an idealist, but not as a powerful cleric, backed by church leadership. Agobard’s anti-Judaism is clear, but Heil for one has questioned his commitment to it.<sup>142</sup> Obviously, Agobard’s writings are too complex and varied to allow for simply one impression, or one theory, to explain all.

A few things do become clear in reading Agobard, however. Firstly, Agobard seems to have not been a happy person. The only emotions he generally displayed were annoyance, bitterness, and incredulity. If he did write the poem *Agobardo pax sit*, despair joins the list. Overall, Agobard comes across in his writing as unhappy, and willing to share his unhappiness. That nearly all of his writings are an attack on someone or something only adds to this impression. The one exception to his negative palette is the salutation to Nibridius in *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*. His address to that senior cleric betrayed true affection. Agobard wrote, “If the nearness of the places or the peace of the situation allowed it, I would wish to speak to your paternity face to face more often, and always procure the council of your sanctity on private or public matters.”<sup>143</sup> I believe that is the only real compliment he paid anyone in all of his writings, and it stood in stark contrast to the anti-Jewish invective which immediately followed. The invective should not diminish the importance of the address, however. The opening lines of *De cauendo conuictu* allow a glimpse into an aspect of

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<sup>140</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 13-14; Poole, *Medieval Thought*, 34-35; Kenneth Stow, “Hatred of Jews or love of church: Papal policy toward the Jews in the Middle Ages” in *Antisemitism Through the Ages*, ed. Shmuel Almog and trans. Nathan Reisner (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1988), 72-73; Albert, “*Adversus Iudaeos*,” 121, 138.

<sup>141</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia*, 44-46 (192).

<sup>142</sup> Johannes Heil, “Agobard, Amolo, das Kirchengut und die Juden von Lyon” *Francia* 25:1 (1998): 42.

<sup>143</sup> “Si locorum uicinitas et rerum tranquillitas sineret, uellem quidem frequentius cum paternitate uestra os ad os loqui et, siue in priuatis seu in publicis necessitatibus, consilio semper uestrae sanctitatis institui.” Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu*, 3-6 (231).

Agobard's personality found nowhere else in his works, and remind us that there was more to Agobard than came through in his writings.

Cabaniss probably came to the conclusion he did about Agobard's rationality because, having to rely on the evidence we have, there is no hint that Agobard's faith had any emotional resonance for him. Right belief for Agobard was an intellectual exercise, the position a person would naturally arrive at if they used their mental faculties. It is one of the reasons why he reacted to Amalarius so badly. Many of Amalarius's teachings sprang from his own mystical experience of the liturgy, and Agobard had no understanding of, or room for, mysticism.<sup>144</sup> If something could not be puzzled out or grasped using logic, the Scriptures, and the Fathers, it simply could not be right. It also helps explain why he reacted as he did to the Jewish mystical beliefs he reported in *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*. He seems to have not recognised mysticism as such, but with both Jews and Amalarius, appears to have thought that they took literally the beliefs and practices they held or used. Although Agobard used the "spiritual" meaning of Scriptures himself, mysticism apparently went too far, and provoked some of the worst of Agobard's ire.

Perhaps connected to his highly intellectual understanding of faith, Agobard seems to have not been very pastoral. While priests were certainly responsible for the souls in their care,<sup>145</sup> the principle concern in Agobard's writing is the exaltation and prerogatives of both priests and bishops against the laity. Particularly in *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii* and *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*, Agobard left no doubt that ordained clergy, simply by virtue of their ordination, are superior to any lay person, whom the clergy govern and rule. The ends remained pastoral, clergy governed in order to lead all to salvation, but the means focused on the clergy as rulers separated from the people, rather than living among the people and exemplifying the way

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<sup>144</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 327-28.

<sup>145</sup> e.g. Agobard, *De modo regiminis*, IX (330-31).

to salvation through their own lives. He also did not write on any subjects usually connected with pastoral care, such as marriage or penance. Unlike Jonas of Orléans and others, he did not write tracts designed to show lay people how to lead lives pleasing to God.<sup>146</sup>

He also did not write much by way of pure theology, instead, the majority of his works came in response to matters he saw, and which he believed needed correction. From trial by ordeal to the presence and practices of Jews to faulty antiphons, Agobard frequently dealt with concrete issues that disturbed him. This concern with actual events and practices indicates that, although Agobard does not appear pastoral because of his privileging of the priestly class and silence on topics such as baptism, in some ways he was very much so. His primary concern was the very Carolingian worry of ensuring salvation through proper belief – belief shown through practice.

### *Agobard the Carolingian*

In very many ways, Agobard was not at all unusual for his time, for only in his attack on Judaism does he prove truly unique in his age. In all other ways, the subjects he chose, the concerns he had, the positions he took, the methods he used, Agobard was a product of the reforming environment of Charlemagne and Louis's time. Where Agobard specifically intersected with his contemporaries on issues will be explored in more detail in chapter 4. Of more importance now is a brief exploration and summary of what it meant to be a Carolingian thinker as scholars have come to understand it, and how Agobard fit into that mould.

What made someone a Carolingian, again as scholars understand the distinction, proves rather more difficult to define than one might at first expect. Scholars have somewhat overblown the idea of the "Carolingian Renaissance," partly because of the self-aggrandizement by late-

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<sup>146</sup> e.g. Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione laicali* in *PL* 106, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1851), 121-278.

eighth- and ninth-century elites at the expense of their predecessors.<sup>147</sup> Closer examination shows that many of the ideas behind and actions taken during the period from Pippin III to Charles the Bald were not new.<sup>148</sup> However, old ideas and ideals never return in the same form they last took, so it is not that scholars have mistakenly regarded the Carolingians, taken both narrowly as the ruling family and more broadly as the leading men and women of the time, as different from the Merovingians who preceded them, and the Ottonians and Scholastics who succeeded them. One must simply use caution, so as to not fall into the trap the Carolingians themselves laid of believing that they were the only bright light in a dark age.

What does set the Carolingians apart for scholars is that they had an agenda, one different at least from the Merovingians. Sifting through the various writings from the period, scholars have determined what the Carolingian leaders, with all of their “legislative intention,”<sup>149</sup> were attempting: to ensure the salvation of all through unity and the proper expression of the correct beliefs. The system they created to do this effectively tied secular and ecclesiastical elites together in the attempt to keep the empire whole and operating. This has led to scholarly charges of either the secular rulers using the ecclesiastical elites to their own ends, or, conversely, ecclesiastical elites using secular rulers to advance *their* own ends – that the State led the Church, or the Church led the State. That the two organisations could have had a more-or-less equal share and role in leading the empire has only recently been advanced.<sup>150</sup>

Because of their focus on salvation, Carolingians leaders have been described as deliberately creating a Christian society in which all people fulfilled their duties to that society,

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<sup>147</sup> Giles Brown, “Introduction: the Carolingian renaissance” in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 23-24.

<sup>148</sup> Brown, “Carolingian Renaissance,” 1-4.

<sup>149</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 258.

<sup>150</sup> de Jong, “Early medieval polity,” 116-17, 124 ff.



of regarding society as the Body of Christ, the Church, or a family.<sup>151</sup> This desire for the salvation of all, or at least that everyone have a chance at salvation, in turn drove the hallmark of the age, the Carolingian efforts at renewal and reform. These efforts have been divided into clear methods and goals. Education via the liberal arts was a major method of the reform agenda. Charlemagne mandated the basic education of both slave and free-born boys.<sup>152</sup> Such a sweeping provision naturally proved easier to legislate than effect. The bishops at Attigny acknowledged that they had not been as careful as they should have in maintaining schools, though they also laid the responsibility for the financial support of students on their parents or lord.<sup>153</sup> A mere three years later, Louis had to again remind the bishops not to neglect the schools.<sup>154</sup> Despite the obvious difficulties, education remained important and sought after. It also became an area of innovation. The Carolingians were the first since Late Antiquity to attempt fusing the liberal arts, with their classical, i.e. pagan, sources, with the study of the Scriptures and the Fathers.<sup>155</sup> The latter still absolutely formed the foundation of learning and the goal remained a better understanding of the Scriptures. The liberal arts simply became the means to that.<sup>156</sup>

From the evidence we have, it seems that Agobard did not concern himself much with education, but Leidrad took an interest in it, including an apparent interest in logic, revived in the ninth century by Alcuin and, with education more generally, another example of Carolingian adaptation.<sup>157</sup> Leidrad involved himself in this revival to such an extent that he presented the

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<sup>151</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 17; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 231; Wemple, "Organic metaphor," 222; Werner, "Gouverneur," 62-63; de Jong, "Empire as *ecclesia*," 205; Nelson, "Kingship and empire," 59.

<sup>152</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c.72 (*MGH Capit. I*, 60).

<sup>153</sup> *Concilium Attiniacense*, c.3 (*MGH Conc. II.2*, 471).

<sup>154</sup> *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines*, c.6 (*MGH Capit. I*, 304).

<sup>155</sup> John Marenbon, "Carolingian thought" in *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 172.

<sup>156</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 197.

<sup>157</sup> Leidrad, *Summo Carolo imperatori*, (*MGH Epp. IV*, 543); Marenbon, "Carolingian thought," 174-75.

Lyon cathedral library with what is now the oldest extant text on dialectic.<sup>158</sup> Lyon seems to have been a centre of study during this period. Agobard's own extensive command of sources, the works of Florus, and Claudius of Turin having spent time in Lyon studying under Leidrad<sup>159</sup> bear witness to the city's intellectual strength.

Agobard himself seems to be a product of the revival and reform of learning begun by his predecessors. His theological tracts, in particular, demonstrate an understanding of both the Scriptures and the Fathers, and did not deviate from the catena method so well established and still very much used by his contemporaries.<sup>160</sup> He only left that model in his more "practical" works (e.g. *De grandine et tonitruis*, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*). However, he rarely abandoned the method completely, such as relying almost completely on Scriptural proofs to argue against the existence of *tempestarii* (storm-raisers) in *De grandine*. In all of his works, however, he used the sort of logical arguments developed by Boethius in his *Opuscula sacra*.<sup>161</sup> Agobard often melded the two methods together, providing strings of patristic or Scriptural quotes in tandem with logical scrutiny, in order to prove his points. In arguing against the practice of ordeal, for example, Agobard mixed citations from Scriptures meant to demonstrate that people are to love their neighbours with questions and observations meant to show the logical inconsistencies of ordeal.<sup>162</sup>

One of the reasons for the interest in education was to help ensure uniformity in worship.<sup>163</sup> Without that uniformity the proper expression of belief could not be assured, and thus neither could salvation. Only a regularized liturgy could combat paganism and prevent

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<sup>158</sup> Now Rome, Casa dei padri maristi A.II.1, late 8<sup>th</sup> or early 9<sup>th</sup>. Rosamond McKitterick and John Marenbon, "Philosophy and its background in the early medieval West" in *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon (London: Routledge, 1998), 97.

<sup>159</sup> Claudius of Turin, *Dructeramno abbati expositionem Geneseos*, (MGH Epp IV, 592).

<sup>160</sup> Gorman, "Commentary on Genesis," 318.

<sup>161</sup> Marenbon, "Carolingian thought," 177.

<sup>162</sup> Agobard, *Contra iudicium Dei* (31-49).

<sup>163</sup> e.g. *Admonitio generalis*, c.72 (MGH Capit. I, 59-60).

misunderstandings of Christian teachings.<sup>164</sup> While not concerned about uniformity per se, Agobard did work to guarantee the liturgical correctness of his see. Not only in the words used, but also in the attitude taken by his clergy.<sup>165</sup> He also clearly expected his clergy to follow his liturgical instructions and corrections.

Although the Carolingians actively promoted the romanization and uniformity of the liturgy, it seems to have been designed more as a consensus, as diversities within a larger unity.<sup>166</sup> The same cannot be said for the unity of the empire. We must note that the desire for unity, more than any other dimension of the period, has been outlined by scholars more explicitly than it was ever stated in the sources. It did appear in writings. Louis's *Divisio imperii* listed unity as one of the reasons he insisted on the inheritance scheme he did.<sup>167</sup> Jonas of Orléans imagined society as one body with two heads.<sup>168</sup> The generation after Louis mourned the loss of unity.<sup>169</sup> Yet the quest for unity remains more an impression scholars have gotten from the sources, than a concept clearly given in them, one "not yet elaborated but generally felt."<sup>170</sup>

The greatest threat to that unity came in the form of competition for offices and honours. Competition has appeared throughout this chapter. Rulers led the way in crafting reform by providing material support to those they determined could help in shaping both present and future society in the desired way. The Carolingians were not the first to patronize artists and intellectuals, but they were the first to use patronage systematically, and often did so as part and parcel of their reform agenda.<sup>171</sup> Agobard already had his archbishopric, yet in the culture of

<sup>164</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 120.

<sup>165</sup> Agobard, *De antiphonario* (337-51).

<sup>166</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, "Unity and diversity in the Carolingian church" in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1996), 81-82; Hen, *Royal Patronage*, 104-07.

<sup>167</sup> *Divisio imperii* (MGH LL I, 198).

<sup>168</sup> Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione regia*, 1 (PL 106, 285).

<sup>169</sup> Ganz, "Epitaphium Arsenii," 548.

<sup>170</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 231.

<sup>171</sup> McKitterick and Marenbon, "Philosophy," 106-08; Rosamond McKitterick, "Royal patronage of culture in the Frankish kingdoms under the Carolingians: Motives and consequences" in *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell'alto medioevo occidentale* (Spoleto: Presso la Sede del Centro, 1992), 113-17; Hen, *Royal Patronage*, 18-19.

competition and patronage he could have still hoped for more, had he wished to compete for Louis's favour. Louis had several clerics, including his half-brother Drogo, also an archbishop, serve him in specific capacities throughout his reign, something Agobard could have sought.<sup>172</sup> Yet it was not until after Agobard's time, when Louis's sons and their followers became free to more stridently jostle for position, that clerics also rose in stature. Lothar used a work of exegesis by Hrabanus Maurus as a mark of legitimacy, since the cleric had stayed loyal to Louis; Hincmar of Reims managed to dominate the church of the western kingdom and beyond for decades.<sup>173</sup> Agobard lived in the generation of more limited opportunities, and, in the end, appears to have given up on any chance of advancement, even while continuing to assert himself throughout his career.

As will be explained more in chapter 4, Agobard continually argued for his vision of an orderly universe. Agobard's ideal world centered around unity and order. In his efforts to promote his vision, he wrote about law, the relations between church and state, Jews, icons, superstition, ecclesiology, liturgy, and heresies. He subscribed to the Carolingian ideal of a Christian empire, with royalty and clergy working in conjunction to ensure the peace, justice, and salvation of society. Yet Agobard's conceptions of peace, justice, and salvation, and his style of presentation, sometimes conflicted with those of Louis and his magnates, the very class of people Agobard should have worked with to guarantee an ordered society.

While it was certainly not unusual for a clerical writer to advocate his version of what the world should be, Agobard's vision drove him to the outskirts of acceptability. He was not without friends, but the positions he took severely hampered his access to the court. Nor were

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<sup>172</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 125.

<sup>173</sup> de Jong, "Empire as *ecclesia*," 206; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 188-89; Alfred Raddatz, "Zur Vorgeschichte der 'Epistula seu liber contra Judaeos' Amulos von Lyon" in *Ecclesia peregrinans: Josef Lenzenweger zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Karl Amon (Wien: Verband der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaften Österreichs, 1986), 55.

they entirely, ironically, in keeping with orthodox teachings. His position on icons, motivated in part by his thoughts on the body in general, pushed Agobard over the line of strict orthodoxy. Because of this, the edition of his works produced by Masson in 1605 remained on the Catholic Church's list of prohibited books for nearly 350 years, pending correction.<sup>174</sup> The breadth of his concerns, and the fervour with which he held them, led to a career of many failures and disappointments. He seems to have been often unhappy, and even today, he is not a very sympathetic figure.

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<sup>174</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 1-2.

Name of Work (per Van Acker)	Proposed date(s)
<i>De grandine et tonitruis</i>	815-17 <sup>i</sup> , c. 816 <sup>ii</sup> , c.815 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>Aduersus legem Gundobadi</i>	817-22 <sup>i,ii</sup> , c.817 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De diuinis sententiis contra iudicium Dei</i>	817-22 <sup>i</sup> , c. 817 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii</i>	817-22 <sup>i</sup> , 817 <sup>ii</sup> , 826-827 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>Aduersum dogma Felicis</i>	818-19 <sup>i</sup> , post 818 <sup>iv</sup> , 819 <sup>ii</sup>
<i>De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum</i>	823 <sup>i,ii,iii</sup> , late 821-end 823 <sup>iii</sup> , 822 <sup>v</sup> , 822-825 <sup>iv</sup>
<i>De dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum</i>	After Nov. 823-24 <sup>i,ii</sup> , 824-25 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De spe et timore</i>	after 823 <sup>i,iv</sup> , 826 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De picturis et imaginibus</i>	825 <sup>i</sup> , 826 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>Contra praeceptum impium de baptismo iudaicorum mancipiorum</i>	826 <sup>i,ii,iii,v</sup> , Jan. 826-828 <sup>iv</sup>
<i>De insolentia Iudaeorum</i>	826-27 <sup>i,iv,v</sup> , c.827 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus</i>	826-27 <sup>i,iv,v</sup> , 827 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De iniusticiis</i>	826-28 <sup>i</sup> , post 822 <sup>ii</sup> , 827-828 <sup>iv,iii</sup>
<i>De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica</i>	826-27 <sup>i</sup> , c. 827 <sup>iii</sup> , 827-828 <sup>ii</sup> , 826-28 <sup>v</sup>
<i>De quorundam inlusione signorum</i>	828-29 <sup>i,ii,iii</sup>
<i>De diuisione imperii</i>	829 <sup>i</sup> , 829-830 <sup>ii</sup> , end 831 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De fidei ueritate et totius boni institutione</i>	829 or 830 <sup>i</sup>
<i>Contra obiectiones Fredegisi</i>	c. 830 <sup>i,iii</sup> , before 830 <sup>ii</sup>
<i>De priuilegio apostolicae sedis</i>	c. Easter 833 <sup>i</sup> , 833 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>Liber apologeticus I and II</i>	summer and fall 833 <sup>i,ii,iii</sup>
<i>Cartula de Ludouici imperatoris poenitentia</i>	fall 833 <sup>i,iii</sup>
<i>De modo regiminis ecclesiastici</i>	834-39 <sup>i</sup> , 826 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>De antiphonario</i>	835-839 <sup>i</sup> , 835-838 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>Contra libros quatuor Amalarii</i>	835-39 <sup>i</sup> , 835-838 <sup>iii</sup>
<i>Rhythmus (Agobardo pax sit)</i>	unknown <sup>i,iii</sup> , before Dec. 815 <sup>ii</sup>

<sup>i</sup>Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xxxix-xlvi.

<sup>ii</sup>Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 100-08.

<sup>iii</sup>Zuckerman, "Political uses of Theology," 29.

<sup>iv</sup>Boshof, *Agobard*.

<sup>v</sup>S. Katz, *Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms*, 38-39.

## Chapter Two

### Agobard's Anti-Judaism

Having given the outline and the wider contexts and frameworks for Agobard's life and work, our attention may now turn to the character and roots of his anti-Judaism. A common theory holds that Agobard's ideas about Judaism were, like Agobard himself, ultimately of Visigothic origin. Albert noted similarities between both Agobard and Amulo's writings and the Visigothic laws and sources, while Castes claimed a long-established relationship between Agobard's *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus* and the councils of Toledo.<sup>1</sup> However, as discussed in the previous chapter, Agobard's origins are by no means indisputable. Also, as has already been and will continue to be discussed, Agobard by and large fit into his wider, Carolingian context. Thus questions about the sources and precedents of Agobard's anti-Judaism remain. This chapter will discuss both Visigothic and Frankish examples of anti-Judaism, including other examples from Lyon, and then Agobard's own anti-Judaism. An exploration of this depth should allow a better sense of possible roots for Agobard's thoughts on Jews, if any exist.

Before proceeding however, semantics must be addressed. Throughout this dissertation I speak of Agobard's anti-*Judaism*, not his *antisemitism*, and I have chosen to do so quite deliberately. Definitions of antisemitism abound, and the continued scholarly debate over the word and its meaning only proves that no definition is yet considered completely adequate. For example, Simon wrote of antisemitism, while Ruether wrote of anti-Judaism, in order to describe the same phenomenon during the same period in works collected into the same volume.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, some scholars, such as Fein, do not distinguish between antisemitism and anti-

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<sup>1</sup> Albert, "*Adversus Iudaeos*," 138 and 141; Castes, "Lyon et sa région," 17.

<sup>2</sup> Marcel Simon, "Christian Anti-Semitism;" Rosemary Ruether, "The *Adversus Iudaeos* tradition in the Church Fathers: The exegesis of Christian Anti-Judaism." Both found in *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict*, ed. Jeremy Cohen, (New York: New York University Press, 1991).

Judaism.<sup>3</sup> The problem of a definition only increases when considering attitudes towards Jews in the Early Middle Ages, as most scholarship focuses on modern manifestations or the early Christian roots of anti-Jewish beliefs. The period from about 400 until the massacres of the Rhenish Jews in 1096, while not completely neglected, has not received the same amount of scholarly attention as other historical periods, due in no small part to a perceived lack of source material. The relative paucity of both primary and secondary sources makes finding the delineation between anti-Judaism and antisemitism for this period difficult, since there is little on which to base such a demarcation if one insists on using hard-and-fast definitions.

As some sort of delineation must be offered however, I will propose not a new definition, but rather a set of hallmarks which I believe mark off antisemitism. I hold that antisemitism must first and foremost seek the elimination of Jews through death or conversion.<sup>4</sup> It must also contain complaints or accusations unique to Jews, or combine them in such a way as to cast Jews as the primary threat to society, (e.g. the thought that Jews are the cause of all wars), and/or include complaints about Jews that are separate from the practice of Judaism, (e.g. the accusation that all Jews will cheat a person out of his/her money). That which is not antisemitism, would be anti-Judaism.

The reason I have not set out a new definition, and the reason that no definition has yet received consensus support, is that there cannot be one definition which covers all the permutations of anti-Jewish sentiment and activity as they have occurred throughout history without being so broad as to be unusable. The Visigoths and Nazis may both properly be called antisemitic according to the hallmarks given above, but the motives for and results of their actions were so different, it hardly seems right that they should be given the same label. What may be more helpful instead, is to use the hallmarks I have suggested, but to primarily think of

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<sup>3</sup> Helen Fein, "Dimensions of antisemitism: Attitudes, collective accusations, and action" in *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, ed. Helen Fein (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), 69.

<sup>4</sup> In this I borrow slightly from Fein's definition. Fein, "Dimensions of antisemitism," 67.



anti-Judaism and antisemitism not even as a continuum, but as a kind of multi-axial graph on which can be plotted out varying degrees of and reasons for disliking Jews. It may not be as clean as selecting a definition and matching an event to it, but it may, in the end, be more accurate. The whole concept of antisemitism and anti-Judaism must be flexible enough to accommodate all the diversity of occurrences. These hallmarks are meant only as suggestions, and as a possible working model. They are not perfect. They notably side-step the issue of race, for the simple reason that current scholastic understanding of medieval conceptions of race is too sketchy for it to be a useful criterion before the High Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup>

### Visigothic Anti-Judaism

Hispano-Roman and Visigothic attitudes towards Jews, as evidenced in the surviving laws and canons, remained within the bounds of Roman imperial precedent for centuries. Indeed there is little of note regarding Jews in either the early Visigothic canonical or civil legislation. The compliance with Roman tradition is unsurprising. Until the issuance of the *Liber iudiciorum* by Reccesvind in 654, Jews were legally Romans, and therefore under the *Lex romana visigothorum*. Alaric issued the *Lex romana visigothorum* in 506, basing it on late-antique Roman legislation. Since Alaric devised his code well after Roman law had been reinterpreted in a Christian framework, it overlapped with canonical legislation, which had begun at the Council of Elvira held sometime between 300 and 306, on many issues. In both the laws and canons one finds prohibitions against Jewish and Christian intermarriage, the Jewish ownership of Christian slaves, and Jewish involvement in government.<sup>6</sup> The civil laws had been on the books since the

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, Innes, "Teutons or Trojans?" and the essays of Murray and Pohl in *On Barbarian Identity: Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages* ed. Andrew Gillett (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> For example, *Lex romana visigothorum*, 3:1:5, 9:4:4 (Linder, *Legal Sources*, 220, 222); Elvira, c.16, III Toledo, c.14 in *Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos*, ed. José Vives (Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Enrique Flórez, 1963), 4-5, 129.

late-fourth century, predated by the canons. In short, nothing in the early Visigothic sources commends further study since it by and large only repeated previous provisions.

This unremarkable level of legislation changed with the ascension of Sisebut to the Visigothic throne in 611 or 612, and his decree early in his reign that the Jews on the peninsula must convert. It must be noted that the exact text of the decree has been lost, and the exact date is debated. Later conciliar references, however, prove that such a decree did occur and had considerable influence on the kingdom's legislation for the remainder of its history.<sup>7</sup> Sisebut's motives have also proved difficult to establish.<sup>8</sup> Unity, however, could have easily been a driving force. Following Reccared's conversion of himself and his kingdom to Catholic Christianity in 589, the political unity built by Leovigild, Reccared's predecessor, became intertwined with religious unity. In Visigothic thought, both factors fed into the kingdom's continued coherence and well-being.<sup>9</sup> Beyond the health of the kingdom, unity also bolstered the authority of the king.<sup>10</sup> Sisebut could have easily imagined that only Jews stood between him and a truly unified kingdom.

While persecutions designed to force Jews to convert had taken place before that time, both in the Roman Empire and its successor states, they had been short-lived events. Their temporary nature was presumably due either to their apparent success, as on the island of Minorca in 418 and in Clermont under Bishop Avitus in 576, when a majority of the Jewish population converted, or to their apparent failure, as seems to have been the case for the forced conversion under the Merovingian king Chilperic in 582, when many Jews did not convert, and

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<sup>7</sup> IV Toledo, c.57 (Vives, 210-11); Rachel Stocking, *Bishops, Councils, and Consensus in the Visigothic Kingdom, 589-633* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 125, 153-54.

<sup>8</sup> Wolfram Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour: The Jew in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 18.

<sup>9</sup> Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 50.

<sup>10</sup> P.D. King, *Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 129.

the majority of those who did so returned to Judaism a short time later.<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, the long-lasting persecutions and inducements for conversion initiated by Sisebut's edict ensured Visigothic Spain a unique place in the history of Jewish-Christian relations.

The repercussions of Sisebut's edict continued to affect the Iberian peninsula until the Muslim invasions of 711. Although the Fourth Council of Toledo, held in 633 under the leadership of Isidore of Seville, expressed its displeasure at the use of force to convert Jews, it nonetheless held that the conversions must be enforced, "lest the name of the Lord be blasphemed, and the faith which they received be held as base and contemptible."<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the newly-baptised population had to be controlled, and the same council passed a number of canons designed to regulate both baptised and unbaptised Jews. These included a provision that baptised Jews not associate with the unbaptised (c.62), and that relapsed Jews could not testify in court (c.64). Also, neither baptised nor unbaptised Jews could serve in public offices (c.65). This last perhaps grew out of the charge in canon 59, that many baptised Jews had reverted back to Jewish rites, including circumcision. This charge carried enough weight of suspicion that all the baptised Jews were barred from public office and thus from holding authority over Christians, since the true conversion of the baptised could not be guaranteed.

The council also mandated the rather drastic measure of removing Jewish children from their parents so that the children could be raised as Christians (c.60). Though the gathered clerics did not specify a time-frame for conversion, whether the children should be baptised immediately or after a period of indoctrination, there was no question that they would be baptised. The canon – if indeed it was directed at the unbaptised Jewish population and not at

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<sup>11</sup> Severus of Minorca, *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* ed. and trans. Scott Bradbury (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 115; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, V.11 and VI.17 in *MGH SSRM* I.1, ed. Bruno Krusch (Hannover: Hahn, 1937), 205-06, 286-87.

<sup>12</sup>"...ne nomen Domini blasphemetur, et fidem quam susceperunt vilis ac contemptibilis habeatur." IV Toledo, c.57 (Vives, 210-11).

baptised or relapsed Jews, and its wording argues for the former –<sup>13</sup> makes little sense in light of canon 57, which argued that conversions must be voluntary. It was also a failure, as a Jewish population remained within the Visigothic kingdom until it fell in 711. Such a population could not have existed had all Jewish children been taken and raised as Christians, as it seems unlikely that the population would have been replenished by immigrants.

That the council made provision for unbaptised and relapsed Jews indicates that Sisebut's decree was not a resounding success. In theory, only Christians inhabited the Iberian after 611 or 612. Subsequent conciliar and royal edicts make it clear that in practice Jews continued to live as part of the Visigothic kingdom for the remainder of its existence. Rather than allow the Jewish community to persist, as would happen for much of the Middle Ages, Visigothic leaders struggled to make Sisebut's edict a reality. The prospect of a kingdom unified in rule, law, and belief proved too important and tempting for later councils and rulers to do otherwise.

Later Visigothic councils attempted to deal with the “problem” posed by Christians, Jews, and baptised Jews, inhabiting the same kingdom. VI Toledo, convened in 638, declared that only Catholics could live in the kingdom.<sup>14</sup> IX Toledo (655) showed the general lack of trust bestowed on baptised Jews by declaring that they must spend all holidays, both Christian and Jewish, with the bishop of whatever area they lived or travelled through, in order to prove their faith and conversion.<sup>15</sup> Previous rulings regarding Jews, such as those examples given above, were confirmed by King Ervig and XII Toledo in 681.<sup>16</sup> Finally, XVII Toledo (694), the last council documented before the invasions in 711, accused Jews of being involved in a conspiracy to overthrow the kingdom, and thus placed all Jews in perpetual servitude.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Iudaeorum filios vel filias, ne parentum ultra involvantur errore, ab eorum consortio separari decernimus deputatos aut monasteriis aut christianis viris ac mulieribus Deum timentibus, ut sub eorum conversatione cultum fidei discant atque in melius instituti tam in moribus quam in fide proficiant.” IV Toledo, c.60 (Vives, 212).

<sup>14</sup> VI Toledo, c.3 (Vives, 236-37).

<sup>15</sup> IX Toledo, c.17 (Vives, 305-06).

<sup>16</sup> XII Toledo, Ervig's address and c.9 (Vives, 384-85, 395-97).

<sup>17</sup> XVII Toledo, c.8 (Vives, 534-36).

To outline the conciliar actions against Jews in this manner lends far more consistency to the Visigothic attempts to convert or control Jews than probably existed. In fact, a majority of Visigothic councils did not mention Jews at all. Also, the fact that there were Jews on the peninsula to allegedly conspire against the kingdom in 694 again betrayed the failure of previous councils and kings in enforcing their will on Jews. In fact, there is no evidence that the various measures aimed at controlling the Jewish population received support from the people, local nobility, or even some in the clergy.<sup>18</sup> Arguably, Jews were a “problem” in the minds of some of the Visigothic elite not least because their refusal to either convert or remain converted destabilized the very unity many Visigothic kings and councils tried to build, and brought the kings’ authority into question.<sup>19</sup> As King put it, “The king had as one of his necessary aims the prevention of activity which threatened to undermine the faith which bound society together, and thus to bring about the destruction of society itself.”<sup>20</sup>

Of course Jews were not the only groups threatening regnal power. The very geography of the Iberian peninsula resists the imposition of a central authority. Throughout the history of the Visigothic kingdom, factions struggled with each other for pre-eminence and control. Once a faction came to power it had to continue fighting in order to keep power. Jews had become an entrenched part of Visigothic society before Sisebut took the throne, and parties existed who found it politically expedient to allow Jews in their areas to remain Jewish, despite, and perhaps even because of, the decrees promulgated by councils and kings.<sup>21</sup>

Naturally, Visigothic anti-Judaism was not limited to legislation. Several Visigothic writers took their turn at producing anti-Jewish works. One such piece came from Visigothic Spain’s most-famous scholar, Isidore of Seville, in his *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, which

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<sup>18</sup> King, *Law and Society*, 137-38; Stocking, *Bishops*, 137.

<sup>19</sup> Drews, *Unknown Neighbour*, 297.

<sup>20</sup> King, *Law and Society*, 129.

<sup>21</sup> Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 111; Stocking, *Bishops*, 3; Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 14; Elukin, *Living together*, 37.

Katz termed as the most important Spanish anti-Jewish work.<sup>22</sup> *De fide* did not stray significantly from precedent; Isidore drew primarily from the Hebrew Scriptures, first to prove that Jesus' nature, life, death, and resurrection had been foretold by the prophets, and second to provide backing from the Hebrew Scriptures for Jews' current position and future fate, as well as to expose the invalidity of their customs. The work sat squarely within the patristic anti-Jewish tradition, though, as both Drews and Cohen noted, Isidore in his writings did not give Jews a clear place in society, which only added to the instability of Jews' situation in the Visigothic kingdom.<sup>23</sup>

In total, had the Visigoths not pursued a long-term course of forced conversion, their attitudes towards Jews would have remained largely unremarkable. It is only because they decided to follow Sisebut's decree to its logical conclusion that the Visigoths stand out in the history of Jewish-Christian relations. One must always bear in mind that historical studies have, by their nature, given Visigothic anti-Judaism a greater cohesion and consensus than probably existed. This is not to deny or downplay the impact the decision to pursue conversion had on both Jews and Christians in the Iberian for the hundred years it lasted. Enough members of the Visigothic elite truly desired the unity a conversion of Jews to Catholicism would bring about to work for that conversion by any means they deemed necessary. Yet it is incumbent on scholars to remember that this was not the whole story of Jews and Christians living together in the Visigothic kingdom, since the two populations did indeed live together for the entirety of Visigothic history.

### Frankish Anti-Judaism

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<sup>22</sup> Isidore, *De fide catholica* in PL 83, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1850), 449-530; S. Katz, *Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms*, 35.

<sup>23</sup> Drews, *Unknown Neighbour*, 232; J. Cohen *Living Letters*, 122.

In some ways, Frankish attitudes towards Jews and Judaism served as a counter-point to those of the Visigoths. While Visigothic policies became more and more restrictive, repetitive, and ineffectual as time passed, Frankish policies became more relaxed, to the point that the Carolingians have earned a reputation among scholars for being pro-Jewish.<sup>24</sup> More contemporaneously, Agobard complained that Louis the Pious had taken to favouring Jews over Christians, and charged that his *missi* had enforced rulings benefiting Jews over and against Agobard's objections, permitted the building of new synagogues, and had changed the market day in Lyon so that it did not interfere with the Sabbath.<sup>25</sup> As discussed in the Introduction, while Agobard's accusations cannot be definitively proven or disproved, Louis did protect the Jews of his realm and may have been imitating late-Roman tradition, although likely without then discriminating against Christians, as Agobard accused Louis of doing.

Given the generally more relaxed Frankish position, it is not surprising that there is little in the Frankish canonical record worth noting on this issue. The common canons barring intermarriage, commensuration, the Jewish ownership of Christian slaves, and the Jewish holding of public office all appeared at least once in councils held in Frankish realms throughout the early Middle Ages. The only truly unusual ruling came in the third Council of Orléans, held in 538, and repeated by the Council of Mâcon around 581. That canon stated that Jews should not go out among the Christian population from Maundy Thursday through Easter Monday.<sup>26</sup> Since both councils passed the usual bans as well as some additional restrictions (e.g. forbidding Jews to talk with nuns<sup>27</sup>), the canon was probably meant as an anti-Jewish measure, rather than as any sort of protection for Jews against Christians overly-excited by the events of Holy Week. Yet it seems unlikely that the edict was ever truly followed, as it is highly impractical to attempt to keep an entire segment of the population essentially indoors for a four-day period. It stood,

<sup>24</sup> Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 90; Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 47; Verstrepen, "Raban Maur," 23-24.

<sup>25</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 44-46, 124, 127-28 (192, 194).

<sup>26</sup> III Orléans (539), c.33 (30); Mâcon (581), c.14 (both Linden, *Legal Sources*, 471, 474).

<sup>27</sup> Mâcon (581), c.2 (Linden, *Legal Sources*, 473).

however, as an attempt to separate the two communities during the most important time of the Christian year. Unlike the Visigothic record, the Frankish canons contained no hint at any desire to actively work for the conversion of Jews. Separation remained the only goal.

As with the Visigoths, Frankish anti-Judaism went beyond conciliar decrees. While the Carolingians may have the scholarly reputation of being pro-Jewish, the Merovingian record is more varied. As previously noted, Gregory of Tours recorded two attempts at forced conversions.<sup>28</sup> The first, in 576 under Avitus, bishop of Clermont, was nothing short of miraculous for Gregory, since the entire Jewish population of the town converted – at least those who remained in Clermont instead of leaving for Marseille. The second forced conversion, under Chilperic in 582, proved anything but miraculous. Gregory noted from the beginning that many of the conversions were superficial, and the entire episode ended with a converted Jew murdering an unconverted Jew, and then himself being killed in retribution by the unconverted man's family. In addition to the evidence provided by Gregory, we know that a few years before Avitus's conversion of the Jews in Clermont, Ferreus, bishop of Uzès presented the Jews of his city with the same choice of conversion or exile.<sup>29</sup> Also, in 591, Gregory the Great felt it necessary to upbraid bishops Virgil of Arles and Theodore of Marseille for the use of force to "win" Jewish converts.<sup>30</sup>

Thus in the course of about fifteen years Jews living under the Merovingians, particularly in southern France, endured five separate attempts at forcible conversion.<sup>31</sup> They notably predated Visigothic attempts, and did not occur again until the later Middle Ages. The sources are too sketchy to give much indication of motive. However, Gregory reported that Avitus told

<sup>28</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, V.11 and VI.17 (MGH SSRM I.1, 205-06, 286-87).

<sup>29</sup> *Vita Ferreoli*, 2-4; Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du Moyen Age sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1963), 131-32.

<sup>30</sup> Gregory the Great, *Epistula* I.45 (MGH Epp I, 71-72).

<sup>31</sup> There is also a record of a persecution under Dagobert, but scholars have discounted the report. Michel Rouche, "Les baptêmes forcés de Juifs en Gaule Mérovingienne et dans l'Empire d'Orient" in *De l'Antijudaïsme antique à l'Antisémitisme contemporain*, ed. Pierre Cazier and Valentin Nikiprowetzky (Lille: Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1975), 107. cf. S. Katz, *Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms*, 25-26.



the Jews of Clermont that Jesus had meant there to be one flock, with one shepherd. The Jews could either join Avitus's flock, or leave. Unity is therefore at least the ostensible reason for his actions, and Rouche, at least, would see an obsession with unity as the driving force behind all of the attempts. He painted the early medieval elites, both lay and ecclesial, western and Byzantine, as "prisoners of a program that identified the heavenly universalism of the Church with the earthly universalism of the Empire."<sup>32</sup> If so, the Frankish and Gallo-Roman elites escaped that prison by the beginning of the seventh century, at least insofar as that desire for unity adversely affected Jews.

Aside from those five forced conversions, Frankish anti-Judaism, like its canons, is largely unremarkable. Whatever clerical anti-Judaism existed did not generally receive royal support, leaving it largely in the realm of theory instead of practicality. Gregory of Tours, although painting many of the Jews he mentioned in a rather unfavourable light, did not seem overly concerned about Jews, nor did he demonize them.<sup>33</sup> Other Frankish writers likewise stayed very much within the bounds of anti-Judaism as mapped out by the Fathers, with its ambivalence regarding Jews' place in a Christian society and their final place at the end of history. That very ambivalence allowed Carolingian scholars a wide berth of possible stances towards Jews from uninterested to actively hostile. Some writers, such as Haimo of Auxerre, went so far as to try and deny Jews a final salvation.<sup>34</sup> Yet no writer strayed too far from the path the Fathers had laid.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, according to Albert, Carolingian scholars had a largely

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<sup>32</sup> "...prisonniers d'un schéma mental identifiant l'universalisme surnaturel de l'Eglise avec l'universalisme terrestre de l'Empire." Rouche, "Les baptêmes forcés," 119.

<sup>33</sup> Goffart, "Conversion," 475-6.

<sup>34</sup> Heil, "Labourers," 78, 85-88; Haimo of Auxerre, *In divi Pauli epistolas expositio*, particularly the interpretation on Romans 11:25-26 in *PL* 117, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 464.

<sup>35</sup> Heil, "Labourers"; Bat-Sheva Albert, "Anti-Jewish exegesis in the Carolingian period: The commentaries on Lamentations of Hrabanus Maurus and Paschasius Radbertus" in *Biblical Studies in the Early Middle Ages* ed. Claudio Leonardi and Giovanni Orlandi (Firenze: SISMEL – Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2005), 181-85.

academic interest in Jews, revolving around the *Hebraica veritas*, and that it took the *Hispani*, Agobard, Amulo, and Florus, to make Carolingian scholars aware of the Jewish “problem.”<sup>36</sup>

This generally patristic and stable level of anti-Jewish sentiment in Frankish history only makes Agobard’s anti-Judaism appear more unique. Indeed, it is only in his thoughts about Jews that Agobard separated himself from his contemporaries. The Franks had historically and continued to not only tolerate the presence of Jews, but made room for their presence through capitulary legislation. Franks by and large appear to have not concerned themselves with the tension between such protections and the prohibitions in the canons, already old by Agobard’s day. In general, when it came to Jews living under their rule, the Franks fit in to the more *laissez-faire* environment of early medieval Europe.

#### Anti-Judaism in Lyon

More specifically than the wider background of Frankish or Visigothic anti-Judaism, Agobard worked within the environment of Lyon. Fortunately, we can get a sense of this context because several Lyonnais works have come down to us from Agobard’s time. Each shows how various clergy of Lyon viewed their world, including the Jews. This insight in turn helps us to understand the ecclesiastic culture in which Agobard lived, worked and was probably raised, and the sounding boards off of which he could bounce ideas. An anonymous commentary on Deuteronomy gives a glimpse into the theology and ecclesiology of a cleric who perhaps worked outside of the Lyon episcopal circle. Inside that circle, however, the deacon Florus aided Agobard and his successors in their work. His own writings reflect many concerns around unity and orthodoxy which he shared with his superiors. So also do the letters of Agobard’s successor, Amulo. More to the point for this study, he wrote a work much like Agobard’s *De iudaicis*

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<sup>36</sup> Albert, “*Adversus Iudaeos*,” 121.

*superstitionibus et erroribus* in defence of the anti-Jewish canons passed at the Council of Meaux-Paris in 845/6.

*Commentary on Deuteronomy.* In 1993 Fransen published portions of the marginal commentary found in a manuscript of Deuteronomy through Ruth produced in Lyon, now BN n.a. lat.1740. The manuscript itself was written in an eighth-century uncial, but the marginal commentary has been identified as a ninth-century miniscule of Lyon origin.<sup>37</sup> Fransen admitted that he would have preferred to give Florus the credit for the commentary, but the hand did not match. He noted that the comments betrayed a writer working in a place where both anti-Judaism and doctrinal rigor flourished.<sup>38</sup> That feature, in conjunction with the palaeographical evidence, makes Carolingian Lyon a likely candidate, and the commentary may very well be contemporary with Agobard.

Fransen divided the portion of the commentary published in 1993 into themes,<sup>39</sup> which makes a thematic comparison with Agobard relatively simple. The commentator agreed with Agobard that priests should not strive for worldly possessions.<sup>40</sup> He likewise worried about keeping the impure away from the pure, stating that the church associates with “clean animals,” those who have been baptised, while it does not take into itself the “unclean animals,” those who have not been renewed through baptism (59, Dt. 14:21).<sup>41</sup> A person’s body could be both a cause and a symptom of sin, for the commentator held that the vices of sinners are shown through bodily desires (60, Dt. 28:22). Like Agobard, he asserted the pre-eminence of the church, stating that the faithful should not offer prayers wherever they wish, but only in a

<sup>37</sup> Paul-Iréné Fransen, “La discipline de l’Église dans un commentaire anonyme au Deutéronome écrit à Lyon au IXe siècle” *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Kanonistische Abteilung* 83 (1993): 52; *Codices Ludgunenses Antiquissimi*, 48 (pl. 36).

<sup>38</sup> Fransen, “La discipline,” 53.

<sup>39</sup> He published a full, critical edition in 2007, yet the additional comments do not add to or change the impressions gleaned from the portions published in 1993. All references are thus to the 1993 edition.

<sup>40</sup> Fransen, “La discipline,” 57, Dt. 18:1; cf. Agobard, *De modo regiminis*, IX (330-31).

<sup>41</sup> cf. Agobard, *De antiphonario*, XVIII.1-9 (350).

catholic church where “the faith is correct and the teaching is healthy.”<sup>42</sup> This pre-eminence also came in opposition to heretics, who busy themselves with vain questions instead of the sincerity of faith (61, Dt. 16:21). Additionally, for the commentator, Jews are cursed, carnal, and unable to resist demons (62-63, Dt. 28:15-16, 24-25).<sup>43</sup>

Much of what the commentator wrote meshed with Agobard’s myriad of concerns, yet differences naturally exist between the two authors. This author seems more concerned with the church at a parish level, as opposed to the wider church with which Agobard largely concerned himself. Some of what this author wrote had a more practical bent than Agobard; if he was not a parish priest himself, some of what he wrote was likely intended for that audience. For example, he wrote about penance, a subject Agobard did not really discuss. He told the reader, the *plebs fidelis*, that they would not be guilty of Christ’s blood as long as they performed penance for their sins and were baptised (59, Dt. 21:9). He also thought that priests should not hesitate to force confessions out of sinners. Likewise, he wrote more about the necessity of baptism than did Agobard. Overall this author seems more traditionally pastoral than Agobard, more concerned with the salvation of each individual believer, rather than focusing his attention, as Agobard did, on believers as a whole.

Agobard and the author also differed in their anti-Judaism. As will be noted, Agobard all but disregarded Augustine’s teachings on Jews. The commentator did not. Rather, he wrote that, because of the pride of the gentiles, God had declared that Jews could not be killed, but that they are reserved for penance, since some will convert at the end of time (63, Dt. 32:26). The most striking difference between the two men comes from the commentary to Deuteronomy 21:15, a verse regarding a man who has two wives, one beloved and one disliked. The author of the commentary wrote:

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<sup>42</sup> “. . . fides recta est et sana doctrina. . .” Fransen, “La discipline,” 61, Dt. 12:13; cf. Agobard, *De quorundam inlusionem*, XII (243).

<sup>43</sup> cf. Agobard, *De superstitionibus*, XX.20-33 (215).

The man with two wives is held out as a figure of our lord and redeemer, who has two people – the first from circumcision, and the second from the price. But who is the first? It is the synagogue of the Jews, who because of their perfidy, have become hateful. But the church, persevering in the love of its redeemer, is called beloved. Yet the synagogue bore the first-born son, that is, the chosen people, and the church the second. Therefore it is not possible for the son of the church, although of the beloved, to be preferred to the hateful son of the synagogue. For from the synagogue came the apostles, the early church, and whatever is considered more sublime in the kingdom of heaven (62).<sup>44</sup>

Far from damning Jews completely, which Agobard nearly did, the commentator acknowledged not only a place for Jews in God's plan, but also their continuation as God's chosen people. The anti-Judaism in his thought is still marked, this passage alone showing clear signs of supersessionist theology, but less severe than Agobard's. That a cleric, presumably from Agobard's church and one who agreed with him in many ways, could still find a positive place for Jews in the cosmic order only highlights how deeply they disturbed Agobard, and how unusually virulent his anti-Judaism was for his time. For the author of this commentary, at least, other issues, such as penance, took precedence over whatever concerns he had about Jews.

*The deacon Florus* All that is known of Florus's biography is that he died "presumably" around the year 860,<sup>45</sup> having served Archbishops Agobard, Amulo (840-52), and Remigius (852-75). If one can indeed place his *Epistola episcopi ad imperatorem de baptizatis Hebraeis* in the context of Agobard's conflict with Jews, as Zechiel-Eckes suggested in a rather contested assertion, then Florus began his service sometime in the early 820s.<sup>46</sup> It certainly began by the end of that decade, however, since his name appears in *De quorundam inlusione signorum*,

<sup>44</sup> "Homo iste, habens duas uxores, figuram pretendit domini ac redemptoris nostri qui habet duas plebes, primam scilicet ex circumcissione, alteram uero ex pretio. Sed qui prima illa, id est synagoga Iudaeorum, propter perfidiam suam, odiosa effecta est, ecclesia uero, in dilectionem redemptoris sui perseuerans, dilecta appellatur. Uerumtamen synagoga primogenitum filium, id est electum populum genuit, ecclesia autem posteriorem; idcirco non potest filius ecclesiae, quamuis dilectae preferri filio odiose, hoc est synagoge; ex ipsa enim apostoli et primitiua ecclesia et quicquid sublimius in regno caelorum dinoscitur, ex eadem synagogam assumptum est."

<sup>45</sup> Cabaniss, "Florus," 230.

<sup>46</sup> Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, "Sur la tradition manuscrite des *Capitula*. . . de coertione Iudeorum: ou Florus de Lyon au travail" *Revue Bénédictine* 107 (1997): 84. The letter itself will be explored shortly.

written in 828 or 829.<sup>47</sup> Given the fairly lengthy term of service and the number and types of works attributed to him, it is difficult to argue with Tafel's assessment of him as a "prodigy of learning and industry."<sup>48</sup> He was undoubtedly very well-read, and showed himself well-versed not only in the Scriptures and the Fathers, but also in Gallic authors and legal sources. Yet like Agobard, Florus seems to have been most familiar with the works of Augustine. His *Expositio in epistolas Beati Pauli ex operibus Sancti Augustini collecta* grouped together references to Paul from across the gamut of Augustine's writings.<sup>49</sup> A deacon this educated must have certainly been a great asset to the archbishops he served.

In addition to his learning, Florus would have been a further help to Agobard because he shared many of Agobard's concerns – those around the proper roles of and relationship between the church and the state, the defence of orthodoxy, and Jews and Judaism. Agobard had written about the roles of church and state in *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii* and in *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*. In the former Agobard argued for the supremacy of priests relative to lay people, and in the latter for the supremacy of the pope as the head of the church. Florus in his turn wrote about the need for episcopal elections to be free from lay interference in *Liber de electionibus episcoporum, collectus ex sententiis patrum*. He also defended the rights of priests, churches and bishops as defined by civil and canon law in *Capitula ex lege et canone collecta*.<sup>50</sup>

Also like Agobard, Florus had concerns about the continuing attacks against orthodoxy. While Agobard had written against the Adoptionism of Felix of Urgell, Florus instead became involved with the arguments around the issue of predestination. He left both a sermon on the subject and a longer tract against the position of John Scotus Erigena. In these, Florus attempted to define and defend the orthodox teaching on predestination and God's foreknowledge. This

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<sup>47</sup> Agobard, *De quorundam inlusione*, I.2 (237).

<sup>48</sup> Tafel, "Lyons scriptorium," 40.

<sup>49</sup> Florus, *Expositio in epistolas* (PL 119, 279-420).

<sup>50</sup> Agobard, *De priuilegio sacerdotii* (53-69) and *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis* (303-06); Florus *Liber de electionibus episcoporum* (PL 119, 11-14) and *Capitula* (PL 119, 419-22).

position taught that God foresees good and evil, but causes neither one to happen. God predestines his elect for salvation, but does not predestine the wicked for damnation so that sinners may have the possibility of repentance. The tract against John Scotus Erigena is one of the works in which Florus showed his command of a vast number of sources, drawing from Scriptures, Fathers, and popes in his effort to show just how Erigena had erred.<sup>51</sup>

Florus also shared some of Agobard's concerns about Jews, though not to the same extent. In his sermon on predestination Florus commented that God knew of (but did not predestine) Jews' future impiety and damnation.<sup>52</sup> Florus is also the most-likely author of *Epistola episcopi ad imperatorem de baptizatis Hebraeis*, the letter describing a recent missionizing effort and conversions among the Jews of Lyon, discussed in detail in the next section.<sup>53</sup> Florus's involvement in this effort, especially if he participated by more than simply composing the letter, shows that he did not believe, as Agobard seems to have, that Jews' conversion should be left entirely to the end of time. That, in turn, could indicate that Florus either believed that such an effort was an aid to the Jews of his time by offering them a chance at salvation, or that he felt it important to reduce the Jewish population through conversion. It must be remembered, however, that the implications of conversionary interests are complicated at best. Also, it is unclear how much the letter actually reflected Florus's own thoughts on the subject, rather than those of whichever archbishop ordered the mission and the letter.

Along with general anti-Jewish tone in his writings, Heil has asserted that Florus wanted to deny Jews' final salvation, based particularly on Florus's omission of the concept from his

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<sup>51</sup> Florus, *Sermo de predestinatione* (PL 119, 95-102) and *Liber adversus Joannis Scoti* (PL 119, 101-250).

<sup>52</sup> "Sic et de impiis Judaeis praesciebat sine dubio eorum impietatem futuram, de qua praedixit in psalmo: Dederunt in escam meam fel, et in siti mea potaverunt me aceto. Praesciebat et subsequentem ipsorum damnationem, de qua in eodem psalmo subjunxit: Deleantur de libro viventium, et cum justis non scribantur." Florus, *Sermo de praedestinatione* in PL 119, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 97-98.

<sup>53</sup> Florus, *Epistola episcopi ad imperatorem de baptizatis Hebraeis* in PL 119, ed. J.P. Migne (Garnier: Paris, 1852), 422.

commentaries on Paul.<sup>54</sup> However, Florus's own writings, as compiled by Migne in volume 119 of his *Patrologia Latina* problematize such a blanket statement. Florus did in fact skim over Romans 11:26, where Paul claimed that all Israel will be saved. The portion of Augustine he chose as exposition for Romans 11:25b-27 came from Augustine's commentary on Psalm 13(14):6-7. "'You have confounded the counsel of the poor man, but the Lord is his hope:' that is, you despised the lowly coming of the Son of God, because you did not see the ostentation of the world on him: so those whom he called will place their hope in God alone, not in transient things. 'Who shall give out of Sion the salvation of Israel?'"<sup>55</sup> Instead of offering a commentary on the hope for Jews' final salvation, to which Romans 11:26 so easily lent itself, and as it was used by not only Augustine, but also by other Fathers such as Jerome and Gregory the Great,<sup>56</sup> Florus gave a passage in which Augustine blamed Jews for being so concerned about worldly signs of power, that they "despised" Jesus' coming. It would seem that Heil was correct in his assessment of Florus.

However, there is also his poem *Martenii admonitio de carminibus proxime sequentibus*, in which Florus rewrote the gospels of Matthew and John in poetic form. It is worth noting that Florus included no mention of Jews in the crucifixion scenes. In his rendition of Matthew's passion, Florus simply stated that "Pilate allowed the people to destroy Christ."<sup>57</sup> With John's passion, he only said that Jesus was betrayed by Judas, led to Pilate, and handed over to the people to be killed.<sup>58</sup> Given how easily the passion narratives from both of those gospels lend themselves to charges of deicide his relative silence on this point is worth noting. Florus ignored the infamous "His blood be on us and on our children" from the Matthew narrative, and left Jews

<sup>54</sup> Heil, "Labourers," 78, 88-89.

<sup>55</sup> "'Consilium inopis confudistis, quoniam Deus spes ejus est:' id est, contempsistis humilem adventum Filii Dei, quia in eo non vidistis pompam saeculi: ut hi quos vocabat, in Deo solo spem ponerent, non in rebus transeuntibus. 'Quis dabit ex Sion salutare Israel?'" Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (PL 36, 142); Florus, *Expositio beati Pauli*, in PL 119, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 310.

<sup>56</sup> Heil, "Labourers," 89.

<sup>57</sup> "Pilatus populo permittit perdere Christum." Florus, *Martenii admonitio* in PL 119, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852) 264.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*, (PL 119, 269).



out of the Johannine narrative in what can best be understood as an intentional excision, as John put Jews in the centre of his passion. If Florus did indeed seek to deny Jews' final salvation, as his *Expositio beati Pauli* suggests, why not utilize the opportunity to explicitly accuse them of murdering Jesus? What charge could better warrant their eternal damnation?

That neither work can be absolutely identified with Florus only makes deciphering his thoughts on Jews all the more difficult. His *Expositio beati Pauli* has also been attributed to Bede or Peter of Tripoli.<sup>59</sup> However, Florus's marks appear on many of Lyon's Augustinian manuscripts, and so the work may well belong to him.<sup>60</sup> His *Martenii admonitio de carminibus proxime sequentibus* has likewise been variously assigned.<sup>61</sup> If Florus did write both works, the difference in his treatment of Jews, or lack of, is striking. Perhaps the commentary on Paul was a more "official" work, written for his more actively anti-Jewish archbishops, while the poems may have been more personal works. Much work remains to be done on Florus, so only suggestions can be made. Should such a division between official and private attitudes prove to be the case, however, it would suggest that Florus's anti-Judaism extended only as far as needed to fill the requirements of Agobard and his successors, but did not reflect Florus's own feelings on the subject.

Florus in fact did not write about Jews that often, which only bolsters the theory that Florus's own anti-Judaism may not have run as deeply as Agobard's. He clearly wrote his *Ex epistola episcopi ad imperatorem de baptizatis Hebraeis*, and the collection of canons preceding it, at a bishop's or archbishop's request. If one includes his commentary on Paul in the "official" category, very few mentions of Jews, and one very significant gap in his gospel poems, remain in Florus's writings. In fact, he discussed Jews so rarely that it is difficult to get any real sense of his thoughts on the subject. Any attempt to determine where he fits on the spectrum of anti-

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<sup>59</sup> Heil, "Labourers," 89, n.62.

<sup>60</sup> Tafel, "Lyons scriptorium," 44-47.

<sup>61</sup> *MGH Poetae II*, 509.

Judaism is only speculation. Like the *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Florus's apparent lack of interest in Jews, even while working for and with Agobard on his own anti-Jewish works, exposes Agobard's uniqueness on this subject.

*Amulo* The legacy of Agobard's anti-Judaism came through most clearly in his successor Amulo, who led the see of Lyon from 841 to 852.<sup>62</sup> Though he, like Florus, involved himself with the debates about predestination,<sup>63</sup> what concerns this study is his work about Jews. Unlike Florus, Amulo did dedicate an entire work to the subject, his *Epistola seu liber contra Judaeos*, written for Charles the Bald probably in the late 840s and heavily influenced by Agobard's *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*.<sup>64</sup> Also of interest is Amulo's alleged involvement with the Council of Meaux-Paris in 845/46, which attempted to mandate the enforcement of all previous anti-Jewish canons.

The two pieces have to be considered together; the connections between the sources Amulo used in his *Liber contra Judaeos*, and those used for the anti-Jewish canons of Meaux-Paris, are too numerous to ignore or to simply be coincidence. Canon 73 of Meaux-Paris, the principle anti-Jewish canon, shares eight of its eleven sources with Amulo's work. They include not only the expected canons, but also civil laws from the *Codex Theodosius*, the Sirmondian Constitutions, and the Theodosian Novellas, as well as a letter of Gregory the Great to the Frankish rulers.<sup>65</sup>

The laws combined in this canon would have banned Jews from military and civil service (119-122; Const. Sirmond. c.6, Nov. Th. III.2, Mâcon (589) c.13), prohibited the building of new synagogues (120; Nov. Th. III.2), kept Jews from owning Christian slaves and enslaved any Jew

<sup>62</sup> *Annales Lugdunenses*, an.841 (MGH SS I, 110); *Fastes episopaux*, t.2, 172-73.

<sup>63</sup> Amulo, *Ad Gothescalcum epistolae* and *Beati Augustini sententiae de praedestinatione et gratia Dei*, in PL 116, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 97ff.

<sup>64</sup> Raddatz, "Vorgeschichte," 55.

<sup>65</sup> Meaux-Paris, c.73 in *MGH Conc.* III, ed. Wilfried Hartmann (Hannover: Hahn, 1984), 119-123; cf. Amulo, *Liber contra Judaeos* XLVII-L, LV-LVIII in PL 116, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 174-78, 181-83.

who converted someone to Judaism (119-122; Gregory the Great's letter, Mâcon (589) c.16, Cod. Th. XVI.9:1), prevented Jews from going out among Christians around Easter (120, 123; Mâcon (589) c.13, Orléans (538) c.33), and banned Christians from eating or having sexual relations with Jews or receiving gifts from Jews (121, 123; Epaone c.15, Laodicea cc. 37-38). Added to these restrictions was the repetition in canons 74 and 75 of canons 58 and 60 of IV Toledo, which prohibited Christians from giving *munus*, an office, to Jews, and declared that Jewish children should be taken from their parents to be raised by Christians (123-124). The final canon concerning Jews, canon 76, asked that slave merchants, both Christian and Jewish, should only be allowed to sell pagan slaves within the kingdom and not be able to export them to the Franks' infidel enemies (124).

While all of the prohibitions in canon 73, if not all of the sources, found a double in Amulo's *Liber contra Iudaeos*, the contents of the last three canons did not. Of main interest are the two Toledan canons. Like Agobard, Amulo did not use any directly Visigothic sources in his anti-Jewish writings. How these two canons then appeared in the proceedings of Meaux-Paris remains a question. One possibility lies in a canonical collection entitled *De fugiendis contagiis Iudaeorum*, presumably but not positively by Florus, and taken to the council by Amulo.<sup>66</sup> However, it is not a perfect match. The collection only gave the last sentence of IV Toledo 58, mandating that those who protect enemies of Christ should be excommunicated, and left out canon 60, that calling for Jewish children to be raised by Christians, entirely. The *Hispana* collection of Spanish, African, Gallic, and ecumenical councils was relatively widespread and provides the most-likely source.<sup>67</sup> Thus, no reason exists that any of the clerics at Meaux-Paris

<sup>66</sup> Bernhard Blumenkranz, "Deux compilations canoniques de Florus de Lyon et l'action antijuive d'Agobard" *Revue historique de droit français et étranger* (1955): 560.

<sup>67</sup> Rosamond McKitterick, "Knowledge of canon law in the Frankish kingdoms before 789: The manuscript evidence" in id. *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, Sixth-Ninth Centuries* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1994), 99; Collins, *Charlemagne*, 110.

could not have decided to include the Toledan canons independently of any influence from Amulo or Lyon.

A relationship, perhaps even an influence, does however seem probable between canon 73 of Meaux-Paris and Amulo's *Liber contra Iudaeos*. It seems that Amulo wrote the *Liber contra Iudaeos* in defence of the council.<sup>68</sup> Charles the Bald had only accepted nineteen of the council's canons, and none of the ones concerning Jews.<sup>69</sup> It is not unreasonable that Amulo, as Agobard before him, felt it necessary to ensure that Charles knew exactly why Christians and Jews ought to be separated and why Charles should therefore uphold the canons. This would explain the similarity in sources used.

That is not the only possible explanation however. Amulo's involvement with Meaux-Paris is not certain. The notice of Charles's confirmation stated that Amulo attended the council along with his suffragan bishops.<sup>70</sup> The council records themselves however, made no mention of Amulo or his bishops.<sup>71</sup> Raddatz noted instead that Hincmar of Reims, who was certainly at Meaux-Paris and the ecclesiastical force of the western kingdom, wrote to Amulo in July of 846, seven months after the council, and accused him of not being the true successor of Agobard in terms of furthering the late cleric's anti-Jewish agenda.<sup>72</sup> It seems reasonable that, as Raddatz suggested, Amulo wrote the *Liber contra Iudaeos* in response to that provocation. Yet, given the proximity of Hincmar's letter to the council, the two possible motivations need not be mutually exclusive. Whether or not Amulo attended the council, Hincmar may have looked to him for help in bolstering its aims in regards to Jews.

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<sup>68</sup> Hartmann, "Meaux-Paris," in *MGH: Conc.* III, 62; Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 109.

<sup>69</sup> *Notitia de conciliorum canonibus in villa Sparnaco a Karolo rege confirmatis*. ed. Alfred Boretius. *MGH: Capit.* II, 260-62.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, 261.

<sup>71</sup> Meaux-Paris, *Praefatio*, (*MGH Conc.* III, 83-84).

<sup>72</sup> Raddatz, "Vorgeschichte," 55; Flodoard, *Historia*, III.20 (*MGH SS XIII*, 514).

The *Liber Contra Iudaeos* itself, as scholars have noted, owed much to Agobard's *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*.<sup>73</sup> Most notably, Amulo used many of the same sources as Agobard had. He drew upon Augustine and Jerome almost exclusively for his patristic sources. Amulo included the stories about Polycarp of Smyrna and offered, almost verbatim, Agobard's defence of using stories about heretics in a work about Jews.<sup>74</sup> He copied Agobard's canonical evidence (LV-LVIII; cf. *De iudaicis superstitionibus* IV-VII). Like Agobard, Amulo provided his readers with Jewish beliefs (XII-XIII; cf. *De iudaicis superstitionibus* X).

Yet they were not the same works. Amulo used some second-hand Visigothic evidence, citing Gregory the Great's letter to Reccared following his conversion of the kingdom to Catholicism, and referred, in that context, to Sisebut's conversion of the Jews (XLIX). Amulo also used late-Roman civil laws in addition to his canonical evidence (XLVII-XLVIII). He mentioned different Jewish beliefs than Agobard had, discussing and refuting their expectation of two messiahs instead of using Agobard's evidence (XII-XIII). He did not give a full summary of the *Toledoth Ieshu*, but only mentioned that Jews think Mary was an adulteress, and Jesus the son of a man named Pandera (XL), accusations which also appear in the Talmud.<sup>75</sup> While Agobard's work has been described as an exegesis on the Antichrist,<sup>76</sup> Amulo's focused more on the crucifixion (XXVII-XXXI). Amulo also used more in the way of Scriptural proofs of Jewish iniquity, especially from Isaiah. His *Liber contra Iudaeos* in general stayed much more in line with earlier patristic examples of the genre, than with Agobard's *De iudaicis superstitionibus*. Despite Hincmar's provocation, Amulo did not pursue any anti-Jewish agenda beyond the *Liber contra Iudaeos*. While Agobard had considered the separation of Jews and Christians an issue of central concern, based on the amount and virulence with which he wrote about it, Amulo appears

<sup>73</sup> Albert, "Adversus Iudaeos," 138.

<sup>74</sup> Amulo, *Liber contra Iudaeos*, VI (PL 116, 144); cf. Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, IX.5-30 (204-05).

<sup>75</sup> Bavli Shabat 104b; Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 15-19.

<sup>76</sup> Heil, "Kirchengut," 54.

to have not found it a pressing worry. Like Florus and the anonymous author of the *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Amulo's one-off on the subject highlights Agobard's uniqueness in this regard.

### Agobard's Anti-Judaism

#### *Shape*

Based on Albert's assertion, that Agobard and the other *Hispani* had to teach the Franks about their Jewish "problem,"<sup>77</sup> it would seem a foregone conclusion that Agobard's anti-Judaism must have sprung from Visigothic sources. Yet, as will be seen, the answer to the question regarding the origins of Agobard's anti-Judaism cannot come so easily. Before even attempting to discern the roots of Agobard's attitudes towards Jews and Judaism however, his own anti-Judaism must be explored in depth. His main anti-Jewish work, *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*, will be discussed fully in the next chapter, yet some of the highlights from that and his other anti-Jewish works will be dealt with here.

The contours of Agobard's anti-Judaism prove easy enough to map, even as the underlying reasons resist simple explanations. To begin with, Agobard clearly considered Jews demonic, even accusing them of being antichrists. Just as Jesus did in the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John, Agobard called Jews sons of the devil, constantly striving to fulfill the will of their infernal father.<sup>78</sup> Also, following John's lead in his first letter, Agobard branded Jews as antichrists, since they have failed to confess Jesus as the Christ (XIX.1-23). Yet it must be pointed out that Agobard did not consider only Jews demonic. Other groups likewise received that unfavourable distinction. Those who love worldly pleasures, spread heresies, or wish to kill Christians, are all servants or sons of the devil in Agobard's mind.<sup>79</sup> Jews did remain the only

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<sup>77</sup> Albert, "Adversus Iudaeos," 121.

<sup>78</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XXII.12-17 (216).

<sup>79</sup> Agobard, *De spe et timore*, 475-585 (441-44); id., *De grandine et tonitruis*, V.7-16 (6-7); id., *Contra iudicium Dei*, 123-128 (38).

group named as antichrists, though Agobard accused others, such as priests who neglect their pastoral duties in order to pursue worldly honours and riches, of being the Antichrist's helpers.<sup>80</sup>

Agobard also considered Jews to be liars, particularly about things regarding God or Christ, turning them into blasphemers. While he did also find that many antiphonaries had become, in parts, blasphemous and rife with human lies,<sup>81</sup> Agobard held that Jews were the worst liars and blasphemers, since they alone curse Christ.<sup>82</sup> Moreover, because of their blasphemies, and sometimes due merely to their presence, Agobard contended that Jews harm Christians. He certainly thought that the practice of trial by ordeal did as well,<sup>83</sup> as did a myriad of other snares – icons, superstitions, the love of worldly goods, dissensions, and so forth. In these respects at least, he seems to have found Jews to be just one more front of assault against Christians. That Agobard considered Jews demonic and mendacious only shows that he embraced some anti-Jewish tropes for his own writings. That he considered Jews to be the epitome of these faults provides both the broad strokes of his anti-Judaism, and a glimmer of his wider anxieties.

In order to delve deeper, Agobard's thoughts on conversion can tell us more about his anti-Judaism than the repetition of not-unusual accusations, since an approach to conversion can betray overall thoughts on Jews. If a person pushed conversion it could signal a departure from an Augustinian and Gregorian position of allowing, indeed necessitating, the survival of Jews as Jews. Forced conversions would fall under this particular departure. At the same time however, a focus on conversion could indicate a sincere interest in and desire for Jews' spiritual health; a desire by the converter to ensure that Jews, as individuals, received salvation. Even this "positive" interest would be anti-Jewish however, since it obviously denied Judaism's religious legitimacy. Conversely, a lack of interest in converting Jews could come as a result of recognizing Judaism as a true and efficacious faith, a quite frankly unlikely position before the

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<sup>80</sup> id., *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici*, IX.1-13 (330-31).

<sup>81</sup> id., *De antiphonario*, III.1-3, XIX.6-7 (339, 351).

<sup>82</sup> id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, IX.48-49 (205).

<sup>83</sup> id., *Contra iudicium Dei* (31-48).

modern era. It could equally come from an anti-Judaism so complete that the person was willing to simply leave Jews to their presumptive damnation. Thus Agobard's stance on conversion, when read with his other ideas about Jews, can serve as a microcosm of his anti-Judaism.

A letter entitled *Epistola episcopi ad imperatorem de baptizatis Hebraeis*, attached to Florus's edition of the Sirmondian Constitutions, described an attempt at converting Jews. According to the letter many Jews, particularly youths, converted to Christianity following a campaign for their conversion. The author of the letter complained that Jewish parents then began sneaking their children out of the cities of Chalon-sur-Saône, Mâcon, and Vienne and sending them to Arles, in order to protect them from the missionary effort. Following this subversion, the bishop presumably directing the mission ordered all remaining Jews to present themselves, so that those who wished to convert could do so, and several did. The letter ended with a question to the emperor about how long or how far those who had been kept from baptism could be pursued by those seeking their conversion.<sup>84</sup> The described missionary effort was apparently aimed at children and forceful, but not forced. Once the bishop had gathered the remaining Jewish community and received those who wished to convert, he released the remainder to their parents "intact."<sup>85</sup> Presumably, were he allowed to pursue the children sent to Arles, he would follow a similar pattern.

The origins and authorship of the letter cannot be definitively deciphered. Some of the evidence does seem to point to the letter coming from Lyon during the time of Agobard. Primary among that evidence is that the letter is appended to a work widely recognized as belonging to Florus.<sup>86</sup> Also, the cities mentioned all lie in the general area of Lyon. Chalon-sur-Saône and Mâcon both lie to the north, and under Lyon's ecclesial jurisdiction. Vienne and Arles were the two archbishoprics to the south of Lyon.

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<sup>84</sup> Florus, *Epistola episcopi*, in *PL* 119, ed. J.P. Migne (Garnier: Paris, 1852), 422.

<sup>85</sup> "Reliquos vero, in quibus nihil boni desiderii vel petitionis agnovi, restitui intactos parentibus suis." *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Zechiel-Eckes, "Sur la tradition," 78.



Yet that is the extent of the evidence, and it is less than conclusive. Even assuming that Florus did indeed write the letter, which does seem to be a reasonable assumption, Agobard's involvement is by no means clear, since Florus served three archbishops of Lyon.<sup>87</sup> Though the cities mentioned all point to the regions of Burgundy and Provence, the letter never named Lyon. In fact, given what the letter did state, it seems that conversion effort only took place in Chalon-sur-Saône, Mâcon, and Vienne, the cities from which parents sent their children to Arles. Yet the effort must have been coordinated in order for two different archdioceses to become involved. Presumably whoever did the coordinating had the letter written, but who that was is not known. The author did not sign the letter, nor is the emperor named. Despite Blumenkranz's assertion that the mere fact of address to an emperor must mean Louis the Pious, the title of emperor by no means died with Louis in 840, leaving only Florus's presumed death date of 860 as a possible *terminus ante quem* for the letter.<sup>88</sup>

Also, Agobard never expressed any interest in converting Jews. Indeed, in all his polemical works, whether against Jews, heretics, or superstitions, Agobard often seemed much more concerned about proving the thing wrong and thus preventing others from falling into the same errors, than in changing any adherents' minds. In none of his anti-Jewish writings did Agobard advocate for the end of Jews through any means, baptism included. Instead he stridently encouraged the separation of Jews and Christians in order to protect Christians from what he considered negative Jewish influence. He seemed willing to leave the conversion of Jews for the eschaton. In this, he shared the opinion of Isidore, Augustine, and other church Fathers, that Jews' conversion could not be brought about by human effort, or in historical time.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 135.

<sup>88</sup> Blumenkranz, "Deux compilations," 246; Cabaniss, "Florus," 230.

<sup>89</sup> Drews, *Unknown Neighbour*, 148-50; Cohen, *Living Letters*, 81-82.

Herein lies a contradiction. Agobard valued unity, as did many Carolingian writers. Yet he seemed willing, if not necessarily content, to have Jews live as a completely separate entity within the very empire meant to bring about unity. In fact, his discontent regarding Jews stemmed largely from the fact that they were not separate enough, but instead formed a very present community in the midst of the empire. What created problems, from Agobard's perspective, was that Jews and Christians had become too unified, that Jews were entwined into the fabric of the empire. This discomfiture at close relations combined with the swift and negative reaction from Louis and his *missi* helps explain the number and increasingly harsh rhetoric of Agobard's anti-Jewish writings.

Heil, however, has questioned Agobard's commitment to any anti-Jewish agenda as such, seeing instead a complex of issues revolving around property and slaves.<sup>90</sup> Agobard's five anti-Jewish tracts all came within the span of five to seven years, from 821/2-827/8. Given his involvement in public life for over twenty-five years, more than ten of which came after his last anti-Jewish tract, Agobard's long silence about Jews raises questions. If Agobard thought Jews were such a threat to society, why did he drop the subject after 827/8? Why did he not list toleration of Jews in his reasons for stripping Louis of rule? Why did he only push for separation, and not elimination?

Yet the fact is, Agobard did push for the baptism of Jews' slaves and the separation of Jews and Christians harder than he pushed for any other issue. The number of works, condensed into a relatively short period of time, betrays an intense burst of activity, all centered around what is really one issue – how Jews and Christians ought to interact. In them, Agobard wrote to palace clerics and Louis alike, that is, anyone and everyone he thought might be able to help him solve the problems he saw in his jurisdiction. All his efforts came to nothing. With his last work on the subject, *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*, written to his friend Nibridius of

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<sup>90</sup> Heil, "Kirchengut," 40-42.

Narbonne, he essentially admitted defeat on any sort of practical level, and so reframed the issue into one of churchmen holding to Scriptures and canons in the face of secular opposition, and asked Nibridius to encourage other clergy to join the cause.<sup>91</sup>

Based on the available evidence, Agobard never resolved this tension between his overall desire for unity and his call for Jewish separation. One possible explanation is that he did not consider Jews a part of the society he wanted unified. This would mean that, in the perfect world of Agobard's ideals, all Christians would live in unity of belief, law, and government, with Jews occupying some space outside of that perfect society. It seems that Agobard did agree with the Visigoths in believing that Jews formed the antithesis of a unified society, but he differed from them in that he never expressed any thought of forcing them, or indeed even attempting to persuade them, to join that society. Such a view could explain his willingness to leave Jews to God, and presumed damnation, provided that they did not harm Christians.

In fact, that statement could sum up Agobard's anti-Judaism. He explicitly stated as much in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*: "As for the rest, because they live among us, we should not be malicious to them, nor should we act contrary to their life, health, or riches. Let us keep the way set forth by the church; [it is] not an obscure way, but shows plainly how to be guarded and humane in regards to them."<sup>92</sup> The first sentence of this sentiment seems simple enough – Jews should not be treated badly, nor harmed in life, limb, or property. It is a neat rewrite of the principle Gregory the Great laid out in his *Sicut Iudaeis* declaration. Yet Agobard did not stop there. What he gave in that first sentence, he took away in the next, for keeping "the way set forth by the church" would have led to harm for Jews. Enforcement of the prohibition on Jewish ownership of Christian slaves would have made continued Jewish involvement in agriculture difficult at best. The bans on eating or socializing with Jews, if put into practice, would have

<sup>91</sup> Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu*, 73-111 (233-34).

<sup>92</sup> "Ceterum, quia inter nos uiuunt, et maligni eis esse non debemus, nec vite aut sanitati uel diuitiis eorum contrarii, obseruemus modum ab Ecclesia ordinatum, non utique obscurum, sed manifeste expositum, qualiter erga eos cauti uel humani esse debeamus." id., *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 100-104 (193).

hastened Jews' social isolation. As the history of Jewish-Christian relations from the Late Middle Ages and on shows, generally speaking, the more isolated and unknown Jews became to their Christian neighbours, the more likely anti-Jewish violence became. In the space of two sentences, Agobard completely contradicted himself, causing one to wonder how sincere he was in his assertion that Jews should not be harmed. His other writings and actions certainly suggest that he believed nothing of the sort, but was willing to "protect" Christians by any means necessary.

Agobard also wrote in this passage of Christians having to be "guarded and humane" (*cauti uel humani*) towards Jews.<sup>93</sup> It is unclear what he meant by this. Perhaps he was simply holding to the gospel command to love one's enemies. Yet trying to strip Jews of their Christian slaves and isolate them from larger society does not seem, now, as a very humane act. Given the response to Agobard's efforts, the Jews of the Lyon area and Louis the Pious did not consider it very humane either. What humanity did Agobard then use towards Jews? Unless Agobard's deeds differed greatly from his words, the only "kindness" possible is that of allowing Jews to remain Jews, that Agobard thought he was being kind in apparently not pushing for conversion. Some kindness, however, since he would have locked them out of society in this life, and believed they would be damned in the next.

Despite this, I still speak of Agobard's anti-Judaism, not his antisemitism. Agobard's writings on Jews do not match any except the broadest definitions of antisemitism. The only one of the hallmarks discussed in the introduction to this chapter that Agobard matched was considering Jews to be the primary threat to society. This one characteristic does not, in my mind, make him antisemitic. Also, although Langmuir's definition of antisemitism as "socially significant chimerical hostility against Jews,"<sup>94</sup> has had its share of detractors, I think his

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<sup>93</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 104 (193).

<sup>94</sup> Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 328.

approach does make a useful distinction between those who dislike Jews for what they actually do or believe (e.g. observe the Sabbath), and those who dislike Jews because of fabricated charges (e.g. ritual cannibalism). Agobard clearly disliked Jews for what he understood as things that they did do or believe, and blasted them for blindly following the traditions of their fathers,<sup>95</sup> but did not concoct false actions or beliefs. It may not have even occurred to Agobard to fabricate information, he may have considered the beliefs he reported damning enough.

The fact that Agobard never advocated the elimination of Jews, nor used fabricated evidence I think keeps him squarely within anti-Judaism, not antisemitism. As a final blow against Agobard being antisemitic, I do not believe that he hated Jews, despite Stow's assertion to the contrary.<sup>96</sup> While not listed among the hallmarks given at the beginning of this chapter, hatred is often an emotion popularly associated with antisemitism (or racism, sexism, etc.), and usually contains an obsessive or pathological quality. I believe that if Agobard had truly hated Jews, he would not have abandoned the subject after 827 and *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*. Also, if his writings had been motivated solely by hate, I believe he would have crossed that line into "chimerical hostility," and begun accusing Jews of patent lies, rather than offering Louis a limited picture of contemporary Jewish belief and practice.

It must also be noted that, despite his almost-unique use of contemporary Jewish practices and beliefs, Agobard still remained somewhat patristic in his aims. Everything he wrote, every piece of evidence he used, he did so in order to benefit Christians and to try to affect the ancient ideal of separating Christians from Jews. Though Jews were not an unknown to Agobard, nevertheless they were a kind of wild-card, a population not under his control but, in his eyes, negatively affecting the people under his care. His anti-Judaism stemmed partly from his attempt to assert some authority over the situation.

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<sup>95</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.80-81 (208).

<sup>96</sup> Stow, "Hatred of the Jews," 72-73

In summation, then, Agobard's anti-Judaism consisted of some "stock" accusations – that Jews are liars, blasphemers, and linked to the Antichrist. He also knew of verifiable Jewish beliefs and practices, and, as will be explained in the next chapter, found them wanting. In light of his anti-Jewish works as a whole, one must understand his avowed disinterest in converting Jews as Agobard washing his hands of any desire or responsibility for their salvation. He saw Jews as a threat to the spiritual health and welfare of those under his jurisdiction, and to the empire as a whole. As such, he sought to protect all Christians, including slaves, from a damaging Jewish influence, and so pressed for the enforcement of canons and laws which would have effectively shut Jews out of wider society.

### *Sources*

With this basic pattern of Agobard's anti-Judaism in mind, one may return to the question of its source. Much has been made by some scholars of Agobard's Visigothic origins, and the similarities between his anti-Jewish attitudes and those of the Visigoths, particularly as they appear in Visigothic canons and laws. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Albert saw general similarities between Agobard's writings and Visigothic law and Castes claimed a long-established relationship between the councils of Toledo and Agobard's *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*.<sup>97</sup> This insistence on a Visigothic source may stem from the fact that Agobard's anti-Judaism had so little in common with what Frankish anti-Judaism existed. Despite his overall conformity with the Carolingian world-view, Agobard's position on Jews bore no resemblance to any other anti-Jewish work from his time and place. Scholars have therefore considered his purported Visigothic birth, have noted the virulence of both his and their anti-Judaism, and made the connection between the two.

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<sup>97</sup> Albert, "Adversus Iudaeos," 138 and 141; Castes, "Lyon et sa région," 17.

Yet such claims stretch the available evidence. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Agobard did not use any Visigothic canons to support his position in *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*. The laws and canons that made Visigothic anti-Judaism unique, the forced conversion and its prolonged aftermath, were entirely absent from Agobard's writings. Also, his unwillingness to pursue conversionary efforts would seem to put him outside of the Visigothic model. Even so, Visigothic sources could have provided Agobard with ample support for his anti-Jewish positions, yet he chose not to use them.

In fact, I find Agobard's overall lack of citations from Visigothic material, including the various councils of Toledo and the writings of Isidore, highly suspicious. We know that Lyon had an epitome of the *Hispana* collection, and Agobard even used a canon from the Council of Elvira which banned images in churches in *De picturis et imaginibus*.<sup>98</sup> We also know that the library at Lyon held two works of Isidore, his *Quaestiones in vetus testamentum* and *Sententiae*.<sup>99</sup> Parallels existed between some of Isidore's statements about Jews made in *Sententiae*, and Agobard's in *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*. Like Agobard in *De iudaicis*, Isidore in *Sententiae* made it clear that Jews were sons of the devil, and that anyone who deviated from apostolic teaching is an antichrist.<sup>100</sup> Both men also left Jews without a place or role in society.

However, while they both made the same remarks about Jews, the two bishops approached their assertions from different angles. Isidore's declaration of Jews as sons of the devil, for example, came at the end of a chapter on heretics, placing Jews with heretics and pagans who, having withdrawn from the people of God, belong instead to the body of the

<sup>98</sup> The epitome of the *Hispana* is MS Lyon 336, a 9<sup>th</sup>-century production. Tafel, "Lyons scriptorium," 53. Agobard, *De picturis*, XXXIII.16-17 (180); Elvira, c.36 (Vives, 29).

<sup>99</sup> Lyon 447 and Lyon 620, respectively. Both are 9<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts, though Lyon 620, containing the *Sententiae* may have been earlier, and perhaps shows some Spanish symptoms. Tafel "Lyons scriptorium," 53-54.

<sup>100</sup> Isidore, *Sententiae*, I.16 and I.25 in *PL* 83, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1850), 574, 592; cf. Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XIX.10-12, XXII.12-17 (214, 216).

devil.<sup>101</sup> Agobard's statement of the same, on the other hand, came during a section of supersessionist theology, and he used it as further proof of God's rejection of Jews.<sup>102</sup> Likewise, Isidore's remark on the antichrist status of anyone who does not follow apostolic teaching started a chapter on the antichrist, but never explicitly mentioned Jews.<sup>103</sup> Agobard's accusation, however, explicitly named Jews as antichrists, and placed that equation at the end of a lengthy section urging Christians to keep themselves separated from Jews as one more reason for that separation.<sup>104</sup>

Of course, *De iudaicis superstitionibus* and *Sententiae* were completely different works. Their totally distinct and separate purposes easily explains why the comments about Jews differ. More generally, however, Agobard's decision not to use Isidore in his anti-Jewish works may have simply come from a lack of appropriate material. Isidore's one solely anti-Jewish work, *De fide catholica*, dealt more with educating Christians than truly attacking Judaism, as was the case with most patristic anti-Jewish works. Agobard, however, attacked Judaism, virulently and as it was, not the fossilized Judaism of patristic tracts. Isidore also apparently did not consider Jews as much of a threat to Christians as Agobard did.<sup>105</sup> Agobard gave the danger Jews posed as the reason he composed *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, stating that if Louis understood the danger, he would act on Agobard's suggestions and the declarations of the canons.<sup>106</sup> While not exactly working at cross-purposes, Agobard's anti-Judaism had a different goal than Isidore's.

That lack of similarity on the subject of Jews does not explain why Agobard would not use Isidore at all, however. Not only did Agobard have access to at least two of Isidore's works, but, as a church Father, Isidore as a source appears in many works throughout the Middle Ages. This includes Florus's *De expositione missae*, so clearly the Lyon clergy did not normally

<sup>101</sup> Isidore, *Sententiae*, I.16 (PL 83, 571-74).

<sup>102</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XXI-XXIV (215-18).

<sup>103</sup> Isidore, *Sententiae*, I.25 (PL 83, 592-94).

<sup>104</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis*, XI-XIX (208-15).

<sup>105</sup> Drews, *Unknown Neighbour*, 111, 123, 178.

<sup>106</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, I.11-15 (199).



hesitate to cite Isidore.<sup>107</sup> Agobard therefore must have made a conscious decision not to use him. Likewise, he must have chosen not to use any other Visigothic source, with the exception of the one canon from the Council of Elvira which appears in *De picturis et imaginibus*.<sup>108</sup> It is possible that he knew of some of his Frankish colleagues' discomfort with Spanish traditions, such as Theodulf of Orléans encountered with his *Libri carolini*,<sup>109</sup> and so sought to mask his Visigothic precedents. That seems unlikely, however, given that Agobard cited a Spanish canon in *De imaginibus*, a work on the very same topic as the *Libri carolini*. What may be more likely is that Agobard disagreed with Visigothic anti-Judaism as evidenced in Isidore and the canons on some fundamental level.

In fact, only one aspect of Agobard's anti-Judaism seems to correspond with the Visigothic – the insistence that Jews formed the opposite of the necessary and desired unity of the *Corpus Christi*. That Jews in particular were harmful to unity followed automatically from the Visigothic insistence that all in the kingdom be Catholic. The unity and stability of the kingdom was only to be found in the unity of belief, without exception.<sup>110</sup> Likewise for Agobard, Jews endangered unity and the cohesion of the *Corpus Christi* by their mere presence and could affect a very literal dispersion of Christians. Agobard complained in *De insolentia Iudaeorum* that orders from Louis the Pious in favour of the Jewish community in Lyon had caused the Christians there to flee, hide and become *districti*.<sup>111</sup> The last term carries the meaning of either being broken apart, or being hindered or molested, and the passage as a whole paints a picture of the Christians of Lyon being scattered. Thus the Jewish community, as far as Agobard was concerned, had led to his community becoming separated, had collapsed its unity. The presence of Jews could also lead to liturgical disparities. In the same letter, Agobard

<sup>107</sup> Florus, *De expositione missae*, 46ff. in *PL* 119, ed. J.P. Migne (Paris: Garnier, 1852), 45ff.

<sup>108</sup> Agobard, *De picturis*, XXXIII.14-17 (180), citing Elvira c.36 (Vives, 8).

<sup>109</sup> Freeman, "Scripture and images," 183-84.

<sup>110</sup> King, *Law and Society*, 122; Collins, *Early Medieval Spain*, 139.

<sup>111</sup> “. . .et contristati christiani, non solum illi qui fugerunt, aut qui absconditi sunt, uel qui districti. . .” Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 47-49 (192).

explained that Christians should not be domestic servants or slaves of Jews, since they would then keep Jewish customs in addition to or instead of Christian ones (68-70). Agobard wrote to Nibridius of Narbonne in *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica* that Christians, particularly the “simpler” folk, were being fooled and swept away by Jewish errors.<sup>112</sup> In these works Agobard made it clear that he considered Jews a major threat to the unity he desired, as well as the spiritual well-being of Christians.

Yet does this similarity lead to Agobard’s anti-Judaism necessarily having Visigothic root? Though the similarity exists, to use it as the sole basis for such a hypothesis over-states the point. Also, one key difference separates Agobard’s ideal of unity from the Visigothic; Agobard worked for the unity of all Catholics, the Visigoths tried to enforce the unity of all *as* Catholics. This one similarity, and an indirect one at that (again, Agobard does not use any Visigothic sources in his anti-Jewish tracts), does not a source make. I believe it is time for scholars to leave behind the model of Agobard as a Visigoth working in the Carolingian world.

Instead, I think Agobard was as Carolingian when he wrote about Jews as he was on any other subject. A child of the Carolingian programs of reform, Agobard was raised with the ideas and ideals of that attempt at reform and renewal. Let there be no mistake, the Carolingians legislated their *Christian* ideals. “They and their clergy outlined a programme which was profoundly Christian in intent and content, the clergy were to become learned in the wisdom of the Christian writers, to read and produce Christian works, to perform Christian observances correctly. . . in order that the whole kingdom, . . . might be full and worthy members of the *communitas fidelium*.”<sup>113</sup> As Agobard’s vision of a perfect world did not have any place for Jews, neither, it seems, did the Carolingians’. Yet, as can be seen by evidence such as Louis’s “Jewish charters,” Carolingian rulers clearly recognised that Jews existed within their realms and

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<sup>112</sup> id., *De cauendo conuictu*, 45-49 (232).

<sup>113</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, xx.

accorded at least some of them some privileges. Just as Agobard never apparently resolved the tension between his ideal of a completely Christian society with the very real presence of Jews, as will be discussed shortly, neither did Carolingian legislators.

As previously discussed in this chapter, little of what Carolingian intellectuals wrote regarding Jews warrants much consideration. A few clerics shared Agobard's low opinion of Jews, and Heil noted an increase in anti-Jewish expression from 800-860.<sup>114</sup> There is a question, however, of how much that represents an actual increase versus an effect of the general increase in production, and continued transmission throughout the Middle Ages, which marked the Carolingian period more generally.<sup>115</sup> In fact, scholarly debate continues regarding Carolingian perceptions of Jews and Judaism. Opposed to Heil, Albert asserted that Carolingians had a largely "positive," that is, academic, interest in Jews, since the *Hebraica veritas* formed part of their interest in correcting Biblical texts.<sup>116</sup> This difference in interpretation by modern scholars only reinforces the impression that Carolingians by and large only continued the anti-Jewish tradition received from the Fathers, with little change or advancement.

This only deepens the contradiction. Jews, by their very nature, formed "the polar opposite of the *societas perfecta* of Christianity,"<sup>117</sup> yet the Carolingians seemed largely unconcerned with the Jews in their midst. Agobard was by no means the lone voice on this issue, although his approach was unique, but Jews did not form a major agenda item at Carolingian meetings. In fact, before Meaux-Paris, Jews did not figure on any Carolingian conciliar agenda at all. It could be argued that the Carolingian agenda was full. Adoptionism, icons, civil war, predestination, theories of kingship, ecclesiology, the meaning of the Eucharist, and the Christian education of the populace, dominated Carolingian writings and councils.

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<sup>114</sup> Heil, "Labourers," 90.

<sup>115</sup> Ganz, "Book production," 786.

<sup>116</sup> Albert, "*Adversus Iudaeos*," 119-121.

<sup>117</sup> Heil, "Labourers," 93.

Despite Agobard's pleas to the contrary, most Carolingians did not see Jews or Judaism as a threat which warranted too much of their attention.

Thus a break existed in Carolingian thought between the perfect, Christian world, and the practical reality of sharing space with members of a different faith. Agobard, however, was one of just a few clerics, and the only one in his generation, to point out the contradiction. His writings illustrate that contradiction beautifully, both by simply forcing the issue out into the open, and by proving unable to solve it. Despite his relatively high level of anti-Judaism, despite his calls that Christians keep themselves separate from Jews, it is apparent in his writings that his reality included Jews. Here, at the intersection of his ideals and realities, lies an important component in understanding medieval Jewish-Christian relations. When faced with the paradox of a Jewish presence in what was billed and built as a Christian empire, most Carolingians chose to shift or ignore the ideal in order to make room for that reality. Agobard, on the other hand, sought to change the reality to match the ideals. I think his initial confusion at the resistance from the court to his suggestions and queries was genuine. To his way of thinking, separating Jews and Christians was one of many logical and necessary steps in forming that perfect, Christian society. That his colleagues and emperor, all products of the Carolingian educational reforms like him, did not share that view probably did shock him. So Agobard responded by increasing his rhetoric and drawing on evidence from the Scriptures, canons, and Fathers, as well as offering snippets of Jewish belief and practice, to show Louis and others that the threat posed by Jews was real, and could not be ignored any more than any other heterodoxy.

Again, his views, though driving Agobard arguably to the edge of deep anti-Judaism, did not push him into antisemitism. Even his opinion of Jews as a polluting influence did not turn him into an antisemite. Although Jews clearly disturbed Agobard more than any other group and he did work to mitigate that disturbance, they shared space with heresy, superstition, and other issues. The basis for his concern about Jews also kept Agobard in the realm of anti-Judaism.

Agobard did not write against Jews simply because they were Jews and therefore needed to be written against, he wrote against Jews because of the negative effect he thought they had on Christians. His focus was on Christians first, and Jews second.

As with every other problem he addressed, however, if Agobard had any real impact on contemporary thinking, it was minimal. He may have affected later developments in Jewish-Christian relations, however. The only manuscript of Agobard's writings to contain the anti-Jewish tracts, now Paris BN lat. 2853, appears in a catalogue of manuscripts held by Cluny, drawn up under Abbot Hugh III, who led that abbey from 1158-61.<sup>118</sup> It is therefore entirely possible that Peter the Venerable, who ruled Cluny until 1156 and stands, after Agobard and Amulo, as the next major cleric in the Middle Ages to confront post-biblical Judaism, read and knew Agobard's works. His attacks on the Talmud in his *Adversus Judaeos* share some of the same tone of disbelief and anger as Agobard used in *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*.<sup>119</sup> Although Peter did not cite Agobard directly, it is tempting nonetheless to consider him a source of inspiration, if nothing else. Peter may have learned to look at contemporary Judaism from reading Agobard. However, he may have also learned it from reading or hearing about Peter Alfonsi.<sup>120</sup> The evidence does not exist to support any real hypothesis on the matter, but it is worth entertaining the thought that Agobard, more than two centuries after his death, found not only a sympathetic, but an effective audience for his anti-Judaism in Peter the Venerable.

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<sup>118</sup> Léopold Delisle, *Inventaire des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale: Fonds de Cluni* (Paris: Librairie H. Champion, 1884), 352-53.

<sup>119</sup> Dominique Iogna-Pratt, *Order and Exclusion: Cluny and Christendom Face Heresy, Judaism, and Islam (1000-1150)*, trans. Graham Edwards (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 304-15.

<sup>120</sup> Stow, *Alienated Minority*, 252; Cohen, *Living Letters*, 255.

## Chapter Three

### *De iudaicis superstitionibus*

At first glance, *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus* may not seem to be that significant of a work. It is only one of five pieces Agobard wrote about Jews or Judaism, the others being *De baptismo mancipiorum iudaeorum*, *Contra praeceptum impium de baptismo iudaicorum mancipiorum*, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, and *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*. It appears that Agobard wrote these five works during the same time period, although the exact dating is somewhat questionable. Van Acker, who has produced the only modern critical edition of Agobard's works, dated *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum* to 823. The remaining four works he placed in the years 826-827.<sup>1</sup> Other authors who have written about Agobard do not always provide possible dates, or discuss all five works; however, there seems to be a consensus that they were all written in the 820s, within the first half of Agobard's archiepiscopate.<sup>2</sup>

As with nearly all of Agobard's works, *De iudaicis superstitionibus* has survived in only one manuscript, Paris BN Lat. 2853. This manuscript contains all of Agobard's works in the Van Acker edition except *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* and the acrostic poem *Agobardo pax sit*. The manuscript dates from the ninth or tenth century, almost certainly came from Lyon, and contains a letter from Pope Gregory IV and the tractate *De divina psalmodia* in addition to Agobard's writings.<sup>3</sup> Thus as only one of several anti-Jewish works by Agobard, and only extant in one manuscript, *De iudaicis superstitionibus* seems to have nothing to recommend it for further study.

Yet *De iudaicis superstitionibus* is a remarkable piece, for it stands as Agobard's principal anti-Jewish work. It is greater than the others not only in terms of length (it is longer

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<sup>1</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xli-xlii.

<sup>2</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 65 and 69; Zuckerman, "Political Uses," 29-35.

<sup>3</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, li-lii.

than the other four anti-Jewish works combined), but also in terms of content. The other anti-Jewish works are letters – short, quote little else apart from Scripture and hold closely to one theme. *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, though couched in an epistolary frame, is much more a treatise. Agobard brought in quotations and evidence not only from Scripture, but also from councils and the Fathers. *De iudaicis superstitionibus* likewise has more structure than the other four works. Rather than trying to push his argument forward as quickly and starkly as possible, as in his other anti-Jewish works, Agobard developed several arguments, all in support of an over-arching argument and theme. Also, while Agobard alone had written the other anti-Jewish pieces, Bernard, archbishop of Vienne and Faof, bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône both put their names to *De iudaicis superstitionibus*.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Epistola episcopi ad imperatorem de baptizatis Hebraeis* mentioned both Vienne and Chalon-sur-Saône as cities from which Jewish parents secretly removed their children to avoid a conversion effort. Although the dating of the letter is problematic, it does point to the existence of Jewish communities in those cities, with which Bernard and Faof could have, like Agobard, experienced problems. This would, however, raise the question of why Bernard and Faof joined Agobard for this work, and not the bishop of Mâcon, a city also mentioned in the *Epistola de baptizatis Hebraeis*. Or, indeed, why any of the other bishops under Agobard or the other metropolitans in the area did not participate. As Heil observed, even in this collaborative work, Agobard seems isolated.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the presence of Bernard and Faof on paper, there is little question that Agobard was the lead, if not the only, author of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*. Nothing else is known about what manner of anti-Jewish sentiment the other two clerics held. The survival of Agobard's other anti-Jewish works makes his sentiments clearer, and *De iudaicis superstitionibus* fits into those sentiments. Indeed, the ideas expressed in *De iudaicis superstitionibus* help make sense of

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<sup>4</sup> Heil, "Kirchengut," 57.

some of the vitriol displayed in works like *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*. Agobard's string of insults at the beginning of *De cauendo conuictu*, that Jews are like a whore and pollute Christians, follows more easily from the assertion in *De iudaicis superstitionibus* that Jews are worse than any heretic and are in fact antichrists, than from the charges of blasphemy laid in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*.<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, *De iudaicis superstitionibus* came as the work promised at the end of *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, for which Agobard was the sole author. He told Louis that a longer treatise with evidence about Jews and how they should be treated, collected by Agobard and his "fellow-brothers" (*confratribus*), had been sent.<sup>6</sup> How many and what kind of sources Agobard collected versus Bernard or Faof cannot be determined beyond a doubt. I think the most likely contribution from Agobard's fellow bishops lay in the historical sections, and aid from Florus in finding and marking sources could probably also be assumed at these points as well. I suspect, however, that Bernard and Faof had little say, perhaps even no knowledge, of the meatier sections, those dealing with Jewish beliefs and the equation of Jews with antichrists. The bulk of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, particularly the parts which attract scholarly interest, I believe came from Agobard alone, and I will treat them as such. The work stands as Agobard's attempt to prove, through canon, Scripture, the Fathers, and the Jews' own beliefs, that he had been right in his actions towards the Jews in his diocese and the lay officials who protected them.

Lending weight to the argument that *De iudaicis superstitionibus* deserves attention, the work endures as one of the most unusual anti-Jewish tracts of the Middle Ages. The *contra Iudaeos* genre by and large relied on Scriptures and previous writings of the type in order to prove the truth of Christianity over and against Judaism. While Agobard certainly used both things, he went beyond the genre as it stood by providing information on Jewish beliefs.

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<sup>5</sup> Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu*, 21-26 (231); id. *De iudaicis superstitionibus* IX.31-49 and XIX (205 and 214-15); id. *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 50-53 and 96-98 (192-93).

<sup>6</sup> id., *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 137-148 (194).



Although that information on Judaism alone would make *De iudaicis superstitionibus* unique and worthy of study, Agobard's intent in writing it provides even more incentive for scholarly interest. Christian anti-Jewish literature had other Christians in mind as an audience. Some, such as records of purported disputations, aimed at strengthening Christians' faith, and providing answers to questions about the more difficult points of doctrine, such as the Incarnation.<sup>7</sup> Other works, such as stories of conversions, highlighted Christianity's obvious superiority over Judaism, and proved to Christians, especially the recently-converted, that they had chosen the right faith.<sup>8</sup> If those stories were ever read by or told to Jews, they could also presumably aid a missionary effort.

To meet this goal of strengthening Christians, nearly every anti-Jewish tract or story included excerpts of Scripture meant to provide proof of how Christians understood the Hebrew Scriptures better than Jews did through a Christological interpretation of certain passages.<sup>9</sup> This served the dual purpose of buttressing Christians' faith, and, should the opportunity present itself, of perhaps convincing a Jew of Christianity's truth. It is this last element, the use of Scriptures to prove Christianity's correctness over and against Judaism, that Agobard left out of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, and indeed of all his anti-Jewish works. This is where Agobard separated himself from all previous *contra Iudaeos* literature. He did want to strengthen Christians, but he wanted to do so by separating them from Jews, not by giving them tools for arguing with Jews. Agobard set out, not to exhibit how Christianity was right, but how Judaism was so wrong that it absolutely proved a danger to Christians who came into contact with it. He sought to demonstrate to Louis or anyone he could "the damnation of souls inflicted on the

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<sup>7</sup> Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens dans le monde occidental: 430-1096* (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1960), 75.

<sup>8</sup> e.g. Severus of Minorca, *Letter on the Conversion of the Jews*; Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, V.11 and VI.17 (MGH *SSRM* I.1, 205-06, 286-87).

<sup>9</sup> e.g. Isidore, *De fide catholica* (PL 83, 449-530); S. Katz, *Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms*, 35.

faithful by the instruments of the devil, namely, the minds of the Jews” so that Louis “will demand a remedy be made.”<sup>10</sup>

Agobard’s life, background, and anti-Judaism have already been explored. An in-depth examination of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, its theme and sources, will continue the study of Agobard’s attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. This will in turn lead to the scrutiny of Agobard’s wider concerns around ecclesiology, politics, and the proper order of life.

## Outline

As promised at the end of *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, *De iudaicis superstitionibus* began with examples of how the Fathers kept themselves separate from Jews. Agobard and probably his fellow-bishops related from Venantius Fortunatus’s *Vita Hilarii* how Hilary, mid-fourth-century bishop of Poitiers, went beyond simply not eating with Jews but would also avoid greeting them on the street.<sup>11</sup> They then recounted the conflict between Saint Ambrose and Emperor Theodosius over the synagogue burned in Callinicum in 388 (II.12-44). After reiterating the lessons to be taken away from the two examples – that one should not even greet Jews, and that it is incumbent on churchmen to actively resist a secular authority acting against the interests of the Church – the contempt in which Cyprian and Athanasius held Jews received a brief mention (III). They claimed that it is the example provided by those two Fathers, “Whose most religious faith and devotion given to Christ all the most reverend leaders of the Gallic Church follow” (III.4-6).<sup>12</sup>

With that, the work segued into a discussion of Gallic and other canons which mandate the separation of Jews and Christians, using rulings from the councils of Epaone, Agde, Mâcon,

<sup>10</sup> “. . . dampna animarum, que per uasa diaboli, mentes uidelicet Iudeorum, fidelibus inferuntur. . . adhiberi . . . iuberet. . . remedium” Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, I.12-15 (199).

<sup>11</sup> id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, II.6-10 (200).

<sup>12</sup> “Quorum religiosissimam fidem et Christo deditam deuotionem omnes Ecclesiarum Gallicanarum reuerentissimi gubernatores secuti. . .” (201).

Orléans (the third council), and Laodicea. Canons against eating with Jews, against Jewish ownership of Christian slaves, and against Jews going out in public from Maundy Thursday until after Easter dominated the section. This section also included canons forbidding Jews to have authority over Christians as judges or toll-collectors, canons advising Christians not to celebrate with or receive gifts from Jews, and one canon excommunicating Christians who have sexual relations with Jews (IV-VIII).

The authors then returned to discussing the examples of the Fathers, specifically what Irenaeus of Lyon recorded about the apostle John and his disciple Polycarp. John purportedly fled a bathhouse once he realised that the heretic Cherintus was also present. Polycarp for his part, when asked, “Do you know me?” by the heretic Marcion, is reported as replying, “I know you, first-born of Satan” (IX.12-17). Yet these examples give the apostolic reaction to heretics, not Jews. To defend the use of this evidence, the authors asserted that all heresies sprang from either Jews or Samaritans. In fact, according to the authors Jews are worse than heretics. They claimed that Jews have not only produced most heresies but while heretics agree with church teachings on some matters, Jews agree with the church on nothing (IX.20ff.). Indeed, Jews do nothing but constantly blaspheme and curse Christ. Agobard, and perhaps his fellow-bishops knew this because, “speaking with them nearly every day we hear the mysteries of their error”(IX.49-50).<sup>13</sup>

The change from any kind of collaboration to Agobard working alone is basically impossible to detect. However, as mentioned above, I believe the most-likely area of collaboration came in the early, historical sections of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*. What followed after I think came from Agobard alone, beginning at the latest with this portrait of Jewish belief. Since this section has been the subject of so much scholastic scrutiny, it deserves to be given in full and discussed here.

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<sup>13</sup> “. . . cotidie pene cum eis loquentes mysteria erroris ipsorum audimus.” (205)

In short, they say that God Himself has a body, and is distinguished by bodily features through limbs, and indeed He has one part to hear us, another to see, certainly another to speak or another which acts. And by this the human body was made in the image of God, except that He has inflexible and unbending fingers, since He carries out nothing by hand. Moreover [they say that He] sits on a throne, which is carried around by four beasts, in the manner of some earthly king, and is enclosed within a huge palace. [They say that] He also thinks many superfluous and fruitless things, which, because they are not all able to come to effect, are transformed into demons. But they also preach innumerable abominable things about God Himself, as we have said, and they worship such an image, not the true, unchangeable and immutable God, whom they do not know inwardly, because they have constructed and fixed stupidities to Him in their hearts.

They also believe that the letters of their alphabet have existed forever, and accomplished various services before the beginning of the world, by which it is reasonable that they preside in the world, indeed [they believe that] the Mosaic law was written many years before the world. They also affirm that there are many worlds, many hells, and many heavens, of which they say one, which they call *racha*, i.e. the firmament, supports God's millstones, with which the manna to be consumed by angels is ground into food. Indeed another one they call *araboth*, in which they affirm God resides, and this is according what is in the Psalms: "make way for him who ascends above *araboth*" (Ps. 68:4). [They say that] because of this God has seven trumpets, one of which measures 1,000 cubits.

And what more? There is no page, no sentence of the Old Testament about which either they do not have lies fabricated and composed by their elders, or they do not always fabricate a new superstition to this very day, and they presume to respond to questions. For they also read in the teaching of their elders that Jesus was once an honourable young man among them, and instructed in the teaching of John the Baptist. There were many students, one of whom, because of his hardness and dullness of understanding, received the name Cephas, i.e. "rock." And when [Jesus] was expected at a feast day by the people, some boys from his school ran to him and sang, according to the honour and reverence due a teacher, "Hosanna to the son of David." In the end, accused because of his many lies, [he was] thrust into jail by the judgement of Tiberius because his daughter, to whom [Jesus] promised a birth without a man's semen, bore a rock. After that [he was] hanged on a fork-shaped gallows, as if a detested magician, where [he was] also struck in the head with a rock. And [he] died in this manner, buried in a certain nearby aqueduct, and entrusted to a certain Jew for guarding. At night [he] suffered the sudden flood of the aqueduct. By the order of Pilate [he was] sought for twelve months, and never found. Then Pilate promulgated a law to [the people] of this kind, saying: "It is clear that he has risen, just as he foretold, who was both slain by you because of envy and who is not found in either a sepulchre or in any other place. And because of this I order that you adore him. But if anyone does not wish to, let him know he has a future place in Hell." Therefore all these things both their elders fabricate and they read with

foolish stubbornness, so that with such falsehoods the whole truth of Christ's power and passion is cancelled out, and so that adoration ought to be shown him not as truly God, but is only brought by the law of Pilate. But also [they say that] Peter was not led out of prison by an angel, as we hold, but by the mercy of Herod, at whose house [Peter's] wisdom was highly praised very often. And then they assert that Christians worship idols, and the strengths which are acquired from the intercessions of the saints among us they are not terrified to say are done by the devil. Who can doubt that they are most worthy of great hatred for all of these things? (X.1-59)<sup>14</sup>

To this original information Agobard added several accusations of Jerome's. Namely, that Jews will test the quality of a menstruant's blood by taste, if testing it by sight is inconclusive. Also, that the only explanation they provide for traditions such as not leaving the house on the Sabbath

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<sup>14</sup> "Dicunt denique Deum suum esse coporeum et corporeis liniamentis per membra distinctum, et alia quidem parte illum audire ut nos, alia uidere, alia uero loqui uel aliud quid agere; ac per hoc humanum corpus ad imaginem Dei factum, excepto quod ille digitos manuum habeat inflexibiles ac rigentes, utpote qui nil manibus operatur; sedere autem more terreni alicuius regis in solio, quod a IIIor circumferatur bestiis, et magno quamuis palatio contineri; cogitare etiam illum multa superflua et uana, que, quia ad effectum cuncta uenire nequeant, uertantur in demones. Sed et innumera infanda de deo, ut diximus, suo praedicant, ac tale colunt simulchrum, quod ipsi in cordium suorum stultitia finxerunt et statuerunt, non uerum, inconuertibilem atque incommutabilem Deum, quem penitus ignorant.

Litteras quoque alfabeti sui credunt existere sempiternas, et ante mundi principium impetrasse diuersa ministeria, quibus eas oporteat in saeculo praesidere, legem uero Mosaycam multis annorum curriculis ante mundum fuisse scriptam. Necnon adfirmant plures esse terras, plura inferna, pluresque caelos, quorum unum, quod ipsi uocant racha, id est firmamentum, molas Dei sustentare asserunt, quibus manna sumendum angelis molatur in escam; alterum uero appellant araboth, in quo Dominum astruunt residere, et hoc esse in psalmo secundum illos: "Iter facite ei, qui caballicat super araboth;" habere Deum propterea septem tubas, quarum una mille ei cubitis metiatur.

Et quid plura? Nulla Veteris Testamenti pagina, nulla sententia est, de qua uel a maioribus suis non habeant conficta et conscripta mendatia, uel ipsi usque hodie noua semper superstitione confingant, et interrogati respondere praesumant. Nam et in doctrinis maiorum suorum legunt, Iesum iuuenem quendam fuisse apud eos honorabilem et magisterio baptisite Iohannis eruditum, quam plures habuisse discipulos, quorum uni propter duritiam et hebitudinem sensus kephae, id est petre, nomen inposuerit. Et cum expectaretur a populo ad diem festum, quosdam ei de scola sua pueros occurrisse, qui illi ex honore et reuerentia magistri cantauerint: "Osanna filio David." Ad extremum uero propter plura mendatia accusatum, Tyberii iudicio in carcerem retrusum, eo quod filia ipsius, cui sine uiro masculi partum promiserat, lapidis conceptum intulerit; inde etiam ueluti magum detestabilem furca suspensum, ubi et petra in capite percussus; atque hoc modo occisus, iuxta quendam aqueductum sepultus, et Iude cuidam ad custodiam commendatus; noctu uero subita aqueductus inundatione sublatum, Pilati iussu per duodecim lunas quesitum nec usque inuentum. Tunc Pilatum huiusmodi ad eos promulgasse legem: "Manifestum est," inquit, "resurrexisse illum, sicut promiserat, qui et a uobis per inuidiam peremptus est, et neque in tumultu neque in ullo alio inuenitur loco. Et ob hanc causam praecipio, ut adoretis eum; quod qui facere noluerit, partem suam in inferno futuram esse cognoscat." Haec autem omnia ideo et seniores eorum confinxerunt, et ipsi stulta obstinatione lectitant, ut talibus commentis tota et uirtutis et passionis Christi ueritas euacuetur, et ut adoratio non ei ut Deo ueraciter exhiberi debeat, sed Pilati tantum lege illi delata sit. Sed et Petrum nequaquam per angelum secundum fidem nostram de carcere eductum, sed Herodis misericordia, apud quem plurimum eius sapientia fuerit conlaudata. Denique et christianos idola asserunt adorare, et uirtutes, que apud nos sanctorum intercessionibus obtinentur, a diabolo fieri dicere non exhorrescunt.

Pro quibus omnibus summo eos odio dignissimos esse quis ambigat?" (205-07).

is that they had received the tradition from their masters. Thus, according to Jerome and quoted by Agobard, Jews prefer the teachings of men to those of God (X.72-81).<sup>15</sup>

Aside from the information quoted from Jerome, Agobard's section on Jewish beliefs provided an entirely new insight into ninth-century Judaism for his readers. Most anti-Jewish tracts for much of the Middle Ages did not concern themselves with Jews as they actually lived or Judaism as it actually existed at the time. Instead, as will be discussed further on in this chapter, most writers confronted Jews as practitioners of a Judaism which had not existed since Biblical times, if, indeed, the Judaism Christian writers portrayed had ever existed.<sup>16</sup> As discussed above, the most traditional form of anti-Jewish polemic in fact concerned itself with bolstering a Christian's faith, using Judaism as a foil.<sup>17</sup> Isidore's *De fide catholica contra Iudaeos*, which enjoyed great popularity throughout the Middle Ages, even being translated into various languages,<sup>18</sup> is a perfect example. In arguing "against" Jews, Isidore started with Christology, and discussed Jews' complicity with, indeed desire for, Jesus's death.<sup>19</sup> Yet Isidore did not offer any new information about Jewish beliefs or practices, limiting himself instead to quotations from Scriptures. The entire tract and the information Isidore gave was designed to bolster the faith of those who already believed.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, as can be seen in the extended passage quoted above, Agobard did not limit himself to Scriptures, nor, as has already been hinted at and will be discussed in more depth shortly, was he primarily concerned about strengthening Christians' faith. Instead, as he had informed Louis in *De insolentia Iudaeorum* what Jews actually did, at least as Agobard alleged, so in *De iudaicis superstitionibus* he offered a glimpse of what Jews actually believed, again,

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<sup>15</sup> Quoting Jerome, *Epistula* CXXI, 10, 19-20.

<sup>16</sup> Cohen, *Living Letters*, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Guy Strousma, "From anti-Judaism to antisemitism in early Christianity?" in *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, ed. Ora Limor and Guy Strousma (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 13.

<sup>18</sup> Drews, *Unknown Neighbour*, 133.

<sup>19</sup> Isidore, *De fide catholica*, I-XXI (PL 83, 449-79).

<sup>20</sup> Drews, *Unknown Neighbour*, 66-73.

according to Agobard. The truly remarkable aspect of this section of *De iudaicis superstitionibus* (and some of what Agobard claimed in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*) is that there is ample evidence that Agobard's information may well have been accurate. Again, as will be discussed later in this chapter, the beliefs Agobard turned against Jews can be found not only in Jewish mystical literature, but also within Midrashic texts, a much more commonly known source.

Having outlined the Jewish beliefs he found offensive, Agobard entered into a fairly lengthy section of supersessionist theology – God's rejection of Jews and the election of gentiles as well as Christians' replacement of Jews as God's Chosen People (XI-XVI.1-15). To bolster his argument, Agobard cited the example of Paul not sharing a table with Clement until Clement was baptised, and the general examples of the apostles and the Judean church avoiding contact with Jews (XVI.16-19, XVII-XVIII). Agobard considered how Jews are Antichrists because they do not confess Jesus as the Christ. He also asserted that Jews were worse off for having rejected the Messiah than they were in Egypt before they received the Law (XIX.10-24, XX.13-33). He returned to the rejection of Israel (XXI-XXII) before moving on to reiterating how Christians should stay separate from Jews (XXIII-XXIV). Agobard then detailed how Jews had been and were still subject to the curses given by Moses in Deuteronomy, while Christians had received all of the blessings (XXV). With that Agobard finished the main body of his treatise. He ended with a reiteration of blessings and curses, a statement that wiser men will have to carry on from what he had done, and a parting salutation to Emperor Louis (XXVII).

### Evidence and Themes

The necessity of the separation of Jews and Christians was the overarching theme of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*. Indeed, I would argue that the separation of the two peoples was Agobard's principal goal in all of his anti-Jewish tracts. The entire work was taken up with the

repetition of this theme and with its defence, what could be termed the “why” of the necessity for the separation of the two religions. That is part of why this work is so remarkable. Rather than follow the traditional format for anti-Jewish works of using Scriptural proof-texts to show Judaism’s errors and Christianity’s orthodoxy, Agobard focused instead on the need for the segregation of Jews and Christians. That Judaism was wrong and Christianity was right went, literally, without saying.

In order to prove his point and bolster this rather unusual work, Agobard used four kinds of evidence. Canons gave legal backing for his position and the stories of saints and apostles taken from patristic writings and Scriptures provided historical precedents. Scriptures also provided theological support, particularly those passages which Agobard used as a basis for his outline of supersessionist theology. The Jewish information he evinced, unlike traditional anti-Jewish tracts, gave his readers a glimpse at Judaism as he saw it, and theoretically then provided Louis and others more incentive for following Agobard’s suggestions.

The canons chosen for *De iudaicis superstitionibus* called for the separation of Jews and Christians. Rulings against sexual relations, commensality, and Christians celebrating with Jews attempted to create social distance between the two groups. Other canons prohibited Jewish ownership of Christian slaves or barred Jews from holding positions of civil authority – judges, toll-collectors, and the like – as such an arrangement could force Christians into sometimes daily contact with Jews (IV-VIII). Both social contact between Jews and Christians and Jewish authority over Christians had the potential to blur the lines between the two faiths and so result in judaizing or outright conversion. Moreover, when Jews held authority over Christians, be that as a master, an employer, or as a civil authority, that situation reversed what Agobard and others saw as the natural order for the two peoples. Regarding slavery specifically, the logic given by the thirteenth canon of the Council of Mâcon (583), quoted in *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, was



that “it is unlawful that those whom the Lord Christ redeemed by shedding his blood should remain ensnared by the fetters of persecutors.”<sup>21</sup>

Agobard’s logic seems to be that if Jews had indeed lost their place as God’s Chosen People, if indeed Jews’ loss of political autonomy and their dispersion from Palestine were punishments for rejecting Jesus as the Messiah, then Jewish ownership and control over Christian lives made no sense. The same logic held true for Jews in positions of civil authority, whether at the court or elsewhere in the empire.<sup>22</sup> For Agobard, Jews should not be politically punished by God through the loss of their homeland on the one hand, and rewarded with political power by rulers on the other. Such realities not only undermined the perceived natural order, but also undermined efforts by clergymen like Agobard to convince other Christians that Jews were an accursed people to be avoided. Such realities could also threaten clerical teachings on the truth of Christian doctrines and sacred history, including supersessionist theology. From Agobard’s perspective, how could the faithful be convinced of the truth and supremacy of Christianity if rulers not only allowed but also initiated the break down of the distinctions between the two religions in daily life? How could the clergy insist on the power of God displayed through the miracles and resurrection of Jesus, if Jews were able to have Christians as slaves?

The stories chosen from the Scriptures and the Fathers provided clear, historical proof of the merit of segregation. The tales of Hilary avoiding Jews on the street<sup>23</sup> and of the early Judean church not turning to Jews for help even during a famine (XVIII.16-19), formed the basis of the historical evidence. The account of Jerome’s conflict with Emperor Theodosius outlined the rights of the Church versus the rights of Jews following anti-Jewish violence inflicted by Christians. However, most of the historical evidence did not directly pertain to Jews or avoiding

<sup>21</sup> “. . . nefas est, ut, quos Christus Dominus sanguinis sui effusione redemit, persecutorum uinculis permaneant inretiti.” Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, VI.27-28 (203).

<sup>22</sup> Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 87; S. Katz, *Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms*, 123.

<sup>23</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, II.45-49 (201).

them. The stories of John fleeing the bathhouse because of the presence of Cherintus and Polycarp's reaction to Marcion belonged to the early church's struggles against heretics, not Jews (II.10-44, IX.1-19). The report in the Book of Acts of Peter not staying or eating with Cornelius before he was baptised and Clement recalling how Peter would not eat with him before Clement's baptism were both stories about gentile converts to the Christian faith (XV.1-5, XVI). As the authors were only able to evince two clear examples of Christians separating themselves from Jews, the historical evidence used provided the weakest support for the necessity of separation. Still, it is important to note that by these examples the authors urged separation not only from Jews, but from anyone who could possibly threaten, pollute, or corrupt the Christian community. As will be seen in the next chapter, pollution was a major concern for Agobard, one he did not limit to Jews.

The theological evidence presented a much stronger case for Agobard's argument. Supersessionist theology, the idea that had Christians replaced Jews as God's Chosen People, an element of Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric from very early on,<sup>24</sup> formed the principal part of the theological basis for the separation of Jews and Christians. For this purpose, Agobard both alluded to and quoted Paul's allegory of Hagar and Sarah in the fourth chapter of the letter to the Galatians. In this allegory Paul read Hagar and Sarah as the two covenants. Hagar was the covenant God made with Israel on Mt. Sinai, and just as Hagar was a slave, so Jews are enslaved by their covenant. Sarah, the free woman, represented the freedom offered by Christ. She was the mother of Christians, children of the promise.<sup>25</sup> For Agobard, "Jews, as much as they exist as strangers to the promised seed of Abraham, that is, Christ, so they are also proved unworthy of

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<sup>24</sup> Rosemary Ruether, "The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism" in *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, ed. Helen Fein (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), 28-30.

<sup>25</sup> Gal. 4:21-31.

the glory of the sons of God” (XXI.12-14).<sup>26</sup> If Jews were not sons, they were slaves, making their participation in a Christian society impossible.

Agobard continued with the issue of enslaved Jews versus free Christians when he used several verses from the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John calling those who sin slaves to sin,<sup>27</sup> to help establish God’s outright rejection of Jews and election of gentiles. From those verses Agobard established that Jews are therefore slaves to sin. As slaves they cannot be part of the household of God. Their only opportunity for freedom is to believe in Jesus as the Christ, which they have refused to do. Though Jews claim to be free children of Abraham, to Agobard they are strangers to the spiritual liberty found in belief in Jesus and are moreover subject to worldly servitude.<sup>28</sup> Jews, according to Agobard, have been destroyed by their own unbelief (XXII.29-30); their continued rejection of Jesus as the Messiah placed Jews outside of God’s grace and salvation, now reserved only for Christians, and had turned Jews into spiritual slaves of sin.

That Agobard considered Jews to be slaves only made the idea of their owning Christians even more troubling. To begin with, that Jews as spiritual slaves were free to own spiritually free Christians as material slaves reversed God’s proper ordering of the universe. Properly, Christians should exercise complete control and authority over Jews, and “no Christian should be subject to a Jew” (VI.24).<sup>29</sup> Also, the Jewish ownership of Christian slaves, or even the hiring of domestic servants, led to a break-down in the distinction between adherents of the two faiths, giving Agobard and other clerics even more reason to resist such a situation. Agobard gave a list of ways in which Christians who work for Jews can fall away from proper Christian practice in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, beginning with keeping the Sabbath and ending with buying Jewish

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<sup>26</sup> “Ergo Iudaei, quantum a promisso Abrahae semine, id est Christo, existunt alieni, tantum et filiorum Dei gloria probantur indigni.” (216)

<sup>27</sup> John 8:33-36.

<sup>28</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XXII (216-17).

<sup>29</sup> “. . . nullus christianus Iudeo deinceps debeat deseruire. . .” (203), citing Mâcon (583) c.16.

wine.<sup>30</sup> He considered working in a Jewish household a great source of danger for Christians. Simply having Jews around of course likewise brought about social relations closer than Agobard would like, as his attestations and prohibitions of Christians eating with Jews show,<sup>31</sup> and the potential for judaizing such relations could bring. As troubling as such easy contact was for Agobard, the intimacy inherent in slavery or domestic servanthood could certainly lead to nothing good for the Christian in such a position. The constant contact with Judaism made it too easy for Christians to fall into the sins of their Jewish masters, making them slaves both materially and spiritually.

Along with the idea of Jews as slaves, another corollary of supersessionist theology is the idea that Jews are cursed, while Christians are blessed. As with supersessionist theology in general, the transfer of blessings to Christians while Jews remain cursed played a role in patristic anti-Jewish polemic from the third century on.<sup>32</sup> For Agobard, it was obvious that biblical blessings belong to Christians, while the curses apply to Jews. Indeed he merely repeated, with some interpretation, the passage in Deuteronomy where Moses outlined the curses in store for Israel if they do not follow the Law.<sup>33</sup> Taking these warnings at face value, Agobard clearly considered Jews to be completely cursed. He wrote that this would remain as the situation for Jews until all Gentiles have converted.<sup>34</sup> “When the fullness of the nations comes in, thus will all Israel be saved” (XXV.39-40).<sup>35</sup> That last statement was the only glimmer of Augustinian thought on Jews in the entire treatise.

As with any other theological topic, early medieval authors who wrote on Jews or Judaism had to consider what Augustine had written on the subject. Augustine had developed his thoughts on Judaism in the chaos and complexity of the end of the Roman Empire in the west

<sup>30</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 68-73 (192-93).

<sup>31</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 91-100 (193); id. *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XXIV.13-36 (218-19).

<sup>32</sup> Garrison, “Franks,” 115; Ruether, “Theological roots,” 29.

<sup>33</sup> Deut. 28:16-19, 43-44.

<sup>34</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XXV.26-36.

<sup>35</sup> “. . . donec plenitudo gentium introeat et sic omnis Israhel saluus fiat.” (220); cf. Rom. 11:25-26.

and in the continued theological conflicts of late-antique Christianity. Jews' lasting usefulness in Augustine's schema of salvation history allowed him to postpone their final conversion to the eschatological future. Jews became a paradox for Augustine, in the same manner as this world, the *saeculum*, which citizens of heaven must work to uphold, while at the same time praying for their liberation from it. The paradox of Jews involved their value as witnesses to the truth of Christianity but also their punishment, their loss of status as God's chosen people, and the necessity of their final conversion.<sup>36</sup>

Augustine's doctrine of Jewish witness was simplified as medieval authors adapted it to their own times and use. Augustine had helped create the fossilized Judaism used by so many other medieval authors, but not, as has been shown, by Agobard. In his assertion of an ultimate redemption for Jews, "and thus will all Israel be saved," (*et sic omnis Israhel saluus fiat*) Agobard does seem to uphold at least a portion of Augustine's thought. Yet Agobard undercut the other facets of Augustine's doctrine regarding Jews, especially their continued utility as witnesses, by confronting a post-biblical Judaism which bore little resemblance to the Judaism in Augustine's writings and thus shared none of its positive attributes.

For Agobard, unlike for Augustine, Jews had a demonic dimension. Within Agobard's supersessionist section he cited the verse from the Gospel of John where Jesus accused Jews of being demonic, saying, "You are children of the devil, and you wish to do your father's will" (XXII.13-14).<sup>37</sup> Agobard followed that with a rhetorical question: "What desires of their father do they not fill daily, holding the Law in contempt, spurning the prophets, persecuting the church, and blaspheming the Son of God?"<sup>38</sup> This demonic condition, the presentation of which Agobard thrust into a discussion of Jews' unwillingness to believe in Jesus as the Christ, is one of the reasons, for Agobard, why Jews have been cut off from God and have been barred from

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<sup>36</sup> Cohen, *Living Letters*, 23-65.

<sup>37</sup> John 8:44.

<sup>38</sup> "An non patris sui desideriis cotidie satisfaciunt, contempnentes legem, spernentes prophetas, persequentes Ecclesiam, atque ipsum Dei Filium blaphemantes?" Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XXII.14-17 (216).

their heavenly inheritance. Yet one more reason why Christians and Jews should be segregated, and Christians protected from negative Jewish influence.

Given that Agobard seems to have had no difficulty assigning Jews a place as children of the devil, it is perhaps not surprising that he also argued that Jews are antichrists. To support this, Agobard used the verses regarding the Antichrist from the First Letter of John which state that any spirit which does not confess Jesus as the Christ is an antichrist. Agobard simply applied that logic to Jews. They do not confess Jesus as the Christ, thus they must themselves be antichrists. In fact, the only reason Jews are not the Antichrist is that they do not claim to be Christ as the Antichrist does (XIX.3-23).<sup>39</sup>

While these various theological arguments came in the latter half of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, some of Agobard's strongest support for the necessity of segregation, the information about Jewish beliefs and customs, came at the beginning. It is impossible to say what part of the treatise Agobard thought might best make his case, but the section on Jewish beliefs has certainly attracted much modern attention. The information assisted Agobard by showing just how depraved Jews are; so much so that the church Fathers of both the canons and the stories were right to avoid Jews and instruct others to do the same. Not only do Jews not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, they make up scurrilous stories about him, God, and the power of the saints. For Agobard, as for Jerome, Jews mindlessly follow the traditions of their teachers and care nothing for God.<sup>40</sup> This information was what made Jews more dangerous, in Agobard's mind, than any other threat to Christian unity. Beyond the canons, beyond the Scriptures, beyond the Fathers, for Agobard *this* showed without question the danger Jews posed Christians.

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<sup>39</sup> I John 2:22-23 and 4:1-3.

<sup>40</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.65-81 (207-08); Jerome, Epistle CXXI, 10,19-20.

Although *De iudaicis superstitionibus* has been called an exegesis on the Antichrist,<sup>41</sup> I believe it can be more properly defined as a treatise on segregation. Throughout the piece, Agobard evinces more and more evidence to show that Jews and Christian must be kept separate from each other. While this push for separation could fairly be considered the theme of *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, Agobard had another, largely implied, reason to argue so strongly for segregation, namely, he wrote to protect Christians. He seems to have worried that the Christianity of the people was too insecure to risk contact with another faith.<sup>42</sup> Therefore rulers, both secular and ecclesiastic, must make every effort to minimize such contact. Again, we find an anti-Jewish writing devoted to helping Christians, even though Agobard phrased that “help” in unusual ways. Yet it was a very Carolingian way to go about things, trusting that a greater amount of knowledge, a better education, would result in right action and eventually salvation.<sup>43</sup> If Louis just knew what the Jews did, what they believed, how they harmed Christians, then Agobard thought that the emperor would have no choice but to enforce the old canons and civil laws.<sup>44</sup> He presumably believed that an awareness of this particular threat to the religious security of the empire would lead to actions similar to those taken against the Adoptionist bishop Felix of Urgell.<sup>45</sup>

The separation Agobard so strongly advocated and the protection it would offer had two purposes – to maintain the cohesion of the Christian community, and to reduce or eliminate the possibility of Christians converting to Judaism. As the conversion of the deacon Bodo showed, a person could choose Judaism over Christianity despite the danger in doing so (Bodo fled to Muslim Spain following his conversion), and such conversions took place throughout the early

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<sup>41</sup> Heil, “Kirchengut,” 54.

<sup>42</sup> Boshof argues as much, *Agobard*, 120-21.

<sup>43</sup> Blumenkraz, *Juifs et chrétiens*, 182.

<sup>44</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 108-110 (194); id. *De iudaicis superstitionibus* I.11-15 (199).

<sup>45</sup> *ARF* an.794 (*MGH SRG* VI, 94 and 95); Chandler, “Heresy and Empire;” Collins, *Charlemagne*, 130-33.

Middle Ages.<sup>46</sup> For clerics like Agobard, Jews held a dangerous appeal for too many Christians, as losing just one to the “synagogue of Satan,” was one too many.

Slaves, who could be Christian, Jewish, or pagan,<sup>47</sup> were particularly likely to convert for several reasons. In order to preserve the formal Jewish unity of the household, Jewish law required the conversion of a slave to Judaism within a year of purchase, or the slave was to be set free. Though that halakhic injunction may have been ignored during the Middle Ages, conversion to Judaism provided the slave with the legal protection of the community, the ability to marry within the community, and greater ease in finding employment if the slave later gained his or her freedom.<sup>48</sup> These factors, combined with probable pressure on the part of many Jewish masters, made the slaves of Jews highly vulnerable to conversion. This would help explain why Agobard focused so much on the pagan slaves of Jews who wished to be baptised, and on the injunctions against the Jewish ownership of Christian slaves. While Zuckerman’s argument, that Agobard’s ultimate goal lay in creating wastelands that would revert to church ownership,<sup>49</sup> may have some merit, I think it reads too much into Agobard’s arguments. He continued to come into conflict over the issue of slaves because Jews’ Christian slaves reversed the natural order, contravened canons and Roman law, and left a segment of the Christian population in a situation with a higher than average likelihood of leading to conversion.

Agobard’s concerns around conversion did not end with slaves however. Judging from his writings around issues such as the “storm-raisers” (*tempestarii*), popularly believed to be able to control the weather, ordinary citizens held beliefs contrary to church teachings.<sup>50</sup> It seems that perhaps the Christianization of the people of southern Gaul, which had held a Christian population dating back to the apostolic age, could still be questioned in the ninth century. Thus

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<sup>46</sup> AB an.839 (MGH SS I, 433); Norman Roth, “Conversion to Judaism” in *Medieval Jewish Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Norman Roth (New York: Routledge, 2003), 197.

<sup>47</sup> McCormick, *European Economy*, 733ff.

<sup>48</sup> Roth, “Conversion to Judaism,” 198.

<sup>49</sup> Zuckerman, “Political uses,” 49.

<sup>50</sup> Agobard, *De grandine et tonitruis* (3-15).



the danger existed that people who already defied certain doctrines, e.g. God's control over the weather, could find Judaism attractive and so convert. Some aspects of Jewish life, such as the Sabbath or the simpler liturgy, may have indeed drawn in some Christians.<sup>51</sup> Although Agobard did not explicitly mention such a possibility, his refrain of the danger Jews posed particularly for "simple Christians" could indicate that he was aware of the temptation to embrace some Jewish practices for those not theologically savvy enough, in his view, to understand the peril in doing so.

Jewish sermons, or even simply conversations about religious matters, seem to have also bothered Agobard. He claimed in *De insolentia Iudaeorum* that Jews were preaching to Christians, informing them of different and better beliefs and blaspheming Christ in the process.<sup>52</sup> Later in the letter, Agobard complained that "simple Christians say that Jews preach better than our priests" (125-26).<sup>53</sup> He wrote to Nibridius of Narbonne that Christians, and not just the "simple" ones, were being swept away by Jewish error.<sup>54</sup> Also, although Deacon Bodo converted to Judaism at the end of Agobard's life and we do not possess Agobard's comments on the conversion (if indeed he commented in writing at all), Bodo proved that the possibility of conversion was not limited to those "simple Christians."

Indeed Bodo's conversion, taken with Agobard's railings against aspects of Jewish theology and his warnings about Jewish preaching point to another threat posed by Judaism, that of their seemingly more vibrant exegesis. Bodo himself, after he became Eleazer, accused Alvarus, a Christian with whom he carried on an epistolary religious debate, of simply being a compiler, unthinkingly accepting the errors in his sources, an ironic mirror to Jerome and

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<sup>51</sup> Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens*, 171-72.

<sup>52</sup> "...ut auderent inreuerenter praedicare christianis, quid potius credendum esset ac tenendum, blasphemantes coram eis Dominum Deum ac Salvatorem nostrum Iesum Christum." Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 50-53 (192).

<sup>53</sup> "...dicant imperiti christiani melius eis praedicare Iudeos quam presbiteros nostros. . ." (194).

<sup>54</sup> Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu*, 45-49 (232).

Agobard's accusations that Jews blindly follow the traditions of their fathers.<sup>55</sup> The charge of just copying and compiling (largely patristic) sources is one familiar to students of Carolingian theology and thought, since scholars often level it themselves.<sup>56</sup> While some scholars have recently begun to point out signs of individuality and ingenuity in Carolingian works, one cannot escape the bulk of repetition.<sup>57</sup> When compared with rabbinic writings like the Talmud, which exhibit such a diversity of opinions, one can understand how Jewish exegesis seemed so much more alive than its Christian counterpart.<sup>58</sup> This exegetical tradition would have formed the basis for the sermons Agobard complained about, and could very well have attracted people to Judaism. Although hard evidence is lacking, as in the case of Jews building new synagogues, it is a very real possibility that Jews did at times actively seek to convert Christians.<sup>59</sup> All of these factors, the likelihood of conversion for slaves, the appeal of some Jewish practices, and Jews teaching Christians about beliefs, made protecting Christians all the more imperative for Agobard, and gave him some of the contextual basis for *De iudaicis superstitionibus*.

Reducing the possibility of conversion was only one aspect of separating Jews and Christians in order to protect the latter. The other aspect lay in attempting to ensure the cohesion and orthodoxy of the Christian community itself. A Christian community in which some members rested on the Sabbath and then worked in Sunday,<sup>60</sup> could not form one body in a very basic sense – the community could not all be together for worship on a weekly basis. Agobard told Louis in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, that the Jews in Lyon had caused the Christians there to become separated, with some Christians even fleeing the city (47-49). At the end of that same letter, in a surprising and probably unfounded accusation, Agobard accused a Jewish slave-trader

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<sup>55</sup> Alvarus, *Epistula XIX* (Gil, 269).

<sup>56</sup> Marenbon summarises this viewpoint, even as he challenges it. Marenbon, "Carolingian thought," 171.

<sup>57</sup> Heil and Albert, for example, have discussed Carolingian anti-Judaism by highlighting when an author deviated from his cited source. Heil, "Labourers" and Albert, "Anti-Jewish exegesis."

<sup>58</sup> Simon, "Christian antisemitism," 164.

<sup>59</sup> Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens*, 159-63.

<sup>60</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 68-70 (192-93).

of stealing Christians to sell across the Pyrenees in Muslim territories (149-59). Even given the rather suspect nature of some of his evidence, Agobard clearly considered Jews harmful to even the basic, physical cohesion of the Christian community.

The effect Jews had on the doctrinal cohesion of the Christian community lay in the purported Jewish sermons, and in possible judaizing by Christians. If Agobard's claim that Jews preached to Christians can be believed,<sup>61</sup> and he may have meant simply religious conversations between Jews and Christians, rather than Christians attending the synagogue services, Christians could have had the beliefs the church tried to instil shaken by Jewish arguments. Religious uniformity was important not only for Agobard, but formed a hallmark of the Carolingian period and its efforts at reform and renewal.<sup>62</sup> Having Christians persuaded by Jews to hold a belief different than what the church taught obviously destroyed the unity Carolingian leaders aimed to create. Since practice and belief went together in the Carolingian mind,<sup>63</sup> Christians keeping some Jewish customs, judaizing, would likewise damage the person's faith and the community's unity.

For Agobard, situations where a Jew could directly, verbally, challenge Christian teaching, as in the purported sermons, must be avoided and prevented. Of equal importance, and perhaps of greater frequency, the intersection of belief and practice must be guarded from any confusion or infiltration. The canons and stories of *De iudaicis superstitionibus* showed how Christians must keep to their own practices, the theological and Jewish evidence gave the reasons why. Along with the concerns over conversion, the insistence on Christians shying away from Jewish practices, and most certainly from Jewish beliefs, provided Agobard with two walls to protect Christians from destructive Jewish influences.

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<sup>61</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 50-53 (192).

<sup>62</sup> McKitterick, "Unity and diversity," 61, 81-82.

<sup>63</sup> e.g. *Admonitio generalis* c.65 (*MGH Capit. I*, 58-59).

## Sources

The sources Agobard chose for *De iudaicis superstitionibus* only underscore that he meant to prove the necessity of separating Jews and Christians. The origins of these sources provide interesting insight both into the materials available to Agobard, and those he felt fit to use. The Christian sources are easy to find, even if Agobard's use leads to questions. The sources for the information of Judaism, on the other hand, provide a much greater challenge in determining their ultimate origin.

The selection of canons Agobard used in this work points to several things. It provides further evidence that the manuscript Berlin Philips 1745 + Leningrad F.v.II.3, a seventh-century collection of canon law of presumably local origin, was in Lyon during Agobard's time. Palaeographers had already determined that the manuscript was in Lyon during the ninth century since, from the marginal and inter-lineal markings present, they had determined that Florus, deacon to Agobard, Amulo, and Remigius, used the manuscript for his *De coertione Iudaeorum*.<sup>64</sup> To place the manuscript in Lyon during Agobard's tenure, one compares the canons of the *Concilia Galliae* which Munier and de Clerq identify as present in the Berlin Philips + Leningrad manuscript in their editions of the *Concilia Galliae* with those found in *De iudaicis superstitionibus*. All of the canons Agobard draws on except for one are a match. That one, from the Council of Laodicea, can be found in the *Dionysiana*, a copy of which is also found in the Berlin Philips + Leningrad manuscript.<sup>65</sup> So it seems highly probable that Agobard (perhaps with Florus assisting) used the manuscript for *De iudaicis superstitionibus*.

Aside from the one "foreign" canon, Agobard was able to obtain the canonical backing he needed to defend the separation of Jews and Christians from Gallic councils. This is perhaps significant. As discussed in the previous chapter, much has been made, by some scholars more

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<sup>64</sup> Tafel, "Lyons scriptorium," 44.

<sup>65</sup> *Concilia Galliae*, ed. Charles Munier (Turnhout: Brepols, 1963), vi; *Concilia Galliae*, ed. Caroli de Clerq (Turnhout: Brepols, 1963), vii; McKitterick, "Knowledge of canon law," 97 and 105.

than others, of Agobard's Visigothic origins. This has led some to argue that Agobard and others like him, Amulo and Claudius of Turin among them, advocated a Visigothic approach to Jews.<sup>66</sup> Yet the evidence for the Visigothic origins of Agobard's anti-Judaism is not convincing, and for his principal anti-Jewish work he obtained nearly all of the canonical evidence he needed from Gallic councils.

Aside from canons, Agobard also made great use of patristic writings, as he did in many of his works. Augustine and Jerome were especially prominent in Agobard's writings, and he used both in *De iudaicis superstitionibus*. Specifically, he drew upon some selections of Augustine's *De haeresibus*, passages from a few of Jerome's letters, and two sections from his *Liber de nominibus hebraicis*. Agobard also included some of pseudo-Clement's *Recognitiones*, pseudo-Cyprian's *Adversus Iudaeos* and *De iudaica incredulitate*, sections of Rufinus's Latin translation of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and Irenaeus of Lyon's *Contra haereses*. Also included were Paulinus of Milan's *Vita Ambrosii* and Venantius Fortunatus's *Vita Hilarii*. Agobard also used *De Trinitate*, traditionally ascribed to Eusebius of Vercelli.

Agobard and his co-authors employed some of these, most obviously the *vitae* but also the pseudo-Cyprian, Eusebius of Vercelli and one of the Jerome letters, to provide examples of how the Fathers reacted to Jews. He drew on others, such as Augustine, Irenaeus of Lyon and some of Eusebius, to obtain information on heresies and patristic reactions to heretics. Eusebius, as well as pseudo-Clement and segments from Acts and the letters of Paul, provided examples of how the apostolic church attempted to separate itself from Jews and other unbaptised people.

While it has been noted that *De iudaicis superstitionibus* followed an unusual path for its entire course, the most remarkable aspect of this work was Agobard's information on Judaism. That Agobard even included what appears to be evidence of contemporary Jewish beliefs is part of what makes *De iudaicis superstitionibus* so unique. It stands as the only medieval example of

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<sup>66</sup> Albert is a prime example of this particular train of thought.

this information until Peter the Venerable, three hundred years later.<sup>67</sup> Most other authors were content to repeat Christological interpretations of the prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, and the general, anti-Jewish exegesis of the Scriptures.<sup>68</sup> Agobard, by attacking the Judaism of his day, exhibited an apparently rare knowledge of post-biblical Judaism.

That Agobard used this knowledge illustrates his unwillingness to settle for anti-Jewish polemic as it stood then, and as it continued for a majority of the Middle Ages. Perhaps he thought that Louis already did or should know the genre, and it obviously had not had the effect Agobard desired, in that Louis continued to “favour” Jews. If one takes *De insolentia Iudaeorum* and *De iudaicis superstitionibus* together, Agobard made sure to inform Louis both of how he claimed Jews acted, and what he claimed they believed. Again, all in the attempt to convince Louis that Jews and Christians ought to be separated.

To that end, Agobard did not attack a fossilized form of Judaism as a way of proving the excellence of Christianity as so many Christian polemicists had done before and would do after him. He did not, as many writers had before, explicitly compare erroneous Jewish beliefs to orthodox Christian beliefs. Nor did he use Judaism as a foil to explain a point of doctrine. There was no attempt, or apparently even the thought, to convince Jews of their error or of Christianity’s truth. Instead, Agobard condemned the Judaism he claims to have seen around him as something that could only be wrong. It seems that, for Agobard, there was nothing to redeem Judaism from its faults, or Jews from theirs. This lack of interest in conversion, discussed in the previous chapter, calls into question Agobard’s use of the formula “all Israel will be saved,” makes that nod to the Augustinian position even more cursory, and reveals the depth of his anti-Judaism.

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<sup>67</sup> Iogna-Pratt, *Order and Exclusion*, 301f and Albert, “*Adversus Iudaeos*,” 137.

<sup>68</sup> Albert, “*Adversus Iudaeos*,” 130.

As for the information used, it is very clear that Agobard was somehow aware of a version of the *Toledoth Jeshu*, the source for the scurrilous life of Jesus. It seems, however, to be a version of the *Toledoth Jeshu* which has otherwise never been written down, or has since been lost. The various versions of the *Toledoth Jeshu* began as oral tales during Late Antiquity, drawing upon materials in the Talmud and a knowledge of New Testament writings, both canonical and apocryphal. They were first written down perhaps in the sixth century.<sup>69</sup> The version Agobard recorded has several unusual elements. It did not, at least as written, contain any origin or infant material. Every other *Toledoth Jeshu*, and the Talmud itself, turned Jesus into an illegitimate child, conceived through adultery or before marriage, and not unusually, while Mary was menstruating.<sup>70</sup> This version did, however, follow a well-worn path, also found in the Talmud, that Jesus was impudent, and a sorcerer.<sup>71</sup>

The method of Jesus's execution, though reversed in Agobard's version by having Jesus hanged and then stoned, has its basis in Jewish law and can be found in the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>72</sup> This kind of death made it clear to any Jewish audience that Jesus had committed great crimes, and deserved his punishment. Burial in an aqueduct, an ignominious burial which in this instance turned out to be short-lived due to a flood, would have further reinforced Jesus's wickedness.<sup>73</sup> Likewise, the section which turned Pilate into the instigator of the resurrection "myth" is, to my knowledge, not found in any other version of the story. It does, however, bear some resemblance to a Christian apocryphon, the *Gospel of Gamaliel*, which portrayed Pilate as dedicated to exposing Jews' denial of the resurrection.<sup>74</sup> It is not a very strong resemblance, however, and it seems highly improbable that the Jews who settled Lyon became aware of a

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Gero, "Apocryphal Gospels: A survey of textual and literary problems" in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt II.25.5*, ed. Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988), 3992.

<sup>70</sup> Gero, "Apocryphal Gospels," 3993; Gustaf Dalman, *Jesus Christ in the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar and the Liturgy of the Synagogues* trans. A. Streane (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and Co., 1893), 8; Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 15-22.

<sup>71</sup> Gero, "Apocryphal Gospels," 3993; Dalman, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 45; Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 25-37.

<sup>72</sup> Bavli Sanhedrin 43a-b; Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 63, 71.

<sup>73</sup> Dalman, *Jesus in the Talmud*, 88.

<sup>74</sup> Gero, "Apocryphal Gospels," 3988.

fifth-century Coptic tale, and incorporated it into their own “life of Jesus.” Yet that both stories involved Pilate in this particular role of confronting Jewish unbelief following the resurrection, does point to a shared sense of Jewish-Christian story and history. Due to the oral origins of the *Toledoth Jeshu*, and the unusual character of the version reported by Agobard, it is possible that he learned only the local version of this Jewish anti-gospel.

Although the use of a version of the *Toledoth Jeshu* is clear, the sources for the mystical aspects of Judaism which Agobard attacked so viciously – the anthropomorphism of God, the eternal nature of the Hebrew alphabet, the multiplicities of heavens and hells, etc. raise more questions.<sup>75</sup> It is possible that Agobard obtained some information on *shi’ur komah* and *merkavah* mysticism. He may have also somehow known of the *Sefer Yetzirah*. The *shi’ur komah* tradition describes the mystical body of God, and Agobard could have used it as the source for his portrait of God. The practitioner of *merkavah*, “chariot” mysticism attempts to recreate the vision found in Ezekiel 1-3, and could have provided the image of God seated on a throne pulled by four beasts, as described in Ezekiel 1 itself. Likewise, Agobard could have pulled the symbolism of Hebrew letters and numbers from the *Sefer Yetzirah*, “The Book of Formation.” However, it is also possible that Agobard was only aware of some of the midrashic and exegetical traditions in Judaism. For example, a long-standing rabbinic tradition attested to God’s corporeality, and most aspects of *merkavah* can be found in midrashic interpretations of the revelation on Sinai.<sup>76</sup> The beliefs he levelled as charges against Judaism appear in both kinds of literature, and the still very fluid state of both sets of literature in Agobard’s time makes a one-to-one correspondence impossible.<sup>77</sup> It is likewise unclear what exactly Agobard meant when he

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<sup>75</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.1-24 (205-06).

<sup>76</sup> Marc Shapiro, *The Limits of Orthodox Theology: Maimonides' Thirteen Principles Reappraised* (Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), 45ff; Ira Chernus, *Mysticism in Rabbinic Judaism: Studies in the History of Midrash* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1982), 11.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Bonfil, “Cultural and religious traditions in ninth-century french Jewry” in *Jewish Intellectual History in the Middle Ages* ed. Joseph Dan (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1994), 2,5 and 7; Barry Holtz,



wrote about speaking to Jews everyday and hearing the mysteries of their errors.<sup>78</sup> Again, the *mysteria* could be aspects of the mystical traditions mentioned above or simply midrash.

Agobard also obtained some of his information on Jewish belief from Jerome, specifically from a section of Jerome's Letter 121 (*Ad Algasiam*). Agobard transmitted Jerome's accusation that Jews care more about the traditions handed down to them by their elders than those given by God, specifically referring to the custom of sitting at home on the Sabbath, apparently for no other reason than to do what their fathers had taught. This was the only "stock" accusation Agobard used in this section, and stands out as such. Such an accusation was neither new nor necessarily unique to Judaism. Of more interest, and more relevant to the tenor of this portion of the work, Agobard shared Jerome's assertion that Jews test the quality of a virgin's or menstruant's blood by sight. If that test is inconclusive, according to Jerome, they test it by taste (X.68-81).

Unlike the information which Agobard obtained more directly, the testing of a menstruant's blood was not a part of Jewish tradition, at least not in those terms. What Jerome seems to have been referring to is the practice of rabbis inspecting a flow of blood from a woman in order to discern whether or not it is menstrual blood, and then whether or not the blood is clean or unclean, menstrual flow being unclean by nature. Rabbis did perform a visual inspection first, and would then smell the blood should the visual test prove inconclusive. No hint exists that tasting the blood ever formed part of the practice. Jerome at this juncture, and Agobard in quoting him, on this point seems guilty of at best misunderstanding, and at worst wilful distortion.<sup>79</sup> Yet Agobard gained two things in quoting Jerome as he did, whether or not he knew the untrue nature of the charge regarding menstrual blood. Agobard firstly provided

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"Midrash" in *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. Barry Holtz (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 178.

<sup>78</sup> "...cotidie pene cum eis loquentes mysteria erroris ipsorum audimus. . ." Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, IX.50 (205).

<sup>79</sup> Bavli Niddah 19-20; Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 204-205.

himself with patristic precedent for using Jewish beliefs or practices in an argument against Jews, instead of the typical reliance on Scriptures and earlier *contra Iudaeos* literature. Because of the precedent chosen, Agobard also obtained a charge with almost guaranteed shock value. As Agobard's audience would have almost certainly included life-long clerics, for whom women and their "ailments" were a mystery, a visceral disgust at the idea of not only testing but tasting menstrual blood seems assured.

Though Agobard claimed to have heard most of his information from Jews themselves, debate remains on exactly how Agobard found this information. Some scholars think it most likely that Agobard obtained it from a convert,<sup>80</sup> while others have withheld judgment on the matter.<sup>81</sup> The options seem rather limited. Agobard may have had at least cordial if not friendly relations with some Jews in the Lyon area, who were willing either to share material or to debate with him. Or Agobard's diocese may have had one or several converts who told him all he wanted to know. Or perhaps he overheard these teachings.

That Agobard learned about Jewish beliefs from one or more Jews, either in the context of friendly exchange or in debate, is certainly an attractive option. As the statement above about speaking with Jews attests, Agobard claimed to have been in regular contact with them. Not just contact, but a kind of relationship where Agobard and a Jew or Jews would discuss *mysteria*. Yet given the long-running conflict between Agobard and the Jews in his diocese, it seems unlikely that Agobard had good enough relations with any Jew in his area to gain the knowledge he used. An atmosphere of open exchange is only possible when both parties are indeed open, which Agobard does not appear to have been, at least in his writings.

It also seems unlikely that Jews discussed their beliefs openly enough for Agobard to have simply picked up enough information to use. Moreover, the details Agobard provided belie

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<sup>80</sup> Bonfil, "Cultural," 2.

<sup>81</sup> S. Katz, *Jews in the Visigothic and Frankish Kingdoms*, 65-66; Blumenkranz, *Juifs et chrétiens*, 51.

a casual acquaintance with the material one would associate with overhearing information. As would become the case later in the Middle Ages, a convert or converts seems the most likely option. They would have known the information and may have been willing to share it with their new bishop. Yet there still remains Agobard's attestation of speaking with Jews regularly. So the question of how he obtained this information will stay a matter of scholarly speculation.

Regardless, there is no reason to doubt the veracity of the information used, with the exception of that from Jerome. All of the beliefs Agobard cited came from within Jewish tradition. Though he may have exaggerated some aspects, or taken others out of context, Agobard did not "accuse" Judaism of any beliefs not already contained within it. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is an important distinction, one which I argue keeps Agobard in the realm of anti-Judaism.

#### Agobard and Carolingian Jewish-Christian relations

*De iudaicis superstitionibus*, along with Agobard's other anti-Jewish works, can tell us much about Jewish-Christian relations in the Carolingian world. In his accusations, allusions, and tirades, Agobard's writings actually provide scholars with a relatively full picture of Jews and Christians living together. The information gleaned from his works, while not necessarily surprising to those who study Jewish-Christian relations in the Early Middle Ages, nevertheless bears some discussion.

One can easily tell from the sources that Agobard carried out his fight for segregation against a very vital and attractive Jewish community. To begin with, the Jews of Lyon seem to have been better educated, or at least more rhetorically refined, than the Christians. By Agobard's own admission, "ignorant Christians say that Jews preach to them better than our

priests.”<sup>82</sup> That clause tells scholars several things. The simplest explanation of how Christians came by such a judgement is that they apparently attended synagogue services or similar forums where they heard Jewish sermons or religious talks. That alone speaks volumes about the comfort levels the two communities had with each other, that Christians felt free to be present at such gatherings, and that Jews would welcome them. Furthermore, some Christians apparently preferred what Jews said, rather than what they heard from their parish priest or other clergy. This could mean that Jewish teachings made more sense or were more easily understood by those “ignorant Christians.” It could also mean that Jewish preachers received a better education than their Christians counterparts, and so were more easily able to explain doctrines and practices. Indeed, scholars have continually questioned the level of education of parish priests, particularly rural ones, despite Carolingian legislation that made their training imperative.<sup>83</sup> Whatever the reason, however, Agobard clearly detected an area with high risk of drawing Christians away from orthodox teachings and practices.

More than attending Jewish services, it seems that Christians ate with Jews with some frequency, at least if mentions of that practice in Agobard’s tracts can be taken as an indication. He first mentioned it in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, as a hypothetical situation of a person eating with their lord’s enemy, meaning a Christian eating with a Jew, Christ’s enemy.<sup>84</sup> He later told Nibridius that Christians fell from the faith both through eating with Jews, and by participating in Jewish practices.<sup>85</sup> In *De iudaicis superstitionibus* itself, aside from the canons cited barring commensality, Agobard argued that Christians misused the apostolic teaching that for the pure all things are pure as an excuse to eat with “infidels,” while knowing full well that doing so

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<sup>82</sup> “. . . dicant imperiti christiani melius eis praedicare Iudeos quam presbiteros nostros. . .” Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 125-26 (194).

<sup>83</sup> e.g. *Admonitio generalis*, c.70, 82 (*MGH Capit. I*, 59, 61-62); Aubrun, “Le clergé rural,” 15-16; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 146-47.

<sup>84</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 91-99 (193).

<sup>85</sup> *id.*, *De cauendo conuictu*, 26-31 (231-32).

constituted a sin.<sup>86</sup> Agobard did not leave specific enough evidence to indicate whether Christians shared religious meals, such as a Sabbath dinner or feast on a Saint's day, or more quotidian meals. Regardless, sharing food again points to comfort and easy contact between the communities. Also again, commensality could be an area which encouraged Christians to break certain rules, such as fasting, laid down by church authorities.

Agobard left other hints of closeness between Jews and Christians living in Lyon. Aside from the two issues just mentioned, he also apparently worried about Christians buying wine or meat from Jews, keeping the Sabbath and then working on Sunday, and not keeping the prescribed fasts.<sup>87</sup> If even only a portion of these collected concerns had any basis in reality, it would seem that the two communities in Lyon lived together with very little friction, and with good business and social relations. In sum, they were too close for Agobard's comfort, and for him to be sure that the Christians under his care could attain salvation.

However, the true vitality, the true power of the Jewish community of Lyon did not come through in the easy contact and interactions with their Christian neighbours. Rather, it became apparent in the charters from Louis and the involvement of the so-called *Magister Iudaeorum*, Evrard, and other *missi* in the debate over the baptism of Jews' pagan slaves. How central the slave issue was to Agobard's thoughts about Jews is debateable, but his apparent attempts to baptise pagans owned by Jews led him into direct conflict with Louis and those in authority under him. The response from the secular authorities shows that Jews occupied a space in society outside of Agobard's control. He had no power to take their Christian slaves away from them, or to even baptise their pagan slaves without permission. He could theoretically cajole or coerce Christians under his care into behaving or believing as he wanted, but against Jews Agobard was completely helpless.

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<sup>86</sup> id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, IV.13-V.12 (citing Epaon c.15, 40, Agde c.40), XXIV.28-36 (citing Tit. 1:15) (202, 218-19).

<sup>87</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 68-73 (192-93); id. *De cauendo conuictu*, 28-31 (231-32).

Herein lay the true lesson about Carolingian Jewish-Christian relations taken from Agobard. Based solely on the issue of slaves, the two groups in the empire who could ignore or over-ride Agobard's authority, Jews and the secular powers, made common cause in thwarting Agobard's attempts to convert Jews' pagan slaves. It is clear from his writings that there was simply nothing he could do against those combined forces. Some have hypothesised that Jews bought the right to not have their slaves converted without their permission from the court,<sup>88</sup> other scholars have argued that being pro-Jewish was beneficial for the empire.<sup>89</sup> The reason does not change the reality that Agobard saw and put into his writings, that of Jews preventing their pagan slaves from being baptised, too easy social and religious contact between Jews and Christians, and all the mechanisms of secular authority at work to keep the status quo.

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<sup>88</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 70.

<sup>89</sup> Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 90.

## Chapter Four

### Agobard's Anxieties

Though the previous two chapters have focused on Agobard's relations with and writings on Jews, scholars have long acknowledged that Agobard cannot simply be reduced to "Agobard and the Jews." Heil made that point quite clearly in his article on Agobard and Amulo's struggles over the restitution of church property.<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Cohen, in detailing Agobard's place in the evolution of the Christian concept and theological use of "the hermeneutical Jew," a discussion which could so easily focus on "Agobard and the Jews," brought into his exploration Agobard's iconoclasm, his concerns about church property, and his desire for order and unity.<sup>2</sup> Even Bonfil, writing on the traditions of ninth-century French Jews, noted how Agobard's arguments against Judaism complemented his struggles against magic, paganism, and image worship.<sup>3</sup> Cabaniss and Boshof, in their biographies of Agobard, naturally explored his life and writings in a broader context than merely his issues with Jews.

As well they should have. Less than one-fifth (five of twenty-six) of Agobard's works centered around Jews or Judaism and they tended, with the exception of *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*, toward brevity. The remainder of his writings focused on a wide-ranging array of topics, from law to liturgy to magic. These topics were not as disparate as they may first appear. An examination of Agobard's entire corpus reveals themes such as purity versus pollution running throughout his works. Based on his Carolingian training, Agobard saw reasons for concern in many of the events and attitudes of his day, not just in Jews. As such he penned tracts on superstition, law, propriety in worship, exegetical errors, and relations between church and state, in order to combat the heterodoxy, worldliness, and pollution which kept his ideal world at bay. It is worth noting that Agobard was never alone in writing on any particular

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<sup>1</sup> Heil, "Kirchengut," 64.

<sup>2</sup> Cohen, *Living Letters*, 123-144.

<sup>3</sup> Bonfil, "Religious and cultural traditions," 4.

topic, many clerics concerned themselves with worldliness, for example, but the conclusions he reached seem to have often placed him in the minority among his colleagues.

This chapter explores Agobard's anxieties. It begins with a discussion of the myriad of issues upon which Agobard expounded, grouped by topic, as well as how and where he intersected with the concerns evident in Carolingian culture. The relationship the issues and topics had to each other becomes evident when this chapter turns to an analysis of the themes present in Agobard's works. These themes allow us to understand the underlying anxieties and idealism that drove Agobard to write and act as he did. Having established that, this chapter, and this study, can turn back to Agobard and the Jews. For again it is in this relationship, this clash between Agobard's ideals and the reality of a Jewish presence and place in the empire, that we can learn not only about Agobard, but about the course of Jewish-Christian relations during the Carolingian period.

## Beyond Jews

### *Heterodoxy*

The first topic explored is heterodoxy, which included superstition, beliefs that bordered on heresy, and actual heresy, a topic to which Agobard returned to repeatedly throughout his career. Indeed, Agobard's first work as archbishop,<sup>4</sup> *De grandine et tonitruis*, contained arguments against the belief in a form of weather-magic which he claimed was held "by nearly all people, noble and base-born, city-dwellers and rural folk, old and young."<sup>5</sup> Agobard rather stumbled onto this belief when four people (three men and one woman) were brought to him to be stoned. They were accused of having fallen off a sky-ship which had brought them from the land of Magonia during a recent storm to steal grain. Popular thought seems to have held that an

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<sup>4</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xxxix.

<sup>5</sup> ". . . pene omnes homines, nobiles et ignobiles, urbani et rustici, senes et iuuenes. . ." Agobard, *De grandine*, I.1-2 (3).



entire network of grain thieves existed and gave a portion of its takings to those who raised the storms, the so-called *tempestarii*, as payment for making the thefts possible (II). Perhaps even more troubling to Agobard than the superstitious idea that people could call up storms at will, he reported that many believed that other people could defend against a storm. These people received a *canonicus*, a set amount of food, for their protective services. Agobard complained that people would not tithe or give alms, but would give this *canonicus* freely, without the need for exhortations (XV).

Agobard did not provide many details of this apparently popular belief in weather-magic. Instead, he filled the tract with scriptural proofs of God's mastery over the weather and the impossibility of men ever having the means either to raise or dispel storms. As Dutton pointed out, Agobard had no interest in winning over the *tempestarii* and those who believed in weather magic, only in discrediting an erroneous belief.<sup>6</sup> For Agobard, the credence in weather magic went against basic rationality and the Scriptures, and thus against God.<sup>7</sup> He called the *tempestarii* brought to him "little men," "estranged from justice and wisdom, without faith or truth."<sup>8</sup> He thought the *canonicus* was inspired by the devil (XV.12). The *tempestarii*, those who believed in them, those who claimed to defend against them and the money they extorted, indeed the whole state of affairs was the "fullness of infidelity" (XV.16).<sup>9</sup>

Agobard, along with the priest Hildigis and the deacon Florus, attacked similarly credulous behaviour in 828 or 829. The trio wrote a tract entitled *De quorundam inlusione signorum* for Archbishop Bartholomew of Narbonne. The events that prompted the letter remain unclear. It seems that some in Bartholomew's diocese had been deceived into thinking that people falling into epileptic-like fits or suffering burns as if from sulphur were signs of God's

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<sup>6</sup> Dutton, "Thunder and hail," 116.

<sup>7</sup> McCormick, Dutton, and Mayewski, "Volcanoes," 865; Dutton, "Thunder and hail," 129.

<sup>8</sup> ". . . homunculos. . . iustitia et sapientia alienos, a fide et ueritate nudos. . ." Agobard, *De grandine*, XIV.9-10 (13).

<sup>9</sup> ". . . plenitudinem esse infidelitatis. . ." (14).

anger. Thus duped, the faithful brought offerings to the places where the “signs” had occurred.<sup>10</sup>

The authors stated that it would have been better for those who had made offerings because of the “signs” to have given alms, been anointed by a priest, or fasted, just as the Gospels and apostles taught should be done in such instances. As it was however, their actions dishonoured God since they erred from what God commanded (XII). The people had displayed the right impulse, but the cause of it was questionable and the execution almost damnable.

In *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, Agobard and his co-authors provided the people frightened by the “signs” an alternative to the actions taken, namely, they should follow the instructions of the Apostles and fast, be anointed by a priest, or give alms. That is, the authors put forward the established church and its hierarchy as the only legitimate expression of religiosity. The “signs” seem to have begun at the tomb of St. Firmin in Uzès (I.7-9),<sup>11</sup> and so the suggestion to redirect the faithful to the institutional church and its practices may have had the desired effect. Agobard offered no such alternative in *De grandine et tonitruis*, however. One suspects that his refutations of weather magic had little effect in curtailing the belief in it. As mentioned in the Introduction, the area under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Lyon consisted mainly of river valleys surrounded by mountains or hills, and so may not have offered much by way of land suitable for the heavy cereal production favoured during the Carolingian period.<sup>12</sup> An ill-timed hail-storm could all but wipe-out a season’s crop, putting people at risk of disease or starvation and also have a detrimental effect on the area’s economy.<sup>13</sup> Large-scale wood-clearing in the Languedoc created a change in the weather patterns there around the year 800, perhaps making such storms more likely.<sup>14</sup> More globally, major volcanic activity, such as what

<sup>10</sup> Agobard, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, I.4-19 (237).

<sup>11</sup> Platelle, “Les soucoupes volantes,” 89.

<sup>12</sup> See above, pg 44.

<sup>13</sup> Dutton, “Thunder and hail,” 119; McCormick, Dutton, and Mayewski, “Volcanoes,” 865.

<sup>14</sup> Sonnlechner, “New units,” 40.

happened in the early 820s, caused severe winters and cold, wet summers.<sup>15</sup> This was not exactly ideal weather for farming. Indeed, the *Annales Regni Francorum* record that both 820 and 823 were bad years in terms of low crop production and a high rate of illness, a bad hail storm taking the blame in 823.<sup>16</sup> Subsistence farmers in particular would have cast about for any and all methods of protecting their crops and thus their lives. This could easily include paying someone to guard against *tempestarii*, no matter what Agobard said about weather magic being nonsense and the work of the devil.

As will be the case for many of the concerns discussed in this section, Agobard was hardly alone in his attacks on these superstitious heterodoxies. Weather magic in particular attracted attention. It had been a concern for Charlemagne, who mandated against it in the *Admonitio generalis*. Louis the Pious and his bishops followed suit, condemning those who claimed that power at Paris in 829. In the *Admonitio generalis* the ban came with the order that places (trees, stones, or fountains) used for pagan practices be destroyed. The canon decided on at Paris touched not only on *tempestarii* but also on other “magicians.”<sup>17</sup> Carolingian legislators thus did not treat weather magic in isolation, but as part and parcel of the continual struggle against paganism, or as one of many practices “detestable and execrable to the divine majesty.”<sup>18</sup> Agobard likewise did not consider just weather magic in his *De grandine et tonitruis*, he included, almost as an appendix, the equally-ridiculous rumours that a recent cattle moraine had been caused by a poisoning campaign carried out by the Beneventans. Agobard, scoffing at people’s credulity, asked how it was that only cattle, and not other animals died, or how exactly so many Beneventans snuck into the empire and carried out the poisonings without getting

<sup>15</sup> McCormick, Dutton, and Mayewski, “Volcanoes,” 867, 881-84.

<sup>16</sup> *ARF* an.820 and 823 (*MGH SRG VI*, 154 and 163-64).

<sup>17</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c.64-65 (*MGH Capit. I*, 58-59); *Concilium Parisiense* (829),c.69, (*MGH Conc. II.2*, 669).

<sup>18</sup> “. . .detestabile et execrabile apud divinam maiestatem. . .” *Concilium Parisiense* (829),c.69, (*MGH Conc. II.2*, 669).

caught.<sup>19</sup> Thus, while his contemporaries approached the issue of weather magic as a sign of paganism or other wicked practices, Agobard, while not ignoring the religious aspects, also considered a belief in weather magic a sign of gullibility in the general population.

Agobard's attacks on popular religiosity continued with his questioning of icon worship. He wrote on the subject in *De picturis et imaginibus*, probably in 825, as preparation for the synod in Paris that year, where the question of icons was again taken up, and worship of them again banned.<sup>20</sup> Like a belief in weather-magic, or a reliance on signs, Agobard thought icons could take away from the faith, honour, and worship due only to God. The actual worship of icons was of course completely anathema to him, as worship belonged to God alone.<sup>21</sup> Even veneration proved problematic, however. As far as he was concerned, the veneration of an icon, unless the icon represented God, ought not take place (XIX.1-6). In short, Agobard thought that, at best, images could easily turn people away from a more spiritual (and for him, more correct) understanding of God, and at worst become idol-worship. He admonished his readers to look on pictures as only pictures, without life, sense, or reason (XXXI). Though he did not allude to the point in this work, he knew that Jews accused Christians of idolatry and claimed that the intercession of the Saints came about through the work of the devil.<sup>22</sup> The veneration of icons therefore not only inhabited a very fine line between proper worship and idolatry, they could also leave Christians open to attacks from Jews.

As discussed in the Introduction, questions about the role of icons in Christian life had begun in the Frankish realm under Pippin III and the dispute between Rome and Byzantium about icons held at Gentilly in 767.<sup>23</sup> It continued under Charlemagne with a response to the

<sup>19</sup> Agobard, *De grandine et tonitruis*, XVI (14-15). The *ARF* recorded such a cattle die-off in 810 (*MGH SRG VI*, 132).

<sup>20</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xliii; *Concilium Parisiense* (825), *Libellus* (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 482).

<sup>21</sup> Agobard, *De picturis*, I.28-31 (152).

<sup>22</sup> *id.*, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.54-57 (207).

<sup>23</sup> See above, pp 21-22; McCormick, "Textes," 113.

ruling on the veneration of icons given at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 contained in the nearly-iconoclast *Libri carolini* penned by Theodulf of Orléans. Due to the mistranslation and subsequent misinterpretation of the acts of Nicaea, and Pope Hadrian I's more iconodule position, work on the *Libri carolini* halted in 793, and the synod of Frankfurt in 794 only passed a canon condemning what it perceived as the Greek elevation to icons to a level equal with the Trinity.<sup>24</sup> Agobard's *De picturis* thus fit into a tradition of questioning the use of icons. This tradition included not only Theodulf, but also Claudius of Turin (who, it must be remembered, studied in Lyon for a time),<sup>25</sup> and Hrabanus Maurus, and stretched back through to Caesarius of Arles and Augustine.<sup>26</sup> Although scholars have sought connections between Agobard's *De picturis* and the other works on icons, particularly that of Claudius because he had studied in Lyon, since they all wrote in the same tradition affinities between works may or may not show indebtedness.<sup>27</sup> The point here, rather, is that Agobard's dim view of icons, that they are mere pictures, by no means set him apart, even if that view ceased to be the official line of the Frankish church with the Council of Paris in 825 and the compromise calling for a place for icons in the Christian community.<sup>28</sup>

Along with these examples of heterodoxy, Agobard also encountered what seem to have been actual heresies during his tenure as archbishop. Perhaps best known is his work against the Adoptionist position of Felix of Urgell, which taught that the human (as opposed to divine) nature Jesus was the Son of God by adoption, not by nature.<sup>29</sup> Agobard wrote *Aduersum dogma Felicis* for Louis the Pious in 818 or 819.<sup>30</sup> Aside from the obvious need to disprove the heretical beliefs, it disturbed Agobard that people had been attracted to Felix's teaching because

<sup>24</sup> *Concilium Francofurtense*, c.2 (*MGH Conc.* II.1, 165); Collins, *Charlemagne*, 135-36; Freeman, "Scripture and images," 163-64; Neil, "Western reaction," 541 and 549.

<sup>25</sup> Claudius of Turin, *Expositionem libri Geneseos* in *MGH Epp* IV, ed. Ernst Dümmler (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 592 ll 18-21.

<sup>26</sup> Kessler, "Carolingian art," 537-38; Appleby, "Instruction and inspiration," 91-99.

<sup>27</sup> Appleby, "Instruction and inspiration," 95.

<sup>28</sup> *Concilium Parisiense* (825) (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 473-551); McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 164.

<sup>29</sup> Cavadini, *Last Christology*, 114-18.

<sup>30</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xl.

he had led such a pious and faithful life. Agobard countered that sentiment by stating that the quality of one's life was proved by the quality of one's faith, not vice versa. It was immaterial how Felix had lived since he had not believed correctly.<sup>31</sup>

This primacy of faith over deeds contradicted the principle in the Gospels of deeds proving faith which Agobard used in *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, written around the same time as *Aduersum dogma Felicis*.<sup>32</sup> This contradiction was necessary because he could not give Felix any quarter, since Agobard, like Pope Hadrian I and Alcuin, understood Adoptionism as creating two distinct Sons, one by nature and one by adoption.<sup>33</sup> This duality, in turn, threatened the very basis of salvation, that Jesus, two natures in one person, "by his saving impassibility, immortality and immutability, made us alive by his death, made us rich by his poverty, made us honoured by his disgrace, healed us by his wounds."<sup>34</sup> This could explain why, even after Felix's death, Agobard felt it necessary to refute what he understood to be Felix's teachings, regardless of whether or not the erstwhile bishop had gained a following in Lyon.

As with icons, Agobard was not alone in his concern about Felix of Urgell and his Adoptionist beliefs. The discussion over the issue began in the 790s under Charlemagne, when the Frankish court discovered Adoptionism existed in the Spanish march, newly-expanded to include Urgell, Felix's see. Because the heresy had appeared within the empire, it proved a great source of concern for the court and demanded far more resources, including works by Alcuin and Paulinus of Aquileia and discussion at four separate councils, than the argument against Byzantine iconoclasm.<sup>35</sup> Unlike the debate over icons, however, Agobard provided the last word on the subject of Adoptionism. His work fit squarely within the mould given by the other

<sup>31</sup> Agobard, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, II (74-75).

<sup>32</sup> *id.*, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, VI.4-8 (22); cf. Mt. 7:20.

<sup>33</sup> *id.*, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, X.5-11 (79).

<sup>34</sup> "...ut salua impassibilitate sua, immortalitate et incommutabilitate, sua nos morte uiuificaret, sua paupertate ditaret, suis contumeliis honoraret, suis uulneribus sanaret. . ." *ibid.*, XX.29-32 (86).

<sup>35</sup> Chandler, "Heresy and empire," 508 and 512.

authors, and with the perceived necessity for vigilance against any and all deviations from orthodoxy.

Agobard wrote his other anti-heretical work, *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*, towards the end of his career (between 835 and 839) while in exile for his continued role in Lothar's rebellion against Louis the Pious and while Amalarius held the see of Lyon.<sup>36</sup> As mentioned in Chapter 1, Amalarius had spent a good portion of his life studying liturgy, including some time in Rome, and so was involved in Carolingian efforts to regularise and romanize the liturgy.<sup>37</sup> Regularisation efforts began under the Merovingians who attempted, more than anything, to standardise the structure of the Mass.<sup>38</sup> The Carolingians continued the effort, Charlemagne famously requesting a copy of the rite supposedly used by Gregory the Great and attempting to forbid the creation of new, and therefore uncanonical, liturgical formulas.<sup>39</sup> Amalarius for his part seems to have particularly concerned himself with finding the meanings behind each act of the liturgy. Unfortunately, he did so by writing what he thought himself, rather than following the accepted practice of filling a work with patristic citations. His views proved a danger to the credulous or semi-literate, and led to a sentence of heresy at the Council of Quierzy in 838.<sup>40</sup> Florus reacted to the questionable Christology in Amalarius's liturgical reforms by accusing Amalarius of giving Christ three bodies,<sup>41</sup> and Agobard attacked a variety of Amalarius's liturgical ideas. Though Agobard did bother to refute the points he brought up, in the end he simply dismissed Amalarius, suggesting that he should have sought answers from Christ, rather than seeking out human teachers in doctrinal matters.<sup>42</sup> For Agobard, the time Amalarius spent studying liturgy under human tutelage meant nothing. It is likely that for Agobard, all the human

<sup>36</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xlvii.

<sup>37</sup> See above, pp 77-78; Amalarius, *De ordine antiphonarii*, LVIII.3 (Hanssens, t.3, 94).

<sup>38</sup> Yitzhak Hen, "Unity in diversity: The liturgy of Frankish Gaul before the Carolingians" in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1996), 27.

<sup>39</sup> *Codex Carolinus*, no.89 (*MGH Epp.* III, 626); *Admonitio generalis*, c.78, 82 (*MGH Capit.* I, 60-62); McKitterick, "Unity and diversity," 61, 66-68; cf. Hen, *Royal Patronage*, 80-82.

<sup>40</sup> Florus, *Relatio*, VII (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 781); McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 148-52.

<sup>41</sup> Florus, *Adversus Amalarium*, I.4 (*PL* 119, 74).

<sup>42</sup> Agobard, *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*, XIX (367).

study had in fact led Amalarius to his errors. If Amalarius had simply contented himself with the Scriptures and patristic tradition, he would have avoided his errors.

The difference in tone between *Aduersum dogma Felicis* and *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii* is striking. Agobard addressed his work against Felix to Louis the Pious, and his address struck the appropriate tone of self-deprecation given the audience.<sup>43</sup> In contrast, he did not address his writing against Amalarius to anyone, and his refutations showed a certain bitterness and a caustic disbelief in Amalarius's positions. At one point Agobard asked regarding one of Amalarius's teachings, "Who has ever heard such a thing?"<sup>44</sup> Amalarius, by unleashing himself from the tethers of the Scriptures and Fathers had strayed into mystical explanations. Agobard could not accept and, perhaps like Felix's fine distinction between the human and divine natures in Jesus, not entirely understand an exegesis so removed from the sources of orthodoxy. Exiled from but obviously still in contact with his see, Agobard simply lashed out at what he saw as Amalarius's ravings in an attempt to preserve the liturgical orthodoxy of the church he still considered his.

### *The Church*

Agobard's primary concern regarding the church centered around its loss of property at the hand of secular leaders. Aside from Agobard's writings against Jews, his strong support for the return of property previously taken by various Merovingian and Carolingian kings, as given in *De dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum* (824), has attracted the most scholarly attention. Cabaniss argued that Agobard's push for the return of property came out an interest in securing some independence for the church rather than partisan politics.<sup>45</sup> Zuckerman linked Agobard's calls for restoration with his efforts to baptise Jews' slaves. He reasoned as Agobard's motive

<sup>43</sup> Agobard, *Aduersum dogma Felicis*, 1-25 (74).

<sup>44</sup> "Quis audiuit umquam tale. . ." id., *Contra libros quatuor Amalarii*, XIV.27-28 (365).

<sup>45</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 44.



that if the Jews lost their labour force, their holdings would become wasteland and could then be restored to the church.<sup>46</sup> Heil for his part argued that Agobard only arrived at his problem with Jews partly through his concern for church property, again through the issue of slaves.<sup>47</sup>

Each of these theories may over-simplify Agobard's motives. Granted, the financial independence of the church concerned Agobard, as it had Leidrad. Yet he certainly seems to have participated in partisan politics despite a supposed lack of interest, as attested to by his involvement with Lothar's rebellion. The theory that the baptism of Jews' slaves would have brought about the loss of Jews' labour force and therefore also their lands is predicated on the assumption that the oft-repeated laws and canons against Jewish ownership of Christian slaves would have been enforced. However, little to no evidence supports this assumption, and Agobard's own troubles over this very issue undermines it. Zuckerman's theory also assumes that Jews formed a major bloc of landowners in the Carolingian Lyonnais. While scholars agree that Jews did own land in the area, the amount is debateable.<sup>48</sup> It seems doubtful that a seizure of Jewish lands would have greatly increased the church's holdings, even if the land had gone to the church rather than to lay magnates, another unwarranted assumption. Finally, a causal link between Agobard's desire to have church property restored and his conflict with the Jews of his area may stretch the thematic similarities between the two issues too far. There is no need for such a connection, as Agobard's desire for purity and order, as will be explored later in this chapter, suffices as a cause for both conflicts.

Agobard's struggle for the restoration of church property related closely to, and even partially stemmed from, his insistence on the prerogatives of clerics over and above those of the laity. Agobard laid out this hierarchy in two works, *De priuilegio et iure sacerdotii*, written in the reforming environment of 817 to 822, and *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*, Agobard's

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<sup>46</sup> Zuckerman, "Political uses," 49.

<sup>47</sup> Heil, "Kirchengut," 48.

<sup>48</sup> Bachrach, *Jewish Policy*, 70; Zuckerman, "Political uses," 37.

response to Louis the Pious's objections to Pope Gregory IV's presence in Francia during the rebellion of 833.<sup>49</sup> In both tracts Agobard made his outlook on the relationship between the ecclesiastical and lay worlds very clear. Simply, since the clergy controlled the means of salvation, but the laity only exercised temporal power, the laity should respect the rights, privileges, and authority of the church and the clergy who served in it.

The existence of bad priests did nothing to deter Agobard's insistence on clerical authority, though priests who taught incorrect doctrines should naturally be anathematized as heretics by a clerical council.<sup>50</sup> Like property given to the church, priests were consecrated to God, and only priests, regardless of their own personal worthiness, could perform the sacraments through which everyone was saved (VII.33-37). For Agobard, this consecration and the ability to administer the sacraments, particularly baptism and the Eucharist, gave priests an authority over lay people, an authority the laity ought to obey in order to learn God's commandments (IX). Thus, despite the admission that there were bad priests, and despite the acknowledgment of the priesthood of all believers at the start of the work (II.1-5), Agobard remained fixed on the intrinsic superiority of the clergy because of their consecration.

The authority of cleric over lay that Agobard advocated likewise held true when Louis questioned why Pope Gregory IV came into his empire at Lothar's request at a time when Lothar was rebelling.<sup>51</sup> Some of the Frankish bishops wrote a (now lost) letter to Gregory, accusing the pontiff of meddling in Frankish affairs and tarnishing his office.<sup>52</sup> Although the attack had been made by Frankish bishops, it is hard to imagine that Louis did not support or perhaps even direct the bishops in their writing, since Gregory could have easily represented yet another assault on Louis's tenuous imperial power. Agobard's defence of Gregory's visit and therefore of papal prerogative, contained in his *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*, was brief. Using letters of former

<sup>49</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xxxix-xl, xlv.

<sup>50</sup> Agobard, *De priuilegio sacerdotii*, XIX (68-69).

<sup>51</sup> id., *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis*, IV (305).

<sup>52</sup> Gregory IV, *Ad Francorum episcoporum*, (MGH Epp. V, 228-32); McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 133.

popes who had defended their own rights, Agobard stridently demonstrated to Louis that those who separated themselves from Rome risked separating themselves from the divine mysteries, and thus from salvation (III). In ending the letter Agobard reminded Louis that he should love the heavenly kingdom more than his earthly one (VII), implying that Louis ought to have been more concerned with offending Gregory than with losing the empire to his sons.

A cleric writing on matters pertaining to the church, Agobard unsurprisingly expressed views about church property and church rights similar to others in his position. On the subject of recouping lost church property for instance, Agobard expressed a concern common to many of his clerical colleagues, if the acts of the Council of Attigny are any indication.<sup>53</sup> Bishops had sought to protect ecclesiastical property, particularly monastic holdings, from incursion for centuries. In the late-eighth century however, the focus changed from protecting against both episcopal and lay violations equally, to targeting the laity only. Carolingian bishops, rather than seeing themselves as a potential abusers of power and property, tried to gain more control over the institutions and holdings under their jurisdiction.<sup>54</sup> Clerics and councils returned to the topic again and again, presumably because their efforts failed to produce the desired results.<sup>55</sup>

Aside from trying to ensure the church's material viability and enhance episcopal power, the efforts to recover former church property also stemmed from an increasing insistence on the superiority and privileges of the clergy. While Agobard's concerns about the proper place and treatment of the clergy in society would have fit in well with Hincmar of Reims and many of his colleagues, the generation after Agobard, they were not entirely out of place in his own generation. McKitterick has noted that as the ninth century continued, the priest's pastoral role, while still present in canons and capitularies "does become, however, somewhat clouded by an

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<sup>53</sup> *Concilium Attiniacense*, (MGH Conc. II.2, 468-472).

<sup>54</sup> Barbara Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 42, 101.

<sup>55</sup> e.g. *Concilium Ingelheimense*, c.1 (MGH Conc. II.2, 551); *Concilium Parisiense* (829), c.15-18 (MGH Conc. II.2, 622-25); Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 294.

increasing tendency to assert the rights and prerogatives of the *sacerdotes* as a class.”<sup>56</sup> Or, as Agobard wrote, “With the great dignity of the priestly office bestowed upon priests, the people are taught to obey them in all things.”<sup>57</sup> This was an obedience that included respecting the church’s property rights.

### *Law and Empire*

Agobard certainly did not limit his concerns or his writings to the ecclesiastical sphere, but expressed his displeasure at current legal and political methods and events. Nor did it take him long to broach those subjects. He wrote both *Aduersus legem Gundobadi* and *De diuinis sententiis contra iudicium Dei* sometime between 817 and 822, in the reforming environment of Louis’s early reign.<sup>58</sup> In those two works specifically, Agobard continued Charlemagne’s concern about discrepancies and inadequacies in the laws, and offered Louis the opportunity to take some concrete action in that regard by suggesting Louis place the *regnum* of Burgundy under Frankish law.<sup>59</sup> Later in his career, in works like *De diuisione imperii* and *Liber apologeticus I*, Agobard moved from legal codes to the oaths of loyalty that helped bind the empire together.

Agobard took issue with apparently all of Gundobad’s law, that is, the *Liber constitutionum sive lex Gundobada* redacted by that ruler, since he asked Louis to place the entire empire under one law, or perhaps replace Gundobad’s code with a Frankish one.<sup>60</sup> For example, Agobard argued against the system of witnesses set up in the code, stating that the testimony of a good Christian could be disallowed for various reasons but that the perpetrator of a crime could perjure himself, an accusation that may have come out of the practice of the law,

<sup>56</sup> McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 15.

<sup>57</sup> “Tanta igitur sacerdotibus sacerdotii dignitate collata, precipitur populo, ut eis in cunctis oboediat.” Agobard, *De priuilegio sacerdotii*, IX.1-2 (60).

<sup>58</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xxxix.

<sup>59</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli*, c.29 (MGH SS II, 458); Agobard, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, XIV.18-23.

<sup>60</sup> Agobard, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, VII.1-4, XIV.18-23 (23, 28).

rather than the code itself.<sup>61</sup> Even more troubling was the people's propensity for fighting, either in or out of court, often out of greed or over matters Agobard considered trivial – an unsavoury habit noted in the *Lex Gundobada* as well.<sup>62</sup> Most especially however, Agobard wanted an end to the use of ordeals, particularly trial by combat. For Agobard, the legal system codified by Gundobad operated against the principles of loving one's neighbour and turning the other cheek as espoused in the Gospels and taught by the church.

*Contra iudicium Dei* laid out Agobard's contentions against the practice of trial by combat, to which he had numerous objections. His primary complaint was that such fighting ran contrary to the reconciling work of Christ (I.9-14). As well, Agobard found it impossible that God's secret judgments could be discovered by the use of ordeals, especially combats that pitted Christian against Christian (VI.1-3). These trials and ordeals happened because people cared more for their material possessions than for God, and wanted too much to advance themselves in wealth and honours (VI.88-90, 175-184). Indeed, Agobard argued that those who sought to kill a Christian were not children of Abraham, but rather children of the devil, who had been a murderer from the beginning (VI.125-128). Essentially, as far as Agobard was concerned, trial by combat, the so-called "Judgement of God," had nothing to do with God, but rather came out of people's greed and the devil's ability to sow dissension and strife. As such he argued stridently against the use of ordeals as a method of reaching a judgment and rendering justice.

Carolingian rulers obviously disagreed on this point. When Charlemagne in 803 issued some revisions to the Ripuarian code, which already made provision for trial by ordeal, he expanded the use of trial by combat.<sup>63</sup> Louis, for his part, likewise legislated uses for ordeal,

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<sup>61</sup> Agobard, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, VI.11-20 (22-23); cf. *Lex Gundobada*, VIII in *MGH LL Nat. Germ.* II.1, ed. Ludovic Rudolf (Hannover: Hahn, 1892), 49-50.

<sup>62</sup> *id.*, *Contra iudicium Dei*, II.9-10 (32); cf. *Lex Gundobada*, XLV (*MGH LL Nat. Germ.* II.1, 75-76).

<sup>63</sup> *Capitulare legi Ribuarie additum*, c.7 in *MGH Capit.* I, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), 118; cf. *Lex Ripuarie*, 60.2 in *MGH LL Nat. Germ.*, III.2, ed. Franz Beyerle and Rudolf Buchner (Hannover: Hahn, 1954), 108.

including as a method of determining perjury.<sup>64</sup> Rather than a perversion of justice and a foolish attempt to understand God's justice, as Agobard argued,<sup>65</sup> and beyond the accepted use of ordeal as part of judicial process, Carolingian rulers understood ordeal, particularly trial by combat, as a means to exposing and undoing perjury.<sup>66</sup> As the rulers saw it, contrary to Agobard's insistence that trial by combat led to dissension and disunity, such an ordeal could heal the social rift created by the perjurer by ultimately exacting justice on him. Clearly, placing Burgundy under Frankish law, as requested in *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, would not have solved the problems Agobard saw with ordeals, and he did not describe what he considered to be a better justice system. Since ordeal's harshest critic did not, or perhaps could not, suggest what he thought would be a system more in keeping with Christian principles, it is unsurprising that his complaints against ordeal did not gain any traction.

Agobard returned to legal questions later in his career, decrying what he saw as the dissolution of justice and order in several works. He began noting problems in *De iniusticiis*, sent to Count Matfrid of Orléans in 826. He reminded Matfrid of his duty to uphold justice, and then scolded him for being "a wall between [people] and the Emperor, by which they are defended from punishment."<sup>67</sup> We do not know the exact complaint or cases which prompted Agobard to write to Matfrid, though the cause involved Bertmond, the Count of Lyon, since Agobard deemed it necessary to state that he took no issue with legitimate complaints, or with his count.<sup>68</sup> Agobard clearly considered Matfrid part of a miscarriage of justice, however, and urged him to tear down iniquity and build up the faith (18-23).

The maintenance of order in the form of oaths of loyalty first appeared in *De diuisione imperii*, written for Louis in 829, although Agobard spent the bulk of the work attempting to

<sup>64</sup> *Capitula legibus addenda*, c.10 (*MGH Capit.* I, 282-83).

<sup>65</sup> Agobard, *Contra iudicium Dei*, 423-505 (46-48).

<sup>66</sup> Olivier Guillot, "Le duel judiciaire: Du champ légal (sous Louis le Pieux) au champ de la pratique en France (XI<sup>e</sup> s.)" in *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo* (Spoleto: Presso la sede del centro, 1997), 729-41.

<sup>67</sup> . . . murum inter se et imperatorem, per quem defendantur a correctione." Agobard, *De iniusticiis*, 50-51 (226).

<sup>68</sup> Agobard, *De iniusticiis*, 55-64 (226).

convince Louis to return to the imperial inheritance scheme decided on in 817.<sup>69</sup> Oaths came up again in *Liber apologeticus I*, intended for wide dissemination in 833.<sup>70</sup> In both works Agobard felt that oaths were losing their ability to ensure loyalty to the Emperor and the government he ran. He informed Louis in 829, perhaps as an early sign of governmental break-down, that people were swearing to “opposing and various” (*contraria et diuersa*) oaths, presumably to different factions developing within the empire.<sup>71</sup> This problem with oaths continued through the rebellions of the 833, since Agobard mentioned in *Liber apologeticus I* that Judith’s faction had extorted oaths from people.<sup>72</sup> Since he used this oath-extortion as part of the evidence against Louis (via Judith), and the presence of contradictory oaths as a warning to him, Agobard must have considered oaths of loyalty an effective means of governance and maintaining order. Unlike ordeal, Agobard saw a place for oaths, such as those outlined in 802 and presumably offered to Louis on his ascension to the throne, in the structure of the empire.<sup>73</sup>

Although Carolingian thinkers wrote on justice as a moral concept more than the practice of law itself, we find once again that Agobard was not alone in questioning legal methods and practices. Theodulf of Orléans wrote his poem, *Versus contra iudices*, in response to his time spent in southern Gaul with Leidrad of Lyon as *missi* in 798.<sup>74</sup> Aside from detailing some of the more impressive bribes he was offered, he wrote against the oaths so often used in court proceedings to prove guilt or innocence.<sup>75</sup> Agobard may not have had much company in writing

<sup>69</sup> Agobard, *De diuisione imperii*, VII (250);

<sup>70</sup> id., *Liber apologeticus I*, III.1-9 (310).

<sup>71</sup> id., *De diuisione imperii*, VII.3-4 (250).

<sup>72</sup> id., *Liber apologeticus I*, II.25-III.6 (310).

<sup>73</sup> *Capitulare missorum generale* (802), c.3-9 in *MGH Capit.* I, ed. Alfred Boretius (Hannover: Hahn, 1883), 92-93; Thegan, *Vita Hludowici*, c.9 (*MGH SS II*, 593). As to whether or not such oaths constituted vassalage, Charles Odegaard, “Carolingian oaths of fidelity” *Speculum* 16:3 (1941): 288-91, cf. Matthias Becher, “Die *subiectio principum*. Zum Charakter der Huldigung im Franken- und Ostfrankreich bis zum Beginn des 11. Jahrhunderts” in *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, and Helmut Reimitz (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 172, 178.

<sup>74</sup> Fouracre, “Carolingian justice,” 781; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 92-93.

<sup>75</sup> Theodulf of Orléans, *Ad iudices* (*MGH Poet.* I, 493-517).

on these issues, but the poem by Theodulf shows that even court clerics took offence at some aspects of the legal system.

While the general population, with its penchant for fighting and extorting oaths provided enough problems, Agobard also blamed greed and the devil's ability to create dissension and strife for the troubles of Louis's reign.<sup>76</sup> He took Louis to task in *De diuisione imperii* (829) for redividing the empire in order to give his son Charles a share in his brothers' inheritance.<sup>77</sup> In it, Agobard reminded Louis that the original *Divisio imperii* of 817 had been decided upon after prayers and with God's help (and one assumes that Agobard included clerical advice under that rubric), while the more recent division had been reached without God's intervention and so risked complete failure.<sup>78</sup> Agobard warned Louis that he had essentially told God that the previous divine intervention meant nothing, and that Louis thought he could do better without God's assistance.<sup>79</sup> Agobard tried to make Louis understand his actions as a dangerous move, likely only to cause trouble.

We know, of course, that Agobard was right, and that the political situation deteriorated after 829. He joined Lothar's cause in the rebellion of 833, producing three tracts during the summer and fall of that year.<sup>80</sup> In the two entitled *Liber apologeticus* Agobard explained his thoughts on the reason for the rebellion against Louis, placing much of the blame for the troubles at the feet of the Empress Judith. According to Agobard, Judith had begun to act in a licentious manner to the point that everyone in the empire and even the world knew of her behaviour. Yet she was able to turn Louis's mind against his sons, and thus caused division in the empire.<sup>81</sup> Agobard also gave the devil a share of the responsibility, since he never stops sowing scandal, and it was the devil who allowed Judith to return to Louis as a legitimate wife even after she had

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<sup>76</sup> Agobard, *Liber Apologeticus II*, I.17-22, IV.9-17 (315, 317).

<sup>77</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xlv.

<sup>78</sup> Agobard, *De diuisione imperii*, IV-V (248-49); cf. *Divisio imperii* (MGH LL I, 198).

<sup>79</sup> Agobard, *De diuisione imperii*, V.1-8 (249).

<sup>80</sup> Van Acker, introduction to *Agobardi Lugdunensis*, xlv-xlvi.

<sup>81</sup> Agobard, *Liber apologeticus I and II* (309-19).



been made a nun.<sup>82</sup> Fault also lay with Louis himself, for letting himself be deceived by his Jezebel wife, and for fighting his sons instead of expanding the empire's boundaries by conquering and converting neighbouring peoples.<sup>83</sup>

After Louis's defeat in 833, Agobard wrote the *Cartula de Ludouici imperatoris poenitentia*, which gave a brief description of the decision reached by a council of bishops and abbots on the best way to proceed since hostilities had ceased, namely by having Louis lay aside his title and perform penance.<sup>84</sup> In it, Agobard spoke frankly of the empire "driven to ruin through the negligence and, so that I may speak more truly, through the cowardice of the Lord Louis."<sup>85</sup> A ruin that entailed an imperial household tainted by scandal, an emperor forcefully relieved of his duties by his elder sons, and an empire forced to choose sides. From Agobard's perspective, such a situation could only hinder the order and unity desired by himself and other Carolingians.

## Behind the Worries

### *Purity and Pollution*

A concern surrounding the ideas of pollution and purity can explain some of Agobard's anxieties. Purity was something which had to be guarded, pollution something to be avoided. For Agobard, Jews, the body, and heretics were all sources of pollution, though the devil, "the inventor and cause of all evil," often proved to be the ultimate cause of corruption.<sup>86</sup> The amount of potential pollution varied by source. Considering the rhetoric he used, we can see that Agobard must have felt that Jews formed the greatest source of potential pollution because of their blasphemies and carnal observances. A focus on the body, such as the materialism that

<sup>82</sup> id., *Liber apologeticus* II, I.17-22, III.1-7 (315-16).

<sup>83</sup> Agobard, *Liber apologeticus* II, VII.3-4 (319); id., *Liber apologeticus* I, III.10-28 (309-10).

<sup>84</sup> id., *Cartula de Ludouici*, 23-61 (323-24).

<sup>85</sup> "...impellebatur ad ruinam per negligentiam et, ut uerius dicam, per ignauiam domni Ludouici. . ." id., *Cartula de Ludouici*, 13-14 (323).

<sup>86</sup> "...inuentor et causa omnis mali. . ." id., *De fidei ueritate*, XV.5 (268).

provoked trials, could also defile a person by preventing them from attaining a better, more spiritual life. Heretics corrupted the very basis of a Christian society by twisting the church's teachings. Any of these sources could create a blemish on the soul, and so Christians, the church, and the empire all needed to be protected from these pollutants in order to remain pure.

That Agobard did not like Jews or Judaism and that he thought Jews and Christians ought to be kept separate has been made clear in the two preceding chapters. That Agobard considered Jews to be a polluting influence would certainly explain some of his passion around this subject. It took him some time before he overtly declared Jews to be polluting, however. The first hint of this came in *Contra praeceptum impium de baptismo iudaicorum mancipiorum* (826) where Agobard mentioned that Jews never ceased blaspheming both privately and publicly.<sup>87</sup> He brought up Jews' blaspheming ways again in *De insolentia Iudaeorum* (826-27), and added that Jews harmed the Christian faith.<sup>88</sup> He seems to have had in mind the contents of Jewish preaching to Christians, and the testimony of Jerome and others that Jews curse Christ and Christians in their daily prayers, presumably a reference to the prayer against apostates and informers contained in the *Amidah* (52-53, 86-90). Yet the line between thoughts or words and pollution is much more subtle, and much more difficult to determine than that between physical acts such as sexual contact or blood and pollution.<sup>89</sup> While Agobard could have been implying Jews' defiling status in these statements, he had yet to clearly describe Jews themselves as polluted or polluting.

This semantic ambiguity ended with *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus* (826-27). Besides reiterating how prone Jews were to blaspheme and how much Jews harmed Christians, Agobard related that both Cyprian and Athanasius declared that Christians should flee the "most

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<sup>87</sup> Agobard, *Contra praeceptum impium*, 68-69 (187).

<sup>88</sup> id., *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 52-53, 108-110 (192, 194).

<sup>89</sup> de Jong, "Imitatio Morum," 50.

polluting fellowship” of Jews.<sup>90</sup> Towards the end of this work Agobard spoke more plainly:

“Therefore Christians have been snatched from the power of darkness and brought over into the kingdom of the beloved Son of God; in no way ought we be polluted by [Jews’] social intercourse or fellowship.”<sup>91</sup>

Agobard significantly increased his rhetoric and made Jewish pollution obvious in *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica* (827), his last anti-Jewish work and the only one addressed to a friend, Archbishop Nibridius of Narbonne. Perhaps it was Agobard’s comfort with Nibridius that allowed him to explicitly articulate the uncleanness of Jews relative to Christians. Whatever the reason, Agobard let loose a most unflattering string of analogy. He wrote:

“Because it seems to be fully unworthy and not suited to our faith that the sons of light be blackened by the fellowship of the dark, and that the Church of Christ, who should be prepared without blemish or wrinkle for the embraces of the heavenly groom, be stained by living together with the blemished, wrinkled, and repudiated synagogue. Indeed it is absurd that the pure virgin, promised to that one man, Christ, seek out the feasts of a whore and through sharing a meal not only heap up diverse shames, but also maintain a danger to the faith; while some of the Christian flock, due to too much familiarity and constant dwelling together, honour the Sabbath with Jews but dishonour the Lord’s day with illegal work, nor do they keep the prescribed fasts.”<sup>92</sup>

In some of the starkest and most negative language he wrote, Agobard left no doubt as to why he maintained that Jews and Christians ought to be separated. In just a few lines he articulated all of his anxieties about Jews by coupling his fear of their polluting influence with his fear of Christians keeping Jewish practices, and by extension falling into Jewish beliefs. Aside from the fact that this passage makes Agobard’s feelings about Jews abundantly clear, the specific

<sup>90</sup> “. . .pollutissimam societatem. . .” Agobard, *De iudaicis supersitionibus*, III.7 (201).

<sup>91</sup> “Erepti igitur de potestate tenebrarum christiani et translati in regnum filii caritatis Dei, nullatenus debemus eorum conuictu et societate pollui. . .” Agobard, *De iudaicis supersitionibus*, XXIV.1-3 (218).

<sup>92</sup> “Quia et satis indignum ac fidei nostrae inconueniens esse uidebatur, filios lucis tenebrarum societate fuscari, et Ecclesiam Christi, quam decet sine macula et ruga sponsi caelestis amplexibus praeparari, maculose, rugose ac repudiate synagoge contubernio decolorari, et uere absurdum est, uirginem castam, uni uiro Christo desponsatam, meretricis dapes expetere, et per communionem cybi ac potus non solum in diuersa flagitia corruere, uerum etiam fidei periculum sustinere, dum ex familiaritate nimia et assidua cohabitatione aliqui de grege christiano sabbatum quidem cum Iudeis colunt, diem uero dominicam illicita operatione uiolant, nec et ieiunia statuta dissoluunt.” id., *De cauendo conuictu*, 21-31 (231-32).

language he used deserves further study. It is one of the few places where Agobard discussed pollution and purity so clearly, and the only place he did so in gendered language.

Agobard began by referring to Christians as “sons of light” (*filios lucis*), but he soon changed to referring to them in the collective sense as the church, and then the bride, of Christ. Although the equation of the church as the bride or wife of Christ originated with Paul, shifting his rhetoric to the feminine (instead of the masculine “sons of light”) gave Agobard easy access to the language of virginity as purity, and promiscuity as impurity. He described the church as a *uirginem castam*, a pure virgin. Unlike *purus*, a more frequently used word for “pure,” *castus* carried with it both moral and religious connotations, with a secondary meaning of something that is pious, holy, and sacred. Obviously, given the context, the secondary meaning should be assumed, and Agobard’s rhetoric of purity thus understood as increased.

It concerned Agobard that the church, this pure and holy virgin, the personification of all Christians, would “seek out the feasts of a whore” (*meretricis dapes expetere*). The language used just in this clause alone was unusual in Agobard. The feasts themselves are *dapes*, religious feasts, a term he only used here, and so likely meant it to convey its specialised meaning. The next clause, calling these feasts a “communion of food and drink” (*communione cybi ac potus*), most likely an intentional reflection of the language of the Eucharist, reinforces that meaning. This would seem to indicate that, while an everyday meal or a celebration such as a wedding feast should still be understood as included in this diatribe, Agobard especially worried about Christians sharing Sabbath dinner or perhaps even a Seder or other religious feast with their Jewish neighbours.

Agobard only used *expetere* (seek out), instead of the more usual seeking verb, *petere*, one other time in his writings. The only other instance came in *Contra iudicium Dei*, where

Agobard described Gundobad, spurred on by Avitus of Clermont, as seeking after truth.<sup>93</sup> Given the tenor of the passage quoted above, Agobard may have chosen *expetere* because its primary meaning is that of wishing for or coveting a thing. Thus, not only was the pure, holy virgin seeking out these feasts and choosing them over Christian fasts, but actually coveting them. This word choice alone shows how much socializing between Jews and Christians concerned Agobard, and just how little time in the presence of Jews he thought was needed for the pure, holy virgin to slip from proper piety and practice.

As for the most attention-grabbing word of the clause, *meretrix* (whore), Agobard only used it four times in all of his writings. The three other times it appeared, Agobard used it in an historical, biblical, sense, such as the two whores involved in Solomon's famous judgement.<sup>94</sup> This instance in *De cauendo conuictu* is the only time he used that label as an insult, instead of merely an historical descriptor. Alone among the groups and issues Agobard combated, only Jews were worthy of that particular slander. Yet despite the strong language, Agobard focused more on how Jews have been left by God than on perceived whoredom. His string of adjectives used to describe the synagogue, *maculosa, rugosa, et repudiata* (stained/defiled/polluted/filthy, wrinkled/shrivelled, and repudiated/divorced), painted a vivid picture of Jews as a cast-off woman. One who, presumably, would have no choice but to turn to promiscuity, to whoring, in order to survive.

Agobard's metaphor of Jews as a whore, while obviously quite distasteful to modern sensibilities and highly insulting to Jews, lacked the weight such a comparison may have carried with another author, simply because Agobard did not discuss women or the more physical aspects of impurity in any great length. His discussions about Judith in the two *Libri apologetici* stand as the only other example of Agobard's use of women and physical impurity. Even there,

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<sup>93</sup> Agobard, *Contra iudicium Dei*, VI.3-8 (34).

<sup>94</sup> Agobard, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, X.2-3 (25); cf. 1 Sam. 3:16-27.

however, he almost wrote around the issue. He described Judith in *Liber apologeticus I* as *lasciuia*, which does carry the meaning of being wanton or licentious, but has the primary meaning of being playful or jolly.<sup>95</sup> Since he later described her as “playing childishly,” (*ludat pueriliter*, V.2), assuming the primary meaning of *lasciuia* could be justified, if one did know of the charges adultery between Judith and Bernard of Septimania which others alleged.

Agobard did not make the situation any clearer in *Liber apologeticus II*. He did label Judith as a Jezebel, though that could certainly have merely been a convention, and he certainly apportioned blame about the state of the empire to Louis as well.<sup>96</sup> By the time the rebellion ended and Agobard wrote his *Cartula de Ludouici imperatoris poenitentia*, Judith was forgotten, and he laid all responsibility squarely at Louis’s feet. If Agobard considered Judith adulterous, and the language used makes any determination difficult, he did not dwell upon the point. That he did not dwell upon bodily forms of pollution more generally does not aid any resolution. In fact, Agobard seems to have been much more concerned with the polluting potential of a desire for worldly goods and honour than the more standard “carnal” concerns revolving around sexual contact. Though Agobard did assert towards the end of *De spe et timore* that the body must be kept pure in order to receive a spiritual body,<sup>97</sup> and while maintaining such innocence for Agobard did certainly involve not being led astray by pretty women, it also involved not holding on to anger, and not remembering past slights (405-407).<sup>98</sup> For Agobard being able to withdraw from the world was the purpose of innocence. “Whoever has done this, he is be able to withdraw from the friendship of the world, which is hostile to God and which the apostle James called

<sup>95</sup> id., *Liber apologeticus I*, II.6 (309).

<sup>96</sup> Agobard, *Liber apologeticus II*, III.14-16, VII.3-5 (317, 319); cf. discussion in Ward, “Agobard of Lyons and Paschasius Radbertus,” 18-21.

<sup>97</sup> Agobard, *De spe et timore*, 667-668 (446).

<sup>98</sup> “Quomodo ergo accipere iubemur regnum Dei sicut puer, nisi quia sicut puer non perseuerat in iracundia, non lesus meminit, non uidens pulchram mulierem delectatur. . .” (440)

adultery” (413-415).<sup>99</sup> Aside from being “hostile to God,” the type of community formed by loving the world, with its pursuit of wealth and prestige makes up the “body of the devil,” standing in opposition to the body of Christ (472-480).

This was not the only instance in which Agobard equated worldliness with adultery. In *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici* Agobard insisted that “heretics are not the only ones who pollute (*adulterant*) the word of God by mixing in their lies, but also all who rush through the sacred ministries to obtain worldly honours and riches. And also those [are adulterers] who, unable to be elevated to honours and riches, wish to obtain a living or daily protection from the sacred ministry, because they do not receive a living in order to preach but preach in order receive [a living]. They do not speak with honesty, as from God, in the presence of God, but they walk about in slyness. They do not renounce the secrets of shame, but they embrace them, they are adulterers.”<sup>100</sup> The use of a term for sexual misconduct, *adulteri*, in the context of discussing a less-obviously carnal sin (the desire to make a living from ministry) is quite interesting. It serves to highlight how deeply the issue of worldliness concerned Agobard. Along with blood, inappropriate sexual contact stands as a universal pollutant.<sup>101</sup> Thus, as well as carrying the connotation that such priests are “two-timing” God, the use of *adulterare* also turned them into pollutants.

This was not a contamination limited to priests, however. Although both clerics and lay concerned themselves with the purity of priests because of their role in performing the sacraments, and thus the effect they had on everyone’s salvation,<sup>102</sup> Agobard considered the laity

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<sup>99</sup> “Quod qui fecerit, ille potest ab amicitia huius mundi recedere, quae inimica est Deo, quam apostolus Iacobus adulterium nominat.” (440)

<sup>100</sup> “Ergo non soli heretici adulterant uerbum Dei miscendo fallacias suas, sed et omnes, qui per sacrum ministerium ad honores et diuitias temporales peruenire festinant; etiam et illi, qui ad honores et diuitias sublimari non possunt, et uictum aut tegumentum quotidianum ex sacro ministerio adipisci cupiunt, quia non ideo sumptus accipiunt, ut predicent, sed ideo praedicant, ut accipiant, nec locuntur ex sinceritate, sicut ex Deo, coram Deo, sed ambulant in astutia, nec abdicant occulta dedecoris, sed amplectuntur, adulteri sunt.” Agobard, *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici*, XI.1-9 (331-32).

<sup>101</sup> de Jong, “*Imitatio Morum*,” 50.

<sup>102</sup> Fouracre, “Carolingian justice,” 776; de Jong, “*Imitatio Morum*,” 55.

equally susceptible to worldliness and the pollution it brought. He aimed *Contra iudicium Dei* and *De dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum* mostly at lay tendencies towards a greed which led to ordeals or the “secularization” of church lands. It is also worth noting that, unlike the fear that acting like a Jew would make a person become a Jew, for Agobard worldliness required only intent, not action. Agobard stated in *Contra iudicium Dei* that those who even wish to be a friend of the world, who wish for wealth and honours even if they never receive them, have by that desire alone become adulterers and enemies of God.<sup>103</sup>

Thus given Agobard’s apparently greater concern with worldliness as a source of pollution versus women, it would seem that being compared to a cast-off woman or a whore, while, again, extremely insulting, would not necessarily be the worst thing Agobard could think of a person or group. However, this certainly does not mitigate Agobard’s intensity in combating what he saw as Jews’ polluting and dangerous influence on Christians. It only means that, as this chapter argues, Jews were not the only objects of Agobard’s concern, nor were they the only source of pollution to guard against.

Agobard did not provide that much evidence for why he described Jews as polluting. He mentioned in several tracts that Jews constantly blaspheme, but did not specify what these blasphemies entailed until he outlined Jewish beliefs in *De iudaicis superstitionibus*. In that tract it becomes clear that their blasphemies consist of beliefs in God’s corporeality, the eternal nature of the Torah, and the absolute worldliness of Jesus, and an insistence that the intercession of the saints are actually acts of the devil.<sup>104</sup> Jewish practices likewise point to their uncleanness. By Agobard’s logic, in maintaining the carnal laws of *kashrut* Jews not only focus even more on the body, but prove their uncleanness, since all things are clean through Christ (XV.5-11). Principally, however, Agobard seems to find the greatest danger in Jews’ rejection of Christ and

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<sup>103</sup> Agobard, *Contra iudicium Dei*, V.168-179 (39).

<sup>104</sup> id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X (205-08).



thus of God, and God's subsequent repudiation of Jews. It is almost as if Jews then have nothing more to lose, spiritually, and this forces them to focus exclusively on the world and their physical lives in it. That idea could have easily led Agobard to describe Jews as *maculosi, rugosi, et repudiati*,<sup>105</sup> with no choice but to continue in their impure state and contaminate everything and everyone with whom they had contact.

Indeed, the polluting potential Agobard saw in Jews has to be understood as part and parcel of the polluting potential of the body. Whether he came to think of the body as polluting because of his fight against Judaism and the carnal beliefs and practices he saw in it, or if a pre-existing distrust of the corporeal gave him simply one more reason to dislike Judaism, the two threads are interwoven in his writings. For Agobard, a person properly progressed from the exterior to interior, lower things to higher, body to soul. It was the only path of spiritual growth.<sup>106</sup> Given that Carolingian culture (particularly the clerical culture) held a fairly platonic view of the universe, that is, they privileged the spirit over the body, Agobard's view hardly surprises.<sup>107</sup> Throughout the Early Middle Ages the body formed "the primary battleground in the war between good and evil, malady and miracle."<sup>108</sup>

For clergy in particular, despite assurances like those Agobard gave that a priest's individual worthiness in no way affected the salvific potency of the Eucharist, the ninth century saw a growing concern about clerical purity because of that very issue.<sup>109</sup> Theodulf of Orléans, for one, pushed for continence among priests because they handled the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>110</sup> There was also a push more generally to turn the clergy into "a separate caste deriving its special status from its service at the altar and its physical contact with the sacred and

<sup>105</sup> Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu*, 24 (231).

<sup>106</sup> id., *De picturis*, XVI.1-5 (165).

<sup>107</sup> Appelby, "Instruction and inspiration," 108.

<sup>108</sup> Michel Rouche, "The Early Middle Ages in the West" in *A History of Private Life. Volume I: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. Paul Veyne (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 457.

<sup>109</sup> Agobard, *De priuilegio sacerdotii*, XV.6-11, XVIII.1-4 (65, 67); Innes, "Politics of humour," 144; de Jong, "*Imitatio morum*," 55.

<sup>110</sup> Theodulf of Orléans, *Capitula*, VIII.4, in *MGH Capit. Ep. I* ed. Peter Brommer (Hannover: Hahn, 1984), 170.

reproducing itself by non-sexual means.”<sup>111</sup> Since clergy manned the line between spiritual and corporeal, sacred and profane, the consensus moved towards an insistence on clerical purity, that is, a class-wide practice of a rigorously spiritual life.

Views on the body were not uniformly negative, of course. However, unlike a cleric such as Jonas of Orléans, who envisioned a way for laity, with their carnal, worldly concerns and duties, to still please God, or Dhuoda, who proclaimed the equality of clergy and laity in all ways that matter for salvation, Agobard seems to have given the body no quarter.<sup>112</sup> Thus part of the issue he took with icons stemmed from his thought that they simply trapped people in the exterior, that is, kept the focus on a physical object, and therefore restrained them from their proper spiritual development.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, a desire for beautiful singing in church did not enhance worship in any way, but only smothered the soul in the delight of hearing.<sup>114</sup> Even beyond the carnality he saw in Judaism, the body seems to have had no redeeming value for Agobard.

### *Worldliness*

The body seems to have posed a double threat for Agobard. Not only could it pollute a person, but its demands, desires, and wants could prevent a person from spiritual progress, could trap them in this world with all of its worries about honour and riches. Just as the pollution threatened by Jews must be understood with the pollution of the body, so the body must also be understood in its connection with worldliness. For Agobard worldliness, an over-concern with

<sup>111</sup> de Jong, “*Imitatio Morum*,” 50.

<sup>112</sup> Jonas of Orléans, *De institutione laicali*, preface (PL 106, 122); Rob Meens, “Ritual purity and the influence of Gregory the Great in the Early Middle Ages” in *Unity and Diversity in the Church*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 1996), 41; M.A. Claussen, “God and Man in Dhuoda’s *Liber manualis*” in *Women in the Church*, ed. W.J. Shields and Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990), 48.

<sup>113</sup> Agobard, *De picturis*, XXXI (179).

<sup>114</sup> id., *De antiphonario*, XII.29-33.

material possessions, wealth, and honours, damaged the church and kept people in their bodies, and thus from the proper love of God.

Agobard held that worldliness harmed the church not least through the secular confiscation of church land to the point where the church could hardly maintain its ministry. He spoke of those who had made themselves rich from church properties while the church, and the poor it should serve, starved.<sup>115</sup> This happened because people, driven by greed, felt free to violate property and objects previously consecrated, because reason and the warnings of Scripture did not restrain some from coveting what had become God's (XV.21-35, XXV). Priests more concerned with a rapid rise through the hierarchy, or at least more concerned with their own welfare than they were for the souls in their care, likewise hurt the church.<sup>116</sup> In both cases from Agobard's perspective, the offending parties had fallen so far into worldly concerns that the church, Christ's own body, became disposable in the quest for increased wealth and prestige.

More than anything however, Agobard felt that worldliness made it impossible for individuals to properly love God. Love of worldly possessions was a sin, as no person's heart was big enough to love both the world and God.<sup>117</sup> Agobard did admit that a problem existed not so much in just being rich, but in loving those riches (351-353), since the love of riches entered one into the fellowship of the world, which he called the body of the devil, thus diametrically opposed to the body of Christ (351-353; 475-480). He also felt that those who loved their lands and livestock more than God were not worthy of Christ.<sup>118</sup> Agobard clearly held to Jesus's warning that one cannot serve both God and worldly interests.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Agobard, *De dispensatione*, XXXI.1-6 (345).

<sup>116</sup> id., *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici*, XI.1-17 (331-32).

<sup>117</sup> id., *De fidei ueritate*, XX.5-6 (273); id., *De spe et timore*, 435-437 (440).

<sup>118</sup> id., *Contra iudicium Dei*, VI.88-90 (37).

<sup>119</sup> Mt. 6:24.

Of course the root of worldliness laid in corporality. As mentioned in the previous section, Agobard held a negative view of the body, considering it something to be overcome or at least ignored in a person's quest for the better, spiritual life. Since Agobard thought that people should properly advance from bodily thoughts and concerns to the spiritual, corporality formed the opposite to that progression, and served as part of what drove Agobard to write on some issues. The greed which led Christians to fight each other over their livestock would go hand-in-hand with an over-emphasis on the body. So would an insistence on the adoration of icons, an over-fondness of liturgical singing, or a priest neglecting his duties in his desire to advance quickly up the clerical ranks. However, the body stays so much in the background for these issues, it is difficult to tell how much corporality concerned Agobard in these instances. It is possible that it bothered him greatly, yet since he wrote to audiences who would have understood the dangers of corporality, he did not belabour the point.

Corporality played a much more obvious role in his fight against Judaism. That Jews are carnal was an accusation thoroughly entrenched in Christian tradition by Augustine, Jerome, and other Fathers, Agobard was simply the latest to use it.<sup>120</sup> However, he did so in a rather unusual way. Agobard did discuss some points of kosher butchering and mentioned the Sabbath, stock pieces of evidence of Jews' literal, carnal, interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, but he did not dwell on the points.<sup>121</sup> He did not even broach the subject of circumcision, another favourite of anti-Jewish authors. Instead, what seems most offensive to Agobard were the beliefs he thought Jews held about God. He reported that, among other things, Jews believe God has a real body, and that he sits on a throne carried by four beasts in a large palace.<sup>122</sup> This "stupidity" (*stultitia*) sealed Jews' carnality, since they were so absorbed in their own bodies they imagined God had

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<sup>120</sup> Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, 1-2.

<sup>121</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 74-84 (193); id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.74-77 (207).

<sup>122</sup> id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.1-8 (205-06).

one as well. Such carnality could only make Jews more of a pollutant and a threat in Agobard's mind, since even their spiritual life was tainted by corporeal thoughts.

### *Order and Unity*

Scholars who have studied Agobard's works have noticed that, along with his anxieties around pollution and worldliness, he had a great desire for unity and thus saw reason for concern in anything he felt threatened that desire. Jeremy Cohen noted that for Agobard both Jews and trial by ordeal went against the principle of Christian order and unity.<sup>123</sup> Cabaniss mentioned that Agobard stressed the unity of all of God's people, while Müller claimed Agobard's ideal was for all to be integrated into the *corpus Christi*.<sup>124</sup> Boshof similarly argued that *Verchristlichung*, the incorporation of all into the *corpus Christi* influenced Agobard's conflicts.<sup>125</sup>

Unity does indeed seem to have been important to Agobard. He spoke of the unity of all in Christ. He wrote of Christ dying to make all one, and thus all people are one in Christ.<sup>126</sup> Agobard also asked that those whom Christ made one through the cross not be divided.<sup>127</sup> He worried about members of his flock being drawn away from the body of Christ by heterodoxies or the allurements of the world.<sup>128</sup> Unity played a role, explicit or implicit, in every work, every issue he tackled. The significance of unity for Agobard came in what he saw as a correlation between unity and faith, disunity and faithlessness. Agobard's logic went as follows: Christ's disciples are known by love, thus the devil's disciples must be known by strife. Love through Christ brings about unity, while dissensions caused by the devil bring disunity. So for Agobard,

<sup>123</sup> Cohen, *Living Letters*, 136.

<sup>124</sup> Cabaniss, *Agobard*, 31; Müller, "Kirche von Lyon," 225.

<sup>125</sup> Boshof, *Agobard*, 43-44.

<sup>126</sup> Agobard, *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*, III.5-6, IV.1-5 (20-21).

<sup>127</sup> id., *Contra obiectiones Fredegisi*, XXI.16-21 (299).

<sup>128</sup> e.g. id., *De grandine*, XV.18-28 (14); id., *De modo regiminis ecclesiastici*, IX (330-31).

unity and faith fed each other, just as dissensions and disunity reinforced each other.<sup>129</sup> Thus the only hope for political unity was through the love and unity brought about by faith in Christ.

Agobard also thought that a unified society should be an ordered society. The maxim “a place for everything and everything in its place,” played out in his writings on a wider scale. He believed there was a place and proper role for emperor and empire, such as protecting church property from unlawful usurpations, as evidenced by his involvement at the council of Attigny.<sup>130</sup> This included a proper class of law to be used in that empire, as evidenced by his *Aduersus legem Gundobadi*. Likewise, the authority of bishops and canons needed to be properly respected and observed,<sup>131</sup> and of course, all people must believe (generally including appropriate action) properly.<sup>132</sup>

More than any other subject, Agobard had a great deal of company when it came to extolling the virtues of and praying for unity. In general, Pippin III and Charlemagne had started the Carolingians down a path which sought to create a society in which the rules of religion and those of society became one and the same, so that all may be united as right-believing and acting members of a Christian society.<sup>133</sup> It took only three generations for the path set by Pippin III to reach its ideological apex. By the time Louis the Pious issued his *Ordinatio Imperii* in 817 the concept “not yet elaborated but generally felt: namely, that the empire was itself a Christian unity, and more than that, was itself the Corpus Christi, indivisible and sacred” governed Carolingian laws and decision making.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>129</sup> id., *Contra iudicium Dei*, 134-143 (38).

<sup>130</sup> Agobard, *De dispensatione*, IV.1-50 (122-23).

<sup>131</sup> e.g. id., *De priuilegio sacerdotii* (53-69); id., *De priuilegio apostolicae sedis* (303-06).

<sup>132</sup> e.g. id., *De quorundam inlusione signorum* (237-43).

<sup>133</sup> Chandler, “Heresy and empire,” 516; Hen, *Royal Patronage*, 98-100; McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 2-5.

<sup>134</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 231.

From this desire for a new, Christian society grew out the Carolingian reform program, particularly with its emphasis on Christian education for clergy and lay alike.<sup>135</sup> From this ideal also came the Carolingian emphasis on unity. McKitterick, however, has argued that instead of strict unity, Carolingian intellectuals pressed for concord. The difference being that unity required an absolute sameness that the Carolingians simply lacked the administrative apparatus, and perhaps even desire to enforce. Concord, on the other hand, allowed for diversity within an over-arching unity, permitting the inevitable regional differences within a framework of agreement on basic principles.<sup>136</sup> This would agree with what Hen noted about the efforts of Merovingian clergy to bring about uniformity, that they really sought the regularization of the order for the Mass, not a uniformity in text and language.<sup>137</sup> Whether modern scholars label what the Carolingians wanted as ‘unity’ or ‘concord,’ however, the intent was to create a cohesive Christian society based on a measure of ritual uniformity previously unknown in the Christian west.

Of course the Carolingian drive for concord involved royal support and sometimes leadership. It also encompassed far more than the order of the Mass referenced by Hen. The Carolingians left virtually no area of life untouched in their effort to renew and reform their burgeoning empire. They turned their attention to various aspects of life for all of their subjects, since the formation of a Christian society necessitated the confluence of public, private, and religious spheres. Carolingian rulers and ecclesiastical magnates often found each other to be ready partners in remoulding society into a Christian framework. Frankish rulers had for generations turned to their own bishops for answers to both theological and ecclesial questions.

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<sup>135</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c.72 (*MGH Capit.* I, 59-60); *Concilium Attiniacense*, c.2-4 (*MGH Conc.* II.2, 471-72); Sullivan, “Carolingian monasticism,” 259; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, 145.

<sup>136</sup> McKitterick, “Unity and diversity,” 81-82.

<sup>137</sup> Hen, “Unity in diversity,” 26-27.

The bishops and clergy in turn looked to the rulers to create an atmosphere safe and stable enough for the church to thrive.<sup>138</sup>

Throughout the period Carolingians met in councils and assemblies, both regional and empire-wide, in order to pass laws and canons designed to bring about the desired Christian society. That was, at least, the theory of why the meetings continued to occur. The Carolingians had a great deal of what Wallace-Hadrill called “legislative intention.”<sup>139</sup> The question has always been, and continues to be, how effective the Carolingians were in putting their reforms and ideals into practice. For example, it seems that the major attempt to reform and regularize the liturgy, the issuance of the sacramentary sent by Pope Hadrian along with the supplement devised by Benedict of Aniane, never completely replaced the older forms of the liturgy. Benedict’s supplement in fact included some older material, but the nods to other traditions did not suffice to replace them.<sup>140</sup> Other areas, such as the preservation of the various legal traditions, bemoaned by Agobard, likewise show the continued diversity within the greater unity of the empire.<sup>141</sup>

It is a great irony that the ideology of unity reached its height under Louis the Pious, the very emperor popularly blamed with the demise of the empire and what unity it engendered. While more recent scholarship has questioned that particular assessment, it must be noted that when one surveys the scope of Frankish history, the political unity over such a broad area created by Pippin III and Charlemagne, and however well maintained by Louis, was clearly the aberration. Despite their failure at prolonging political unity, the Carolingians nevertheless stood as an early attempt to turn their ideals into social practice.<sup>142</sup> Agobard, then, proves only one

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<sup>138</sup> Chelini, “Les ‘emplois’ liturgiques,” 324-26; Chandler, “Heresy and empire,” 507-09; McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, xix-xx; Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir*, 133-34.

<sup>139</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 258.

<sup>140</sup> Hen, *Royal Patronage*, 75-80; McKitterick, “Unity and diversity,” 68-69.

<sup>141</sup> Fouracre, “Origins of the nobility,” 21.

<sup>142</sup> Boshof, “Einheitsidee,” 164-65; McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 209.



more Carolingian among many who desired unity through the creation of a properly Christian society.

### Conclusion: Back to Jews

Thus far, this dissertation has explored a myriad of aspects regarding Agobard – his context, life, writing, anti-Judaism, and his other concerns. All throughout I have tried to show how Agobard was rarely alone, or even that unusual, in what he thought, and that most of the concerns he had about Jews were not exclusive to them. I have tried to show his struggle against the Jews in his area and his views on Judaism without having his anti-Judaism dominate the discussion, in order to give as full a picture of him as possible. Yet all of that is not to suggest that scholarly interest in his anti-Judaism has been misplaced or has unnecessarily magnified that trait, rather, it most certainly warrants investigation and explanation. Having studied Agobard as closely as possible, I can now return to the questions begged by the scholarship and by Agobard's own writings; why did Jews bother him so much that he parted company with his contemporaries, and why should scholars care?

Much of the reason why Agobard wrote so much and so negatively about Judaism must stem from the fact that he found in Jews a group of people who hit on every single one of his anxieties. Jews were, for Agobard, the very paragons of every sin which drove him to write. He claimed as much in *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, promising to demonstrate to Louis “how they are worse than all unbelievers.”<sup>143</sup> No other group had as many claims on Agobard's anxieties as Jews did.

Most obviously from his writings, Jews provoked anxieties around carnality for Agobard. They still kept the laws of *kashrut*, tested the purity of a menstruant's blood, kept a very literal

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<sup>143</sup> “. . . quomodo peiores sint omnibus incredulis. . .” Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 144 (194).

Sabbath, and believed in a corporeal God.<sup>144</sup> In short, Agobard saw Judaism as a religion based on bodily rites and regulations which could only serve to prevent its followers from attaining an appropriate, “spiritual,” understanding of God, and by extension, of Jesus as God’s son.

Agobard summarised and sealed this ensnarement of Jews in the corporeal when he transmitted Jerome’s accusation that Jews “prefer the teachings of men to the teachings of God.”<sup>145</sup>

Moreover, Jews’ carnality was intimately linked with their disbelief and their blackened spiritual state. According to Agobard, the Law expelled the spirit of idolatry from the Jews upon its initial reception. However, after Christ came, the spirit “returned to its original home, now ornamented with carnal observations of the law and sullied by Pharisaic traditions. . .it brought seven other worse spirits with it. . .making [them] worse than before.”<sup>146</sup> Jewish carnality was so complete, in fact, that they confused the veneration of icons with idol worship, and so accused Christians of the very carnality from which they suffered (X.54-55). Agobard thought that Jews were so trapped in corporeal, literal, ways of thinking, that they could not recognise a possible spiritual reason for the practice.

This Jewish focus on the body directly threatened any Christian who had regular contact with Jews. Agobard argued against Jews even employing Christians as domestic servants, “lest Christian women keep the Sabbath with them, and lest they work on the Lord’s day, lest they break fast with them during Lent, and lest their servants eat meat during Lent, lest any Christian earn meat slain and skinned by Jews in return for service and sell it to another Christian, lest they drink their wine, and other like things.”<sup>147</sup> Agobard, at least in this passage, was not worried that Jews’ domestic servants would become spiritually tainted by their service, but rather that they

<sup>144</sup> id., *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 74-85 (193); id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.1-2, 71-75 (205, 207).

<sup>145</sup> id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, X.80-81 (208); quoting Jerome, *Epistula CXXI*, 19-20.

<sup>146</sup> “. . .ad pristinam domum reuersum. . .carnalibus uero legis obseruationibus ornatam, a farisaicis traditionibus ueluti mundatam. . .septem alios nequiores se spiritus assumpsit. . .peiora fecit prioribus.” Agobard, *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, XX.20-30 (215).

<sup>147</sup> “. . . ne femine christiane cum eis sabbatizarent, et ne diebus dominicis operarentur, ne diebus xlme cum eis pranderent, et mercennarii eorum isdem diebus carnes manducarent, ne quilibet christianus carnes a Iudeis immolatas et deglubatas emeret et aliis christianis uenderet, ne unum illorum biberent, et alia huiusmodi.” id., *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 68-73 (192-93).

would take on some of the physical practices of their masters. Besides a perhaps obvious concern about judaizing, held by many clerics since the early church, Agobard did not explain why a Christian drinking Jewish wine, for example, was bad in and of itself. If he did find any spiritual danger in such an event, he did not articulate it.

Indeed Agobard instead seems to have ignored any spiritual ramifications of Jewish observances such as the Sabbath. Convinced that Jews were helplessly trapped in the physicality of their religion, Agobard focused on how such practices could affect a Christian body. It seems rather ironic that Agobard, who so often argued for a progression from the worldly to the spiritual, should focus so much on Christians maintaining the correct, *outward* practices of Christianity – attending services, not working on Sunday, observing set fasts, and so forth – in the face of *outward* Jewish practices. Given that some of the Carolingian reform efforts focused on creating right practice as a way to ensure right belief,<sup>148</sup> it is not surprising that a Carolingian like Agobard would assert that the opposite also held true, that wrong practice could only lead to wrong belief. From this perspective, if keeping the laws of *kashrut* led to believing that God has a literal body, the only way to prevent Christians from believing the latter was to forbid them to keep the former. Indeed, Agobard told Nibridius in *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica* that he had forbidden the Christians under his jurisdiction from marrying or socialising with Jews, lest they fail in their Christian faith.<sup>149</sup>

This focus on the necessity of avoiding Jewish carnal practices complicates Agobard's insistence on de-emphasising the world and the body, since it used the body as proof of the soul's condition. However, as well as being a Carolingian approach to the problem, this also could be seen as an argument based on the very principle Jesus espoused when he said "you will

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<sup>148</sup> Patzold, "Bischöfe," 152-62; Hen, *Royal Patronage*, 67-68; de Jong, "Early medieval polity," 120; McKitterick, *Frankish Church*, 5-9, 156-57.

<sup>149</sup> Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu*, 58-61 (232).

know them by their fruits.”<sup>150</sup> Agobard even argued as much in *Aduersum legem Gundobadi*, by claiming that the “city of God” should be separated from the “city of the devil,” and that a person’s deeds would indicate to which city they belonged.<sup>151</sup> If Agobard considered keeping the Sabbath “bad fruit,” but attending services and not working on Sunday “good fruit,” then his fear of Christians keeping Jewish practices makes sense. Thus, instead of ignoring the spiritual ramifications of Jewish observances, Agobard attacked them the only concrete way that he could, by their fruits.

While Agobard made Jewish carnality clear, he left the associated anxiety of worldliness implicit. However, Jewish willingness to go through secular lines of power in order to guard their possessions in the form of slaves can hardly be interpreted any other way. Though Agobard did not write as much, what he did write certainly has the implication that caring about a slave as a material possession to the point of denying salvation through baptism would be an extreme form of worldliness. Agobard, having made the Jews’ carnality quite clear, seems to have felt comfortable leaving their worldliness unspoken. After all, how could Jews, trapped in their bodies through their carnal rites, do anything other than care for the things of the world more than the things of God?

Along with carnality and implied worldliness Agobard accused Jews of frequent, if largely-unspecified, blasphemies. The only description Agobard offered of these blasphemies came in *De iudaicis superstitionibus et erroribus*, when he outlined some of Judaism’s mystical beliefs, and provided a version of the *Toledoth Jeshu*.<sup>152</sup> Despite the paucity of proof he submitted, Agobard asserted that Jews “never cease blaspheming and cursing believers publicly and privately.”<sup>153</sup> He did mention, on Jerome’s authority, that Jews daily curse Christ and

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<sup>150</sup> Mt. 7:15-20.

<sup>151</sup> Agobard, *Aduersum legem Gundobadi*, VI.1-8 (22).

<sup>152</sup> Agobard, *De iudaicis*, X.1-57 (205-07).

<sup>153</sup> “. . . credentes publice et occulte blasphemare et detestari non cessat.” id., *Contra praeceptum impium*, 68-69 (187).

Christians as part of their prayers.<sup>154</sup> Jews even apparently had the temerity to preach to Christians about “what is better to be believed and held” (50-52).<sup>155</sup> Until the description in *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, Agobard seems to have trusted to an automatic and forceful response from the court based on the mere charge of blasphemy, rather than deeming it necessary to offer much by way of proof.

Jews also harmed the unity and order of the empire, as far as Agobard was concerned. As discussed in Chapter 2, he complained in *De insolentia Iudaeorum* that the Jewish community in Lyon, and Louis’s ruling in their favour, had caused the Christian community there to become scattered (*districti*), to suffer a very clear and concrete disunity.<sup>156</sup> Slightly more obliquely, and based on Agobard’s thoughts about Jewish carnality and the potential for Christians to take on Jewish practices, the principal way Jews could cause the Christian community to break apart was through creating a lack of liturgical, and thus communal, cohesion. That is, if a portion of the Christian community kept the Sabbath with Jews (whether or not the Jews were their masters or employers) while the rest of the Christians attended Mass on Sunday, as Agobard claimed in *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*, then the community was no longer unified.<sup>157</sup> Agobard wrote to Nibridius of Narbonne of Christians led into error by Jews, and urged his friend to stay strong in the face of such forces beating against the Church (45-49, 86-91).

In short, Jews represented the culmination of all the pitfalls and sins that drove Agobard to write. Put more colloquially, Jews pushed all of Agobard’s buttons. In his view they had no redeeming value and were of no use to Christians, despite Augustine’s assertions otherwise. Rather, their very presence was a constant threat to the Christian community, a challenge to

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<sup>154</sup> id., *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 86-87 (193).

<sup>155</sup> “. . .quid potius credendum esset ac tenendum. . .” (192).

<sup>156</sup> Agobard, *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 47-49 (192).

<sup>157</sup> id., *De cauendo conuictu*, 29-31 (232).

Christianity's claim to be the only true religion, and a stumbling block to unity. Jews stood opposed to the right-believing, orderly universe Agobard wanted.

Unfortunately for Agobard, he could not simply get rid of Jews, which brings us to another reason of why Agobard wrote as he did on the subject – Jews posed a perpetual problem in his mind. Unlike misbelieving or misbehaving Christians whom Agobard could, at least in theory, cajole or coerce back to orthodoxy or excommunicate, he had no weapons against Jews themselves. Whether Agobard felt that, doctrinally, he could not move against the Jewish community in order to affect the separation he advocated, and I doubt that was the case, he most certainly could not politically, practically. The charters issued by Louis and the presence of Evrard, the so-called *magister Iudaeorum*, and other *missi* around Lyon during the conflict made that clear. Write as he may about the necessity of separating Jews and Christians, Agobard could not make it happen.

This inability to act led to an unspoken admission, even in his own writings, that, as deeply as Agobard disliked them, Jews had a place in the world and the empire. Again, he showed no desire to convert Jews, just their slaves. He also gave no indication of wishing to expel Jews from Lyon or the empire. He also did not advocate killing Jews. What he did, was push for a radical segregation which would have cut off Jews, economically and socially, from mainstream life in the empire. He not only called for the right to baptise Jews' slaves,<sup>158</sup> he argued that Jews should not have Christian domestic servants and that Christians should not drink Jewish wine.<sup>159</sup> He likewise cited as examples to be followed stories and canons of how Christians should not socialise with Jews, nor should Jews have any kind of authority over Christians.<sup>160</sup> He claimed to have prohibited the Christians under his jurisdiction from eating or

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<sup>158</sup> Agobard, *De baptismo mancipiorum Iudaeorum* (115-17); id., *Contra praeceptum impium* (185-88).

<sup>159</sup> id., *De insolentia Iudaeorum*, 68 and 116 (192, 194).

<sup>160</sup> id., *De iudaicis superstitionibus*, II-VIII (199-204).

drinking with or marrying Jews.<sup>161</sup> This begrudging admission of a place for Jews in the world thus eventually turned into a nebulous foot-hold somewhere outside of a Christian society. If Agobard (or Amulo, or the bishops at Meaux/Paris) had succeeded in his attempts to separate the two communities, then Jewish life in the ninth century could have begun to look much more like that in the later Middle Ages, with the attendant misperceptions and persecutions.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Agobard approached the problem he saw in Jews as a Carolingian. He tried to convince other Carolingians of what he thought in ways familiar to them, through Scriptures, canons, and the Fathers. His understanding of the Christian society his contemporaries tried to build drove him to first question the issue of baptising the slaves of Jews. Official resistance to that led him to challenge Louis and other officials to defend that decision. As the confrontation progressed Agobard, who had been raised in the culture of the reform of Charlemagne, challenged them further to fulfill what he understood as the necessary end of that culture, and create their perfect, Christian society by separating out Jews.

So it was that Agobard, the great illustrator and critic of the Carolingian contradiction about Jews, also showed that the Carolingian agenda of *correctio et emendatio* itself contained the seeds of the later history of Jewish-Christian relations. The Carolingian insistence on the formation of a Christian society, followed to its logical conclusion, necessarily excluded Jews. However much scholars see positive relations between Jews and Christians on the ground during this period (and I include myself in this group), be that through charters such as those granted by Louis or by reading against the grain of rants like Agobard's, we can no longer ignore that when the Carolingians issued legislation which, for example, ordered that bishops and priests teach the Catholic faith to all the people,<sup>162</sup> when the Carolingians very deliberately went about creating a

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<sup>161</sup> id., *De cauendo conuictu*, 58-60 (232).

<sup>162</sup> *Admonitio generalis*, c.61 (*MGH Capit.* I, 58).

Christian society, they absolutely left another ideological path available for later anti-Judaism in Europe.

I most certainly do not want to argue for some teleological inevitability in the course of Jewish-Christian relations in medieval Europe. Previous generations of scholars took that course, only to have later ones show that it cannot be that simple. After all, the majority of the Carolingian leadership, both lay and clerical, ignored or disregarded the very conclusions Agobard came to about Jews based on his Carolingian training. That later leadership chose instead to act on similar conclusions has to be understood in the contexts of those times and places. However, it must be acknowledged that later developments did not spring out of nowhere but rather had some of their roots in the religious and social innovations of the Carolingian period. Later anti-Jewish authors had an antecedent, however unknown, in the Carolingian Agobard.



## Lyon Manuscripts

MS Name	Contents	Date and Provenance	Marked by Florus?	Contents Used by Agobard?
Lyon 600 & BN NA lat. 446	Jerome <i>Epistulae</i>	eighth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes
BN lat. 9643	<i>Codex Theodosian</i>	sixth, Lyon <sup>1</sup>	No	No
Lyon 426 & BN NA lat. 1629	Augustine <i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i>	seventh, looks local <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes
Lyon 443 & BN NA lat. 1591	Origen on Genesis, Exodus & Leviticus	Most is seventh, eighth & ninth Lyon <sup>1</sup>	No	No
Lyon 604 & BN NA lat. 1594	Augustine <i>Sermones</i> and <i>Opuscula</i> ; Jerome Letters	seventh <sup>1,2</sup>	Yes	Yes (sermons)
Lyon 607 & 606	Augustine <i>De civitate Dei</i>	sixth, Lyon 606 ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes
Berlin 159	<i>Lex romana visigothorum</i>	sixth	No	No
Berlin Phillips 1745 & Leningrad F.v.II.3	<i>Concilia Galliae; Notitia Galliarum; Dionysiana</i>	seventh, local <sup>1,2</sup>	Yes	Yes
BN lat. 152	Hilary <i>In Psalmos</i> ; Jerome <i>Commentaria in Isaiam</i>	fifth, probably local <sup>1</sup> ; sixth & ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes (Jerome)
BN NA lat. 1593	Hilary <i>In Psalmos</i>	fifth-sixth <sup>1</sup>	No	No
Lyon 425 & BN NA lat. 1585	Psalms; <i>Probationes Pennae</i>	fifth-sixth; eighth France <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes (Psalms)
Lyon 478	Augustine <i>De consensu Evangelistarum</i>	sixth <sup>1,2</sup>	Yes	Yes
Lyon 403 & 1964	Pre-Jerome Heptateuch	seventh <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No
Lyon 483	Origen <i>In epistulas S. Pauli</i> (Rufinus's translation)	sixth, Italian or French <sup>1</sup>	No	No
Lyon 468 & BN NA lat. 602	Jerome <i>In Hieremiam</i>	seventh <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes
Berlin Phillips 1761	<i>Lex romana visigothorum</i>	seventh <sup>1</sup> , sixth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
Lyon 602	Jerome <i>Epistolae; Dialogi; Adversus Iovianum</i> ; etc.	seventh, to 94v clearly local <sup>1</sup>	No	No
BN lat. 11641 & Geneva mI 16 & St. Petersburg F.I.1	Augustine <i>Homiliae; Epistulae</i>	seventh, Luxeuil <sup>1,2</sup>	Yes	Yes (letters)
Lyon 600 & BN NA lat. 446	Jerome <i>Excerpta ex operibus</i>	seventh-eighth, French, probably Lyon <sup>1</sup>	No	?
BN NA lat. 1740 Codex Bezae	Old Testament New Testament	eighth <sup>1</sup> fifth & ninth,	No Yes	Yes Yes

<sup>1</sup> Lowe, *Codices Lugdunenses*, plates.

		ninth written in Lyon <sup>1</sup>		
Lyon 484	Florus on Paul	ninth, Lyon <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
Lyon 788	Augustine <i>De pastoribus</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
Lyon 608	Augustine <i>Opuscula</i>	eighth-ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	?
Lyon 473	Bede on the Gospels	ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes (Luke)
Lyon 475	Homilies	ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	?
Lyon 603	Augustine <i>De baptismo</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
Lyon 605	Augustine <i>Contra Cresconium</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
Lyon 610	Augustine <i>Contra Faustum</i>	eighth-ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes
BN lat. 9550	Eucher <i>Formulae Spirituales</i> ; <i>Epistulae</i> ; etc.	seventh <sup>1</sup>	Yes	No
BN lat. 8913	Avitus <i>Homiliae</i>	Early cursive papyrus <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
BN lat. 1622	Codex Agobardinus (Tertullian)	ninth, Lyon <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
BN lat. 2859	Florus	ninth, Lyon <sup>2</sup>	Yes	No
Lyon 599	Gregory of Nanzianzus <i>Liber apologeticus</i> (Rufinus's translation)	?	No	No
Lyon Sainte-Foi 128	Logical works and creeds	?	No	Yes (creeds)
Lyon 471	Bede on Ezra	?	No	No
Lyon 324	Plato <i>Timaeus</i> (Chalcidius's translation)	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 336	Epitome of the <i>Hispana</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes
Lyon 375	<i>Lex romana visigothorum</i>	ninth-tenth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 401	<i>Paralipmena</i>	eighth-ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes
Lyon 402	Origen on the Pentateuch	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 430	Esdra, Maccabees, Esther	ninth, Spanish symptoms <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes (not Esther)
Lyon 447	Isidore <i>Quaestiones veti testamenti</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 448	Jerome <i>In Hieramiam</i> ; Isidore on Pentateuch	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes (Jerome)
Lyon 449	Bede on Kings	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 451	Augustine <i>In Psalmos</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 465	Jerome on Isaiah	ninth <sup>2</sup>	Yes	Yes
Lyon 472	Augustine on the Gospels	ninth-tenth <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes
Lyon 476	Jerome on Matthew	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes
Lyon 611	Augustine and other Fathers	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	?
Lyon 612	Augustine <i>Retract.</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 619	Acts of the Council of Aachen (817)	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Lyon 620	Isidore <i>Sententiae</i>	eighth-ninth, Spanish? <sup>2</sup>	No	No

<sup>2</sup> Tafel, "Lyons scriptorium," 44-59.

BN lat. 2853	Agobard <i>Opera</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
BN lat. 4404	<i>Brevarium Alarici</i>	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
BN 12236-7	Eucher	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	No
Autun 5	Gospels	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	Yes
Vat. Reg. 2078	Theodulf, Avitus, Prudentius, Caper, Agraecius, Aldhelm, etc.	ninth <sup>2</sup>	No	?
Lyon 452	Hilary <i>In Psalmos</i>	uncial <sup>2</sup>	No	No

**Other Works Used by Agobard** (per Van Acker)Amalarius*Liber officialis**Liber de ordine antiphonario*Psuedo-Ambrosius*Epistula suppos.*Anastasius II*Epistula*Augustine*Collatio cum Maximino**Confessiones**De doctrina christiana**Enchiridion**Epistula ad Galatas expositio**In euangelium Ioannis tractatus**De haeresibus**De praedestinatione sanctorum**Quaestiones in Heptateuchum**De uera religione**Contra sermonem Arianorum**De trinitate*Avitus of Vienne*Dialogi cum Gundobado**Epistulae**Contra Eutychianam haeresim*Bede*De templo**De temporum ratione*Claudius of Turin*Epistulae*

Pseudo-Clement*Recognitiones*Cyprian*De dominica oratione**Ad Donatum**De zelo et liuore*Pseudo-Cyprian*Aduersus Iudaeos**De iudaica incredulitate*Cyril of Alexandria*Contra Theodoretum**Apologeticus contra Orientales**XII Capitula**Interpretatio XII capitularum**Epistula ad Nestorium**Epistula ad Successum*Eusebius of Caesarea*Historia Ecclesiastica*Eusebius of Vercelli*De trinitate*Eutropius*Epistula de perfecto homine**De similitudine carnis peccati*Fulgentius*De fide ad Petrum*Gregory the Great*Moralia in Iob**Homiliae in Ezechielem**Epistulae**Homiliae in Euangelia*

Hadrian*Epistula ad Carolum Magnum**Epistula ad Constantinum*Jerome*Hebraicae quaestiones in Genesim**Prologus in librum Iob**Prologus in Ezechielem**Commentaria in Amos prophetam**Prologus in epistulas Pauli**Commentaria in epistulam ad Galatas**Commentaria in epistulam ad Ephesios**Aduersus Iouianum**Liber de nominibus hebraicis*Hilary of Poitiers*De trinitate*Irenaeus of Lyon*Contra haereses*Leo the Great*Tractatus**Epistulae*Nestorius*Anathematismi*Paulinus of Milan*Vita Ambrosii*Paulinus of Nola*Epistulae*Pelagius I*Epistulae*Priscian*Institutiones grammaticae*

Proclus of Constantinople*Epistula de fide*Prudentius*Liber Cathemerinon*Saluianus*De gubernatione Dei*Symmachus*Epistulae*Venantius Fortunatus*Vita Hilarii*Vigilius of Tapsus*Contra Eutychetem**De unitate Trinitatis*Miscellaneous Works*Capitula ab episcopis Attiniaci data**Confessio fidei Felicis**Episcoporum relatio**Expositio prauae fidei Theodori**Ordines missae**Praeceptum Iudaeorum Ludouici Pii**Registrum Ecclesiae Carthaginiensis**Sacramentarium Gelasianum*

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