

# *Shrine and Idol Destruction in Three Carolingian Hagiographic Texts*

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*Examination of shrine and idol destruction stories included in three hagiographic texts rewritten by elite Carolingian authors shows that this thematic element may illuminate the concerns and horizon of expectation of the revisers. Destruction episodes contributed to stories of eponymous heroes that shaped the heritage and identity of monastic communities, and even seemed worth projecting into the ancient Christian past. In the absence of uniform disciplinary and doctrinal guidance regarding relics, stories of the destruction of unholy matter may also have delineated the boundary separating legitimate from illegitimate devotional objects and practices.*

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References to the destruction of what were almost always said to be pagan shrines and idols appear often in hagiographic texts rewritten in the Carolingian period. Recent studies have examined the intentions, outlook and circumstances of ninth-century authors in the Frankish realms who reworked earlier saints' *Lives* and passions, but rarely with attention to idol and shrine destruction episodes as a thematic element.<sup>1</sup> One reason for this may be that the brevity of most references to

AASS = *Acta sanctorum*; BHL = *Bibliotheca hagiographica Latina*; CSEL = *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*; MGH = *Monumenta Germaniae historica: Conc. = Concilia; Epp. = Epistolae; SRM = Scriptorum rerum Merovingicarum; SS = Scriptorum (in folio)*

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<sup>1</sup> Monique Goulet, 'Vers une Typologie des réécritures hagiographiques, à partir de quelques exemples du nord-est de la France: avec une édition synoptique des deux *Vies* de saint Èvre de Toul', in Monique Goulet and Martin Heinzelmänn (eds), *La Réécriture hagiographique dans l'occident médiéval: transformations formelles et idéologiques*, Paris 2003, 109–44; Monique Goulet and Martin Heinzelmänn (eds), *Miracles, vies, et réécritures dans l'occident médiéval: actes de l'Atelier »La réécriture des Miracles« (IHAP, Juin 2004) et SHG X–XII: dossiers des saints de Metz et Laon et de saint Saturnin de Toulouse*, Paris 2006. The annual *Hagiographica* of the Società Internazionale per lo Studio del Medioevo

destruction leaves scholars little to work with. Another may be that the routine, commonplace and stereotyped character of nearly all such reports seems unlikely to have much connection to events in the world of the Carolingian revisers. References that Carolingian authors made to pagan practices arouse suspicion because their 'preoccupation with authority, orthodoxy and correctness' often led those authors to label as pagan a variety of ideas and practices that the 'authorities could not abolish, transform or control', and at least some of which were not religious at all.<sup>2</sup> A sign that this is a missed opportunity comes from the late antique ecclesiastical historians and hagiographers, whose accounts of idol- and shrine-toppling often went beyond chronicling deeds to present those destructive acts as meaningful within the larger narrative contexts and in anticipation of the interests and taste of certain audiences.<sup>3</sup> Even reports of destructive acts that had taken place within living memory, such as Willibald's story of Boniface felling the oak at Geismar, did more than simply record the event. Destruction episodes appeared and had a role within larger texts which were crafted in particular circumstances with some audience in mind. Their meaning in the context of the wider narratives in which they occurred is not simply the same as the ostensible struggle against non-Christian or superstitious practices on the ground. For this reason, any effort to understand this or that reported act of idol-smashing must consider the meaning, purpose and anticipated audience of the story of that act in the text in which it appeared.<sup>4</sup>

Latino has often published studies on the reception, revision and reuse of earlier texts. See also Richard Corradini, Maximilian Diesenberger and Meta Niederkorn-Bruck (eds), *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: frühmittelalterliche Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik*, Vienna 2010. One study that has noticed idol destruction is Albrecht Diem, 'Die *Regula Columbani* und die *Regula Sancti Galli*: Überlegungen zu den Gallusviten in ihrem karolingischen Kontext', in Franziska Schnoor, Karl Schmuki, Ernst Tremp, Peter Erhart and Jakob Kuratli Hübli (eds), *Gallus und seine Zeit: Leben, Wirken, Nachleben, Monasterium Sancti Galli*, vii, Saint Gallen 2015, 65–97 at p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> Yitzhak Hen, 'The early medieval West', in David J. Collins (ed.), *The Cambridge history of magic and witchcraft in the West from antiquity to the present*, Cambridge 2015, 183–206 at pp. 188, 191.

<sup>3</sup> Mar Marcos, 'Religious violence and hagiography in late antiquity', *Numen* lxii (2015), 169–96; Ulrich Gotter, 'Rechtgläubige–Pagane–Häretiker: Tempelzerstörungen in der Kirchengeschichtsschreibung und das Bild der Christlichen Kaiser', in Johannes Hahn, Stephen Emmel and Ulrich Gotter (eds), *From temple to church: destruction and renewal of local cultic topography in late antiquity*, Leiden 2008, 43–89; Ulrich Gotter, 'Thekla gegen Apoll. Überlegungen zur Transformation regionaler Sakraltopographie in der Spätantike', *Klio* lxxxv (2003), 189–211.

<sup>4</sup> Acknowledging that Willibald's account, *Vita Bonifatii* vi, ed. Wilhelm Levison, MGH, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum* lvii, Hannover 1905, 31–2, including the episode of the oak at Geismar, was indebted to earlier stories and was written for a certain audience, need not entail that the episode did not take place: James Palmer,

In order to show the value of considering this thematic element, the present study examines destruction stories included in revisions of earlier hagiographic texts written in the second quarter of the ninth century by three prominent Carolingian authors, namely Jonas of Orléans, Walahfrid Strabo and Paschasius Radbertus. In each case the reviser modified or added a reference to idol or shrine destruction in ways that seem to illuminate his particular circumstances, interest and horizon of expectation. These rewritten texts furnished portraits of saintly patrons updated according to the tastes and perspective of the upper tier of Frankish Church and society. A noticeable feature of each of these portraits was hostility to shrines, idols and in one case also sacred groves. Jonas emphasised the desirability of convincing former pagans to destroy the idols they had worshipped. More surprising is Walahfrid's transformation of the earlier text's pagans into Christians who had lapsed into superstitious veneration of their patron saints. Also striking is Radbertus' addition of the destruction of shrines, idols and sacred groves to the history of the Church before the reign of Diocletian. A further possibility is that these three modifications of references to shrine and idol destruction reflect a shared concern of some members of the Frankish ecclesiastical élite to exert a normative, guiding influence over the uncodified customary practices surrounding the veneration of saints' relics. Altered stories from the *Lives* and *Passions* of the saints may have offered a means of influencing the thought and imagination both of the custodians of saints' relics and of those who visited saints' shrines.

### *Jonas of Orléans*

Bishop Jonas of Orléans mentioned idol destruction in his revision of an earlier *Life* of Bishop Hubert, a task he undertook at the request of Bishop Walcaud of Liège, who in 825 had transferred the relics of St Hubert to the Ardennes village of Andages in his effort to reform the monastic community of St Peter there.<sup>5</sup> Hubert was *protégé* and successor of Bishop Lambert of Maastricht whose see was shifted to nearby Liège

*Anglo-Saxons in the Frankish world, 690–900*, Turnhout 2009, 67, no. 149, and 'Defining paganism in the Carolingian world', *Early Medieval Europe* xv (2007), 402–25 at p. 412; Shannon Godlove, 'The first *Life* of Boniface: Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*', in Michel Aaij and Shannon Godlove (eds), *A companion to Boniface*, Leiden 2020, 152–73 at pp. 163–70; John-Henry Clay, *In the shadow of death: Saint Boniface and the conversion of Hesse*, 721–54, Turnhout 2010, 200–3, 295–307.

<sup>5</sup> Satoshi Tada, 'The creation of a religious centre: Christianisation in the diocese of Liège in the Carolingian period', this *JOURNAL* liv (2003), 209–27.

after Lambert's martyrdom in about 705.<sup>6</sup> The *Vita prima Hucberti* (BHL 4677) was produced in the eighth century, perhaps soon after Hubert's death in 727. According to Jonas, Walcaud thought an improved version of the *Life* would better induce modern priests to emulate the saintly prelate. Jonas emphasised that he had only repaired the text of an author who either disdained or was unfamiliar with literary adornment and elegant speech.<sup>7</sup>

Jonas mentioned idol destruction because that theme had been present in the earlier text. The *Vita prima Hucberti* described Hubert's Christianisation of the countryside in what is now south-eastern Belgium.<sup>8</sup> Like the apostle preaching in season and out of season reproving, he snatched many from the 'error of the Gentiles' and drew people even from a long way off seeking baptism. 'He destroyed with consuming fire the many idols and sculptures which were being worshipped in the Ardennes', and imposed harsh penance on those who sacrilegiously venerated the ashes of the idols. Likewise, in Texandria and Brabant, 'he destroyed many idols and sculptures and with his own effort in various places built sanctuaries in honour of the holy martyrs', thereby illuminating the realm of the Franks as if by the sun's rays.<sup>9</sup> The *Vita prima Hucberti* often recycled material from earlier texts, and this passage resembles a description of Lambert's apostolic work combatting the 'error of the Gentiles' found in the earliest *Vita Landiberti* (BHL 4677). Lambert too had 'destroyed many temples and idols' in Texandria.<sup>10</sup> Both in the *Vita prima Hucberti* and in its source the bishop himself destroyed the profane objects, whether these were idols and sculptures, or temples and idols.

In his recension Jonas presented the protagonist not as idol-breaker but as instigator of idol-breaking. Like the apostle, Hubert preached whenever he was able, and the Holy Spirit gave him such sweetness of speech that he attracted many people seeking rescue from the devil and admittance into the kingdom of Christ. So emphatically did these people reject 'the worship of idols along with the profane rite of their observance and of their [demonic] authors that the temples once venerable to them they

<sup>6</sup> Frans Theuws, 'Maastricht as a centre of power in the early Middle Ages', in Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuws (eds), *Topographies of power in the early Middle Ages*, Leiden 2001, 155–216.

<sup>7</sup> Jonas, *Epistola xxx*, ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH, Epp. v, Berlin 1899, 348.

<sup>8</sup> Ellen F. Arnold, *Negotiating the landscape: environment and monastic identity in the medieval Ardennes*, Philadelphia, PA 2013, 204.

<sup>9</sup> 'Idola plurima et sculptilia, quae colentes erant in Ardoinna, igne cremanda destruxit, – favillam vel cineres eius, – quod postea fanatici homines more sacrilego venerabant, triennio paenitentia illos diiudicans. Ea vero similia in Texandria et in Brabantiae plurima simulacra et multa sculptilia destruxit et sanctuaria per diversa loca in honore sanctorum martyrum proprio sudore construxit, et velut radius solis splendiflua inluminacione illius Francorum regni serenus inluxit': *Vita prima Hucberti* iii, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH, SRM vi, Hannover 1913, 484–5.

<sup>10</sup> 'plurima templa et simulacra ibidem destruxit': *Vita Landiberti episcopi Traiectensis vetustissima* x, ed. Bruno Krusch, *ibid.* 363.

razed to the ground, and the dust of them, which they now detested as filthy, they scattered in various places'.<sup>11</sup> As had the *Vita prima Huberti*, Jonas reported the penance Hubert imposed upon anyone who showed reverence for that dust. But unlike his model, Jonas wrote that in the Ardennes as well as Texandria and Brabant, it was the converts themselves who broke up the idols and destroyed the temples of their former gods or, better, demons, and it was they too who built churches for God in honour of the holy martyrs. With words the man of God induced the people to undertake these tasks themselves, thereby showing that through Hubert's discourse the light of truth had replaced the darkness of error.<sup>12</sup>

Jonas did not explain why he altered the earlier account to say that the former pagans themselves destroyed the idols. But it seems likely that such a change magnified the reputation of Hubert, for great as it was to confront the heathen and overturn their idols, a further perfection lay in persuading them to destroy the objects they had formerly held to be sacred. Several other episodes in his recension of the *Life* also suggest that preaching to and instructing ordinary people mattered even more to Jonas than it had to the author of the earlier *Life*.<sup>13</sup> Echoing a traditional hagiographic model, Jonas's recension mentioned the saint's personal progress in asceticism, subjective spiritual development and struggle against demonic forces.<sup>14</sup> But Jonas presented those elements among images of the pastor and preacher derived largely from Gregory I, and configured both as consoler and father of the poor, elements present in the earlier *Life*, but now infused with a strong evangelical and missionary impulse.<sup>15</sup>

Emphasis on effective pastoral discourse reflects ideas expressed at the synods of Paris in 829 and Aachen in 836, councils Jonas attended and whose acts he had a central role in recording.<sup>16</sup> During those years the

<sup>11</sup> 'ad eum populi concurrerent ac de potestate faucibusque diaboli se erui atque in regnum Christi gremiumque sanctae Ecclesiae per baptismi gratiam transferri gauderent, idolorumque cultum, nec non profanum eorum observationis ritum cum auctoribus eorum respuentes, ita olim sibi veneranda templa terrae coaequant, ut pulverem eorum veluti immunditiam detestantes per diversa dispergerent': Jonas, *Vita secunda Huberti* iv. 4, ed. Charles De Smedt, AASS Nov. 1, Brussels 1887, 806–18 at pp. 809–10.

<sup>12</sup> 'Sicque praeliator Domini strenue adversarias insequendo ac proterendo virtutes imperium Domini in fines eorum longe lateque ampliavit, ut in Texandria et Brabantie eorum detegendo insidias, eos penitus annullaret, effigiesque eorum populi Christi gratia illuminati confringerent penitusque abdicarent. Ab his autem a quibus deorum, immo daemoniorum, templa subvertebantur, Christo Domino praeclara in honore sanctorum martyrum templa per sanctum Hugbertum construebantur et honorabantur': *ibid.* 810.

<sup>13</sup> For example *ibid.* vii. 7, AASS Nov. 1, 811, which corresponds to *Vita prima Huberti* vi, MGH, SRM vi. 486.

<sup>14</sup> *Vita secunda Huberti* i. 2, AASS Nov. 1, 809.

<sup>15</sup> *Vita prima Huberti* xx, MGH, SRM vi. 495; *Vita secunda Huberti* iii. 26–7, AASS Nov. 1, 816; Raffaele Savigni, *Giona di Orléans: una ecclesiologia carolingia*, Bologna 1989, 210–12.

<sup>16</sup> Alain Dubreucq, *Jonas d'Orléans, Le métier de roi (De institutione regia)*, Sources Chrétiennes ccccvii, Paris 1995, introduction at pp. 18–23.

Frankish episcopacy emerged as a self-conscious corporate entity that was openly aware of its responsibility within and for Christian society.<sup>17</sup> Alongside their sacramental office and obligation to proclaim the Gospel, the pastoral duties of the *rectores ecclesiarum* received increasing attention in the ninth-century sources.<sup>18</sup> Their responsibility for the formation, guidance, correction and defence of those entrusted to their care entailed certain duties and a way of life that had been articulated in the *Liber regulae pastoralis* of Gregory I, which was now presented as being as normative for the *ordo clericalis* as the Rule of Benedict had been for the religious since the synods of Aachen in 816–19.<sup>19</sup>

Hubert's instigation of shrine- and idol-wrecking may have been a theme suggested to Jonas by older stories. Eusebius reported cases in which new converts to Christianity spontaneously destroyed the images and shrines that they had formerly regarded as sacred.<sup>20</sup> Sulpicius Severus wrote that when angry pagans objected to his destruction of their shrines, Martin spoke to them so persuasively that they themselves overturned their temples.<sup>21</sup> Gregory of Tours recounted how Vulfilac the Stylite convinced people near Trier to pulverise a statue of Diana.<sup>22</sup> The eighth-century *Vita Amandi* (BHL 332) said that news of the saint's resuscitation of a dead man inspired converts to destroy the shrines where they had formerly worshipped.<sup>23</sup>

Some Carolingian authors certainly knew those older stories. Writing in the second decade of the ninth century, Eigil said that as a missionary in

<sup>17</sup> Mayke de Jong, *The penitential state: authority and atonement in the age of Louis the Pious, 814–840*, Cambridge 2009; Savigni, *Giona di Orléans*, 148–9.

<sup>18</sup> *Concilium Parisiense anno 829* i, ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH, Conc. ii/2, Hannover 1908, 609–49, where 'ministerium sacerdotale' appears at i. 609, and 'persona sacerdotalis' appears at iv. 610–11. 'Persona pontificalis' appears in *Concilium Aquisgranense anno 836*, MGH, Conc. ii/2, 705; *Concilium Parisiense anno 829*, cxxx, 632, for 'rectores ecclesiarum'. See *Concilium Aquisgranense anno 836* (47), vii, MGH, Conc. ii/2, 718, for 'episcopal ordo'. On the characterisation of the episcopal office see Savigni, *Giona di Orléans*, 145–8.

<sup>19</sup> 'Ordo clericalis' appears in *Concilium Aquisgranense anno 816* cxiii, ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH, Conc. ii/1, Hannover 1906, 394; Hrabanus Maurus, *De institutione clericorum* i. 2, ed. Detlev Zimpel, Turnhout 2006, 130; Jonas of Orléans, *De cultu imaginum* i, PL cvi.315C. The *Liber regulae pastoralis* is mentioned and quoted in *Concilium Parisiense anno 829* iiiii, MGH, Conc. ii/2, 611.

<sup>20</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* iv. 39, PL viii.80C.

<sup>21</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* xv.4, ed. C. Helm, CSEL i, Vienna 1866, 125.

<sup>22</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum* X viii. 15, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH, SRM i/1, Hannover 1951, 381–2. See Tamar Rotman, 'Imitation and rejection of eastern practices in Merovingian Gaul: Gregory of Tours and Vulfilac the Stylite of Trier', in Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas and Tamar Rotman (eds), *The Merovingian kingdoms and the Mediterranean world: revisiting the sources*, London 2019, 113–23, and Yitzhak Hen, *Culture and religion in Merovingian Gaul: A.D. 481–751*, Leiden 1995, 173–4.

<sup>23</sup> *Vita Amandi* i.15, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH, SRM v, Hannover 1910, 439.



northern Hesse Sturm had convinced pagans to give up their idols and images, to destroy the temples of their gods and to cut down the sacred groves.<sup>24</sup> Hilduin's *Vita Dionysii* (BHL 2175) from the third decade of the ninth century repeated an older story that in the saint's presence even an armed crowd whose pagan priests had incited violence against the holy man became docile and instead destroyed the very idols they had made.<sup>25</sup> The *Vita secunda Liudgeri*, written in about 850, modified an earlier report of Liudger and his companions destroying shrines and idols, to say that through convincing words and leadership Liudger induced the rough Frisian 'pagans' to endure the sight of him destroying their shrines.<sup>26</sup> In the third quarter of the ninth century Odo of Beauvais wrote that the holy reputation of the ancient martyr Lucian was so great that even before his death he inspired converts to break the idols that they had made.<sup>27</sup>

One way to discern something about the likely intended audience of the *Vita secunda Huberti* is to situate the event that text commemorates, namely the transferal of Hubert's relics, within the career of the man who commissioned Jonas to write. Walcaud came from a prominent family that held land in the Ardennes, and a twelfth-century source reported that his father, Adelred, had accompanied Charlemagne on an Italian expedition and died outside Pavia.<sup>28</sup> In about 810 Walcaud was elevated from the circle of court ecclesiastics to rule the nearby diocese of Liège, a post he occupied until his death in about 831. His respect for hierarchy and enthusiasm for the reforming impulse within Frankish Church and society made Walcaud a good choice to oversee the Church in this important centre situated close to Aachen. Jonas drew attention to Walcaud's eagerness to raise

<sup>24</sup> Egil, *Vita Sturmi* xxiii, ed. Pius Engelbert, *Die Vita Sturmi des Egil von Fulda: literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, Marburg 1968, 159.

<sup>25</sup> Hilduin, *Vita Dionysii* xxii, *PL* cvi.41C. Hilduin depended upon an earlier text (BHL 2171), *Passio sanctorum martyrum Dionysii, Rustici et Eleutherii* iii. 20, ed. Bruno Krusch, *MGH, Auctores antiquissimi* iv/2, Berlin 1885, 103.

<sup>26</sup> *Vita secunda Liudgeri* viii, ed. Wilhelm Diekamp, *Die Vitae sancti Liudgeri*, Münster 1881, 58, which modified Alfridi, *Vita Liudgeri* i. 16, *Die Vitae sancti Liudgeri*, 20. On these *Lives* see Ingrid Rembold, 'Rewriting the founder: Werden on the Ruhr and the uses of hagiography', *Journal of Medieval History* xli (2015), 363–87.

<sup>27</sup> Odo, *Passio Luciani* iii. 11, *PL* cxxiv.1118C, a detail not present in the earlier *Passio* (BHL 5008), ed. Charles Salmon, 'Actes inédits de saint Lucien premier évêque de Beauvais', *Mémoires de la société des antiquaires de Picardie, troisième série*, vi, Paris–Amiens 1880, 490–4.

<sup>28</sup> Alain Dierkens, 'La Christianisation des campagnes de l'empire de Louis le Pieux: l'exemple du diocèse de Liège sous l'épiscopat de Walcaud (c. 809–c. 831)', in P. Godman and R. Collins (eds), *Charlemagne's heir: new perspectives on the reign of Louis the Pious (814–840)*, Oxford 1990, 309–29 at p. 310. On Walcaud's father see Gilles d'Orval, *Gesta episcoporum Leodiensium* ii. 34, ed. J. Heller, *MGH, SS* xxv, Hannover 1880, 48.

the people entrusted to him from good to better, and to improve the condition of anything within his diocese which was in need of emendation.<sup>29</sup> Continuing the practice of his predecessor, Gerbaud (Ghärbald), Walcaud issued a circular of directives and exhortations intended to enable his diocesan clergy to serve their flock better by leading more upright lives themselves and concentrating on their liturgical, evangelical and sacramental responsibilities.<sup>30</sup> A long-term project of Walcaud was to enhance episcopal influence in the southern part of his diocese by reforming the languishing late seventh-century religious community at Andages. In about 805 he gave the house land from his own patrimony in the nearby villa of Bure, and in the years from about 810 to 817 the old *cella* was entirely rebuilt and communal life there placed under the Rule of Benedict. The timing of this Benedictine reformation seems to reflect the concern to lay out regular patterns of living for monastic and canonical communities expressed in the acts of the councils held at Aachen in 816 and 817, and Walcaud first cleared the move with his metropolitan, Hildebald of Cologne, and with Louis the Pious.<sup>31</sup> According to Jonas, the leading members of the new community petitioned for custody of the body of Hubert for three years before Walcaud consented. In 825, again conspicuously deferring to his superiors and acting in compliance with conciliar decrees forbidding the unauthorised movement of saints' relics, Walcaud gained imperial and archiepiscopal approval to transfer Hubert's body from Liège to Andages.<sup>32</sup>

Asking Jonas to revise the eighth-century *Vita prima Huberti*, with the addition of an account of the *elevatio* and transferal of Hubert's body, may reflect Walcaud's awareness of his own limits as a writer. But, as the manuscript evidence suggests, it was also an adept stroke of public relations. The text of Jonas's *Vita secunda Huberti* appears in some thirty-five manuscripts copied before 1500.<sup>33</sup> The earliest of these, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, MS Lat. 5609, has been dated to about 850 and is thought to have been copied at Saint-Hubert itself before coming

<sup>29</sup> *Vita secunda Huberti* iv. 29, AASS Nov. 1, 817, appends remarks about Walcaud to an appreciation of the enthusiasm of Louis the Pious for correction and regulation of the orders of Frankish Church and society.

<sup>30</sup> Walcaud's capitula, ed. Peter Brommer, MGH, *Capitula episcoporum* i/1, Hannover 1984, 43–9.

<sup>31</sup> On Walcaud's reform of St Peter at Andages see Dierkens, 'La Christianisation des campagnes', 319–21.

<sup>32</sup> *Vita secunda Huberti* iv. 31–2, AASS Nov. 1, 817–18. One instance of the prohibition of unauthorised relic transferals appears in the acts of the Council of Mainz of 813, li, ed. Albert Werminghoff, MGH Conc. ii/1, Hannover 1906, 272.

<sup>33</sup> Alain Dubreucq, 'Jonas Aurelianensis ep.', in Lucia Castaldi and Valeria Mattaloni (eds), *La trasmissione dei testi latini del medioevo / Mediaeval latin texts and their transmission* (Te.Tra), vi, Florence 2019, 403–39 at pp. 431–9.



into the possession of Hincmar of Reims, from whom it passed to the abbey of Saint-Remi. Other copies produced at Saint-Hubert dating from the first half of the tenth century (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Gravenhage, MS 71. H.66, fos 67r–109v) and the twelfth century and later (Musée des arts anciens du Namurois, Namur, fonds de la ville MS 2, fos 200vb–203va, and fonds de la ville MS 15 1, fos 112v–122v) show that Jonas's version of the *Life* continued to be well regarded at the saint's burial place. That the text was known continuously in Liège seems highly probable in view of the copies associated with churches and abbeys there in the tenth century (KBR, Brussels, MS 14650–9 [3236], fos 181r–210r) and later (KBR, MS 2750–65 [933], fos 78r–82r; KBR, MS 9636–7 [3228], fos 96r–108r; Stadtarchiv, Cologne, Best. 7010 [Handschriften – Wallraf] 163, fos 109v–119r). The text was present in some Benedictine cloisters in the region, namely Saint-Vaast in Arras (ÖNB, Vienna, Cod. 550, fos 1r–32r), Saint-Pierre in Lobbes (KBR, MS 18018 [3239], fos 160r–162v) and Saint-Willibrord in Echternach (BNF, MS lat. 9740, fos 78r–87v), but also in England, as is clear from eleventh-century and twelfth-century manuscripts produced or owned by Benedictine foundations in Worcester and Canterbury (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 9 [under B. 6], 243–58, copied in Worcester and perhaps owned by the Benedictine cathedral priory of St Mary; British Library, London, MS Arundel 91 I, fos 198r–206v). Other twelfth-century copies show that the text was known in Trier (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS theol. lat. 2\* 267 [Rose 790], fos 153r–160; Stadtbibliothek, Trier, MS Hs. 1178/480 4\* [449, olim 361], fos 52r–62r, and Metz (BNF, MSS lat. 5278, fos 314v–324r, and 5308, fos 218v–225v), as well as Cistercian houses in Antwerp and Orval (KBR, MS 7460–1 [3176], fos 154r–160v, 161r–162r; Archives de l'Abbaye, Tamié, MS 29).

This evidence suggests that the *Life* gained both local and regional audiences. The custodians of the reformed monastery of Saint-Hubert surely welcomed the text as a record that celebrated their patron in a suitably dignified manner. Jonas's version of the story attested the authenticity and provenance of the body in the tomb, and it advertised the scrupulous and sanctioned means by which Andages came to possess Hubert's relics. By emphasising the role of Carloman in the first *elevatio* of Hubert's miraculously incorrupt body in 743, and the role of Louis the Pious and his court in the second in 825, Jonas wrote Saint-Hubert into the royal and ecclesiastical history of the Christian Franks.<sup>34</sup> As read aloud on the saint's day and perhaps also on the day of the arrival of his relics in Andages, the text played an important role in the development of a collective identity

<sup>34</sup> *Vita secunda Hüberty* xxiv, xxvi, xxvii, AASS Nov. 1, 815–16, where Carloman is named three times, twice as *rex* and once as *princeps*, as opposed to the two references to him, once as *princeps*, in *Vita prima Hüberty* xviii, xx, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH, SRM vi, Hannover 1913, 494–5.

of the reformed community that distinguished Saint-Hubert's from other foundations in the Ardennes. Ellen Arnold has studied the competition for spiritual and material ascendancy that Saint-Hubert faced in the ninth century from regional monasteries such as Stavelot, where St Remacle was buried, and Malmedy, which eventually acquired the relics of martyrs.<sup>35</sup> *Vita secunda Hucberti* provided stories that enhanced the reputation of the monastery and were apt to attract local and regional pilgrims. Visitors in need of the saint's intercession and the monks' hospitality came to Saint-Hubert already during the tenure of the first abbot, Alveus, and the miraculous cures and assistance that they received were recorded and then collected twice, in the mid-ninth century (BHL 3996) and then again in the later eleventh century (BHL 3997).<sup>36</sup> These miracles and the celebrity of the saintly bishop came to the attention of other churches and abbeys in the region in a way that put Saint-Hubert on the map. For his part, Walcaud and the bishops of Liège who succeeded him gained prestige through their association with Louis the Pious and the reforming bishops and abbots who had done so much to implement the standards of life and orthodox worship suited to the Franks as the people of God. Jonas himself was an important friend to have, and the elegant style of the text he wrote was likely to appeal to the taste of the élite members of court and empire who were themselves engaged in improving the education of clerics within the realm. It is plausible that the text found its way to Hincmar of Reims and to libraries in Trier, Metz and elsewhere thanks to the bishops of Liège. But it may also have circulated because of the dislocation caused by repeated Viking incursions in Lotharingia and the Ardennes. It is possible that the monks took the *Vita secunda Hucberti* along with the saint's relics when they fled the monastery on two occasions, probably in the early 880s.<sup>37</sup>

### *Walahfrid Strabo*

Episodes of idol destruction appear in the revision of the *Vita Galli* that Walahfrid Strabo wrote for Abbot Gozbert of Saint Gallen in 833 or

<sup>35</sup> Arnold, *Negotiating the landscape*, 173–212.

<sup>36</sup> *Miraculorum* i.1, AASS Nov. 1, 823, features the story of a blind man whose sight was miraculously restored after he came to Saint-Hubert 'de longinquo' during the abbacy of Alveus and was received 'secundum morem hospitio'. On the two collections of miracles see Arnold, *Negotiating the landscape*, 204–9.

<sup>37</sup> *Miraculorum* i. 18, AASS Nov. 1, 826, mentions a book taken by the party who removed the saint's body from the monastery in anticipation of the arrival of Vikings, but not which book. For other cases in which books were taken away from foundations threatened by raiders see Richard Gameson, 'Alfred the Great and the destruction and production of Christian books', *Scriptorium* 11 (1995), 180–210 at pp. 185–97, and Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the written word*, Cambridge 1989, 159.

834.<sup>38</sup> Two earlier prose *Lives* of Gallus existed, the anonymous older one, now called *Vetustissima* (BHL 3245), which was likely written in the period 720/725, and a first recension (BHL 3246) which was dedicated to Gozbert by the monk Wetti of Reichenau sometime between 816 and 824.<sup>39</sup> Gozbert was an apt dedicatee because his assumption of authority marked the beginning of the end of Saint Gallen's domination by the nearby bishops of Constance, and during his tenure the abbey flourished in terms of wealth, culture and architecture.<sup>40</sup>

Gozbert and his advisers probably welcomed Walahfrid's *Vita Galli* (BHL 3247–9) because it reflected the current prosperous situation of the monastery and brought the image of its eponymous saint into harmony with the culture of the ruling tier of Carolingian Church and society. Walahfrid was in a position to write such an account because in 829, after two years of training at Fulda under Hrabanus Maurus, he went to Aachen to become tutor to Charles, the emperor's youngest son, a post he held until 838. Living in the imperial court as *protégé* of the archchaplains Hilduin and then Grimald, he came to know the taste and range of interests of the reform-minded bishops, abbots and lay aristocrats who surrounded Louis the Pious. Recent studies show that he anachronistically presented the activities and outlook of Gallus and his contemporaries in terms of the Rule of Benedict, which achieved a certain preminent status in Francia only during Walahfrid's lifetime.<sup>41</sup> The recensions display moments in a longer process of accretion through which the Irish holy man Gallus was transformed into the apostle of Alemannia.<sup>42</sup> Nor have the present-minded political features of Walahfrid's revision escaped attention. Imperial patronage of Saint Gallen after 816 made it expedient to

<sup>38</sup> Martin Brooke, 'The prose and verse hagiography of Walahfrid Strabo', in Godman and Collins, *Charlemagne's heir*, 551–64.

<sup>39</sup> Raphael Schwitter, 'Zur Entstehungszeit der ältesten Teile der Vita s. Galli', *Mittelaltersches Jahrbuch* xlv (2011), 185–200.

<sup>40</sup> Phillipe Depreux, 'La Plainte des moines de Saint-Gall auprès de l'empereur Louis le Pieux (815)', *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Kirchengeschichte* xciv (2000), 7–16; Rolf Sprandel, *Das Kloster St Gallen in der Verfassung des karolingischen Reiches*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1958, 47; Johannes Duft, *Die Abtei St Gallen*, Sigmaringen 1990–4, ii. 61–3; Johannes Duft, Anton Gössi and Werner Vogler, *Die Abtei St Gallen: Abriß der Geschichte, Kurzbiographien der Äbte*, Saint Gallen 1986, 22–3, 102–3; Hans Rudolf Sennhauser, *St Gallen Klosterplan und Gozbertbau: zur Rekonstruktion des Gozbertbaues und zur Symbolik des Klosterplanes*, Zürich 2001; Werner Jacobsen, *Der Klosterplan von St Gallen und die karolingische Architektur*, Berlin 1992.

<sup>41</sup> Kelly Gibson, 'La Vie monastique dans les *Vies* de saint Gall réécrites au ix<sup>e</sup> siècle', in Marie-Céline Isaïa and Thomas Granier (eds), *Normes et hagiographie dans l'Occident latin (vie–xvie siècles)*, *Hagiologia* ix, Turnhout 2014, 329–43.

<sup>42</sup> Raphael Schwitter, 'Vom Einsiedler zum Apostel Alemanniens. Karolingische *Réécriture Hagiographique* am Beispiel der *Vita Sancti Galli*', in Schnoor, Schmuki, Tremp, Erhart and Hüebli, *Gallus und seine Zeit: Leben, Wirken, Nachleben*, 267–81.

represent a long history of friendship with the Frankish monarchy and to highlight royal beneficence even in the eighth century, a period for which it had to be invented.<sup>43</sup> Although Walahfrid affirmed his own version of *sine ira et studio*, he also said that he reported accurately what he learned from others, not that what he learned from others was factually accurate.<sup>44</sup>

Walahfrid included two idol destruction episodes, both of which took place while Gallus travelled with Columbanus before settling in his forest cell. Echoing a report in Wetti's version, and which was presumably also once present in the now fragmentary *Vetustissima*, Walahfrid recorded that at Tuggen, at the south-eastern end of Lake Zürich, seeing that people worshipped 'simulacra' and 'idola', Gallus 'burned down the shrines in which they sacrificed to demons, and whatever votive offerings he found he threw in the lake'.<sup>45</sup> The inhabitants' angry and obdurate response to this caused Columbanus and his party to move north-east to Arbon on the Bodensee. Both Wetti and Walahfrid presented the destroyed cult objects at Tuggen as pagan.

In the second case, Walahfrid diverged from his source by changing pagans into lapsed Christians. Again, the corresponding passage in *Vetustissima* has not survived, but Wetti reported that a priest Columbanus and Gallus encountered at Arbon recommended they continue east by boat to the dilapidated town of Bregenz which was advantageously situated on fertile land close to the lake.<sup>46</sup> Having disembarked there, Columbanus and his companions found the town, established a residence, and made prayers of supplication for the place. Prayers were called for because the superstitious pagans ('superstitiosa gentilitas') there worshipped 'three gold-covered brazen images, to which they made votive offerings instead of to the creator of the world'.<sup>47</sup> Encouraged by

<sup>43</sup> Krusch's comment, 'Impudens mendacium', about Walahfrid, *Vita Galli* ii. 10, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH, SRM iv, Hannover 1902, 320 n. 4, reflects a judgement already present in the scholarship. Sprandel describes the weaponisation of the past for the present conflict in Gozbert's time: *Das Kloster St Gallen*, 26.

<sup>44</sup> 'Inseremus quoque huic operi nonnulla quae non scripturae testimonio, sed veracium virorum relatione didicimus. In quibus omnibus, quantum ad nos attinet, veritatis lineam servare studebimus, neque per amorem falsi aliquid de nostro inserentes neque per invidiam veri quippiam ex voto celantes. Et quia nos scripta vel dicta sequimur aliorum, ad illos veritas rerum, ad nos pertinet adbreviatio dictionum et adunatio rationum': Walahfrid, *Vita Galli* ii. 9, MGH, SRM iv. 318.

<sup>45</sup> 'fana in quibus daemoniis sacrificabant, igni succendit, et quaecunque invenit oblata, demersit in lacum': *ibid.* i. 4, MGH, SRM iv. 287–8. This corresponds to Wetti, *Vita Galli* iv, ed. Bruno Krusch, MGH, SRM iv. 259.

<sup>46</sup> Gerold Hilty, *Gallus und die Sprachgeschichte der Nordostschweiz*, Saint Gallen 2001, 71–82, 188–90.

<sup>47</sup> 'Tres ergo imagines aereas et deauratas supersitiosa gentilitas ibi colebat, quibus magis quam creatori mundi vota reddendo credebat': Wetti, *Vita Galli* vi, MGH, SRM iv. 260.

Columbanus' intense desire to destroy their superstition, Gallus addressed the people, who gathered at the usual festival of the temple, exhorting them to turn to their creator Jesus Christ, the son of God, who had opened the path to the heavenly kingdom to the human race mired in filth. 'Then in the sight of all he took the images, ground them with stones, and threw them into the deep sea.' While this act prompted some to confess their sins and believe, others left in anger. Columbanus then blessed water and 'by consecrating the polluted places restored the former honor of the church of St Aurelia'.<sup>48</sup>

Walahfrid kept much of this account but presented the inhabitants of Bregenz not as pagans but as Christians who had lapsed into idolatrous reverence for the local patron saints. The chapel constructed in honour of St Aurelia, which Columbanus later restored, appears now at the beginning of the story, not at the end, for there the newcomers found that the people had given up worshipping at the holy altar and instead made offerings to three gold-covered brazen images that were affixed to the wall. Walahfrid apostrophised the people, saying: 'These are the old gods and the ancient protectors of this place by whose help both we and our homes endure down to the present.'<sup>49</sup> Gallus addressed the people in the church, exhorting them to return from the 'error of idolatry' to the worship of God the Father, true creator of all, and his only begotten Son, in whom is salvation, life and resurrection. He then seized the idols, smashed them to bits with stones, and cast them into the lake, a spectacle that prompted some to confess their sins and return to the Lord, while others withdrew in sullen hostility. Columbanus and his companions rededicated the church with the proper rites, including the installation of relics of St Aurelia, and immediately celebrated mass, after which the people went home rejoicing.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> 'Igitur, videntibus cunctis, sublatae imagines comminuit petris atque in profundum deiecit maris. Tunc ergo pars populi confitendo peccata sua credidit, parsque irata et indignata cum furore abscessit. Nam et vir Dei Columbanus aquam benedixit atque sanctificando loca contaminata ecclesiae sanctae Aureliae honorem pristinum restituit': *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> 'Repererunt autem in templo tres imagines aereas deauratas, parieti affixas, quas populus dimisso altaris sacri cultu, adorabat, et oblati sacrificiis dicere consuevit: "Isti sunt dii veteres, et antiqui huius loci tutores, quorum solatio et nos et nostra perdurant usque in praesens": *ibid.* i. 6, MGH, SRM iv. 289.

<sup>50</sup> 'Columbanus itaque beato Gallo id iniunxit officii, ut populum ab errore idolatriae ad cultum Dei exhortatione salutari revocaret, quia ipse hanc a Domino gratiam meruit, ut non solum Latinae, sed etiam barbaricae locutionis cognitionem non parvam haberet. Cumque eiusdem templi solemnitas ageretur, venit multitudo non minima promiscui sexus et aetatis, non tantum propter festivitatis honorem, verum etiam ad videndos peregrinos quos agnoverant advenisse. Ergo dum ad horam orationis concurrerent, iussu venerandi abbatis Gallus coepit viam veritatis ostendere populo, et ut ad Deum converterentur admonere, utque vanis abiectis adorarent Deum Patrem,

Albrecht Diem has pointed out Walahfrid's substitution of Christians lapsed into idolatry for the pagans whom Wetti had reported in his account of the incident at Bregenz.<sup>51</sup> Diem presented this story as one instance of a wider pattern in Walahfrid's *Vita Galli*, namely its tendency to draw attention to the place more than the man. Like *Vetustissima*, Wetti's recension focused on the convergence of the hero's career with that of Columbanus, including a disciplinary regimen that prepared Gallus as *vir Dei* to battle Satan in a terrestrial arena beneath the panoptic eye of the supernal observer. These elements were present also in Walahfrid's version, but now less conspicuous because of a more pronounced focus on manifestations of divine power in and around the 'happy place' of Gallus' tomb, and because of a greater emphasis upon that place as the centre of communal monastic life and liturgical observance.<sup>52</sup> This shift in emphasis reflects Walahfrid's inclusion of many stories of posthumous miracles worked at and around the grave which had no counterpart in Wetti's version, and which made the reworked text twice as long as the first recension. But even in passages recounting events before Gallus died, Walahfrid attended less to the charisma and personal sacrality of Gallus than Wetti had, instead magnifying the numinous character of the place as well as the dignity, ethos and prospect of its coenobitic community.

Walahfrid left the Tuggen episode as it had been in Wetti's recension, an expression of the zealous opposition to pagan worship that Gallus shared with Columbanus. In the incident at Bregenz, however, Walahfrid may have sensed an opportunity to picture Gallus' activity in light of issues familiar to members of the contemporary Frankish ecclesiastical élite. Like the abbots and bishops who participated in church councils and frequented the imperial court, Walahfrid was aware that reverence for the saints which was such a wholesome practical force in strengthening the faith and attracting people to churches could degenerate into a superstitious attachment to those saints and their relics. In Walahfrid's retelling, the Bregenz story illustrated how this might happen and also presented an

creatorem omnium rerum, et unigenitum Filium eius in quo est salus, vita et resurrectio mortuorum. Et in conspectu omnium arripiens simulacra, et lapidibus in frustra comminuens, proiecit in lacum. His visis nonnulli conversi sunt ad Dominum, et confitentes peccata sua, laudes Domino pro sua illuminatione dederunt. Alii propter imaginum comminationem ira et furore commoti, gravi indignationis rabie turbidi recesserunt. Beatus autem Columbanus iussit aquam afferri, et benedicens illam aspersione ea templum, et dum circumirent psallentes, dedicavit ecclesiam. Deinde invocato nomine Domini, unxit altare, et beatae Aureliae reliquias in eo collocavit, vestitoque altari, missas legitime compleverunt. Omnibus itaque rite peractis, reversus est populus in sua cum gaudio magno': *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Diem, 'Die *Regula Columbani* und die *Regula Sancti Galli*', 93.

<sup>52</sup> For 'felix locus', an expression that does not appear in *Vetustissima* or Wetti's recension, see Walahfrid, *Vita Galli* i. 34, MGH, SRM iv. 310; Diem, 'Die *Regula Columbani* und die *Regula Sancti Galli*', 90–5.



impressive instance of the sort of response that was appropriate under such extreme circumstances.

That Walahfrid understood such concerns is evident in the liturgical handbook, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis*, that he wrote in 840–2 not long after he revised *Vita Galli*. Noting the dynamic character of the modes of religious observance, he wrote that demonic enticement shifted what had first been purely spiritual worship in the open air to temples built for sacrifices and blood offerings, and then to the worship of idols.<sup>53</sup> Even under the new dispensation, when adoring the Father in spirit and truth was known to be the central thrust of faith, human beings often mistook images for the transcendent objects they signified, becoming attached to sensible traces of the holy instead of the spiritual realities to which they point. Walahfrid advocated a middle way between the extremes of scorning religious images and pictures altogether and the misguided transfer of a spiritual worship to material things.<sup>54</sup> Just as excessive reverence should not be given to such images, so too the saints, ‘whether living or dead, are not worshipped or adored in the liturgy – for we ask the saints, not that they themselves should supply the things that are necessary for our salvation, but that they seek from’ God whatever suppliants need for salvation.<sup>55</sup> This view reflected a consensus position that had been worked out in Frankish circles already in Charlemagne’s reign and was then reaffirmed with greater emphasis as the norm under Louis the Pious.<sup>56</sup> The main targets in this discourse were iconophobes, whose zeal for what they took to be purely spiritual practices led them to advocate purging religion of non-essential material accretions. But advocates of the moderate position also recognised the possibility that excessive enthusiasm for the saints might produce reverence for them and their relics that was superstitious, or could present an ‘occasion of error and superstition’.<sup>57</sup> Attentive pastors would prevent this from occurring and correct it firmly if it did. Walahfrid recast the Bregenz incident in this anachronistic and characteristically Carolingian manner, showing that the holy man, whose body now lay in the tomb at Saint Gallen, had himself unequivocally opposed the worship of patron saints.

Walahfrid’s *Vita Galli*, which famously survives in no fewer than seventy-five manuscripts, was widely known in the later ninth century and after. Perhaps the earliest of these, Sankt Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 562, was

<sup>53</sup> Walahfrid Strabo, *Libellus de exordiis et incrementis quarundam in observationibus ecclesiasticis rerum* ii, ed. Alice L. Harting-Correa, Leiden 1996, 52. <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 74.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 79, using the translation of Harting-Correa.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas F. X. Noble, *Images, iconoclasm, and the Carolingians*, Philadelphia, PA 2009.

<sup>57</sup> In a letter from the early 840s Amolo of Lyon warned Bishop Theutbald of Langres that their enthusiasm for the ostensible relics of unknown saints presents common people with ‘occasio erroris et superstitionis’: *Epistola* i. 3, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH, Epp. v, Berlin 1899, 363–8 at p. 364.

produced not long after Walahfrid wrote and is still present in the Saint Gallen library, along with copies of the text included in manuscripts from the tenth, eleventh, and later centuries.<sup>58</sup> Because of the text's elegance and its focus on the monastic community gathered at the saint's tomb, Walahfrid's version eclipsed the two earlier *Lives* and has been described as the literary counterpart of Gozbert's new church.<sup>59</sup> Manuscripts produced in the tenth and eleventh centuries show that the text was known in regional foundations such as Weingarten Abbey near Ravensburg (Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Stuttgart, MS HB XIV.2, fos 50r–71v) and the Bodensee Abbey, Mehrerau (Leopold-Sophien-Bibliothek, Überlingen, MS 3). But it circulated farther afield at an earlier date, as the late ninth-century copy made at Lorsch (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano, MS Pal. lat. 846, fos 25ra–47rb) and another late ninth-century text now in Vienna (ÖNB, Cod. 357, fos 244v–271r) show. Other indications of widespread circulation are the tenth-century copy possessed by St Emmeram in Regensburg (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Clm 14720, fos 92r–170v), the later tenth-century copy owned by the Benedictine community at Verdun-sur-Meuse (Universitätsbibliothek, Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 477), the tenth- or eleventh-century copy made at Corvey (British Museum, London, MS Add. 21170, fos 2–99) and the eleventh-century copy possessed by Remiremont Abbey (Bibliothèque Multimédia Intercommunale Épinal-Goldbey, Épinal, MS 147 [67], fos 46v–60v).<sup>60</sup> Tenth- and eleventh-century copies are present in libraries in northern Germany (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, MS lat. 4\* 505), Italy (Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Firenze, MSS Plut. 19.17; Plut. 30 sin. 4; Biblioteca Nazionale, Napoli, MS 'Vittorio Emanuele iii' XV.AA.12) and the United States (Yale University, New Haven, Ct, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library 481, 25). Even this brief review is enough to show that Walahfrid's text was read and copied from the first both at Saint Gallen and its vicinity and in monastic and ecclesiastical centres around the Frankish empire.

<sup>58</sup> Beat Matthias von Scarpatetti, *Die Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen I Abt, IV: Codices 547–669: hagiographica, historica, geographica, 8.–18. Jahrhundert*, Wiesbaden 2003, 48–50.

<sup>59</sup> Walter Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter*, iii, Stuttgart 1991, 303.

<sup>60</sup> On British Museum, MS Add. 21170, see Joseph-Claude Poulin *Les Libelli dans l'édition hagiographique avant le XIIe siècle*, in *Livrets, collections et texts: études sur la tradition hagiographique latine*, ed. Martin Heinzelmann, Ostfildern 2006, 97, and Hartmut Hoffmann, *Das Skriptorium von Corvey im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert*, in his *Schreibschulen und Buchmalerei. Handschriften und Texte des 9.–11. Jahrhunderts*, MGH, Schriften lxx, Hannover 2012, 14.

*Paschasius Radbertus*

Reference to shrine destruction occurs in the revision of an older *Passio Rufini et Valerii* (BHL 7373) that Paschasius Radbertus carried out during his tenure as abbot of Corbie, which extended from late 843 through spring 849 but was certainly finished by 853. He did this in response to a request from the custodians of the saints' relics at the church in Bazoches, a village situated on the river Vesle (Vidola) on the route between Soissons and Reims, and whose name probably reflects the place's status already in Merovingian times as the basilica of Rufinus and Valerius.<sup>61</sup> The older *Passio*, which Radbertus referred to as a booklet whose narrative had been garbled by age or the incompetence of its writer, is a brief seven paragraphs in the Bollandist edition, describing the arrest, interrogation and martyrdom of Rufinus and Valerius, keepers of a public granary on the banks of the Vidola, by Rictiovarus, the prefect of Maximian Augustus (285–305) tasked with rooting out Christianity in northern Gaul.<sup>62</sup>

Radbertus' version (BHL 7374) fills ten double-column pages in Migne's reprint of the edition of Sirmondus, and manifests the critical outlook and some of the doctrinal interests of its author. Radbertus claimed to produce a more eloquent version while respecting the integrity of the older record, explaining that anyone in doubt of this could consult the original. Respect did not prevent him from correcting two points of chronology, one of them in the earlier text itself and the other regarding a mistaken claim that Radbertus had heard that Rufinus and Valerius were contemporaries of St Dionysius.<sup>63</sup> The introduction includes a discourse comparing the relics of the saints to the written record of their life and deeds, noting that the latter is superior to the former as an incentive to holiness and an invitation to supernal contemplation. It is unfitting to house holy relics in containers adorned with precious metal and jewels while allowing the stories of the saints to be forgotten or to be handed down in corrupt and unworthy form. Without disparaging the devotional value of relics, Radbertus emphasised the priority of what is inward, spiritual and intellectual over what is outward, material and bodily. This focus was in keeping with an on-going discussion of devotional practices and venerable objects

<sup>61</sup> Brigitte Meijns and Charles Mériaux, 'Le Cycle de Rictiovar et la topographie chrétienne des campagnes septentrionales à l'époque mérovingienne', in Marie-Céline Isaïa (ed.), *Les Premiers Temps chrétiens dans le territoire de la France actuelle: hagiographie, épigraphie et archéologie: nouvelles approches et perspectives de recherche*, Rennes 2009, 19–33 at p. 25.

<sup>62</sup> *Passio Rufini et Valerii*, AASS 3rd edn Jun. 3, 285–6; Michèle Gaillard, 'Un « Cycle » hagiographique du haut moyen âge en Gaule septentrionale: les passions des martyrs de Rictiovar', *Hagiographica* xxi (2014), 1–28.

<sup>63</sup> *De passione sanctorum Rufini et Valerii*, PL cxx.1489–508 at 1494C, 1496C; Berschin, *Biographie*, iii. 307–8.

that had begun in the Frankish realms during the reign of Charlemagne and continued under his son and grandsons.<sup>64</sup> Such concerns seem to be behind the extensive account and critique of pagan Roman image worship that Radbertus put into the mouth of the saints in response to Rictiovarus' characterisation of Christian worship as superstition. A main theme of their apology is that the Incarnation was meant to lead human beings from the material sphere and worldly knowledge to divine wisdom in a transcendent movement that philosophers such as Cicero and Seneca would have approved.<sup>65</sup>

While the earlier *Passio* began with the work of Rictiovarus, the revision arrived there slowly and manifested an interest in the Roman state and its history that had not been present before. Radbertus outlined the situation of Christians in the empire before the Diocletianic onslaught and explained the causes of the persecution. With the Gospel illuminating the whole empire, and with every language and nation praising the Lord, Radbertus pictured a pre-Constantinian fulfillment of the prophecy: 'their sound has gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world' (Psalm xviii. 5). Because of their integrity, Christians were so often entrusted with public affairs that few devoted themselves exclusively to sacred rites and religion.<sup>66</sup> Serving as soldiers in the imperial palace, and as functionaries in civic and provincial administration, these people made forum, streets, cities and countryside echo with praise of the Lord.<sup>67</sup> Bishops enunciated the word of God to everyone in a manner suited to their diverse conditions and capacities. Feast days and saints' days were observed with spiritual rejoicing. Now themselves heavenly (Philippians iii.21), such people despised earthly things and so became the object of wonder and fear to the surrounding nations, worthy of the Holy Spirit's description of the church as *pulchra ut luna* (Songs vi. 9). Free of vices such as envy and jealousy, in their piety and righteousness these people deserved and received God's favour.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> *De passione*, PL cxx.1489C–91B; Gerda Heydemann, 'Relics and texts: hagiography and authority in ninth-century Francia', in Peter Sarris, Matthew Dal Santo and Phil Booth (eds), *An age of saints? Power, conflict and dissent in early medieval Christianity*, Leiden 2011, 187–204 at pp. 197–9; Berschin, *Biographie* iii. 305–6.

<sup>65</sup> *De passione*, PL cxx.1498D–1502A, with embedded passage attributed to Seneca quoted from Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* ii. 2, ed. Samuel Brandt, CSEL xix/1, Vienna 1890, 101; Heydemann, 'Relics and texts', 196–7; Berschin, *Biographie* iii. 307.

<sup>66</sup> 'Parumque fuerat Christianorum plebem suos ritus suamque religionem tueri, nisi etiam pro fidei sinceritate, pro virtutum studio, pro pietatis cultu, reipublicae curis praeficerentur': *De passione*, PL cxx.1491D.

<sup>67</sup> 'Palatinas igitur aedes Christi milites obtinebant, urbana negotia disponebant, provinciarum procuraciones administrabant, cernebatur ubique sacer conventus, sanctitatis stolis et probitatis insignibus radiare; in foro, in plateis, in urbibus, in agris laus Christi personabat': *ibid.* 1492A.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 1492CD; Hannah W. Matis mentions Songs imagery in *De passione* in a chapter focusing on Radbertus: *The Song of Songs in the early Middle Ages*, Leiden 2019, 178.

Radbertus mentioned the destruction of pagan shrines and idols in the middle of this account of the prosperity of Christians within the empire before Diocletian. After referring to the public roles filled by Christians and the praise of Christ heard everywhere, he wrote that ‘Shrines were destroyed, idols were broken, sacred groves were burned; instead temples were constructed for the supernal king, altars were erected, and throngs of people flooded to countless churches, hymns were sung with joy, and holy readings were recited with the awe of divine fear.’<sup>69</sup> The destruction of shrines, idols and sacred groves was evidently a thematic element important to Radbertus, because he did not take it from the main sources he was following.

The core of his account came from Eusebius in the Latin of Rufinus. Radbertus mentioned him as a source of information about the persecution, and it is apparent that his description of the peace of the Church also derived at least in part from the same source.<sup>70</sup> But the *Historia ecclesiastica* did not mention destruction of shrines or idols in this period. Walter Berschin pointed out that his reference to Christian soldiers within the imperial palace and Christians serving in roles of public administration suggests that Radbertus may have been familiar with the *Passio Sebastiani* (BHL 7543) or other stories circulating in the diocese of Reims around the time of Hildruin’s transferal of the relics of Sebastian to Soissons in 826.<sup>71</sup> Parts of its dramatic plot may well have inspired Radbertus, but the idol destruction mentioned there is unlike the report of Radbertus. Sebastian convinced the Prefect Chromatius, who was ill, to grant leave to round up ‘all the idols in his house [and] to break those of stone, burn those of wood, melt down those of gold, silver, and bronze and divide the proceeds among the poor’. This Sebastian did, but Chromatius was not healed until he had also given up for destruction a precious mechanical astrological device made of glass and decorated with zodiacal figures.<sup>72</sup> Although this story is rich with detail, it is domestic, personal and apologetic, unlike

<sup>69</sup> ‘Destruébantur fana, simulacra confringebantur, luci succendebantur; templa vero superno Regi fabricabantur, altaria erigebantur, catervae populorum ad ecclesias innumerabiles confluebant, hymni cum gaudio celebrabantur, lectiones sanctae, cum timoris horrore divini recitabantur’: *De passione*, PL cxx.1492A.

<sup>70</sup> The reference to Eusebius appears at the first of the account of the persecution: *ibid.* 1493D; but it is clear that even in discussing the peace of the Church (at 1491C–1492D), Radbertus consulted Rufinus: *Historia ecclesiastica* viii. 1. 1–6, ed. Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte*, *Eusebius Werke* ii/2, Leipzig 1908, 737, 739.

<sup>71</sup> Berschin, *Biographie* iii. 307.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Da nobis potestatem ut omnia idola, quae in domo tua invenerimus, lapidea confringamus, lignea incendamus, aurea et argentea vel aerea conflemus, et pretia eorum egentibus dividamus’: *Passio Sebastiani* xv. 52, AASS Jan. 2, 3rd edn, Paris 1863, 637. The ‘cubiculum holovitream, in quo omnis disciplina stellarum ac methesis mechanica est arte constructa’ is the subject of *Passio Sebastiani* xvi, *ibid.* 638.

Radbertus' reference to shrine destruction, which is public, categorical and triumphant. As neither the relevant section of *Historia ecclesiastica* nor the *Passio Sebastiani* offered a model for shrine destruction of the sort Radbertus had in mind, its insertion here seems to have been an idea of his own.

It may be that Radbertus introduced shrine destruction here in the interest of rhetorical or thematic symmetry. In the following section of the text, still relying on Rufinus, he explained that God permitted the persecution because of the vice, animosity and disunity of the Christians which were occasioned by the very liberty and peace they had enjoyed. The degradation of the Church now matched its former exultation, the fair bride of Songs becoming the daughter of Sion whose punishment Jeremiah described (Lamentations ii). Glorious before, now it was dark and base; 'temples of the living God were destroyed to their foundations, Holy Scripture was burned in public streets, priests and bishops of the churches were dragged naked and bound through forum and streets and taken to jail'.<sup>73</sup> This reference to the demolition of churches, as well as the description of the spectacular murder of Christians, Radbertus modelled on Rufinus' account. But as has been noted the earlier statement about the destruction of shrines, idols and sacred groves was apparently an invention of Radbertus. It is as though the magnitude of destruction of the persecution required, as a justification in advance, a proportionate Christian assault on the shrines of the gods. Anticipation of the wastage of Christian sites in the near future led Radbertus to mention a corresponding destruction of pagan sites and idols.

Present-minded concerns may have induced Radbertus to place shrine destruction at the centre of his account of the peace of the Church. Berschin noticed that some of the causes of the persecution Radbertus listed are reminiscent of the civil discord Frankish society endured around the time he wrote.<sup>74</sup> But the placement of shrine destruction may also be a product of Radbertus' concern about saints' relics. Gerda Heydemann has related Radbertus' participation in an on-going negotiation of authority in the cult of saints' relics to his 'exceptionally sophisticated engagement with the pagan cults' in the *Passio*. He had a role in

<sup>73</sup> 'quantoque fuerat prius gloriosa cunctis, tantum obscura et vilis dedita est universis. Etenim templa Dei vivi ab ipsis fundamentis destruebantur, Scripturae sacrae in plateis publice comburebantur, sacerdotes et principes Ecclesiarum nudati et vincti per foros et plateas trahebantur, et carceribus tradebantur': *De passione*, PL cxx.1493D. This echoed the imperial decrees, which Radbertus quoted: 'ut cunctae quae usquam erant ecclesiae usque ad solum destruerentur, Scripturae sacrae igni exurerentur': *ibid*. The whole is based loosely on Rufinus, *Historia ecclesiastica* viii. 1, 741.

<sup>74</sup> Berschin, *Biographie*, iii. 307. On Radbertus' attunement to contemporary power struggles see Mayke de Jong, *Epitaph for an era: politics and rhetoric in the Carolingian world*, Cambridge 2019.



the wider Carolingian discourse regarding the proper use of devotional aids such as relics and religious images.<sup>75</sup> Although the pagan shrine destruction reference he included in the text lacks an explicitly apologetic or didactic tone, there is something cautionary about it. Churches fortunate enough to house relics of celebrated saints enjoyed prestige and drawing-power. But the custodians of holy objects had a responsibility to moderate and instruct those who came to venerate the saints, ensuring that ashes and dust housed in ornate reliquaries were a devotional aid in Christian worship rather than a snare or distraction. Lack of clarity about this might render the physical remains even of the holy dead no better than the shrines, idols and sacred groves destroyed by Christians during the early peace of the Church.

Unlike the texts of Jonas and Walafrid studied here, the revision of *Passio Rufini et Valerii* that Radbertus produced seems to have reached only a limited audience. The text is known from two manuscripts. The first, Trinity College, Dublin, MS 174 (B.4.3), fos 107r–114v, was produced in the second half of the eleventh century and owned by the cathedral of St Mary in Salisbury. The second, BNF, MS lat. 12602, fos 142v–155r, was written in the first half of the twelfth century, perhaps at Corbie, which possessed the book until it was taken to Saint-Germain-des-Prés no later than the eighteenth century. It is possible that the text was continually present at Corbie from the time of the work's composition. Whether the church at Bazoches possessed the improved version of the acts of its patrons that Radbertus wrote is uncertain. In the mid-tenth century, Flodoard devoted two chapters of *Historia Remensis ecclesiae* to Rufinus and Valerius. The first of these includes an epitome of the pair's ministry and martyrdom but apparently relies upon the earlier passion (BHL 7373), not the revision of Radbertus. Flodoard mentioned the temporary removal of the martyrs' relics from Bazoches to Reims to avoid Viking raiders, and he also described several miracles by which the saints defended the Church during a period of civil strife, but he was silent about books or other treasures.<sup>76</sup>

The destruction episodes recounted in these three texts are diverse in content. Jonas's Hubert embodied a core value of the Carolingian episcopacy when he persuaded converts to destroy the idols they had once worshipped and to accept a disciplinary regimen that was intended to transfer reverence from unholy shrines and idols to churches dedicated with holy relics. At Bregenz, Walafrid's Gallus smashed idols himself because the Christian flock there, lacking competent pastoral guidance,

<sup>75</sup> Heydemann, 'Relics and texts', 197.

<sup>76</sup> Flodoard, *Historia Remensis ecclesiae* iv. 52–3, ed. Martina Stratmann, MGH, SS xxxvi, Hannover 1998, 454–7.

had drifted into superstitious adoration of their saintly patrons instead of God. As historical background to the martyrdom of Rufinus and Valerius, Radbertus imagined a pre-Diocletianic Christian Church within the empire that enjoyed divine favour in part because of its decisive repudiation of the outlook and practices of Roman idol worship. There were also important differences in the success of the three texts in which these episodes were reported. While Jonas's revision seems to have been well known in the diocese of Liège and the region of Saint-Hubert, and Wahlfred's *Vita Galli* was widely admired and copied, Radbertus' text was apparently little known.

Because the texts lack an explicit common aim, identification of possible convergences of intention must remain cautious and speculative. Each of these texts told a story that was connected with the foundation of a monastery or church, and in two cases, those of Saint-Hubert and Saint Gallen, the production of a revised *Life* of the eponymous saint coincided with a significant rebuilding project and the expansion of the spiritual and material horizons of the foundation. In the case of Bazoches, for which evidence of such expansion is absent, it is noteworthy that neither the church itself nor Radbertus' revision of the *Passio Rufini et Valerii* left much trace. As the late Janneke Raaijmakers has recently shown in a study of Fulda, monasteries that enjoyed royal patronage in the early ninth century were also likely to provide themselves with written histories of their founders or early heroes that signalled a long-standing connection to the Carolingian house and conformed to the literary taste and cultural standards of the court.<sup>77</sup> The texts of Jonas and Walafrid were well-known and widely copied in part because their language and form agreed with the contemporary outlook of correction and improvement. The eponymous heroes they celebrated, especially Gallus but also Hubert, exhibited virtues that made them suitable emblems of communal heritage and shared identity.

Behind these disparate stories there may also be a common impulse to corroborate present-day enthusiasm for the saints while at the same time discouraging excessive or inappropriate attachment to their relics. The three documents studied here were written for and associated with churches containing the tomb and relics of a saint or martyrs. In each case the task of rewriting an earlier text allowed the reviser to articulate aspects of the saints' cult as he thought it should be, and to disallow other objects and practices by picturing them as illicit. Such an opportunity to project a normative image would have been attractive for elite authors because in this period the veneration of saints and their relics was a

<sup>77</sup> Janneke Raaijmakers, *The making of the monastic community of Fulda, c. 744–c. 900*, Cambridge 2012.

widespread practice that had not received careful doctrinal treatment, a matter of *habitus* rather than creed.<sup>78</sup> In the absence of a determinate set of guidelines for the treatment and display of relics ecclesiastical authorities used whatever informal means they could to influence the outlook and behaviour of their flocks and the lower clergy stationed in remote parishes. Hubert was said to have persuaded former pagans to destroy the old idols and temples and to build churches for God and dedicate them to martyrs. Gallus too was reported to have destroyed pagan idols, but also to have corrected Christians who had strayed into a superstitious reverence for patron saints in place of God. Radbertus rewrote the history of the Church before Diocletian's reign to include the destruction of pagan shrines, idols and groves, and he emphasised that even the relics of saints are holy only insofar as they point to the purely spiritual object of faith. In each case shrine and idol destruction was linked to normative statements about the reverence properly directed towards saints and their relics. Stories like the three considered here may have reminded visitors to Andages, Saint Gallen and Bazoches that the numinous matter within the reliquary was categorically different both from the profane material objects of everyday life and the idols and shrines of the past.

<sup>78</sup> Julia M. H. Smith, 'Relics: an evolving tradition in Latin Christianity', in Cynthia Hahn and Holger A. Klein (eds), *Saints and sacred matter: the cult of relics in Byzantium and beyond*, Washington, DC 2015, 41–60 at p. 50, and 'Portable Christianity: relics in the medieval West (c. 700–1200)', *Proceedings of the British Academy* clxxxi (2012), 143–67; Nicole Herrmann-Mascard, *Les Reliques des saints: formation coutumière d'un droit*, Paris 1975.