2. A Model for Empire: The Councils of 813 and the Institutio Canonicorum

Published by

Kramer, Rutger.
Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire: Ideals and Expectations during the Reign of Louis the Pious (813-828).
Amsterdam University Press, 2019.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/66427.

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2. **A Model for Empire: The Councils of 813 and the Institutio Canonicorum**

As Louis came of age, so did the Frankish empire.¹ As the realms evolved into an *imperium Christianum*, more intellectuals became aware of the wages of rulership and the responsibilities that came with a position close to the top.² Deliberations on the nature of ‘Christian kingship’ and the notion of a ‘Christian empire’ were not exclusive to the Frankish understanding of rulership, and long predate the reign of Louis the Pious, going back to at least the age of Constantine the Great.³ Likewise, attempts at merging political interests and ecclesiastical ideals were nothing new, even by Carolingian standards: the dynasty had consistently sponsored such efforts since at least the 740s.⁴ Nonetheless, the confluence of imperial and ecclesiastical ideologies was arguably never as fortunate as during the final years of the reign of Charlemagne and the first decade of that of his son.⁵ Within that time, the period from 813 and 822, between the coronation of Louis the Pious and his public penance at Attigny nine years later seems especially fruitful. Many issues were addressed in this dynamic decade.⁶ The court was reshuffled in 814-815, Louis’ *imperium* was confirmed by Pope Stephen II in 816, and the *Ordinatio Imperii* was issued in 817 in the hopes of pre-emptively quelling internecine conflicts.⁷ The people at the centre of such debates were confident that their ideas could – and oftentimes did – have an impact on how a kingdom was run.⁸ Thus, when a large number of bishops, abbots and priests were convoked at Aachen in 816 to rethink the nature of religious communities within the empire, they were also forced to reflect on their own role within the Christian empire.⁹ The ecclesiastical councils held in Aachen between 816 and 819 should therefore not be seen as being exclusively concerned

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with the categorization of the constituent parts of the ecclesia. Rather, they were part of a wider movement that aimed to engender correctio in the hearts and minds of all Christians, thus linking up universal ideals with individual concerns.10

The different aspects of ecclesiastical correctio at the start of the reign of Louis the Pious should not be viewed in isolation from one another. Neither should one disconnect between the reforms themselves and the changing views on rulership that accompanied them. What mattered to the court was to order the ecclesia, creating a clear and structured overarching Church organization. The authority behind these reforms was the same for everyone involved: the imperium, as represented by the person of Louis the Pious.11 As such, the sources pertaining to the correctio movement which emanated from Aachen should not be regarded as merely being imperial edicts proposing new consuetudines for the monasteries in the Frankish realms; they attempted to describe a new world, and the new life that came with it, in such a way that everybody would be able to find their own path through it.12 Consequently, the debates from which they sprang were used by the ecclesiastical elite to define their own place within the empire, as well as how they viewed their relation with the emperor, and his responsibilities of rulership. While monastic and canonical communities were the primary focus of the texts issued between 816 and 819, in reality the entire ecclesia was scrutinized and examined.13

This chapter will focus on the texts carrying the decisions made during the councils of 816-819. Instead of explaining the nature of these decisions themselves and their place in the ecclesiastical thought of the Carolingians, however, it will approach them as the end of lengthy deliberations, or even as midway points in a debate that the participants knew had not ended when the council was over.14 Conciliar acts or capitularies should not just be seen

10 Firey, A Contrite Heart, p. 180; Mostert, “…but they pray badly using corrected books”, pp. 112-113; Ullmann, Carolingian Renaissance, pp. 4-8.
11 McKitterick, History and Memory, p. 118; Van Espelo, ‘A testimony of Carolingian rule?’.
12 Smith, “Emending evil ways”, p. 211: ‘Certainly, correctio was at the heart of the Carolingian royal vision of society, but early medieval religious politics did not neatly divide elite from popular, clerical from lay, or court from country. Rather, correctio provided a vocabulary, a repertoire of norms, and an array of procedures from which a wide range of individuals and institutions could appropriate whichever elements each cared to select’.
13 Consuetudines in the more general sense of non-codified ‘legal’ customs also underwent a transformation in the wake of Carolingian imperial aspirations. This should not be taken as an early iteration of a common law system, but as an ongoing attempt to adapt Roman legal traditions to the needs of Carolingian politics: Lupoi, The Origins, pp. 396-413.
14 Kramer, ‘Order in the Church’.
as an impulse to improve the Church (which they certainly were), but, as this chapter will show, they were part of a process in motion. Thus, I will first analyse five councils organized simultaneously under Charlemagne in 813, focusing specifically on the justifications given by the participants for doing what they were doing. These show that they were indeed self-consciously engaging in a dialogue with their peers and their superiors, while improving the Church under their responsibility at the same time. Moving on to Aachen in 816, the second part of this chapter will focus mainly on the *Institutio Canonicorum*, arguably the most important text to emerge from the deliberations held there. Long taken to be a series of measures aimed specifically at the institution of canonical communities, I will show how this text, too, reflects the holistic approach taken to Church reforms by the Carolingian elites.

These texts and councils were not merely part of a concerted effort to remedy persisting problems within the *ecclesia*. Instead, they should also be seen as a reflection on a ‘system’ as it was developed and implemented. This was a discourse community that rested on the precarious balance between the court on the one hand, and the monastic and canonical communities that were being reformed on the other. Additionally, studying this development through the two-way mirror of this particular set of source material has the advantage – or complication – of demonstrating how worldly rulers, bishops and abbots were each marking out their own territory, while simultaneously showing how religious communities found their particular place in the Carolingian *ecclesia*. They had to reconsider their position in the light of the new ecclesiastical landscape, and renegotiate their position vis-à-vis bishops and rulers in the process. Meanwhile, both the abbots and the bishops involved in these debates were once again reflecting upon themselves as much as on the world around them. Recording the interaction between court and clergy thus became a way of ordering society in and of itself.¹⁵

**The Road to 813**

Councils had long been a staple of Frankish ‘political theology’, serving both as a counterweight and to support the idea that ministerial kingship was a divinely ordained regal birthright (or: duty) given to the king,
who channelled the power of God in the world.\textsuperscript{16} The pastoral power of councils derived from the notion that they represented God’s will by presenting the decisions made as the product of the prelates acting in perfect concord.\textsuperscript{17} According to the Carolingians, episcopal councils held the highest position in the ecclesiastical organization.\textsuperscript{18} The judgement reached by assemblies of high-ranking members of the clergy would generally be accepted by other interested parties as well, even though it was determined that these bishops were, in turn, subject to the ‘authority and doctrine’ of the archbishops presiding over them.\textsuperscript{19} Consensus achieved at a council counted as an indication that a decision had been the right one.\textsuperscript{20} Consequently, a lot of effort was put into the establishment of this consensus: it was vital that everybody present felt entitled to make his voice heard without the risk of repercussions, all were clearly aware of the impact of their decisions.\textsuperscript{21}

The question remained to what extent the decisions cast during such councils bound the ruler by virtue of being consensual.\textsuperscript{22} After all, participants were aware that the results were a product of delicate negotiations between various holders of ministerium – the set of pastoral responsibilities with which everyone in a position of authority would have been burdened.\textsuperscript{23} The relation between rulership, council and consensus was itself the subject of debate in the time of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious.\textsuperscript{24} As courtiers tried to figure out the boundaries of acceptable behaviour at the centre of the imperium, the precise roles of councils and councillors still needed to

\textsuperscript{16} Noble, ‘Secular sanctity’; according to Mostert, Political Theology, p. 19, political theology is not always evident, but often consists of an ‘imaginary text’. Cf. Sullivan, ‘Context of cultural activity’, pp. 66-67. Halfond, Archaeology, pp. 1-31, provides a clear overview of the institution of councils before the rise of the Carolingians.

\textsuperscript{17} See, for example, Nelson, ‘Law and its applications’, pp. 308-309 and pp. 315-316; De Jong, ‘Ecclesia and the early medieval polity’, pp. 123-128.

\textsuperscript{18} Morrison, Two Kingdoms, pp. 68-98.

\textsuperscript{19} Chazelle, ‘Archbishops Ebo and Hincmar of Reims’, pp. 1063-1064. Recently, Pangerl, Metropolitanverfassung, has done one of the first in-depth studies of the re-emergence of the metropolitan system in a long time, arguing that this development was due largely to the vision of Charlemagne (and to a lesser extent a consequence of a drive for self-regulation). While the influence of the ruler should not be underestimated, this book will work from the assumption that there was as much cooperation between the ecclesiastical elites as obedience to the king.


\textsuperscript{21} Kramer, ‘Order in the Church’.

\textsuperscript{22} Apsner, Vertrag und Konsens, pp. 90-128.

\textsuperscript{23} Sassier, ‘Représentation, délégation, ministerium’; Stone, Morality and Masculinity, pp. 58-63; Pössel, ‘Authors and recipients’, p. 274.

be defined. The sources studied in this chapter are themselves part of the ongoing development of what has been termed ‘consensual rulership’. In spite of the insistence in many narratives that the outcome had been established ‘with one voice’ (*una voce*), this should not be taken as an end to the debate. Doing something *una voce* carried connotations of liturgical unity and ‘harmonious concordance’: working together towards a common goal. It gave extra liturgical weight to agreements reached by a collective, as during the Council of Frankfurt in 794, or the Council of Coulaines of 843, but could also be used to show how linguistic differences were overcome to create understanding among participants, as happened at the Synod of Whitby of 664. Even the unanimity presented in conciliar acts thus represents the complex interdependence needed to keep the various parts making up the *ecclesia* moving forward. It thus stands to reason that Charlemagne, Louis the Pious and their entourage would regard such meetings as being vital to the credibility of their reign, and indeed saw them as contributing to its resilience.

The Carolingians had learned from the best. They were placed in a long tradition that reached back centuries, at least to the precedent set by Constantine the Great when he presided over the Council of Nicaea in 325. The memory of his involvement of ecclesiastical affairs, carefully cultivated by subsequent observers, set the stage for the development of a ‘western’ Christian ideology that, as far as the Carolingians were concerned, also involved the Merovingians and their Visigoth neighbours in the centuries that followed. What is interesting here is that the Carolingians would often highlight not only imperial power, but also the importance of cooperation between the various moving parts of the realm. For instance, in a Carolingian forgery purporting to go back to the sixth century, the foundation of Saint-Maurice-d'Agaune is staged as a dialogue between Sigismund and a

27 Rankin, ‘Carolingian music’, p. 278; Morrison, ‘Know thyself’.
group of bishops at a council. During the Adoptionist controversy, a late-eighth-century Christological debate between Frankish bishops and their colleagues in Umayyad-occupied Spain, the legacy of Constantine was used by both parties not to argue about obedience to imperial rule, but rather to highlight the dangers of doing so blindly. An agreement existed on both sides of the Pyrenees that Constantine had perhaps been too authoritarian, which had caused as much harm as good for the Church.

The so-called Concilium Germanicum of 742-743, the first major council organized under the authority of the Carolingian family and their ally, the English monk Boniface, shows how this mentality had already taken root before the Carolingians took power. While this council is notable for being the first to explicate that ‘monks and nuns should strive to order their world and to live according to the Rule of Saint Benedict’, it is equally noteworthy for the insistence that secular and ecclesiastical authority join forces. According to the prologue, the goal of the council was to advise Karloman, Pippin’s brother. Karloman, in turn, was presented as having taken the initiative for this gathering. As a first order of business, it was decided that:

A council was to convene each year, so that in our [Karloman’s] presence, the canons and rights of the Church may be restored, and the Christian way of life may be improved.

Keeping in mind that the Concilium Germanicum was as much the brainchild of Boniface as it was of his Carolingian sponsors, the description within the council document of the ‘dux and princeps of the Franks’ working with the ‘best of my bishops, who are under my rule’ already shows that reforms depended on the close and wilful cooperation between all parties.

If council acta convey this image, the same went for the many capitularies that were promulgated from the court during the reigns of Charlemagne

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32 On this controversy, see Cavadini, Last Christology; Close, Uniformiser la Foi, pp. 19-138.
33 Kramer, ‘Adopt, adapt and improve’; Pohl, ‘Creating cultural resources’.
34 Von Padberg, Bonifatius, pp. 53-70, esp. pp. 65-69; Hartmann, Synoden der Karolingerzeit, pp. 50-53.
35 Concilium Germanicum, c. 7, p. 4: ‘Et monachi et ancille Dei monasteriales iuxta regulam sancti Benedicti ordinare et vivere, vitam propriam gubernare studeant’.
36 Concilium Germanicum, c. 1, p. 3: ‘Statuimus per annos singulos synodum congregare, ut nobis presentibus canonum decreta et aecclesiae iura restauretur, et relegio Christiana emendetur’.
37 Concilium Germanicum, Prologue, p. 2: ‘Ego Karlmannus, dux et princeps Francorum [...] cum consilio servorum Dei et optimatum meorum episcopos qui in regno meo sunt’.
and Louis the Pious. In addition to their supposedly legislative functions, these widely disseminated lists of capitula served to show how the court had to come to terms, time and again, with its position in the eye of the proverbial storm. Although their role in the transmission of royal or imperial legislation cannot be underestimated, they provided an equally visible reflection of consensus and cooperation among the elite. This in turn made them powerful tools for extending and strengthening the social identity of their recipients, and, by implication, the social power of the ruler who was ultimately responsible for their contents. Regardless of how far away the court might be, these documents served as a ‘reflection of the realities of power’ to their recipients. These realities were either welcomed or resented, but always acknowledged.

Thus, even famously programmatic texts like the Admonitio Generalis of 789 or the Epistola de Litteris Colendis, composed in the 790s, emphasize the reciprocal responsibility between bearers of authority and their subordinates in terms echoing the relation between teacher and student. With its focus on a correct use of language, the Épistola de Litteris Colendis, the only extant copy of which was written to Abbot Baugulf of Fulda, started by positing that ‘it is better to do what is good than to know it, yet knowing comes before doing’, and finished by stating how the advantage of such exemplary knowledge is that others dwelling in the presence of learned men may be ‘edified […] by [their] appearance’. In the Admonitio Generalis, much more overtly concerned with

38 On the difficulties connected with the conceptualization of ‘capitularies’, see Patzold, ‘Normen im Buch’.
39 McKitterick, Carolingians and the Written Word, pp. 27-37.
40 Pössel, ‘Authors and recipients’, pp. 270-274, introduces the concept of ‘social identity’. Cf. Gravel, Distances, Recontres, pp. 108-110. A contrary opinion, mentioned by Pössel, is voiced by Hannig, who – based, according to Pössel, on an ‘older conceptualization of ruler and aristocracy as necessarily opposed’ – argues that the capitularies actually show the existence of an ‘ideological warfare’ between the emperor and his nobility instead of seeing them as building an identity; Hannig, Consensus fidelium.
41 Pössel, ‘Authors and recipients’, p. 270.
43 Martin, ‘Remarks on the Epistola de litteris colendis’; Mordek et al., Die Admonitio Generalis, pp. 1-63; generally, see Contreni, ‘Pursuit of knowledge’.
44 Epistola de Litteris Colendis, p. 251: ‘Quamvis enim melius sit bene facere quam nosse, prius tamen est nosse quam facere. […] Optamus enim vos, sicut decet ecclesiae milites, et interius devotos et exterius doctos castosque bene vivendo et scholasticos bene loquendo, ut, quicunque vos propter nomen Domini et sanctae conversationis nobilitatem ad vivendum expetierit, sicut de aspectu vestro aedificatur visus, ita quoque de spainitia vestra, quam in legendo seu cantando perceperit, instructus omnipotenti Domino gratias agendo gaudens valeat’; trans. King, Translated Sources, pp. 232-233.
reforms, this point was made explicitly, not only through the comparisons drawn between Charlemagne and his Old Testament predecessors, but also when its audience is told, in the closing statement of the prologue:

Do not omit, and thereby fail to preach with pious zeal, anything which seems to your holiness advantageous to the people of God, that almighty God may reward both your sagacity and the obedience of your subjects with eternal felicity.\textsuperscript{45}

The Admonitio Generalis moreover exemplifies the difficult relation between self-conscious idealization and subsequent interpretation. Written in the name of Charlemagne, the text itself was co-authored by, among others, Alcuin and Theodulf. Indeed, it may have been due to their influence that the text was intended as constructive criticism, not as law per se.\textsuperscript{46} It had to, in order to deal with the discrepancy between ideals of a Christian, Frankish identity as they existed among the Carolingian intellectual elites on the one hand, and the reality of small worlds and permeable local identities on the other.\textsuperscript{47} The court seemed to have been aware that the impetus provided by the Admonitio Generalis might lead to wildly different reactions across the realm.\textsuperscript{48} As such, it is a cautious document, in which Charlemagne spent quite some time justifying his request that:

The pastors of Christ’s churches and leaders of His flock and brightest luminaries of the world, strive with vigilant care and sedulous admonition to lead the people of God to the pastures of eternal life.\textsuperscript{49}


\textsuperscript{46} Scheibe, ‘Alcuin’, and most recently Mordek et al., Die Admonitio Generalis, pp. 47-63. Ling, Cloister and Beyond, pp. 113-120, also posits that Angilramn of Metz (d. 791) may have been involved in the composition of this text.

\textsuperscript{47} On the one hand, see Reimitz, ‘Omnes Franci’; on the other, see, for example, Davies, Small Worlds or the contributions to Patzold and Van Rhijn, Men in the Middle. Generally, see also, for example, Prinz, ‘Kirchen und Klöster’, who on p. 788 ends his analysis of the interaction between courtly and intellectual activities with the ‘bange und bis heute aktuelle Frage, ob und wieweit sich der geistige Mensch, der Intellektuelle, für handfeste Zwecke der Politik – hier der Kirchenpolitik – einspannen lassen darf’ (‘the anxious and still-current question, to which extent spiritual people, intellectuals, should even be roped into pursuing concrete political goals – in this case ecclesiastical politics’).

\textsuperscript{48} This it did: Van Rhijn, ‘Manuscripts for local priests’; Patzold, ‘Pater noster’.

\textsuperscript{49} Admonitio Generalis, Praefatio, p. 180: ‘quapropter placiit nobis vestram rogare solertiam, o pastores ecclesiarum Christi et ductores gregis eius et clarissima mundi luminaria, ut vigili
The king’s struggles were even compared with those of his Old Testament forebear Josiah in the process – an addition probably made at the instigation of Theodulf. It was a bold yet careful statement, which in itself indicated that Charlemagne wanted to present his efforts as being about more than tearing down old structures to build them up again.

Often considered a starting point of the Carolingian reforms, the *Admonitio Generalis* actually ‘needs to be seen in the context of the succession of increasingly elaborate statements about the integration of the Christian faith within the institutional and political framework of the Frankish realm’. It was part of the efforts by the court to bind its subjects with ideals of loyalty and a shared responsibility for the fate of the *ecclesia*, which had become increasingly convincing at the same time. Conversely, admonitions by the king should be taken very seriously, but not because they were ordered: they should be heeded because it was the right thing to do, and the state of the Church required it. A similar sentiment underlies many other texts connected with Carolingian *correctio*. Theodulf of Orléans, for example, in his *De Ordine Baptismi*, composed in response to a questionnaire on baptismal practices sent around from the court in 812, applauded that particular imperial initiative. He assumed that:

> These questions, meanwhile, [...] have not only been learned by the royal highness because of the need to learn, but also because they endeavour to teach.

His colleague Leidrad of Lyon echoed this praise in the closing sentence of his response to the same questions about baptism, thanking the emperor for inciting the bishops to think about what they teach their flocks, ‘to get rid of our mental turpitude and inciting us to do holy works’. Both accepted
the role of the ruler in such educational endeavours. As Theodulf explained in his response, this was the right order of things. He acknowledged that the point of this inquiry was neither to teach the emperor about proper baptismal rites, nor to uniformize them afterwards, but to force bishops to think about this issue – just like the emperor should encourage all his subjects to do their proper work. In return, the bishops were made aware of their responsibility to teach their subordinates, further strengthening the structure of Carolingian governance by ensuring the ‘bottlenecks of local correctio’ would never get clogged. From an episcopal point of view, responsibility for the flock should idealistically entail responsibility for everybody within the ecclesia, but these aspirations were tempered by a pragmatic realism that allowed people to perform their duties.

No matter how succinctly formulated, behind every set of capitularies or conciliar acts lurked lengthy deliberations, which more often than not incorporated input from all parts of the empire. It was acknowledged in the time of Charlemagne that these deliberations were as important as the legislation that emerged as a result, if not more so – and that any initiative taken by the court was bound to set new developments in motion. Intellectual elites thrived on discussions and debates as long as these were arbitrated by a well-informed court, and the court, in turn, welcomed well-intentioned counter-initiatives as long as they stayed within the bounds of orthodoxy. The insistence on unanimity notwithstanding, cooperation between court and clergy needed constant reinforcement, and in spite of an increased reliance on the written word as a permanent record of things to come, a degree of flexibility and openness would be expected on all sides.

The Carolingian model of rulership as it shines through in such texts was one in which cooperation and ideological unity were of the utmost importance. As the scale at which the Carolingian court operated grew ever since their first attempts at regulating the Church with the help of Boniface, their self-confidence had grown to the extent that the discourse community now worked to improve the ecclesia by addressing issues in a highly self-reflective manner. With this, the stakes increased accordingly.

gloriosissime imperator, semper felix, optime, auguste, qui nos pia vestra sollicitudine tanquam dormientes excitatis, et torporem mentis nostrae excutitis, et ad sanctum exercitum provocatis’.
56 Van Rhijn, ‘Priests and the Carolingian reforms’.
58 Nelson, Opposition, p. 25; Van Renswoude and Kramer, ‘Dissens, Debatte und Diskurs’.
While this might be construed as reflecting an increased centralization of the *ecclesia*, it may not have felt as such to contemporary observers. The baptismal inquiry did not result in new ‘rules’ that were propagated from the court, for instance. Rather, it shows willingness on the part of both the court and the high clergy to rethink a fundamental aspect of their religion, and in the process self-reflexively renegotiate their position in the world, the empire, and the *ecclesia*.

One of the most visible instances of this dynamic process occurred in the year 813. It was last year of Charlemagne’s reign, as well as the year Louis was crowned co-emperor, and acclaimed as the officially recognized heir by the elites witnessing the event.\(^6^0\) Additionally, 813 saw the organization of no less than five synods held simultaneously throughout the realm, called together by the emperor with the purpose of identifying points for the improvement of the *ecclesia*.\(^6^1\) Charlemagne may even have seized this project to pass the torch to his son, and to present him with a clear jumping-off point for his own reign. Shortly after Louis’ arrival in Aachen, he rekindled the negotiations that had started in the wake of his coronation.

More councils were organized almost immediately, although this time around they were held at the palace itself, under the auspicious eye of the ruler, and they resulted most visibly in a massive canonical compilation known as the *Institutio Canonicorum*.

The next section will take a closer look at these five councils and the representations of rulership and authority contained in their prologues. Having done that, these findings will be put next to the self-perception contained in the *Institutio Canonicorum*, which will allow us to see how ideas about bishops and abbots differed between the more localized councils of 813 and the all-encompassing text that was produced over the five years that followed. The sources pertaining to this process provide a snapshot of the ecclesiastical elites in the middle of a debate. Their goal was not only to come up with new regulations, but also to redefine their role within society. This involved justifying both their episcopal authority and their clerical obedience to the leaders of the *ecclesia*: the framing of the councils of 813 forced emperor and episcopate alike to rethink their world, their history, and their expectations.\(^6^2\)

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\(^6^0\) In addition to the sources discussed below, see Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, c. 30, pp. 34-35.
\(^6^1\) Generally, see Hartmann, *Synoden der Karolingerzeit*, pp. 129-140.
Teaching the Empire

Judging by the report in the Annales Regni Francorum (ARF), the year 813 was all about stability for the Carolingians. While wars and unrest plagued neighbouring kingdoms, Charlemagne consolidated the peace with his East Roman counterpart Michael, and also with the kings of the Danes to the north. Additionally, he held an assembly in Aachen where he elevated his surviving son Louis to the position of co-emperor, and had a collection made of the canons gathered in five regional councils organized earlier that year, in Reims, Tours, Mainz, Chalon-sur-Saône, and Arles.

The order in which these events have been presented in the ARF is noteworthy. Firstly, the report is bookended with affairs in Byzantium. In the ‘mild spring’, peace with the Byzantine empire was ratified, ending the long process of recognition by the East Romans. Then, Louis is called to the palace, and Charlemagne ‘shared the title of emperor with him’, while simultaneously making Louis’ nephew Bernard, king of Italy. Only then the ARF mention the five councils ‘held on his order […] to improve the condition of the churches [statu ecclesiarum corrigendo]’. They are only mentioned in the context of their collected conclusions, which were presented to Charlemagne, in autumn. The ARF notes that a copy was kept in the archives of the palace, and ends with the statement that the canons themselves may be found in the cities where the councils had been held. It is clear that the general assembly and Louis’ coronation were the focal point of this episode, and the five councils were only mentioned as part of the preparations for the assembly in September.

This presentation differs from another near-contemporary source, the so-called Chronicon Moissiacense (CM), an enigmatic universal chronicle that was most probably composed in the south of Francia in the course of the 820s. For the events of 813, this composition maintains a different order from the one presented in the ARF. First, the text tells of a concilium magnum...
held in Aachen ‘with the Franks’, during which the decision was made to organize four councils (this version omits the council of Chalon-sur-Saône for reasons unclear) and he ordered that whatever they determined at these synods, they would report at a *placitum* organized by the emperor. The text then relates how in September, a great assembly of the *populus* was held at the palace, during which a group of prelates presented Charlemagne with ‘46 articles concerning matters of necessity to God’s church and the Christian people’. Only after this has happened is Louis’ succession decided, and acclaimed immediately afterwards.

The context of Louis’ coronation in 813 has been explained elsewhere in greater detail, achieved by combining and distilling the extant source material into one coherent narrative. It is equally interesting to note, however, that the placement of these councils in the respective chronicles reflects the overarching writing goals of both texts, and shows different ways to interpret this series of fortunate events. For the composers of the *ARF*, it was important to show to the audience how the Carolingian dynasty would continue without a hitch, and how the appointment of a successor happened around the same time the ecclesiastical reforms were given new impetus. As this passage was probably composed after Charlemagne’s death, shortly afterwards, the author(s) of the *ARF* could have chosen this framing device to show how the new emperor not only had the support of his subjects, but was also given the tools – and the advisers – to continue the works started by his father. The composer of the *CM*, on the other hand, separated the councils from the coronation and thereby made a distinction between the dynastic affairs of the Carolingians and the greater concerns of the *ecclesia* for which they were responsible. For that reason, the *CM* first wraps up the councils and the articles of improvement produced there before telling of Louis’ coronation, whereas the *ARF* shows the entanglement between these two developments.


67 *CM*, a. 813, p. 146.


69 See, generally, McKitterick, ‘Constructing the past’.

70 On the composition of the *ARF*, see among others McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 27-49.

71 Kats and Claszen, *Chronicon Moissiacense Maius*, vol. 1, p. 86.
Both of these versions highlight the important point that, although the
councils were presented as a major overhaul of the Carolingian ecclesia,
their conclusions were presented as advice to the court; the result of local
deliberations framed as proposals for the court to take into account. At each
meeting, local power brokers had set out to respond to the emperor’s call from
their own perspective, expressing their local concerns in such a way that they
would resonate at the highest level. It is assumed that they were implemented
as part of an empire-wide programme of reform, but interestingly, this is never
explicitly stated, as if the chroniclers thought it more important to show how
the empire was involved in the education of the new emperor than to dwell
on the importance of these councils for the ‘reforms’ they represent. This
affects our reading of the written records of these five councils. The overlaps
and differences between them are not merely reflective of programmatic
imperial concerns, but local interpretations of a common set of questions,
which moreover served to rally local elites to a Carolingian cause. By actively
engaging them in the debate on the future of the empire, the court required
the councils to speak the same language: the language of correctio.

Two capitularies from 811 indicate that this was a project long in the
making. As ‘briefing papers for participants in an upcoming assembly’,
these two texts may give an indication of what Charlemagne wanted to
achieve, which would in turn give a sense of purpose and direction to the
participants in these five councils. It is as yet unclear whether these
capitularies indeed set the agenda for the councils of 813, or if they should
be understood as a courtly expression of interest in separating the secular
and ecclesiastical spheres of interest. Many of the points raised in these
two documents had not yet been made as explicitly as they were here, and
many of these points recur in the conciliar acta of 813. Regardless of their
connection to any identifiable council, however, these capitularies show a
court intent on formulating questions as well as obtaining answers. These
were documents meant to engender debate, which in turn were hoped to

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72 Schmitz, ‘Reformkonzilien’, p. 3.
73 It nevertheless was assumed by Ganshof, ‘Note’, that Charlemagne sent out an agenda
in preparation for these councils (an idea that should not wholly be discounted). Cf. Patzold,
Episcopus, pp. 74-80, who argues against the ‘decomposition’ postulated earlier by Ganshof, ‘La
fin du règne’, but sees in these councils a sign of continuing vitality.
74 Schmitz, ‘Reformkonzilien’, p. 2.
75 Capitula Tractanda cum Comitibus Episcopis et Abbatibus and Capitula de Causis cum
Episcopis et Abbatibus Tractandis.
77 Patzold, Episcopus, pp. 75-77.
yield useful advice. The participants lived up to the expectations. Looking at the prologues of the acta from Arles, Reims, Mainz, Chalon-sur-Saône, and Tours, it becomes clear that they have all been framed as reactions to a laudable initiative, similar to the responses to Charlemagne’s baptismal inquiry rites the year before.79

The acta of the Council of Arles open with a short sermon-like text in which those present implore God to grant Charlemagne, ‘at whose command our brotherhood has assented to this meeting’, stability, justice, and the ability to benignly rule the populus.80 This introduction is followed by a speech by the archbishops Nibridius of Narbonne and John of Arles, in which they explain that the emperor, a ‘disciple and supporter of Christ [...] observing that evil is acting against him’, wished for the ‘churches who support his reign’ to ‘instruct the pious through preaching, furnish [them] with saintly morals, and build [them] with the example of blessed lives’.81 Thus, they continue, he has asked all episcopal centres to pray for him, and to help the ‘multiplicity of the Church of God’ to unanimously help ‘protect against the ancient enemy’.82 The gathered clergy were happy to oblige and provided him with a number of capitula to assist everybody in the world in walking the ‘road to salvation’.83 If it was not enough, they add in closing, he could freely add more to it, and whatever was deemed reasonable he could use to ‘bring about divine clemency’.84

79 See Guyotjeannin, “Antiqua et authentica”, pp. 11-14, on the usefulness of topos in prologues as historical sources.
80 Concilium Arelatense, Prologus, p. 248: ‘serenissimum ac religiosissimum praedictum dominum nostrum Karolum imperatorem, cuius iussu fraternitatis nostrae coctus est adunatus’.
81 Concilium Arelatense, Prologus, p. 249: ‘gloriosissimum etenim ac serenissimus dominus noster [...] verus Christi discipulus et imitator, ecclesiae Dei statum vigili instantia roborare disponit [...] maligna contra se observatione agentibus animi libertate gratissima ac pie miserationis instantia ignoscere consuevit, ut qui in diversis sanctae vitae studiis sese exercendo praepollet atque omnibus Dei sacerdotibus obsecrans et obtestans, ut ecclesias, quas regendas susceperunt, pia praedicatione instruante, moribus sanctis exornent ac beatae vitae exemplis adidicent’. On John of Arles and Nibridius of Narbonne, see Depreux, Prosopographie, pp. 274-275 and pp. 123-125.
82 Concilium Arelatense, Prologus, p. 249: ‘Quocirca quoniam pro tot tantisque beneficiis, quae multimoda devotione ecclesiae Dei vel gentibus praerogare studet, quid illi unanimitas nostra condigne respondeat [...] ut suae potentiae defensione protecti antiqui histis decipulum evadant’.
83 Concilium Arelatense, Prologus, p. 249: ‘Et quia initiandis ab beatam vitam hominis haec prima semper est via salutis praevia quoque nostris et institutis pariter et praeceptis, quae per veram credulitatem in omni terrarum orbe diffusa expanditur, nostrae collationis eloquis praedictur’.
84 Concilium Arelatense, Explicit, p. 253: ‘Haec igitur sub brevitate, quae emendatione digna perspeximus, quam brevissime adnotavimus et domno imperatori praesentanda decrevimus, poscentes eius clementiam, ut, si quid hic minus est, eius prudentia suppleatur, si quid secus
Incorporating this speech into the *acta* was deliberate. Its opening has been lifted from chapter 8 of the Sixteenth Council of Toledo (693), which dealt with the responsibility borne by the people in the realms to protect the offspring of the king. In the Council of Arles, the parts relating to these children have been taken out, so that it is now about the protection of the *ecclesia* as a whole.\(^85\) Even though that particular intertextual reference may have been lost on their audience in Aachen, the southern bishops may have seen the subjects of the ruler as his ‘children’, or they may have had Louis in mind, who was still their king in 813, even though he was in Aachen being prepared for the empire when they composed their text.\(^86\) As Louis was getting ready for his coronation, he probably received a crash course on how to run an empire.\(^87\) Could the bishops gathered in Arles be showing their approval of the new emperor, and help him along the way? It is tempting to think that they, the ones who had seen Louis grow into his role as king of Aquitaine, felt responsible for his well-being and that of the realms in general.

The remaining conciliar *acta* also signalled that they were friendly to Charlemagne’s initiative and intend to give advice, not prescriptions. The bishops in Reims were ‘gathered by Lord Charles the pious *Caesar* after the custom of the emperors of old’, and presented the result of their deliberations for his consideration, ‘for the *correctio* of all the Christians in the empire’.\(^88\) That this was done, they add, ‘according to the *consuetudines* established by the venerable fathers’, served first and foremost to assure the emperor that they were doing everything according to plan.\(^89\) It also showed that they tapped into a further key aspect of Carolingian cultural efforts: the insistence that these activities stood in a venerable tradition.\(^90\) The *acta* of

\(^{85}\) *Concilium Toletanum Decimum Sextum*, cap. 8 (De munimine prolis regiae), pp. 574-575.


\(^{88}\) *Concilium Remense*, Prologus, p. 254: ‘Hic est ordo capitulorum breviter adnotatus, quae [...] notata sunt in conventu metropolitanae sedis Remensis ecclesiae a domno Karolo piiissimo Caesare more priscorum imperatorum congregato [...] ad laudem et gloriam sui sancti nominis et ad mercedem praefati gloriosissimi principis nostri seu correctionem totius Christiani imperii in co consideranda vel statuencia erant, eo cooperante secundum suam magnam misericordiam et piiissimam voluntatem ordinari mererentur’.

\(^{89}\) Halfond, *Archaeology*, pp. 87-89.

\(^{90}\) *Concilium Remense*, Prologus, p. 254: ‘Primo omnium [...] statutum est secundum consuetudinem ieiuminium triduanum’.
Mainz take the form of a letter to the court, and detail how those present, after a three-day fast, got together in the *claustrum* of the community of Saint Alban’s to thank God that He had provided his Church with such a capable *rector*. This time, we learn that the participants were divided into three groups: the bishops would study the Acts of the Apostles, the canons, and the works of Gregory the Great; the abbots and monks would read the *RB*, ‘discussing [...] how the life of monks could be augmented’; and the ‘counts and judges’ would decide how to improve the *vulgi iusticia*. Their conclusions were sent to Charlemagne to aid and educate him how to improve his ‘imperial dignity, so that we all and all the Christian *plebes* would be bettered’. The bishops in Chalon-sur-Saône simply started by saying that they convened the bishops and abbots of *Gallia Lugdunensis* ‘in order to aid our Lord Jesus Christ and at the command of our most serene and glorious august Charles’. The archaic geographical designation for the province possibly served to emphasize the point that, although they boasted a Roman past, they were nonetheless also part of the new empire. Accepting Charlemagne’s intermediary role, they gathered everything that might be improved, and ‘presented them to the lord emperor for his most sacred judgement’. These *acta* were unabashedly framed as recommendations based on hearsay (*Dictum nobis est...*), and are perhaps the most overt in presenting their ideas as recommendations: even the institution of the Sunday as a day of rest was left to the ‘command [*imperium*] of the lord emperor’.

91 *Concilium Moguntinense*, Prologus, p. 259: ‘Christi consona voce gratias egimus Deo patri omnipotenti, quia sanctae ecclesiae suae tam pium ac devotum in servitio Dei concessit habere rectorem’. See also Hartmann, *Synoden der Karolingerzeit*, p. 130.


93 *Concilium Moguntinense*, Prologus, p. 260: ‘tamen vestra pietas ita dignum esse iudicaverit, et quicquid in eis emendatione dignum repperitur vestra magnifica imperialis dignitas iubeat emendare, ut ita emendata nobis omnibus et cunctae Christianae plebi ac posteris nostris proficiant ad vitam et salutem’.


95 The designation *Gallia Lugdunensis* for the region was rare in Carolingian sources. It occurs in Orosius, *Historiarum Libri VII*, lib. 1, cap. 2.64, and the so-called *Notitia Galliarum*, a popular text in early medieval episcopal circles: Harries, ‘Church and state’. For the situation in Antiquity, see Goudineau, ‘Les provinces de Gaule’, pp. 161-170; on the endurance of the tradition, see Cowdrey, ‘Structure of the Church’, p. 240.

96 *Concilium Cabillonense*, Prologus, p. 274.

97 *Concilium Cabillonense*, c. 50, p. 283: ‘ut authentica constitutione illius venerandi diei observatio iuxta imperium domni imperatoris statuatur’.
and foremost, relating how the emperor was inspired to spur his ‘bishops, abbots and venerable clergy’ into action; they congregated in Tours, and wrote several capitula on those things they thought could be emended ‘according to the rules of the canons’. 98

Far from being mere humilitas topoi, these prologues all accepted a certain model for empire: the emperor was inspired by God to improve the state of the ecclesia, and he in turn depended on his court to execute this office. 99

The prelates involved accepted their responsibility. Given that they were treating questions about the entire ecclesia, and that this was a work in progress, they deferred their conclusions back to a higher authority. That was the main goal. In addition to demonstrating different local concerns and conceptualizations of Church reform, they all show a centralized negotiation in action: the emperor called, and the clergy answered.

Of the prologues, only the council of Mainz mentioned the laity, and explains that the monastic communities held their discussions in a separate forum. In Arles and Reims, on the other hand, no one category has been highlighted. The former talked of fraternitas in very general terms, whereas the latter mentioned the metropolitans supervising the synod. Only the texts from Chalon-sur-Saône and Tours mention that both episcopi and abbates were present. All texts nonetheless provide recommendations concerning the lives of monks and nuns, canons and priests alike, as well as the lives of their superiors, the bishops and abbots actually holding these deliberations. This introspection adds another dimension to the acta. These were bishops and abbots deciding on the lives of abbots and bishops, making recommendations to the imperial court about things they felt could be improved about their own behaviour. Although it was not clear to what extent their decisions would receive an empire-wide response, these councils represent the essence of Carolingian Church, namely correctio and emendatio: the clergy were in many ways correcting themselves – just the way the emperor expected it. 100

98 Concilium Turonense, Prologus, p. 286: ‘Quantum piissimi imperatoris nostri excellens animus divinae saptentiae fulgere sit irradiatus ad gubernandum praesentium rerum statum, ipsius imperii sibi a Deo dati liquido testantur negotia […] His igitur intentus pios aut religiosos Dei sacerdotes eclesiae gubernacula in regno sibi divina largitate collatio tenentes saluberrimis exhortationibus admonuit, ut operam darent et actibus eminerent, quibus et se bene opprando et sibi commissos verbis et exemplis instruendo regerent. […] Sitquidem urbe Turonis congregati episcopi, abbates et venerabilis clerus pro parvitate nostra paúca, quae ad tantum opus pertinent animadvertismus et quae secundum canonica regulam emendatione indigent, distincte per capitula adnotavimus, serenissimo imperatori nostro ostendenda’.

99 On humilitas, see, for example, Poulin, L’Idéal de Sainteté, pp. 81-98.

Although the self-reflective nature of these five councils was not unique, the combination with a pro-active stance with regards to Church reforms as a means of self-improvement is an interesting feature. Before 813, council acta usually presented themselves as collective reactions against immediate problems, such as the heterodox movements addressed at Frankfurt in 794 or at Aachen in 809.\(^{101}\) Statements associated with individual *correctio*, on the other hand, are mostly found in capitularies issued in the name of the emperor.\(^{102}\) In that way, the synods of 813 continue in the tradition of the councils from the time of Boniface, as these were also called together so as to simply ‘give counsel to [the *princeps*] how the law of God and the ecclesiastical *religio* could be recuperated’.\(^{103}\) In short, these *acta* combined the idealism of such capitularies as the *Admonitio Generalis* of 789 or the *Capitulare Missorum Generale* of 802 with the consensus inherent in the texts emanating from the earliest ‘Carolingian’ synods.\(^{104}\) They were framed as pieces of advisory literature, the result of consensual decision-making, with a subtext of being royal or imperial orders.\(^{105}\)

Apart from these ideological similarities contained in the prologues, each of the councils also retained its own character. Between the many recommendations about a potential centralized reform effort, they show the diversity still marking the Carolingian *ecclesia*.\(^{106}\) The councils of 813 not only treated the question who ought to take the lead in these reforms, but also what was to be emended in the first place. Each prologue represents both an internal dialogue on local affairs and a dialogue with the *ecclesia* as a whole. Thus, each of the individual councils reflects on the relation between monasteries, episcopal courts and imperial ideals as well.

The congregation in Arles, in the south-east of the kingdom of Aquitaine, emphasized their Visigothic connections. The tone had been set by the use of the Sixteenth Council of Toledo, and it was continued when they cited the Fourth Council of Toledo in their advice on baptismal education

\(^{101}\) See also Davis, *Charlemagne’s Practice of Empire*, pp. 252-253, on the possible Bavarian roots of this shift.

\(^{102}\) McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, pp. 30-35.


\(^{104}\) Innes, ‘Charlemagne’s government’, esp. pp. 85-86.


\(^{106}\) Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 76-77.
and comital support to uphold priestly authority. 107 The bishops decided to further emphasize this heritage by employing a curious Iberian dating system of the era, which according to Isidore, was linked with the Roman conquest of the peninsula in 38 BC. 108 In the redrafted prologue of the Sixteenth Council of Toledo, the Council of Arles also recalculated the date without converting it to, for example, the better-known annus Domini system. Given as 730 in the Visigothic acta, this council was set in ‘the forty-sixth year of our glorious and orthodox lord and prince, Emperor Charles, on the sixth day of the Ides of May, in the era 851’. 109 This attachment to Roman or even ‘Visigothic’ time may have reinforced the idea that these bishops, in spite of their heritage, were part of an empire that had already been unified under the first Roman emperor who had appropriated the title of Augustus. 110 Like the bishops in Chalon-sur-Saône, they wanted to convey that their imperial roots went deep, and there was room for several identities moving at several different paces, as long as they were moving towards the same goal and under the supervision of an ‘orthodox’ ruler.

The clergy gathered in Arles stressed ecclesiastical unity and cooperation above all else. After a reconfirmation of their faith, the participants first decreed that ‘all bishops, priests, as well as the abbots and monks collected as one’ should pray for the emperor and his sons. 111 In the next caput, the responsibility of the archbishops to teach their bishops about baptism and the mysteries of the church is reaffirmed, so that these bishops may pass on the knowledge to their priests and clerics, ‘for ignorance is the mother of errors’, they state, quoting the Fourth Council of Toledo. This same source is then used to explain why laymen should not evict priests from their parishes. These enclaves were necessary for the priests, ‘who have been taught by their bishops’, to do God's work, meaning that local rulers were also banned

107 Concilium Arelatense, cc. 3–4, pp. 250–251; Ullmann, ‘Public welfare’, pp. 17–19; Moore, Sacred Kingdom, p. 280, erroneously writes that the council references the Fourteenth Council of Toledo instead.
108 Cf. Isidore of Seville, Etymologies, 5.36.4; Roth, ‘Calendar’, p. 190.
111 Concilium Arelatense, c. 2, p. 250: ‘Ut pro excellentissimo atque gloriosissimo domno nostro Karolo rege seu liberis eius omnes episcopi, presbyteri seu abbates et monachi in unum collecti, in quantum extremitas nostra praevalet, psalmodia, missarum sollemnia atque laetaniarum officia omnipotenti Deo devotissime exsolverent, decrevimus’. 
from using churches as courts or for *placita*.

If the priests were allowed to do their job, the text continues, they preach ‘for the benefit of the entire Church’, something they should not only do inside their comfort zone in the *civitas*, but also outside, in accordance with their pastoral duty. If everyone functioned according to their status in life, then *pax et concordia* would reign ‘between bishops and counts, between clerics and monks, and within the entire *populus Christianum*, provided that these judges and counts would accept the supremacy of the episcopacy.

The aim of the council of Arles would have been to confirm the bishop's responsibility for all that transpired in his diocese. To the authors of the *acta*, this included everything except what transpired inside monastery walls. A bishop's only duty in that respect was to safeguard the isolation of female communities, and to establish whether ‘monks endeavoured to live according to a rule’ and canons according to the *ordo canonicum*. The assumption was that the *regula* in itself would be enough to ensure a proper way of living within the confines of the cloister.

Similar concerns are visible in the text from Reims. Consisting of a large number of terse chapters, these *acta* were more concerned with educating and properly ordering the clergy. This becomes evident when looking at the opening chapters, which state that everybody should know the Creed and the Lord's Prayer ‘to the best of their intellect’, before going into the requirements for ‘those who would ascend the Church hierarchy [*gradus ecclesiasticus*]’.

Aspiring clergymen should start by reading the Letters of Saint Paul and then upgrading to the Gospel. As they climbed the ladder, their responsibility increased along with their knowledge. Learning how to say Mass made the difference between a deacon and a *presbyter*, while a proper understanding of baptismal rites would turn a *presbyter* into a

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113 *Concilium Arelatense*, c. 10, at 251: ‘Providimus enim pro aedificatione omnium ecclesiarum et pro utilitate totius populi, ut non solum in civitatibus, sed etiam in omnibus parrocchii presbyteri ad populum verbum faciant, ut et bene vivere studeant et populo siih commisse praedicare non negligent’. Ling, *Cloister and Beyond*, pp. 143-150.

114 *Concilium Arelatense*, c. 12-13, pp. 251-252.

115 *Concilium Arelatense*, cc. 6-7, p. 251; c. 7 quotes the Council of Epaon of 517, c. 38, p. 28. On this Merovingian council, see Helvétius, ‘L’organisation des monastères féminins’, pp. 156-157.

116 *Concilium Remense*, cc. 1-3, p. 254: ‘Ut quicumque ad gradus ecclesiasticos condigne ascendere voluerit, unusquisque intellegere, qualiter secundum possibilitatem intellectus sui in eo gradu, ubi constitutus est, Deo militare et se ipsum valeret custodire’.

117 *Concilium Remense*, cc. 4-5, p. 254.
sacerdos. Then, another distinction was made between the canonicus who had to peruse the sancti canones, and the abbot, who was expected to memorize the RB, ‘so that he could guard and also govern himself and his [monks]’. Further ascending the hierarchy, the pastores ecclesiae of the Church were told to take Gregory the Great’s Regula Pastoralis to heart, in order to ‘understand how to live themselves and how they should admonish their subjects’. Interestingly, the text here distinguishes between sacerdos and episcopus, using the former to denote the sacral aspects of the priestly office, and the latter when talking about specifically episcopal duties. The vocabulary thus reflects an awareness of the multifaceted nature of the responsibilities held by these officials. Finally, every cleric should read the sententiae patrum, which could refer to the Sayings of the Desert Fathers, specifically, but might also more generally mean the corpus of patristic literature the Carolingians had at their disposal. To complete the circle, priests were to use the knowledge thus gathered in their sermons to the people, and make them intelligible to everyone in their own language. This precept, which also occurs in the Council of Tours, has a distinctly Alcuinian flavour, and may point to Anglo-Saxon influences on the proceedings, either directly or through the agency of Alcuin’s pupils.

Unlike the Council of Arles, Reims singled out the abbot as the teacher of a monastic community, the one who had to explain the RB in a way similar to the pastoral duties of a bishop. Still, they were never treated as equals, with the exception of the common admonition that neither bishop nor abbot should allow jokes during mealtimes. The rules regarding the interaction between judges and bishops further emphasized the point that bishops had a pastoral duty beyond their own community. Monasteries were

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118 Concilium Remense, c. 6, p. 254.
119 Concilium Remense, c. 8, p. 254: ‘Lecti sunt sancti canones’; c. 9, p. 253: ‘Lecta est regula sancti Benedicti, ut ad memoriam reduceret abbatibus minus scientibus’.
120 Concilium Remense, c. 10, p. 254: ‘Lectae sunt sententiae libri pastoralis beati Gregorii, ut pastores ecclesiae intellegenter, quomodo ipsi vivere et qualiter sibi subjectos deberent ammonere’.
122 Concilium Remense, c. 15, p. 255: ‘Ut episcopi sermones et omelias sanctorum patrum, prout omnes intellegere possent, secundum proprietatem linguæ praedicare studeant’. On this precept, see Ullmann, Carolingian Renaissance, pp. 28-29 and n. 3.
123 Concilium Turonense, c. 17, p. 289; Ling, Cloister and Beyond, pp. 151-152. On the ‘Alcuinian’ rhetoric of (self-)improvement, see Garrison, ‘An Aspect of Alcuin’.
125 Concilium Remense, c. 17, at 255: ‘Ut episcopi et abbates ante se ioca turpia facere non permittant’. Innes, “He never even allowed”.
directly dependent on the emperor in this model, up to and including the contentious issue of abbatial elections.\textsuperscript{126} This was the defining difference between monastic and canonical clergy at the Council of Reims. Both monks and canons lived in monasteria, and both required ‘plenty of consilium how to fight for God, and to better guard their own souls’. However, monks were to stay out of secular affairs altogether, whereas canons were allowed to venture out.\textsuperscript{127}

If the main concern in Arles was to ensure cooperation within the ecclesia, and the bishops in Reims wanted to highlight the importance of education, the Council of Mainz delineated existing divisions within the ecclesia – something which already starts in the prologue, where a separation between bishops, abbots and laity was established, to the ultimate benefit of the plebs Christianus.\textsuperscript{128} Presided over by Archbishops Richulf of Mainz and Arn of Salzburg together with the court chaplain Hildebald of Cologne, the acta of Mainz devoted more space to these Christian people.\textsuperscript{129} After a series of chapters pertaining to the morals of all believers, culminating in a call for peace and concord reminiscent of the one written in Reims, a set of provisions for the care of orphans, widows and pauperes was inserted. Next, bishops were exhorted to rule (regere et gubernare) the Church and to share competencies with the counts and judges in their diocese.\textsuperscript{130} This division between ecclesiastical and secular elites is explained later in the acta, when the main difference between clergy and laity is described in almost Gelasian terms: clerics wield spiritual weapons, and thus have to relinquish their secular ones when relinquishing the world.\textsuperscript{131}

The differences between saeculum and the Church are translated into practical matters, such as in rules governing ecclesiastical possessions, or a

\textsuperscript{126} Concilium Remense, c. 23, p. 256. For the female counterpart, see c. 33, p. 256: ‘De monasteriis puellarum considerandum est et domni imperatoris misericordia imploranda, ut victum et necessaria a sibi praebat cui possint sanctaemoniales, et vita illarum et castitas secundum fragilitatis sexu diligentem provisa tueatur.’
\textsuperscript{127} Concilium Remense, cc. 25, 26 and 29, p. 256.
\textsuperscript{128} Concilium Moguntinense, Prologus, p. 259: ‘Incipientes igitur in nomine Domini communem consensum et voluntate tractare pariter de statu verae religionis ac de utilitate et perfectione Christianae plebis, convenit in nobis de nostro communi collegio clericorum seu laicorum tres facere turmas, sicut et fecimus.’
\textsuperscript{129} On these bishops, see Bullough, ‘Charlemagne’s “men of God”’, pp. 142-150; Schieffer, ‘Erzbischof Richulf (787-813)’.
\textsuperscript{130} Concilium Moguntinense, cc. 1-7, pp. 260-262; c. 8, p. 262: ‘Ut episcopi potestatem habent res ecclesiasticas praeviendare, regere et gubernare atque dispensare secundum nonam auctoritatem, volumus, et ut laici in eorum ministerio obedianst episcopis ad regendas ecclesias Dei’.
\textsuperscript{131} Concilium Moguntinense, c. 17, p. 266.
ban on singing songs within earshot of churches. They also underlie a list of qualities expected of *advocati* – people who connect monastic communities to the outside world – or an admonition that those who ‘minister the altar of the Lord’ should avoid secular affairs. Still, the delineation between clergy and laity should not be understood as an attempt to separate the two, but rather to propose ways in which they might coexist. In a telling *admonitio*, the synod ordered the *sacerdotes* to make sure the *populus Christianus* knew the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed, and connected this with the institution of schools, ‘either in monasteries or in the court of *presbyters*’. Whereas in Arles, this knowledge was a prerequisite for combating ignorance as ‘the mother of all errors’ and thus safeguarding the unity of the *ecclesia*, the prelates in Mainz actively promoted learning and teaching the populace, for the same reasons.

Even more explicit is a diptych on maintaining peace in church. The authors first state that, ‘no one should presume to forcibly remove a suspect who has fled into a church, and neither should he be given over to punishment or death’; it was up to the *rectores* of the church to ensure that he would escape with ‘life and limb’. Next, it is unequivocally stated that church buildings were not to be used as secular courts. These two decrees echo a passage from the *Capitulatio de Partibus Saxoniae*, a legal text from the late eighth century issued by Charlemagne as part of his attempts to integrate the recently conquered Saxons into his kingdom. In this text, a provision about church asylum makes it clear that this would be a prelude to, but not part of the trial itself. After the fugitive has faced his prosecutors ‘with life and limb’ unscathed, it would be up to a *placitum* to determine what should happen to him next.

133 On *advocati*: *Concilium Moguntinense*, c. 50, p. 272; on the ban on trade, c. 14, p. 264.
134 *Concilium Moguntinense*, c. 45, pp. 271-272: ‘Symbolum, quod est signaculum fidei, et orationem dominicam discere semper ammoneant sacerdotes populum Christianum […]. Propterea dignum est, ut filios suos donent ad scolam, sive ad monasteria sive foras presbyteris, ut fidem catholicam recte discant et orationem dominicam, ut domi alios edocere valeant’.
135 *Concilium Moguntinense*, c. 39, p. 271: ‘Reum confugientem ad eclesiam nemo abstrahere paressuet neque inde donare ad poenam vel ad mortem, ut honor Dei et sanctorum eius conservetur. Sed et rectores ecclesiarum pacem et vitam ac membra eis obtinere studeant; tamen legitime componant quod inique fecerunt’.
the Council of Mainz reinforced the significance of church asylum, but specified that this should not imply that any defendant be tried within that same sacred space. Secular justice should be applied by secular judges, and bishops would decide on all matters pertaining to the Church, even if it involved laypeople. In this sense these *acta* take position in an ongoing debate that was made visible in a fierce debate between Alcuin, Charlemagne and Theodulf in 802, for example. There, the issue of church asylum became a hot topic again specifically because a refugee cleric had hidden away in Tours. The roots of this problem, however, went even deeper and affected more people than just those involved in that particular conflict.

In addition to this division between pastors and the *populus*, there is one further demarcation within the text, between monks and canons. The final determination of who went where was up to the bishops, who also had to make sure both types of community were lacking in nothing. Figuring out how to do this was another matter. In two chapters, the canonical way of life is specified: canons should live in a cloister, and, ‘to the extent that human frailty permits’ according to ‘the doctrine of divine Scripture and the documents of the Holy Fathers’. Moreover, the text continues, quoting from Isidore of Seville’s *De Ecclesiasticis Officiis*, these canons should keep themselves free from the pleasures of the world and ‘apply themselves to continual training’ so that as they give effort to knowledge, they may administer the grace of their learning to the people. Monks, the following two chapters continue, had to go one step further. They too had to live

140 *Concilium Moguntinense*, c. 8, p. 261: ‘Ut episcopi potestatem habeant res ecclesiasticas praevidere, [...] et ut laici in eorum ministerio oboediant episcopis ad regendas ecclesias Dei’.
142 Meens, ‘Sanctuary’.
143 *Concilium Moguntinense*, c. 20-21, pp. 266-267.
144 *Concilium Moguntinense*, c. 9, pp. 261-262: ‘In omnibus igitur, quantum humana permittit fragilitas, decrevimus, ut canonici clerici canonice vivant, observantes divinae scripturae doctrinam et documenta sanctorum patrum [...] et in suo claustro maneat’.
145 *Concilium Moguntinense*, c. 10, p. 263: ‘Discretionem igitur esse volumus atque decretivm inter eos, qui dicunt se saeculum reliquisse, et adhuc saeculum sectantur [...] ut ita discernantur, sicut in Regula Clericorum dictum est [...] Item Isidorus: “Seniores quoque debitam praebeant oboedientiam nec ullo iactantiae studio se advellant. Postremo in doctrina, in lectionibus psalmis, ymnis et canticis exercitio iugi incumbant. Tales enim esse debent, qui divinis cultibus se mancipandos student exhibere, scilicet ut, dum scientiae operam dant, doctrinae gratiam populis administrant”; De ecclesiasticis officiis (*DEO*), lib. 2, c. 2; on the complex interplay of texts and quotations, which also touches upon the use of the Rule of Chrodegang, see Ling, *Cloister and Beyond*, pp. 131-143.
according to rules, again ‘as far as human frailty permits’, but here the RB as explained by their abbot ruled their life.\textsuperscript{146} Moreover, monks were also forbidden to attend placita, and the worldly affairs of a monastery were to be administered by a deacon to prevent the praepositus, who by the early ninth century had essentially become the right-hand man of the abbot, from falling into the ‘snare of the Devil’.\textsuperscript{147} It was a concern already implied by Benedict of Nursia when he warned that the appointment of the praepositus should be an intramural affair, as ‘it happens all too often that the constituting of a praepositus leads to scandalum in monasteries’, especially ‘in those places where the praepositus is constituted by the same bishop or the same abbots who constitute the abbot himself’.\textsuperscript{148} According to the RB, this would lead to the absurd situation of effectively placing the appointee outside of abbatial authority, which would in turn subvert the very fabric of communal life, held together as it was by the ideal of obedience.

A moralistic outlook similar to that taken in Mainz drove the acta of Chalon-sur-Saône, whose capitula were intended to point out ‘things [...] that required emendatio’ according to the emperor.\textsuperscript{149} Leaning on scriptural authority, these acta start with the statement that all episcopi had to study the ‘writings [...] that are called canonical’, including the Regula Pastoralis.\textsuperscript{150} Knowing these norma enabled them to be an example to the populus, and help them ‘uproot sins and plant virtues’ through preaching.\textsuperscript{151} In order to ensure their example would be upheld, schools should be established as a shield against heresies and to turn more people into the ‘salt of the Earth’ lauded by Christ during his Sermon on the Mount.\textsuperscript{152} This aim, that everybody should have the opportunity to live like a good Christian, was the main reason why bishops should be especially irreproachable.\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{146} Concilium Moguntinense, c. 11, p. 263: ‘Abbates autem censuimus ita cum monachis suis pleniter vivere [...] secundum doctrinam sanctae regulae Benedicti, quantum humana permittit fragilitas’.
\textsuperscript{147} Concilium Moguntinense, c. 11, p. 263: ‘Ac deinde decrevimus, sicut sancta regula dicit, ut monasteriorum ubi fieri possit, per decanos ordinetur, quia illi praepositi saepe in elationem incidunt et in laqueum diaboli’; c. 12, p. 264: ‘ut monachi ad saecularia placita nullatenus veniant, neque ipse abba sine consilio episcopi sui’.
\textsuperscript{148} RB, c. 65. See also Semmler, ‘Benedictus II’, pp. 31-32, n. 18.
\textsuperscript{149} Concilium Cabillonense, Prologus, p. 274: ‘rebus, in quibus nobis emendatio necessaria videbatur’.
\textsuperscript{150} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 1, p. 274.
\textsuperscript{151} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 2, p. 274: ‘Et sint subditis norma vivendi, ita videlicetut et verbis et exemplis populo ad aeternam patriam pergenti ducatum praebant’, and c. 37, p. 281.
\textsuperscript{152} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 3, pp. 274-275.
\textsuperscript{153} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 5, p. 275: ‘Ut iuxta apostoli vocem sacerdotes inreprehensibles sint’.
should not be enforced. Writing about oaths, for example, the council states that obedience to the bishop should not be sworn, but enacted.\textsuperscript{154} Similarly, penance should not be left to written rules, but would depend on public enactment and the emperor’s interpretation – a subject they were especially keen on.\textsuperscript{155} Bishops should not take personal preference into account when applying penance; they were more like doctors in that regard, and in the end God would know the ‘contrite hearts’ of those in need of medicine.\textsuperscript{156} The assumption was that clerics who had learned to live a virtuous life did not require constant guidance. Only when they behaved in a way ‘more akin to tyranny than to the right order’ or otherwise acted counter to the norms set out in these \textit{acta}, should a bishop intervene.\textsuperscript{157} As long as the clergy did their jobs without letting their status go to their heads, things would turn out fine.\textsuperscript{158}

One of the few rules specifically aimed at the monastic life in the \textit{acta} of Chalon-sur-Saône stipulated that new monks should not give all their possessions to their church because they had to, but ‘voluntarily’, thankful that their donation aided orphans, widows, and poor people.\textsuperscript{159} Conversely, accepting donations given under false pretences or through coercion was against the \textit{ministerium} of abbots and bishops.\textsuperscript{160} Other than that, the bishops were content to write that abbots and monks should ‘live according to the \textit{RB} in almost all the regular monasteries established in

\textsuperscript{154} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 13, p. 276: ‘Quod iuramentum, quia periculosum est, omnes una inhibendum statuimus’.
\textsuperscript{155} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 25, p. 278; Meens, \textit{Penance}, pp. 114-123.
\textsuperscript{156} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 34, p. 280: ‘multo magis his observandum est, qui non corporum, sed animarum medici existunt. […] Cor autem contritum et humilitatum Deus non despicit’.
\textsuperscript{157} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 15, p. 277: ‘ab eis censum exigunt, quod magis ad tirannidem quam ad rectitudinis ordinem pertinet’.
\textsuperscript{158} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 14, p. 276: ‘Cavendum est sane, ne, cum episcopi parrocchias suas peragrant, quantam non solum erga subditos, sed erga socios tirannidem exerceant nec, quod absit, cum caritate, sed cum quadam iudiciaria invectione stipendia ab eis exigant’.
\textsuperscript{159} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 6, p. 275: ‘Oblatio namque spontanea esse debet […] Eclesia vero sancta non solum fideles spoliare non debet, quin potius inopibus ope ferre, ut debiles, pauperes, viduae, ophani et ceteri necessitatem patientes a sancta eclesia utpote a pia matre et monium gubernatrice subsidium accipiant’. Cf. the \textit{Capitula de causis cum episcopis et abbatibus tractandis}, cc. 4-6 and c. 8, on the concerns connected with ‘relinquishing the world’.
\textsuperscript{160} Concilium Cabillonense, c. 7, p. 275: ‘ut episcopi sive abbates, qui non in fructum animarum, sed in avaritiam et turpe lucrum inhiantes quoslibet homines infectos circumveniendo totonderunt et res eorum tali persuasione non solmn acceperunt, sed potius subripuerunt, penitentiae canonicae sive regulari utpote turpis lucri sectatores subiaceant’.
these parts’. 161 This was to be commended, they continued, ‘because the writings of Saint Benedict show all of them how they ought to live’. 162 It seems the moralistic goals of the council of Chalon-sur-Saône prevented the participants from wanting to interfere too deeply in monastic life itself. Their goal was not to establish where one community ended and the next one began; they wanted to establish how everybody should live the best possible life. As far as monks were concerned, how that should be done was already contained in the RB. Conversely, things that required flexibility, such as penance, should not be left to uncontrollable multitudes of texts, but required the involvement of the bishops, the emperor, and the entire community.

Finally, the Council of Tours closes the circle by calling attention to the members of the ecclesia – represented by the abbots, sacerdotes, and clergy – and how their actions reflected their relation with the empire. Their loyalty to Charlemagne was reinforced by gathering at his command and praying on his behalf. 163 Also, episcopi should strive to be good exempla by studying Scripture, the libri canonici, and of course Gregory’s Regula Pastoralis, while abstaining from joking, hunting or anything else that offended the eyes or ears. 164 This call to action did not just pertain to bishops, either. Young widows were expected to visibly remain in mourning so as to prevent ‘being alive and dead both at once’; the congregation was supposed to enter the church and attend Mass in revered silence; and ‘counts and judges were admonished not to permit vile and unworthy persons to approach them to give testimony’. 165 They were expected to respect the office of bishop, and not to spurn the counsel provided by them – although, on the other hand, bishops should ‘humbly support’ their secular counterparts, reinforcing
the idea that nobody acted in isolation. After all, the authors wrote, ‘All men, and especially Christians, should strive to have peace, unanimity and concord between [each other]’.\textsuperscript{166}

The sacrum palatium and the knowledge it generated stood above all, as evidenced by a caput on the correct way of performing penance.\textsuperscript{167} Due to the many irregularities that still persisted, it is recommended that ‘the bishops should congregate at the palace, so that it may be determined by them whose penitential book from among the ancient authors should be supported above all’.\textsuperscript{168} It remains unclear if the bishops should nominate their own books, or if these were furnished by the palace library, but it is clear that they figured this was a greater task than they could handle in Tours alone. Interestingly, the group that was the subject of this chapter consisted of the same prelates gathered in Tours, writing these very recommendations ‘according to the rule of the canons’.\textsuperscript{169} These bishops, for their part, felt they could turn to the court whenever they could not reach consensus or when they would not leave something important up to chance. ‘Whatever our prince likes to do about this, we, his faithful servants, are always happy and ready to oblige his wishes and his will’, they wrote in closing.\textsuperscript{170} They almost seem to relinquish responsibility as soon as they received it, being careful to submit to the will of the court in the most important instances. This could be for political reasons, of course. The emperor was in a position to protect their property or put a check to aristocrats exacting a levy from priests taking over a parish.\textsuperscript{171} Maybe some of the participants in the council, with the conflict of 802 still lingering on their minds, even felt the need to reconfirm that the palace should indeed be at the centre of it all, no matter how small the issue at hand.

Although the prologue to the Council of Tours stated that there were abbots present at the proceedings, most of the opening narrative is centred on the sacerdotes who were responsible for the ‘governance of the Church in the regnum’, and this (im)balance is continued in the rest of the text

\textsuperscript{166} Concilium Turonense, c. 32, p. 290: ‘Omnes homines et maxime Christiani studeant inter se pacem, unanimitatem et concordiam habere, odium vero et discordiam longe a se propellere’.

\textsuperscript{167} Meens, Penance, p. 115.

\textsuperscript{168} Concilium Turonense, c. 22, p. 289; De Jong, ‘Sacrum palatium’, pp. 1243-1244.

\textsuperscript{169} Concilium Turonense, Prologus, p. 286: ‘episcopi, abbates et venerabilis clerus [...] quae secundum canonicam regulam emendatione indigent’.

\textsuperscript{170} Concilium Turonense, c. 51, p. 293: ‘sed quomodo deinceps piissimo principi nostro de his agendum placebit, nos fideles famuli eius libenti animo ad nutum et voluntatem eius parati sumus’.

\textsuperscript{171} Wood, Proprietary Church, pp. 527-529, esp. also n. 68. Cf. Concilium Turonense, c. 15, p. 288; c. 51, p. 293.
itself. Only one *caput* is aimed directly and specifically at monastic communities, and, as was the case in the Council of Reims, it was only to state that ‘the monasteries of monks, where in the past the Rule of the Blessed Father Benedict was upheld’, but which had fallen into disrepute through negligence, ‘should return to a pristine state’. The way to accomplish this was to appoint abbots who lived according to the Rule and taught others to act similarly. Otherwise, the text finished, ‘they seem more like canons than like monks’. Another echo of the conflict of 802 may be felt here: as Charlemagne, in the course of a heated exchange of letters, sought to put Alcuin back in his place, he held it against them that the reputation of the community of Saint Martin was damaged by the unclear position of its monks. ‘Sometimes you claim to be monks’, the emperor wrote, ‘sometimes canons, and sometimes neither’, ultimately leading to *mala fama*. Proper leadership would go a long way towards avoiding similar reproaches in the future. The *Regula*, channelled by an abbot, should be the defining factor of a monk’s life; canons also lived in a *monasterium*, celebrated the liturgy together in one place, slept in a dormitory, and ate meals together. The major difference was that canons lived in episcopal cities. They had bishops to ‘admonish and teach’ them and, more importantly, to take care of their material needs. In between these two types, other canonical communities had to rely on ‘abbots who, […] by going ahead, show the way [*via*] which, by advancing correctly [*recte*], lead to a better life’.

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172 *Concilium Turonense*, Prologus, p. 286.
173 *Concilium Turonense*, c. 25, p. 290: ‘Monasteria monachorum, in quibus olim regula beati Benedicti patris conservabatur, sed nunc forte qualicunque neglegentia subrepente remissius ac dissolutius custoditur vel certe penitus abolita neglegitur, bonum videtur ut ad pristinum revertantur statum’.
174 *Concilium Turonense*, c. 25, p. 290: ‘et abbates eorundem in eodem habitu ac vita, qua ipsa regula praecipiens incidere ac vivere studeant, quoniam aliqua sunt monasteria, in quibus iam pauci sunt monachi, qui praedicti patris regulam suis abbatibus promissam habeant, quippe cum ipsi abbates magis canonice quam monachice inter suos conversari videntur’.
178 *Concilium Turonense*, c. 24, p. 289: ‘Simili modo et abbates monasteriorum, in quibus canonica vita antiquitus fuit vel nunc videtur esse, sollicite suis praevideant canonicis […] sintque abbates sibi subditis bene vivendo duces et praevii viamque demonstrant, qua recte
Regula that made the monachus, but that should not preclude others from following in their footsteps.

While the prelates participating in these councils welcomed the role of the court as a focal point and instigator of any ecclesiastical reform initiative, it was evident that they all had different ideas what the challenges were, and how they might be solved. This reflected the general idea behind these councils. They were intended to provide new impetus to the reform movement in the empire. However, the fact that they had been centrally organized at various places in the realm illustrates how the court felt it was worthwhile to gather the opinions of the intellectual elite before taking the next steps. The approach parallels the pragmatic gusto that characterized the reign of Charlemagne, when the court would also present results as the product of the best minds in the empire, personified by the ruler. In this case, however, the court may have realized that the results of this project required everyone to make real changes in their daily lives. These reforms concerned the entire ecclesia, and it was necessary to involve the ecclesiastical elites in the decision-making process. In the context of the transfer of the nomen imperatoris in 813, the results of each of the councils sent to Aachen reinforced the image of unity as the result of a dynamic interplay between local concerns and courtly interests, precisely because they indicate the different ways each of the episcopal communities tackled the challenges the encountered. As an added advantage, this process thus provided Louis with a powerful image of the burdens of imperium he was about to face – and how the ecclesia could help him bear this burden while adding to it in the process.

Much more is hidden in these five council acta, and more detailed analyses need to be done to fully grasp the implications of the sources used, to account for the overlaps, similarities and differences between the various

A forthcoming article by Ling, ‘Monks, canons’, will shed more light on this aspect of the relation between monks, canons and their bishops. Fried, ‘Elite und Ideologie’, regards these councils as reflective of a drive for uniformization and centralization instigated by the Carolingian court – an interpretation which overestimates the reach of the court at this point; he may be correct in his assessment that 813-819 marks an apex of Carolingian achievement, but in my opinion, this achievement was to catalyse debate, not to order uniformity.

De Jong, ‘Charlemagne’s Church’, p. 128.
Davis, ‘A pattern for power’, p. 245.
This is the gist of Semmler’s ‘Benedictus II’ and ‘Beschlüsse des Aachener Konzils’, for example: although uniformization was not an issue, changes were expected.
See Beumann, ‘Nomen imperatoris’; Borst, ‘Kaisertum und Namentheorie’.
capita, or to gauge the influence of individuals on the proceedings.\textsuperscript{184} For now such questions may be left open, if only because they accurately reflect the bewildering state of the Carolingian ecclesia in the year 813. Even though the \textit{acta} indicate a particular set of concerns shared among the participants, the individual nature of these compositions, their different focal points and variety in direction all point to the conclusion that this was a case of \textit{reculer pour mieux sauter} rather than an attempt to uniformize.

This may have been intentional. It is impossible to ignore the timing of these councils as a prelude to the coronation of Louis the Pious. By all accounts, the ultimate goal of these five councils was to present Charlemagne with a condensed list of things that required his attention. This they did, in Aachen, so the emperor may simply have seized the opportunity to also publicly elevate his son to become his equal in the presence of all key players within the kingdom. The differences between contemporary historiographical accounts of these councils noted above show that the connection between councils and dynastic policy – if any – was not clear to contemporary observers, either. As presented in the \textit{ARF}, the coincidence of these councils with the elevation of Louis showed the intimate connections between court and church reform. The gathering in Aachen presented the fledgling emperor Louis with a set of blueprints for the empire, formulated by important ecclesiastical gatherings all throughout the realm. It was important that Louis’ elevation occurred before the presentation of these conciliar teachings, so that continuity would be safeguarded. The peripheral perspective of the \textit{CM} was more insistent on the central role of the court in running the ecclesia, and left the education and coronation of Louis the Pious in the hands of his father. In this version, the gathered elites first imparted their wisdom on the ruling emperor, and then approved of Louis’ coronation. Continuity was assured, but this time it was in the hands of the court as channelled through the imperial crown.

Regardless of these narrative perspectives, it is important to remember that these councils were not indicative of an increasing uniformization of the ecclesia. Seen from Aachen, they reflect the growing role of the court in the debate on how to correct \textit{correctio}; seen from a local perspective, they presented bishops with the opportunity to reframe their relation to the court. The model for empire seen through these councils is one in which people were told to propose things to put on the agenda, and were subsequently

\textsuperscript{184} Generally, Ling, \textit{Cloister and Beyond}, has more detailed information on the way the life of the canons would be shaped through these stipulations. See also Moore, \textit{Sacred Kingdom}, pp. 279-284.
invited to court to help hammer out the details. The diversity of the observations made in the ensuing corpus of texts demonstrates the flexibility of the Carolingian Church. What was at stake was to make sure that both the old and the new emperor were aware of this. These were not laws, but recommendations – more what one would call guidelines than actual rules.

Charlemagne’s death in January 814 did little to dampen the enthusiasm of the bishops, abbeys and aristocrats involved. A new emperor had been appointed and groomed to continue the work started by his forebears. Indeed, it did not take long after Louis’ arrival in the palace to organize a new series of councils, this time held in Aachen itself between 816 and 819. The most important text to come out of these synods will be the focus for the remainder of this chapter: the *Institutio Canonicorum*.

‘An Effort, not an Honour’: Bishops and Their Responsibilities

If the five councils of 813 should be seen in a broader political context, the same goes for the synods organized at the palace in Aachen during the first five years of the reign of Louis the Pious. In addition to the confirmation of a large number of charters and immunities, the court was re-arranged as Louis’ entourage from Aquitaine was integrated into the existing corridors of power.\(^{185}\) Louis elected his son Lothar as co-emperor, and was confirmed as emperor by Pope Stephen IV in 816, itself the result of intricate political schemes between Aachen and Rome; arrangements were made for the division of the empire among Louis’ three sons; and the first rebellion against Louis, led by his nephew Bernard of Italy, was quelled with unfortunate results for the instigator.\(^{186}\) The activities at court between 814 and 819 show a ruler eager to make his mark on the *imperium* by intensifying the momentum built by his father. It is in this context that we should see the reform councils that took place in Aachen from 816 to 819.\(^{187}\) By now, the mind-set at court was truly imperial, and Louis’ entourage wanted to continue the debate and live up to the expectations set by the reforming activities of 813.

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Through sheer scale and intent, the councils of 816–819 themselves were momentous in their own way.\textsuperscript{188} Apart from their direct impact, the texts they produced also betray a high level of self-awareness and self-definition of those involved in their creation.\textsuperscript{189} While the precise relation between the extant manuscripts remains impossible to reconstruct, there is a surprisingly high degree of thematic unity among the texts, most of which ultimately revolve around the questions of how to distinguish between monastic and canonical communities, why this was important, and what bishops should do about it.\textsuperscript{190} These goals were even reflected in the organization of the councils: the so-called \textit{Capitulare Monasticum}, usually seen to be the result of the 817 meeting specifically, was the product of deliberations among abbots exclusively.\textsuperscript{191} Although most of the extant documents are quite brief and mostly describe changes that should be made to the \textit{consuetudines} of monastic communities, they present us with several hints as to the collective nature of what transpired inside the palace at the time – one of which is the repeated insistence that their deliberations indeed took place inside the palace.\textsuperscript{192}

In spite of such messages, the many different texts produced tell us that this was a comprehensive, unified attempt at improving religious life in the empire while at the same time conveying a message about the multiplicity that persisted. As with the councils of 813, the \textit{Capitulare

\textsuperscript{188} Angerer, ‘\textit{Consuetudo} und Reform’, p. 112, speaks of the council/capitularies of 817 as a ‘Paukenschlag’ (bombshell).

\textsuperscript{189} Especially the texts edited as \textit{Synodi Primae Aquisgranensis Decreta Authentica}; \textit{Synodi Secundae Aquisgranensis Decreta Authentica}; but see also the \textit{Capitulare Monasticum}. To these compositions may be added an as yet understudied \textit{florilegium} of works by Gregory the Great and Basilius, among others, attributed to Benedict of Aniane: Dolbeau, ‘Florilège carolingien de Septimanie’; Dolbeau refers to a different MSS than the one studied by Étaix, ‘Un florilège ascétique’. See also Choy, \textit{Intercessory Prayer}, pp. 151-152.

\textsuperscript{190} Semmler, ‘Zur Überlieferung der monastischen Gesetzgebung’; Semmler, ‘Beschlüsse des Aachener Konzils’. According to the lapidary statement by Mordek, \textit{Bibliotheca}, p. 999, ‘Die monastische Gesetzgebung Ludwigs des Frommen dürfte durch die Forschungen Semmlers geklärt sein’ (‘The monastic legislation of Louis the Pious should be clarified through the research done by Semmler’). But see Lukas, ‘Additio I: Die sogenannte \textit{Collectio capitularis}’, p. 8: ‘Semmlers Modell der Abhängigkeitsverhältnisse zwischen den vier Versionen des monastischen Kapitulars enthält also letztlich zu viele Ungereimtheiten, um ein stimmiges Bild der Entstehung dieses Textes zu bieten. Ihm ein konkretes Gegenmodell entgegenzusetzen, ist bei der verwirrenden Vielfalt der Überlieferung nicht möglich’ (‘Semmler’s model for the relationship of dependence between the four versions of the monastic capitulary thus in the end contains too many inconsistencies to offer a coherent idea about the genesis of this text. To create an alternative model, however, is not possible due to the confusing complexity of the capitulary’s transmission’).


\textsuperscript{192} Kramer and Gantner, ‘Lateran thinking’.
Monasticum and its worldly counterpart, the Capitulare Ecclesiasticum, are reflective of a degree of uncertainty, of the leeway that was still given to the monasteries, as long as they were ruled by a regula, controlled by a bishop, and concerned for the empire. Through its presentation as a collective response to an ongoing project and its focus on the internal life of monasteries as communities with a function within the wider world, the Capitulare Monasticum proposed part of a definition of ‘monasticism’ by insisting on its regularity – preferably that of the RB. Meanwhile, the Capitulare Ecclesiasticum called the participants to both observe the capitula themselves, and to teach their subjects about them. Ostensibly aimed at bishops and thus more focused on the pastoral side of things, the importance of Church possessions and episcopal control is paramount, but the stipulations stop outside the cloister: only the election of abbots and the eligibility of slaves to enter a monastery are mentioned, implying that the internal autonomy of monasteries had become a fait accompli – an observation echoed, for example, in an early-ninth-century ordo for the organization of such meetings, written in the area around Salzburg. The Capitulare Ecclesiasticum sought to regulate all clergy under episcopal supervision; the text was not just for reading, but also for teaching and guiding the priests and canons who neglected their duties ‘partly out of ignorance and partly out of laziness’. They, too, required a regula to keep them on the straight and narrow.

This was a niche that the Institutio Canonicorum (IC), by far the longest text to come out of these councils, aimed to fill. According to its prologue, the best and brightest were gathered to deliberate how to re-order the lives of canons and monks, bishops and abbots to the extent that:

All those who are thought to belong to the canonical profession may proceed on the path he has undertaken without stumbling, and live together in the service of Christ, with great devotion and unanimous concord.

193 Gaillard, ‘De l’interaction entre crise et réforme’; Semmler, ‘Benedictus II’.
194 Capitulare Ecclesiasticum, p. 275.
196 Capitulare Ecclesiasticum, c. 3, p. 276.
197 Institutio Canonicorum (IC), Prologus, p. 312: ‘quatenus omnes, qui canonica censentur professione, per viam propositi sui inoffenso gressu incederunt et in Christi militia devotius unanimes atque concordes existerunt’; trans. Bertram, Chrodegang Rules, p. 96.
This was not a new issue, and it would persist after the centralized councils studied in this chapter, as seen for example in a number of capitularies issued by Lothar in Italy following his father’s initiatives. When studied as products of the ongoing dialogue between court, cloister and canones, the source material connected to these councils reveals much about the interaction between them, how it was perceived, who was thought to be in a position to effectuate these reforms, and who was ultimately responsible for their enforcement. Compared to the other two capitularia, this compilation took a wholly different approach to such issues by taking into account the position of the bishop both as shepherd and as the leader of his community.

Both the title and the prologue of the work suggest that the *Institutio Canonicorum (IC)* was written specifically to establish a ‘pattern for the education’ of the canonical clergy. The composers of the text were moreover aware that any prescription for canons would also influence how bishops ought to behave, which in turn had repercussions for monastic communities. The *IC* is thus not simply a set of new regulations, and neither is it a mere *florilegium* for the benefit of the clergy. The composers have woven together all the ideas they had conceived during previous councils together and all the older and authoritative knowledge at their disposal to form a new, programmatic text demonstrating that no one in the *ecclesia* could function in isolation. The result, a massive compilation of patristic and canonical texts, combined with a set of rules aimed at the canonical clergy, is a highly self-reflective work that shows the all-encompassing nature of the Carolingian reforms from the vantage point of the imperial court.

It is clear that this compilation was widely distributed. According to an overview given by Hubert Mordek, 136 manuscripts of the *IC* from between the ninth and the fourteenth century are extant, with another 22 copies which may have been lost. A vast majority of these are single codices containing the text in its entirety, but even the number of excerpts stands as a testament to the widespread use of this text. The fact that later authors, composers and compilers made use of the *IC* shows that this compilation

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198 Semmler, ‘Monachus’; Specifically, the 825 *Capitulare Olonnense Ecclesiasticum Primum*, c. 7, pp. 326-327, stipulates that bishops are responsible for the conversion of their canonical communities according to the rules laid out ‘earlier’. That earlier text is no longer extant, but its monastic ‘equivalent’, the *Capitula de Inspiciendis Monasteriis*, may be found in one of the manuscripts that also contains the Capitulary of Olonne.

199 *IC*, Prologus, p. 313: ‘ab omnibus, qui in canonica professione Domino militant, hanc institutio formam tot ecclesiasticorum virorum vigilantium studio congestam dignisque preconiis laudatam iuxta virium possibilitatem modis omnibus observandam’.

was taken seriously. Especially the final chapter, c. 145, a brief summary of the work in total, proved popular in this regard, but most of the subsequent canon collections using the IC did not limit themselves to this shortened version, and rightly so. As will be shown, the IC was intended to be read as one integral composition.

Attached to the IC in the Monumenta Germaniae Historica (MGH) edition is the Institutio Sanctimonialium, a similar set of regulations that was specifically meant for female communities. This text did not share its male counterpart’s reception: nine manuscripts have to date been identified, most of which stem from the early ninth century. While this might attest to a lack of interest in this particular take on female sanctity, it is interesting to see that most extant copies were produced shortly after the council. It therefore seems that the express imperial demand that these texts were to be copied and spread throughout the realms was taken seriously, at least at first. As Gerhard Schmitz has noted, the question to what extent these canons – both for male and female clergy – have been copied verbatim as intended, or have experienced some form of rewriting in the process, is still open. Did the copyist obey the imperial wish that these texts were copied to the letter, and how did this hold up as manuscripts drifted ever further from the original? This is a question that has proven difficult to answer for the Institutio Sanctimonialium, and will be even more of a challenge for the IC – which accounts for the fact that a detailed analysis of the IS falls beyond the scope of this book. Although many manuscripts of the IC have been identified, they have not yet been put in a comprehensive manuscript matrix, which continues to hamper our understanding of the impact of these texts. Thus far, studies of the IC have focused on its role as part of a wider monastic or canonical reform movement imposed by the court, undoubtedly steered by the fact that the MGH implies that these were

201 Institutio Sanctimonialium Aquisgranensis.
202 Generally, see Schilp, Norm und Wirklichkeit; Gerhard Schmitz, ‘Aachen 816’; Mordek, Bibliotheca, pp. 1057-1058.
203 Schmitz, ‘Aachen 816’, pp. 509-517; Werminghoff, ‘Beschlüsse des Aachener Concils’, p. 634, called the Institutio Sanctimonialium an ‘Übersetzung [of the IC] ins Weibliche’ (‘an adaption of the IC for a female audience’), which may explain his lack of interest in that particular text and its manuscript transmission.
205 This gap is filled by the excellent MA thesis by Michael Eber, Kanoniker und Kanonissen in der Aachener Reform. While this thesis remains unpublished at the moment of writing, its main conclusions will form the basis of a forthcoming article: Eber, ‘Canons, canonesses and connections’.
206 On the idea of the ‘manuscript matrix’, see Nichols, ‘Introduction’.
acta of the 816 Council of Aachen. However, as will be shown, the IC reads more like a speculum episcoporum than the conciliar acta from the first half of this chapter. Still, it should be seen as a product of the same time, when a more specific articulation of institutions was considered a first step towards improving them.

In order to fully comprehend the meaning of and the intentions behind the IC, it is vital to take the large swathe of patristic and canonical quotations contained in the text into account. These have been largely ignored in modern research, which is curious given that they make up the lion’s share of the IC.\(^{207}\) No less than 113 chapters separate the Prologue from the 30 ‘actual’ canons, and these should certainly not be regarded as mere quotations.\(^{208}\) This is where the collective mind of the participating bishops and abbots showed that reform should be as much about a return to old values as it is about finding new directions.\(^{209}\) This is where they seized the opportunity to define their place in the world; after all, as they were articulating their own essential role within the Church, they were also reappraising the place of the ecclesia in Frankish society.

**Church Fathers in Aachen**

The patristic quotations in the IC are roughly divided into three parts. After the prologue, the first part consists primarily of excerpts from Isidore of Seville’s *De Ecclesiasticis Officis*; Gregory the Great’s *Regula Pastoralis* (RP) and Julianus Pomerius’ *De Vita Contemplativa* (DVC) – misidentified within the text as Prosper of Aquitaine.\(^{210}\) This section also contains a sermon by Augustine and two letters by Jerome, detailing who the clergy should be.

The second part, which mainly contains canonical quotations that probably stem from a version of the *Dionysio-Hadriana*, tells members of the ecclesia...
exactly what they should do.211 The third section includes more letters and sermons by Augustine and Jerome, and continues to quote heavily from both Gregory and Isidore; it describes how clerics ought to behave.212 The primary target audience of the text is clearly formed by the bishops in the Frankish realms, charged with the education of those subordinate to them – which theoretically included everyone. The IC was thus not composed primarily for canonical communities, but was also aimed at the bishops who were supposed to be guiding them, who had to cope with the institutionalization of this hitherto fuzzy category of clergymen, and whose responsibility it was to safeguard both their behaviour and their reputation.213 As these same prelates were the ones composing the text in the first place, it should not be surprising that the IC is also exceedingly self-reflexive.

The patristic texts used have been heavily edited and interpolated. Moreover, the selection of authors may seem limited, but this reinforces the ideas that these were deliberate choices: the composers were not striving for intellectual exclusivity, but relying on those texts whose authority had already been established, texts that everyone could relate to.214 In at least one case, they had gone a step further. As demonstrated by Albert Werminghoff, who prepared the MGH edition of the IC at the start of the twentieth century, the passages attributed to Gregory the Great have actually been lifted from a collection of that pope’s writings by the seventh-century Visigothic bishop, Taio (or Taius) of Zaragoza.215 While this discovery is interesting in its own right, and raises the possibility that more such florilegia have been used instead of the ‘original’ sources identified in the edition, the fact that Taio’s collection has been used also serves to illuminate the way the participants in the council regarded the sources they used – Gregory the Great especially so.216 It is therefore useful to dwell a bit longer on this particular collection, its author and its intentions.

Taio’s story is interesting in itself, and his relationship with the various kings and bishops he served under certainly made its mark on the

211 IC, cc. 39-93, pp. 360-370. On the Dionysio-Hadriana collection and its arrival in Aachen, see Mordek, Kirchenrecht und Reform, pp. 151-162: Mordek, ‘Dionysio-Hadriana und Vetus Gallica’. This collection was highly prevalent in Carolingian ecclesiological discourse – for instance, it also featured heavily in the Admonitio Generalis: Mordek et al., Die Admonitio Generalis, p. 31.  
212 IC, cc. 93-113, pp. 370-394.  
214 Otten, ‘Texture of tradition’.  
composition of his *Libri Sententiarum V*. His first intellectual endeavour probably was his involvement in the revision of the *Lex Visigothorum* instigated by his predecessor Braulio and the kings Chindasuinth and Reccesuinth in the early seventh century. Chindasuinth then sent him to Rome in the late 640s to retrieve a missing part of Gregory the Great’s *Moralia in Iob*. Once there, he became so enamoured with Gregory’s views that he composed a collection of his writings, dedicated to his sponsor, Bishop Quiricus of Barcelona. While doing so Zaragoza was set upon by the rebel Froia until it was rescued by ‘the orthodox and great worshiper of God, Prince Reccesuinth’. This not only delayed Taio’s work to the extent that he had to explain it in his prologue, but also allowed him to clarify the theme of his work to Quiricus: he followed a thread linking ‘the all-powerful Lord [...] until the end of this world’, insisting on an Augustinian vision of a heavenly Jerusalem that opposed to the confusion that was Babylon.

In his *Praefatio*, Froia represented the chaos of Babylon, while Reccesuinth stood for peace, justice and the Christian way that led to Jerusalem. This was not simply a compendium to the works of Gregory, and neither writing it nor reading it was easy. This work was meant for those who were serious about the Kingdom of Heaven, who, like Taio, longed for the ‘unity of the catholic Church’. And, even though the participants in Aachen, over 150 years later, only really cited parts of the second of his five books, it seems as if they had taken the words of Taio’s preface to heart.

Taio’s five books of *Sententiae* rearranged Gregory’s writings into a completely new work. Book I is a cosmology, in which God, his creations, and his relationship with Man is discussed. Book II deals with the history of the Church, starting with the teachings of Christ, and going from the spread of Christianity to the then-current state of affairs, in which bishops, priests, the faithful, and monks are discussed in order. Book III reads like a *Speculum Principorum* (or *Laicorum*) and treats human history, the virtues, religion, and

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218 See, for example, Diáz, ‘Visigothic political institutions’, pp. 337ff.
219 Madoz, ‘Tajón de Zaragoza’.
222 Taio, *Sententiae*, Praefatio, c. 5, col. 730B.
224 O’Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain*, p. 87, described the work as ‘poorly organized’.
life in general.\textsuperscript{227} Book IV focuses on the vices, dreams and visions, and other ephemeral phenomena, whereas Book V deals with justice and its opposites – hypocrisy, heresy and impiety – and the punishments that awaited sinners at the end of the world.\textsuperscript{228} Taio’s \textit{Sententiae} thus present a study of life, the universe and everything, channelled through the works of Gregory the Great.

Given the resurgence of the popularity of the pope’s works in the Carolingian era, it seems safe to assume that the composers of the IC were aware they were using an adaptation.\textsuperscript{229} By electing to take their material from Book II of Taio’s \textit{Sententiae} instead of perusing the works of Gregory himself, they showed that they were thinking not exclusively in terms of the rules they had to follow, but also of their place in the world and their role in the lives of others.\textsuperscript{230} They were not quoting from the \textit{Regula Pastoralis}, or the \textit{Moralia in Iob}, or the letters of Gregory. They were looking at these works through the lens of a recontextualization which demonstrated how they were about life itself, and not only about bishops or the Book of Job. This conscious use of patristic writings by the composers of the IC to relate to their position in the world shows how they, like Taio, adhered to the words of Deut 32:7: ‘Ask your father, and he will declare to you; ask your elders and they will tell you’.\textsuperscript{231} The IC was intended to be the response of self-proclaimed elders to the question how they would reform the ecclesia. In attempting to do so, they turned to their own fathers as well.\textsuperscript{232}

At the start of the IC, Isidore’s \textit{De Ecclesiasticis Officiis} (DEO) is used to describe the various offices of the Church.\textsuperscript{233} Curiously, the order of

\textsuperscript{227} Taio, \textit{Sententiae}, cols. 831-911.

\textsuperscript{228} Taio, \textit{Sententiae}, cols. 911-957; cols 957-990.

\textsuperscript{229} Mews and Renkin, ‘Legacy of Gregory’, pp. 325-333; more generally still, see Leyser, ‘The memory of Gregory’. An interesting insight into the way \textit{florilegia} were regarded in the later ninth century is provided by Notker the Stammerer in his \textit{Notitia de Illustribus Viris}. In it, on p. 59, he recommends the use of such collections to become acquainted with the wisdom of the Fathers, as these present their work in an ordered fashion: Kaczinski, ‘Reading the Church Fathers’. Many thanks to Johanna Jebe for pointing out this reference.

\textsuperscript{230} Costambeys et al., \textit{Carolinger World}, p. 134.

\textsuperscript{231} Taio, \textit{Epistola ad Eugenium}, col. 724C: ‘Optaveram siquidem tuae nunc adesse praesentiae, ut sicut scriptum est: “Interroga patrem tuum, et annuntiabit tibi, majores tuos, et dicent tibi” [Deut. 32:7], ex tui oris prudentia formulam sumerem, cum in principio hujus operis velut cujusdam telae verborum texturam praeponerem’.

\textsuperscript{232} More research into the use of patristic texts in the IC is sorely needed: Schmitz, ‘Aachen 816’, pp. 497-500; Schilp, \textit{Norm und Wirklichkeit}, p. 62, n. 13. Both authors are writing on the \textit{Insitutio Sanctorum} specifically, but their points about the reception of the Church Fathers address broader issues. Forthcoming articles by Wieser, ‘Beyond the Church Fathers’, and Eber, ‘Canons, canonesses and connections’, will start to fill this niche.

\textsuperscript{233} IC, cc. 1-9, pp. 318-326.
these offices has been reversed. Whereas Isidore started his listing with bishops – *sacerdotes* – and worked his way downward towards the porters – *ostiarii* – before moving on to treating monks, penitents, married people, and catechumens, the *IC* started with the *ostiarii* and ascends the orders to the *sacerdos*.234 One explanation for this reversal could be that the composers intended the rest of the *IC* to be about these *sacerdotes*. They may have envisaged this as a *cursus honorum* similar to the *gradi ecclesiastici* described in the Council of Reims in 813.235 Apparently, this did not necessarily include monks. Isidore devoted a chapter to them, which has been left out of the *IC* entirely.236 This seems to reflect the status of monks in the Carolingian discourse as being allowed to live their regulated lives more or less outside the system. Even within the *DEO*, they were the first of ‘those who carry out the ministries of religion’ to have no connection with the Temple of Solomon.237 Their biblical examples were the prophets Elijah and Elisha, as well as John the Baptist, but mostly the ‘noble leaders’ who came afterwards – exemplary abbots and holy men – united by their ‘pursuit of poverty’.238 The order described by Isidore started with the *sacerdotes*, the heirs of Moses, Aaron and the apostle Peter. In that scheme, it could be significant that Isidore’s most important monastic role models were prophets whose role it was to criticize authority figures and keep them on the straight and narrow.239 Their calling came from God directly. Being Christians, they remained under episcopal authority, but monastic communities nonetheless fell outside of the scope of the *IC* at this point.

The *IC* is about the clergy with a function in the Temple, whose office it was to serve at the altar of the Lord.240 They occupied an institution within the *ecclesia*, and they were marked as such by their tonsure:

A precedent which has been introduced by the apostles, so that those who were consecrated to serve the cult of God would be inaugurated by having their hair cut.241

235 Concilium Remense, cc. 3-4, p. 254.
236 *DEO*, lib. 2, c. 15 (in the CCSL edition, this is listed as c. 16).
237 *DEO*, lib. 2, Praefatio: ‘deinceps exordia eorum qui diuino cultui ministeria religionis inpendunt ordine persequemur’.
238 *DEO*, lib. 2, c. 15.1.
239 For a similar case, see De Jong, ‘Becoming Jeremiah’; Booker, *Past Convictions*, p. 178.
241 *IC*, c. 1, p. 318; *DEO*, lib. 2, c. 4.1. See Goosmann, ‘The long-haired kings’; Diesenberger, ‘Hair’.
The tonsure was the principal means of identifying the clergy. It distinguished them from the laity and established their spiritual authority. The tonsure, like a tiara, was an external sign of their elect status. This becomes a Leitmotiv of this first part of the IC. Consistently self-reflective, it is impressed upon the bishops that they have been marked as different. This should not be limited to their tonsure or their vestments, but also to their behaviour. They were shepherds, watchmen, and, as Isidore reminds them, that ‘is the name of a work, not of an honour’. The idea is elaborated upon in the third part of the IC, where a citation from Jerome’s letter to Nepotian explains what it meant to be a member of the elite:

A clergyman, then, as he serves Christ’s church, must first understand what his name means; and then, when he realizes this, must endeavour to be that which he is called. For since the Greek word κληρος means ‘lot’ or ‘inheritance’, the clergy are so called either because they are of the lot of the Lord, or else because the Lord Himself is the fate, that is, the inheritance of the clerics. And because he himself [a cleric] is as it were a portion of the Lord, or partakes in the Lord, he should conduct himself in such a manner that he himself possesses the Lord and is possessed by the Lord.

One did not simply become a bishop by choice, the IC explains. One should not enter the clergy for personal gain or for worldly honours, nor to garner praise. It was one’s destiny, one’s duty to bear the heavy burden of authority, to act within the secular world, and still strive for holiness – two things that were not mutually exclusive, as they clarify using Pomerius’ DVC in chapter 19 of the IC, and which was a central thesis of the works of Gregory the Great as well.

242 IC, c. 1, p. 318; DEO, lib. 2, c. 4.4.
243 IC, c. 9, p. 323; DEO, lib. 2, c. 5.2. More specifically still, IC, c. 24, p. 346; Taio, Sententiae, lib. 2, c. 35; Gregory the Great, Regula Pastoralis, lib. 2, c. 3.
244 IC, c. 9, p. 323; DEO, lib. 2, c. 5.8: ‘Episcopus autem, ut quidam prudentiam ait, nomen est operis, non honoris’. Isidore has borrowed this quote from Augustine, De Civitate Dei, lib. 19, c. 19.
245 IC, c. 94, p. 370: ‘Igitur clericus, qui Christi servit ecclesiae, interpretetur primo vocabulum suum et nominis diffinitione prolata nitatur esse quod dicitur. Si enim clerics Graece, Latine sors appellatur, propterea vocantur clerici, quia de sorte sunt Domini vel quia Dominus ipse sors, id est pars, clericorum est. Et quia velut ipse pars Domini est vel Dominum partem habet, talem se exhibere debet, ut ipse possideat Dominum et ipse possideatur a Domino’. A similar definition may be found in IC, c. 99, p. 377: see also Grifoni, ‘This is a cleric’.
246 IC, c. 38, pp. 359-360.
The text impressed upon its readers that being a bishop was a sacrifice and ultimately a humbling experience. Equally important was that, like a sacrifice, they should not succumb to excessive zeal, either. For this, they needed self-discipline and a proper education, to shield them from the dangers of being burned either from within or without. In a passage forming a bridge between the common vices of the clergy and the duties they have to fulfil, the bishops turned to Taio, who had reworked parts of Gregory the Great’s Homiliae in Ezecheliem into a culinary metaphor in which the bishop – the doctor – is shielded by an ‘iron wall’ of knowledge. This iron wall, in turn, is the sartago or ‘frying pan’ from Lev. 6:21-22, used to offer the sacrifice to the Lord, thoroughly cooked, but not burned.248 Bishops should similarly be warmed by a love for God, but prevented from turning their zeal into anger or extreme strictness.249

This was emphasized because individual bishops theoretically had no mechanism of control other than their self-discipline. As shepherds of the Lord, who held the powers of binding and loosing, they had no higher authority to answer to than God.250 Although this meant they would have to account for their deeds in the afterlife, those abusing their worldly position actually harmed their flock: the people who look up to their bishop, and who are bound to imitate his example. Their sins would be visited upon him as well, the authors stressed, invoking Ezekiel’s famous injunction that:

When [the Lord] threatens the sinner with doom of death, and word thou give him none to leave off his sinning, die he shall, as he deserves to die, but thou for his death shalt answer to me.251

If bishops were unworthy, the entire realm would suffer.252 Therefore, the IC stressed the importance of sharing the burdens of authority, urging the prelates to act together, as parts of the same episcopal body – or rather, as the head ruling over the body of Christianity.253 If the head was badly treated,

248 Taio, Sententiae, c. 34, cols. 829D-832A.
249 IC, c. 34, p. 355; see Gregory the Great, Homiliae in Hiezechihelem, 1.12.29-30. Doctor is used as ‘someone who teaches’: Teeuwen, Vocabulary of Intellectual Life, pp. 76-79.
250 IC, c. 22, p. 344, as well as c. 12, pp. 330-336, which consists of excerpts from Augustine, Sermo de Pastoribus.
251 Cf. Savigni, ‘L’église et l’épiscopat’.
252 IC, c. 14, p. 340.
253 IC, c. 26, p. 340: ‘Sed iam quid adnuntiet, audiamus. “Si me dicente ad impium: Impie, morte morieres, non fueris locutus ut se custodiat impius a via sua, ipse impius in iniquitate
its sickness would enter into the body.\textsuperscript{254} This was why the insertion of 54 canons and papal rulings made sense. Their position between two parts of more moralistic, less overtly practical sections shows that there was more to their inclusion than merely reminding the audience of the rules with which they should have already been familiar.

The duality of authorship and audience helps explain this inclusion. The composers first and foremost reminded their audience that there were venerable rules to follow. Thus, the IC includes canons going back to patristic times, starting with the famous Councils of Nicaea (325), Chalcedon (451) and Antioch (341), but including a large number of other synods – all aimed at showing that episcopal authority had a long history.\textsuperscript{255} The fact that they also attest to a long-standing relationship with imperial authority cannot have been lost on the participants of the council, either.\textsuperscript{256} Moreover, when regarded thematically, the canons did more than merely reiterate older regulations. A large number of them were concerned with morality and misplaced feelings of superiority, from a canon stating that ‘if certain clerics advanced by their own bishops are supercilious, let them not remain whence they are unwilling to come forth’, to two closely related injunctions against ‘anyone condemning him who eats flesh […] as though he were without hope [of salvation]’ and ‘those who are living a virgin life for the Lord’s sake, and who treat arrogantly the married’.\textsuperscript{257} These were concerns not about the habits of the Carolingian clergy – be they priests, \textit{clerici canonici}, or the bishops themselves – but about the moral superiority they seemed to think came with it. As they ascended the hierarchy, the combination of power and humility became more and more of an issue. Bishops were chosen by God and should neither refuse their burden nor think light of it. Neither, for that matter, should the clergy under their authority spurn advancement at the hands of their superiors either: they were part of the same \textit{ordo}, and should act accordingly, even if their greater responsibility also meant they ought to exercise greater humility.


\textsuperscript{254} IC, c. 30, p. 352: ‘Caput enim languidum doctor est agens peccatum, cuius malum ad corpus pervenit’ (‘For the powerless head is the driving force behind sins, from where bad things come to the body’).

\textsuperscript{255} Mordek, ‘Kirchenrechtliche Autoritäten’. For an overview of Carolingian canonical collections, see Kéry, \textit{Canonical Collections}.

\textsuperscript{256} Cf. De Jong, ‘Religion’, p. 137.

\textsuperscript{257} IC, c. 57 (Carthage, c. 31), p. 364; c. 65 (Gangra, c. 2), p. 365; c. 67 (Gangra, c. 10), p. 365.
Social cohesion is another main concern in this part of the *IC*. This is not only visible in the constant insistence that participants in synods had all been part of the decision-making process, but almost paradoxically also in the regulations aimed at maintaining order within the *ecclesia*.\textsuperscript{258} Priests were supposed to stay in one place, no one was allowed to interfere in another diocese or parish, and excommunications by one bishop could not be ignored by another.\textsuperscript{259} Liturgical practices such as fasts should be uniformly enacted, not exaggerated under the pretence of asceticism.\textsuperscript{260} Like the opening chapters of the *IC*, in which Isidore’s ordering of the clerical offices was reversed to ascend to the episcopacy, the canonical citations insist on hierarchy, in which ‘deacons shall have *honor* from the subdeacons and all the inferior clergy’, but they may not ‘sit down in the presence of a priest’.\textsuperscript{261} Bishops, in turn, superseded priests, archbishops stood over bishops, and synods acted as the supreme body of authority in the Church. Towering over it all stood the emperor; he did not have the power to revoke excommunications, but could be appealed to provide the plaintiff did so with the ‘consent of his metropolitan’.\textsuperscript{262} Only archbishops should have direct access to the emperor’s ear, and only a council had more authority in ecclesiastical matters, giving the ruler a place within the ecclesiastical framework, above, but not beyond the prelates composing the text.\textsuperscript{263} The emperor thus transcended clerical *ordines* without breaking free of the *ordo*.

This section of canons also includes a number of standardized rules for clerics and the sanctions they would face for breaking them. Priests were supposed to stay sober, not harbour any secular ambitions, steer clear of taverns, and, in the very first canon, are told not to live together with women, except those that are beyond suspicion.\textsuperscript{264} Next to morals and *ordo*, this presents a third major theme of this part, which leads up to the final section of the *IC*: the interaction with the world and the importance one’s good

\textsuperscript{258} *IC*, c. 60 (Laodicea 363, c. 24), p. 364, offers the following delineation of who were part of the *ordo ecclesiasticum*: ‘*a praesbiteris usque ad diaconos et reliquum ecclesiasticum ordinem, id est usque ad subdiaconos, lectores, cantores, exorcistas et ostiarios et ex numero continentum et monachorum*’ (‘from the priests until the deacons and the rest of the ecclesiastical order, that is until the subdeacons, lectors, cantors, exorcists and porters or any from among the monks’).

\textsuperscript{259} *IC*, c. 87 (Chalcedon, c. 20), p. 368. On excommunication: *IC*, c. 42 (Nicea 325, c. 5), p. 361; c. 54 (Carthago 419, c. 29), p. 363; c. 70 (Antioch, c. 2), p. 366; and especially c. 72 (Antioch, c. 6), p. 366.

\textsuperscript{260} *IC*, c. 68 (Gangra, c. 18), p. 365.

\textsuperscript{261} *IC*, c. 77 (Laodicea, c. 20), p. 367.

\textsuperscript{262} *IC*, c. 73 (Antioch, c. 11), p. 366.

\textsuperscript{263} Depreux, ‘Hiérarchie et ordre’; De Jong, ‘*Sacrum palatium*’, pp.1252-1255.

\textsuperscript{264} *IC*, c. 39 (Nicea, c. 3), p. 360.
reputation by avoiding the social stigma of *mala fama* by which those in a position of authority could lose their power along with their reputation.\(^{265}\)

This third part of the *IC* even ends on this note, quoting, among others, two sermons of Augustine, both called *On the Way of Life of the Clergy* in the *IC*.\(^{266}\) These sermons crown a series of letters by Jerome and a large number of passages from the *DVC* that were all concerned with the way the clergy should comport themselves. In these sermons, Augustine defended his community of canons against allegations of dishonesty, caused by the fact that some clerics kept possessions – which Augustine had expressly forbidden.\(^{267}\) His eloquent statements against clerical wealth notwithstanding, at the heart of the matter for the Carolingian bishops was the damage to the reputation of the community. As the Church Father put it himself: ‘There are two things, conscience and reputation; conscience for yourself, reputation for your neighbour’; those in a position of power should take care not to tarnish their reputation even if they are living well.\(^{268}\) The *IC* echoes the idea that the two should operate in harmony. As long as the clergy acted according to their good conscience, they would retain their reputation and with it, the right to act as an example to their flock:

As the apostle says, you see, ‘We have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men’ [1 Cor. 4:9]; those who love us look for something to admire in us, those who hate us malign us. We, however, set in the middle between both parties, have the duty, with the help of the Lord our God, to protect both our way of life and our reputation, lest our admirers are put to shame by our detractors.\(^{269}\)

Good *sacerdotes* should practice what they preached. They should lead by example, and do so willingly. In exchange, their upkeep would be taken care of by the faithful, the chosen people of God.

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\(^{266}\) *IC*, c. 112-113, pp. 385-394. Wieser, ‘Beyond the Church Fathers’.


\(^{268}\) *IC*, c. 112, p. 385: ‘Duae res sunt, conscientia et fama, conscientia tibi, fama proximo tuo’.

\(^{269}\) *IC*, c. 113, p. 389: ‘Quod enim ait apostolus: “Exspectaculum facti sumus mondo et angelis et hominibus”, qui nos amant quae sunt quod laudent in nobis; qui autem nos oderunt detrahunt nobis. Nos autem in utroque medio constituti adiuvante domino Deo nostro et vitam nostram et famam nostram sic custodire debemus, ut non erubescant de detractoribus laudatores’.
Correcting Communities

A short explicit links the patristic section of the IC to the ‘new’ canons:

It is clear that the Holy Church is bound to follow the example of the Fathers we have quoted, whose writings show that she flourished abundantly under the teachings of the Apostles; superiors are therefore bound to take pains always to imitate the Fathers, as subordinates are to obey, for it is by following their example and their teaching that they may attain to that blissful joy where the Fathers have gone before.\textsuperscript{270}

To the extent that the patristic florilegium was made by bishops, for bishops, it justified their position and clarified their complex relationship with the faithful, their flock, the ruler, and the Lord. They had been chosen by God, through the agency of the faithful, crowned by their tonsure and set apart not only through their appearance, but also through their blameless behaviour. Therefore, they had to ensure that they remained pure not just in the bodily sense, but also in their minds. Being ‘in the world but not of it’ was about more than maintaining their celibacy.\textsuperscript{271} It was about maintaining their integrity as priests, because only if they operated en bloc could they form the head that controls the limbs of the body that is the ecclesia, and prepare the Christian people for life in the City of God.\textsuperscript{272}

Although never overtly stated, the Augustinian streak visible in the florilegium continues throughout the ‘regular’ part of the IC. This was nowhere made clearer than in caput 114, the first chapter of the part of the Institutio that is explicitly framed as a discreet rule for the canonical clergy. Entitled ‘Which precepts are specifically to be applied to monks, and which to Christians in general’, it is the longest of this section and consists mostly of biblical passages not only exalting the apostolic life, but also demonstrating how Christians were able to live ‘in styles appropriate to [their] different gifts’, leading them towards their ‘holy mother, the heavenly

\textsuperscript{270} IC, Explicit, p. 394: ‘Quia ergo constat sanctam ecclesiam praedictorum patrum exempla sequi debere, quorum noscitur documentis post apostolica instituta ubertim coruscare, debent non solum praebi iimitando, verum etiam subditi obsequendo usquequaque studere, qualiter eorum exemplis et doctrinis parentes ad felicitatis gaudia, quo illi praecesserunt, valeant pervenire, quoniam sicut hi, qui eorum doctrinis et exemplis summa devotione oboedient, aeternis gaudiis insuruntur, ita nimium ea sectari nolentes aeternis supplicis mancipantur’.

\textsuperscript{271} De Jong, *Imitatio morum*; Beaudette, “In the world but not of it”.

\textsuperscript{272} Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle*, pp. 173-184; Booker, Past Convictions, pp. 135-136 (for a reversal of the metaphor).
Jerusalem’.273 The biblical quotations used in this chapter suggest it drew on an anti-Pelagian letter written by Augustine to Hilary of Syracuse in 414 or 415.274 It dealt heavily with questions of faith and free will, as well as ideas about law and its fraught relationship with the world, a subject of interest to the composers of the IC especially.

The first part of Letter 157 addresses the problem of Original Sin and how Christ’s sacrifice absolved the world, but also how this would not enable people to automatically attain salvation without God’s grace – the freedom they had been given was the freedom to choose the medicine administered by Christ, who in turn enabled them to live up to His expectations.275 For Augustine, Christ’s rule ‘teaches us what we ought to will’.276 It made God’s will understandable by humans, which in turn enabled good Christians to recognize personal ‘transgressions’ as sins, thus allowing them, individually, to do better and thereby get a glimpse of the good life.277 Connected to this is the problem of wealth and personal possessions, which is dealt with in the second part of the letter: Was being wealthy a sin in and of itself, as claimed by the Pelagians?278 Augustine answered this question with a resounding no: the Bible never indicated that wealth was a bad thing.279 There were nevertheless dangers to being rich. Most importantly, it was easy to forget that you owed your prosperity to God, which in turn opened you up to sins like avarice or pride.280 Even if the apostolic life is, in principle, the better one, it would be wrong to condemn ‘the lesser good deeds’ while ‘rousing people to the greater good’; someone who was generous and virtuous, and thus used ‘the gift he has from God’, was just as likely to attain Heaven as someone who, like a monk, had relinquished all possessions and live a truly perfect life.281 After all, Augustine concluded, ‘what I hold about the Church of Christ in the World is that it must carry within her both good and bad

273 IC, c. 114, p. 397.
275 Augustine, Epistola 157, cc. 2-8, cols. 674-677.
276 Augustine, Epistola 157, c. 10, col. 678: ‘Ad abundantiam igitur delictorum lex nos docet, quid uelle debeamus, nisi adiuvet gratia, ut, quod volumus, valeamus et, quod valuerimus, impleamus’.
277 Augustine, Epistola 157, c. 17, col. 681.
278 Rees, Pelagius, pp. 171-173; cf. Augustine, Epistula 156 (written by Hilarius to Augustine), cols. 673-674.
279 Augustine, Epistola 157, c. 23, col. 686.
280 Augustine, Epistola 157, c. 26, col. 686.
281 Augustine, Epistola 157, c. 37, col. 691.
people until the end of this world’. 282 That did not make the (material) world a bad place, but a dangerous one.

Although Augustine’s Letter 157 is mostly quoted through the biblical quotations in IC 114, its ideas may be found throughout the IC and even the entire Early Middle Ages. 283 For instance, the idea that those not living an apostolic life may still aspire to holiness had been brought up using Pomerius and Jerome already, whereas Gregory the Great’s assertion that to be a bishop was to be a ‘sacrifice’ implied the absence of choice, even though it should not prevent them from trying their best regardless. 284 On the other hand, this Augustinian link also demonstrates why the bishops’ responsibilities would not convey unto them any form of superiority. They were reminded that ‘no-one, no matter how powerful, could know whether their actions were in accord with the inscrutable agency of God’s grace’. 285 Their authority may have been granted by God, but that only provided them with the means to give their flocks the possibility of choosing His grace. They should therefore guard themselves against ‘spiritual élitism’ as well as against the baser threats posed by the world – a world that they, unlike monks, could not avoid.

This posed an interesting conundrum. It went right to the heart of the IC’s narrative goals and touched upon monastic and canonical communities alike. This was about church possessions, about wealth and how to deal with it. As the IC implied, monks only lived a secluded, apostolic life because bishops watched over them and allowed them sustenance out of the possessions of the church. The implication was that they were theoretically shielded by their cloistered existence and their adherence to a regula, but bishops could nonetheless impose themselves on the one link these communities had with the world outside: their land. 286 This was where monks still required episcopal protection, and, mutatis mutandis, where they remained under episcopal responsibility. ‘The life of canons and monks should not differ when it comes to avoiding vice and cultivating virtue’, the IC intones. 287

282 Augustine, Epistola 157, c. 40, cols. 692-693: ‘Unde quia ex hac quidem occasione sed tamen iam breviter dixi, quid etiam de ecclesia Christi in hoc saeculo sentiam, id est quia usque ad huius saeculi finem necesse est portet bonos et malos’. This is, essentially, the corpus permixtum mentioned above.
283 Goetz, ‘Idéologie (et anti-idéologie)’.
284 This is a line of reasoning also visible in Smaragdus, Diadema Monachorum, c. 67: accepting one’s fate/faith (as a Christian) means breaking free of servitude from the law and attaining freedom to follow God’s ‘rules’ by one’s own volition.
285 Leyser, Authority and Asceticism, p. 7.
286 This was not a new issue either: Rosenwein, Negotiating Space, pp. 32-36.
287 IC, c. 115, p. 397: ‘non tamen in cavendis vitiis et amplectendis virtutibus eorum a monachorum distare debet vita’.
This was a challenge more than an affirmation to canonical communities, who, unlike monks, were not shielded from secular affairs by their *regula* or the episcopal assistance they received managing the *res ecclesiae*.

Bishops – and the canonical clergy in general, ‘who can lawfully draw on their own resources as well as on those of the Church’ – were more vulnerable to temptation than monks.288 Their lives were not set in a monastic reflection of paradise, but in a world that harbours good and evil next to one another. Carolingian canons were not supposed to be monks.289 Their communities were not as shielded as monastic communities were, and the clergy living there was more prone to sin.290 To keep the members of those communities from erring was added to the task of their pastor.

These and similar problems were mostly addressed in the first two sections of the *IC*, which was not a comprehensive set of rules per se, but a series of elaborations on the patristic and canonical precepts contained in the *florilegium*. It was shown how these rules worked in practice, for communities that lived behind walls – hence the importance of porters – but which remained ‘open to the world outside’ all the same.291 These were precepts for a good Christian life, meant to shield those who heeded them even when they ventured outside to perform their pastoral duties.292 Within the confines of the *IC*, maintaining these ‘internal cloisters’ was one of the main functions of the *praepositus*. As much as Benedict of Nursia warned against having the episcopacy enmeshed in monastic affairs, for the composers of the *IC*, bishops were tasked not only with caring for the physical enclosure of canonical communities, but also with ‘strengthening the minds of his subordinates […] lest the invisible wolf find a passage to enter the Lord’s sheepfold’.293 He was to do so both ‘in a spiritual sense’ and with ‘strong walls all around’. Failure to take proper care of his flock made him liable to be punished by God. For transgressions against worldly rules, however, bishops would also face the judgement of a synod.294 Again, it shows how bishops who were responsible for their flock were also tasked with policing their peers.

288 *IC*, c. 115, p. 397. See also *IC*, c. 116, p. 398.
289 Oexle, ‘Les moines d’occident’; Heitz, ‘De Chrodegang à Cluny II’.
290 Claussen, *Reform of the Frankish Church*, pp. 58-59 and p. 70.
293 *IC*, c. 117, p. 398: ‘Praepositorum officii est, ut subditorum mentes sanctarum scripturarum lectionibus assidue muniant, ne lupus invisibilis aditum inveniat, quo ovile Domini ingredi et aliquam ovium subripere valeat’.
294 *IC*, c. 117, p. 398.
By starting the final part of the IC with this distinction between monks and everybody else, the composers confirmed that maintaining the separate status of monasteries in the Carolingian empire remained a challenge. So was coming to terms with the existence of canonical communities. Both had their place within the existing order, neither was inherently superior to the other, and both had rules that they should adhere to. For monasteries, these would be documented, as anything from a ‘Holy Rule’ to an exemplary vita – both of which might also serve as commentaries on their position in the world. 295 Thus, in spite of the practical shortcomings of a written rule in reality, the idea underlying the IC was that the lives of monks would be regulated in absolute terms. 296 This was a luxury they could afford, the IC implies, because the virtues of their bishop shielded them from the dangers of the world. In return, monasteries not only wielded the power of prayer, but were also expected to share the knowledge gained during their ‘perfect’ lives, and radiate their holiness outwards.

The clergy around a bishop depended on him for guidance. 297 They were more visible than monks, especially since they were expected to perform their pastoral duties both inside their own city and in the wider context of their civitas or diocese. 298 Consequently, the move to institute canonical communities and to follow Chrodegang of Metz’s lead in providing them with guidelines on how to live their lives may have been born from an increased desire to keep them close and disciplined: as the boundaries between the two types of community blurred, a more institutionalized distinction became necessary. As argued by Stephen Ling in his PhD dissertation, this was deemed necessary in part precisely because of the novelty of Chrodegang’s text: his Regula needed to be firmly grounded in the authoritative canons of the past. 299 It is for this reason that the source material for both overlaps to such an extent, whereas the two texts do end up taking different approaches to the challenges laid before them.

Both canonical and monastic communities were defined by the learned men living there, held together by the claustrum at the centre. Now, the

295 Diem, ‘Carolingians and the Regula Benedicti’.
297 IC, c. 145, p. 420.
299 Ling, Cloister and Beyond.
Carolingian drive to order society required that they be distinguished in a more official manner. The guiding principle was similar to that behind the local *correctio* that was applied to village priests: partly intended to ensure their loyalty to the regulations formulated by those above them, and partly to ensure that proper Christianity would trickle down to the general populace.\textsuperscript{300} In both cases, these clerical regulations were not simply rules to follow or ignore. The aim of the *IC* was also to help canons internalize the Christianity that was supported by the court and to make these priests, lectors, exorcists and porters worthy of their tonsure. The remainder of the *IC* dealt with the amount of possessions (and food) canons were allowed to have, the dangers inherent in receiving them, and the challenge of allowing new members into the community, together presenting the ‘system’ the Aachen Council had set out to create.\textsuperscript{301} It was an Augustinian system, and a Gregorian, but also a Carolingian one, in which everybody knew their place for the greater good, and in which the court and the emperor were doing what they could to prevent their subjects from committing sins.\textsuperscript{302}

The key to all this was that cornerstone of Carolingian cultural policy: education. As was made clear throughout the *IC*, this was a two-way process. Bishops were teachers and students, subordinating themselves to the teachings of the Bible, while also conferring their knowledge to the clergy under them. This was the essence of the Carolingian episcopacy: the ability to provide the faithful with ‘twofold nourishment’, or the ability to ‘know what you teach’ while also teaching what they know.\textsuperscript{303}

**Communicating *Correctio***

It is in this regard that the court’s presence becomes most obvious, and where a link with the groundwork laid under Charlemagne is visible: it could not have escaped anyone present that the imperial court was acting

\textsuperscript{300} On the implementation of this more localized *correctio*, see Van Rhijn, *Shepherds*.

\textsuperscript{301} On the different approaches to communal life in the *Regula* of Chrodegang and this part of the *IC*, see Ling, *Cloister and Beyond*, pp. 159-198.

\textsuperscript{302} On whether or not there was anything like a programme of ‘political Augustinianism’ first proposed by Arquillière, *L’Augustinianisme Politique*, see Contreni, ‘Carolingian Era, early’, p. 125: ‘what Carolingian readers knew of Augustine provided the raw material they drew upon with surprising degrees of freedom to address issues that concerned their society’; cf. Close, ‘*O insecabilis unitas?*’. *IC*, c. 114, pp. 396-397.

\textsuperscript{303} *IC*, c. 123, pp. 403-404. On *disce quod doceas*, see, for example, c. 94, pp. 370-371; c. 96, p. 389. Steckel, *Kulturen des Lehrens*, p. 120.
as the entity providing this ‘twofold nourishment’ to the bishops, teaching those who were to lead by example themselves.\textsuperscript{304} This may be seen in the \textit{Prologus} to the \textit{IC}, where the organization of the synod and the role of Louis the Pious in its proceedings were described. Additionally, the letters sent to the archbishops Sicharius of Bordeaux and Arn of Salzburg shed light on the system behind these good intentions, and show the court in action once again. Both bishops were absent from the council, and both were sent a copy of the \textit{IC} to inform them of the decisions made.

The \textit{Prologus} begins by explaining the deplorable state of the Church by referring to the ignorance and/or laziness of neglectful \textit{praepositi} – a clear sign that something was amiss at the meeting point between the \textit{ecclesia} and the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{305} More importantly, the text shows a ruler taking control. In an early indication that the emperor wanted to present himself as the one overseeing the overseers, it is detailed how it was he who ‘summoned a holy and general Council to the palace at Aachen’ in order to ‘initiate […] many harmonious and necessary measures for the improvement of the Holy Church of God’.\textsuperscript{306} Louis the Pious ‘consulted [\textit{consulere}] the said holy and venerable council […] and admonished all by giving counsel [\textit{consulendo admoneret}] it as well’, an interesting play on the verb \textit{consulere} as indicating both the giving and the taking of advice. Furthermore, he also admonished them to make the very \textit{florilegium} now known as the \textit{IC} in order to educate ‘the simpleminded and less intelligent’ clerics, but also to explain what it meant to be a bishop, and to ensure that those ‘belong to the canonical profession’ would know which path to take.\textsuperscript{307}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{305} \textit{IC}, Prologus, p. 312: ‘immo consulendo admoneret super quibusdam ecclesiarum praepositis, qui partim ignorantia, partim desidia subditorum curam parvipendebant et hospitalitatem minus iusto diligebant, quid facto opus esset’ (Among other matters it happened that he consulted the said holy and venerable council, which had met with the favour of God and decreed that all should so consult it, on what should be done about certain provosts of churches who were taking insufficient care over their subordinates, and were less than generous in their hospitality, partly through ignorance, partly through laziness’, trans. Bertram, \textit{Chrodegang Rules}, p. 132).
\textsuperscript{307} \textit{IC}, Prologus, p. 312: ‘quatenus omnes, qui canonica censentur professione, per viam propostiti sui inoffenso gressu incederunt et in Christi militia devotius unanimmes atque concordes existerunt’.
\end{flushleft}
The assembled prelates were happy to follow this admonition. In a passage rich in the vocabulary of empire, they rejoiced in their ‘pious and benevolent prince who was wise and devout in providing for all the needs of the Church’, and set about drawing a ‘description of that way of life as the emperor had instructed them’. It was even noted explicitly that many of them were already familiar with that canonical way of life, in order to emphasize that they were not reinventing the wheel.\footnote{IC, Prologus, p. 312: ‘Ad quam etiam admonitionem sacer conventus intimo gaudio repletus, expansis in caelum manibus, creatori omnium gratias agens benedixit, quippe qui tales tam pium tamque benignum ecclesiae suae sanctae principem cunctisque eius necessitatibus sapientissimum ac devotissimum praetulerit procuratorem. Suscipientes ergo libentissime hilariterque eius saluberrimam multis Deo miserante profuturam admonitionem licet plerique auxiliante Christo devote ac relegiose cum sibi subjectis canonica servent institutionem et in plerisque locis idem ordo plenissime servetur, omnium tamen id animis sedit, ut secundum eiusdem principis admonitionem’.} Moreover, they were able to do so because Louis gave them:

Access to a great abundance of books, from which they could select authoritative canons and writings of the Fathers, as one might gather flowers from different meadows.\footnote{IC, Prologus, pp. 313: ‘una divino freti auxilio et eiusdem piissimi principis non modico adiuti iuvamine, eius videlicet liberalissima largitione copiam librorum prae manibus habentes, ex canonica auctoritate et sanctorum patrum dictis, veluti ex diversis pratis quosdam flosculos carpentes, hanc institutionis formam exacerperent et canoniceis observandam conferrent’.}

Thanks to the imperial court, the bishops were not only admonished to do something about the education of their canonical clergy, but also put in a position to act accordingly. Given the compilatory nature of the IC, the insistence on the books made available by Louis the Pious is important. With this statement, the emperor was identified as the one providing the sources for the re-education of the clergy. This point was further developed in the narrative of how the canons were accepted:

Then the most victorious princeps and all who were present shouted, ‘Thanks be to God!’; and nor were they wrong to do so, for it was God himself who for his inscrutable purposes and by his gracious inspiration had persuaded the said emperor to promote it, and in his mercy had helped him bring it into effect.\footnote{IC, Prologus, p. 313: ‘ab eodem victoriosissimo principe et ab omnibus, qui aderant, ‘Deo gratias’ adclamatum est. Nec inmerito: quippe qui et occulta sua dispensatione et gratissima inspiracione prefatum principem, ut id moveret fieri, compulit et, ut ad effectum perducaretur, miserando adiuvit’.}
While the inspiration may have come from God, the actual groundwork was done by the more erudite members of the council. The facilities and content of the court library had enabled their efforts.\textsuperscript{311} This is indicated, for example, by the fact that the canons used in the \textit{IC} all seem to stem from the canonical collection known as the \textit{Dionysio-Hadriana}, given by pope Hadrian to Charlemagne upon the latter’s visit to Rome in 774.\textsuperscript{312} This text symbolized the connection between Rome and Aachen, which might therefore indicate that the bishops wanted to channel the authority of Rome into Aachen without being fully dependent upon it.\textsuperscript{313} After all, the divine inspiration behind the \textit{IC} had gone through the emperor. He, together with those who ‘unanimously agreed’ on the text, would be responsible for the implementation of the new order.\textsuperscript{314}

It may be that the scribes were pandering to the emperor here, casting his role in the proceedings in a more positive light than reality would permit. Nevertheless, this was one of the goals of the text. This document presented the Frankish bishops with a chance to define their role in the world, but it was acknowledged that they needed to do so in relation to the empire and the court that enabled them to do so in the first place.\textsuperscript{315} It was also a way for the new emperor to establish himself as a benevolent ruler of the \textit{ecclesia}, and his court as the centre of his educational efforts.\textsuperscript{316}

This also follows from the copies sent by Louis the Pious to two prelates who had not been to Aachen, archbishops Sicharius of Bordeaux and Arn of Salzburg. Their representatives, Adalhelm and Notho, respectively, were sent home with a full version of the text (including the \textit{Institutio Sanctimonialium}), together with a letter from the emperor, containing his plans for the implementation of the ideas proposed at the council.\textsuperscript{317}

\textsuperscript{311} On the contents of this library under Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, see Bischoff, ‘Hofbibliothek Karls des Großen’, and Bischoff, ‘Die Hofbibliothek unter Ludwig dem Frommen’; see also Bullough, ‘Charlemagne’s Court Library’.
\textsuperscript{313} Fried, ‘Ludwig der Fromme’, takes a very mechanistic view of the relation between the two, arguing that the Carolingian reforms an attempt to establish independence from papal primacy; this misrepresents the relation between Rome and Aachen, both of which profited equally from a strong religious identity north of the Alps: Noble, ‘Papacy’.
\textsuperscript{314} \textit{IC}, Prologus, p. 313.
\textsuperscript{315} Haberl, ‘Hofbibliothek’, overstates the role of the court in ‘enforcing’ these reforms, but convincingly assesses the importance of the library and the idea of authenticity it represented for the pursuit of reforms.
\textsuperscript{316} See also Contreni, ‘Pursuit of knowledge’.
\textsuperscript{317} Louis the Pious, \textit{Epistolae ad Archiepiscopos}.
Archbishop Magnus of Sens, who had to leave early, was also sent a definitive version of the IC, with accompanying letter and two missi to assist him in the name of Louis. These letters form a great addition to the IC as a document of ecclesiastical policy. They supplement the image presented in the conciliar acts about the involvement of the court in the ongoing process of Church reform, and also illustrate in a practical sense how Louis dealt with the interdependence between court, canon and cloister outlined by the IC.

The letters are very similar, although a few noteworthy differences embellish the image they give when viewed together. They all start by referencing the ‘sacred and venerable Council assembled recently under the blessing of God and at our request in the palace at Aachen’, although it is clear immediately that Magnus of Sens had actually been present. He was personally involved in the decision to send a copy of the definitive text to Sens, whereas the other two bishops were reminded that a council had taken place with a terse: ‘We are confident that this has not escaped the notice of Your Holiness’. The letters emphasize the importance of the IC as it had been established: in accordance with their ministerium, the recipients were to summon the bishops under them so that ‘the text of the Rule [...] may be read out to them, chapter by chapter’, so they could learn how ‘the sacred council produced it in order to promote the dignity of the leaders of the Church and the salvation of souls’. Then, the bishops may copy the IC for themselves, but only, the emperor stresses, ‘in such a manner that it is not distorted by a careless writer, or in any way abbreviated by anyone’ – a warning that had apparently not been heeded by everybody.

These last points are especially important, as they reminded the bishops where the text came from: the court. A definitive copy would be ‘stored in the archive of the palace’, and that copy should serve as the benchmark for all subsequent versions – not, as added in the letters sent to Magnus and Sicharius, an earlier redaction that had earlier been erroneously read to the council. By insisting that the version of the IC in Aachen was the

320 Louis the Pious, *Epistolae ad Archiepiscopos*, p. 459: ‘ut ab his, qui eam transcripturi sunt, ita transcribatur, ut nec depravata vitio scriptoris nec detruncata ab aliquo fiat, sed, sicut a praedicto misso nostro eis demonstratum fuerit, absque aliqua depravatione vel detruncatione transcribatur’.
321 Louis the Pious, *Epistolae ad Archiepiscopos*, pp. 459-460: ‘Noveris etiam, quia ideo illius exemplum apud armarium palatii nostri detentum est, ut eo probari patenter possit, quis eam
definitive one, Louis effectively extended the importance of the court as established in the Prologue: at first the council was dependent on the books furnished by the emperor, and now, the court assumed responsibility over the purity of the end product, a text that has been made *sacrum* by virtue of the fact that it was composed by a council. The text had earned its place next to the venerable *RB*, of which a copy had allegedly been procured by Louis’ father at Montecassino. In that sense, it is noteworthy that this passage was omitted in its entirety from the letter sent to Arn; perhaps Louis did not feel the need to mention this to the experienced courtier, but it seems more probable that its omission follows from the observation that prelates from the dioceses of Bordeaux and Sens were present, whereas nobody from Salzburg attended, ensuring that only the definitive version had reached the Bavarian archdiocese. Participation was and remained the key to influence.

The letters warned the archbishops that ‘next September’ *missi* would be sent throughout the empire to check ‘which of the prelates are performing the duties laid on him diligently; which ones have obeyed our commands about building enclosures and other closures for the canons’, and ‘which ones have been so avaricious as to deny the support they could reasonably have given to those who serve Christ’. These envoys reported directly to the imperial court, so Louis would know who to reward, and who to ‘make into an example to strike fear into others’. Curiously, the instructions to the bishops (and the *missi*) may have differed slightly according to the recipient of the letters. Magnus, Arn and Sicharius were all notified that the imperial envoys had to oversee the copying and distribution of the text of the *IC* within their diocese. Whereas the latter two archbishops were told that the *missi* had to complete or take charge of this task, however, for Magnus, who had been present at the council and should therefore have realized the importance of this charge, the *missi* were there to assess the situation. Similarly, when Louis forewarned
the recipients of his letters of the coming of the *missi*, he wrote to Arn and Sicharius that:

> The space of one year is allowed for the performance of the things decreed above, so that where they have not yet been done, they can be easily carried out.\(^{326}\)

Magnus, on the other hand, already knew of this one-year buffer period, so the emperor wrote him that he would assign people to clear away any remaining opposition if ‘those we sent ahead’ had not been able to suitably do so within the year.\(^{327}\) This grace period is nowhere mentioned in the actual text of the *IC*, and when Louis writes ‘as you are aware’ in the letter to Magnus it appears that the bishops had already been instructed about this at the palace in Aachen. The versions sent to the archbishops of Salzburg and Bordeaux were accompanied by more than mere cover letters. The letters represented the synod and its decisions, but the *missi* who carried them had the full weight of imperial authority behind them.\(^{328}\) As Louis made clear, this superseded the power of individual bishops.

### Channelling Authority

The *IC* was a moral treatise first and a set of rules for canons second. As a whole, it illustrates the interaction between imperial power and ecclesiastical elites at the start of the reign of Louis the Pious. The emperor, as rector, instigated this whole project and, by implication, took responsibility for its outcome. The bishops, on the other hand, were expected to teach what they had been taught at court, and thereby share the divine burden of the emperor to carry out the proposed ‘reforms’. The sentiment was elegantly

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328 On the authority of letters and those bearing them, see McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 218-222.
summarized in the closing sentence of the emperor’s letters to the absentee archbishops:

It is truly proper and just that, in the measure in which you are exalted above others by the dignity of your high priesthood, and are held by us in reverence and affection, all the more you shall show yourself prompt and dutiful in obeying the will of God, which is our own.\footnote{329}

Completing the circle of interdependence, Louis nevertheless still required the bishops to pray for him.\footnote{330}

The authors behind the IC sought to redefine the function of authority itself, and its role within an ecclesia in which everyone should have equal chances of receiving God’s grace. In order to make this possible, it was important not only to establish everybody’s place within the Carolingian order, but also to define the roles and responsibilities of everybody who was a part of the elite, who would be in a position to enable others to attain the heavenly Jerusalem. The IC should not be seen as merely a set of regulations for canonical communities under the aegis of those discussing said rules. It was a reflection on the authority of the prelates, formulated by these very same prelates as they composed their own speculum. They were not putting old wine into new skins. This was a text about the essence of episcopal power, embedded in a hierarchical model that relied as much on responsibility as on obedience, if not more so.\footnote{331} The story of its inception and its dissemination confirms that imperial and episcopal authority went hand in hand during the councils of Aachen, and continued to do so in the minds of its participants. In the course of this narrative, the authors justified their own position.

The place of monks and canons vis-à-vis their bishop, their abbot or their ruler was but one of many themes in the IC. Drawing lines between all types of ‘living together’ remained the subject of heavy debate.\footnote{332} It was not simply

\footnote{329}{Louis the Pious, \textit{Epistolae ad Archiepiscopos}, p. 464: ‘Dignum quippe iustumque est, ut, quanto sublimius sacerdotii dignitate aliiis superemeris et a nobis venerabiliter diligeris, tanto magis ad Dei nostramque voluntatem exequandam devotionem te atque promptiorem exhibeas. Vale in Domino et ora pro nobis’. The addition of \textit{iustumque} is absent in the letter to Magnus.}

\footnote{330}{Generally, see Choy, \textit{Intercessory Prayer}, pp. 131-160.}

\footnote{331}{Compare Choy, ‘Deposit of monastic faith’, on what she calls the ‘essence of monasticism’ (p. 81) and how this was also described using a multitude of sources.}

\footnote{332}{Noble, ‘Monastic ideal’, pp. 248-249; Rosenwein, \textit{Negotiating Space}, pp. 115-134; the contributions to an upcoming volume (Kramer, Kurdziel and Ward, \textit{Categorising the Church}) will focus specifically on the separation between monastic and canonical communities in the early ninth century.}
a question of defining one single community in uniform surroundings, and neither did the prelates involved feel qualified to elevate one single ideal to a normative level. Instead, the councils of 813 and the *Institutio Canonicorum* should be seen as proposals on how to deal with the multiplicity of options available to the Carolingian *ecclesia*.

The preferential treatment of the *RB* was one way of coping with this diversity. Other than that, the massive compilation made in Aachen in 816 gives the impression that the bishops were not attempting to uniformize the Church, but to demonstrate how one might live in the best way possible inspite of persisting differences. After all, everybody bore some degree of responsibility for everyone else’s salvation, but some were more heavily burdened than others.333

This flexibility was already implicit in the texts produced. The compilers of the *IC* compared their work to ‘gathering little flowers from different meadows’, and used the otherwise obscure Visigothic Bishop Taio’s summary of Gregory’s works instead of actually revisiting the works of the pope. The opening of the *IC*, detailing the different grades of the ecclesiastical order described by Isidore of Seville, are reminiscent of the beginning of the Council of Reims, where different functions within the *ecclesia* were likened to figures from the biblical past in words that also echo Isidore. Finally, although this chapter has mainly focused on the rhetoric supporting episcopal authority and the way those involved in creating these texts framed their own place in the greater social whole, it should be noted that many of the behavioural rules given in 813 were actually repeated in the *IC*. Often, this was done with the same concerns for the virtue of the clergy on the one hand, and the upholding of their reputation on the other; drunkenness, concubinage, corruption and the misuse of church buildings, among others, were abuses to be avoided not only because they were sinful, but also because they would tarnish the reputation of priests, the bishops who were responsible for them, etc. The rules were thus not exclusively aimed at forcing priests, monks and canons to act in a certain way, but also presented a way to explain how to maintain the moral high ground and thus their own authority.

Even with the limited number of sources tapped and the broad scope they nonetheless have, it seems clear that the ecclesiastical elites, centred on the palace in Aachen, wanted to present itself as a stable community, held together by a shared pool of texts and a common way of discussing them. These texts took on many different meanings depending on the context.

333 Staubach, ‘Populum Dei’.
within which they operated. Nonetheless, the letters, compilations, capitularies and conciliar acts cited were all products of that same community, and reflected concerns, hopes and anxieties shared among its members. As such, they represent a particular way of dealing with the challenges presented by the court. More importantly, they shared a willingness to develop this discourse by means of a perpetual debate within the community, and with those that were situated on – or just outside – the margins. The inheritance of Louis the Pious accelerated rather than dampened their willingness to reflect on the nature of the empire. The first step towards resolving any challenge on the path of the Carolingians was to establish a conversation between the parties involved. The court, having established itself as the instigator of such dialogues in the course of the eighth century, arguably reached its zenith during the reign of Louis the Pious. If the composition and promulgation of the IC marked a high point in this development, this should by no means be seen to imply that that particular chapter of the debate about the ecclesia had been closed. This was a debate that was opened when Jesus told his followers to 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s', that was continued in the age of Constantine, and that was still going strong at the turn of the ninth century. The use of the councils of 813 in tenth- and eleventh-century compilations on church reform, for instance, shows that these matters were still pressing centuries later. Moreover, the common core of texts shows that writing conciliar acta was a rhetorical device in itself. It showed how the ideas around which the Carolingian discourse community revolved were evolving with each debate.

No text is an island. Around the same time as the composition of the Institutio Canonicorum, the palace in Aachen was buzzing with activity and productivity, and among the compositions features a whole corpus of longer and shorter normative texts pertaining to the daily life in monastic communities. The many different reactions to the initiatives from Aachen reflect as many different attempts to make these measures palatable for local communities, most of which seemed to have been willing to attach themselves to the ideology of an imperial ecclesia as propagated from the court, but not at the cost of their own identities and traditions. To them, unity

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334 Sassier, Royauté et Idéologie, pp. 131-135.
335 See, for example, Semmler, 'Administration und Schriftlichkeit', who, on p. 78 draws attention to the IC and the letters to Arno, Sicharius and Magnus. Moore, Sacred Kingdom, pp. 286-287.
336 A large number of these may be found in Hallinger, Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum 1.
and diversity were not mutually exclusive. From a courtly point of view, (moral) authority was vital, though, and it is important not to forget that matters of power and authority and the acceptance of imperial centrality set the agenda of many such debates. The work done in Aachen in the first five years of the reign of Louis the Pious neither marked the end of a development, nor the start of a new way of thinking. It was part of an ongoing story, an ongoing debate, and it was still far from over.

In order to showcase an influential strain of thought about the nature of rulership and its role within the *ecclesia* at the time, the next chapter will look at ideals of authority and Christian living formulated by one of the most prominent intellectuals operating at the Carolingian court. This was Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel, who had taken it upon himself to educate his peers about the correct way of living. In doing so, he presented a more theoretical, lucid approach to the issues treated in the *IC*. Distilling the many visions of empire he encountered at court, Smaragdus' goal was to instil upon his audience a clear sense of right and wrong, a sense of the responsibilities they had to bear, and, most importantly, a clear sense of direction on the *via regia* that would lead them towards salvation.
