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THE POWER OF THE KING, THE POWER OF THE BISHOP. THE COUNCIL OF FISMES IN 881 IN THE FACE OF A CRISIS WITHIN THE CAROLINGIAN MONARCHY

The spring of 881 at last heralded in the Kingdom of the Western Franks the progressing stabilisation of power. Already a year before, the young kings, sons of Louis the Stammerer, had divided among themselves, without controversy or war, the inheritance from their father¹. It happened in early 880, with an active participation of the most prominent lords of the kingdom and a clearly visible supervision of a much older Carolingian, representing a competing line of the dynasty of the Eastern Franks, and the paternal uncle of the young rulers, Louis III the Younger.

First, in February an agreement was reached with the king from behind the Rhine. Lotharingia which he demanded while supporting his claims with a display of force, was given back to him. In the valley of the Oise a meeting was held of the two armies: the one of the Eastern Franks supported by a part of the aristocracy from the Western Kingdom, and the other one, which consisted of troops under the two newly crowned kings and was backed by Hugo the Abbot². It was then that an agreement

¹ Louis the Stammerer died on the 10th of April 879, nominating an elder of his sons, Louis III as his heir. His will was not respected, and in the early September of that year (we do not know the precise date of this event) both sons were crowned kings of Franks in the monastery of Ferrieres. See: *Recueil des actes de Louis II le Begue, Louis III et Carloman II, rois de France (877-884)*, ed. F. Grat, J. de Font-Réaulx, G. Tessier, R.-H. Bautier, Paris 1978, pp. XXXII-IV.

² A precise description of the events can be found in the *Annals of Saint Vaast* which explicitly point out to Hugo the Abbot as the author of the agreement. *Annales Vedastini*, ed. R. Rau, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. II, Berlin 1960, (880). Cf. J. Fried, *The Frankish Kingdoms, 817-911: The East and Middle Kingdoms*, in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, Cambridge 1995, p. 157.

concerning the border between both kingdoms was reached for the price of the recognition of crowning both sons of Louis the Stammerer. Official annals by the Eastern Franks very clearly indicated the link between the recognition of the two brothers as legitimate heirs to the throne, and handing over Lotharingia to the ruler from behind the Rhine. "Next, Louis the Younger headed for Galia, received the sons of Louis [the Stammerer] who arrived at his palace, and subjected the whole kingdom of Lothar under his power"³. The permission for the meeting and admitting the young kinsmen to the elder cousin were in these circumstances a public display of favouring them and the proof of recognising their power. A few weeks later, at the Franks' assembly in Amiens the division of the state between the two brothers was decided⁴. Louis III, being the older one, received the northern part, the kernel of the Carolingian domain, namely Neustria and France itself, whereas Karloman received the southern part with Burgundy and Aquitany⁵. At the time the division was being made, one of the brothers was about 16 years old, while the other was probably 12⁶. No wonder that the decisions were made at the general assembly of the Franks and, as the sources clearly suggest, this all happened above the two rulers' heads. Hincmar in the *Annals of Saint-Bertin* wrote that it happened the way "their subjects (*fideles*) decided (*inuenerunt*)"⁷. On the other

³ *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. R. Rau, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. III, Berlin 1960, (880), [Louis the Younger] *postea in Galliam profectus filios Hludowici ad se uenientes suscepit totumque regnum Hlotharii suae dittoni subiugauit*.

⁴ A thorough analysis of the competition among the Frankish aristocrats during the first months of the young kings' rule can be found in the work by K. F. Werner, *Gauzlin von Saint Denis und die westfränkische Reichsteilung von Amiens (März 880). Ein Beitrag zur Vorgeschichte von Odos Königtum*, in: "Deutsches Archiv", vol. 35, part 2 (1979), pp. 395–462, especially pp. 430–7.

⁵ *Annales Vedastini*, op. cit., (880), ...*Hludowicus et Karlomannus reges Ambiantis cum suis fidelibus ueniunt, ibique Franci inter eos diuidunt, dataque est pars Franciae et omnis Neustria Hludowico, Karlomanno uero Aquitania atque pars Burgundiae necnon et Gothia*; Cf. M. Chaume, *Les origines du duché de Bourgogne*, vol. I, Paris 1925, p. 307.

⁶ Louis III was born not earlier than in December 862, so he was 16, or, perhaps, almost 17 in the time of his coronation. His younger brother, who was in the time of his death in December 884 only about 18, must have been born in 867, and in the time of his coronation was not older than 12.

⁷ The *Annals of Saint Bertin* confirm the account by the chronicler of Saint Vaast, and specify towards the end of the description the principles of *commendatio*. *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, F. Grat, J. Vieillard, S. Clémencet, Paris 1964 (quoted below as: *Annales Bertiniani*), (880), *Fili autem Hludowici quondam regis*

hand, the author of the *Annals of Saint-Vaast* stated that in Amiens “the Franks divided [the kingdom] between them, and a part of *Franciae* and the whole of Neustria were designated to Louis, whereas Karloman received Aquitany, Gotia and a part of Burgundy”⁸. Karl Ferdinand Werner noticed that some sources had associated the assumption of power by the two brothers with the convention in Amiens⁹. The agreement may have indicated that the elder brother would become a sort of *princeps*, holding in his hands the most important and oldest royal domains together with the central residence in Compiègne. However, each of the brothers received a homage paid by the nobles of their respective state which he held in his own sovereign possession¹⁰. This did not change the fact that the division of the state was as a matter of fact made by the nobles, who to some extent “assigned” the provinces to the kings¹¹.

The treaty in Ribemont and decisions made in Amiens introduced order into the political life of the kingdom. The internal crisis was resolved, the division of influence among the most prominent nobles — carried out, and the kings were recognised by the other Carolingian line. Both rulers celebrated Easter in the palace of Compiègne which signalled concerted rules for the future. They also went together, in early June, for the arranged meeting with Louis the Younger in Gondreville¹². The king from

reversi sunt Ambianis civitatem, et sicut fideles illorum inuenerunt, regnum paternum inter se dividerunt, id est ut Hludouicus quod de Francia residuum erat ex paterno regno, sed et Niustriam cum marchis suis haberet, et Karlomannus Burgundiam et Aquitaniam cum marchis suis haberet, ...

⁸ One should particularly notice the expressions used in the annals. *Annales Vedastini, op. cit. ... Franci inter eos dividunt*, to mean “the kingdom” and further, in the passive voice: *dataque est pars...* In a more elegant way the same was introduced by Hincmar, who ascribed the process of the division to both kings, and made them the subject of the sentence, yet, on the other hand, he emphasised that they were acting according to the resolutions of *fideles*. *Annales Bertiniani, op. cit. ... sicut fideles illorum inuenerunt, regnum paternum inter se dividerunt, ...*

⁹ K. F. Werner, *Gauzlin von Saint-Denis*, p. 432. Cf. *Annales Floriacenses, MGH SS*, vol. 2, p. 254, *... hludouicus et karlomannus apud ambianas regnum suspiciunt et dividunt mense martio...*

¹⁰ *Annales Bertiniani, op. cit.*, (880), *... et quique de proceribus secundum conuentiam, in cuius divisione honores haberent, illi se comendarent.*

¹¹ Cf. J. Nelson, *The Frankish Kingdoms, 814–898: the West*, in: *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. II, Cambridge 1995, ed. R. McKitterick, p. 137.

¹² *Annales Bertiniani, op. cit.*, (880) [Both kings] *Compendium redientes, tibi Pascha Domini celebrauerunt, et post haec per Remum et Catalaunis ciuitates ad placitum conductum mediante Iunio apud Gundulfi uillam obulam suis sobrinis uenerunt. Ad*

behind the Rhine did not arrive, suffering from a severe infirmity, yet the talks took place as he sent his envoys. Also his brother, the king of Italy, Charles the Fat, turned up especially for this meeting. However, the third of Louis the German's sons, the ruler of Bavaria, Karloman, failed to turn up at the meeting. It was not the fate of the Western Franks crown to be the subject of the talks any longer, but *pax* and *stabilitas* of the kingdom. A decision was made¹³ concerning a joint defence against the Normans and taking up the action against the kinsman who questioned recent resolutions made in Ribemont. It was Hugo, Lothar II's son, who dreamed of the restitution, with the support from his brother-in-law Thibaut of Arles, of the kingdom of his grandfather and father, and of assuming power there. Louis the Younger especially engaged himself in this matter, and it was him who after all, not long before, had gained Lotharingia for himself through blackmail and threats of military intervention.

Yet the ultimate goal for the assembled rulers was to crack down on Bozon, the first non-Carolingian king who ruled since the autumn of 879 over the territory which belonged to the dynasty¹⁴. The assembled representatives of different Carolingian lines indeed demonstrated solidarity not only in declarations, but also in action. From then, as of July, for the next summer weeks they strove together to put in order the issue of the borders, subjecting the resisting cousins, and in particular taming Bozon, the powerful aristocrat who, possessing the territory given to him by the emperor, appropriated the power and subsequently reached for the crown. By doing so, he set a dangerous precedent for the whole dynasty, for all its members. No wonder that both Carolingian lines jointly took action against him and aided the descendants of Charles the Bald both politically and militarily¹⁵.

quod placitum Hludouicus, infirmitate detentus, uentre non potuit, sed pro se missos direxit. Karolus autem a Longobardia rediens illuc uenit. The *Annals of Fulda* place this meeting in the middle of August, however, we think that the date given by Hincmar is correct, as it is on a par with a further course of events.

¹³ Sources explicitly emphasise joint decisions and actions, see: *Annales Bertiniani*, *op. cit.*, (880),... *In quo placito* [that is in Gondreville] *communi consensu inuentum est ut ipsi reges...* and next, the schedule of actions to be taken is introduced. Similarly in the *Annals of Saint Vaast*.

¹⁴ Bozon's ascending to the throne was discussed by W. Mohr, *Boso von Vienne und die Nachfolgefrage nach dem Tode Karls des Kahlen und Ludwigs des Stammers*, in: *Archivum Latinitatis Medii Aevi (Bulletin Du Cange)*, vol. 26 (1956), pp. 141-165.

For Louis III and Karloman, the joint action taken by the leading members of the family, meant first of all to strengthen their position towards their own *proceres* and clearly define the scope of the royal power (basically in the territorial sense), as well as to mark out the territory subordinate to them and hand it over into their hands. However, in the long run, the support from the prominent cousins increased the chances of the young kings, strengthened their prestige and facilitated the process of taking and implementing sovereign decisions¹⁶. This was not reversed by an almost unfortunate course of action taken against Bozon, which ended in the siege of Vienne.

The Carolingian army set out to Burgundy, taking there respective towns which were in Bozon's possession. In this way the troops approached his most important residence. Vienne became the major stronghold of resistance which blocked the march of the enemy troops and hampered not only the defeat of the local force, but also the liquidation of Bozon's state, the newly created monarchy with the royal court, administration and central offices. The *Annals of Saint-Vaast* inform that Bozon decided to remain in his town and face the siege. The allied rulers approached Vienne and offered him a peace deal, which he refused¹⁷. Presumably, the condition was to voluntarily and immediately relinquish his claim to the throne. On the other hand, Hincmar wrote in his account that the king of Burgundy left Vienne, leaving there his wife and daughter as well as considerable troops, and he himself fled to the mountains¹⁸. It is

¹⁵ The case of Bozon in the background of the situation in the Kingdom of Western Franks was discussed more thoroughly in the work by J. Fried, *Boso von Vienne oder Ludwig der Stammler. Der Kaizerkandidat Johanns VIII*, in: "Deutsches Archiv", vol. 32/1 (1976), pp. 193–208. See also: W. Fałkowski, *Potestas regia. Władza i polityka w królestwie zachodniofrankijskim na przełomie IX i X wieku (Potestas regia. The Power and Politics in the Kingdom of Western Franks at the turn of the 9th and 10th Centuries)*, Warszawa 1999, pp. 31–42.

¹⁶ The stand of the Carolingians on Bozon and the internal crisis within the dynasty was discussed by L. Boehm, *Rechtsformen und Rechtstitel der burgundischen Königserhebungen im 9. Jahrhundert. Zur Krise der karolingischen Dynastie*, in: "Historisches Jahrbuch", vol. 80, (1961), pp. 1–58.

¹⁷ *Annales Vedastini, op. cit.*, (880), ... *Bosonem in Vienna civitate incluserunt, pacemque ei obtulerunt, quam ille rennuat suscipere. Circumdata itaque urbe ille se firmissime intus munit.*

¹⁸ *Annales Bertiniani, op. cit.* (880), ... *et pergentes simul Karolus, Hludouicus et Karlomannus ad obsidendam Viennam, in qua Boso uxorem suam cum filia et magnam partem de suis hominibus relinquens, fugam ad montana quaedam arripuit.*

difficult to determine which information is more credible, but the essence of the accounts is, against all appearances, the same. Here Bozon did not surrender, was not defeated or humiliated, and did not discredit himself as a ruler. For he understood, according to the account of one annal, that it was a better choice to accept the confrontation and command the defence in person, while being close to his family and milieu. Another account, however, the *Annals* by Hincmar, which explicitly mentioned the king's flee, stated that the king was looking for better conditions to defend himself in the mountain areas of the country, and he left his wife in the castle to be the representative of the family and the royal majesty. Her name was Irmingarda, the daughter of Louis II, the king of Italy and emperor (who had died five years prior to those events), and she directly descended from the Carolingian dynasty¹⁹. In these circumstances, the army of the invaders did not face a usurper — the appropriator of the crown, but another representative of the family, a close relation from the most prominent family. It would be difficult in this situation to think that Bozon discredited himself for he was at that time collecting troops for the relief in more remote areas of his state²⁰. After all, Hincmar noticeably avoided accusing him of the illegal appropriation of the crown and calling him a tyrant — usurper²¹. Thus, during his campaign Bozon did not lose his dignity and royal majesty, and remained the ruler recognized by his subjects, who still posed a serious threat to the Carolingian kings as their rival²².

¹⁹ See: *Karl der Grosse*, ed. W. Braunfels, P. E. Schramm, vol. IV, Düsseldorf 1967, genealogical table, 5th generation.

²⁰ The *Annals of Fulda* mention Bozon's escape to the territory behind the other bank of the Rhône, but his final destination was Vienne. *Annales Fuldenses*, op. cit., (880), *Boso vero fugiens ultra Rhodanum fluvium in urbe Vienna se tutatus est*. It would suggest that Bozon began his defense on the North-West border of his state, and then retreated to the line of the Rhône.

²¹ Hincmar did not use this definition at all in his annals. Yet we frequently find it in the *Annals of Saint-Vaast*. E.g. here are two mentions: on the coronation of Bozon and taking a decision to set out on an expedition. *Annales Vedastini*, op. cit., (879), *Boso etiam dux Provinciae per trannildem nomen regis sibi vindicat partemque Burgundiae occupat*, (880), ... *Hludovicus rex dirigit Heinricum (...), qui pergeret cum Hludovico et Karlomanno contra Bosonem tyrannum*.

²² Despite making great efforts, the Carolingian rulers could not find the executors who would lead to the collapse or death of their rival. A very meaningful seems to be the passage from the *Chronicle* by Reginon, which tells us how much all the kings hated Bozon. *Reginonis chronica*, ed. R. Rau, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. III, Berlin 1960, p. 254, (879). Cf. also Bozon's epitaph,

The invasion of Burgundy of 880 ended for the Carolingian party unexpectedly and in somewhat discreditable circumstances. On the 29th of September Karloman of Bavaria died, who was the brother of Louis the Younger and Charles the Fat, the actual leaders of the newly established coalition. The elder of them was then seriously ill and did not participate in the siege of Vienne, whereas the younger of the brothers decided immediately to take action. For Karloman's death opened the way to the imperial coronation. Therefore, ignoring the vows he had made or the fact that he was the head of the family and the chief-commander of the expedition, Charles the Fat left his cousins and set out to Lombardy. Hincmar tried to describe those events in a very balanced and emotionless way, yet his account is not free from confusion mixed with disgust. "Charles, on the other hand, who promised to siege Vienne together with his cousins, even though it had been confirmed by their mutual oaths, suddenly abandoned the siege and headed for Italy"²³.

The annalist of Saint-Vaast gave his account a much more dramatic overtone. He linked the description of Charles's withdrawal with the information about the curse put on Bozon. These were the bishops who did it in consultation, as it was marked, with the kings and aristocrats. The majority of the crown rulers who participated in the expedition, so clearly emphasised by the annals, reflected the reality, yet the account shows another aspect of the problem, that is the fact that it was a joint action taken by the whole family. All possible methods of pressure were brought. Firstly, was a proposal of ending the conflict peacefully, next, attempts were made to cut Bozon off from his resources, and finally, he was condemned fully and forever. However, further below in the account there is a mention that "King Charles [the Fat] immediately took a decision and, without notifying Louis and

where it was emphasised that nobody, despite big efforts, managed to oust him. *Recueil des Historiens de France*, vol. VIII, p. 50. See: W. Falkowski, *Potestas regia*, pp. 40–42.

²³ *Annales Bertiniani*, *op. cit.* (880), *Karolus autem, qui se una cum sobrinis suis Viennam obsessurum promiserat, mox ut quaedam sacramenta utrimque inter eos facta fuerunt, ab ipsa obsidione recessit et in Italiam perrexit ...* Hincmar, however, wrongly writes further down this passage that the imperial coronation of Charles the Fat took place on the 25th of December that year. In fact it happened some time later, on the 12th of February 881. See: C. Brühl, *Fränkischer Krönungsbrauch und das Problem der "Festkrönungen"*, in: "Historische Zeitschrift", vol. 194 (1962), p. 325.

Karloman, put fire to his camp and at night set out to his domain. "Next in the story we find the mention on Karloman of Bavaria's death, which suggests the reason for the sudden change of plans²⁴. Nevertheless, we do not understand such a strange conduct, which equally shows both the haste and presumably extreme determination of Charles, and his contempt for the other chiefs. Charles the Fat pointedly showed how little he was interested in the matters of the Western Kingdom and how much he neglected the dynasty's common interest. The siege was ended not much later, which contributed to strengthening the prestige of neither the dynasty nor its respective members²⁵.

Louis III returned to the north to his province, where the Norman threat continued to rise. Within the next several months, between the summer of 880 and August of 881 subsequent Norman troops raided the whole area of the country, including those inside its territory. They devastated the whole area between the Escaud and Somme, and also Frisia and the surroundings of Nijmegen, as well as Corvey and Amiens²⁶. The pagans built fortified camps near Courtrai, where they stayed over the winter, continuing their invasion also in the autumn and winter season. In these circumstances, the short mention in the *Annals of Saint-Vaast* that the young ruler came back to his castle and spent Christmas in Compiègne, acquires a really symbolic meaning²⁷. Returning to his capital, Louis III in fact arrived at the battlefield during the remaining and ever protracting threat. He did it when one of the most powerful aristocrats in the kingdom, Gozlin of Saint-Denis, left by the king to defend the state, decided that he could no longer fulfil his obligations²⁸. In this situation,

²⁴ *Annales Vedastini, op. cit.*, (880), *Unde episcopi cum consilio regum et principum eum [Bozon] perpetuo damnare anathemate. Karolus vero rex de nocte consurgens, ignorantibus Hludowico et Karlomanno, igne concremavit, atque ita revertitur in sua. Hoc etiam tempus obiit Karlomannus rex, frater Karoli et Hludowici.*

²⁵ Karloman's campaign against Bozon was discussed on the basis of available sources by J. de Font-Réaulx, *La campagne de Carloman contre Vienne en 881-882 et l'identification de Lépicius villa Andegavensis*, in: "Bulletin philologique et historique", 1928-1929 (ed. in 1931), pp. 1-6.

²⁶ On Norman invasions of the Kingdom of the Franks and their consequences see: A. D'Haenens, *Les invasions normandes en Belgique au IXe siècle. Le phénomène et sa repercussion dans l'historiographie médiévale*, Louvain 1967.

²⁷ *Annales Vedastini, op. cit.*, (880), *Hludowicus vero rex rediit in Franciam diemque nativitatis Domini egit celebrem in Compendio palatio.*

²⁸ *Annales Vedastini, op. cit.*, (880), *Gozlinus vero et hi qui cum eo erant videntes non posse eos resistere, mense Octobrio intrante dimisso exercitu, rediit unusquisque in sua.* Above in the same annals the information can be found that King

the king's return proved not only his own courage, but also responsibility for his country and the subjects who were being attacked by pagans, who "day and night continued to burn churches and humiliate the Christian people"²⁹. The Franks bore in mind Charles the Bald's recent trips to Rome, when the gangs of pirates invaded the whole of kingdom. Already during those Norman raides, another representative of the dynasty, Charles the Fat, gave another example of irresponsibility on the battlefield. Breaking off his commitments and without considering possible harmful consequences of his steps, he also set out to Italy for the imperial crown. Thus, Louis III's resignation from aiding his brother and his return to the north-west borderland of the inherited state must have been noticed and appreciated by all. This was clearly emphasised by Hincmar, who wrote that "Louis left Karloman with the army during Bozon's siege, and returned to his part of the kingdom in order to fight against the Normans"³⁰. Therefore, the Franks were able to see and appreciate the ruler who, at least temporarily, resigned from the games and merely prestigious competition within the dynasty, in order to face a real danger, bitterly experienced by everyone.

It was a gradual process to contain the situation, yet the young king possessed, apart from courage, also unquestionable military talent and a lot of luck. The final battle against the Normans, which took place as late as on the 3rd of August 881 at Saucourt, was prepared by the king slowly and mindfully. Primarily, this was the victory of moral significance, because it stopped a series of raids and looting, and showed how to defend oneself efficiently. On the battlefield near the estuary of the Somme only the troops which operated in that region were broken, but it brought hope for victory to all the citizens of the

Louis III, setting out on his expedition against Bozon, designated Gozlin to defend the kingdom from the Normans. To define his mission the word *tutio* was used, which was usually the term to describe the duty of the monarch to protect his subjects. *Hludowicus vero Gauzlinum cum aliis multis ad tuitionem regni contra Nortmannos dirigit.*

²⁹ *Annales Vedastini, op. cit.* (880), *Timor quoque et tremor eorum cecidit super inhabitantes terram, et hac elati victoria die noctuque non cessant aecclesias igne cremari populumque Christianum iugulari.*

³⁰ *Annales Bertiniani, op. cit.* (881), *Remanente Karlomanno cum suis contra Bosonis seditionem, Hludowicus, frater eius, reuersus est in partem regni sui contra Nortmannos.*

kingdom and significantly increased Louis III's prestige³¹. The summer military campaign could only be victorious if all the forces had earlier been organized and help from the local aristocrats received. Louis III did it skillfully and in a proper way, yet at the same time he did not stop strengthening his power and extending the possibilities of action. In the spring of 881, in spite of a continuous presence of threats, the unsolved problem with Bozon, and an endless control from the aristocrats, the young monarch seemed to be able to have hope for better future. The great Carolingian kings finally accepted the new west-Frankish rulers. Bozon's younger brother was successfully paralysing his moves in Burgundy, trying to win support of local aristocrats, and preparing a new offensive³². The elder brother became famous as a courageous and efficient leader, and a responsible guardian of the kingdom. The danger of further Norman invasions induced the domestic opposition to cooperate with the ruler and accept his independence. These were the circumstances in which a new internal conflict broke out, which became a real test of Louis's maturity and his political skill.

On the 28th of January 881 the Bishop of Beauvais, Odon died³³, who used to be the chaplain of Charles the Bald, as well as long-standing collaborator and adviser of Hincmar. His diocese belonged to the archdiocese of Reims, and for this reason the aged archbishop at once began to take steps towards introducing a new bishop. Beauvais was the bishopric which supervised the area and policy on the western border of the archdiocese and controlled the routes from Neustria and Bretany, both these along the coast and those leading to the central part of the kingdom, around Compiègne, Reims, and Soissons³⁴. Already in February

³¹ The battle became legendary and was described in the poem *Ludwigslied*, which was composed already during Louis's life, as a splendid victory by the Franks, which gave everybody hope for better future. On the poem see: H. de Boor, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. I, Frankfurt 1960, p. 91.

³² Already in mid January of 881, Bozon regulated the matter of the bishop's domain through a royal document, issued in Toisieu (Canton Roussillon). He appears there with the earlier assumed royal title *Boso, misericordia Dei rex*. *Recueil des actes des rois de Provence*, ed. R. Poupardin, Paris 1920, N° XX, (18.01.881). More details on this document see: W. Fałkowski, *Potestas regia*, p. 35. Cf. also R.-H. Bautier, *Aux origines du royaume de Provence, de la sédition avortée de Boson à la royauté légitime de Louis*, in: "Provence Historique", vol. 23 (1973), p. 41 — 68.

³³ Cf. *Galla Christiana*, vol. IX, pp. 699–701.

Hincmar appealed in his letter to the clergy and the citizens of the diocese for consultation about the election of the next Bishop of Beauvais. Simultaneously, in another letter, he designated the Bishop of Senlis, Hadebert as his curator of the diocese³⁵. The next step was to demand from the king the right for an independent choice of the successor. He did it only three months later, after the meeting between the bishops and local clergy at the council. Strengthened by their support, he wrote a letter to Louis III, asking him not to nominate another bishop and leave the right to do so in the hands of the Church hierarchs³⁶. This letter directly refers to the proceedings at the council of Fismes, which began on the 2nd of April³⁷. Hincmar, on behalf of the participants, informed the monarch that the previous choice which had been made in Beauvais was not approved. Thanks to the local clergy and secular electors, a person named Fromold was chosen to be consecrated, yet he was not approved by the bishops. In the course of other elections, two more candidates, namely Rudolf and Honorat, were selected, yet they also appeared to be undeserving consecration. In this way, concluded Hincmar, locals "silly and impertinent, infatuated with desire", lost the right to select the candidate, which was then handed down to the participants of the council³⁸. Thus the king, while suggesting his own candidate Odakar, could not invoke the will of the clergy and secular voters of Beauvais, but he was obliged to fully respect the opinion of the hierarchs gathered at the council³⁹.

³⁴ Cf. J. Devisse, *Hincmar, archevêque de Reims (845–882)*, vol. I–III, Geneva 1975, p. 985.

³⁵ Heinrich Schrörs dates both letters at February 881. H. Schrörs, *Hincmar, Erzbischof von Reims. Sein Leben und seine Schriften*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1884, p. 556 (register N^o 500 and 501).

³⁶ All the three documents can be found in: *Patrologiae Latinae cursus completus*, ed. J.-P. Migne (quoted below as: *PL*), vol. 126, col. 258–261, 269, 110. J. Devisse suggests that the letter to the king was sent already in March, before the council was in session. (*op. cit.*, p. 985, footnote 125). On the contrary, H. Schrörs accepted April as the right date (*op. cit.*, p. 556, N^o 502), and based his argument, as one can assume, on an explicit reference to the decisions of the council. We agree with this latter argument.

³⁷ *PL* 125, col. 1069–1086, ... *anno incarnationis Dominicae 881, indictione 14, iv Nonas Aprilis* (col. 1069–70). See: H. Schrörs, *op. cit.*, p. 434. J. Devisse (*op. cit.*, p. 986, footnote 126) dated the beginning at the 1st of April.

³⁸ *PL* 126, col. 114, ... *non est mirum si stulti et improbi ac cupiditate caecati toties taliter agunt, non correcti de reiectione pravae suae electionis in Fromoldum, et reprobo Rodulfo, et a se electo Honorato sacro episcopali ordini adhuc fidelis doctrina incongruo, perdidit electionem.*

Hincmar's document clearly appears to be the answer to Louis's letter, who had already taken a decision to support Odakar and, making use of a result of the election favorable for him, introduced his candidacy to be approved by the council. The archbishop firmly refused both all the political pressure, and the suggestion that he should feel obliged to execute the king's will as the one who was a long-standing advisor of subsequent rulers. "As Your Majesty have written, I have always been helpful and true-hearted to the kings, Your predecessors, in the matters for the benefit of the kingdom, and I shall remain equally loyal and devoted to You. I have been this way so far, and it is my intention to be the same in the future. Therefore, may Your Majesty fulfil Your obligations to the Holy Church, bishops, and myself, as they have done so to You. Be it for the proof of my loyalty which I showed You with some other subjects (*fidelibus*) during Your election, and I did it with no special effort. I did so for the prosperity of Your future rule. May God help You act virtuously. May You not want to return evil for my good, neither at the insistence which does not come from God's inspiration, nor convincing me, in my old age, to abandon holy rules. I have done all things so far neither to desire something, nor because of love or fear. Thank God, I have held the office of bishop this way for thirty six years. Thus, I shall decide, as it is necessary"⁴⁰.

Hincmar therefore responded not only categorically and with dignity, but also as an old, experienced advisor and participant of numerous top political events. He did not fail to remind the youngster of neither his age nor services which he had offered to the dynasty and himself. Also, the content of the letter clearly shows that after the old king's death the election of a new ruler took place, during which Hincmar and his surroundings actively

³⁹ *Ibidem*, ... *vota omnium qui commorantur in Belvacensi Ecclesia, in Odacrum concordare*, ...

⁴⁰ PL 126, col. 115, cap. VII, *Quod scripsistis, ut sicut semper regibus praedecessoribus vestris in omni utilitate regni proficiuus et devotus fui, ita vobis fidelis et devotus existam. Quod et hactenus observavi et observare cupio. Vos autem sanctae Ecclesiae, et eius rectoribus, atque mihi servate quod illi conservaverunt; et pro devotionis fidelitate, quam vobis cum caeteris fidelibus vestris in electione vestra, non sine magno labore, ad provectionem regiminis, quo jam nomine, dei Dominus etiam virtute potiti estis, nolite retribuere mihi mala pro bonis, suadentes, non tamen auxiliante Domino, persuadentes, ut in senecta mea declinem a sacris regulis, quod nec pro cupiditate, nec pro amore vel timore hactenus feci, ut a gradu episcopali, quo per triginta et sex annos gratia Dei usque modo functus fui, merito decidam.*

supported the youngsters. Thus, their rights to the west-Frankish throne were not that obvious for all the lords of the kingdom⁴¹. In the conclusion of the letter the Archbishop introduced the matter explicitly. The decision needs to be left for the bishops, who together with the clergy and secular congregation of the diocese will hold the election and consecration. However, within the short conclusion which directly referred to his previous reasoning and pointedly repeated earlier arguments, a small yet important mention on the royal dignity can be found. "The election and consecration will be done — the old archbishop wrote — the way it had been established in old canons, during the council, by the bishops, clergy, and secular congregation of the church in Beauvais, with a sovereign consent of Your Royal Majesty, as it befits the king in his office (*cum libero consensu vestro, sicut regium ministerium decet*), as well as on the basis of legal and customary regulations"⁴². This sentence echoed long lasting debates at the Council of Fismes on the fundamental obligations of the king and the responsibilities of the bishops to the monarchy. The scope of the monarch's power was limited by canon laws and the majesty of bishops, and the old adviser's personal authority was extended to the whole group of the Church hierarchs. The debate, which was led by Hincmar, clearly determined the rights and duties of both parties, and discussed these issues far more extensively than it would merely stem from the controversy over the assignment of the bishop in Beauvais. In this way, the conflict over the bishopric was transformed into a public debate on the principles of the functioning of the Carolingian monarchy and mutual relations between the secular authority and the clergy.

⁴¹ In the discussion on the way of choosing rulers, either through election or on account of dynastic rights, the case of the successors of Louis the Stammerer should be classified as a choice of Frankish lords. Hincmar wrote: ... *cum caeteris fidelibus vestris in electione vestra* ... J. Dhondt, in his article *Élection et hérédité sous les Carolingiens et les premiers Capétiens* ("Revue belge", vol. XVIII, 1939, pp. 923–5), not referring to this letter, emphasised a decisive role of lords, who, however, elected the ruler from among the successors of Charles the Great. Both Hincmar's remarks and the political situation of the period make us suppose that the discussions on the assumption of the throne were very long, heated, and they did not have to be limited to the representatives of the ruling dynasty.

⁴² PL 126, col. 117, cap. X, *in fine*, *Conveniant ergo in pace Christi, sicut statutum secundum sacros canones fuit, in synodo episcopi et clerus ac plebs Belvacensis Ecclesiae cum libero consensu vestro, sicut regium ministerium decet, et juxta legalem ac regularem formam electio exsequatur et ordinatio prosequatur.*

The way Hincmar perceived these matters is best reflected in the passage from another letter, which he sent to the king after the council came to an end, most probably in the second half of June. The author said there explicitly that on the royal dignity and the privileges of the Church he had written sufficiently in other works, and there was no need to repeat the same. "I have written long enough in my other letters to Your Majesty on the dignity of the predecessors of Your Royal Majesty, emperors and kings, and what privileges had been given by them to the Holy Church and bishops, and how they respected them. And I shall discuss publicly no more of what has not been useful yet"⁴³. Thus the Archbishop gave another admonition to the young ruler, almost as an arbiter who looks at this particular conflict over the bishopric through the issues of more general nature and traditionally accepted principles. In reply to the king's suggestion, or perhaps request, to honour the monarch and let him award the bishopric in Beauvais to his favourite, he answered with dignity that he had done it in the best possible way on the day of Louis's coronation. On this occasion, he also wished the king would honour God, according to the then taken oath, through following his predecessors' example and respecting laws given to bishops and the Church⁴⁴. During those deliberations, he gave a particularly strong statement, which again referred to the period from before the coronation and the discussions and political games of that time. Hincmar, recouring to Christ's words in the *Gospel* according to St. John — "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you"⁴⁵ — for the next time firmly reminded who was doing whom a favour. "You have not chosen me to lead the Church, but I, together with my collaborators and some faithful to God, as well as your predecessors, have jointly chosen you to rule the king-

⁴³ PL 126, col. 117–122, *Ad eundem Ludovicum regem. De Odacro invasore Ecclesiae Belvacensis*, cap. VI, col. 119, *De honore praedecessorum vestrorum imperatorum et regum, et qualiter privilegia sanctae Ecclesiae ac rectorum et ministrorum ipsius decreverunt et consevaverunt, in aliis litteris sufficienter vobis scribere studui: quae si vobis non profuerint, nec plura proderunt*. On dating this letter see: H. Schrörs, *op. cit.*, p. 556 (N^o 505).

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, col. 118–9, ... *iste frater noster a vobis ad me rediens ambasaviat mihi ex vestra parte, ... et peteret ut ad opus Odacri honorarem vos de episcopo Belvacensis ecclesiae. Cui respondi, quoniam sicut melius et honorabilius atque salubrius scivi, vos inde honorare curavi, hortans ut sicut professi estis in die consecrationis vestrae, in regimine regni praedecessorum vestrorum honoretis Deum, consentiendo ei, conservando sanctae Ecclesiae ac ipsius rectoribus leges ...*

⁴⁵ The *Holy Gospel* according to St. John, XV, 16.

dom, on the condition that you respect invariable laws"⁴⁶. Of course, this was again about the Archbishop's stance in the period between the death of Louis the Stammerer in April of 879 and the coronation of both his sons in September of the year when he unambiguously and actively supported the princes⁴⁷. The reply is also accompanied by an important comment which indicates the existing limitations of the king's power, which must allow for previously issued laws.

Hincmar was able to answer the king so proudly and firmly, because his position was supported by the discussions and declarations of the council, and by the theses which were passed there⁴⁸. A few weeks earlier, in April of 881, a common stance was agreed in Fismes on the issue of the conflict over the succession after Bishop Odon, and on the subject of the prerogatives of the king's power. General considerations on principles of the monarchy are in the first chapter of the resolution, and it is them which begin further arguments.

The issues discussed at the beginning regard the differentiation and separation of two major sources of the authority in the state, the royal *potestas* and bishop's *auctoritas*. A detailed separation was carried out between the majesty of the monarch and the authority of the bishops, which was deeply, though briefly justified. "There are two, as we read in *Holy Works*, [possibilities] of ruling this world, the holy authority of bishops and royal power. (*auctoritas sacra pontificum et regia potestas*). For only our Lord, Jesus Christ could truly be the king and priest (*rex et sacerdos*)"⁴⁹.

⁴⁶ PL 126, col. 119, ... *Non vos me elegistis in praelatione Ecclesiae, sed ego cum collegis meis et caeteris Dei ac progenitorum vestrorum fidelibus, vos elegeri ad regimen regni, sub conditioe debitas leges servandi.*

⁴⁷ This statement was already noticed by W. Ullmann, *Der Souveränitätsgedanke in den mittelalterlichen Krönungsordines*, in: *Festschrift für Percy Ernst Schramm*, ed. P. Classen, P. Scheibert, Wiesbaden 1964, vol. I, p. 80, reprinted in: *idem*, *The Church and the Law in the Earlier Middle Ages*, Variorum Reprints, London 1975. The author rightly noticed that Hincmar's arguments give the impression as if the whole political support given to the young Carolingians came from the bishops, whereas secular lords either did not engage themselves in the course of events or did not play an important role in them.

⁴⁸ On the correspondence between Hincmar and Louis III during the controversy over the succession of the bishopric of Beauvais see: G. Schmitz, *Hincmar von Reims, die Synode von Fismes 881 und der Streit um das Bistum Beauvais*, in: "Deutsches Archiv", vol. 35, part. 2 (1979), pp. 463–486. *Ibidem*, previously unpublished letter by Hincmar from the beginning of April 881.

⁴⁹ PL 125, col. 1069–1086, *Capitula in synodo apud s. Macram ab Hincmaro promulgata*. Col. 1071, cap. I, *quia sicut in sacris legitimus litteris, duo sunt, quibus*

After Him, “neither a king dared to appropriate the bishop’s dignity, nor a bishop — the royal power”⁵⁰. In this context, to describe a possible misconduct of both parties, the word *usurpare* was mentioned. During the discussions held in Fismes in April of 881, it gained an additional meaning because of the continuous heated debate with Bozon. The whole Carolingian dynasty and the whole political and intellectual elite regarded Bozon as an usurper, who illegally assumed royal power. It was only Hincmar, who in his annals consequently avoided such definitions. Yet, analysing the situation in which the monarch can aim to extend his power, and try to reach for the bishop’s prerogatives, the Archbishop of Reims does not hesitate to use this term. For him, it is undoubtedly usurpation, most often called in all sources tyranny, that is an unlawful and illegal rule.

Such a decisive and firm reaction partially stemmed from the clearly expressed aims and aspirations of the king, who introduced them in his letter sent in early spring. Thanks to the discovery by Gerhard Schmitz, we know the gist of the ruler’s reasoning, which was fully quoted in a letter of reply by Hincmar from the beginning of April. The monarch said that, following Christ, he wanted to assume the duties of a king and priest. “We, as the king and your priest want to remain with dignity in God’s service both in divine and worldly matters”⁵¹. The Archbishop regarded this statement not only as an infringement of royal prerogatives, but also as open usurpation which was inspired by the king’s advisers⁵². Such radical postulates must have given rise to a fierce reaction and strong resistance.

principaliter mundus hic regitur, auctoritas sacra pontificum, et regia potestas. Solus enim Dominus noster Jesus Christus vere fieri potuit rex et sacerdos. See: H. Schrörs, *op. cit.*, p. 556 (N^o 503) and pp. 434–444.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, ... *nec rex pontificis dignitatem, nec pontifex regiam potestatem sibi usurpare praesumpsit.*

⁵¹ G. Schmitz, *Hikmar von Reims*, p. 481, *Ut, quia Christus duas in se assumpsit personas, regis scilicet et sacerdotis, ut esset rex pariter et sacerdos, iungamur simul, ut ego rex et vos sacerdotes Dei ministerium condigne tam in divinis quam in humanis adimplere valeamus officii.*

⁵² G. Schmitz, *op. cit.*, p. 471, regards Gozlin of Saint-Denis, the royal chancellor, as the author of these words. According to Hincmar, they should be ascribed to ... *non vobis, sed dictatori eiusdem epistolae* ... G. Schmitz stresses the harmony between the views of the Archbishop and the king, which only differ from each other, according to him, in theological matters which directly refer to the above quoted sentence about imitating Christ. However, it seems that already this exchange of letters, irrespective of the declarations at the council, reveals not only the conflict over the bishopric, but also a clear difference of opinion on mutual

In his statement published at the end of the council, which was probably called so quickly considering the king's attempts, Hincmar and his advisers went even further⁵³. First, they introduced the differences which were connected with the character of service provided by the representatives of both offices. "Christian kings leave questions of eternity to bishops, and bishops leave worldly matters at kings' disposal"⁵⁴. Next, they pointed out the consequences which stemmed from this fact and had a both prestigious and practical dimension. "Thus the bishop's dignity is of bigger importance than the royal one, because kings are anointed by bishops, whereas bishops cannot be consecrated by kings"⁵⁵. Finally, they led to the conclusion which indicated the superiority of priests over rulers and its practical consequences. "Thus, of more importance is the burden which rests on the shoulders of priests rather than kings, as this is the priests who are to take responsibility for those kings who are to be destined to face the Final Judgement. On the other hand, the protection of kings is more important than priests in the worldly matters, because they are entrusted by the King of kings with the duty to guard honour, security, and peace of the Holy Church, priests and hierarchs, as well as to make law and run wars"⁵⁶. In this way the doctrine on the subordination of a monarch to a priest, and the secular authority to the clerical one was laid. Caring for every detail, Hincmar used in this context to define God a very literal title "the King of kings". Also, the conclusion was drawn that topical decisions and current politics should be adjusted to

relations between the two authorities. Hincmar emphasises with determination the sovereign and superior authority of the bishop.

⁵³ J. Devisse, *op. cit.*, p. 992, claims that it was Hincmar who was the author of the theses passed in Fismes. There is no doubt that he chaired the session and surely edited the final version of the text, yet the statement was issued after a several day discussion among the clergy gathered there.

⁵⁴ PL 125, col. 1071, ...*Christiani reges pro aeterna vita pontificibus indigerent, et pontifices pro temporalium rerum cursu regum dispositionibus uterentur,...*

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, *Et tanto est dignitas pontificum maior quam regum, quia reges in culmen regum sacrantur a pontificibus, pontifices autem a regibus consecrari non possunt*; M. Bloch puts emphasis on this passage in: *Les rois thaumaturges*, Paris 1924, p. 71 and footnote 1, and also recalls the earlier *Libellus proclamationis adversus Wenlonem*, whose authorship he ascribes to Hincmar.

⁵⁶ Col. 1071 B, ... *et tanto gravius pondus est sacerdotum, quam regum, quanto etiam pro ipsis regibus hominum in divino reddituri sunt examine rationem: et tanto in humanis rebus regum cura est propensior, quam sacerdotum, quanto pro honore et defensione ac quiete sanctae Ecclesiae, ac rectorum et ministrorum ipsius, et leges promulgando, ac militando, a Rege regum est eius curae onus impositum.*

the needs of the mission exercised by the clergy⁵⁷. Walter Ullmann, stated in his consideration on the royal authority that in the position taken in Fismes Gelasian influences could be noticed, which stressed a bigger responsibility of priests and referred to the Old Testament tradition in which priests handed over to kings the knowledge of how to rule⁵⁸.

In this way they overcame a fundamental dilemma in the medieval theory of the state — what means should be used to implement declared values and ideals, and in which way particular laws should reflect general rules.

The superior position of priests is clearly visible in the coronation ceremony, which symbolically shows the superiority of their authority, their bigger responsibility and longer perspective in which they keep everyday matters and duties. It also means, as the participants of the council stressed, that they entrust rulers with laws so that they know how to rule their subjects and how to honour priests.

In order to confirm the consideration, an example of punishing biblical King Osaiah, who had reached for some of the spiritual prerogatives, was mentioned⁵⁹. Firstly, he was afflicted by leprosy, secondly, the priests evicted him from the temple, and next, he was forced to remain in seclusion in his house⁶⁰. This example was on the one hand to indicate possible consequences of disobeying the separation of jurisdiction between the two authorities and, on the other hand, to educate how dangerous it can be to aim to reverse the hierarchy between the worldly rulers and the priests, who think about spiritual matters. In Hincmar's view, politics should be subordinated to not only the aim of, what is obvious, eternal redemption, but also to current directives of the Church hierarchs.

At the time of his election to become king, Osaiah was sixteen. In his rule he showed fear of God, and he listened to his

⁵⁷ E. Delaruelle noticed that already in the work by Jonah of Orléans suggestions can be found that *Impertium Christianum* is not an exclusive concern of emperors or princes, but first of all — of bishops. E. Delaruelle, *En relisant le "De institutione regia" de Jonas d'Orléans. L'entrée en scène de l'épiscopat carolingien*, in: *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge Louis Halphen*, Paris 1951, p. 190.

⁵⁸ W. Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*, London 1969, pp. 117–8.

⁵⁹ PL 125, col. 1071, cap. I, *in fine*.

⁶⁰ *The Second Book of Chronicles*, 26.

experienced adviser. He ran successful and necessary wars, strengthened Jerusalem, and looked after the state. However, when his trusted adviser had gone, he lost his moderation and became obsessed with success. He dared to reach for the spiritual power and himself make offerings to Jehova, which the priests disapproved of. The king refused their warnings and wanted to vent his anger on his opponents. It was then that he was severely punished. The analogy between this story and the situation in the kingdom of the Franks is obvious. Hincmar understood it very well and that is why he limited himself to a brief evocation of the history of Osaiah, and did not draw a detailed parallel. Nevertheless, the significance of this example must have been strikingly literal for every addressee of this story.

A reference to the superiority of bishops over crowned rulers, visible in the coronation rite, was evoked in the declaration of Fismes in the form of statement saying that "the anointment of kings takes place thanks to bishops" (*reges in culmen regium sacrantur a pontificibus*). This, of course, applied to the coronation ceremony, only through which, according to this reasoning, the pretender to the throne, even if he came from a royal dynasty, gained an authentic position and real monarchic rights. The tautology used here deliberately combined in one expression both the assumed royal title and the title of the would-be king before being anointed. For the dynasty members who aspire to the royal crown gain this highest position among the whole ruling elite thanks to bishops, who through the act of coronation not only hand over to them the right to rule but also consent to their making law. Kings become authentic monarchs only through the agency of bishops, and this is what they should not forget. The skill to rule the subjects also stems from the act of anointing, and this was another argument evoked in the council statement⁶¹. Janet Nelson rightly noticed that the anointment of rulers by bishops was, at least in the early Middle Ages, of a character similar to magic rituals of designation in traditional cultures. The case was not, however, to hand over functions and rights of priests, but to emphasise a spiritual aspect of the power which

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, col. 1071 D, ... *quia cum sacerdotes in regimine regni reges ungebant, et diademata capitibus illorum imponebant, legem in manibus eis dabant, ut discerent et scirent qualiter se et subjectos sibi regere, et sacerdotes Domini honorare debeant.*

was being received, and a characteristic subordination of a ruler to the Church hierarchy⁶².

The letters sent from the council explicitly prove that Hincmar did not fail to remind the ruler of any aspect of the matter. For the council dealt with an ideological base of ascending the throne and wielding the royal power, whereas during the council was in session and immediately afterwards, in the discussed above letters, the aged Archbishop reminded of his political merits for the whole dynasty, in the period which immediately predeceased the coronation.

The bishops who gathered in Fismes made a clear division between the bishop's and king's power. In their opinion the only one who combined these two together was Christ. He is the only one who can be called both the king and priest. No other monarch, or bishop can and should dream about such a power and position, because the scope of these two functions is completely different. They both complement and need each other, even though their mutual hierarchical position is as equally obvious as the hierarchy of goals in the worldly and eternal lives. Kings need priests to gain eternity, whereas bishops use rulers to manage a course of wordly matters⁶³. This was the way in which Hincmar and his advisors determined a mutual dependence and the essence of functioning of the two dignities. *Rex et sacerdos* remains therefore an ideal which cannot be achieved on account of the complementarity between these two functions and their hierarchical dependence. At the same time, however, one should not even think about achieving such a position, as it would be an attempt to come level with Christ. Thus, there should be no surprise that bishops see the need to indicate a proper form and right scope of power of the rulers themselves and the monarchy as an institution⁶⁴.

⁶² J. Nelson, *National Synods, Kingship as Office, and Royal Anointing: an Early Medieval Syndrome*, in: *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe*, London 1986, pp. 248–9. See also: L. Rougier, *Le caractère sacré de la royauté en France*, in: *The Sacral Kingship*, Leiden 1959, pp. 608–12.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, ... *sic actionibus propriis dignitatibusque ab eo distinctis, ut et Christiani reges pro aeterna vita pontificibus indigerent, et pontifices pro temporalium rerum cursu regum dispositionibus uterentur*, ... See: J. Devisse, *op. cit.*, p. 993, where the quoted passage can also be found. On the Council of Fismes see: pp. 985–8, whereas the remarks on the council declaration are on pp. 992–6.

⁶⁴ Cf. W. A. Eckhardt, *Das Protokoll von Rawenna 877 über die Kaiserkrönung Karls des Kahlen*, in: "Deutsches Archiv", vol. 23 (1967), pp. 295–311, who men-

On the other hand, as Marc Bloch noticed, the term *rex et sacerdos* had already been used with reference to a ruling monarch in a very positive meaning, almost as the highest praise⁶⁵. The records of the Frankfurt Council of 794 show this term among the number of others. Charles the Great was first called there "lord and father" (*dominus et pater*), next "king and priest" (*rex et sacerdos*), and finally "the most moderate governor of all Christians" (*omnium Christianorum moderantissimus gubernator*)⁶⁶. Yet, the list of titles was provided with an equally long index of functions and actions which Charles the Great should take. He is then to show compassion to prisoners of war, aid the oppressed, reduce the burden of dues, and be the consoler to widows and hope to the poor⁶⁷. Thus, this is first of all a collection of postulates directed straight to the ruler, and only after them appear a number of titles ascribed to Charles. However, in each case the title is accompanied with an appeal to the ruler to adopt the proper role and act accordingly. Paul of Aquileia, who on behalf of the bishops of Lombardy wrote the council theses, each time provided the titles given to Charles with a short postulate for the ruler to accept such a role⁶⁸. Thus we are not facing flattering remarks to end the treatise or clearly expressed statements which would describe the existing state of affairs. It is more likely an outline of suggested scope of the royal power from the perspective of the Church hierarchs.

We can find additional help in interpreting these declarations in the sentence which precedes this passage. There, Charles the Great was asked to adopt the role of a leader who fights for the

tioned the Council of Ravenna in 877, where Charles the Bald was compared with the Creator. It seems, however, that the record of the decisions made in Ravenna requires a detailed and thorough analysis, together with the whole political and ideological context, since one of the postulates introduced there was to imitate by the monarch "the only authentic king, Christ" (*op. cit.*, p. 307).

⁶⁵ Cf. M. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 74 and footnote 2, also p. 75 and footnote 1. The author quotes the expressions from the Council of Frankfurt, and notices that in the periods of weakness of the Carolingian dynasty bishops had a tendency to treat monarchs with superiority, but this could not be observed during the heyday of the Carolingians.

⁶⁶ *MGH, Concilia*, vol. II, 1, p. 142, ... *sit dominus et pater, sit rex et sacerdos, sit omnium Christianorum moderantissimus gubernator auxiliante domino nostro Iesu Christo*, ...

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, *Indulgeat miseratus captivis, subveniat opressis, dissolvat fasciculos deprimentes, sit consolatio viduarum, miserorum refrigerium*, ...

⁶⁸ In each case the word *est* was used in conjunctivus — in the form of *sit*, so that the formulated advice might be more explicit and remain a postulate.

Church against “visible enemies”, whereas the bishops took the responsibility to fight against “invisible enemies”, using for this purpose spiritual weapons⁶⁹. Thus, a characteristic division of responsibilities is suggested between the royal authority and the clergy. The ruler is to protect worldly life, whereas the bishops care about eternal life and salvation of the subjects. This programme was formulated carefully and refinedly, yet the general message included in the conclusion of the text is a clear instruction how one needs to understand the role of a ruler, who in the first sentence of the treatise was called “lord in this world”⁷⁰. We should, however, notice that in contrast to a later opinion by Hincmar, Paul of Aquileia did not see any discrepancy between the function of a priest and king. On the contrary, he called on Charles to take the duties, connected with the two functions, and fulfil them. Thus, in the formula *rex et sacerdos* two roles, which are mutually complementary and regard two different ways of acting, are included. Their mutual relations were introduced by the bishops, but the decision whether to accept them or refuse depended on a sovereign will of Charles the Great, because bishops appealed directly to him.

Thus, the change which took place between the Councils of Frankfurt and Fismes was fundamental, and resulted first of all from the weakening of the Carolingian kings, their lack of prestige, weaker authority and involvement in internal political disputes. Paul of Aquileia, writing his theses in 794, perceived the role of bishops and tasks to be performed by kings in a largely similar way to Hincmar almost 90 years later, yet he could not afford either a similarly strict tone or any attempt to dictate his own vision to the ruler⁷¹. Nevertheless, he did not notice any

⁶⁹ *Concilia*, vol. II, 1, p. 142, *Unde supplicandus est tranquillissimus princeps noster, ut ille pro nobis contra visibiles hostes pro Christi amore Domino optulante dimicet, et nos pro illo contra invisibiles hostes, Domini inprecantis potentiam, spiritualibus armis pugnemus, ...*

⁷⁰ *Concilia*, vol. II, 1, p. 130, *...Caroli regis, domini terrae ...*

⁷¹ Once more in the sources from the period of Charles the Great's rule a combination between the royal and spiritual functions can be found. In his letter to Charles and Karloman of 770, the Pope Stephen III opposes the dismissal of Karloman's wife, the daughter of the King of Longobards. Among many arguments was also the following: *Nam absit hoc a vobis, qui perfecti estis Christiani, et gens sancta, atque regale estis sacerdotium*. M. Bloch (*op. cit.*, p. 75) rightly regards this expression as a kind of adulation. Nevertheless, the Pope did not see anything wrong in very term itself *regale sacerdotium*, or also in such understanding of the royal function. *PL* vol. 89, col. 1254 C. Cf. *Regesta pontificum romanorum*, ed. by

discrepancy between the function of a priest and a social role of the ruler. His great successor by the side of Carolingian monarchs defined these roles from the position of the Archbishop of Reims completely in a different way, as not only separate and autonomous, but also functioning in utterly dissimilar spheres. Also, the consecration was for him a form of contact with God higher than anointing. That is why the programme outlined by Paul of Aquileia, bears clearly a character of appeals and requests possible to act on. Whereas in Hincmar's version it becomes an admonition and instruction with a very emphatic definition of limits on the role to be adopted by the ruler. It, of course, stemmed not only from a different theological base but also from a lower authority of the whole dynasty, as well as Louis III's young age, and limited, as it seemed, chances to exercise authentic rule. *Res publica*, which he ruled, was not the same *regnum* as the state of his great ancestors, and the power, which he held, was more contingent upon the opinion and will of his surroundings. What was during the rule of Charles the Great a postulated fulfilment of the role of the greatest secular monarch, in the epoch of his great great grandson became the unacceptable trespassing of natural borders between the authorities, and almost sacrilege.

The admonitions by Hincmar were addressed to "kings, governors of the state, and the collaborators of the royal office". Such a long and untypical definition of the addressees of the admonitions was to stress that the case was not either one particular conflict with the ruler or the instructions for young Louis III. The west-Frankish Church, gathered in Fismes, formulated with a strong voice the theses which regarded the very essence of the monarchy. "And thus with the power of the bishop's authority and the voice of Lord we admonish the royal majesty, the governors of the state, and also the plenipotentiaries of the royal office, to show, in the face of God and people, that they are God's aides, and therefore both now and in the future deserve to be supported, ..."72. The term *res publica*, used in the text instead

Ph. Jaffé, G. Wattenbach, Leipzig 1885, vol. I, N° 2381. The formula *rex et sacerdos* in the period before the Council of Frankfurt was discussed by A. Angenendt, *Karl der Grosse als "Rex et Sacerdos"*, in: *Das Frankfurter Konzil von 794. Kristallisationspunkt Karolingischer Kultur*, ed. R. Berndt, Mainz 1997, pp. 255–278.

⁷² *Ibidem*, col. 1077, cap. VI, *Admonitio ad regem et ministros reipublicae, Regiam vero dignitatem, et ministros reipublicae, ac cooperatores regni ministerii, episcopali auctoritate et Domini voce monemus, ut semetipsos coram Deo et coram hominibus*

of the word *regnum* to mean the state, was to emphasise that this is a common concern and shared responsibility, rather than the exclusive prerogative of the ruler. Simultaneously, as Walter Ullmann showed it, the concept of *res publica* was very similar, in a legal sense, to the situation of a child before reaching an adult age. The legal position of these two subjects was understood in a very similar way. It was like leaving an underage in custody of an adult, or the state (*res publica*) under the rule of a mature ruler. The function of a protector of the kingdom (*tutor regni*) was first of all grounded in respecting the law. For it was the laws that guaranteed proper exercising of protective functions and appropriate delivering on the duty of supervision. Just like an immature adolescent, also *res publica* required legal guarantees of its rights and a good protector⁷³. Such understanding of the term *res publica* brought about associations directly with the young age of Louis III, his lack of experience, and a related to this, urgent need to suggest right solutions and support from the people of high esteem⁷⁴. In the same sentence the supporters and collaborators were called *ministri* and *cooperatores*, which explicitly indicated persons who were experienced and tested as assistants in great work of governing the country⁷⁵.

The treatise written in Fismes concludes with the remarks on the need to possess wise advisors. In this context, the example of Charles the Great was evoked, who even though surpassed other Frankish kings with the knowledge of the *Holy Bible* and all laws, never allowed the situation to happen where he would not have to hand three of among his wisest and most outstanding advisors⁷⁶. He took all decisions with his advisors, with whom he

tales exhibeant, ut adiutores Dei fieri, et ab ipso et in praesenti saeculo et in futuro adjuvari mereantur: ...

⁷³ W. Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 177–184, especially pp. 179–181.

⁷⁴ In the theses accepted in Fismes we can find the expression *reipublicae ministri* in one more place, col. 1071, cap. II.

⁷⁵ Y. Sasser, *L'utilisation d'un concept romain aux temps carolingiens: la res publica aux IX^e et X^e siècles*, in: "Médiévales", vol. 15 (1988) p. 19, noticed that the expression *ministri rei publicae* was used in capitularies of Charles the Great, which was surely remembered at the court. The author stresses the multiple use of this expression by Hincmar, whom he regards as the person who put it into circulation, p. 28.

⁷⁶ PL 125, col. 1084–5. Hincmar emphasised that their job was to strive for the prosperity and proper functioning of the kingdom, and to satisfy the needs of the Church, ... *de utilitate Ecclesiae, et de profectu ac soliditate regni meditabatur*.

discussed respective matters in detail. In this place, an expression from the *Book of Proverbs* was quoted that salvation is connected with possessing an exquisite advisor⁷⁷. “So if — the bishops concluded — he, such a wise and strong, supported by the power of the kingdom and peace-loving ruler of many kingdoms, tried to act this way, it also is You, most gracious king, who should act this way as well⁷⁸. The authors compared the depressing picture of the current condition of the state with a splendid past, and stressed that it was the last moment to prevent its collapse. In the conclusion, the pathos of appeals to the king intermingles with dramatic descriptions and drastic accounts. Here there is nobody or hardly anybody who can receive or hold a dignity or landed property without paying off. Nobody is safe either. There is no room in this kingdom for peace, consideration, justice and judgement, so necessary everywhere. “Hence, take pains to end this looting and devastation in the kingdom, and relieve these poor people, who for so many years have been suffering from extensive and continuous damage, also due to the ransom paid to the Normans, so that these people could find some help. And may justice and care, which seem to be dead now, be revived. May God provide us with the virtue of bravery against pagans, because for many years now there has been no protection of this kingdom, and ransom and tribute are paid not only by the poor, but also by churches, once splendid, now — deserted⁷⁹. Thus the need to look for harmony and common decision making is clearly outlined, and Hincmar, looking at the issues of the kingdom from the perspectives of a long-serving advisor to the monarchs, demands consequently to allow for the opinion of the council and the whole political surroundings⁸⁰.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, col. 1085 B, ...*salus autem, ubi multa consilia*. P. Riché noticed a common practice in early medieval writing to refer to this quotation from the *Book of Proverbs*. See: P. Riché, *La Bible et la vie politique dans le haut moyen âge*. Annexe, in: *Le moyen âge et la Bible*, ed. P. Riché, Paris 1984, p. 400.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, col. 1085 A, *Et si ille [Charles the Great], qui sic sapiens et fortis, et amplitudine regni locuples, et multorum regnorum pacificus dominator, agere studebat ...[...] quid vobis [domine rex dilectissime] sit agendum attendite, ...*

⁷⁹ PL 125, col. 1085–6, *Et sagitate ut istae rapinae ac depredationes in isto regno cessent, et miser iste populus, qui jam per plures annos per depredationes diversas et continuas, et per exactiones ad Northmannos affligitur, aliquod remedium habeat, et justitia et iudicium, quae quasi emortua apud nos sunt, reviviscant, et virtutem nobis Deus reddat contra paganos, quia usque modo jam ante plures annos locum in isto regno defensio non habuit, sed redemptio et tributum non solum pauperes homines, sed et ecclesias quondam divites jam evacuatas habent.*

This is the situation in which the bishops call the king to act, explicitly hinting that the time to fulfil his duties has come, and the matters which belong to the Church should be left for them. Against this background, the earlier made division of functions and duties between the spiritual and secular authority gets even more vivid. For a dramatic situation requires decisive actions from the monarch, whereas he deals with what is unnecessary. Such a consistent line of reasoning by the bishops was not even hampered by evoking the example of Charles the Great, who was after all directly called to adopt a double role of a king and priest. However, it was emphasised that the situation of the state had been completely different then. The kingdom had been flourishing, the ruler had listened to wise advisors and maintained personal prestige. Yet, the very proposal directed to Charles to reach for spiritual prerogatives was not recalled, even though Hincmar knew perfectly the expression *regale sacerdotium*, used by him several years earlier during discussions on the principles of the monarchy for the needs of Charles the Bald⁸¹. Still, in the period between the treatise with the advice for Charles the Bald and the coronation which soon took place in Metz, in the state of the Franks came to pass fundamental changes in the functioning of the state, the position of the king and the ruling dynasty, as well as in the whole ruling elite⁸². The state was weakened by a long-lasting, internal rivalry among the Carolingians, recurring scandals at the court, escalating raids of the Normans, and first of all by the incompetence and lack of leadership of the subsequent Carolingian monarchs. This was the moment when the bishops advised the ruler to concentrate on his duties and leave in their hands the leadership over the people on the road to salvation. The king should first of all be a mighty protector, appear as a *tutor regni*, and efficiently realise fundamental objectives of the monarchy. The bishops begged for such a ruler several years later at another council.

⁸⁰ Cf. remarks on Hincmar's political beliefs from this period, J. Nelson, *Hincmar of Reims on King — making: The Evidence of the Annals of St. Bertin, 861–882*, in: *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe*, Variorum reprints, Ashgate 1999, XVII, pp. 25–6.

⁸¹ Hincmar quotes St. Peter (1, 2), *Vos gens electum, regale sacerdotium. Quaterniones*, PL 125, col. 1040 D. The treatise was written in the summer of 868, see: H. Schrörs, *op. cit.*, p. 533, N° 212.

⁸² On the rule of Charles the Bald see: J. Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, London 1992, the French edition which we use, Paris 1994. On the events of 866–9, see: pp. 239–42.

In May of 895 the Council of Tribur was held by twenty six bishops. The Kingdom of Western Franks was being torn apart by the rivalry of the two elected and crowned monarchs: Odo, the son of Robert the Strong, and Charles the Simple. Both in Lotharingia and other borderland provinces of the Eastern Kingdom fierce fights for *honores* were taking place between the local families⁸³. The position and real power of Arnulf of Karinthia were not strong enough to take full control over the course of events. The Council of Triburg, called by Arnulf and held according to an old Carolingian tradition in his presence, tried to restore peace in the kingdom, scrupulously listing decrees and orders. The list of published rules and regulations is opened, however, by the description of a monarch as the “king enlightened by the light from the heights and enliven by a strong desire for the grace of God, the father and the lord, who would be with his body and soul a very well prepared aide in the matters of the Church, as well as equally efficient defender and saviour in times of rebellion, ...”⁸⁴ This is in fact a list of sophisticated praises, yet still the one which emphasises those features of a monarch which are most desired by bishops and the subjects, who are praying and calling for them to God. However, they differ from the above analysed paragraphs of the Council of Fismes with a bigger degree of generalisation, and the lack of reference to specific situations and events, and above all, a lofty, dramatic tone. “Here just the circle of holy priests together with the other clergy — the bishops continue — kept singing with a strong voice *Te Deum laudamus*, remaining humble and adoring the king, striking bells and crying. After saying the prayer, both for the safety of his Highness, the King, and their brothers, [the participants of the Council] worshipped the Majesty of the Holy Trinity, for It had given them such a friendly and strong tutor of the kingdom (*regni tutorem*)⁸⁵. The

⁸³ See: E. Hlawitschka, *Lotharingen und das Reich an der Schwelle der deutschen Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1968, especially pp. 171–175. Also: B. Zientara, *Świt narodów europejskich (The Dawn of European Nations)*, Warszawa 1985, pp. 306–8.

⁸⁴ MGH, *Capitularia*, ed. A. Boretius, W. Krause, vol. II, N° 252, p. 212, B, *Quibus rex, superno lumine illustratus et zelo divini honoris animatus, ut pater et dominus remisit se corpore et animo paratissimum aeclesiarum rerum auxillatorem, aequae defensorem vindicemque in rebelles, ...*

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, *Ad haec sanctorum coetus sacerdotum cum adstanti clero in veneratone regis se humilians per alta voce “Te Deum laudamus” sonantibus campanis, lacrimantibus quam plurimis in finem usque decantavit; dictaque oratione, tam pro serenissimi regis incolomitate, quam eclaim pro fratribus gloriosam maiestatem trinitatis conlaudabant, qui ets tam mitem et strenuum contulit regni tutorem.*

adulations, said the most enthusiastically, were to serve as a support for Arnulf of Karinthia in his efforts, which were then being made, for the imperial crown. He received it almost a year later, at the end of 896⁸⁶. An allusion to this ambition is made in the conclusion of the preface to the Council decrees. "In this way, through subsequent masses together with prayers the King's dignity became clearly visible, and next, the just Judge of the present and future age, swore to mercifully crown him [Arnulf] for the announced defence of the holy Church"⁸⁷. The Majesty of Arnulf of Karinthia was also worshipped by a multiple exclamation "Christ, hear us, may great King Arnulf long live!" (*Exaudi Christe, Arnolfo magno regi vita*)⁸⁸. The Council was therefore transformed into a great triumph of the king of Eastern Franks, who being the last of the Carolingians could consider himself the ruler superior to the majority of "little kings", those *reguli* of the area of the old empire⁸⁹. However, despite the fact that in this case we are facing a strong monarch in the time of his glory, who had a strong position, the bishops explicitly expressed their expectations towards him. The term *tutor regni* indicated the scope of duties of the ruler and determined his role as the highest protector of the state and the Church⁹⁰. By the same token, it obliged him to efficiently act within the anticipated framework, which was additionally particularised by the expressions "father and lord", and also "the aide in the Church affairs" (*aeclesiasticarum rerum auxiliator*). Almost one hundred years after Charles the Great's death, his successors could not dream about a full and efficient supervision over the Church authority even in the times of their great triumph. On the other hand, however, in fear of the attacks from powerful lords and barons, the clergy asked the ruler for protection and sought his aid. One chronicler noted

⁸⁶ Arnulf's imperial coronation took place on the 22nd of February 896. See: C. Brühl, *Fränkischer Krönungsbrauch*, p. 326.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, *Sicque per caetera missalia officia cum divinis laudibus regis honorificentia intonuit, acsi pro defensione promissa sanctae Dei aeclesiae iudex iustus praesenti futuroque seculo eum coronare misericorditer repromitteret.*

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 213, version A. Two, slightly different versions of the text have been preserved from the Council of Triburg. Basically, we are analysing version B, though the quoted proclamation cry can only be found in version A.

⁸⁹ On Arnulf's ambition and his position as the supreme King see: W. Fałkowski, *Potestas regia*, pp. 74–85, 97–102.

⁹⁰ The title of *tutor regni* is discussed by W. Ullmann, *Schranken der Königsgewalt im Mittelalter*, in: "Historisches Jahrbuch", vol. 91 (1971), p. 12.

that there were numerous attempts to limit the power of bishops and weaken their position⁹¹. Official annals of the Kingdom of the Eastern Franks said that this was the council of the whole Lotharingian Kingdom, which was in session *pro utilitate christianae religionis*⁹². This was taking place in harmony and mutual consent with the ruler whose favours the clergy sought for the price of adulation and political support. Thus, within a dozen or so years after the Council of Fismes called by Hincmar, the Carolingian monarch again took control over the situation in the ruling elite of his kingdom, and restored the natural order, established by his ancestors.

(Translated by Robert Bubczyk)

⁹¹ Chronicler Reginon noted that the bishops had gathered at the Council, because many lords intended to diminish their power. *Regnonis chronica*, in: *Quellen zur karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, ed. R. Ra u, vol. III, Berlin 1960, p. 302, (895), ... *sinodus magna celebrata est apud Triburias contra plerosque seculares, qui auctoritatem episcopalem inimnuere temptabant*.

⁹² *Annales Fuldenses*, *op. cit.*, p. 162, (895), *Convententibus itaque de toto Hlotarico regno, (...) curte Triburia magnus synodus habebatur ... multa quidem pro utilitate christianae religionis tractantes ...*