

Social justice in the Carolingian world

Poverty, hierarchy, and the (non)uses of Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*
in the ninth century

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Introduction

Sometime around the middle of the seventh century, in one of the many monasteries dotting Ireland, a monk started writing about what he considered to be the twelve abuses of his world.¹ Should people commit these sins, he warned starkly, they would be strongly mistaken, as the just judgement of God would propel them all into ‘the darkness of Hell’.² The abuses implicated all of society, from rich to poor, from young to old, man and female. At risk of eternal damnation were the wise man without good works (1); the old man without religion (2); the youth without obedience (3); the rich man without almsgiving(4); the woman without modesty (5); the lord without virtue (6); the contentious Christian (7); the poor man who is proud (8); the unrighteous king (9); the negligent bishop (10); the people without discipline (11); and the community without Law (12).³ As the titles show, every type of person, and in two cases entire communities, is endowed with a particular, characteristic kind of sin.

The title of this text is *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, or ‘On the twelve abuses of this world’.⁴ The treatise went on to become a popular text in the Carolingian world, as testified by the 10 continental manuscripts that survive from the ninth century. In the earliest surviving continental ninth-century manuscripts, *De duodecim abusivis* is ascribed to St. Cyprian (200-258), a bishop and martyr known primarily for his works of pastoral care and admonitions on martyrdom. Of the ten ninth-century continental manuscripts, two are anonymous, while the remaining are all described to St. Cyprian. After the ninth century, the tractate also begins to be attributed to others, most notably St. Augustine and Isidore.⁵

Several parts of the text show clear pointers to its Irish context. The twelfth abuse of the people without Law was originally written as an exhortation to the anti-Roman faction in the Irish paschal controversy, as the attention paid to the danger of schism and matters of discipline make clear.⁶ More importantly, the first and second groups of six abuses show internal correspondences to the concept of orders or ‘grades’ found in early medieval Irish law tracts.⁷ Finally, the many

¹ On the dating of this text, see now principally A. Breen, ‘De XII *Abusivis*: text and transmission’, in P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (eds), *Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages: Texts and Transmission / Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Texte und Überlieferung* (Dublin, 2002), pp. 78-94 here pp. 81-85; M. Clayton, ‘De *Duodecim Abusivis*, Lordship and Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England’, in S. McWilliams (ed.), *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis* (Suffolk, 2012), pp. 141-163, here p. 142.

² Pseudo-Cyprian, *De Duodecim abusivis saeculi*, ed. trans. A. Breen, ‘Towards a critical edition of *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College, 1988), pp. 330-429, here p. 333. Henceforth *DDA*.

³ *DDA*, p. 333.

⁴ Breen, ‘Text and transmission’, p. 82.

⁵ Here following E. Leontidou, ‘Pseudo-Cyprian in the light of the earliest manuscripts’ (Unpublished paper, IMC Leeds 2014). For a more in-depth discussion of the attributions of this text see pp. 38-40 in this thesis below.

⁶ A. Breen, ‘The evidence of antique Irish exegesis in Pseudo-Cyprian, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C. - Archaeology, Celtic studies, history, linguistics, literature*, 87.4 (1987), pp. 71-101, here p. 76.

⁷ Breen, ‘Text and transmission’, p. 78.

interrelations with both earlier and subsequent works in the Hiberno-Latin source corpus show that this text was without doubt first set to writing in Ireland.⁸

Although Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate has for some time been described as one of the texts most influential to Carolingian political thought, especially in the context of kingship, it has never been studied from the perspective of social justice. As of now, almost all discussions on the role *De duodecim abusivis* played in the Carolingian world have focused on the ninth abuse of the unjust king.⁹ In one way this is remarkable, given that the two abuses of the *pauper superbus* and the *dives sine eleemosyna* in the text deal exclusively with questions surrounding the morality of wealth and poverty. On the other hand, Carolingian authors themselves seem to have been interested almost exclusively in Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse of the *rex iniquus*.¹⁰ However, we should also remember that all surviving ninth-century continental manuscripts transmitting *De duodecim abusivis*, bar one, take over all abuses.¹¹ This suggests that the other parts of the text, including those exclusively concerned with social justice, would certainly have been known to those authors citing only the *rex iniquus*, and were deemed relevant enough to be copied. However, despite the focus of this thesis on social justice, the abuse of the *rex iniquus* will also be discussed in much detail. Besides it being the most popular part of the text in the Carolingian world, it will be argued that its contents also had important consequences for Carolingian thinking about social justice.

The primary purpose of this thesis is not to provide a traditional narrative of the 'influence' of *De duodecim abusivis* on Carolingian thinking about social justice. Insetad I have sought to use both the use and nonuse of this text by Carolingian authors as a window to Carolingian thinking about social justice. Following Gabrielle Spiegel's fundamental article on the social logic of texts, each and every 'inscription' or 'fixation of meaning' of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate would have mirrored as well as generated social realities.¹² Thus the ways in which Carolingian authors used some

⁸ A. Breen, 'Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* and the Bible', in P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (eds), *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission: 3. internat. Kolloquium Irland und Europa im frühen Mittelalter*, 27. bis 31.8.1984, Dublin (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 230-245, here p. 231; Breen, 'Antique Irish exegesis', p. 76; There are many more internal aspects to the text that point to an Irish context of the text, which will be discussed in more detail in the third chapter of this thesis (pp. 27-37 below).

⁹ An exception can be found in an article by Julia Smith, in which she briefly touches upon the possible role of the *femina sine pudicitia* in Carolingian thinking about gender: 'Gender and ideology in the early Middle Ages', *Studies in Church History*, 34 (1998), pp. 51-73.

¹⁰ An extensive full-text search for both the titles and notable excerpts from Pseudo-Cyprian's abuses of the '*pauper superbus*', '*dives sine eleemosyna*', and the '*dominus sine virtute*' in the MGH, *Patrologia Latina*, and LLT-A databases did not yield any new citations of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate.

¹¹ S. Hellman, *Ps.-Cyprianus. De xii abusivis saeculi*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 34 (Leipzig, 1909), p. 18; the only ninth-century manuscript that contains an excerpted version of Pseudo-Cyprian's text is Leiden *Voss. Lat.* F48 f. 92, which only transmits the preface listing the twelve abuses. The reason behind the inclusion of Pseudo-Cyprian's in this text remains unclear: B. S. Eastwood, 'Astronomical images and planetary theory in Carolingian studies of Martianus Capella', *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, 31 (2000), pp. 1-21, here p. 25, n. 24.

¹² G. M. Spiegel, 'History, historicism and the social logic of the text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), pp. 59-86, here p. 84.

parts of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate in matters of social justice, while ignoring others, can reveal much about the how Pseudo-Cyprian's text shaped Carolingian thinking about social justice, but also about Carolingian society itself and the ways in which such matters as hierarchy and social mobility were envisioned by Carolingian authors. More specifically, I will focus on how the use of *De duodecim abusivis* can tell us something about the worldview of Carolingian elites. The *practice* of social mobility and the 'social reality' of hierarchy will be touched upon, but do not lie at the centre of this thesis.

My discussion will not be limited to the Carolingian world: the Irish social context of Pseudo-Cyprian's text will also be discussed at length. More specifically, I have attempted to add a comparative perspective to the ninth-century Carolingian uses and nonuses of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate in matters of social justice. By comparing the Carolingian (non)use of the text to the seventh-century Irish context of the text's inception, I hope to show how Carolingian society was in several ways very different from that of early medieval Ireland. In this way, a comparative discussion of a single Irish text's Carolingian reception can enlighten the ways in which society was structured in both Ireland and the Carolingian world. Moreover, it allows us to shed light on aspects of Carolingian society and thinking about social justice that only really come to the foreground when one compares these to the structure and intellectual tradition of a different but near-contemporary society.¹³

Finally, some notes on the structure of this thesis are in order. In the first chapter, several methodological issues will be tackled. Then, in the second chapter, the ideas of social justice in *De duodecim abusivis* itself will be discussed, with a focus on Pseudo-Cyprian's use of the Bible and patristic authors. Following this purely textual analysis, the third chapter will place *De duodecim abusivis* and its author in their early medieval Irish social context. In the fourth chapter I will then discuss the manuscript context of Pseudo-Cyprian's treatise in the Carolingian world, so as to provide a better view of its availability, audiences, and uses in the ninth century. In the fifth chapter, the Carolingian use of Pseudo-Cyprian's abuse of the *rex iniquus* in matters of social justice and kingship will be discussed, by placing the tractate in the context of the Carolingian reforms. This is followed by a sixth chapter, in which I will discuss how parts of Pseudo-Cyprian's treatise were used in educating the Carolingian 'rich and powerful'. A final seventh chapter will then discuss Carolingian thinking about the poor, hierarchy, and social mobility, in an attempt at explaining why

¹³ On the value and challenges of historical comparison in the early Middle Ages see C. Wickham, 'Problems of comparing rural societies in early medieval Western Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 2 (1992), pp. 221-246; Wickham argues for structural comparison between societies and economies, yet the benefits he enumerates would also apply to a comparison between various worldviews.

Pseudo-Cyprian's words on the *pauper superbus* do not seem to have appealed to Carolingian authors.

I. Methodological foundation

1.1. Defining the pauper

Before we can address the main questions of this thesis, several methodological issues have to be dealt with. First of all, I have utilised two rather problematic concepts: that of ‘poverty/the poor’ and that of ‘social justice’. These notions still bear very strong Christian connotations, but this does in no way mean that the way we think poverty and social justice now can be directly traced to early Christian texts: it is often stressed that our concept of what constitutes ‘poverty’ was inherently different from early medieval thinking about the poor. A recent handbook on the Carolingian world notes that ‘In Carolingian usage, “poverty” was defined not in economic, but in social terms: the “poor” were the opposite of the “powerful”’.¹⁴ Therefore, ‘royal protection of the poor cannot be seen as a matter of “social welfare”’.¹⁵ The authors are here, in fact, indebted to Karl Bosl’s fundamental 1960s article on the so-called *potens-pauper* dichotomy, of which the main argument appears to have acquired the status of an *adagium* in anglophone medieval studies.¹⁶ Bosl argued that from the early to high Middle Ages, *pauperes* were not seen as the ‘materially poor’ in the modern sense of the word, but rather as the ‘less powerful’ (i.e. the opposite of the *potentes*). The *pauperes* that appear in Carolingian capitularies were not poor because they were materially impoverished, but because they lacked access to law courts and were exploited by the powerful.¹⁷ In another study, Bosl even goes so far as to suggest that the idea of *paupertas* as a deficit in possessions and wealth was completely absent from the *Weltbild* of early medieval society – *pauperes* were only thought of as the antithesis of the *potentes*.¹⁸

Another important historian in light of medieval ‘poverty studies’ can be found in Michel Mollat, who wrote what still is the most comprehensive study of ‘poverty’ in the Middle Ages.¹⁹ He devised three ‘thresholds’ of poverty: biological, economical, and social. The biological threshold

¹⁴ M. Costambeys, M. Innes, and S. MacLean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 264.

¹⁵ Costambeys *et al.*, *Carolingian World*, pp. 264-265.

¹⁶ Bosl’s article has been especially helpful to high and late medievalists who seek to compare thinking on poverty in ‘their’ periods to concepts of the poor in the Carolingian world – although they admittedly often add a nuance absent in Bosl’s article. See for example: A. S. Brett, *Liberty, Right and Nature: Individual Rights in Later Scholastic Thought* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 12; M. Lupoi, *The Origins of the European Legal Order* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 264; J. P. Huffman, ‘Potens et pauper: charity and authority in jurisdictional disputes over the poor in medieval Cologne’, in R. C. Figueira (ed.), *Plenitude of Power: The Doctrines and Exercise of Authority in the Middle Ages. Essays in Memory of Robert Louis Benson* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 107-124, here p. 108.

¹⁷ K. Bosl, ‘*Potens und Pauper*: begriffsgeschichtliche Studien zur gesellschaftlichen Differenzierung im frühen Mittelalter und zum “Pauperismus” des Hochmittelalters’, in *id.* (ed.), *Frühformen der Gesellschaft im mittelalterlichen Europa: Ausgewählte Beiträge zu einer Strukturanalyse der mittelalterlichen Welt* (Vienna, 1964), pp. 106-134, see here particularly pp. 108, 111.

¹⁸ K. Bosl, *Armut Christi: Ideal der Mönche und Ketzer, Ideologie der aufsteigenden Gesellschaftsschichten vom 11. bis zum 13. Jahrhundert*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 1 (Munich, 1981), p. 6.

¹⁹ M. Mollat, *Die Armen im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1984).

is met when someone is no longer able to maintain health due to a lack of food; the economical threshold is met when a person lacks the monetary funds to sustain one's basic needs; and the social threshold is met when one can no longer maintain the relationships and status associated with one's position. These thresholds are all tightly connected; in high medieval cities, a lack of monetary funds would result in a lack of food, while a lack of monetary funds or of food could also lead to 'social poverty'.²⁰ In line with this scheme, Mollat sees an important difference between the 'Merovingian poor' and the 'Carolingian poor'. While the former lacked food and clothing, the latter primarily suffered socially: '*Für die Armen der Merowingerzeit ging es um Überleben; im 9. Jahrhundert ging es darum, seinen Platz in der Gesellschaft zu erhalten*'.²¹

When limited to the Carolingian world, Mollat and Bosl seem to agree – and Mollat indeed appears to have been inspired by Bosl's seminal article – in that they assume that the Carolingian idea (and to Mollat, the 'social reality' too) of poverty was primarily concerned with the 'oppressed', not with the destitute. Although this was clearly a very important way of constructing the *pauperes* in Carolingian capitularies, it cannot be said, as Bosl implied, that the Carolingian worldview was completely devoid of the idea of the poor as a materially disadvantaged group in society. After the publication of Bosl's and Mollat's fundamental works, Hans-Werner Goetz argued that the '*pauper-dives*' dichotomy is, in fact, often seen in narrative Carolingian sources, as opposed to the normative texts used by Mollat and Bosl.²² One can therefore not state, like Bosl, that the early medieval worldview simply could not envision the *pauperes* as those who lacked goods, money, or food. Additionally, Otto Gerhard Oexle has shown how both types of *pauper* – namely the socially disadvantaged as well as the materially destitute – can appear in the same text.²³ This is revealed by the early tenth-century life of Gerald of Aurillac, the famous layman-saint. First of all, as a *dives* Gerald helped the *pauperes* as the destitute with alms, while he also fed and clothed them in his houses.²⁴ Secondly, as a *potens* Geraldus fulfilled the Biblical admonition to judge rightly over the poor and humble. The *pauperes* could always access Geraldus to outlay their *negotia* to him.²⁵ There was in the Carolingian world therefore '[...] *nicht nur materielle Armut, sondern die Menschen jener Zeit hatten auch einen klaren Begriff von ihr und von ihren Bedingungen*'.²⁶

²⁰ Mollat, *Armen im Mittelalter*, pp. 13-14.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²² H.-W. Goetz, "'Unterschichten" im Gesellschaftsbild karolingischer Geschichtsschreiber und Hagiographen', in *id.* and A. Rathmann-Lutz (eds), *Vorstellungsgeschichte: Gesammelte Schriften zu Wahrnehmungen, Deutungen und Vorstellungen im Mittelalter* (Bochum 2007), pp. 117-134, here pp. 15-16.

²³ O. G. Oexle, 'Potens und Pauper im Frühmittelalter', in H. Vögel, W. Harms, and K. Speckenbach (eds), *Bildhafte Rede in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit. Probleme ihrer Legitimation und ihrer Funktion* (Tübingen, 1992), pp. 131-149, here p. 139.

²⁴ Oexle, 'Potens und Pauper', p. 140.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

One could go further and state that, even if one limits one's enquiry to the capitulary evidence, as Bosl and Mollat did, many capitulary texts very clearly evoke the *pauperes* as the materially destitute. This is particularly visible in the context of famines.²⁷ The so-called Second Capitulary of Herstal, most likely written in reaction to a great famine in 778/9, specifies that abbesses have to take in four hungry poor each, and that the *fortiores* are to pay emergency taxes for the benefit of the poor.²⁸ Here the *pauperes* are those in need of food, a group oppressed by the scourge of hunger rather than by the *potentes* and corrupt justice. Additionally, in some instances both the 'material' and 'oppressed' associations are combined in a single use of the word *pauperes*. In an 813 capitulary the counts are forbidden to carry out secret trades with *pauperes*, out of fear that the *potentes* might exploit the *pauperes*, and the 829 council of Paris states that bishops, counts, and other officials imposed too low price limits on the foods sold to them by the *pauperes*.²⁹ Here the *pauperes* are both a group in clear danger of material poverty, as well as those suffering from 'social poverty' through the oppressions of the *potentes*.³⁰

In this light, the supposed difference between 'our' and 'Carolingian' notions of poverty might have been a bit overstated by those medievalists following Bosl's article. Indeed the purely material measurement of poverty as propounded by today's World Bank, namely the rather arbitrary global threshold of everyone earning less than one dollar a day, would be alien to the Carolingians.³¹ Yet in the current world, poverty is rarely measured merely in economic terms; social scientists and large international organisations prefer to speak of 'relative poverty'. The United Nations, for example, officially reject the 'absolute' economic notion of impoverishment. Instead they seek to take into account such issues as 'social exclusion' as an effect of poverty, in trying to reveal and tackle the 'multidimensional nature' of destitution.³²

One of the objectives of this thesis will be to show that the Carolingian and seventh-century Irish notions of poverty were just that – multidimensional. Finding a single 'absolute Carolingian' definition of poverty that is valid for an entire source corpus, or even an entire society, as Mollat and Bosl have sought to do, is impossible. A helpful concept from the field of medieval studies in this regard is offered by the notion of 'situational constructs'. Patrick Geary set an example for

²⁷ Following the list collated by F. Curschmann, *Hungersnöte im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte des 8. bis 13. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 82, the Carolingian world suffered no less than 30 (recorded) famines over the ninth century; these thus constitute more than 'exceptional incidents' during which *pauperes* were only briefly and 'situationally' envisioned as the destitute in an economic sense of the word.

²⁸ *Capitulare Haristallense* (779), ed. H. Mordek, 'Karls des Großen zweites Kapitular von Herstal und die Hungersnot der Jahre 778/779', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 61 (2005), pp. 1-52, here pp. 9-10.

²⁹ *Capitula e canonibus excerpta* (813), ed. A. Boretius, MGH Capit. 1, no. 78, pp. 173-175, here c. 22, p. 174; *Council of Paris* (829), ed. A. Werminghoff, MGH Conc. 2.2, no. 50, pp. 569-680, here c. 52, p. 645.

³⁰ R. Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 224.

³¹ J. E. Foster, 'Absolute versus relative poverty', *The American Economic Review*, 88.2: *Papers and Proceedings of the Hundred and Tenth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association* (1998), pp. 335-341, here p. 335.

³² UNESCO, 'International migration: poverty', accessed 3.6.2016 [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/international-migration/glossary/poverty].

later studies in early medieval history when he applied this concept to early medieval ethnicity: someone living in sixth-century Lombardia could be Lombard and Gepid at the same time.³³ Similarly, depending on the situation and beholder, a *pauper* could be the victim of a famine, a small free landholder who lacks access to law courts, a socially mobile malcontent who from his pride seeks to rise above his lowly status, or a combination of some of these. There was no such thing as ‘the’ early medieval, ninth-century Carolingian, or seventh-century Irish *pauper*.

1.2. Defining social justice

Unlike as is the case with the modern word ‘poor’ and the early medieval word ‘*pauper*’, our concept of ‘social justice’ did not exist in any way in early medieval Latin. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, social justice is a type of justice at ‘the level of a society or state as regards the possession of wealth, commodities, opportunities, and privileges’.³⁴ However, this definition fails to evoke the association with socially progressive views that is almost always present in the term’s modern usage. That is perhaps most clearly exemplified by the term ‘social justice warrior’. This term has since the early 2000s been used mainly pejoratively for persons who express or promote views positive of matters such as feminism and equal wealth distribution. Initially used exclusively on internet blogs and other social media, its use has now also spread to the printed press.³⁵

The term ‘social justice’ has also played, and still plays, an important role in the Catholic Church. In fact, it has since the 1960s often been asserted by Catholic scholars its first use was not by a ‘secular’ socialist, but by a Catholic clergyman: the Jesuit Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio, in a 1840 book on natural law. Despite the fact that ‘social justice’ *was* first used by a socialist, namely by the (protestant) Irish thinker William Thompson in his 1824 book on the ‘Distribution of Wealth’, it is clear that Catholic thinkers have been very important in the development of our modern idea of social justice.³⁶

D’Azeglio drew heavily upon the writings of St. Thomas of Aquinas, specifically the latter’s ideas of ‘general’ justice and the common good. D’Azeglio’s addition of ‘social’ to the term ‘justice’ stemmed from two factors in mid-nineteenth century Catholic thought. On the one hand, Catholic

³³ W. Pohl, ‘Conceptions of ethnicity in medieval studies’, in L. K. Little and B. H. Rosenwein, *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 15-24, here p. 18; see also P. Geary, ‘Ethnic identity as a situational construct in the early Middle Ages’, *Medieval Perspectives*, 2.3 for 1988 (1991), pp. 1-17.

³⁴ Lemma for ‘social, adj. and n.’ in *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

³⁵ No academic literature on this term seems to exist. The most informative article as of yet is that written by the Washington Post’s Abby Goldheiser: ‘Social justice warrior’, *Washington Post* (7.10.2015), accessed online on 25.07.2016 [<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2015/10/07/why-social-justice-warrior-a-gamergate-insult-is-now-a-dictionary-entry/>]

³⁶ W. Thompson, *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth Most Conducive to Human Happiness; applied to the Newly Proposed System of Voluntary Equality of Wealth* (London, 1824).

thinkers were reacting to liberalism, which in their eyes not only led to revolutionary behaviour, but also economic oppression through its focus on individual interests. On the other hand, the increasingly visible plight of the new working class brought a new intensity to the Church's traditional concern for the poor. However, the Thomistic idea of general justice had become tightly entangled with the laws of modern states, rather than the interests of the lower classes. In this situation, using the term 'social', which had become more popular over the early nineteenth century, was the most logical alternative.³⁷

This idea of social justice, founded on Thomistic ideas of the common good but using modern terms, survived into the twentieth century. In his *Divini Redemptoris* (1936), Pius XI stated that it was 'the very essence of social justice to demand from each individual what is necessary for the common good'. Later, the 1986 U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops saw a similar link between 'the common good' and 'social justice', arguing that 'Social justice implies that persons have an obligation to be active participants in the life of society and that society has duty to enable them to participate in this way [...] This form of justice can also be called "contributive", for it stresses the duty of all who are able to help create the goods, services, and other nonmaterial or spiritual values necessary for the welfare of the whole community'.³⁸ More recently, Pope Francis explicitly linked the idea of social justice to resolving the 'structural causes of poverty'. In his *Evangelii gaudium*, he argues that no one is 'exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice'. Specifically, everyone is required to be aware of 'the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty'. Moreover, he sees inequality 'as the root of social ills'.³⁹ Pope Francis connects these admonitions on poverty to the Bible: 'A mere glance at the Scriptures is enough to make us see how our gracious Father wants to hear the cry of the poor'.⁴⁰

A supposed direct and obvious connection between a kind of 'objective' social justice, the fight against modern inequality, and Biblical texts, must, however, be nuanced. The idea of 'social justice' that Pope Francis alludes to has its roots in nineteenth-century socialism and Catholic thought, and did simply not exist before that time. What we would describe as 'social justice' lies close to the Biblical concept of 'righteousness', but these two concepts are in no way the same. Most importantly, righteousness assumes a 'covenant relationship' or an indebtedness; the rich gave to the poor because their status as wealthy men required them to repay a moral debt – not because

³⁷ N. Paulhus, 'Uses and misuses of the term "social justice" in the Roman Catholic tradition', *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 15.2 (1987), pp. 261-282, here p. 268.

³⁸ T. O. Nitsch, 'Social justice: the New-Testament perspective', in S. T. Lowry, B. Lewis, and J. Gordon (eds), *Ancient and Medieval Economic Ideas and Concepts of Social Justice* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 147-162, here p. 148.

³⁹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium* (Vatican City, 2013), paragraphs 201-202. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html]

⁴⁰ Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, paragraph 147.

they believed that it was in the common good to redistribute wealth. Similarly, Jesus helped the sick because his status as the Son of David required him to be a patron to his clients, the needy.⁴¹ Additionally, Pope Francis's wielding of Biblical texts to argue for more social equality through a systematic change in society, leading to fairer wealth distribution, would be alien to early Christian thinkers. Paradoxically, early Christian thought combined the idea that all Christians were essentially equal with the notion of a strictly hierarchical world that above all ought not to be changed by social upstarts. Systematic wealth distribution would have been a very novel idea indeed to Augustine and his peers.⁴²

'Social justice' is therefore not a purely objective socially progressive notion that can be deduced effortlessly from the Bible and other authoritative early Christian texts. When we venture beyond the religious uses of this concept, the multidimensional nature of 'social justice' becomes even clearer. In this regard, the debates waged over the objectivity of 'social justice' by philosophers, political theorists, and economists over the second half of the twentieth century are particularly enlightening. Three approaches to what one could call 'the problem of social justice' can be deduced from these discussions. First of all, there is the hegemonic approach, which suggests that social justice is based on 'eternal ideas, pure reason, or the inevitability of the rational cosmos'.⁴³ The modern idea propagated by some Catholic social thinkers that our notion of social justice was essentially already present in early Christian texts and therefore 'true' would fit into this category, together with many socialist schools of thought. Secondly, one can discern the sceptical approach, which denies the very possibility of social justice. Based on the impossibility of finding a definition that could commend universal assent, the sceptic rejects the entire notion as an essentially useless or even dangerous one.⁴⁴ Thirdly, there is the pluralistic approach, which assumes that theories of social justice are multiple in any given society. Which concept of social justice is taken up by a given group or society depends on the interests involved; some might argue that a distribution according to a particular kind of individual merit – be it intellectual, economic, or a combination of these – is most just, while others are in favour of a distribution of wealth based on the notion that all humans are fundamentally equal.⁴⁵

It is this pluralistic approach that lies at the foundation of the use of 'social justice' in this thesis. Although the modern concept of an 'objective' socially progressive idea of social justice was unknown to premodern authors, I would argue that the pluralistic notion of social justice can be

⁴¹ Nitsch, 'The New-Testament perspective', pp. 153-154.

⁴² A. Firey, "'For I was hungry and you fed me": Social justice and economic thought in the Latin patristic and medieval Christian traditions', in T. Lowry, B. Lewis, and J. Gordon (eds), *Ancient and Medieval Economic Ideas and Concepts of Social Justice* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 333-370, here p. 334.

⁴³ T. A. Spragens jr., 'The antinomies of social justice', *The Review of Politics*, 55.2 (1993), pp. 193-216, here p. 194.

⁴⁴ Spragens, 'Antinomies of social justice', pp. 195-196.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

applied fruitfully to early medieval sources. In this vein, any text that dwells on social (in)equality and the ‘just’ distribution of wealth, power, and social possibilities in society will be considered to be dealing with ‘social justice’. These views do not need to be ‘progressive’ in our modern sense of the word to be classified as relevant to the theme of social justice. When a staunchly elitist aristocratic author argues that it is unjust for the poor to seek wealth and to rise out of their position, I will consider him to be engaged with ‘social justice’. Today we would not normally associate such ideas with the term ‘social justice’ – because our notion of social justice is one focused on modern ideas of socialism and equality – but it is important to remember that many early medieval writers considered social mobility and equality to be inherently ‘unjust’. Our contemporary western idea of social justice might seem firm, objective, and tied to socially progressive politics, yet it is only one notion of social justice among many.

1.3. ‘Early medieval Ireland’ and ‘the Carolingian world’

A final set of methodological issues arises out of my use of the concepts of ‘early medieval Ireland’ and ‘the Carolingian world’. First of all, these concepts underlie both the geographical and temporal scope of my analysis. ‘Early medieval Ireland’ mainly serves to provide a social context for Pseudo-Cyprian’s treatise. As *De duodecim abusivis* was written around 650, I have consequentially sought to limit my sources to those texts likely produced between ca. 600 and ca. 800. This is still a very large period, but the relatively scarce source material does not allow a narrower scope: most of the sources are simply dated to either ‘somewhere’ in the seventh or ‘somewhere’ in the eighth century, which makes it hard to suggest even long-term changes in the social structure of early medieval Ireland and in how society was conceptualised. I have, however, endeavoured to pay most attention to those sources conclusively dated to the seventh century. That is not to say that Irish society and conceptions thereof remained a kind of ‘static’ essential whole even during this period of the seventh century, or that regional variation lacked. Future studies, especially when incorporating the full range of archaeological evidence, might be able to provide more regional and temporal nuance than my admittedly rather impressionistic picture of Pseudo-Cyprian’s society and the way this was conceptualised by Irish elites.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The potential of archaeology in this regard is exemplified by Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400 – 800* (Oxford 2005), pp. 544-546; J. S. Foster ‘Viewing the past through a golden lens: the early medieval period and Irish identity’, in S. D. Stull (ed.), *From West to East. Current Approaches to Medieval Archaeology* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), pp. 55-71; C. Fredengren, ‘Poor people’s crannogs’, *Archaeology Ireland*, 15.4 (2001), pp. 24-25; C. N. Peters, ‘He is not entitled to butter’: the diet of peasants and commoners in early medieval Ireland’, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature*, 115 (2015), pp. 79-109; J. Soderberg, ‘Clientage and social stratification in early medieval Ireland: an archaeological perspective’, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 18/19 (1998/1999), pp. 396-433.

This problem also applies to the concept of a ‘Carolingian world’, albeit to a lesser extent. The greater number of sources, and the larger certainty over the date in which they were first written down, has allowed me to stick to a temporally more nuanced chronological narrative than was possible for my discussion of early medieval Ireland. This narrative starts with the first traces of Pseudo-Cyprian’s model of kingship at the Carolingian court in the late 700s, and ends around the divisions of the empire in 887. As the Carolingian world as a coherent ‘realm’ was above all defined by the ruling dynasty itself, the death of Charles the Fat in 888 also serves as the end point of this thesis.⁴⁷ A more urgent danger, especially in regards to my discussion of Carolingian thinking about ‘social justice’, concerns the assumed ‘commonality’ of the ‘Carolingian’ ideas of social justice that I propose. Already in the 1960s, Raymund Kottje argued that even though a certain degree of unity in religious life was accomplished as a result of the efforts of Carolingian rulers and bishops, there remained a large degree of regional diversity.⁴⁸ About two decades later, Richard Sullivan stressed the importance of regionalism and diversity of thought in Carolingian times, which according to him was underplayed by Carolingianists, causing an overemphasis on the commonality of practices and ideas. This, he argued, in turn served to stress the distinctiveness and significance of the Carolingian empire and era.⁴⁹

It is not my intention to portray Carolingian thinking about social justice as ‘holistic’ and unchanging. However, my discussion of the Carolingian’s use of Pseudo-Cyprian’s *rex iniquus* in matters of social justice will logically be fully centred on the court, simply because this part of the text was mainly used by court-connected authors in constructing the *officium* of Carolingian kings and emperors. In my discussion of Carolingian notions of social mobility, the poor, and (ig)nobility in the final chapter of this thesis, I have sought to find ‘prevailing’ notions of these concepts in the Carolingian world, with which I mean more specifically those ideas on the poor, nobility, and social mobility that were most widespread and socially acceptable in the ninth century. However, this does not mean that such ideas wholly defined ‘Carolingian thinking about social justice’. As will become clear, there was, in fact, much room for debate, and it is important to stress that, just as there was no single Carolingian idea of what constituted a *pauper*, there was no such a thing as *the* ‘quintessentially Carolingian’ idea of ‘the acceptability of upward social mobility’ or ‘the danger of ignobles’.

⁴⁷ Costambeys *et al.*, *Carolingian World*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ R. Kottje, ‘Einheit und Vielfalt des kirchlichen Lebens in der Karolingerzeit’, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 76 (1965), pp. 323-342, esp. p. 341.

⁴⁹ Costambeys *et al.*, *Carolingian World*, p. 9; R. E. Sullivan ‘The Carolingian age: reflections on its place in the history of the Middle Ages’, *Speculum*, 64:2 (1989), pp. 267-306.

II. Social justice in *De duodecim abusivis*

2.1. Social justice and the rex iniquus

To Pseudo-Cyprian, the king was above all else to be just or righteous (*iustus*), and this quality is inherently tied to the protection of the poor. The first three behaviours he names as the attributes of a righteous king are essential here:

[...] in righteousness [*iustitia*] alone is the king exalted and in fidelity and truth the governance of the peoples established. For the righteousness of a king is to oppress no man unjustly through the exercise of power, to give judgement between a man and his neighbour [*proximum*] without acceptance of persons [*sine acceptione personarum*], to be the defender of strangers, orphans, and widows [...] to nourish the poor with alms [...].⁵⁰

As shown by this excerpt, Pseudo-Cyprian sees the defence of orphans, widows and strangers as well as giving alms to the poor as an essential part of the king's *iustitia*. His concern for these groups mirrors the Old Testament concern for the socially detached: the Book of Deuteronomy admonishes that 'When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow' (24:20), and, similarly: 'When you have made an end of tithing all your tithes increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and you will give it to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled' (26:12). Pseudo-Cyprian's remarks on defending orphans, widows, and strangers, unjust oppressions, and equal judgement must be read as being inherently tied to the judicial protection of these powerless groups. Both in the Old and New Testament 'the poor' were defined as those in most danger to be wronged by the justice system, because they lacked the social 'safety nets' of the powerful: the widow had been detached from her husband; the orphan from his or her parental family; and the stranger was without the protection of local social ties.⁵¹ In a more general sense of 'all the powerless', the Biblical Book of Proverbs promises great rewards to the king who is kind to the *pauperes*: the throne of the king 'that judges the poor in truth' shall be 'strengthened forever' (Prov. 29.14); Jeremiah accuses the sinful people of Israel because they 'have not judged the cause of the widow, they have not managed the cause of the fatherless, they have not judged the judgement of the poor' (Jer. 5.28).

⁵⁰ *DDA*, pp. 400-403; Breen translates '*proximum*' as 'another [man]', but such a reading ignores the different meaning of '*proximum*' as opposed to '*virum*'.

⁵¹ Nitsch, 'The New-Testament perspective', p. 156.

The strong intertwinement between the concepts of *iusitia*, poor relief, and the protection of the oppressed as the duty of the king also becomes clear if we look at the Bible verses Pseudo-Cyprian used in composing this part of his tractate. One source likely used by Pseudo-Cyprian in the excerpt cited above is that of Jeremiah 22. The verse is clearly addressed to a king: Jeremiah is ordered to ‘Go down to the house of the king Juda’, and should address the king as follows upon arrival: ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Juda, who sits on the throne of David’ (Jer. 22.1-2). In the context of social justice, the words of God that follow bear some strong resemblances to Pseudo-Cyprian’s idea of kingly *iusitia*: ‘Execute judgement and justice (*iusitia*), and deliver him that is oppressed out of the hand of the oppressor: and afflict not the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, nor oppress them unjustly’ (Jer. 22.3) [...]. It is easy to see how Pseudo-Cyprian might have used this text and reordered it in composing his own admonition: *iusitia* is here defined as not unjustly oppressing the vulnerable groups of the strangers, the orphans, and the widows; moreover, these tasks are addressed to a king.

Only Pseudo-Cyprian’s notion of judging without regard to persons is absent from Jeremiah 22. The formula of judging *sine acceptione personarum* used by Pseudo-Cyprian can only be found *verbatim* in I Peter 1.17: ‘[...] if you invoke as Father him who, without respect of persons [*sine acceptione personarum*], judges according to every one’s work [...]’. Yet Pseudo-Cyprian explicitly writes of judging without acceptance of persons between *a man and his neighbour (proximum)*, which he could not have taken from this verse. It is, however, present in Jeremiah 7.5-6, together with the notion of not oppressing orphans, widows, and strangers, but there lacking the words *sine acceptione personarum*: ‘[...] For if you will order well your ways, and your doings: if you will execute judgement between a man and his neighbour (*proximum*); If you oppress not the stranger, the orphan, and the widow’ (Jer. 7.5-6).

It is therefore likely that Pseudo-Cyprian reworked Jeremiah 7.5-6, 22.3, and Peter 1.17 in describing the just king as one who defends the powerless and judges equally among his subjects. Considering his deep knowledge of patristic authors, he might well be following one or a combination of patristic writings in this reworking.⁵² Whatever the sources that lie behind this, his use of these Biblical citations shows that the defence of widows, orphans, strangers should not be seen as disconnected from the notion of judging equally *sine acceptione personarum* and the admonition to not oppress anyone unjustly in *De duodecim abusivis*: in Pseudo-Cyprian’s mind, judging equally was also first and foremost a matter of social justice, of defending the powerless, and of ‘not oppressing’ the poor, even though they might at a first reading seem to be presented as separate admonitions

⁵² On Pseudo-Cyprian’s knowledge of patristic authors see Breen, ‘Pseudo-Cyprian and the Bible’, p. 323, and *id.*, ‘Antique Irish exegesis’, *passim*.

in his enumeration of the markers of the *rex iniquus*. For the king who neglects this duty, Pseudo-Cyprian has a stark warning:

[...] let the king know this, that just as among men he is set highest in his throne, so likewise if he does not administer justice, he shall be sit in the foremost place of punishment. For in this life, as many transgressions as he permitted to have under him, he shall be punished commensurately, in atonement, in the world to come'.⁵³

Yet the consequences of just and unjust kingship go far beyond this personal salvation of the ruler's soul. The *rex* who does not rule according to the precepts summed up by Pseudo-Cyprian threatens the very existence of his realm in the current, temporal, world. Nature itself will turn against the *rex iniquus* and all of his people; his sins and negligence will result in a disturbance of 'the tranquillity of the peoples'; scandals in the kingdom; diminished fruits of the lands; the obstruction of the subjection of the peoples; general misfortunes that will hinder the prosperity of the kingdom; sorrow caused by the deaths of loved ones and children; hostile invasions that lay waste to the provinces; the slaughter of beasts of burden and herds; storms; a disturbance of the 'upper atmosphere' that prevents the fertility of the land and the sea; blasts of lightning that destroy the cornfields and the blossom of trees. And, 'above all', the unjustness of the *rex iniquus* will cause his heirs to fade away into insignificance, and they will not inherit the kingdom.⁵⁴ Pseudo-Cyprian further substantiates this final curse with a single Old Testament reference to I Kings 11:31: 'For the Lord, because of Solomon's great sin, divided the kingdom of the House of Israel out of the hands of his children, and because of king David's righteousness he left the lamp of his generation forever burning in Jerusalem'.⁵⁵ The rule of a *rex iustus*, on the other hand, will result not only in the tranquillity, protection, and rejoicing of his subjects, but also in the 'temperateness of the weather, the stillness of the sea, the fruitfulness of the earth' as well as 'the sure inheritance of his children' and, notably, 'the solace of the poor'.⁵⁶

Apart from the Biblical reference to the inheritances of Solomon and David, Pseudo-Cyprian's cosmological notion of kingship cannot be traced back to a specific Bible verse. This absence of a clear Biblical model for Pseudo-Cyprian's cosmological idea of kingship is significant. The Old Testament God is, of course, clearly portrayed as punishing particular peoples for their sins and injustices with famines, thunders, and plagues. It is, after all, he who '[...] provides rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains' (Ps. 147.8); who has control over 'Fire and hail, snow

⁵³ *DDA*, pp. 408-409.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 404-405.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 408-409.

and clouds' (Ps. 148.8). Yet there are two important differences between the cosmological punishments of the Old Testament God and Pseudo-Cyprian's scheme. First of all, God is not described as the actor behind the natural disasters and blessings that befall the *rex* in Pseudo-Cyprian's scheme of cosmological punishment and reward, while in the Old Testament, thunder, rainstorms, plagues and similar afflictions are always explicitly attributed to God's agency. He punished the Egyptians with natural disasters because their Pharaoh did not allow the Israelites to sacrifice to their God (Ex. 9); Samuel called upon the Lord to send thunder and rain as a punishment for the sins of his people (I Sam. 12.17).⁵⁷ In *De duodecim abusivis*, the cosmological punishments and rewards of kingship are effected directly by the king's *institia* or lack thereof, not by an almighty God as in the Old Testament.

Secondly, God's punishments through storms, plagues, and famines are in the Bible generally not focused on the rule of kings, but on the chosen people's disobedience to God. In the case of the Pharaoh of Exodus 9, it is not the people's own king that is punished, but one of another people. Moreover, the Pharaoh was not punished for being *iniquus*, but for disobeying the word of God. In all other cases where God's punishment is of a cosmological nature he punishes the sins of an entire people, not the unrighteousness of a single *rex*. Addressing Moses, God says that if his people abide by his commandments, he will reward them with 'rains in their season, so that the land will yield its produce and the trees of the field will bear their fruit' (Lev. 26.4); it is because of the Israelite's rebellious hearts that they do not 'fear the Lord our God, who gives rain in its season, both the autumn rain and the spring rain, who keeps for us the appointed weeks of our harvest' (Jer. 5.24).⁵⁸

In fact, it is clear that Pseudo-Cyprian's cosmological notion of kingship was not based on the Bible – at least not directly – but on the idea of cosmological kingship in the Irish tradition of early medieval *tecosca*-literature. In these vernacular advisory works for kings we find a concept of kingly righteousness similar in its meaning and centrality to Pseudo-Cyprian's *institia*, namely the notion of *fír flathemon*.⁵⁹ This refers to the 'just' behaviour of the king, which both refers to his

⁵⁷ It is important to note that the Pharaohs of the Bible appear both as villains and as more positive figures of power. In late antique and Carolingian traditions, the Pharaoh became a figure mostly used 'to comment on the behaviour of people who were either threatening to the protagonists of these stories, or who could help them move up in the world [...] he seems to have been used predominantly to comment on those in a position of power or authority': R. D. Kramer, "'...*Quia cor regis in manu dei est...*": The Pharaoh in Carolingian monastic narratives', in P. Depreux, F. Bougard, and R. Le Jan (eds), *Compétition et sacré au haut Moyen Âge: entre médiation et exclusion*, Haut Moyen Âge, 21 (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 139-164, here pp. 149-150.

⁵⁸ See also Clayton, 'Lordship and kingship', p. 147: '[...] while the Bible envisages these contrasting fates as dependent on the conduct of the people as a whole, in the Irish text all depends on the king's justice and this seems to be the distinctively Irish emphasis in the ninth abuse'.

⁵⁹ R. M. J. Meens, 'Politics, mirrors of princes and the Bible: sins, kings and the well-being of the realm', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7.3 (1998), pp. 345-357, here p. 351; H. H. Anton, 'Pseudo-Cyprian, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* und sein Einfluß auf den Kontinent, insbesondere auf die karolingischen Fürstenspiegel', in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 568-617, here p. 592.

‘truth’ as well as his ‘justice’. The *Testament of Morainn* (*Audacht Morainn* in the original Old Irish), written around 700, notes that it is through the king’s attribute of *fír flatbemon* that ‘plagues and great lightnings are kept from the people’, ‘that he [i.e. the king, not God!] secures peace, tranquility, joy, ease, and comfort’, ‘that abundances of great tree-fruit of the great wood are tasted’, ‘that milk-yields of great cattle are maintained’, ‘that there is abundance of every high, tall corn’, ‘that an abundance of fish swim in the seas’.⁶⁰

However, Pseudo-Cyprian does not base his admonitions about care for the poor on specifically ‘Irish’ traditions, but rather, as outlined above, on several Biblical verses. By embedding his quintessentially Christian notion of poor relief and social justice into a non-Biblical cosmological scheme of kingship, he effectively provides a great sense of urgency to the Christian idea of protection of the poor. The Pseudo-Cyprianic *rex* who oppresses the poor and does not give alms can doom his entire people – and this not because of an affront to God, but through his *iniustitia* alone. Conversely, the rule of a king who has *iustitia* is visible, among many other things, because of the solace of the poor – cared for by alms, protected from unjust oppression, and spared from the horrors of famine.

2.2. Moralising wealth, poverty, and power

Pseudo-Cyprian’s fourth grade of abuse is ‘a rich man without almsgiving, who hoards up for the future the surplus of his material acquisitions, which he does not need, for safekeeping, distributing nothing to the poor or needy’.⁶¹ In contrast to the almsgiving and defence of the poor that Pseudo-Cyprian constructs as the duties of the king, the *Dives sine elemosyna* only endangers the salvation of his own soul: ‘[...] whilst he guards with diligence the things he has acquired upon Earth, he forfeits the everlasting treasure of the heavenly home’.⁶² Pseudo-Cyprian seems to imply that the rich man needs to take a very radical step indeed in order to acquire this everlasting treasure: one of the many Biblical examples he offers in driving home his message is that of the rich young man who asked Jesus about the way to perfection, upon which Jesus answered: ‘If you wish to be perfect, go and sell all that you have and give it to the poor, and come follow me, and you will have treasure in Heaven [...] It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.’ (Mt. 19:21, 24).⁶³

⁶⁰ *Audacht Morainn*, ed. trans. F. Kelly (Dublin, 1976), p. 7; on the relationship between Pseudo-Cyprian’s *iustitia* and the Old Irish ‘*fír flatbemon*’ see J. Grigg, ‘The just king and *De duodecim abusivis saeculz*, *Parergon*, 27.1 (2010), pp. 27-52, here pp. 36-38.

⁶¹ *DDA*, pp. 352-353.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 353-355.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 354-355.

After thus driving home the danger of keeping to one's riches, Pseudo-Cyprian argues the uselessness of loving temporal things. Not only do they stand in the way of one's everlasting treasure in paradise, but being material things, they cannot and do not give love in return. Instead, argues Pseudo-Cyprian, 'it is commanded that we love not the world but our own neighbour, since he can return our love with love'.⁶⁴ Pseudo-Cyprian then contrasts the vice of avarice with the virtue of mercy. Instead of subjecting to avarice (*avaritia*) and, for this reason, 'perish in eternal damnation', they should be merciful (*miser cordia*), for those that are merciful shall receive mercy. 'In that virtue', God requires not riches, 'but rather looks upon the affection and heart of man'.⁶⁵

With that final promise, Pseudo-Cyprian seems to contradict himself. After all, did he not earlier cite Jesus's words to the rich young man, which clearly state that those who do not forfeit all their goods and become poor themselves will have no chance of going to heaven? This was, at least, the seemingly straightforward meaning attached to this verse by the anonymous author of the early fifth-century text *De divitiis* and other late antique authors. It was not possible to soften these words by ingenious allegory, unless 'the rich were to find a very large needle or a very small camel'.⁶⁶ Such views were energetically attacked by Augustine. To him, every Christian was a sinner, but this did not deny the rich the chance to save themselves through almsgiving.⁶⁷ To Augustine riches carried particular moral dangers, but he he also stressed that rich Christians who have wealth, but are not 'possessed' by it, can still hope for heaven.⁶⁸ Although these fifth-century debates, waged in North Africa, Gaul, and Italy, might seem to be of little importance to a seventh-century cleric writing in Ireland, the writings on these discussions are essential to understanding Pseudo-Cyprian's view on riches.

Pseudo-Cyprian's indebtedness to Augustine in this context of the morality of wealth is not very apparent in his admonition against the rich man without alms, but it is very clear in Pseudo-Cyprian's description of the eighth abuse, that of the *pauper superbus*. There he admonishes the 'poor man who is proud, who, although he has nothing, is puffed up with pride, when, on the contrary, even the rich of this world are commanded by the apostle Paul not to be high-minded' (I. Tim. 6:17).⁶⁹ The *crux* of the argument that also enlightens Pseudo-Cyprian's thinking about the *dives sine elemosyna* is his citation of Proverbs 13:7:

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 358-359.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 362-363.

⁶⁶ P. Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350-550 AD* (Princeton, 2012), p. 319.

⁶⁷ Brown, *Eye of a Needle*, pp. 361-362.

⁶⁸ K. Ward, 'Porters, catapults, community, and justice: Augustine on wealth, poverty, and property', *New Theology Review*, 26.1 (2013), pp. 55-62, here pp. 56-57.

⁶⁹ *DDA*, pp. 392-393.

For humble men who have honestly come by riches may be called poor in spirit, but those who are proud and yet have nothing are without doubt deprived of that blessing. Of both sorts of men, Holy Scripture speaks thus: ‘There is one who is rich although he has nothing, and there is one who is poor although he has many riches’ [Proverbs 13:7]. The rich man who is humble in spirit is as a poor man, for all his riches, and the poor man who is proud in his heart is as a rich man, though he possesses nothing. It follows, therefore, that humility of mind is a noble poverty and that foolish or empty riches are a wicked excess of the spirit.⁷⁰

This ingenious connection between the to the Bible immensely rare concept of the proud poor man – which only occurs in Sirach 25:4 – and the message of Proverbs 13:7 is not Pseudo-Cyprian’s, but Augustine’s.⁷¹ Specifically, Pseudo-Cyprian is indebted to Augustine’s 36th sermon, essentially an in-depth commentary on Proverbs 13:7.⁷² In his sermon, Augustine explains that pride, not riches, was the true danger to the Christian. The sermon effectively shows one of Augustine’s central ideas, namely that a Christian community was not divided between the rich and the poor, but between the proud and the humble: ‘Nothing in riches is to be feared more than pride’.⁷³ The rich man was more likely to fall into the vice of pride, but the proud poor man needed to fear pride too, either because he avariciously longs for riches or is ‘spiritually proud’ because of his poverty, and therefore thinks he is more perfect than the rich.⁷⁴ Thus the soul of a poor man who is proud is in more danger of eternal damnation than that of a rich man who is humble.

However, Pseudo-Cyprian went far beyond Augustine’s notion that the poor could be proud too. Augustine, like Pseudo-Cyprian, argued against their social mobility. He urged the poor to not to seek riches, and portrayed the poor as not much more than the ‘porters to heaven’. In Augustine’s sermons, the poor were ‘our carriers’, who obediently transported the alms of the rich to heaven, evoking ‘an image that preserves the servility of the poor’.⁷⁵ ‘What else are they but porters through whom we transfer our goods from earth to heaven?’, he asked his congregation.⁷⁶ Yet none of Augustine’s writings show the sheer hate with which Pseudo-Cyprian attacks the poor and their supposed pride in his *De duodecim abusivis*. Unlike the rich man without alms, who only

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 398-399.

⁷¹ The context of this text, from ‘*pauper enim humilis [...] superbus mentis affecto*’, also shows indications of having used Ambrose’s *De Nabuthae* (24) and Cassian’s *Collationes* (13): Breen, ‘Pseudo-Cyprian and the Bible’, p. 232.

⁷² *DDA*, p. 399.

⁷³ Brown, *Eye of a Needle*, p. 349; Augustine, *Sermones ad Populum*, *Sermo* 36, PL 38, cols 215-220, here c. 2, col. 215: ‘*Nil enim in divitiis tam timendum est, quam superbia*’.

⁷⁴ Firey, ‘Social justice and economic thought’, p. 335.

⁷⁵ Ward, ‘Augustine on wealth’, p. 58; Firey, ‘Social justice and economic thought’, p. 337.

⁷⁶ Ward, ‘Augustine on wealth’, pp. 58-59.

endangers his own soul through his avarice, the proud poor man of *De duodecim abusivis* is an anomaly that angers God and upsets the proper social order: he bears ‘a proud heart against God’, even though ‘because of his extreme wretchedness, ought to be humble and downcast in his manner of behaviour’.⁷⁷ The seriousness of this abuse is, in fact, already clear when one only considers the structure of Pseudo-Cyprian’s text, as it hinges on the notion that every ‘grade’ of abuse is incrementally more detrimental to the good order of the world. Following this rule, the eighth abuse of the *pauper superbus* is by its mere placement in the text presented as a more serious offence than its antithesis, namely the fourth abuse of the rich man without alms.

What most offends Pseudo-Cyprian, and, in his mind, God, are those poor men who are not just ‘inflated by pride’, but actively seek to rise out of their position. This shows that the eighth abuse is at its core a stark, almost emotional admonition against social upstarts – not a learned and thoughtful exposition about pride and humility in the tradition of Augustine. In Pseudo-Cyprian’s mind, poverty of the poor is ‘necessary and unavoidable’; the poor must ‘bear in mind what kind of person they are’, and they should ‘cease from being puffed up with pride because they cannot obtain in worldly riches what they desire’.⁷⁸ These harsh words are not based on either Biblical or patristic material, and would therefore presumably have originated from Pseudo-Cyprian’s own anxiety for the social mobility of the poor of his own time.⁷⁹ With that, Pseudo-Cyprian’s idea of a *pauper* could be called Janus-faced - and one of these faces is presented as being very hateful indeed. On the one hand the *pauper* is the person who has to be given alms, and is at risk of unjust oppressions and unequal judgement. On the other hand the poor are dangerous because they can strive for a higher social position and riches, which upsets the natural order and constitutes an affront to God himself.

The idea that the internal disposition of a person, and not his riches, determines the salvation of his soul is also present in a slightly different way in Pseudo-Cyprian’s sixth abuse of the ‘lord without virtue’. To Augustine, ‘even power could be taught to be humble before God [...] and to protect the powerless’.⁸⁰ This notion was shared by Pseudo-Cyprian, as testified by his idea that ‘[...] some men grow more perfect when in high station, and some again become worse, and fall through pride’.⁸¹ Being a *dominus* was thus not by definition being someone *sine virtute*.

⁷⁷ *DDA*, pp. 392-393.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 397-399.

⁷⁹ Breen, ‘Text and transmission’, p. 79.

⁸⁰ Firey, ‘Social justice and economic thought’, p. 335; Brown, *Eye of a Needle*, p. 350.

⁸¹ *DDA*, pp. 378-379.

Pseudo-Cyprian offers the High Priest and Judge of Israel, Eli, as the prototype of an unvirtuous lord. He lost ‘the power and capacity to rule [...] through negligence [*negligentia*] and imprudence of mind’.⁸² By not restraining his sons ‘with the rigor and severity befitting a judge’, Eli had evoked God’s anger (I. Sam. 2:22-36).⁸³ Indeed the Biblical source also focuses on Eli’s failings as a judge: God was offended because Eli ‘knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them’ (I. Sam. 3:13). Pseudo-Cyprian himself adds that, to be virtuous, the lord should therefore strive ‘to be held in fear through the administration of just punishments, not of personal injuries, but of transgressions of the law of God’.⁸⁴ The primary duty of the lord to Pseudo-Cyprian is thus to judge rightly, and his principal vice is that of *negligentia*. The model of Eli, a clerical figure, is more appropriate to Pseudo-Cyprian’s *dominus* than one might think at first sight. In fact, the text itself makes clear that this was a religious – not a secular – lord: Pseudo-Cyprian notes that the *dominus* does not require the armed force of secular lords but rather ‘inner fortitude of spirit’, suggesting that his *dominus* must be interpreted as being a clerical lord.⁸⁵

As we have seen with the *rex iniquus*, good judgement would to Pseudo-Cyprian have been intimately connected with the care of the poor. In this light, his admonition to not administer punishments because of ‘personal injuries’ could be read as similar to Pseudo-Cyprian’s admonition to the *rex iniquus* that he is to judge *sine acceptione personarum*. Such a reading of the justice meted out by the *dominus sine virtute* is further strengthened by Pseudo-Cyprian’s reference to the Book of Samuel at the closing of the sixth abuse: God ‘[...] lifts the poor and needy man out of the dunghill and makes him to sit with the princes of his people; and he casts down the mighty out of their seat and exalts the humble’ (I. Sam. 2:8).⁸⁶ This serves both as a warning to the unvirtuous lord – he might be ‘cast down’ from his seat – and also as a reminder that God is, in the end, with the poor (so long as they are not proud).

In conclusion, the king is clearly the foremost defender of the poor in Pseudo-Cyprian’s worldview. He is to prevent their oppression and give them alms; the rule of a just king can be discerned through the solace of the poor. Should he fail in these tasks, however, his *iniustitia* will have grave consequences of a cosmological nature to his entire realm. This provides a great sense of urgency to the king’s duty of defending the *causa pauperum*. Following Augustine, Pseudo-Cyprian sees the rich as not inherently sinful by the mere fact of their great possessions. Through almsgiving and humility, they can still hope for the heavenly kingdom, even without renouncing their possessions. Similarly, the *dominus* is not by definition someone without virtue. So long as he diligently

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 372-373.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 374-377.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 374-375.

⁸⁵ Clayton, ‘Lordship and kingship’, p. 145; Breen, ‘Text and transmission’, pp. 78-80.

⁸⁶ *DDA*, pp. 380-382.

carries out God's law, he too can hope for heaven, despite the inherent moral ambiguity that accompanies his high office. Finally, Pseudo-Cyprian has much darker words for the proud poor man; the right of the poor is to carry alms into heaven, and to passively receive the protection of the *rex*. They are not, however, to aspire for any improvement in their position. In *De duodecim abusivis*, doing so constitutes nothing less than a direct insult to God: they should know their place.

III. Pseudo-Cyprian and his world

3.1. Early Irish kingship and social justice

‘*En yrland erent reis plusur, cum alures erent les cunturs*’ (‘In Ireland there are as many kings, as there are counts elsewhere’), so starts the *chanson de geste* celebrating the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in the late twelfth century.⁸⁷ This observation would also have been valid in seventh-century Ireland. It is estimated that at any given date between the fifth and twelfth centuries, there were no fewer than 150 ‘king’ for a population of much less than half a million souls.⁸⁸ Each of these kings ruled over a *tuath*, literally translated as ‘a people’. Each *tuath* consisted of around 3000 people, meaning that these kingdoms were much smaller than those outside of Ireland between the seventh and ninth centuries. This political fragmentation was, however, combined with a surprising degree of cultural unity, in religion, language, and social structure.⁸⁹ Moreover, the idea that such a multiplicity of petty kingships would logically result in a constant state of warfare and near-anarchy is mistaken; compared to early medieval mainland Europe, the great number of Irish kings ‘tended to limit the scope of their activities, rather than expand them’.⁹⁰

One way in which the Irish sought to maintain this relative state of peace, as well as a sense of order, was through the drafting of a great number of law tracts on kingship and social order.⁹¹ Much more than was the case in the Merovingian and Carolingian realms, Irish kingship was a highly codified and intensively regulated affair. Irish law tracts minutely lay out a status-based system specifying who can and cannot become king.⁹² Additionally, Irish authors envisioned various hierarchical models whereby some kings were ranked higher than others. The early eighth-century tract on status *Críth Gablach*, for example, envisions three grades of king: the king of a single *túath*, who is subject to another king, but has no kings subject to him; the king of several *túaths*, who is lord over other kings but also himself subject to a higher king, and finally the king who is a king of kings and himself not the vassal of another king.⁹³ The function of these ‘grades of kingship’ seems

⁸⁷ Cited in F. J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (Dublin, 2001, orig. London, 1973), p. 7.

⁸⁸ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 7; B. Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin, 2000), p. 37.

⁸⁹ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, pp. 7-8.

⁹⁰ D. Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland, 400-1200* (London, 1995), p. 62.

⁹¹ There has been much debate over to what extent these law tracts reflect the ‘social reality’ and ‘legal life’ of early medieval Irish society. Such questions are of less interest to this thesis, considering I limit my enquiry to how these law tracts reveal an elite *Weltbild*. As products of a particular society, they are attempts at understanding a particular society and its legal system: T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘Críth Gablach and the law of status’, *Peritia*, 5 (1986), pp. 53-73, here p. 54.

⁹² T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 90.

⁹³ T. M. Charles-Edwards, ‘A contract between king and people in early medieval Ireland? Críth Gablach on kingship’, *Peritia*, 8 (1994), pp. 107-119, here p. 108.

to have been to alleviate possible antagonisms between various family branches. This was concretely achieved by allowing other dynasty heads to retain the title of 'king', even though they were only client kings.⁹⁴

The noble 'status' that determined whose claim to the office of kingship was most legitimate was mainly based on the size of a noble's clientele, and to a lesser extent on dynastic ties to the office of kingship. The institution of clientship has been called the 'basis of Irish society'.⁹⁵ Irish clientship was not centred on land, but rather on grants of cattle. The lord would provide his clients with a 'fief' of cattle, and received rents and services from his clients in return.⁹⁶ Thus *Crith Gablach* notes that the status of kings is determined by a combination of 'the long standing submission of a people, his office among a people [...] his base clients; and his free clients; his hereditary serfs'.⁹⁷ The 'base clients' here were most important in determining the legitimacy of a noble's claim to kingship, as these were subject to hereditary service. 'Free clients', on the other hand, could terminate the contract with their lord at will, which made them a less reliable source of power and wealth. Finally, the 'hereditary serfs' named in the *Crith Gablach* were unfree or half-free commoners.⁹⁸

Because Irish lordship was founded on the scarcity of livestock, it is likely that there was a rather high degree of rotation in the possession of kingdoms and client kingdoms: a king only owned a limited portion of wealth to divide among his heirs, which meant that royal status could gradually be lost by a particular family, which would then be relegated to holding merely a client-kingdom or even lose the status of king altogether. Similarly, noble families that managed to acquire enough base-clients could rise to kingship or in the grades of kingship.⁹⁹ Pseudo-Cyprian's Biblically inspired warning that the unjust king would cause his 'sons and nephews to fade out of significance, so that they do not inherit the kingdom', would in this light be eerily relevant to Irish kings. The potency and popularity of this warning is further attested by Bishop Tirechan's ca. 690 *Life* of St. Patrick. Tirechan narrates how, when Patrick visited the assembly-place Tailtiu on Easter Sunday during the reign of Lóegaire, son of Níall, he met the former's brother, Coirpre. This Coirpre wanted to kill Patrick, and had flogged some of the saint's helpers in an effort to find out the identity of Patrick. Instead, he was rewarded with a curse very similar to the warning wielded by Pseudo-Cyprian in the *De duodecim abusivis*: 'Your seed shall serve the seed of your brothers and there will be no king of your seed for ever'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 14.

⁹⁵ Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 141.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁹⁷ Charles-Edwards, 'Law on status', p. 58.

⁹⁸ Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship*, p. 41.

⁹⁹ I. Warntjes, 'Regnal succession in early medieval Ireland', *Journal of Medieval History*, 30 (2004), pp. 377-410, here pp. 390-392; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 75.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

The extraordinary importance of wealth to Irish kingship also partially explains Pseudo-Cyprian's notion of the king and the rich as the quintessential carers for the poor, as opposed to the bishop and the Church. In effect, Irish clientship was a system of gift-giving: the lord lended his client a grant of cattle, and in return the client served his lord and provided him with hospitality – food and entertainment – when the lord made a tour of his realm. It is likely that gift-giving was in this regard more prolific than in contemporary medieval Frankish kingdoms. For one, the relationship between the Irish lord and his clients was much more egalitarian than in Francia. This already shows in the king's house, which could normally not be distinguished from that of other nobles. The *Críth Gablach* specifies that the house of the king should be about the size of that of his average 'strong clients' – in stark contrast to the palatial residences of Frankish kings.¹⁰¹ Secondly, Frankish lords retained ownership over the lands worked by their *coloni*, at least theoretically, indefinitely. In Ireland, however, the relationship between lord and client was contractual and more short-term – unlike land, grants of livestock will naturally not last for much longer than seven years. After such a period the cattle that had not deceased or been slaughtered would simply become an outright gift to the client. This was thus more of an exchange than the obligatory relationship endured by the Frankish *colonus*. Moreover, the fact that the Irish client was expected to entertain his lord in his own house shows much less social distance than that between the Frankish lord and his *coloni*.¹⁰²

In his fundamental study on exchange in tribal societies, the sociologist Marcel Mauss revealed how gift-giving functions in what he called 'archaic societies': the Pacific Northwest, Polynesia, and Melanesia. Mauss's most valuable insight is that gift-giving in these societies was inherently reciprocal: by giving, a person reveals himself to be generous, and therefore as someone who deserves respect; by receiving a gift, the receiver shows respect to the giver; and by returning the gift a person can show that his or her honour is equivalent to that of the original giver.¹⁰³ Although recently several historians have, rightfully so, doubted that early medieval Irish society can be described as 'tribal', this does not make Mauss's findings useless to the study of early medieval Ireland.¹⁰⁴ No one will deny that in regards to social ties, early medieval Irish society was, like the societies studied by Mauss, 'based on small, tightly-knit social units, in which welfare was determined largely by natural events [and] economic fortune and misfortune tended to be collective',

¹⁰¹ Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, pp. 72-73; A. O'Sullivan, 'Early medieval houses in Ireland: social identity and dwelling spaces', *Peritia*, 20 (2008), pp. 225-256.

¹⁰² Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 79.

¹⁰³ M. Mauss, *The Gift* (London, 2002, trans. from the French by W. D. Halls), esp. pp. 11, 17; R. Latvio, 'Status and exchange in early Irish laws', *Studia Celtica Fennica*, 2 (2005), pp. 67-96, here p. 83.

¹⁰⁴ On these debates, see F. J. Byrne, 'Tribes and tribalism in early Ireland', *Ériu*, 22 (1971), pp. 128-166, and N. B. Aitchison, 'Kingship, society, and sacralty: rank, power, and ideology in early medieval Ireland', *Traditio*, 49 (1994), pp. 45-76, esp. p. 46.

which created ‘a high degree of economic interdependence’.¹⁰⁵ This interdependence, in turn, was articulated both by the egalitarian system of Irish clientship and, more specifically, by the mutual gift-giving that integral to it.

Almsgiving by the king and his rich nobles, as prescribed by Pseudo-Cyprian in his *De duodecim abusivis*, would have been an important part of this Irish system of gift-giving. In this regard, almsgiving served two functions that were socially beneficial to Irish kings. First of all, as the status of a noble, including that of a king, was based first and foremost on his wealth, almsgiving was a way to show that one was indeed rich and worthy to be called a noble or king. To use the model outlaid by Mauss, by giving away his wealth to the poor, the king and his nobles showed their generosity and wealth, thus gaining respect – and increasing their chances of acquiring and holding onto the office of *rí*. This was no one-way form of charity, either: as Pseudo-Cyprian notes, giving to the poor would save the rich man’s soul in the afterlife.

The second social function of kingly almsgiving in early medieval Ireland is that it strengthened what one could call his ‘claim to just rule’. As we have seen, much like vernacular Irish *tecosca*-literature, Pseudo-Cyprian sees the king as the one directly responsible for the wellbeing of his people. Through his *institia* good harvests are secured, while his *iniustitia*, conversely, causes famine. This cosmological nature of early Irish kingship was also at play in clientship relations: through their *institia* or *fír flathemon* the kings were seen as providing fertility, and very concretely at that by lending their clients grants of cattle and, sometimes, arable land. The king’s clients are then portrayed in the law tracts as ‘returning’ this fertility through the paying of tributes and the provision of their services.¹⁰⁶ Another way of underpinning the idea of the king as the one who provides fertility to his people is by placing almsgiving in this sacral scheme. Pseudo-Cyprian does indeed note that the just king will give alms to the poor, but a more explicit connection between a cosmological scheme of kingship and kingly almsgiving is found in the *Córus Bescna*, dated to ca. 700, which explicitly describes almsgiving as one of the kingly activities that ‘prevented the onset of plague’.¹⁰⁷ In this context, the Pseudo-Cyprianic notion of the king as the quintessential giver of alms helped propagate the idea that his rule was ‘just’, and that this *institia* prevented famine and gave fertility to the *tuath*.

Besides the impetus to kingly almsgiving provided by its two social functions, another reason for the to a Carolingianist or Merovingianist remarkable centrality of the king to the protection and care of the poor in early medieval Ireland concerns the lack of cities. On the continent, the

¹⁰⁵ Firey, ‘Social justice and economic thought’, p. 344.

¹⁰⁶ Aitchinson, ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality’, p. 70.

¹⁰⁷ Latvio, ‘Status and exchange’, p. 89, n. 56.

notion of episcopal poor care had developed in the Late Antique *civitates*. Gregory of Tours' *miracularii* were essentially urban dwellers.¹⁰⁸ In Ireland, on the other hand, there was no such urban context for episcopal rule.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, the notion of the bishop as the 'father to the poor' did not develop. Moreover, it seems that almsgiving to the Church was actively discouraged by the clergy themselves: the ninth-century *Tallaght memoir*, written in the monastery of Tallaght by members of the Irish *Céli Dé* monastic 'movement', notes that the monastery's extra food was to be given to the poor. However, the monks were also instructed not to accept gifts from the laity, because some laymen did not offer anything directly to the poor and thought they would only have to give something to the monks to 'win heaven'.¹¹⁰ This suggests that the role of the Church in matters of almsgiving and poor care was not nearly as pivotal in early medieval Ireland as it was on the continent, a situation that is mirrored in *De duodecim abusivis* through the absence of the Church as the quintessential guarantor of the poor, and the great importance of almsgiving and poor care to the office of kingship.

Finally, Pseudo-Cyprian's admonition that a king should 'give judgement between a man and his neighbour without respect to persons' can also be enlightened by the Irish context of *De duodecim abusivis*. Early Irish law tracts describe the legal category of *comaithech* or 'neighbour'. This term is most often used in the literal sense of 'joint client', meaning a base client who paid rent 'jointly' with his neighbour. The eighth-century *Bretha comaithebesa* ('Laws of the neighbourhood') explain why such a legal term was needed for base clients living in proximity to each other: there was no legal distinction of status between rent-paying freemen on the level of the neighbourhood. When the rent was paid, all freemen were to be treated equally and status was (ideally) forgotten. Most notably, the usual division between noble and commoner was not valid here. At the level of the neighbourhood, 'noble and peasant went clod-hopping on equal terms'.¹¹¹ Pseudo-Cyprian's admonition on equal justice between a man and his neighbour must most likely be seen in the context of this early medieval Irish legal category of 'joint clients'. Moreover, as we have seen, the Bible verses used by Pseudo-Cyprian in his admonition on equal justice between a man and his neighbour all touched upon the protection of the poor and the weak. This suggests that he tried to stress that persons of lower status (which, in the early medieval Irish worldview, always went together with poverty, given the strict stipulations on property in the law tracts) would, at the level of the neighbourhood, have to be treated equally with those of higher status by the king when

¹⁰⁸ A. E. Jones, *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul. Strategies and Opportunities for the Non-Elite* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 157-160.

¹⁰⁹ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 242.

¹¹⁰ W. Follett, *Céli Dé in Ireland: Monastic Writing and Identity in the Early Middle Ages*, *Studies in Celtic History*, 23 (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 183.

¹¹¹ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 101.

collecting renders. Even if that was not his original intention, the meaningful nature of the concept of ‘neighbour’ in early medieval Irish society would have ensured that Pseudo-Cyprian’s contemporaries understood it in the context of the norms evoked by the *Bretha comaitbchesa*. Pseudo-Cyprian’s idea of equal justice between a man and his neighbour does in no way, however, mean that Pseudo-Cyprian argued for an absolute kind of equal justice between everyone regardless of status – his admonition on equal justice must in its Irish context be understood as pertaining specifically and only to the paying of renders to the lord at the level of the neighbourhood. Such a reading is further substantiated by the elaborate Irish system of honour prices, which ensured that justice was inherently elitist, favouring those of high rank and disadvantaging those of low rank. Arguing in favour of equal justice before the law courts would have made little sense in this social setting.

3.2. Constructing a classed society

Let us now have a closer look at the way in which Pseudo-Cyprian’s society was ordered below the level of kings. It is clear that the elites of early medieval Ireland were exceptionally concerned with matters of hierarchy, codified in extensive lists. Some of these status lists were presented as being of a lay origin, while others dealt solely with ecclesiastical hierarchies. Rarer were law texts which applied originally lay ranks to the Church hierarchy, such as is the case with the *Uraicecht Becc*.¹¹² There was no single gradation of status that encompassed all of society; rather, every social group – from lay people to nobles and churchmen – was given its own rank system.¹¹³ The focus of these law texts is mainly on the aristocracy and free farmers; the lower classes of society are not discussed in much detail. As is the case with the specifications detailing the legitimacy of kingship discussed above, the law text’s regulations on those below the king were mainly concerned with how personal wealth determined a person’s rank.

The most basic social distinction in early Irish law texts is between the free (*sóer*) and the unfree (*dóer*). The former were then further divided into the privileged (*nemed*) and the unprivileged.¹¹⁴ The unfree seem to have been the only group that was explicitly regarded as non-combatant, and their chances at social mobility were constructed as even more limited than those of the poorest commoners. On the other hand, members of the latter group – even the lowliest free farmer – were always accepted potential warriors.¹¹⁵ Additionally, the law texts envision a group of

¹¹² Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 133.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹¹⁴ Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship*, p. 39.

¹¹⁵ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 68.

half-free persons (*fuidir*), whose resources did not allow them to sustain full free status. This situation was created by a kin's wealth being divided with each generation of sons, leaving some lacking the land required for sustaining a family.¹¹⁶

In the past, historians and anthropologists have sought to find a 'tripartite' social system in early medieval Irish society. Still in the 1980s, Neil McLeod suggested that the most important division was a tripartite one between kings, lords and commoners, and still visible 'as sort of fossilised remains' in the law tracts.¹¹⁷ One criticism levelled against this view is that bipartite divisions – those between the unfree and the free, and the *nemed* and the non-*nemed* – were more central to the Irish law tracts than any tripartite scheme.¹¹⁸

Even more important than this insight is that a focus on finding *the* way Irish society was 'divided' neglects the multifunctional nature of ranks in medieval Ireland. Although Irish law tracts assume a high degree of 'exclusivity in rank', this is absent from other sources. Most notably, in early Irish narrative sources abbots are regularly portrayed as leading armies and are even sometimes defined as 'princes'.¹¹⁹ Kings at times became abbots, and there are also descriptions of bishops becoming kings.¹²⁰ This explains why Pseudo-Cyprian chose the term *dominus* for his fourth abuse, which is, as we have seen, about a clerical, not a secular kind of lord: to Pseudo-Cyprian and his contemporaries, a high-ranking churchman was in many ways very much a 'lord'.¹²¹

Despite the absence of a single tripartite social system and the in practice very egalitarian relationship between lord and client, the Old Irish law tracts on status suggests that elites suffered from a serious amount of status anxiety. As is also exemplified by Pseudo-Cyprian's abuse of the *pauper superbus*, Irish elites were particularly afraid of social mobility and anything that threatened to muddle status differences. Thus the introduction to the law tract *Senchas Már* shows horror at the very possibility of social equality, while *Críth Gablach* specifies that any king found with a mallet, an axe, or a spade in his hands reveals himself to be a commoner, which reduces his honour price to that of a non-noble.¹²² In the *Di Astud Chirt & Dligid*, another early Irish law code, it is suggested that 'a freeing of serfs' and 'a release of slaves' by the ruler will lead to 'loss in grain, dairy produce, and mast'.¹²³

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

¹¹⁷ T. E. Powell, 'The ideas of the three orders of society and social stratification in early medieval Ireland', *Irish Historical Studies*, 29 (1995), pp. 475-489, here p. 485; N. McLeod, 'Interpreting early Irish Law: status and currency. Part I', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 41 (1986), pp. 46-65.

¹¹⁸ Powell, 'Three orders of society', p. 485.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 486-487.

¹²⁰ Latvio, 'Status and exchange', p. 90.

¹²¹ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 121; Anton, 'De duodecim abusivis und sein Einfluß auf den Kontinent', p. 575.

¹²² Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship*, p. 46; Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 124.

¹²³ Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship*, p. 78.

Irish origin myths reveal a longer-lasting elite fear of social mobility and upstart commoners. The *Audacht Morainn* relates the advice provided to ‘Morann son of Móen to Feradach Find Fechnach son of Craumthann Nia Nar’, whose mother ‘brought him away in her womb after the vassal tribes had destroyed the nobles of Ireland except for Feradach in his mother’s womb’.¹²⁴ Finally, even the natural world was portrayed by early Irish authors as strictly inegalitarian: the aforementioned *Bretha Comaithchesa* envisions a system whereby trees are ranked according to a system mirroring that of the law tracts on status, so as to be able to define fines when someone’s tree is damaged or destroyed by a neighbour. Thus the most valuable class of trees is described as ‘lords of the wood’, while the second-most valuable class is defined as the ‘commoners of the wood’.¹²⁵

It would therefore be no overstatement to note that the authors of Irish law tracts were obsessed with what they perceived as the dangers of social mobility. The Irish law tracts did, however, allow for social mobility, albeit one of a very restricted sort. A basic rule is that it took three generations to raise or lose one rank, an idea often described with the phrase ‘*sáegul triúr*’, or ‘lifetime of three men’. One could claim noble rank depending on the number of base clients under control, much like the legitimacy of a claim to kingship was determined. But, in an apparent effort to maintain divisions of status in society, those whose descent was not lordly needed double the usual number of base clients before being elevated of noble rank, in an apparent bid by lawmakers to make it nigh impossible for a commoner to become a noble.¹²⁶

But who were the persons directly responsible for these strict rules on status and social mobility? According to Old Irish tradition, the laws were originally written by the *filid*, the Old Irish, and, it is often implied, pagan, poet. Indeed the earliest law fragments, dating from the seventh century, are in archaic verse.¹²⁷ However, the idea that the law tracts were therefore somehow pre-Christian has recently been criticized. Most notably, historians have revealed how many early Irish law tracts testify to clear traces of Christian beliefs and practices.¹²⁸ Given these traces of Christianity in several Irish law tracts, it seems more likely that ‘pre-Christian sacral principles had been assimilated at least as early as the mid-seventh century to a biblical concept of kingship by divine grace that belongs firmly in the mainstream of medieval Christian European thought’.¹²⁹

Pseudo-Cyprian is a good example of this development: although his ideas on cosmological kingship go back to a traditional Irish cultural climate and textual genre, his traditional Irish ideas

¹²⁴ *Audacht Morainn*, p. 1.

¹²⁵ F. Kelly, ‘Trees in early Ireland’, *Irish Forestry*, 56.1 (1999), pp. 39-57, here pp. 41, 44.

¹²⁶ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, pp. 92-93.

¹²⁷ F. J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (Dublin, 2001, orig. London, 1973), p. 14.

¹²⁸ D. Ó Corráin, L. Breatnach, and A. Breen, ‘The laws of the Irish’, *Peritia*, 3 (1984), pp. 382-438; Powell, ‘Three Orders’, p. 475, n. 1.

¹²⁹ Aitchison, ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality’, p. 63.

on kingship are very much compatible with and indeed heavily embedded in Christian *topoi* and language. This is for example the case with his construction of the king as the protector of the poor in the Biblical sense of widows, orphans, and strangers. Early medieval Irish law tracts share a similar concern for the ‘Biblical’ poor. This is implied by the *Cáin Adomnáin* (‘Law of Adomnán’), a late seventh-century law tract. It contains a ‘Law of the Innocents’, and its inclusion shows how an abbot could mobilise Ireland and its kings behind the Biblical idea of protecting the weak and the powerless – in this case women, clerics, and children. Other surviving law tracts reveal that an edict like this ‘was enforced by recruiting the powers of client-kings, lords, churches and kindreds – in effect by recruiting society itself to enforce an edict upon itself’, spurred by those churchmen who were able to maintain close relations with kings.¹³⁰ Another early Irish law tract, *Cáin Patraic*, notes that kings are responsible for protecting foreigners visiting the kingdom, specifically merchants.¹³¹

We can thus assume that most of the law tracts of Pseudo-Cyprian’s time would have either been written or at the least heavily redacted by churchmen. These churchmen, we can assume, were members of an elite. Thomas-Charles Edwards has in this regard argued that Irish law texts and *tecosca literature* provided an image of society that was meant to appear ‘favourable to the interests of the elite as a whole’, while ‘in fact it reflected more closely the aspirations of the learned orders, including the Church. Early Irish literature did not merely entertain or praise kings and nobles, it instructed them. It was the voice of one or more learned orders influencing the conduct of the lay nobility’.¹³² The high social value attached to ‘verbal and artistic skills and to learning’ in some Irish law tracts must according to him therefore also be seen as attempts by Irish churchmen of defining learning as ‘high status’, who then used ‘that very same learning to impose a comprehensive view of social status’.¹³³

However, when we look at how early medieval Irish elites saw themselves, such a view seems too dichotomous in focusing on the supposed ‘interested’ of the learned clerical orders. As noted above, clerics could acquire secular offices, and Pseudo-Cyprian’s description of a clerical figure as a *dominus* certainly does not suggest the existence of a clear division between the worlds and interests of churchmen and secular nobles. Furthermore, great Irish clerical families were usually tied to royal lineages through marriage alliances, and many of the smaller churches and monasteries were owned by local ‘secular’ aristocratic families.¹³⁴ Indeed Charles-Edwards himself reveals how tied-up the clerical and secular spheres were in his discussion of a seventh-century Old

¹³⁰ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 524.

¹³¹ Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 81.

¹³² Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 137.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

¹³⁴ Latvio, ‘Status and exchange’, p. 90.

Irish poem. In this poem, a bishop (perhaps rather not incidentally being the brother of a king of Leinster) taunts a rival in a decidedly aristocratic fashion:

[...] are your horns horns of buffalo? Are your ales the ale of Cúalu? Is your land the Curragh of the plain of Liffey? Are you the descendant of a hundred high-kings? Is your church Kildare? Do you keep house with Christ? Even someone so proud as the bishop of Kildare could only claim to be the descendant of a hundred high-kings by combining both maternal and paternal descent!¹³⁵

It is therefore more likely that secular dynasties and churchmen ‘shared a mutual interest using in many cases propaganda to further the aspirations of each other’.¹³⁶ The primary way in which they did this was by constructing the nobility and king as *nemed*, which more specifically was defined in the law tracts as a broad category of elites including nobles, high-ranked clerics, and skilled scholars and craftsmen. The word *nemed* thus referred to a large and multifaceted part of society. Additionally it had connotations with sacrality – hence in Old Irish the word originally meant ‘sacred place’.¹³⁷ However, an important *caveat* is in order here: I am not arguing in favour of the traditional idea of Irish ‘sacral kingship’. This traditional view, first inspired by James George Frazer’s *The Golden Bough* (1894), assumes that Irish kings were inherently ‘tribal’, and had ‘but few governmental duties, apart from acting as war leader and presiding over the *óenach* or popular assembly’.¹³⁸ These kings were ‘literally hedged about with divinity in the form of taboos or *geissa*’.¹³⁹ In this view, the power of Irish kings evolved from their sacral status, not the other way around. In effect they were traditionally seen as little more than ‘priestly vegetables’, whose lives were completely regulated – and limited – by elaborate sacral systems of taboos.¹⁴⁰ This sacral status attached to kings in law texts, *tecosca literature*, and indeed in *De duodecim abusivis* must rather be perceived as an ‘ideological strategy’. Kings *first* acquired their office through wealth and power, and ‘then assumed a sacral mantle that was central to the legitimation of their rank’.¹⁴¹ On the one hand this provided a special role to the king: they are portrayed as those giving fertility, and more than any other noble reveal their great wealth through gift-giving. This functioned as an ideological foundation for the tribute paid to them by their clients. Yet, as we have seen, the king also stood remarkably close to his

¹³⁵ Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 95.

¹³⁶ Latvio, ‘Status and exchange’, p. 90.

¹³⁷ Aitchison, ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality’, p. 60.

¹³⁸ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 23; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion*, 2 vols (New York/London, 1894).

¹³⁹ Byrne, *Irish Kings*, p. 23.

¹⁴⁰ Aitchison, ‘Kingship, society, and sacrality’, p. 60.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 70

nobles; early medieval Irish clientship was in practice – economically speaking – likely surprisingly egalitarian. It is easy to see how in this context, the concept of the *nemed* as a sacred, ‘privileged’ group in society added to this sense of equality. Why those in power sought to propound this view is clear: by constructing the kings and their noble clients as part of the same sacred group in society, the emergence of a ‘class’ consciousness that sharply divides ruled and ruler is worked against.¹⁴²

Yet not everyone could be privileged in this society, and Irish authors were clearly very concerned about upward social mobility by commoners and loss of status by nobles. Thus the construction of a separate class of privileged ‘sacred’ people, and the detailed provisions on status, also served to create a clear dichotomy between the nobles and the ‘vassal peoples’ who, according to the *Audacht Morainn*, had killed all nobles but one in Ireland’s mythical past. While Irish elite authors sought to nuance social divisions between themselves and their direct (noble) clients, they at the same time tried to reinforce the barrier between noble and commoner. These attempts can be seen as part of the process through ‘which the evident power of the medieval *ceti dirigenti* [ruling classes] was created and maintained’, a research topic explored by the late Timothy Reuter in a thought-provoking article. He suggests that the nobility constructed a ‘classed world’ which effected ‘a sense of confidence – even if this overlay unease and fear – amongst the dominant’.¹⁴³

It is in this context of a constructed division between nobles and ignobles, expressed in ideological, elitist propaganda, that Pseudo-Cyprian’s admonitions on the abuse of the *pauper superbus* must be placed. One trait the multifaceted *pauperes* of Pseudo-Cyprian’s Biblical material had in common was that these were persons or groups of people who either fell outside of the social order, or threatened to do so.¹⁴⁴ In the society constructed by the early medieval law tracts, this would likely have referred to those groups of non-noble freemen designated as the *ocaire*, small-farmers who were free but only tenuously so, the *fer midboth*, or ‘man of the middle huts’, as well as the half-free *fuidir* and *bothach* in early Irish law tracts. It is likely that all these groups would have normally been seen as a kind of ‘good poor’, who would receive the alms of the rich and the king as specified by Pseudo-Cyprian. Only when they misbehaved – asked for lower rents, tried to rise in status, or simply acquired too much wealth – would they fit Pseudo-Cyprian’s idea of the *pauper superbus*, who through his inflated mind is unable to accept his lowly position, and long for earthly riches.

Additionally, early Irish law tracts refer to some rather more ill-defined people that lived even more on the margins of society. This includes the *sinnach brothlaig*, or ‘fox of a cooking pit’,

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁴³ T. Reuter, ‘Nobles and others: the social and cultural expression of power relations in the Middle Ages’, in A. J. Duggan (ed.), *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 85-98, here pp. 84-85, 94.

¹⁴⁴ Firey, ‘Social justice and economic thought’, p. 333.

which can best be described as a ‘type of wandering down-and-out’, as well as the *riascaire*, or ‘marsh dweller’.¹⁴⁵ This latter figure was apparently despised by both the *túath* and his own king, and travelled from ‘marsh to marsh, from mountain to mountain’.¹⁴⁶ Finally, there was the *raitech* or ‘man of the road’, someone who was exiled from his kin and forced to travel from place to place in search of food.¹⁴⁷ These wandering poor could also be given alms at times, but it is unlikely that Pseudo-Cyprian’s idea of the *pauper superbus* referred to this fringe group of fringe groups. Pseudo-Cyprian focuses on the dangers of social mobility, yet these wandering poor were so ‘down-and-out’, and detached from normal society and kinship bonds, that they would not normally be associated with the social upstarts against which Pseudo-Cyprian argues in his eighth abuse. The existence of these terms for ‘the poor’ is, however, significant in that they are very explicitly pejorative, and that the persons to which they referred were ‘despised’ by both king and people. As we will see, such pejorative notions of ‘the poor’ are rather less present in the Carolingian world.

It has also been suggested that the *senchleithe* and the *mug*, respectively hereditary serfs and slaves, were seen as ‘poor’ in early medieval Ireland.¹⁴⁸ This is, however, doubtful. The concept of *paupertas* was an inherently Biblical idea to Pseudo-Cyprian; he and his contemporaries would have internalised the Biblical meaning of the poor, which is clearly limited to those who either fell out of society or threatened to do so – widows, orphans, strangers, the sick, and freemen who were taken advantage of due to their lack of wealth. Slaves and serfs, on the other hand, were very much part of the ‘functioning community’; they enjoyed (or rather more likely, suffered) guaranteed employment and their social status would in no way be seen as ‘tenuous’ by their elite contemporaries – precisely because the social position of a slave was so fixed.¹⁴⁹

It is clear, in conclusion, that much of Pseudo-Cyprian’s law tract can be illuminated by its Irish context. Above all, it gives an explanation for Pseudo-Cyprian’s construction of the king, and not the Church, as central to poor care. His eighth abuse of the *pauper superbus* who threatens to acquire wealth, meanwhile, must be seen in the context of elite Irish attempts at constructing a ‘classed society’. This attempt at constructing a classed society is also at play in Pseudo-Cyprian’s idea of the just king, who is clearly portrayed as the one giving fertility to his people, which would in turn have legitimized his demand of renders from his clients.

¹⁴⁵ A. O’Sullivan, ‘The social and ideological role of crannogs in early medieval Ireland’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, Maynooth National University of Ireland, 2004), p. 251.

¹⁴⁶ O’Sullivan, ‘The social and ideological role of crannogs’, p. 251.

¹⁴⁷ F. Kelly, *Early Irish Farming: a Study Based Mainly on the Law-Texts of the 7th and 8th Centuries AD* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 432-436, 454.

¹⁴⁸ As done by J. S. Foster, ‘Viewing the past through a golden lens: the early medieval period and Irish identity’, in S. D. Stull (ed.), *From West to East. Current Approaches to Medieval Archaeology* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2014), pp. 55-71, here p. 64.

¹⁴⁹ On the Biblical idea of the poor see Firey, ‘Social justice and economic thought’, p. 343.

IV. The manuscript context in the ninth century

4.1. Distribution and attribution

Pseudo-Cyprian's treatise has been transmitted in ten manuscripts dated to the ninth century.¹⁵⁰ The best place to start our discussion of the text's Carolingian manuscript context is undoubtedly the library of the monastery of St. Gall: four of the ninth-century manuscripts were, and still are, located there. Additionally, it was an important centre for the text's transmission throughout the Carolingian world. The earliest manuscript is identified as Cod. Sang 89, and its script testifies to an insular influence. In this manuscript, *De duodecim abusivis* is included among several works by the 'genuine' Cyprian.¹⁵¹ The Irish tractate was copied from Cod. Sang. 89 into a slightly later one (Cod. Sang. 150) as an independent codicological unit, placed in between several genuine and spurious works by Augustine and Gregory the Great.¹⁵²

Somewhere between 841 and 872, Grimald, archchaplain for Louis the German from 833 onwards and abbot of St. Gall from 841, donated two more copies of *De duodecim abusivis* to the monastery of St. Gall, taken from his personal library.¹⁵³ The older of these two manuscripts, identified as Cod. Sang. 277, was written in St. Gall around the middle of the century, and the younger one, Cod. Sang. 570, contains a copy of *De duodecim abusivis* culled from this older 'Grimald' manuscript.¹⁵⁴ This more recent copy, dating to ca. 865-885, might have been written in St. Gall after its exemplar was already in the abbey library. However, its western hand could also be an indication of it having been written in Lotharingia, or even West Francia.¹⁵⁵

Beyond St. Gall, there are many other indications that *De duodecim abusivis* was very well known in East Francia. One manuscript was likely copied in Weißenburg in the second quarter of the ninth century, while another one can be dated to the third quarter of the ninth century and localised to Alsace.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, contemporary library catalogues indicate that the libraries of Fulda, Lorsch, Murbach, and Würzburg also contained copies of *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ These are: St. Gall, Cod. Sang. 89, 150, 570, and 277; Paris BnF lat. 18095; BV Vat. Lat. 293; Rome BV Regin. Lat. 195; BV Pal. Lat. 973; Saint-Omer Bibl. Publique 26; and Leiden Voss. Lat. F48 (only the preface).

¹⁵¹ G. Scherrer, *Verzeichniss der Handschriften der Stiftsbibliothek von St. Gallen* (Halle, 1875), pp. 34-35.

¹⁵² Scherrer, *Verzeichniss der Handschriften*, pp. 55-57.

¹⁵³ T. Zotz, 'Grimald', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 10 vols (Stuttgart, 1999), vol. 4, cols 1713-1714; Grimald's list of books gifted to St. Gall is reproduced in G. H. Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum* (Bonn, 1885), no. 23.21, p. 54.

¹⁵⁴ Resp. Cod. Sang. 277, pp. 187-242, and Cod. Sang. 570, pp. 164-192.

¹⁵⁵ B. Bischoff, 'Bücher am Hofe Ludwigs des Deutschen und die Privatbibliothek des Kanzlers Grimald', in *Id., Mittelalterliche Studien. Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart, 1981), pp. 187-212, here p. 196; R. Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und des Hrabanus Maurus* (Berlin/New York, 1980), p. 60.

¹⁵⁶ Respectively Rom. B.V. Regin. Lat. 195, on which see Bischoff, 'Bücher am Hofe Ludwigs', p. 196; and Zürich, Zentralbibl., MS Car. C 176 (D64), on which see Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, p. 82.

¹⁵⁷ Hellman, *Ps.-Cyprianus*, p. 17; Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum antiqui*, no. 37.159, p. 85 and no. 18.207, p. 41.

Despite this relatively large number of manuscripts available in East Francia, *De duodecim abusivis* was known in West Francia too. Cod. Sang. 277 served as the exemplar for a Reims copy, dated to the second half of the ninth century. Another manuscript was written somewhere east of Paris between ca. 850 and 875.¹⁵⁸ Further north, a manuscript containing *De duodecim abusivis* was written in St. Bertin, and a 831 library catalogue shows that the text was at that time also in the St. Riquier library.¹⁵⁹

Although a detailed analysis of how *De duodecim abusivis* was transmitted from the seventh to the ninth century lies far beyond the scope of this thesis, some comments on this are in order. Aidan Breen has discerned two distinct versions of the text: the first encompasses the earlier insular manuscripts in which *De duodecim abusivis* was usually attributed to Augustine, while his second group consists of those continental manuscripts in which a later ‘corrected’ version of the text is transmitted, and generally attributed to St. Cyprian. The earliest transmissions of Pseudo-Cyprian’s tractate can be found as excerpts in several works of Hiberno-Latin literature, most notably in the late seventh-century *Collectio canonum Hibernensis* and the eighth-century *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae*. Later, Sedulius Scottus’s *Collectaneum* also contains excerpts from *De duodecim abusivis*. Of these three early transmissions, the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis* and Sedulius used the ‘uncorrected’ version of the text, while the *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae* was already indebted to a corrected continental version.¹⁶⁰

All ninth-century Carolingian manuscripts discussed here are part of Breen’s second version, and all but one are attributed to Cyprian. It is likely that the text was first attributed to Cyprian in Carolingian schools during the early phase of the text’s diffusion, as *De duodecim abusivis* does not was not associated with other spurious or genuine Cyprianic works.¹⁶¹ Only in Cod. Sang. 89 and Cod. Sang. 150 is *De duodecim abusivis* transmitted with Cyprianic texts. This reluctance to associate *De duodecim abusivis* with the Pseudo-Cyprianic corpus likely stems from an older tradition that dictated which texts should be contained in a ‘Cyprianic’ manuscript (i.e. in a collection of Cyprian’s works), and which was codified in Late Antique lists of patristic texts.¹⁶² *De duodecim abusivis* arrived too late on the continent to be included in these lists.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ BV Pal. Lat 973, with *De duodecim abusivis* at ff 27v-38v, on which see the description by M. Kautz, ‘Vatikan, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 973’ [http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/digi-pdf-katalogisate/sammlung51/werk/pdf/bav_pal_lat_973.pdf]; Paris BN lat. 18095; B. Munk Olsen, *L’étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XIe et XIIe siècles*, vol 2: *Catalogue des manuscrits classiques latins copiés du IXe au XIIe siècle* (Paris, 1985), p. 102.

¹⁵⁹ Saint-Omer Bibl. Publique 267; R. Ulysse, *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques des départements*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1904), p. 135

¹⁶⁰ Breen, ‘Text and transmission’, pp. 86-93.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹⁶² See C. H. Turner, ‘Two early lists of St. Cyprian’s works’, *The Classical Review*, Vol. 6, No 5 (May 1892).

¹⁶³ Leontidou, ‘Pseudo-Cyprian in light of the earliest manuscripts’, pp. 7-8.

4.2. A text for bishops

Let us now turn to the Carolingian manuscript contexts of *De duodecim abusivis*. A first context that can be discerned is episcopal in nature. This is apparent from the Reims copy made of Cod. Sang. 277, itself identified as Vat. Pal. Lat. 973.¹⁶⁴ A first clear pointer to the episcopal context of this text is the inclusion of a liturgical *ordo* for the elevation of a bishop, titled ‘*Ordo vel examinatio in ordinatione episcopi*’.¹⁶⁵ Another included text that has very clear episcopal connotations is titled the ‘*Orationes ad capillos tondendum*’, or ‘Prayers on the shearing of the hair’ – this would have been used by a bishop as part of the rite, supervised by him, of elevating someone to the clergy, which involved a ceremony of tonsure.¹⁶⁶ Additionally, the manuscript contains Ansegis’s *Collectio Capitularium*, a text of particular relevance to bishops: it contains regulations on those who are excommunicated by bishops, the office of the bishop, the places where it is proper to live as a bishop, and how they are to be elected.¹⁶⁷

Another pointer to the episcopal audience of this manuscript can be found in the included texts that dwell upon moral concerns that fell under the responsibility of the bishop. Four texts transmitted in the manuscript touch upon issues of sexual morality. A letter pseudonymously attributed to Pope Hormisdas (450-523) deals with adulterous clerics; a text titled ‘*De matrimonio dicta patrum*’ is a collection of spurious Augustinian declarations and excerpts from a letter of Pope Siricius, all dealing with marriage, and also touching upon the problem of adultery; another work, titled, *De consanguinitate* specifies how incest can be prevented; an excerpt of two chapters from Autpert Ambrose’s *De conflictu vitiorum et virtutum* argues against the keeping of concubines, as well as more generally against the sin of *luxuria* (associated with fornication); and an excerpt from Jerome’s commentary on the Gospel of Matthew deals with men who abandon their wives.¹⁶⁸

All these texts touched upon moral problems of both laymen and the clergy that were seen as falling under the responsibility of the bishop in the Carolingian world. An episcopal capitulary ascribed to Theodulf of Orleans (d. 821) dwells at length on concerns of clerical purity, including specifically adultery, fornication, and sodomy.¹⁶⁹ The example of Lothar II’s divorce reveals best to what extent bishops saw themselves, and were seen, as the ones who had the duty to oversee the sexual morality of the ruler – even if they did not always agree, and fiercely contested each other’s

¹⁶⁴ Kottje, *Die bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, pp. 224-22; Kautz, ‘Vatikan, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 973’.

¹⁶⁵ Meens, ‘Mirrors of princes’, p. 353, n. 40. Kautz, ‘Vatikan, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 973’.

¹⁶⁶ Kautz, ‘Vatikan, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 973’.

¹⁶⁷ Ansegis, *Collectio capitularium*, ed. G. Schmitz, MGH Capit. N.S. 1, pp. 431-681, here pp. 431-437, for the chapter list with titles.

¹⁶⁸ Kautz, ‘Vatikan, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 973’.

¹⁶⁹ On clerical purity and sexual sins see M. de Jong, ‘Imitatio Morum. The cloister and clerical purity in the Carolingian world’, in M. Frassetto (ed.), *Medieval Purity and Piety. Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform* (New York, NY, 1998), pp. 49-80.

arguments in regards to Lothar's attempts to divorce Teutberga.¹⁷⁰ The role of bishops as the overseers of marriage and sexual morality is further attested by a 841 capitulary, in which Lothar I decreed that 'adultery' was one of the sins that bishops were to punish with public penance. Finally, Jonas, Bishop of Orleans, spends many words on denouncing adulterous laymen in his *De institutione laicali*.¹⁷¹

The manuscript also contains a work on the 'good life', namely an excerpt from Julian Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa*. The excerpt from Pomerius's text is yet another clear testimony to the pastoral intentions of the compiler. Of the three books that make up this work, the first two are explicitly meant for the instruction of bishops, while the final one was intended for the clergy at large.¹⁷² The scribe of the manuscript, however, only copied a single chapter from the second book, which is dedicated to the confession and acknowledgement of one's sins. Sinful clerics are to 'become their own judges, and, as though avengers of their own iniquity, here exercise the voluntary penalty of a most severe punishment against themselves', so that they 'will exchange eternal torments for temporal ones'.¹⁷³ Right before the folios of Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis*, the scribe added another text that, like Pomerius's work, shows clear penitential connotations: Benedict of Aniane's *Modus paenitentiarum*. In this text, Benedict of Aniane extrapolates four ways (*modi*) of sin from St. Benedict's *Regula*, ranging from failings that must be judged on an individual basis, to 'criminal' offences that can lead to excommunication and expulsion from the community. Additionally, he discusses how the perpetrators of these various ways of sin must be held accountable.¹⁷⁴

It is likely that the inclusion of Pseudo-Cyprian's text directly after Benedict of Aniane's *Modus paenitentiarum* was inspired by a concern for clerical sin shared by these two texts, as well as by Julian of Pomerius's *De vita contemplativa*. Pseudo-Cyprian's first abuse of the 'wise man without works' is aimed at the 'preacher (*praedicator*) [...] who does not himself act in accordance with what he preaches to others' and 'who has fallen into the love of sin'.¹⁷⁵ Because much is entrusted to these preachers, 'the greater reckoning shall be exacted, and the servant who knows the will of his master and does not do it, shall be punished with sharper and heavier strokes of the rod'.¹⁷⁶ The same sentiment is echoed in the tenth abuse of the negligent bishop, 'who seeks to be honoured among men for his high standing, but does not guard the dignity of his office in the sight of God'.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁰ On the divorce case see K. J. Heidecker, *The Divorce of Lothar II: Christian Marriage and Political Power in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca, 2010), and on the role of bishops in this esp. pp. 128ff.

¹⁷¹ On clerical views of lay sexual morality in the Carolingian world see Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, pp. 279-309; the examples are Stone's.

¹⁷² Julianus Pomerius, *De vita contemplativa*, PL 59, cols 415-520, trans. J. Suelzer, *Julianus Pomerius, The Contemplative Life*, Ancient Christian Writers, vol. 4 (London/Westminster Md., 1947), here p. 17.

¹⁷³ Pomerius, *De vita contemplativa*, II, c. 7, cols 451A-452B, trans. Suelzer, pp. 68-70.

¹⁷⁴ Benedict of Aniane, *Excerptus diversarum modus poenitentiarum*, PL 103, cols 1417C-1420B, here cols 1417C-1418A.

¹⁷⁵ *DDA*, p. 335.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

At the time of vengeance, so warns Pseudo-Cyprian, such negligent bishops should take heed, for ‘the Lord shall complain, in the words of the prophet: “Many pastors have destroyed my people; and the shepherds did not look after my flock, but they fed themselves” (Jer. 12.10, Ez. 34.8)’.¹⁷⁸

Besides echoing a concern for sinful clerics also apparent in the preceding texts of this St. Gall manuscript, the way in which Pseudo-Cyprian constructs the preacher and bishop as those responsible for the morality of their flock fits well with the other texts in the manuscript. According to Pseudo-Cyprian, the word *episcopus* means ‘an overseer or watchman’.¹⁷⁹ After having read the preceding texts on clerical sin and lay immorality, the bishop who read this manuscript would have understood what this meant: he was to diligently watch over the morality of his lay and clerical subjects.

One important duty of the Carolingian bishop was to instruct his flock in matters of faith, or, in other words, to preach.¹⁸⁰ The Reims copy just discussed does not contain much material that clearly points to such a preaching context, but another manuscript, Cod. Sang. 89, does. The works transmitted together with Pseudo-Cyprian’s *De duodecim abusivis* in this work – all by the ‘genuine’ Cyprian – shed some light on how this Irish tractate might have functioned in a ninth-century Carolingian preaching context. Although the transmitted work by Cyprian are all technically ‘treatises’, and not titled as *sermones*, their contents make clear that it was a collection of texts perfectly suited for the episcopal instruction of both the clergy and laity in matters of faith, possibly also used directly as material for sermons or simply orated ‘as is’.¹⁸¹

The St. Gall manuscript sets off with Cyprian’s *De dominica oratione*, a treatise explaining the lord’s prayer. In addition to clarifying all of the prayer’s passages, Cyprian gives several practical suggestions on the required disposition of the believer. Thus he admonishes the believer to, during the prayer, remain ‘disciplined, observing quietness and humility’.¹⁸² Upon this follows a tract on the virtue of patience, in which Cyprian portrays patience as the key to a virtuous life. Without patience, he argues, it is impossible to accomplish such central Christian precepts as not swearing, to pray for both your adversaries and persecutors, and to forgive a brother when he sins against oneself.¹⁸³ *De duodecim abusivis* is then preceded by the tractate *De opere et eleemosynis*, with a message of an immediate relevance to Carolingian *divites*. Admonishing the rich of his own time and place, Cyprian rebukes the rich, whose eyes, ‘overcast with the gloom of darkness, and shadowed in the

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 419.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁸⁰ R. E. McLaughlin, ‘The Word eclipsed? Preaching in the early Middle Ages’, *Traditio*, 46 (1991), pp. 77-122, here esp. p. 79.

¹⁸¹ Although no sermons of Cyprian seem to have survived into Carolingian times, it has been suggested that some of his ‘treatises’ may have originally been intended as sermons: McLaughlin, ‘The word eclipsed’, p. 89.

¹⁸² Cyprian of Carthage, *De dominica oratione*, ed. C. Moreschini, CCSL 3A (Turnhout, 1976), pp. 90-113, here c. 4, p. 91.

¹⁸³ Cyprian of Carthage, *De bono patientiae*, ed. C. Moreschini, CCSL 3A (Turnhout, 1976), pp. 118-133, here c. 16, pp. 127-128.

night, do not see the destitute and the poor'.¹⁸⁴ By closing their eyes the rich make a grave mistake, for without alms, one cannot hope for the heavenly kingdom.¹⁸⁵ After this follows Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate, which is in turn followed by the final text of the manuscript, Cyprian's treatise on the plague. Tackling a thorny question that arose because of this plague (ca. 250-ca. 270) – now often named the 'Plague of Cyprian' in reference to Cyprian's description of it in his treatise – Cyprian seeks to explain why Christians suffered just as badly under the disease as the pagans. His answer is one of consolation: presenting to the reader that most usual of suspects as the lead figure in any Christian narrative on bad fortune – Job –, Cyprian argues that adversity benefitted them all, for only in adversity were they truly proved. Following these examples, the Christians of Cyprian's day ought to face disasters with courage and patience. At the end of his tractate, he reminds his audience that for true believers, the heavenly kingdom is not to be feared. After all, the merciful will be rewarded, for they 'have transferred their earthly belongings into heavenly treasures'.¹⁸⁶

Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* is particularly relevant to the text directly preceding it, and the one directly following it. Cyprian's preceding treatise on good works and almsgiving fits perfectly with Pseudo-Cyprian's words on the rich man without alms, who, by neglecting the poor, risks eternal damnation. The same theme of almsgiving is discussed by Cyprian in the following tractate on the plague – here it is being presented as the merciful deed that allows true believers to enter the kingdom of heaven, particularly relevant in times of adversity. It is impossible to ascertain exactly why Pseudo-Cyprian's tract was inserted in this manuscript, and why it was placed directly after Cyprian's tractate on almsgiving and good works, but it could well be because *De duodecim abusivis* devoted an entire *abusio* to almsgiving. After all, *De duodecim abusivis* was no accepted part of the Cyprianic corpus in Carolingian times – as it was not yet included in the late antique lists of patristic works –, which suggests the existence of this different, or perhaps additional, reason for its inclusion in a 'Cyprianic' manuscript like Cod. Sang. 89.

4.3. Penitential associations

As we have seen, in the Reims manuscript identified as Vat. Pal. Lat. 973, Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate was associated with a corpus of an 'episcopal' or 'pastoral' nature, in which several texts dwelled explicitly on matters of public morality, sin, and penance. Such an association of *De duodecim abusivis* with penance is even stronger in the Reims copy's exemplar, Cod. Sang. 277, donated to the St. Gall library by Grimald. In this manuscript, *De duodecim abusivis* is found together with a penitential

¹⁸⁴ Cyprian of Carthage, *De opere et eleemosynis*, ed. M. Simonetti, CCSL 3A (Turnhout, 1976), pp. 55-72, here c. 15, p. 64.

¹⁸⁵ Cyprian, *De opere et eleemosynis*, c. 4, p. 57.

¹⁸⁶ Cyprian of Carthage, *De mortalitate*, ed. M. Simonetti, CCSL 3A (Turnhout, 1976), pp. 17-32, here c. 26, p. 31.

written by Halitgar, bishop of Cambrai (r. 817-831).¹⁸⁷ This connection between Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate and Halitgar's penitential deserves particular attention, because it is also visible in two other manuscripts: Cod. Sang. 570 copies both Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate and Halitgar's penitential from Cod. Sang. 277, and a late ninth-century manuscript from Alsace, Zürich MS. Car. C 176 D64, copies both texts from one of these two St. Gall manuscripts.¹⁸⁸

Halitgar's penitential was written at the request of Ebo, bishop of Rheims, probably somewhere in the late 820s.¹⁸⁹ In a prefatory letter attached to many copies of the penitential, Ebo shows disdain for the existing penitentials, as they lacked consistency and authority. He therefore asked Halitgar to compose a new penitential, which should be based on authoritative patristic sources.¹⁹⁰ The first book of the *Paenitentiale Halitgarii* begins with a chapter on the eighth principal vices or 'eighth sinful crimes'.¹⁹¹ The foremost of these vices is pride (*superbia*), 'the root of all evil'.¹⁹² After that come vainglory (*inanis gloria*), envy (*invidia*), sadness (*tristitia*), greed (*avaritia*), gluttony (*ventris ingluviis*), and extravagance or lust (*luxuria*).¹⁹³ In the ensuing chapters of the first book Halitgar discusses these sins in more detail, and also explains how they can be remedied. One possible reason for the association of Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* with this text might lie in the great relevance of the tractate's twelve abuses to, particularly, this discussion of vices and their remedies: *De duodecim abusivis* effectively illustrates the dangers and consequences of sinful behaviour, thus stressing the importance and need of Halitgar's penitential 'remedy'. This is also suggested by the list of books donated by Abbot Grimald to the St. Gall abbey, compiled somewhere between 841 and 872: in the first entry, Halitgar's penitential, titled '*Ebonis episcopi de octo principalibus vitiis*', is described as having been in one volume with only *De duodecim abusivis*. This implies that to the scribe of the list of books donated by Grimald this was a two-work volume on vices: Ebo's

¹⁸⁷ R. Kottje, Lemma 'Halitgar', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart, 1999), cols 1876-1877.

¹⁸⁸ L. C. Mohlberg Mohlberg, L. C., *Katalog der Handschriften der Zentralbibliothek Zürich*, vol. 1: *Mittelalterliche Handschriften* (Zürich, 1951), pp. 146-148; Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, pp. 58-59; On the way these manuscripts are related see Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, p. 86. Bischoff notes a '*textgeschichtliche Verwandtschaft*' between the two texts, p. 196, based on Grimald's gift list: Bischoff, 'Bücher am Hofe Ludwigs des Deutschen', p. 196.

¹⁸⁹ On the dating of the *Paenitentiale Halitgarii*, see R. M. J. Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600-1200* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 331.

¹⁹⁰ Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe*, pp. 130-131; Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, p. 8, both referring to Ebo, *Epistola ad Halitgarium episcopum Cameracensem*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 5, p. 617.

¹⁹¹ *Paenitentiale Halitgarii*, I, c. 1, PL 105, cols 651-710, here col. 657C; Interestingly, earlier writers who well on the scheme of the eighth principal vices, most notably John Cassian and Aldhelm of Malmesbury, ended their lists with pride, while Halitgar places it at the beginning of his list. Halitgar's idea of pride as the root of all sins is derived from the Bible, specifically his citation of '*Initium omnis peccati superbia*' from Sirach 10.15. He could also have based his ideas on pride on the works of Aldhelm, John Cassian, and Gregory the Great: although all these authors placed pride at the end of their respective lists of vices, they share Halitgar's notion of pride as the root of all sin: R. L. McDaniel, 'Pride goes before a fall: Aldhelm's practical application of Gregorian and Cassianic conceptions of "*superbia*" and the eight principal vices', in R. G. Newhauser (ed.), *The Seven Deadly Sins. From Communities to Individuals* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 95-109. On the scheme of the eighth principal vices in Late Antiquity see also R. G. Newhauser, *The Treatise on Vices and Virtues in Latin and the Vernacular* (Turnhout, 1993), esp. pp. 181-88.

¹⁹² *Paenitentiale Halitgarii*, I, c. 1, PL 105, col. 657C.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

work on the ‘eight principal vices’ and Cyprian’s work on the ‘twelve abuses’, which was really about the typical sins committed by twelve characteristic persons and groups.

That these two works were thus understood by contemporary scribes and readers as dealing with the same issues and themes is first of all suggested by the importance of pride in Halitgar’s penitential and *De duodecim abusivis*. The sin of *superbia* is central to the eighth abuse of the proud poor man, and also plays an important role in the sixth abuse of the lord without virtue. As we have seen the proud poor man risks losing the heavenly kingdom due to his inflated mind, while Pseudo-Cyprian shows the dangers of pride to those in positions of power by referring to the Biblical example of Saul, who ‘offended God through his pride and disobedience’.¹⁹⁴ This example shows, according to Pseudo-Cyprian, ‘that some men grow more perfect when in high station, and some again become worse, and fall through pride and the arrogance of power’.¹⁹⁵

This congregates well with Halitgar’s penitential, in which pride is not only described as the root of all sin, but also associated with rebelliousness.¹⁹⁶ The ‘proud poor man’ and ‘lord without virtue’ of the Irish tractate effectively illustrate why penance was required. Moreover, Halitgar’s penitential contains specific instructions on the sinful oppressions committed by *domini*, namely the murder of a slave by her *domina* because of jealousy, as well as the more general unlawful killing of one’s slave.¹⁹⁷ To those bishops and priests who had read Halitgar’s penitential, Pseudo-Cyprian’s concept of the *Dominus sine virtute* would have been a very appropriate model in reminding their higher-ranking flock of the need to do penance for their misdeeds. If the *domini* failed to heed the priest’s instructions, they might well end up like the unvirtuous lords listed by Pseudo-Cyprian, who had fallen from their high positions due to their pride and rebelliousness against God.

Additionally, the sinfulness of clerics is a theme that plays an important role in both *De duodecim abusivis* and Halitgar’s penitential. Pseudo-Cyprian’s admonitions on the ‘wise man without works’ and the ‘neglectful bishop’ are particularly relevant here. They provide a good background to several of Halitgar’s penitential regulations, most notably those on priests and deacons who have bedded a woman, on prospective priests who have been guilty of sins, and on clerics (including, explicitly so, bishops) who are involved in usury. The clerics who read the two St. Gall *codices* which contained both the Irish tractate and Halitgar’s would have made the mental connection between Pseudo-Cyprian’s abuses on sinful clerics and these penitential regulations. Pseudo-Cyprian evokes the divine punishments that befall sinful clerics, while Halitgar provides the cure.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ *DDA*, p. 377.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

¹⁹⁶ *Paenitentiale Halitgarii*, I, c. 2, PL 105, col. 660B.

¹⁹⁷ *Paenitentiale Halitgarii*, IV, c. 5, ed. H. J. Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher und das kanonische Bussverfahren* (Mainz, 1898), pp. 252-300, here p. 280.

¹⁹⁸ *Paenitentiale Halitgarii*, V, cc. 1, 2, 3, 9, ed. Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher*, pp. 286-287, 288.

Besides such internal thematic congruencies between the two texts, another reason for the association of *De duodecim abusivis* with Halitgar's penitential hinges on the person of Ebo. In fact, it has been suggested that the penitential was issued by Ebo instead of Halitgar, as a great number of early manuscripts containing the penitential can be localised to the Reims region.¹⁹⁹ That the penitential was indeed very closely associated with Ebo is further testified by the forementioned list of books donated to the Abbey of St. Gall by Grimald, as it names Ebo as the author of the work.²⁰⁰ This suggests that the compiler of the list thought that the *Paenitentiale Halitgarii* was above all 'Ebo's penitential', perhaps even incorrectly assuming that Ebo was the compiler of the work. Grimald's list of donated books also makes likely that Ebo was associated with the penitential long after the late 820s. This is substantiated by the fact that Fulda, the place where Ebo was exiled to from 833 to 840, is, in addition to Fulda, an early centre of dissemination of manuscripts containing Halitgar's penitential.²⁰¹

This connection between Halitgar's penitential and Ebo is also suggested by other works in the two St. Gall manuscripts containing *De duodecim abusivis* and Halitgar's penitential, as they also point to a Fulda provenance. Moreover, these works reveal that *De duodecim abusivis* might, in fact, have been associated with Halitgar's penitential in the context of the discussions surrounding the short-lived reinstatement of Ebo in 840-841 as Archbishop of Reims. During his exile in Fulda before his reinstatement, Ebo would have met the abbey's abbot at that time, Hraban Maur. The latter himself composed a penitential at the request of Archbishop Otgar of Mainz (d. 847) in, or not long after, 841. An important question Hraban tried to tackle in the *Paenitentiale ad Otgarium* concerned sinning priests and the possibility of reinstating them to their offices after they had done penance, which seems to relate to the contemporary debate surrounding the reinstatement of Ebo in 840.²⁰² This restitution crisis provides the context for an important link between *De duodecim abusivis*, St. Gall, Ebo, and Hraban's Fulda, namely a specific combination of two letters, one pseudonymously ascribed to Gregory the Great and a genuine one by Isidore. This 'Gregor-Isidor Kombination', as Raymond Kottje named it, is found together with Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* in Cod. Sang. 277, Cod. Sang. 570, Zürich MS. Car. C 176 (D64) and Pal. Lat. 973.²⁰³ Out of these four manuscripts, three also transmit Halitgar's penitential, while only Pal. Lat. 973 does not.²⁰⁴ Hraban's *Paenitentiale ad Otgarium* is the first witness to the 'Gregor-Isidor Kombination' and it is very

¹⁹⁹ Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe*, p. 132, n. 140.

²⁰⁰ St. Gall, Cod. Sang. 267, p. 32, ed. Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum*, no. 23.21, p. 54.

²⁰¹ Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe*, p. 132; M. de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814 - 840* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 76-80; P. R. McKeon, 'Archbishop Ebbo of Reims (816-835): a study in the Carolingian empire and church', *Church History*, 43:4 (1974), pp. 437-447, here pp. 443-444.

²⁰² Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe*, p. 133.

²⁰³ Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, p. 230.

²⁰⁴ Mohlberg, *Mittelalterliche Handschriften*, pp. 146-148; Kautz, 'Vatikan, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Pal. lat. 973'.

likely that its inclusion in the forenamed four manuscripts goes back to Fulda.²⁰⁵ The importance of the letter's inclusion in our manuscripts, however, only becomes truly apparent when the contents of the two letters are taken into account: they both deal with the restoration of lapsed clerics after penance, and both allow sinful clerics to return to their offices, even if these sins were particularly grave. The spread of this specific combination from Fulda therefore implies that Hraban actively supported Ebo's cause of being reinstated as the bishop of Reims.²⁰⁶

It is conceivable that the association of *De duodecim abusivis* with these two letters and with Halitgar's penitential (or, following the list of books gifted by Grimald: 'Ebo on the eighth vices') had a similar Fulda provenance; indeed, the ninth-century library of Fulda contained a copy of *De duodecim abusivis*.²⁰⁷ There is also reason to believe that Ebo and Hraban would have wanted to disseminate *De duodecim abusivis* together with Halitgar's penitential and the 'Gregor-Isidor Kombination', in the interest of Ebo's reinstatement to the see of Reims. According to Pseudo-Cyprian's tenth abuse, the dignity of the episcopal office consists of caring for the spiritual wellbeing of his flock: 'It behoves the bishop therefore to attend diligently to the sins of all over whom he is set in eminence to guard them, and after he has examined those sins, to cause them to be amended, if he can, by word and deed'.²⁰⁸ Following this message, Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* could be read as a justification of Ebo's role in Louis the Pious's 833 forced public penance in Soissons. Its message would certainly be at odds with the attempts of Louis, and the bishops who had remained loyal to him, at 'gaining the moral high ground' during and shortly after the 833 rebellion.²⁰⁹ Some time after Louis had regained control, he accused Ebo during the 835 assembly in Thionville of having transgressed ecclesiastical rules by excluding the emperor from the Christian community, as well as by falsely incriminating him. Ebo had thus become the scapegoat of the 833 rebellion.²¹⁰ Yet, in light of Pseudo-Cyprian's text, nobody could accuse Ebo of *not* having done enough. The central message of Pseudo-Cyprian's *episcopus negligens* is that the bishop was the quintessential watchman. This was an idea strongly at odds with the idea of *correctio* put forward by Louis the Pious and the bishops that rallied around him in the wake of the revolt: in his *Gesta Hludowici*, Thegan implied that the 'bigwig bishops at the court forfeited their right to *admonitio* [...] once more, it was the emperor's turn to be the watchman against sin'.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Discussed in detail by Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, pp. 230-234.

²⁰⁶ Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Halitgars von Cambrai und Hrabanus Maurus*, p. 230; Isidore of Seville, *Epistula ad Massonam episcopum*, PL 83, cols 899A-902A; Pseudo-Gregory the Great, *Epistula ad Secundinum inclusum*, PL 130, cols 1111B-1112C.

²⁰⁷ Hellman, *Ps.-Cyprianus*, p. 17.

²⁰⁸ *DDA*, p. 413.

²⁰⁹ On this concept of a 'moral high ground' at Louis the Pious's court, see De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 5f.

²¹⁰ De Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 76-8.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79, in reference to Thegan's wielding of Ez. 3.18 against the rebellious bishops in Thegan of Trier, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. trans. E. Tremp, MGH SRG 64 (Hannover 1995), pp. 167-278, here c. 53, p. 246; The reasons for the sympathy of various bishops, including Thegan and the Astronomer, for Louis the Pious's rule are manifold,

Moreover, Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse of the *rex iniquus* forces an enormous amount of responsibility onto the *rex*. Unlike the negligence of Pseudo-Cyprian's bishop, the iniquity of an unjust king will lead to very concrete disasters. Some of these disasters would have retrospectively implicated the reign of Louis the Pious both before and during the 833 rebellion, thus at the same time suggesting that Ebo's criticism was justified, and his deposition unfounded.²¹² An example can be found in the Astronomer's narrative. He was writing in the 840s – meaning at the time that Ebo tried to clear his name –, and was clearly sympathetic to Louis the Pious's rule. Yet at the same time he evoked natural disturbances that, according to *De duodecim abusivis*, mark out an unjust king: the Astronomer notes that in 823 the Empire was plagued by 'an earthquake at the palace of Aachen', 'frequent and unusual lightning', 'stones falling with hail', and 'diseases of people and animals'.²¹³ Besides natural disasters, the Astronomer also describes military troubles. In 827, the rebellious Gothic leader Aizo 'was attacking our people who lived in the frontier areas, and he was particularly devastating the region up to Cerdaña and Vallés'.²¹⁴ Louis sought to suppress this revolt, but the force he sent, under the command of Bernard, Count of Barcelona, failed in this, nor could it prevent further devastations. Bernard's army moved 'more slowly and haltingly than was fitting', which allowed the Moors to devastate the regions of Barcelona and Gerona.²¹⁵ Following the *Annales regni Francorum*, only a year later the fragile peace between the Danes and the Carolingians was broken: the Danes 'attacked our men [...] taking from them everything they possessed [i.e. they plundered the Carolingian army's encampment]'.²¹⁶ Not much later in his reign, after the 833 rebellion, another text, the *Annales Fuldenses* narrate how the empire suffered the incursions of Norsemen, who plundered Dorestad in 835, and Antwerpen and Witla in 836.²¹⁷ Compare all this to Pseudo-Cyprian's surprisingly applicable warning that the rule of an unjust king will suffer 'hostile invasions' that 'lay waste to the provinces on all sides'.²¹⁸

and cannot be reduced to a single 'program'. Contextualising all narratives on the 833 rebellion in-depth lies, however, beyond the scope of this thesis. On this see S. Patzold, 'Eine "loyale Palastrebellion" der "Reichseinheitspartei": Zur "Divisio imperii" von 817 und zu den Ursachen des Aufstands gegen Ludwig den Frommen im Jahre 830', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 40 (2006), pp. 43-77.

²¹² The longer-term usability of Pseudo-Cyprian's text as a kind of propagandistic 'model of criticism' aimed at rulers is suggested by the Mainz continuations of the Annals of Fulda; these describe the rule of Charles the Fat as being plagued by the oppression of the poor, defeats against enemies of the realm, and famines. On this see principally S. McLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century. Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 43.

²¹³ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. trans. E. Tremp, MGH SRG 64 (Hannover 1995), pp. 279-558, here c. 38, trans. T. F. X. Noble, *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: Lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thégan, and the Astronomer* (University Park, Pa. 2009), p. 266

²¹⁴ Astronomer, *Vita Hludowici*, c. 41, trans. Noble, p. 270.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, c. 41, trans. Noble, p. 271.

²¹⁶ *Annales regni Francorum* ed. F. Kurze, trans. E. Rau, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Darmstadt, 1955), pp. 10-155, here s.a. 828, p. 152, also referred to more briefly in the *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. F. Kurze, trans. R. Rau, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. 3 (Darmstadt, 1966), pp. 19-177, here s.a. 828, p. 21.

²¹⁷ *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 835 and 836, p. 23.

²¹⁸ *DDA*, p. 407.

That *De duodecim abusivis* was transmitted together with Halitgar's penitential and the letters by Isidore and Gregory thus suggests a connection of this text to Ebo's exile in Fulda, as well as an association of the Irish tractate with penitential matters – especially those concerning the sins of the clergy. Additionally, the way in which the letters by Isidore and Gregory supported Ebo's claim to the episcopate of Reims, and how *De duodecim abusivis* indirectly reinforced his attempts by providing a legitimation for his role during the 833 rebellion, suggest that this combination of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate with the letters and Halitgar's penitential had some role to play in Ebo's frantic attempts at regaining his past position and cleaning his name. In this context, *De duodecim abusivis* implicated the emperor and would have helped in defending, retrospectively, Ebo's role in Louis's public penance as having been the rightful duty of every good bishop.

4.4. Honouring your elders

Sometime in the second half of the ninth century, the St. Gall scribes added a small Biblical excerpt titled '*De honore parentum*' to the end of all three ninth-century St. Gall manuscripts containing Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate. This brings us to the final manuscript context of Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* discussed here: that of the political struggles between ninth-century Carolingian rulers and their sons. The Biblical text found in the St. Gall manuscripts is from Sirach 3.6-17:

6 He that honours his father shall have joy in his own children, and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard.

7 He that honours his father shall enjoy a long life: and he that obeys the father, shall be a comfort to his mother.

8 He that fears the Lord, honours his parents, and will serve them as his masters that brought him into the world.

9 Honour your father, in work and word, and all patience,

10 So that a blessing may come upon you from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end.

11 The father's blessing establishes the houses of the children: but the mother's curse roots up the foundation.

12 Glory not in the dishonour of your father: for his shame is no glory to you.

13 For the glory of a man is from the honour of his father, and a father without honour is the disgrace of the son.

14 Son, support the old age of your father, and do not grieve him during his life;

15 And if his understanding fails, have patience with him, and do not despise him when you are in your strength: because the relieving of the father shall not be forgotten.

16 For good shall be repaid to you for the sin of your mother.

17 And in justice you shall be built up, and at the day of affliction you shall be remembered: and your sins shall melt away as the ice in the fair warm weather.

As this text was not yet included in Grimald's list of donated books, but is included in the two manuscripts that still today contain Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate, *De duodecim abusivis* was likely associated with Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* after the list was compiled, at the earliest in 841.²¹⁹ Following this, Grimald – having been abbot of the abbey during this time – could have played a role in its addition to the three St. Gall manuscripts. Most notably, Grimald was also archchaplain of Louis the German since 848, thus fulfilling the highest clerical office at the East Francian court.²²⁰ That *De honore parentum* was very much deliberately associated with *De duodecim abusivis* sometime in the second half of the ninth century is suggested by the manuscript identified as Cod. Sang. 89. The oldest library catalogue of St. Gall, dated to the mid-ninth century, lists all works still part of Cod. Sang. 89, with the exception of two Cyprianic works transmitted in the manuscript – *De mortalitate* and *De ecclesie unitate*. However, the last entry of the list is followed by the notice '*et alia nonnulla in 1. vol.*' Considering this manuscript is 'Cyprianic', in being first and foremost a collection of Cyprian's works, this reference to 'some others' likely refers to these remaining two Cyprianic texts.²²¹ That *De honore parentum* was added some time after the manuscript's initial composition is further suggested by the fact that it was written in a different, less careful hand, inserted at the final one-and-a-half leftover pages of Cod. Sang. 89, while also lacking the ornate orange-coloured rubrics, incipits, and explicits that characterise all preceding texts of the manuscript.²²²

The *De duodecim abusivis-De honore parentum* combination originated too late to be placed in the context of Louis the Pious's struggles with his sons. Yet its inclusion might still, as it were, 'look back' at these earlier conflicts in the first half of the ninth century. For one, there is no Biblical precedent for titling this excerpt from Sirach as '*De honore parentum*'. Of course this title could have been deduced logically from the contents of the Biblical excerpt, but a more likely explanation is that it was based on an earlier work with the same name: Hraban Maur's tractate *De honore parentum*, written in the autumn or early winter of 834 – *i.e.* the aftermath of Louis the Pious's 833 public

²¹⁹ St. Gall, Cod. Sang. 267, p. 32.

²²⁰ On Grimald's position at Louis the German's court see Fleckenstein, *Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1959), p. 168f; T. Zotz, Lemma 'Grimald', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 10 vols (Stuttgart: Metzler, [1977]-1999), vol. 4, cols 1713-1714.

²²¹ St. Gall, Cod. Sang. 728, p. 18; Becker, *Catalogi bibliothecarum*, p. 51.

²²² St. Gall, Cod. Sang. 89, pp. 216-217.

penance and his son's rebellion.²²³ Unlike the title might suggest, this was more a letter of consolation, and a plea for forgiveness, than a rebuke of disobedient sons who failed to honour their parents.²²⁴ Thus Hraban's pupil, Rudolf of Fulda, described this text as follows: 'a consolation letter after the disaster that struck him [Louis] because of his sons and magnates; in which it is shown by divine testimony that a wrong verdict cannot rightly condemn an innocent; in which he [Hraban] also, finally, exhorted him [Louis] to forgiveness of those who had committed crimes against him'.²²⁵ That the St. Gall scribes responsible for the addition of the Biblical excerpt on honouring fathers were reminded of this tractate, and consequentially of a past Carolingian ruler's struggles with his sons, is further suggested by the fact that exactly the same lines from Sirach are cited by Hraban in his *De honore parentum*, in the first chapter titled '*De honore parentum et subiectiōne filiorum*'.²²⁶ It therefore seems likely that the St. Gall scribes were not only reminded of the circumstances at which Hraban aimed his *De honore parentum*, but also that they copied the Sirach excerpt directly from Hraban's text.

In effect, Hraban's tract showed how the passage from the Book of Sirach on honouring one's father could be wielded in reprimanding rebellious sons. This, combined with Grimald's high position at the court of Louis the German, means that the St. Gall copies of Sirach's words on honouring one's father can be placed in the context of Louis the German's struggles with his sons – of which, indeed, there were many.²²⁷ Following the *Annals of Fulda*, in 861, his eldest son, Carloman, expelled the *duces* who were installed in the border areas entrusted to him, being Pannonia and Carinthia, and replaced these with his own men. Based on these actions Louis the German feared that his elder son tried to rule like a king, and that he was planning a revolt against him. In 862 father and son reconciled again, but the theme was set. The next year another conflict appeared, with the Emperor being so disgusted at his oldest son's behaviour that he swore to deny him any position of power for as long as he would live. Carloman subsequently lost his lands to his brother, Louis the Younger, and a Count Gundachar. He was then held at the court, but managed to flee in 864, and tried to regain control of Carinthia. A final reconciliation between son and father then followed in 865.²²⁸ With that the father-son struggles were not over, as Louis the German's younger

²²³ Hraban Maur, *De honore parentum*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 5, pp. 404-416; M. de Jong, 'Hraban Maur as mediator: *De honore parentum* (autumn 834)', in S. Joye et al. (eds), *Splendor Reginae. Passions, genre et famille. Mélanges en l'honneur de Régine Le Jan* (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 49-58, see here for the dating of the text p. 49.

²²⁴ De Jong, 'Hraban Maur as mediator'; M. de Jong, 'Carolingian political discourse and the biblical past: Hraban, Dhuoda, Radbert', in C. Gantner, R. McKitterick, and S. M. Meeder (eds), *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 87-102, here pp. 91-94.

²²⁵ Rudolf of Fulda, *Miracula*, c. 15, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1., pp. 341, trans. De Jong, 'Hraban Maur as mediator', p. 49.

²²⁶ Hraban Maur, *De honore parentum*, c.1, p. 405.

²²⁷ The discussion below of Louis the German's troubles with his son is based on W. Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche* (Darmstadt, 2002), pp. 68-71.

²²⁸ Hartmann, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 68-69.

sons soon began to stir up trouble. In 865, Louis the Younger rebelled, because his father had taken some fiefs from him. This rebellion soon broke apart, but the period of respite following it only lasted until 869.²²⁹ In that year, the 63-year old king decided to draw up his will, but he kept the details secret, causing his younger sons, frightened by rumours that suggested they would be disinherited in favour of Carloman, to unite and hole themselves up in the Speyergau. King Louis had to travel to the Rhine to appease his younger sons, and managed to arrange another peace.²³⁰ After 870, however, tensions remained, with the sons again rebelling several times from 871 to 874, but refraining from fratricidal fighting after their father's death in 876.²³¹

It is likely that *De honore parentum* was added to the three St. Gall manuscripts in the context of this veritable smörgåsbord of filial disobedience. Considering Abbot Grimald's close ties to Louis the German's court, copying *De honore parentum* might have been spurred by the need for a text that forced home the idea that filial disobedience was unacceptable, in the context of the son's rebellions up to 871, Grimald's death. However, assuming the likelihood of the close ties between St. Gall and Louis the German's court remaining strong after Grimald's death, interest in *De honore parentum* could also have peaked during the 871-874 rebellions of the king's younger sons. During those years, the Biblical excerpt's lines 'Son, support the old age of your father, and do not grieve him during his life' would have been particularly relevant.

But why, finally, was *De honore parentum* added to three St. Gall manuscripts containing Pseudo-Cyprian, and why twice directly after Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate? The answer to this question must likely be found in Pseudo-Cyprian's third abuse of the young man without obedience, 'whereby the world is corrupted from the right order of things. For how can he hope to be shown the reverence and respect due to old age, who disdains to show obedience the old when he is a young man himself?'²³² Pseudo-Cyprian expects the young man to show 'humble service, subjection, and obedience', while he also notes that the 'first thing commanded of us is that we honour our father'.²³³ These words fit perfectly with the Biblical excerpt copied under the title *De honore parentum*. I would therefore like to suggest that *De duodecim abusivis* was associated with *De honore parentum* because this pair of texts provided ample ammunition to those clerics, likely first and foremost Grimald, who sought to strengthen Louis the German's position against his rebellious sons.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72; *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 873, p. 77f.

²³¹ Costambeys *et al.*, *Carolingian World*, p. 403.

²³² *DDA*, pp. 345.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 347.

Although we only see a limited concern for social justice in the ninth-century Carolingian manuscript context of *De duodecim abusivis*, the picture sketched above does have important consequences for the text's use in matters of social justice by Carolingian authors, as will become clear in the ensuing chapters. For one, Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate was available in a large part of the Carolingian world, although it seems to have been more well-known in the east than in the west. Secondly, it likely served a multitude of (sometimes intensely partisan) political purposes: it could be used by a cleric as material in support of their ruler against his disobedient and rebellious sons, but also by a bishop like Ebo, or those sympathetic to his cause, in an effort to 'clean his name'. Thirdly, the text was clearly associated with sin, especially those of clerics. And fourthly, the episcopal uses of the text tell us something about the treatise's audience, and how bishops could have used the text in preaching and matters of sin.

V. The king and social justice in the Carolingian world

5.1. Early letters of advice

Around 775, a monk with the Anglo-Saxon name of Cathwulf wrote a letter to Charlemagne, in which he praised the Frankish king for his successes against his brother Carloman and the Lombards. Cathwulf also took the opportunity to give some advice. This came in the form of a small mirror of princes, which shows clear similarities to Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse: Cathwulf notes that a righteous king was to protect widows and orphans, and should judge equally between the 'poor and powerful'.²³⁴ His reign would be blessed, among other things, by a fruitful earth and sea and a peaceful climate. The reign of an unjust king, however, would be struck by famine, storms diminishing the fruitfulness of the sea and the land, as well as plague.²³⁵

In describing the negative effects of kingship Cathwulf refers to a Patrick, the name under which a section of Pseudo-Cyprian was included in the so-called *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*, an Irish canon law connection compiled in the late seventh or early eighth century.²³⁶ This at the very least reveals that Cathwulf's little mirror for Charles was indebted to the same insular cultural milieu that spawned Pseudo-Cyprian's tract, and that the model of kingship propagated by him is essentially the same as that of Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse.²³⁷ Although it is likely that Cathwulf built upon Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate, a direct connection between Pseudo-Cyprian and Cathwulf cannot be proven – the latter could still have made use of a source common to both *De duodecim abusivis* and the *Collectio Hibernensis*.²³⁸

Cathwulf's letter has been seen as the 'embryonic *Fürstenspiegel*', the first example in a long line of advisory texts for rulers reaching far beyond Carolingian times.²³⁹ For our purposes, however, Cathwulf's letter is particularly significant because it was the first source through which the 'insular' model of kingship also visible in Pseudo-Cyprian's treatise was impressed upon the mind of a Carolingian ruler.²⁴⁰ The influence of this letter on Carolingian ideas of rulership must not be underestimated. Although the fact that his letter to Charlemagne is the only text known authored by him, it is likely that Cathwulf was not some obscure Anglo-Saxon monk to Charlemagne's court,

²³⁴ Cathwulf, *Epistula ad Carolum regem* (775), ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 4, no. 7, pp. 501-505, here p. 502: '[...] octava aequitas iudici inter divitem et pauperem?'

²³⁵ Cathwulf, *Epistula ad Carolum regem*, pp. 501-503.

²³⁶ Likely this does not refer to the famous saint, but rather to a later seventh-century ecclesiastic 'intimately associated with the *Romani* movement in the Irish Church': Breen, 'Text and transmission', p. 82.

²³⁷ Meens, 'Mirrors of princes', p. 354.

²³⁸ H. H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos in der Karolingerzeit*, Bonner historische Forschungen, 32 (Bonn, 1968), pp. 76-78.

²³⁹ W. Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship* (London, 1969), p. 49.

²⁴⁰ M. E. Moore, 'La monarchie carolingienne et les anciens modèles irlandais', *Annales HSS*, 51.2 (1996), pp. 307-324, pp. 307-308.

writing from distant shores. The way Cathwulf addresses Charlemagne with phrases such as *'mi rex'* suggest a personal proximity to the king, while his knowledge of Charlemagne's recent victories also shows that he could not have been far removed from Charlemagne's court.²⁴¹ Moreover, it is likely no coincidence that the only extant copy of the letter is found in the letter collection of the abbots of St. Denis. The abbey was, by the time of writing, already of great importance to the Carolingian dynasty. Charlemagne's direct ancestors were buried in St. Denis, and Fulrad, its abbot, led the delegation at Corbény in 771 where the Frankish magnates accepted Charlemagne as their king. Finally, in 754, St. Denis was the place where Charlemagne was anointed by Pope Stephen II. This all suggests that Cathwulf's letter must have been read with particular care by Charlemagne's advisors.²⁴²

It is no surprise, then, to see that Charlemagne's closest courtier, Alcuin, wrote a letter in 793 to Aethelred, the king of Northumbria, in which he propounds the same Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship that was advertised to Charlemagne's court some 20 years earlier by Cathwulf. Clearly dependent on the Pseudo-Cyprianic notion of unjust and just kings, Alcuin admonishes Aethelred and his *principes* to give alms to the poor and distribute their riches, and that a just king should be like a father to widows, orphans, and the poor.²⁴³ Just rule will be rewarded with prosperity for the *gens*, calm weather, and fertility of the lands.²⁴⁴ These words are based partly on Cathwulf's letter, and partly directly on the ninth abuse of the *De duodecim abusivis*.²⁴⁵ However, Alcuin does not uncritically copy from these sources, but makes a slight change to the scheme himself: whereas the Pseudo-Cyprianic tractate sees *institia* as the central kingly virtue, Alcuin, following Isidore, adds *pietas*, under which fall the protection of the defenceless and care for the poor.²⁴⁶

Alcuin wrote another letter that propagated the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship and social justice a few years later, in 799, and this time to Charlemagne. Whereas his earlier letter to Aethelred and the Northumbrian greats can rightly be described as a stern 'admonition', the 799 letter to Charlemagne must rather be characterized as a 'long debate between the monarch and his adviser'.²⁴⁷ By defending the oppressed, Charlemagne would, like the Biblical David, see a blessed rule, a contented people and great harvests.²⁴⁸ This reference to the blessed rule of David reminds

²⁴¹ J. Story, 'Cathwulf, kingship, and the royal abbey of Saint-Denis', *Speculum*, 74.1 (1999), pp. 1-21, pp. 4-8.

²⁴² Story, 'Cathwulf, kingship, and Saint-Denis', pp. 11, 20-21.

²⁴³ Anton, 'De duodecim abusivis und sein Einfluß auf den Kontinent', pp. 600-602.

²⁴⁴ Alcuin, *Epistula ad Aethelredum regem (793)*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 4, no. 18, pp. 49-52.

²⁴⁵ Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 104.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp 104-107.

²⁴⁷ W. Falkowski, 'The Carolingian *speculum principis*: the birth of a genre', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 98 (2008), pp. 5-27, p. 21.

²⁴⁸ Alcuin, *Epistula ad Carolum regem (799)*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 4, no. 177, pp. 292-293, p. 293.

us of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate, in which the Old Testament example of David is also invoked.²⁴⁹ Pseudo-Cyprian used the example of King Solomon to show how unjust rule can prevent the king's sons from inheriting the kingdom: 'the unrighteousness of a king even causes his sons and nephews to fade out of significance, so that they do not inherit the kingdom'. King David, on the other hand, was righteous, which is why God left 'the lamp of his generation forever burning in Jerusalem'.²⁵⁰

5.2. The cosmological model of kingship and the poor in the 820s

By the 820s, the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship and its admonitions regarding the poor and powerless were being invoked by clergymen at Church councils, who wielded it to warn against the cosmological significance of the justice or injustices of the ruler. In reaction to Bernard of Italy's failed rebellion of 818, Louis the Pious struck back with force against those that were implicated or thought to be implicated in the plot. Bernard himself died as a result of his punishment – he was blinded – while other family members were tonsured and exiled. Particularly the blinding (and unintended manslaughter) of a close family member constituted a very public sin. It is in this context that Adalhard, himself exiled by the emperor in the wake of the rebellion, invoked the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship at the 822 council of Attigny. There, as narrated by Agobard, Adalhard argued that the ruler's sins could cause many misfortunes, including 'disturbances, disasters, and infertility among the people'.²⁵¹ Although Agobard himself noted that this was based on Scripture, there is no Biblical source for this specific narration of a cosmological kind of kingship.²⁵² The image evoked by Adalhard does show strong congruencies with the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship in its focus on natural disasters as a result of bad rule, but he hinges it on the sins (*peccata*), not the *iniustitia* of the ruler, as is the case in *De duodecim abusivis*.²⁵³

More importantly, it was the emperor who made a call towards orthodoxy and an end to negligence. Indeed, the first *capitulum* of the council acts note that Louis's 'example' had persuaded the bishops to confess to their own negligence.²⁵⁴ This was very much a scene of 'mutual admonition'.²⁵⁵ A direct connection between Adalhard's admonition and Pseudo-Cyprian's tract is impossible to establish, but as the letter of Alcuin shows, Pseudo-Cyprian's tract was clearly known at

²⁴⁹ Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 105-106.

²⁵⁰ Alcuin, *Epistula ad Carolum regem*, p. 293.

²⁵¹ Agobard of Lyon, *Liber de dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum*, ed. L. van Acker, *Agobardi Lugdunensis opera omnia*, CCCM 52 (Turnhout, 1981), no. 7, pp. 121-142, here p. 122.

²⁵² De Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 153-154.

²⁵³ Agobard, *De dispensatione*, p. 122.

²⁵⁴ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 126.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

the Carolingian court, and many of the bishops would have been reminded of two particular aspects of *De duodecim abusivis*. First of all, in his description of the ninth abuse Pseudo-Cyprian notes that the just king is to ‘correct’ the sins of his subjects – precisely what Louis the Pious was doing, according to the council acts, in admonishing his bishops about their negligence.²⁵⁶ Secondly, the tenth abuse of Pseudo-Cyprian’s tract is the *episcopus neglegens*, who fails in his task of watching over and correcting the moral failings of his flock.²⁵⁷ When Adalhard uttered his warning on the cosmological significance of the ruler’s sins, he might well have had Pseudo-Cyprian’s admonitions about the neglectful bishop in mind.

This allusion to the model of Pseudo-Cyprian’s tractate paved the way for a much more elaborate and explicit wielding of the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of rulership by the empire’s bishops seven years later, at the council of Paris. There the bishops cited Pseudo-Cyprian’s ninth abuse of the *rex iniquus* in full. Already with Alcuin’s letters, it had become clear that the emperor had gained not only the mandate but the duty to manage God’s work on earth.²⁵⁸ At Attigny, this idea was further explicated: Louis the Pious was praised for his enquiry into the moral failings of his bishops. At Paris, however, a new and important development took place. As noted recently by Michael Moore, the ruler’s duty now clearly included caring for the poor.²⁵⁹ According to the synodists, the ruler was to enquire diligently into the *causa pauperum*.²⁶⁰ Five *capitula* of the council acts dwell extensively on the poor, in which the emperor is explicitly seen as the person responsible for the wellbeing of the poor and the weak: the oppression of the poor, caused by the avarice of bishops and counts, is forbidden ‘*ab imperiali clementia*’; the *causa pauperum* is part of what the synodists defined as the *ministerium regis*.²⁶¹

What has not yet been noted by Moore and earlier commentators on the Paris 829 council, however, is that Pseudo-Cyprian’s *De duodecim abusivis* was at this council very clearly associated with, first and foremost, taking care of the poor. Before citing Pseudo-Cyprian’s ninth abuse, the *capitulum* in question is exclusively concerned with stressing the emperor’s duty to care for the poor. Following Isidore, the bishops note that a ruler can be called king deservedly only if he rules piously and with *misericordia* – the foremost virtue associated with poor relief.²⁶² Should he be devoid of these traits, he cannot be called a king, but must be named a *tyrannus*. Right before invoking Pseudo-Cyprian, the bishops also cite two excerpt froms the Biblical Book of Proverbs, noting that ‘The king that judgeth the poor in truth, his throne shall be established forever’ (Prov. 29:14) and that

²⁵⁶ *DDA*, p. 400.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 410-414.

²⁵⁸ Moore, ‘La monarchie carolingienne’, p. 322.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, ‘La monarchie carolingienne’, p. 322.

²⁶⁰ *Council of Paris* (829), *MGH Conc.* 2.2, no. 50, pp. 569-680, here p. 652.

²⁶¹ *Council of Paris* (829), pp. 645, 651.

²⁶² *Ibid*, p. 649.

‘mercy [*miseriordia*] and truth preserve the king, and his throne is strengthened by clemency’ (Prov. 20:28).²⁶³ The directly following citation of Pseudo-Cyprian evidently serves to stress the cosmological significance of the ruler’s actions in relation to the poor; Pseudo-Cyprian’s tract is invoked to hammer down the bad fortune caused by a bad king, and the good fortune caused by a good king. Considering the exclusive focus on *miseriordia* in the preceding sentences, it is clear that a good king is, in this context, a king who cared for the poor and fought against their oppression, while a bad king was one who failed in his duty of keeping watch over the *causa pauperum*.

From this we can deduce that for the synodists of the council of Paris, Pseudo-Cyprian’s tractate had a twofold role in impressing on the ruler his duty to care for the poor. First of all, by citing the tract they brought attention to two duties of the king that they stressed before citing the *De duodecim abusivis*, namely the ruler as the corrector of his people and the ruler as the carer for the poor. Under the ruler’s duty of corrector, moreover, fell his responsibility of protecting the poor against the avaricious misdeeds of bishops and counts. Secondly, the synodists’s invocation of Pseudo-Cyprian’s cosmological scheme effectively provided a sense of urgency to their many earlier admonitions on the *causa pauperum* and on the correction of the avarice of the ruler’s *potentes*, some of which are given directly before the citation of the ninth abuse.

5.3. The *causa pauperum* and mirrors of princes from the 830s onwards

A similar use of Pseudo-Cyprian to stress the ruler’s duty of caring for the poor is visible in a text only several years younger than the Paris council acts, namely the *De institutione regia* (831-834) by Jonas of Orleans (c. 760-843). Dedicated to King Pippin I of Aquitaine (797-838), the work provides a mirror of princes based, in large part verbatim, on the Paris acts. This is no coincidence: Jonas was responsible for the drawing-up of the Paris acts, and it is likely that some of his personal ideas are reflected in them.²⁶⁴ In his mirror of princes, Jonas cites Pseudo-Cyprian, and also reiterates the Paris acts’ admonitions on the importance of *miseriordia* and ruling justly over the poor.²⁶⁵ Additionally, he copies the notion of the *causa pauperum* as part of the *ministerium regia* from the Paris acts.²⁶⁶ Like the letters of Alcuin and Cathwulf, this mirror of princes served to impress the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship upon the mind of a Carolingian ruler. What is new, however, is that

²⁶³ *Council of Paris* (829), p. 650.

²⁶⁴ Anton, *Herrscherethos und Fürstenspiegel*, pp. 204-205.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

²⁶⁶ Jonas of Orleans, *De institutione regia*, PL 106, cols 279-306, trans. H. H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 45 (Darmstadt, 2006), pp. 47-99 (ed. taken over from PL), here pp. 47-99, p. 76: ‘Regale ministerium specialiter est populum Dei gubernare et regere cum aequitate et iustitia et, ut pacem et concordiam habeant, sustinere. Ipse enim debet primo defensor esse ecclesiarum et servorum Dei, viduarum, orphanorum caeterorumque pauperum necnon et omnium indigentium’.

the king's care for the poor already touched upon by Alcuin and Cathwulf is now clearly defined as the duty to look into the *causa pauperum* as part of the *ministerium regis*, in line with the Paris council acts. This combined and focused Pseudo-Cyprian's ideas of the king as corrector, the king as carer for the poor, and the cosmological significance of his rule in the form of a comprehensive 'manual' for a king.²⁶⁷

Around 855, another author, the Liege-based Irishman Sedulius Scottus (fl. 840–860) also stressed the importance of caring for the poor as the ruler's duty in his *De rectoribus christianis* (855-859?). Like Jonas's *De institutione regia*, this was a mirror of princes, meant to instruct a lay ruler in 'just rule'.²⁶⁸ In his manual, Sedulius continuously stresses the need of the ruler to protect and aid the poor.²⁶⁹ While Pseudo-Cyprian defined the *solacium pauperum* as the marker of the rule of a righteous king, Sedulius sees the oppression of the poor people as the trait of a wicked king (*princeps impius*).²⁷⁰ The ruler is 'above all' to make 'fitting provisions for widows and orphans and the poor', in line with Pseudo-Cyprian's admonitions about the king as the protector of the poor and alms-giving.²⁷¹ Additionally, Sedulius writes about eighth pillars that support the rule of a just king. The second of these is to correct sins, and the eighth 'fairness of judgment as between rich and poor' – a clear parallel to, respectively, Pseudo-Cyprian's notions of the ruler as corrector, his insistence on judgement *sine acceptione personarum*, and his notion of the king as the protector of the poor.²⁷² Finally, the urgency of his admonitions on the poor is provided by embedding his view of just kingship in a cosmological scheme akin to that of Pseudo-Cyprian:

[...] observe how many evils supernal and divine justice metes out to evil rulers and how many good things to good ones. For to the reprobate it returns sudden accidents, calamities, captivities, the loss of children, the slaughter of friends, the barrenness of crops, intolerable pestilences, brief and unhappy days, prolonged illnesses, the worst of deaths, and, above all, eternal torments. To just and holy rulers, by contrast, it gives many consolations in the

²⁶⁷ Moore, 'La monarchie carolingienne', pp. 323–324.

²⁶⁸ It is unclear for whom exactly Sedulius wrote this tractate. Charles the Bald and Lothair II have been suggested as possible dedicatees; the latter for the congruence between Sedulius' focus on control over one's household and Lothair's domestic difficulties, and the former because of the many poems Sedulius wrote for him and because Charles was known for providing a *hospitalia Scottorum* to Irish scholars like Sedulius: L. M. Davies, 'Sedulius Scottus: *Liber de rectoribus Christianis*, a Carolingian or Hibernian mirror for princes?', *Studia Celtica*, 26-27 for 1991-1992 (1993), pp. 34-50, here pp. 44-45.

²⁶⁹ Sedulius Scottus, *De rectoribus christianis*, ed. trans. R.W. Dyson (Suffolk, 2010), pp. 75, 81, 95, 103, 109, 189.

²⁷⁰ Sedulius, *De rectoribus*, p. 91; Davies, 'Sedulius Scottus', p. 43.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109; J. L. Nelson, 'Kings with justice, kings without justice: an early medieval paradox', in *La Giustizia nell'Alto Medioevo (secoli IX-XI), 11-17 aprile 1996*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 44, vol. 2 (Spoleto, 1997), pp. 797-826, here p. 801; Davies, 'Sedulius Scottus', p. 42; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971), p. 138; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 263.

present - an abundance of riches, the glory of triumphs, the tranquillity of peace, offspring of noble character, many and happy years [...].²⁷³

This cosmological significance of just and unjust kingship is then connected to care for the poor: '[...] all events of adversity or good fortune work together for the good of God's chosen ones', who 'studiously acquired knowledge of those arts pleasing to the Almighty', which meant, among other things, 'to judge justly' and 'to aid the poor'.²⁷⁴

The central message of Sedulius Scottus is thus the same as that of the synodists of Paris and Jonas of Orleans, while showing clear parallels to Pseudo-Cyprian's model: it is the ruler's duty to, from his *injustitia*, care for the poor and the weak, and if he fails to do so, or even work towards the oppression of such defenceless groups, his realm will suffer grave consequences of a cosmological nature. Although Sedulius nowhere cites Pseudo-Cyprian directly, he cites parts of the tractate in his *Collectaneum* and was thus clearly familiar with its contents.²⁷⁵ Given that knowledge, and the many parallels between his *De rectoribus christianis* and *De duodecim abusivis*, it does seem likely that his text was at least in part inspired by Pseudo-Cyprian's model of kingship. Even if Sedulius did not draw directly from Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate, the model of kingship he propagates is identical to Pseudo-Cyprian's and that of other Irish tractates on just kingship such as the *Audacht Morainn*.²⁷⁶

Pseudo-Cyprian remained a relevant and popular text to the Carolingian clergymen who wished to instruct their rulers on the cause of the poor far into the ninth century. The 859 council of Langres stressed that the ruler had to protect the justice of the poor '*absque personarum acceptione*', mirroring Pseudo-Cyprian's focus on the ruler as the one who protects the poor *sine acceptione personarum*, albeit logically not being aware of its likely original meaning in the context of the early medieval Irish 'law of the neighbourhood'.²⁷⁷ There is no evidence of a direct connection between the council of Langres and Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate, but the council acts do show that the provision of equal justice in the interest of the powerless was seen by the synodists as an important duty of the ruler. Considering Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse in which this sentiment is expressed forcefully was already cited in full at the 829 council of Paris, it is likely that many of the synodists knew and were reminded of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate in their admonition over justice '*absque personarum acceptione*'.

²⁷³ Sedulius, *De rectoribus*, p. 193.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 194-195.

²⁷⁵ Davies, 'Sedulius Scottus', p. 44.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁷⁷ *Council of Langres* (859), ed. W. Hartmann, MGH Conc. 3, no. 47, pp. 458-489, here p. 479; Hartmann suggests a possible indebtedness to Ps Cyprian at p. 479, n. 261.

The popularity of Pseudo-Cyprian's text in ascribing the duty of caring for the poor to rulers is less ambiguously shown by the writings of Hincmar of Rheims (ca. 806-882). In his *De regis persona et regio ministerio ad Carolum Calvum regem* (870-877), Hincmar uses Pseudo-Cyprian to both portray the king as the carer for the poor as well as his duty to correct his people. He cites a smaller part from the 9th abuse and the 11th (*plebs sine disciplina*) in c. 25, to show the duty of the king as corrector. The 12th abuse of the *populus sine lege* is cited in c. 27, to show that the king has the duty to uphold the law above all.²⁷⁸ Additionally, Hincmar cites Pseudo-Cyprian in his *Admonitio ad episcopos et ad regem Karlomannum*. Hincmar wrote this letter in 882 to king Carloman II (c. 866-884) and the bishops of Western Francia. He first admonishes the bishops to respect their heavy responsibilities, and not to deviate from their *officium*, illustrating his point by citing Pseudo-Cyprian's 10th abuse of the *episcopus negligens* in full. He then continues with admonishing the king: the *rex* should not be unjust, because he must be like a rector to all his people, and follows by citing Pseudo-Cyprian's abuse of the *rex iniquus*, also in full. Thereafter, basing himself on the Biblical excerpts cited at the 829 Paris council acts, Hincmar notes that the king is to allow the poor to approach him – so that they can gain justice –, and to ensure that they are not oppressed. He then adds some words of his own to this, namely that measures need to be taken against the oppression of the poor, 'for God is insulted by the harm done upon them'.²⁷⁹ Hincmar's writings therefore show the long-lasting potential of Pseudo-Cyprian's text in adding new material and force to admonitions on the duty of the king to care for the poor, as well as the connected duty of correcting his subjects.

5.4. Pseudo-Cyprian and the reform efforts of Carolingian rulers

The message of the many Carolingian scholars who cited Pseudo-Cyprian to their rulers was clear: should the king fail in his duty of safeguarding the *causa pauperum*, God's judgement would befall all of his people, and should the rich not give alms they would endanger the future salvation of their souls. It is no surprise, then, that the capitularies of ninth-century kings and emperors dwelled extensively on the protection of and care for the poor. Not long after Cathwulf's 775 advisory letter propagating the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship, Charlemagne showed an increasing concern for both the duty of the king as the corrector of his people as well as his duty of caring for and

²⁷⁸ Hincmar of Rheims, *De regis persona et regio ministerio ad Carolum Calvum regem*, PL 125, cols 833-856, trans. H. H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 45 (Darmstadt, 2006), pp. 150-191, here p. 157, see also n. 25.

²⁷⁹ Hincmar of Rheims, *Admonitio ad episcopos et ad regem Carolomannum apud Sparnacum facta* (882), PL 125, cols 1007-1018, trans. H. H. Anton, *Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters*, 45 (Darmstadt, 2006), pp. 192-207, here p. 203: '*De oppressione pauperum providendum est, quia in eorum afflictione Deus offenditur*'.

protecting the poor. Indeed it would be hard to deny that under Charlemagne ‘there is a paternalism about Carolingian rule that is lacking earlier’.²⁸⁰ An often-cited example for this new ‘paternalism’, or, to use the more recent term, ‘Carolingian reforms’, of Carolingian rule is the 789 *Admonitio Generalis*. This text clearly defined it as the duty of the ruler to make sure that his people would remain on the right moral path. Although Pseudo-Cyprian would have been a good source for driving this message home, Charles and his bishops then made do with Biblical material: the example that the king was to follow was that of King Josiah who, ‘by visitation, correction and admonition, strove to recall the kingdom which God had given him to the worship of the true God’.²⁸¹

Despite the absence of a direct citation or clear use of Pseudo-Cyprian’s text in the *Admonitio generalis* (or in other programmatic capitularies, for that matter), it is more than likely that Pseudo-Cyprian’s model of kingship helped shape Carolingian reform efforts. As we have seen, Alcuin wrote at least two letters propagating the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship to rulers, of which one was addressed to Charlemagne. Alcuin is generally considered to have been the ‘chief architect’ behind the *Admonitio generalis*, and without much doubt was himself the author of the 72th and 73th chapters of the *Admonitio*.²⁸² The main principles of the *Admonitio Generalis* were ‘to restore the spirituality of the Frankish *populus dei*, reunite the ecclesia under the *auctoritas* of Charlemagne as the *rector ecclesiae*, and establish the Frankish *Christianum imperium* as the instrument for the salvation of souls’.²⁸³ The *De duodecim abusivis* was very relevant to this reform program of the *Admonitio Generalis*, especially in its focus on almsgiving, the king as protector of the poor, and, above all, the king as the corrector of his people. Moreover, the idea that the king’s rule had a cosmological significance underpinned the Carolingian reforms at large. This was articulated by Charlemagne himself in his 807 letter to bishop Ghaerbald, in which he ordered for fasts to be held throughout the realm in response to God’s wrath, visible in infertile lands, disturbances in the weather and the crops, a pestilence, and wars with pagan peoples.²⁸⁴ All these disturbances of a cosmological nature also appear in Pseudo-Cyprian’s treatise. It is likely that in writing the letter, Charlemagne was influenced by Alcuin, who was here in turn at least in part indebted to *De duodecim abusivis*.²⁸⁵ We can therefore assume that Alcuin and the other authors of this text, as well as Charlemagne himself,

²⁸⁰ Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 104.

²⁸¹ *Admonitio generalis*, ed. trans. H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes, and M. Glatthaar, *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Großen* (Hannover, 2012), pp. 179-242, here *Praefatio*, p. 183, trans. De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 17; Meens, ‘Mirrors of princes’, p. 345.

²⁸² J. Lepree, ‘Sources of spirituality and the Carolingian exegetical tradition’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, The City University of New York, 2008), pp. 101-102; see also F. C. Schiebe, ‘Sources of spirituality and the Carolingian exegetical tradition’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, The City University of New York, 2008); H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes, and M. Glatthaar, *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Großen* (Hannover, 2012), pp. 50-63, for parallels between Alcuin’s works and the *Admonitio*.

²⁸³ Lepree, ‘Sources of spirituality’, p. 101.

²⁸⁴ Charlemagne, *Epistola ad Ghaerbaldum episcopum*, ed. A. Boretius, MGH Capit. 1, no. 124, pp. 244-246; Meens, ‘Mirrors of princes’, p. 345.

²⁸⁵ Moore, ‘La monarchie carolingienne’, pp. 314-315.

were inspired by Pseudo-Cyprian's admonitions on the king as the carer of the poor and the king as the corrector of his subjects.

This link between the *Admonitio generalis* and Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* is also shown by the so-called Pseudo-Bonifatian sermon collection.²⁸⁶ These sermons were clearly influenced by the Carolingian reforms, and can be dated to the late eighth or early ninth century. Moreover, the collection as a whole can be particularly closely associated with the *Admonitio Generalis*. The *Admonitio* notes that the priests are to instruct the people *generaliter* in matters of faith, which is precisely what sermon I, appropriately titled *De fide recta*, sets out to do. The *Admonitio* also regulates that the incarnation of the Son of God, his birth, death, resurrection, and ascension will have to be preached by the realm's priests. This congregates closely with sermons II, X, and XIV in the Pseudo-Bonifatian collection, which together touch upon all these aspects in the life of Jesus. Additionally, the *Admonitio* describes good works as part of the principal virtues, and hold priests accountable for making sure the people aspire to reach these virtues by almsgiving and the confession of sins. Good works are also an important part of the Pseudo-Bonifatian sermons.²⁸⁷ Notably, the Pseudo-Bonifatian sermons also show a connection to both Alcuin's writings and *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*. The first sermon cites from Alcuin's *De fide sanctae Trinitatis*, and sermon VII reproduces part of his *Liber de virtutibus et vitiis*.²⁸⁸ Sermon number IX, finally, is essentially a thorough reworking of several of Pseudo-Cyprian's abuses – on which more will be said in the coming chapter.²⁸⁹

The connection between Pseudo-Cyprian's text, Alcuin, and the *Admonitio Generalis* reveals that *De duodecim abusivis* must have had at least some influence on the ideas that lay at the foundation of the Carolingian reforms. This is further suggested by the many Carolingian capitularies dealing with the protection and care of the poor. As argued by Janet Nelson, from about 799 onwards Alcuin's letters show an increased concern for *munera*, because the greed for riches threatened the justice of the realm. Most importantly, corrupt and greedy counts could be tempted to disadvantage the poor in court proceedings due the bribes of the rich. Alcuin therefore recommended Charlemagne only took those counts as his *missi* 'who were able to walk a straight path between the poor and the rich'.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁶ Pseudo-Boniface, *Sermones*, PL 89, cols 843-872A.

²⁸⁷ R. M. J. Meens, 'Christianization and the spoken word: The sermons attributed to St Boniface' in R. Corradini (ed.), *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik* (Vienna, 2010), pp. 211-222, here pp. 218-220.

²⁸⁸ Meens, 'Christianization', pp. 216-217.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

²⁹⁰ Alcuin, *Epistula ad Leonem papam* (799), ed. E. Dümmeler, MGH Epp. 4, no. 186, pp. 311-313, here p. 312: '*Quod vero tua bona pro multorum salute providentia suadendum mihi censuit dulcissimo meo David de missorum electione, qui discurrere iubentur iustitias faciendas, scias certissime et hoc me saepius fecisse, et suis quoque suadere consiliariis*'; Nelson, 'Kings with justice', pp. 391-393.

This intertwinement of the ruler as corrector and the protector of the poor was quickly internalised by Carolingian rulers. They did not hesitate to admonish their own sons on the protection and care for the poor. Thegan narrates in his *Gesta Hludowici* how in 813 Charlemagne, after praying with his son Louis, admonished his son Louis, in front of a great assembly of bishops and grandees, to care for his people as if it were his children, to be a protector of the monasteries, to correct unruly and useless people, and to be father to the poor.²⁹¹ This admonition also shows strong parallels to the duties of a just king outlaid Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse.²⁹² No less than four years later, Louis the Pious himself stressed to his sons that they ought to prevent the oppression of the poor, because allowing this would be equal to participating in tyranny.²⁹³

More frequent, however, were admonitions to the realm's powerful and rich, which can be roughly divided in two categories. First of all, Carolingian rulers admonished their rich subjects to give alms. Janet Nelson even sees a 'radical call to alms' in Charlemagne's admonitions on almsgiving.²⁹⁴ It might, however, be more correct to speak of many 'calls' to alms, in response to periods of crises – particularly famines.²⁹⁵

A second category concerns the oppression of the poor in capitularies. An enormous amount of capitularies admonish *potentes* who oppress the poor. The context of these admonitions must be sought in the struggles of free small landholders, who were in danger of being driven from their lands, forced to sell their land cheaply, or pressed into some form of servile status by the powerful.²⁹⁶ This is, at least, suggested by the charter evidence. One example can be found in the 861 hearing of Charles the Bald of twenty-three homines of St-Denis, who complained against a certain 'Deodadus the monk', the one responsible for running their estate. The *homines* stated that this Deodadus 'wanted unjustly to bend them down into an inferior service by force'. Deodadus and the mayor (*maior*) of the estate replied that they had brought some *coloni* from the estate as

²⁹¹ Thegan of Trier, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. trans. E. Tremp, MGH SRG 64 (Hannover 1995), p. 182.

²⁹² On the parallel to Pseudo-Cyprian, see also the opinion of ed. Tremp, p. 183, n. 36, who notes that 'Die [...] öffentliche Rede Karls über die Herrscherpflichten [...] enthält fürstenspiegelähnliche, im Kern wohl authentische Ermahnungen, mit Anklängen an Ps. Cyprian, De XII abusivis saeculi c. 9'.

²⁹³ *Capitulare missorum Silvacense* (853), ed. V. Krause and A. Boretius, MGH Capit. 2, p. 272: 'Si autem, et quod Deus avertat et quod nos minime obtamus, evenerit, ut aliquis illorum propter cupiditatem rerum terrenarum, quae est radix omnium malorum, aut divisor aut obpressor ecclesiarum vel pauperum extiterit aut tyrannidem, in qua omnis crudelitas consistit, exercuerit, primo secreto secundum Domini praeceptum per fideles legatos semel, bis et ter de sua emendatione commoneatur, ut, si his renisus fuerit, accersitus a fratre coram altero fratre paterno et fraterno amore moneatur et castigetur'; Moore, *La monarchie carolingienne*, p. 316.

²⁹⁴ Nelson, 'Munera', pp. 384-386.

²⁹⁵ See f.e. the reaction to the 778/779 famines: Mordek, 'Karls des Großen zweites Kapitular von Herstal'; M. Dießenberger, *Predigt und Politik im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern: Arn von Salzburg, Karl der Große und die Salzburger Sermones-Sammlung*, Millennium-Studien 58 (Berlin, 2015), p. 328 ff.

²⁹⁶ Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, p. 223 follows Bosl, 'Potens und Pauper'; See also the helpful list of capitulary chapters – no less than twenty – on the oppression of the poor provided by K. Dort and C. Reuther, 'Poor Relief in the Carolingian capitularies', in A. Gestrich, R. Lutz, H. Uerlings (eds), *Strangers and Poor People. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe and the Mediterranean World from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day*, vol. 13 (Frankfurt a.M., 2009), pp. 431-454, with the list at p. 435.

witnesses, who could testify that ‘in the time of Louis [the Pious] those men listed above and their antecedents had always been serfs (*servi*) of that villa, bound to inferior service’.²⁹⁷

Most of the capitulary chapters in which rulers admonish their *dives* and *potentes* to give alms and not oppress the poor lack clear Biblical or patristic references – nor is Pseudo-Cyprian cited explicitly in any of these capitularies. But the content of Pseudo-Cyprian, its status at the Carolingian court through Alcuin, its connections with the *Admonitio Generalis*, as well as the voluminous manuscript transmission, make it very likely that it served as at least a part of the inspiration behind Carolingian legislation on poverty. Carolingians could find the notions of the importance of almsgiving by the rich, the king as the protector of the poor, and the king as the corrector of his subjects in this single comprehensive text, making it an ideal authoritative source for their reform efforts.

5.5. A new model of kingship

The way in which Hincmar and other Carolingian scholars used Pseudo-Cyprian to instruct their rulers on caring for the poor, correcting their subjects, and the cosmological significance of their actions was not so self-evident at the beginning of the Carolingian period. Already since the early Church, being a bishop on the continent meant being a father to the poor. In the late antique West, bishops gradually took over the role of the late Roman *defensor civitatis*, who was a judge with the primary task of defending the causes of the poor.²⁹⁸ When accused of attempting to increase the wealth of his church, St. Augustine had already stressed that he did not own properties, but only ‘managed’ them in the interest of the poor.²⁹⁹ Little over a century later, Gregory of Tours praised King Guntram’s dedicated almsgiving and the concern he showed for his people, noting that he was therefore ‘already regarded as not only a king but also as a bishop of God’ – caring for the poor could thus make a king look like a bishop.³⁰⁰ The *Decrete* of Pope Simplicius (468-483), cited

²⁹⁷ Tessier, *Recueil*, II, no. 228, pp. 7-9, as cited and trans. in J. L. Nelson, ‘Poor Relief in the Carolingian capitularies’, in A. Gestrich, R. Lutz, H. Uerlings (eds), *Strangers and Poor People. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe and the Mediterranean World from Classical Antiquity to the Present Day*, vol. 13 (Frankfurt a.M., 2009), pp. 431-454, at p. 57; see also Nelson, ‘Kings with justice’, p. 806 on this episode, arguing that it might not have been a “typical” case of peasants having access to royal justice’, because ‘Charles was the special patron of St-Denis’. It does, however, enlighten the semantic field of *oppressiones pauperum* by *potentes*, whatever the true concerns for kings in regards to such events. Additionally see Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, pp. 224-225, who argues that by the later ninth century the pressure on small landholders had remained, but the ‘acute moral concerns’ had disappeared, resulting in less specific admonitions on the oppressions of the poor; contra Costambeys *et al.*, *Carolingian World*, p. 264, who argue that the practices condemned in Carolingian legislation were merely ‘age-old practices becoming more visible because of a more assertive royal power issuing more legislation’.

²⁹⁸ Moore, *Sacred Kingdom*, p. 39;

²⁹⁹ Brown, *Eye of a Needle*, p. 482, referring to Letter 185.9.36.

³⁰⁰ A. McKenzie, ‘Model rulers and royal misers: public morality among the Merovingian aristocracy’, in A. Scott and C. Kosso, *Poverty and Prosperity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 3-24, here p. 8, citing Gregory of Tours, *Gregory of Tours: The Merovingians*, trans. Murray, pp. 213-14.

at the 511 council of Orleans, stipulated that bishops were to reserve a third of their income for the poor.³⁰¹

Rulers and other rich men were, of course, also praised for their almsgiving – but caring for the poor was not yet defined as a part of the king's *officium*. The notion of the ruler as the protector of the poor was only hesitantly promoted during the episcopate of Gregory the Great, who still considered retreat as the most proper reply to a sinful world. To the Merovingians, the conduct of the king had little consequences for the salvation of his people: what mattered was that the Merovingian ruler would endanger his own soul by sinning. The notion that the salvation of the entire people, and the circumstances of their life in this world, could be harmed by the unjust rule of the king was alien to them.³⁰² Gregory the Great and the Merovingian bishops essentially shared the Augustinian view, in which only the heavenly kingdom could be just. In his thought worldly kingdoms were inherently sinful. The poor were to be represented by the bishop, not the king, who in turn admonished the wealthy to give alms.³⁰³

If the ruler gave alms, he did so as one of the exceptionally wealthy, not because his *ministerium regis* demanded this from him. Yet this did not mean that the kings had no role to play in late antique poor care. In fact, even though the absence of Merovingian normative texts that deal with almsgiving in the wake of famines stands in sharp contrast with the many Carolingian capitularies on famines, Merovingian kings certainly provided substantial aid to the poor during food crises.³⁰⁴ This is most clearly exemplified by a poem written by Venantius Fortunatus (d. ca. 609), dedicated to Count Sigoaldus, 'who gave food to the poor on behalf of the king'.³⁰⁵ Fortunatus described this deed of charity in what could be defined as a 'commercial terminology': by giving to the poor, the rich would gain 'plentiful boons'. Because of this *felix commercium*, Venantius and his king would be assured of the heavenly kingdom. Sigoaldus's action was thus described as a personal virtue, not as a duty inherent to his office.³⁰⁶ This was very different from the late eighth century onwards. Public agents, including the king, would become the guardians of collective sin.³⁰⁷ It was in this period that clerics began to advise their kings and emperors to make the *causa pauperum* one of the central

³⁰¹ Mollat, *Armen im Mittelalter*, p. 42.

³⁰² Moore, 'La monarchie carolingienne', pp. 314-315.

³⁰³ Firey, 'Social justice and economic thought', p. 333.

³⁰⁴ M. Cândido da Silva, 'L'"économie morale" carolingienne (fin viiiie-début ixie siècle)', *Medievales*, 66.1 (2014), pp. 159-178, here pp. 176-177; see also Da Silva's, 'Public agents and the famine in the first centuries of the Middle Ages', *Varia Historia*, 32.60 (2016), pp. 779-805, esp. p. 790, in which he concludes that 'In Gaul, from the late 5th century to the end of the 6th, the aid to the poor, even when undertaken by men of power, was considered an exceptional fact, stemming from the characters' personal virtues'.

³⁰⁵ Cited in Cândido da Silva, 'Public agents and the famine', p. 796.

³⁰⁶ Cândido da Silva, 'Public agents and the famine', p. 798.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 803.

pillars of their rule.³⁰⁸ Instead acting out of their personal virtue and taking part in a *felix commercium*, the very *officium* of Carolingian kings and emperors now included poor care.

The use of *De duodecim abusivis* by Carolingian reformers can therefore be seen as part of a new understanding of early ninth-century Carolingian bishops of kingship, and in particular its relationship to poor care. In a 1990s article, Michael-Edward Moore argued that so-called ‘Irish models of kingship’, with Pseudo-Cyprian’s tract as the most representative example, played an essential role in the increasing understanding of kingship as an inherently Christian office.³⁰⁹ It must be stressed that this is a wholly different theory than that of the Germanic ‘sacral kingship’, which has by now been thoroughly discredited. Rather, Moore’s idea of ‘sacralising’ kingship envisions that over the eighth and ninth centuries, the idea of kingship was seen more and more in religious terms. Yet, crucially, these terms ‘did not derive from an ancient pagan past, but were profoundly Christian’.³¹⁰

Interestingly, Moore places the inception of this new model of kingship in the same period as Steffen Patzold situates his ‘new episcopal model’: both models are presented as arising in the 820s, and both authors attach a particular importance to the 829 council of Paris.³¹¹ This is, I think, no coincidence. As most clearly revealed by Patzold, the 820s saw the development of a shared knowledge over what it meant to be a bishop, and about the role this bishop was to play in society. In the new episcopal model, bishops saw it increasingly as their duty to reconcile all people, including the emperor, with God, despite the people’s sins.³¹² Jonas of Orleans was not only the bishop who drew up the acts of the 829 council of Paris and cited Pseudo-Cyprian’s ninth abuse both in that text and in his *De institutione regia*, but he was also one of the ‘fathers’ of the new episcopal model.³¹³ In this context, the wielding of Pseudo-Cyprian’s tractate by bishops like Jonas might have stemmed from their in the 820s ever-increasing conviction that they were to safeguard the bond between God and the ruler, an idea that is also revealed through the role of bishops in Louis

³⁰⁸ A direct link between mirrors of princes and Carolingian reform efforts is generally accepted, see f.e. Dort & Reuter, ‘Poor care’, p. 483: ‘The mirrors of princes “declared the care of the poor and the weak to be a duty of the ruler, derived from the Christian virtues of “*miser cordia*” and “*iustitia*”. We may note an interdependence of “ruler’s ethos” and “pauper policy” under Charlemagne and his son. Their many protective regulations in the capitularies and the fundamental “government programme” presented in them show that the Carolingian rulers took seriously the obligations addressed to them by the Mirrors for princes and attempted to implement these in concrete measures through the capitularies’ and Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 198: ‘Die Forderungen der Fürstenspiegler verblieben keineswegs im Raum unverbindlich-abstrakter Reflexion. Es ist ein Vorgang von nicht zu unterschätzender historischer Tragweite, dass das Königtum die Maximen eines verchristlichten Herrscherethos “bernahm und als Richtschnur für die eigene Tätigkeit anerkannte”.

³⁰⁹ Moore, ‘La monarchie carolingienne’, esp. p. 313.

³¹⁰ M. E. Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300-850* (Washington, 2011), p. 16.

³¹¹ S. Patzold, *Episcopus: Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008), pp. 511-512; *Id.*, ‘Redéfinir l’office épiscopal: les évêques francs face à la crise des années 820/30’, in F. Bougard, L. Feller and R. Le Jan (eds), *Les élites au haut Moyen Âge: Crises et renouvellements* (Turnhout, 2006), 337-359, here pp. 350-353. See also *Id.*, ‘Bischöfe als Träger der politischen Ordnung des Frankenreichs im 8./9. Jahrhundert’, in W. Pohl (ed.), *Der frühmittelalterliche Staat - europäische Perspektiven* (Vienna, 2009), 255-270.

³¹² Patzold, *Episcopus*, p. 510.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

the Pious's 833 public penance.³¹⁴ After all, Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse of the *rex iniquus* above all shows that the king's actions have important consequences not only for himself, but for all his people. Although Pseudo-Cyprian does not describe God as an actor in the cosmological punishments inflicted on the realm of a *rex iniquus*, Jonas and his peers would certainly have understood these punishments as signs of God's anger. Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse thus became a text in which the ruler, following the new episcopal model, was held accountable for the manifold signs of God's pleasure by the empire's bishops. In this way, the new episcopal model might in turn have encouraged the popularisation of a new 'sacral' model of kingship, in which the actions of the ruler had a cosmological significance not seen before.

However, sacralising kingship was no easy undertaking in the light of such authorities as Augustine, whose clear message was that kingship on earth was inherently sinful, and that kings could only hope for their personal salvation. Attempting to sacralise the office of kingship itself would have been somewhat of a moral offence to Augustine.³¹⁵ The idea that the king must care for the poor so that his worldly kingdom will be 'just' fits perfectly with what Henri-Xavier Arquillière defined as *l'augustinisme politique*, a 'perversion' of Augustine's thought through which clergymen did not de-sacralise, but rather sacralised worldly empires and their rulers. The Carolingians made particular use of isolated excerpts from Augustine's *De civitate Dei*: whereas the City of God was the expected kingdom of heaven to Augustine, many Carolingian authors presented it as a kingdom that could, and indeed, should, be established on earth. A case in point is Jonas of Orleans's use of an excerpt from *De civitate Dei* on 'happy kings' in his *De institutione regia*. Although Augustine was writing about the 'happy kings' of the city of God in this excerpt, Jonas presents it as an ideal that could be fulfilled by the just ruler on earth, also implicating that these kings would bring *felices* while still in their earthly world – not in the heavenly kingdom, as was the view of Augustine.³¹⁶

Pseudo-Cyprian's notion of the ruler as the one responsible for the *causa pauperum*, and, importantly, his idea that all the people would suffer consequences of a cosmological nature if he failed in this task, would have functioned as two of the main driving forces in the efforts of Carolingian clerics to sacralise kingship. It is easy to imagine how *De duodecim abusivis* provided a 'useful summary' of ideas on poverty, *correctio*, and the cosmological nature of kingship already known to the Carolingians through the Old Testament, in which God is often presented as rewarding his

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*

³¹⁵ Nelson, 'Kings with justice', pp. 798-799.

³¹⁶ Jonas of Orleans, *De institutione regia*, PL 106, cols 279-306, here cols 304C-306A; Nelson, 'Kings with justice', p. 799; Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 99; Moore, 'La monarchie carolingienne', pp. 323-324; on Augustine's idea of the king's 'happiness' as not resting in the "consolations of this wretched life," but in anticipation of "eternal felicity", see D. D. Allman, 'Sin and the construction of Carolingian kingship', in R. G. Newhauser (ed.), *The Seven Deadly Sins. From Communities to Individuals* (Leiden, 2007), pp. 21-40, p. 29.

people with good harvests, and punishing them with famines and storms. After all, the Carolingians were clearly concerned about God's control over nature, and, by implication, over famines. Nowhere is this more vividly illustrated than in the Utrecht psalter, where two drawings clearly show, respectively, God's angry voice causing storms, and angels in the clouds raining down lightning on the sinful earthlings and their crops below.³¹⁷

As we have seen previously, the Pseudo-Cyprian model of cosmological kingship was subtly different from that found in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the people of Israel could be punished with God-sent natural disasters for its sins and disobedience to their Lord. To Pseudo-Cyprian, however, what mattered most were not the individual sins of both the ruler and his people, but *only* the *iustitia* of *only* the ruler. Other abuses not dealing with the *rex*, such as the people without law, the lord without virtue, and negligent bishop, did not result in famines and similar all-encompassing disasters. This subtle difference compared to the Old Testament model of kingship made Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate an incredibly powerful alternative text in the hands of clergymen who sought to sacralise the *ministerium* of Carolingian kings and emperors. Even more than was the case in the Old Testament, the righteousness of Pseudo-Cyprian's ruler is central to the prosperity of the realm. In Pseudo-Cyprian's universe, the overwhelmingly individual consequences of the sins committed by the rich, poor, and the people at large pale in comparison to the disasters that befall the entire realm of an unrighteousness ruler.

Smaragd of Saint-Mihiel (d. 830) has been taken as an example of an author who 'bypassed' Pseudo-Cyprian in attaching a cosmological significance to the *ministerium regis*, instead going directly to the Old Testament, 'straight to the Biblical source'.³¹⁸ As for social justice, his text bears the same message as Pseudo-Cyprian's and the mirrors of princes discussed above. In his *Via regia* (ca. 809) Smaragd posits 'care for the poor' as an important task of the *rex*, while also implicitly embedding this task in a cosmological scheme. He is particularly concerned with the cause of the poor in his chapter on *iustitia*. Smaragd cites the same Biblical phrase from the Book of Proverbs as the synodists of the 829 council of Paris, that the ruler who rules justly over the poor will see his throne strengthened in heaven; to the king who from his piety defends the poor, Smaragd promises everlasting fruits.³¹⁹ In the chapter dedicated to *miser cordia*, Smaragd encourages the *rex*

³¹⁷ Utrecht Psalter, fols 16r and 78v; P. E. Dutton, 'Thunder and hail over the Carolingian countryside', in: *id.* (ed.), *Charlemagne's Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of the Dark Ages* (New York, 2004), pp. 169-188, here p. 181.

³¹⁸ R. D. Kramer, 'Great expectations: imperial ideologies and ecclesiastical reforms from Charlemagne to Louis the Pious (813-822)' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Freie Universität Berlin, 2014), pp. 121-122; Meens, 'Mirrors of princes', p. 356.

³¹⁹ Smaragd, *Via regia*, PL 102, cols 933-970, here cols 949B-949D.

to be eager in defending the poor, widows, and orphans, and to frequently give alms to the destitute.³²⁰ Finally, Smaragd explicates the cosmological nature of sins and virtues, stating that the people who obey God will be blessed by flourishing towns and lands, abundantly growing crops, rain at the proper time, a fertile people, and trees with many fruits.³²¹ Should the people not listen to God, however, the people will be punished with ‘sudden terror’, ‘diseases’, ‘fever’; seed will be planted in vain, ‘because your enemies will eat it’.³²²

Smaragd’s evocation of God’s punishment derives from the Book of Leviticus (26.3-17), and the message of his Old Testament citation seems to evoke an image similar to that of Pseudo-Cyprian: if a ruler does not care for the poor, he is a sinner, and his people will suffer consequences of a cosmological nature; if he is virtuous, they will be rewarded with good weather and fertile lands. There are, however, two essential differences between the cosmological models of the two texts. First of all, to Smaragd, it was first and foremost the love of God that mattered, not the upholding of *iustitia* as part of the *ministerium regis*. It is this love that prevents sins.³²³ Secondly, Smaragd does not like Pseudo-Cyprian stress the unique nature of the ruler’s sins. His derivation from Leviticus deals with the sins of the entire people of Israel: the ruler has no special, uniquely consequential role here. Thirdly, Smaragd’s work as a whole is not a ‘mirror of princes’, as is often assumed. His concept of the *via regia*, or kingly road, is indebted to the Biblical imaginary of the ‘King’s Highway’ which crossed the territory of the Ammorhites, and which the Israelites sought to traverse.³²⁴ Smaragd himself cites Num. 21:21-22, in which the Israelites plead the Ammorhites to ‘have leave to pass through your land: we will not go aside into the fields or the vineyards, we will not drink waters of the wells, we will go the king’s highway, until we cross your borders’.³²⁵ In the late antique exegetical tradition, still prevalent in ninth-century works including that of Smaragd, this narration of the kingly road was explained as referring to the arduous path every believer had to traverse, while trying not be lured away from the path by the temptations one encountered along the way.³²⁶ In light of these differences, Smaragd’s *Via regia* might tell us more about the appeal of the Pseudo-Cyprianic model through the special position of the *rex* occupied in *De duodecim abusivis*, than about the ‘general’ popularity of cosmological schemes of rulership in Carolingian times.

However, the idea of the king as the corrector of his people, which in turn had important implications for the king’s duty in regards to the ‘oppression’ of the *pauperes* by the realm’s powerful,

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, col. 950B.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, cols 938B-939B.

³²² *Ibid.*, cols 938D-939A.

³²³ Kramer, ‘Great expectations’, pp. 121-122.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

³²⁵ Smaragd, *Via Regia*, col. 634B, trans. Kramer, ‘Great expectations’, p. 126.

³²⁶ Kramer, ‘Great expectations’, p. 126-127.

was available in many other sources. As we have seen, to the authors of the *Admonitio Generalis* it was a Biblical example, namely that of Josiah, which drove home their message of the king as the *rector* of his people. Moreover, already in 773 abbot Eanwulf, a trustee of king Aethelred of Northumbria, had written a letter to Charlemagne in which he urged the king to correct his subjects, without any reference or connection to Pseudo-Cyprian's text – except, perhaps, a shared insular context.³²⁷

Yet even though the idea of the king of corrector itself was not unique to Pseudo-Cyprian in the Carolingian world, *De duodecim abusivis* was the only authoritative source available to the Carolingians that embedded the king's duty of correction into a unique cosmological model of kingship, and saw the king as central in the care and protection of the poor – and this was certainly new to the Carolingians. In light of the fundamental differences in kingship and society between early medieval Ireland and the continent, it is no surprise that *De duodecim abusivis* was such a popular text among the ranks Carolingian reformers. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Pseudo-Cyprian's worldview was in several ways uniquely Irish. *De duodecim abusivis* was shaped not only by Christian thought, but also by a society wholly different than those on the continent. In early medieval Ireland, there were no episcopal cities through which the idea of the bishop as the *pater pauperum* could take hold; the greater and culturally more explicated centrality of wealth to both noble and kingly status made almsgiving logically much more important; and the sacralised system of Irish kingship made almsgiving and protecting the poor an essential part of aristocratic propaganda in portraying the king as the one providing fertility to his people. The many Biblical and Late Antique Christian texts available to the Carolingians that were relevant to kingship could, of course, also be used very fruitfully in the Carolingian program of sacralising kingship, but Pseudo-Cyprian's wholly different worldview, the product of a seventh-century Irish social and cultural context radically different from that of the continent, made *De duodecim abusivis* an exceptionally useful and unique authoritative text to those bishops in search of an authority that gave the king the mandate to care for the poor.

Pseudo-Cyprian's admonitions on the *rex iniquus* contained all the ingredients needed by Carolingian authors in their effort to sacralise the rule of their kings and emperors in the form of a single comprehensive text: the office of the king meant correcting his subjects and protecting the poor, while the justices or injustices of his rule would no longer have an effect only on the future of his own soul, but on the salvation of all his subjects, providing a new kind of urgency to his duties. Although most of these notions were present in scattered form in the Bible, no other text

³²⁷ Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 75.

provided a comprehensive synthesis of them. More importantly, no other text available to the Carolingians attached so much importance to the possible blessings and disasters resulting from the rule of kings and emperors in regards to the poor and powerless. As the council acts of Paris show, Pseudo-Cyprian's text provided a comprehensive complement to otherwise isolated Biblical citations on poverty. It added new, quintessentially 'Irish', material on the ruler's duty of protecting the poor, correcting his powerful subjects so that they would give alms and not oppress the weak, as well as embedding them in an unprecedented cosmological scheme. This added an unprecedented sense of importance to the ruler's efforts in upholding the *causa pauperum*. Finally, as shown by the reform attempts of Carolingian rulers the ideas on social justice and kingship expressed in Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* played an important role in not only clerical doctrine and advice, but also in the way kings and emperors tried to manage their realm.

VI. Educating the rich and powerful on social justice

6.1. The rich and almsgiving

The fourth abuse of Pseudo-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* is the rich man without alms. As we have seen, Carolingian rulers saw admonishing their powerful and rich subjects to give alms as one of their main duties in the context of their reform efforts. These reform efforts were in turn partly indebted to Pseudo-Cyprian's notion of the ruler as the corrector of his people, which, through Alcuin and many other clerics, was brought to the attention of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious. Yet Carolingian clergymen themselves also sought to encourage laymen to give alms directly, meaning without any reference to the role of the ruler as a corrector of his people and the protector of the poor.

This is clearly visible in Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis*, dedicated to *comes* Widon, prefect of the March of Brittany, but, as Alcuin himself notes, actually meant as a general text for the purpose of instruction and salvation. It was effectively a sermon, to be read by other counts as well as powerful laymen in general.³²⁸ Almsgiving plays a major role in this layman's manual for a virtuous life. Already in his preface, Alcuin admonishes Widon to prepare himself 'a habitation of heavenly glory with unwearied will by very great largesse of alms giving'.³²⁹ Two chapters of the *De virtutibus* are dedicated to respectively charity and almsgiving. Alcuin notes that 'Charity obtains first place in the precepts of God'.³³⁰ The rich are admonished to give alms, because without it they will lose the kingdom of heaven. Not only that, 'Just as water extinguishes fire, alms extinguish sin'.³³¹ Alcuin specifically addresses the avaricious rich man, who must 'give to the poor what you have, so that you may find in heaven what you have given on earth. Why do you fear to lose your money and you do not fear that you will wholly perish?'.³³²

Alcuin likely knew *De duodecim abusivis*, and his message to the rich is essentially the same as that of Pseudo-Cyprian's fourth abuse. Yet a direct connection between both texts cannot be established. This is different for the ninth sermon of the Pseudo-Bonifatian sermons, which is, as noted before, effectively a full reworking and summary of Pseudo-Cyprian's abuses. It admonishes the rich to give away their property, not to take what is not theirs, and to clothe and support

³²⁸ Falkowski, 'Speculum principis', pp. 22, 25; contra Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, p. 86, who assumes that Alcuin's examples are for 'ein König oder hoher Adliger', and Wallach, who saw it as a mirror of princes specifically meant for Charlemagne. However, as Falkowski has noted, the concrete examples offered in this work make it inherently different from Alcuin's letters to kings and emperors.

³²⁹ Alcuin, *De virtutibus et vitiis*, PL 101, cols 613-638, here *Epistola nuncupatoria*, cols 613C-614C, English translations by R. Stone, 'Translation of Alcuin's *De Virtutibus et Vitiis Liber* (Book about the Virtues and Vices)', *The Heroic Age*, 16 (2015) [<http://www.heroicage.org/issues/16/stone.php>], here paragraph 6.

³³⁰ Alcuin, *De virtutibus*, c. 3, cols 615C-616A, trans. Stone, par. 9.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, c. 17, cols 625B-626B, trans. Stone, par. 23.

³³² *Ibid.*, c. 19, cols 627C-628C, trans. Stone, par. 25.

others.³³³ The Pseudo-Bonifatian sermon collection is, however, the only Carolingian text on almsgiving that shows a clear use of Pseudo-Cyprian's fourth abuse of the *Dives sine elemosyna*. In the light of the Carolingian's extensive use of Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse, this might appear surprising. After all, almsgiving was also an important topic to Carolingian reformers.

There appears to be a twofold reason why even Alcuin, who clearly knew the text and wrote extensively on almsgiving, did not cite Pseudo-Cyprian's fourth abuse in the context of almsgiving. First of all, Pseudo-Cyprian did not add anything unique to the topic of almsgiving. Unlike his notion of the just king, which provided a very useful synthesis of diverse thoughts that were otherwise only found scattered in other Christian texts, his idea of almsgiving by the rich was much less dependent on a specifically Irish cultural tradition and confirmed fully with the Biblical material also known on the continent.³³⁴ In short, there was nothing new to find here.

Secondly, the Carolingians could make use of a long list of continental texts on almsgiving, as well as the many Biblical references to the importance of almsgiving, which, importantly, taken individually all made the same point: the rich ought to give to the poor, because God commanded so and it was in the interest of their soul. Gregory the Great had already presented almsgiving and good works as being able to 'have an operative effect on the fate of a person's soul in the afterlife'.³³⁵ In the seventh-century *Visio Baronti*, the need of almsgiving and good works was more emphasized than in the writings of Gregory the Great and patristic authors – it was now seen as more important than say, the celebration of the Eucharist –, but the message was essentially the same: the rich needed to give alms, or their souls would be doomed.³³⁶ The Carolingians could build on such texts as well as the many relatively self-evident Biblical admonitions on almsgiving, and there was thus no need of a text that synthesized various Biblical ideas into one rather more complex 'model of almsgiving' - much unlike was the case with the Pseudo-Cyprianic model of kingship, which proved to be so useful to those Carolingian clerics seeking to sacralise the office of kingship.

6.2. The dominus sine virtute and admonishing potentes

As we have seen, the Carolingian manuscript context of Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate suggests that it was likely used by bishops. It has particularly strong associations with texts about the sinfulness of clerics, as well as with texts by the genuine Cyprian that could have been used in an episcopal

³³³ Pseudo-Boniface, *Sermones*, col. 846; Meens, 'Christianization', p. 216; Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik*, p. 340

³³⁴ See f.e. Tobit 4:7; 4:11; 9:9-10; 12:8-9, Sirach 3:33; 12:3; 17:18; 29:15, Daniel 4:24, Luke 11:41, Acts 10:4; 10:31; Deuteronomy 14:29; 15:7-11.

³³⁵ J. J. Contreni, "'Building mansions in heaven": the *Visio Baronti*, Archangel Raphael, and a Carolingian king', *Speculum: a journal of mediaeval studies*, 78 (2003), pp. 673-706, here p. 685.

³³⁶ Contreni, 'Mansions in heaven', pp. 688-690.

preaching context. That Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate was used in such a context of admonishing sinful clerics is also testified by Hincmar, who used Pseudo-Cyprian's abuse of the *dominus sine virtute* to remind the powerful of their duty and to warn them against sinning.

It should first of all be noted that Hincmar saw Pseudo-Cyprian's precepts to the *dominus sine virtute* as not only relevant to kings, but to all who had the power of domination.³³⁷ In his *De Ordine Palatii*, Hincmar applies the lessons of Pseudo-Cyprian's *dominus sine virtute* to the realm's dukes and counts.³³⁸ Hincmar's use of the *dominus sine virtute* thus mirrors the rather transitory nature of Pseudo-Cyprian's 'clerical' *dominus*. As we have seen, to Pseudo-Cyprian and his contemporaries the *dominus* would have referred to a Church figure, but these were always nobles, and must have, at least in some cases, been rather hard to distinguish from 'secular' *domini*. This suggests that Pseudo-Cyprian's *dominus sine virtute* was useful to Hincmar precisely because the early medieval Irish 'clerical' *dominus* was so ill-defined – Irish abbots were known to lead armies, kings could become bishops, and the clergy was inherently aristocratic. Only one sentence in the abuse points to its clerical contexts, and apart from that it reads as a manual for all persons who 'have the power of domination'.

The group of Carolingian *potentes* to which Pseudo-Cyprian's sixth abuse seemed particularly relevant in Hincmar's mind fits, however, very neatly with Pseudo-Cyprian's original meaning of the *dominus sine virtute* as a clerical lord. In his *Ad Episcopos* (882), written as an admonition to the participants of the 882 Synod of Epernay, Hincmar uses the abuse of the *dominus sine virtute* to warn the assembled bishops that 'some through the office of domination come nearer to God: some with such an honour of dignity laid upon them become worse'.³³⁹ One of the things that made lords come 'nearer to God', as Hincmar also cited from Pseudo-Cyprian's tractate, was to strive 'to be held in fear through the administration of just punishments, not of personal injuries, but of transgressions of the Law of God'.³⁴⁰ A final warning taken from Pseudo-Cyprian's tract (and in turn based on I. Sam. 2.8) explicitly touches upon social justice: God '[...] lifts the poor and needy man out of the dunghill and makes him to sit with the princes of his people; and he casts down the mighty out of their seat and exalts the humble'.³⁴¹

³³⁷ Stone, *Morality and masculinity*, pp. 109-110.

³³⁸ Anton, *Fürstenspiegel und Herrscherethos*, pp. 305-306.

³³⁹ Hincmar, *Ad episcopos*, cols 1012D-1013A: 'Per quae exempla evidenter ostenditur, quosdam in sublimiori statu ad majorem perfectionem crescere, quosdam vero per supercilium dominationis ad deteriora defluere. Per quod utrumque intelligitur, eos qui ad meliora condescendunt, per virtutem animi, et Dei auxilium posse id facere, et eos qui ad deteriora devertuntur, per mentis imbecillitatem pariter et negligentiam errare', trans. Stone, *Morality and masculinity*, p. 123; *DDA*, p. 378; see also Stone, *Morality and masculinity*, p. 45, on Hincmar's moralising works.

³⁴⁰ Hincmar, *Ad Episcopos*, Col.1012B.

³⁴¹ 'Ipse enim elevat de stercore egenum, et sedere facit cum principibus populi sui: et deponit potentes de sede, et exaltat humiles (Ps. CXII; Luc. I), ut subditus fiat omnis mundus Deo, et egeat omnis gloria Dei': Hincmar, *Ad Episcopos*, Col.1013A-B.

Hincmar's use of Pseudo-Cyprian's *Dominus sine virtute* in his 822 *Ad Episcopos* was, in fact, likely part of a much broader concern about sinful powerful clerics, hierarchy, and social justice within the Church. As shown by Janet Nelson in a thought-provoking article on the problem of wealth in the Carolingian Church, Hincmar was particularly concerned about the gap between rich and poor among the clergy. The 883 council of Toulouse sought to ensure that the priest was not exhorted by the bishop, while rulers sought to 'safeguard' the social position of the lower clergy through their *capitularia*. As argued by Nelson, 'this was a problem of the clergy as *pauperes*, victims of episcopal *potentes*'.³⁴² The greatest danger in this regard was that the powerful clergy could use their influence to leech on the wealth of the Church, to the detriment of their lower-ranked peers.³⁴³ It is likely in this context that Hincmar cited Pseudo-Cyprian's sixth abuse to the bishops gathered at Epernay: he reminded them to be virtuous *domini*, who would not punish their inferiors because of 'personal injuries', and warned them that God would depose the powerful from their seats, and exalt the humble. This would clearly be a powerful and appropriate message to those bishops that oppressed the lower-ranked clergy, and leeched on the wealth of the Church.

³⁴² J. L. Nelson, 'Making ends meet: wealth and poverty in the Carolingian Church', *Studies in Church History*, 24 (1987), pp. 25-35.

³⁴³ Nelson, 'Making ends meet', pp. 25-29; see also, on Hincmar's rhetoric against *cupiditas*, G. Calvet, 'Cupiditas, avaritia, turpe lucrum: discours économique et morale chrétienne chez Hincmar de Reims (845-882)', in J-P. Devroey, L. Feller, and R. Le Jan (eds), *Les Elites et la richesse au Haut Moyen Age*, Haut Moyen Age 10 (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 97-112, esp. p. 103: 'L'objectif pour Hincmar est de défendre un bien commun, les terres de la paroisse ou du diocèse, contre l'accaparement au profit d'un évêque, d'une famille ou d'un groupe'.

VII. Hierarchy, nobility, and the poor in the Carolingian world

7.1. The 'bad poor' of the Carolingian World

As we have seen, Pseudo-Cyprian's treatise, and particularly the eighth abuse of the *pauper superbus*, show an urgent concern for matters of hierarchy and social order, which also marked the seventh-century Irish elite worldview at large. Interestingly, such a concern for the good order of society and a hatred of social mobility are also found in the Pseudo-Bonifatian sermon collection – and not only in the ninth sermon which is clearly modelled on the *De duodecim abusivis*. One of the clear purposes of the sermon collection was 'ohne Zweifel dazu beizutragen, die etablierten Hierarchien in unterschiedlichen sozialen Bereichen zu festigen'.³⁴⁴ In the second sermon, the author notes that 'every fugitive slave should return to his master, and if his master cannot be found he should be killed, so that order will not be disturbed'; the ninth sermon notes that one group is the *ordo* of the greats, the other that of the submitted, the one that of the rich, and the other that of the poor.³⁴⁵ Inspired by Pseudo-Cyprian's eighth abuse, the ninth sermon also argues that the poor and powerless are ordered to be humble, and 'not long for the riches of this world'.³⁴⁶ Just like the slaves should obey their masters, the ninth sermon stressed that the powerful and judges are subordinated to the king and his bishops. Their virtues and duties are the ones of the just *rex* in Pseudo-Cyprian's ninth abuse: they should not oppress anyone, defend widows, orphans, and the poor, as well as give alms to the latter, and be humble and merciful.³⁴⁷

Unlike Pseudo-Cyprian's abuse of the *dominus sine virtute*, that of the *pauper superbus* was, with the exception of the Pseudo-Bonifatian sermon collection, not cited in any Carolingian text in the context of social justice. One would expect otherwise. After all, aristocratic Carolingians are well known for showing some amount of 'status anxiety', and Pseudo-Cyprian's eighth abuse was in its sheer vitriol unique among the to the Carolingians available corpus of Biblical and Late Antique texts. It must certainly have been a (at least, to the Carolingians' more staunch elitists) very useful and authoritative elaboration of the single and compact Biblical verse on the '*pauper superbus*' found in Sirach 25:3-. In this verse Sirach exclaims that his soul hates the proud poor man, the deceitful rich man and the foolish old man – without giving any more information on these archetypes. The reasons behind the nonuse by Carolingian authors of Pseudo-Cyprian's eighth abuse must at least in part be found in different ideas over the acceptability of social mobility between the seventh-

³⁴⁴ Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik*, p. 337.

³⁴⁵ Pseudo-Boniface, *Sermones*, col. 846, trans. Meens, 'Christianization', p. 219.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, col. 850, trans. Meens, 'Christianization', p. 216.

³⁴⁷ Meens, 'Christianization', p. 216; Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik*, p. 340.

century Ireland that spawned *De duodecim abusivis* and the Carolingian world. As we have seen, seventh-century Irish society was presented by its elites as inherently hierarchical. Irish authors seem to have been obsessed with status. Pseudo-Cyprian's eighth abuse was certainly not the only text that so harshly denounced social mobility: the origin myth introducing the *Audacht Morainn* evokes a kind of 'aristocratic nightmare' of the distant past in which the vassal peoples had exterminated all but one of Ireland's nobles. I would argue that in the Carolingian world, on the other hand, it was much less acceptable to publicly deride social mobility and the less fortunate.³⁴⁸

The *pauperes* could, however, be associated with several negative traits in the Carolingian world. The first of these is making use of poor care even if the poor person could feed himself: the Carolingian archetype of the 'unworthy poor'.³⁴⁹ In an 806 capitulary, Charlemagne specifies that wandering beggars who could feed themselves were not allowed to make use of poor care; the *fideles* were to take care of their own poor, and not of those wandering poor who refused to work.³⁵⁰ One of Louis the Pious's capitularies (ca. 820) regulates the appointment of *magistri* so that *simulatores* under the *mendici et pauperes* could be found out.³⁵¹

A second negative archetype of the *pauper* known to the Carolingians was the corrupt poor man. In his *Capitula quibus de rebus magistri*, Hincmar states that only the 'true' poor were to be included on local churches' poor lists, not the priest's family members or friends. As the '*nihil habentes*', these local priests were seen 'as exceptionally prone to corruption'.³⁵² A similar concern for poor people as the ones exceptionally prone to corruption can be found in the *Annales Laureshamenses*. The annalist narrates how in 803 Charlemagne ordered that the *pauperiores vassos suos* of the lower palace hierarchy (*de infra palatio*) were no longer to preside as judges, because they could be bribed too easily. Instead, judicial affairs from then on had to be handled only by the greater vassals, meaning counts, abbots, and bishops. In this way the *pauperes* and 'all of the people' could have true justice.³⁵³ Interestingly, the *pauperes* are here therefore not only those susceptible to corruption, but also the victims of said offence. It must, however, be noted that although corruption was often associated with the poor, it was not at all a sin exclusively attributed to them. More often it was levelled at the *iudices* at large and also often specifically to *potentes*.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁸ See also J. L. Nelson, 'Organic intellectuals in the Dark Ages?', *History Workshop Journal*, 66 (2008), pp. 1-17, here p. 15, in which she characterises several Carolingian authors according to the 'self-identification with wider social groups, use of various forms of writing to convey social concerns, their public-spiritedness, their fundamental humanity'.

³⁴⁹ On this see Dort and Reuther, 'Poor care', p. 443.

³⁵⁰ *Capitulare de disciplina palatii Aquisgranensis* (ca. 820?), ed. A. Boretius, MGH Capit. 1, no. 146, pp. 298-299, here c. 7 p. 298.

³⁵¹ *Capitulare missorum Niumagae* (806), ed. A. Boretius, MGH Capit. 1, no. 46, pp. 131-133, here c. 9 p. 132.

³⁵² Nelson, 'Making ends meet', p. 152.

³⁵³ *Annales Laureshamenses*, ed. G. H. Pertz, MGH SS 1, pp. 22-39, here c. 36, p. 38.

³⁵⁴ On corrupt *potentes* and their injustices against the poor see Nelson, 'Kings with justice' and R. le Jan, 'Justice royale et pratiques sociales dans le royaume franc au IXe siècle', in *La Giustizia nell'Alto Medioevo (secoli IX-XI), 11-17 aprile 1996*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 44, vol. 1 (Spoleto, 1997), pp. 47-90, esp. pp. 50-51.

Another negative stereotype of the poor is that of the proud poor man. Hraban Maur discusses the *pauper superbus* in his *Commentarium in ecclesiasticum*, the only (surviving) Carolingian exegetical discussion of the *pauper superbus*. However, this text completely lacks the focus of Pseudo-Cyprian on social mobility, as well as Pseudo-Cyprian's general hatred levelled against those poor seeking a betterment of their condition: 'the poor man is evidently detested, who against the condition of his poverty shows pride in his elevated mind' and 'who loses heavenly glory because of his pride'.³⁵⁵ To Hraban, the pride of the *pauper superbus* is entirely spiritual: this *pauper* does not seek material goods in this world, nor must be reminded what his place is. Moreover, Hraban portrays the proud poor man not as a worse offence than the deceitful rich man that also offend Sirach's mind. In fact, the *dives mendax* gets a much harsher treatment: the deceitful rich man is described as nothing less than a heretic, 'who through his avarice and greed holds onto his earthly riches'.³⁵⁶

A final negative stereotype of the *pauper* found in Carolingian texts is that of the insubordinate poor man. During the reign of Charles the Bald, Archbishop Wulfad of Bourges (d. 876) sent a letter to the clerics and laymen in his diocese. First of all, he admonished the powerful (*potentes*) to rule justly over those set under them. Although the *minores* had less power, the *potentes* were to see them as their brothers. Secondly, the bishop noted that the '*pauperes et minus potentes*' should submit to the *potentes*, and serve the latter loyally.³⁵⁷ However, such insubordination was more often associated with the nobility than with the *pauperes*. In his *De virtutibus et vitiis*, Alcuin discusses pride, which he sees as a general sin to which all people are susceptible. In this, he pays particular attention to the sins of subordinates: 'Pride also happens through obstinacy, when people despise obeying their lords. From that indeed is born all disobedience, and all presumption and obstinacy, contentions, heresies, arrogance, all which evils the true humility of the servant of God will be able to conquer very easily'.³⁵⁸ A similar denunciation of insubordination is found in Dhuoda's *Liber manualis* for her son, William. Dhuoda urges the latter to 'submit to the regular yoke of service, and be faithful to Charles your lord, whatever his status may be'.³⁵⁹ William is also to 'Love, cherish and

³⁵⁵ Hraban Maur, *Commentarium in ecclesiasticum*, PL 109, cols 763-1126, here cols 0946A-B: '*pauperem videlicet detestans superbum, qui contra conditionem paupertatis suae animo elato superbit*'.

³⁵⁶ Hraban, *Commentarium in ecclesiasticum*, cols 0956B-C: '*dives est et mendax, quia cum terrenas divitias in avaris et cupidis possessoribus possidet, totus mendacio [...] Dives mendax est haereticus*'.

³⁵⁷ Wulfad of Bourges, *Epistola pastoralis*, ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 6, no. 27, pp. 188-192, here p. 191; cited in Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, p. 121.

³⁵⁸ Alcuin, *De virtutibus et vitiis*, col. 633, trans. paragraph 34.

³⁵⁹ Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, ed. trans. M. Thiébaux, *Handbook for her Warrior Son*, Cambridge Medieval Classics, 8 (Cambridge, 1998), III, c. 8, p. 107; M. A. Mayeski, 'The beatitudes and the moral life of the Christian: practical theology and biblical exegesis in Dhuoda of Septimania', *Mystics Quarterly*, 18.1 (1992), pp. 6-15.

render diligent service to the great leaders', so that he will never incur the 'lord's reproach of disloyalty'.³⁶⁰ Such subordination is not tied to either *minores* or *pauperes*, and not even specifically levelled at the lower orders of society. Both texts were dedicated to lay nobles, and the advice of Alcuin and Dhuoda clearly pertains to them, not to insubordinate *pauperes* or *minores*.

7.2. Denouncing and fearing the ambitious unfree

If we leave the semantic field of *pauperes* and instead turn to the broader field of those not belonging to the *nobiles* and *potentes* at large, we can find some more powerful denunciations of social groups that would also have been poor, at least in an economical sense of the word (although this trait is, importantly, not stressed in Carolingian descriptions of said groups). When looking at the rhetoric pertaining to these *ignobiles* at large, we also find some evidence of Carolingian antipathy against lower-class upward social mobility.

One group that evoked particularly vicious criticism from some Carolingian authors concerns that of the unfree, or the *servi*. In his *Liber exhortationis* (ca. 780-799), Paulinus of Aquileia portrays hell as the place where hierarchy is completely destroyed. As a warning against those lay *potentes* who live unjustly in this world, Paulinus notes that in hell there is no honour of senior and king, nor is the master placed above the *servus*.³⁶¹ To some Carolingians, such an upturning of hierarchy was already taking place in their temporal world. A loathing of *servi* as well as their social mobility can most famously be found in Thegan's (d. 849-852?) *Gesta Hludowici Pii imperatoris*. In his famous discussion of the assembly of Soissons he describes how 'All the bishops [...] especially those whom he had lifted up from the vilest servile condition [...] had forced the emperor to enter the monastic life.'³⁶² The main culprit in this affair was Ebo, bishop of Reims (d. 851), 'who descended from generations of slaves, to batter him [Louis] savagely with the fabrications of others'.³⁶³ What Thegan tries to make clear is that Louis the Pious's ensuing public penance had been forced upon him by ignoble *servi*, and was therefore void.³⁶⁴

This diatribe against Ebo and the other bishops who imposed penance on Louis must be seen against the background of a telling chapter in which Thegan argues against the 'awful custom of making the highest bishops out of the lowest servants'.³⁶⁵ Thegan's hatred of ignoble bishops

³⁶⁰ Dhuoda, *Liber manualis*, III, c. 8, pp. 107-108.

³⁶¹ Paulinus of Aquileia, *Liber exhortationis*, PL 99, cols 253A-B: '*nbi non est honor senioris et regis, nec dominus est super servum*'; Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, p. 122.

³⁶² '*Omnes inde episcopi molesti errant illi, maxime illi, quos ex vilissima conditione servili iam exalterat*': Thegan, c. 43, p. 272, trans. 211.

³⁶³ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 44, p. 272, trans. 211.

³⁶⁴ De Jong, *Penitential State*, 78.

³⁶⁵ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 20, pp. 204 and 206, trans. 204.

can thus be interpreted as a reaction to the social mobility that allowed ignoble persons to acquire positions of power.³⁶⁶ Indeed, we can ascertain that Ebo came from a non-noble family. Thegan's remark about Ebo's ancestors having been 'goatherds, not advisors to princes' is clearly defamatory, but a person like Charles the Bald was also aware of Ebo's lowly origins.³⁶⁷

It should be stressed that Thegan's diatribe against the *servi* is not limited to upstart clerics. Thegan truly constructs a dichotomous classed world, in which noble *domini* are juxtaposed to ignoble *servi*.³⁶⁸ He does not only despise that *servi* 'educate some of them in the liberal arts' as a way to enter the episcopacy, but also that they 'marry others to noble women, and force the sons of nobles to accept their daughters in marriage'.³⁶⁹ These *servi* mock and despise the old nobles (*senes nobiles*), they try to oppress the *nobiles* so that they can 'put their own vile kindred in their place'.³⁷⁰

Stefan Patzold has sought the primary context of Thegan's diatribes against Ebo and other *servi* in the context of the 'new episcopal model'. According to Patzold, a crucial aspect of this new model was that nobility no longer mattered. This is above all exemplified by the acts of the 829 Synod of Paris. The 'bishop' as defined in these text is opposed to aristocratic values.³⁷¹ Patzold reveals eloquently how Thegan's narration of Ebo and the *servi* is actually an application of his own position *vis-à-vis* this 829 Paris synod to the 833 assembly of Soissons: while the bishops around Ebo stressed the dignity of their *ministerium* whatever the ignobility or nobility of its occupant, Thegan, a man of the old school, argued that this *ministerium* was despicable precisely because of the bishop's ignobility.³⁷²

Patzold explicitly aims his arguments at the notion of a so-called *Reichsaristokratie*, which assumes that aristocratic values permeated the episcopacy throughout the early Middle Ages. More broadly speaking, Patzold disputes the idea of the Carolingian elite as being dominated by a single group defined as 'the aristocracy'.³⁷³ In his view, most of the sources that are in some way connected to political institutions (the court and assemblies) do not envision 'nobles' as political actors. It were bishops, abbots, counts, dukes and *fideles* occupying their respective offices on which the

³⁶⁶ See particularly S. Airlie, 'Bonds of power and bonds of association in the court circle of Louis the Pious', *Power and its Problems in Carolingian Europe* (Farnham 2012), pp. 1-24, in which Thegan's diatribe against Ebo is placed in the context of the 'hunger of Carolingians for talented and trustworthy servants'.

³⁶⁷ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 253; S. Airlie, 'Security and insecurity of identity and status in the Carolingian elite' in F. Bougard, H.-W. Goetz, and R. Le Jan (eds), *Théorie et pratiques des élites au Haut Moyen Âge: Conception, perception et réalisation sociale* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 221-242, here pp. 225-226; McKeon, 'Ebbo of Reims', pp. 437-438.

³⁶⁸ H. W. Goetz "Unterschichten" im Gesellschaftsbild karolingischer Geschichtsschreiber und Hagiographen', in *id.* and A. Rathmann-Lutz (eds), *Vorstellungsgeschichte: Gesammelte Schriften zu Wahrnehmungen, Deutungen und Vorstellungen im Mittelalter* (Bochum 2007), pp. 117-134, here pp. 132-33.

³⁶⁹ Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici*, c. 20, p. 206, trans. 204.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* cc. 20, 50, pp. 208, 243, trans. pp. 204, 215.

³⁷¹ Patzold, 'Office épiscopal', pp. 343-346.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 350-353.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 338, 347.

political order was founded; these were primarily seen as individuals carrying out their *ministerium*, not as nobles.³⁷⁴

According to Patzold, Thegan's text reveals that the absence of nobility in the new episcopal model of the ninth century was seen as noteworthy, and not dismissed as a 'logical' consequence of the nature of canon law – in which, it is often argued, the only truly social distinction was that between the free and unfree.³⁷⁵ I would argue that, in addition to revealing this, the example of Thegan can also be seen as an example of a co-existing worldview current in ninth-century elite circles, that was dichotomous, in that it can be described as a 'two-class' one, opposing ignoble *servi* to their noble *domini*. Moreover, from this perspective, as represented by Thegan, positions of power are reserved to the nobility, while ignoble *servi* are very explicitly denied access to such positions.

7.3. Nobility and the Stellinga-revolt

A broader fear of ignoble *servi* occupying positions of power and then humiliating and oppressing the *nobiles* is also found in three of the four narratives that describe the 841 Saxon *Stellinga* revolt. This is articulated most clearly in the *Annales Fuldenses*, which narrate how the Saxon *liberti* entered a *coniuratio*, upon which they sought to oppress their legitimate lords.³⁷⁶ The *Annales Xantenses* describe likewise how in 841 throughout Saxony the *servi* that had taken the name of the *Stellinga* acquired *potestas* over their *domini*, thereby humiliating the *nobiles*.³⁷⁷ Nithard's narrative of the *Stellinga* in his *Historiae* is much more extensive and detailed, and instead of a dichotomy between the unfree and their *domini* he contrasts the *nobiles* as *domini* to the rest of Saxon society. According to Nithard, the *gens Saxonum* was, in the Saxon's native language, composed of *edbilingui*, *frilingi*, and *lazzi*. Still following Nithard, these correspond to, respectively, the Latin words *nobiles*, *ingenuiles* (the freeborn), and *serviles*. The revolt was organized by the latter two groups; the *frilingi-ingenuiles* and *lazzi-serviles*. These numerous *ignobiles* wanted to abide to their old laws and Gods, and took the name *Stellinga* upon them. Thereafter they drove out their *domini* and lived according to their old customs, until they were *nobiliter* crushed by Louis the German in August 842.³⁷⁸ Thus, although

³⁷⁴ Patzold, 'Bischöfe als Träger', pp. 260-261.

³⁷⁵ Patzold, 'Office épiscopal', pp. 350, 353.

³⁷⁶ *Annales Fuldenses*, s.a. 842, p. 30: '[...] in Saxoniam pergens validissimam conspirationem libertorum legitimos dominos opprimere conantium auctoribus factionis capitali sententia damnatis fortiter conpescuit.'

³⁷⁷ *Annales Xantenses*, ed. trans. R. Rau, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt 1969), pp. 339-372, here s.a. 841, p. 344: 'Eodem anno per totam Saxoniam potestas servorum valde excreverat super dominos suos [...] Et nobiles illius patriae a servis valde afflictis et humiliati sunt.'

³⁷⁸ Nithard, *Historiae*, ed. trans. R. Rau, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt, 1968), pp. 385-46, here IV, cc. 2, 4, pp. 448, 454.

Nithard envisions three social groups, the primary contrast is still between upstart *servi* and their rightful lords.

The *domini-servi* and *nobiles-ignobiles* dichotomies that define these narratives have led many scholars to see the *Stellinga* as a rare early medieval example of a peasant revolt. East German scholars in particular have sought a *Klassenkampf* in the *Stellinga*.³⁷⁹ However, in their two recent PhD dissertations Robert Flierman and Ingrid Rembold convincingly argue that it is incorrect to describe the Saxon *Stellinga* as such.³⁸⁰ In their view, the class differences within Saxon society described in the sources are more of a Carolingian invention than the defining feature of a quintessentially ‘Saxon’ societal structure. Only in the years after the *Stellinga* do the sources begin to stress these supposed class distinctions. In the words of Flierman, the *Stellinga* ‘had put class on the agenda’. Shocked at seeing *nobiles* being defeated by their social inferiors, elite authors began to construct a worldview in which the *nobiles* were placed firmly above the rest of society.³⁸¹

Moreover, Rembold persuasively argues that the *Stellinga* were, at least before 842, most likely ‘communities of men who participated in the dispensing of customary justice’, who ‘were accepted and tolerated in the Carolingian world’.³⁸² Crucial to her argument is the notion that Lothar allied himself to the *Stellinga* in 841, as narrated by Prudentius of Troyes (in the *Annales Bertiniani*), as well as Nithard.³⁸³ This connection between Lothar and the *Stellinga* has been disputed in the past, but, as Rembold rightly argues, there is no reason to discredit two independent reports just because their authors were biased against Lothar.³⁸⁴ Another argument that has been offered against the existence of this connection is that it would simply have made no sense for Lothar to ally himself to a mass of peasants, because this would certainly have alienated his elite allies. It is, however, not necessary to see the *Stellinga* as an anti-elite movement: Prudentius, for one, does not mention any *servi-domini* or *nobiles-ignobiles* dichotomy. He simply writes that the *Stellinga* were the men who ‘had resisted Louis and his *fideles* so fervently’.³⁸⁵ This passage suggests that the *Stellinga* at first waged their war specifically against the Saxon *fideles* that supported Louis the German – perhaps in close cooperation with Lothar –, not against the Saxon aristocracy at large. The *Stellinga* only truly became a revolt *after* the hostilities between Lothar and his brothers ended in June 842.

³⁷⁹ Eric Goldberg disputes the Marxist reading of the *Stellinga*, but he does not abandon the framework of the *Stellinga* as a peasant revolt: see E. J. Goldberg, ‘Popular revolt, dynastic politics and aristocratic factionalism in the early Middle Ages: the Saxon “Stellinga” reconsidered’, in *Speculum*, 70 (1995), pp. 467-501, esp. p. 468.

³⁸⁰ I am grateful to Robert Flierman and Ingrid Rembold for having allowed me to consult their dissertations.

³⁸¹ R. Flierman, ‘Pagan, pirate, subject, saint. defining and redefining Saxons, 150-900 A.D.’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Utrecht, 2015), p. 223.

³⁸² I. Rembold, ‘The politics of Christianization in Carolingian history’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge, 2014), p. 93.

³⁸³ *Ibid.* pp. 94-95.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

³⁸⁵ *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. trans. G. Waitz, *Quellen zur Karolingischen Reichsgeschichte*, vol. 2 (Darmstadt 1969), pp. 11-287, here s.a. 842, p. 59; English translation by J. L. Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin*, *Ninth-Century Histories* 1 (Manchester 1991), here p. 58.

Perhaps emboldened by their success, they continued agitating. It was this that likely provoked Louis the German's expedition to Saxony in August 842, during which he *nobiliter* crushed the *Stellinga*. Yet even after that year, the *Stellinga* rose up once again: Nithard describes a later resurgence that took place in 842 or 843.³⁸⁶ By that time, the *Stellinga* certainly no longer operated 'within the rules of the game'.³⁸⁷ Nithard and the three annalists thus portray Saxon society as being divided between *nobiles/domini* and *ignobiles/servi*, while this division would at the inception of the *Stellinga* itself have been much less relevant. The dichotomous view of society proposed by these authors must therefore be seen as a later response to the continuing agitation of the *Stellinga*. Although Einhard and Nithard are very conscious of the nobility of the Saxons as a legal category, their denunciations of *ignobiles* were of an extremely situational nature. With the exception of the rebellious Saxons, Carolingian authors did not see nobility as a strict legal category.³⁸⁸

7.4. Defending the poor and upward social mobility

Although Carolingian capitularies admonished corrupt *pauperes*, Thegan virulently argues against the upward social mobility of *servi* like Ebo, while some of the narrators of the *Stellinga* revolt denounced the Saxon rebels as perfidious *ignobiles*, many Carolingian authors reveal, in fact, very positive views on the poor, upward social mobility of *ignobiles*, as well as on the ideal of social equality.³⁸⁹ A good example can be found in Jonas of Orleans's *De institutione laicali*. To him, all men were naturally equal, and he found it 'deplorable' that the poor were robbed by the rich of those goods that God had conceded as common to man, such as wild animals.³⁹⁰ Jonas orders the *dives* to 'recognise those who show themselves in this world to be weak and low in refinement and appearance and dissimilar in wealth, to be equal and similar to themselves by nature'.³⁹¹ Jonas did not only assert this equality, but also demanded concrete behaviour from the rich laity: he complains that some people only honour rich priests, but fail to pay honour to the poor among them.³⁹² This attack on the rich in defence of the poor would have been unseemly to Pseudo-Cyprian. Taking into account the Irish law tracts on status and Pseudo-Cyprian's eighth abuse, he and his fellow

³⁸⁶ Nithard, *Historiae*, IV, c. 6, p. 458.

³⁸⁷ Rembold, 'Politics of Christianization', 109

³⁸⁸ J. L. Nelson, 'Nobility in the ninth century', in A. J. Duggan (ed.), *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 43-53, here pp. 45-47.

³⁸⁹ C.f. W. Derlihy, 'Three patterns of social mobility in medieval history', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 3.4. (1973), pp. 624-647, arguing for significant possibilities of social mobility throughout the Middle Ages.

³⁹⁰ Jonas of Orleans, *De institutione laicali*, PL 106, cols 121-278, here II, c. 23 col. 215.

³⁹¹ Jonas of Orleans, *De institutione laicali*, II, c. 22, col. 215: '*Cum causam pauperum Christi, quidam fastu potentiae tumefacti, quidam diuturna requie delectati, quidam etiam corporales delicias, in quibus nimium metas discretionis excedentes resolvuntur, amplexati, non magnopere ducere soleant, existunt nihilominus quamplures qui ob amorem canum et diversissimas venationes, quibus miserabiliter insistent, et se, et pauperum curas quodammodo negligunt*' trans. Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, p. 219

³⁹² Jonas of Orleans, *De Institutione laicali*, II, cc. 15, 20, cols 196, 208-9: for the above I am following Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, pp. 219-220.

clergymen-aristocrats would likely have balked at the very notion of paying the same respects to a poor as to a rich priest.

Yet Jonas went further than simply denouncing the sins of the rich and powerful. He deplored the lack of a unified Christian community on earth, and compared the contemporary situation to the primitive Church: ‘the possessions that were common to them [i.e. the members of the primitive Church], now thus are personal to certain people, so that very rarely anything is returned to the use of another from them’.³⁹³ Recently, Guy Lobrichon edited an early ninth-century text in which the anonymous author(s) attempt to refute exactly this notion of going back to the primitive Church, when possessions ‘were common’ to all Christians: ‘There are people in the Holy Church who claim on diverse grounds that it should not have accepted the fiefs of property, slaves [*mancipia*], or other offerings, and that it should not keep what it received’.³⁹⁴ Both Jonas’s remarks and this anonymous tractate suggest that there was a group in the Church who longed back to what the authors of the tractate defined as the ‘poverty of the time of the apostles’.³⁹⁵ However, considering that only one author (Jonas) seems to favour this return to the poverty of the primitive Church, while only one other text testifies to a ‘faction’ making the same case, this was likely no very popular notion among Carolingian elites.³⁹⁶

There seems to have existed more of a majority position in favour of upward social mobility of non-nobles. The dichotomous view of society, constructed with most force by Thegan and situationally employed by the Carolingian authors discussing the *Stellinga* revolt, was not only limited in its popularity, but also explicitly disputed. First of all, Lothar’s attempts to create an alliance with the *Stellinga* reveal that, in spite of the antipathy levelled against ignoble *servi* by Thegan, Nithard, and the annalists of Fulda and Xanten, powerful members of the secular Carolingian elite were content with according non-nobles a position of power if that suited their interests. Secondly, a critique of the dichotomous view of society proposed by Thegan can be found in an 858 exhortation by Hincmar, in which he asked Louis the German not to listen to those bishops whom he claimed that he should listen only to the *nobiles*. According to Hincmar it was not noble birth, but apostolic succession that truly makes a bishop.³⁹⁷ Just like Thegan argued against the new episcopal model

³⁹³ *De Institutione laicali*, I, c. 20, col. 164, trans. Stone, ‘Laicus’, p. 12.

³⁹⁴ *Libellus sacrae paginis veteris testamenti excerptae qualiter omnia dona ecclesiarum ab antecessoribus patribus conlata sunt*, ed. G. Lobrichon, ‘Biens d’église, offrandes et lieux sacres: autour d’un traité carolingien inédit’, in M. Lauwers (ed.), *La dîme, l’église et la société féodale* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 123-153, here p. 123.

³⁹⁵ *Libellus sacrae paginis veteris testamenti*, p. 123.

³⁹⁶ On thinking about wealth in the Carolingian Church, see Iogna-Prat, D., ‘Préparer l’au-delà, gérer l’ici-bas: Les élites ecclésiastiques, la richesse et l’économie du christianisme (perspectives de travail)’, in J.-P. Devroey, L. Feller, and R. Le Jan (eds), *Les Elites et la richesse au Haut Moyen Age*, Haut Moyen Age 10 (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 59-70; H.-W. Goetz, ‘Idéologie (et anti-idéologie) de la richesse au haut Moyen Age’, in J.-P. Devroey, L. Feller, and R. Le Jan (eds), *Les Elites et la richesse au Haut Moyen Age*, Haut Moyen Age 10 (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 33-58; J. Devisse, ‘“Pauperes” et “Paupertas” dans le monde carolingien: ce qu’en dit Hincmar de Reims’, *Revue du Nord*, 190 (1966), pp. 273-288.

³⁹⁷ *Council of Quierzy* (858), ed. W. Hartmann, MGH Conc. 3, no. 41, pp. 403-427, discussed in Patzold, ‘Office épiscopal’, 354-356.

on the grounds that it negated the importance of nobility, Hincmar disputed a dichotomous worldview in which *ignobiles* were not accorded any political power.

That the upward social mobility of clerics was not seen as a moral affront by the majority of Carolingian *potentes* is further suggested by the *Admonitio Generalis*. One chapter in this programmatic text states that new clergymen are to be recruited from both servile as well as freeborn children, and the same *capitulum* stressed the need of correcting the monastic school's books properly. This suggests that servile children would also enjoy an education to be able to correct and read liturgical texts.³⁹⁸ Clearly, the idea that 'a child of goatherds' like Ebo could become a learned clergyman was not seen as an affront to the good order by the authors of one of the most programmatic and early texts of the Carolingian reform. In fact, as suggested by Stuart Airlie, the Carolingians might have desperately needed intelligent lower-class boys. They did not only bring talent, but also loyalty to Carolingian kings and bishops. After all, they could not fall back on the kinship networks of established aristocrats, and were in large part dependent on their new patrons. The relatively positive view of social mobility espoused by elite authors might thus lie in the 'hunger of Carolingians for talented and trustworthy servants'.³⁹⁹

This positive view of upward social mobility still seems to have been in vogue in the 880s, when Notker projected it back onto the reign of Charlemagne in his *Gesta Karoli*. His work as a whole shows a great sympathy for the poor and the ignoble, and a great preoccupation with 'the humbling of the proud and the rewarding of the humble'.⁴⁰⁰ At the very beginning of this text, Notker narrates how two Scots from Ireland appeared on the coast of Gaul, who cried out to the crowds that they had wisdom for sale. Charlemagne sought exactly this, summoned, and after keeping them with himself for a short while instructed one of them 'to reside in Gaul, and he assigned him a good many boys of the nobility, of the middling sort, and of the lower classes'.⁴⁰¹ This passage suggests that in the 880s, it was still very much seen as acceptable to draft ignoble boys into the ranks of the clergy. Notker, however, went further than that. Later in his work, he narrates how at one point Charlemagne ordered some boys he had sent to be learned in letters to come to him, so that they could present the epistles and poems that they had written. Notker then contrasts the ignoble with the noble boys: 'Those of the middling and lower sort offered works adorned, beyond his expectations, with every sweet sign of wisdom. The noble boys, however, handed over flimsy

³⁹⁸ *Admonitio generalis*, ed. trans. H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes, and M. Glatthaar, *Die Admonitio generalis Karls des Großen* (Hannover, 2012), pp. 179-242, here c. 70, pp. 222-224.

³⁹⁹ Airlie, 'Bonds of power', p. 204.

⁴⁰⁰ MacLean, *Kingship and Politics*, p. 205, n. 32.

⁴⁰¹ Notker the Stammerer, *Gesta Karoli Magni imperatoris*, ed. H. F. Haefele, MGH Script. rer. Germ. N.S., 12, here I, c. 1, pp. 1-3, English translations by T. F. X. Noble, *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: Lives by Einbard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer* (University Park, Pa. 2009), here pp. 59-60.

works that were wholly silly'.⁴⁰² After having heard the boy's orations of their works, Charlemagne rained praise on the ignobles, while then condemning the noble ones: 'You nobles, you sons of magnates, you delicate and pretty boys, you who trust in your birth and wealth, setting aside my command and your own advancement, you neglected the study of letters, and you indulged in luxury, games, idleness, and useless pastimes'.⁴⁰³

In this part of the text, Notker not only constructs the ignoble boys as more capable and disciplined, but also explicitly argues in favour of ignoble social mobility in the ranks of the clergy. He lets Charlemagne proclaim that the ignoble boys have earned 'great favor' with him, and that they should 'be eager to do even better', so that they can look forward to being with 'bishoprics and splendid monasteries'.⁴⁰⁴ This story is picked up again in a later chapter, when Notker narrates how one of these poor boys praised by Charlemagne is indeed given a bishopric, to the detriment to a noble candidate put forward by Queen Hildegard.⁴⁰⁵

The poor and low-born did not have to be skilled in the learned life to be worthy of Charlemagne's (meaning here: Notker's) praise. He narrates how, at one point in Charlemagne's reign, there 'was a certain poor and low-born cleric in the entourage of the king who was not well enough instructed in letters'.⁴⁰⁶ When Charlemagne heard that a bishop had died, he promised the bishopric to a 'man of no little nobility and learning'.⁴⁰⁷ This soon-to-be bishop was overjoyed, promptly organised a banquet for his friends and acquaintances in celebration of his new appointment, and supposedly had a very merry time. In his impressive state of inebriation, or, in Notker's words, 'drowned in the strong drink, and nearly dead from the wine', the happy drinker forgot a rather important appointment: he was due to take part in the night Office, and his absence meant that he failed to sing his part of the ceremony.⁴⁰⁸ Because of his absence, there ensued a long silence after the reading, and all clerics refused to take up his response. That is, until Charlemagne demanded that someone sing. The 'poor and low born cleric' introduced by Notker at the beginning of the chapter in question then makes a reappearance, takes over the soon-to-be-bishop's part, upon which the night Office continues in an orderly fashion.⁴⁰⁹ Charlemagne was so contented with this performance that he retracted his promise to give the bishopric to the noble and learned man, instead giving it to the poor, unlearned, and ignoble poor man.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰² Notker, *Gesta Karoli*, c. 3, pp. 4-5, trans. p. 61.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5, trans. p. 61.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, c. 4, p. 5, trans. p. 62.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, c. 5, p. 7, trans. p. 63.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, c. 5, p. 8, trans. p. 63.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, c. 5, p. 9, trans. p. 64.

It has been suggested that 'Thegan's audience of noble *potentes* could take the character assassination of Ebbo on board, and nod smugly', but, as the above suggests, not all that many *nobiles* would have agreed with Thegan's exceptionally harsh views on socially mobile *servi*.⁴¹¹ Taken together, the *Admonitio generalis* on ignoble clerics, Jonas of Orleans's attacks on the rich, Hincmar's letters on the nobility of bishops, and Notker's retrospective accounts of ignoble social mobility, suggest that Carolingian elites were, from the reign of Charlemagne up to that of Charles the Bald, not only generally more critical of the rich, instead of being anxious about the ambitions of the (proud) poor, but even explicitly allowed *ignobiles* to rise up in the clerical hierarchy.⁴¹² This contrasts sharply with notions of social justice in early medieval Ireland, where hierarchies were codified, social mobility fiercely denounced, and the 'freeing of peasants' could lead to an upturning of the cosmological order.

This brings us to a final question: what lay at the foundation of these very different ideas on social justice in early medieval Ireland and the Carolingian world? One possible explanation for this difference in the two worldviews might be found in Chris Wickham's notion of a 'structural difference between peasant-mode societies where status among peasant producers was relatively impermanent, and depended on consent and reciprocal gift-giving, which inhibited accumulation; and feudal-mode societies, where most surplus was taken from peasant producers by lords, and was accumulated and then spent outside the peasant context altogether'.⁴¹³ Early medieval Ireland was, according to Wickham, a peasant mode society, as shown by the dominance of gift-giving and the in practice very egalitarian social structure. Only great kings, and in the eighth century possibly also churches, would have been able to acquire wealth on a large scale.⁴¹⁴ In Francia, on the other hand, the 'peasant mode' of society weakened from 750 onwards, and had in some areas been largely superseded by the 'feudal mode' ca. 800.⁴¹⁵

An important consequence of this difference is that Carolingian landowners would on the whole have been much more confident in relation to ambitious *ignobiles* than members of the Irish elites in Pseudo-Cyprian's day. The waning of the 'peasant mode' on the continent showed itself in a strengthening of aristocratic domination over society.⁴¹⁶ First of all, this meant that the military

⁴¹¹ Nelson, 'Nobility in the ninth century', p. 46.

⁴¹² J. J. Contreni, 'The Carolingian renaissance: education and literary culture', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 709-757, here p. 716.

⁴¹³ Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 304, 571.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 571; P. Cammarosano, '*Potentes et pauperes*: stratification et mobilité sociale dans le monde carolingien', in W. Falkowski and Y. Sassier (eds), *Le monde carolingien: Bilan, perspectives, champs de recherches* (Turnhout 2009), pp. 323-332, here p. 326.

discipline became the guarded monopoly of the nobility.⁴¹⁷ This process is exemplified by the famous story of Wala's humiliation in Radbertus's *Epitaphium Arsenii*.⁴¹⁸ Radbert narrates how the emperor, 'by an inspiration of some kind', had decided that Wala 'should be humbled and forced back among the weaker ones'. After thus being shunned at court, Wala despondently took to the road. During his travels, Radbert narrates, Wala met a *rusticus* driving a cart, who was girded with a belt and arms. Wala offered to swap his own *arma* with those the *rusticus* 'was carrying as a poor man', an offer that was gladly accepted by the latter.⁴¹⁹ After the men had exchanged their belts and arms, Wala exclaimed: 'Lowly things suit me better, since I am not occupied with soldiery (*militia*) of the present age, but with affairs of common life'.⁴²⁰ What this tells us, then, is that, while the *ignobile vulgus* was not yet completely unarmed, the honour of having well-made arms had become the very hallmark of nobility; after abandoning his *arma* and taking over those of the peasant, Wala was no longer a professional fighting man.⁴²¹ Compare this to the 'peasant-mode society' of early medieval Ireland, where *all* freemen, noble or not, were seen as potential warriors.⁴²²

Secondly, the increasing aristocratic domination over peasant society entailed an increase in disputes between aristocratic landholders and peasants. Peasants disputed increased rents, the seizure of land by their lords, the imposition of new labour impositions, monastic rights over woodcutting and animal pasture, and so forth.⁴²³ However, crucially, this kind of peasant resistance played itself out *within* the Carolingian order.⁴²⁴ Carolingian aristocrats could afford to be self-confident: social mobility and peasant discontent were no longer true threats to their position.⁴²⁵ The *Stellinga* managed to evoke so much negative commentary on perfidious *ignobiles* precisely because it was such an exceptional event: being a large-scale peasant revolt, ignoble discontent here, but only once, transversed the borders of the Carolingian order. Pseudo-Cyprian and his contemporaries lacked the notion that peasant resistance could play itself out within the context of an aristocratic order. In their relatively egalitarian society nobles were always under threat of losing their

⁴¹⁷ T. F. X. Noble, 'Secular sanctity: forging an ethos for the Carolingian nobility', in P. C. Wormald and J. L. Nelson (eds), *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge 2007), pp. 8-36, here pp. 17-18.

⁴¹⁸ Leyser, 'Beginnings of knighthood', p. 554.

⁴¹⁹ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, PL 120, Cols 1557-1650, here c. 6, col. 1572A, trans. J. A. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins: Contemporary Lives of Adalard and Wala* (Syracuse, NY 1967), pp. 83-204, here p. 99.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴²¹ K. J. Leyser, 'Early medieval canon law and the beginnings of knighthood', in L. Fenske, W. Rösener and T. Zotz (eds), *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Josef Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen 1984), pp. 549-566, here p. 566.

⁴²² Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, p. 68.

⁴²³ S. Epperlein, *Herrschaft und Volk im karolingischen Imperium. Studien über soziale Konflikte und dogmatisch-politische Kontroversen im fränkischen Reich* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 20-39; Wickham, *Early Middle Ages*, pp. 579-581; G. Albertoni, 'Law and the peasant: rural society and justice in Carolingian Italy', in *Early medieval Europe*, 18 (2010), pp. 417-445; A. Rio, 'Freedom and unfreedom in early medieval Francia: the evidence of the legal formulae', *Past & Present*, 193 (2006), pp. 7-40; W. Davies, 'On servile status in the early Middle Ages', in M. L. Bush (ed.), *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage* (London, 1996), pp. 225-246.

⁴²⁴ Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, 585.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 574.

status to up-and-comers. Paradoxically, the early Irish ‘ranks of status’ are therefore more likely a sign of an elite that was constantly in flux and under threat, than of the intensely static society that these laws try to evoke. This great fear and uncertainty over status consequentially spawned Pseudo-Cyprian’s vicious attack on ambitious and proud *pauperes*, while the more stable social position of Carolingian aristocrats meant that Pseudo-Cyprian’s harsh words on the *pauper superbus* were of little use to their ends. They no longer needed to fear or hate their ambitious ignoble peers. Despite dissenting voices – of which Thegan is certainly the ‘loudest’ surviving example – Carolingian elites possessed enough social confidence to allow *ignobiles* into their ranks.

Conclusion

This thesis took off by introducing an anonymous treatise written ‘somewhere’ in seventh-century Ireland, and we eventually ended up in the very different world of ninth-century Francia. There, Carolingian authors had found a multitude of new uses and interpretations of this text, some of which would certainly have baffled the original author. This journey of *De duodecim abusivis* from one social context to another does not only shed light on how the Carolingians ‘received’ the treatise, or how it influenced a particular scholarly tradition. Perhaps more valuable than all that, the way Carolingian authors used *De duodecim abusivis* reveals much about how they perceived and moralised ‘social justice’.

We have first experienced how Pseudo-Cyprian’s work was on the one hand indebted to a specifically Irish cultural tradition, and on the other hand made use of patristic traditions and a large number of Biblical texts. Most notably, Pseudo-Cyprian went much further than his patristic and Biblical sources in defaming the *pauper superbus*, effectively extrapolating a single Biblical excerpt into a full-blown attack on the ambitions and ‘puffed-up minds’ of those *pauperes* who vainly seek earthly riches. Compared to the proud poor man, the *dives sine eleemosyna* got off relatively well: he would endanger his own soul, but was no ‘offence to God himself’.

After having then seen *De duodecim abusivis* in its social context, both the contents of the text and its author were further illuminated. Pseudo-Cyprian was, it became clear, a member of a fiercely elitist nobility, and his tractate can in this context be seen as an attempt to construct a ‘classed society’. To Pseudo-Cyprian, it was fundamentally socially unjust for the poor to seek earthly riches and social advancement, an idea which is mirrored in the strict laws on status drafted by his peers. However, paradoxically Irish society was also very egalitarian, while the equation of ‘status’ with ‘property’ meant that both upwards and downwards social mobility was likely a common occurrence. We have also seen how the central importance accorded to the king in matters of almsgiving was likely a reflection of this focus on wealth in matters of status, as well as of the absence of the bishop as a *pater pauperum* in early medieval Ireland.

We then turned our gaze to the Carolingian world, first by looking at the manuscript context of *De duodecim abusivis*. This made clear that Pseudo-Cyprian’s *De duodecim abusivis* was not only a relatively well-known and popular text, but also told us much about the possible uses of this treatise, and its audiences: *De duodecim abusivis* was likely used by bishops in a preaching context, was associated with clerical sin and penance, and also had a role to play in Louis the German’s conflicts with his sons. However, long before the earliest surviving manuscript was composed, Cathwulf already wrote a letter in which he transmitted the Pseudo-Cyprian model of kingship to the Carolingian court. The to the Carolingians unique focus on the king as the carer for the poor,

combined with the cosmological notion of kingship that underpinned this kingly duty, made Pseudo-Cyprian's treatise a perfect source for those Carolingian reformers who were propagating a new 'sacralised' or 'Christianised' model of kingship. In this new model of kingship, the king was more than before defined as the quintessential carer for the poor. Additionally, Hincmar's wielding of the *Dominus sine virtute* shows the text's usability in directly admonishing clerical *potentes* over their oppressions of the lower clergy.

Yet other parts of the text remained uncited, despite providing unique material – such was the case with the *pauper superbis*. More than any other part of the treatise, the Irish context of this archetype and its subsequent non-reception by the Carolingians reveals a difference in notions of social justice between early medieval Ireland and the Carolingian world. To the Carolingians, it was only right that exceptionally talented commoner-boys could rise up in the ranks of the clergy. After all, their expertise was sorely needed, while aristocratic domination over society was too firm for limited upward social mobility of the poor and ignoble to be a constant threat. To Pseudo-Cyprian and his peers, on the other hand, social mobility would have evoked the origin myth narrated in the *Audacht Morainn* of Ireland's last surviving noble child after the onslaught of the 'vassal peoples'. In his society, nobility was much more tenuous, and an uprising by the ignoble poor must have appeared to be a very real possibility.

In conclusion, I would like to propose two avenues for further research. First of all, I have argued that many Carolingian elite authors reveal relatively positive views about the poor, the less powerful, and the upward social mobility of these groups in society, which would have made Pseudo-Cyprian's abuse of the *pauper superbis* a text too radical in its hostility against the poor to be of much use to their writings on issues of wealth and poverty. Hincmar argued against the notion that only *nobiles* could become bishops, while Notker contrasted ambitious and diligent poor clerical boys with their lazy and frivolous noble peers. Jonas of Orleans went even further, concretely denouncing those who honoured rich priests, but not poor ones, while also appealing to the poverty of the primitive Church in condemning the rich of his own day. Although there of course existed negative stereotypes of the poor and the ignoble in the ninth century, these seem to have been limited, devoid of the contempt that marks Pseudo-Cyprian's text, and, as in the case of the *Stellinga*, situational.

One way in which this can be explored further is by looking more closely at the relationship between Carolingian thinking about social justice and what could be called the 'practice' of poor care, hierarchy, and social mobility: how were ideas about social justice 'translated' into Carolingian legislative efforts, and what was in turn, the practical significance of defining the ruler as the guarantor of the *causa pauperum*? Did legislative efforts on the *pauperes* actually help 'the poor', and, if so, can we more closely define what kind of social groups benefited from this legislation? I would

argue that the current view in the historiography on these questions, namely that legislation about the poor did not have ‘any direct connection with the aspirations declared in our more ideological texts’, and that such legislation on the poor was merely meant ‘to demonstrate that those exercising power did so legitimately’, is in need of revision.⁴²⁶ After all, it seems very unlikely that a person like Jonas of Orleans understood his words on the poor, equality, and the primitive Church in his *De institutione laicali* as having no connection to the description of the *causa pauperum* as being a part of the *ministerium regis* in the 829 Paris council acts, which he redacted.

Secondly, I have suggested that the Carolingian’s use of Pseudo-Cyprian’s treatise reveals a difference between early medieval Irish and Carolingian thinking about social justice. Building upon this, I would like to end by proposing that further comparative studies between Carolingian notions of social justice and those of preceding and following eras might yield a much-needed new narrative on Carolingian notions of wealth and social mobility. How did Carolingian thinking about social mobility and the poor relate to ideas of social justice in Late Antiquity, and was wealth really only truly ‘problematised’ from the eleventh century onwards?⁴²⁷ Although Bosl’s reduction of all Carolingian ideas about the poor and social justice to a supposed *pauper-potens* dichotomy still seems to have some currency in current historiography, I hope to have shown that Carolingian *pauperes* had a multitude of different faces. A more fruitful narrative on Carolingian notions of social justice could instead hinge on the comparatively positive views of Carolingian elites on upward social mobility and the poor.

⁴²⁶ Costambeys, *Carolingian World*, p. 264.

⁴²⁷ Particularly late antique studies seem to have been blessed with more syncretical works on thinking about social justice. See particularly Jones, *Social Mobility in Late Antique Gaul*; Brown, *Through the Eye of the Needle*; Id., *Treasure in Heaven. The Holy Poor in Early Christianity* (Charlottesville/London, 2016), on the ‘holy’ and ‘real’ poor in late antique thinking. On how wealth is still assumed to have only truly been problematised from the eleventh century onwards, see Lobrichon, ‘Biens d’église’, pp. 107-109 and H.-W. Goetz, ‘Idéologie (et anti-idéologie) de la richesse au haut Moyen Age’, in J.-P. Devroey, L. Feller, and R. Le Jan (eds), *Les Elites et la richesse au Haut Moyen Age*, Haut Moyen Age 10 (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 33-58.

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