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The Eighth Sacrament? The Evidence of Hincmar of Rheims

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The Eighth Sacrament?

The Evidence of Hincmar of Rheims

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Honors Bachelor of Arts – Capstone Thesis

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Introduction: Hincmar, the Father of Sacramental Coronation

“And now Samuel took out his phial of oil, and poured it out over Saul’s head; then he kissed him, and said, Hereby the Lord anoints thee to be the leader of his chosen people; thine it shall be to deliver them from the enemies that hedge them round.”

I Samuel 10:1.

Charles X was the last Bourbon king of France and the last French king to be inaugurated into his office with a solemn rite of consecration, the *sacre*.¹ He himself had lain prostrate before the Archbishop of Rheims who, clad in his pontifical garb, was ready to perform his most solemn liturgical function: to celebrate the *sacre du roi* was the highest privilege of the bishop of that see. As the king-to-be lay with his face on the floor, the archbishop stood in prayerful silence, the Holy Ampulla containing precious oil sent from heaven rested on the high altar, and the choir intoned the litany of the saints, begging their intercession for the future king. When the litany had finished, the archbishop anointed the king with chrism from the Ampulla, first on the breast and shoulders, then on the hands and head. The king was then clothed in the deacon’s dalmatic and the subdeacon’s tunicle, before receiving the royal mantle and, of course, his crown. Lastly, the king was invested with the symbols of his office: slippers, spurs, and sword, along with the scepter and the hand of justice. The archbishop removed his imposing mitre and in a sign of obedience and humility kissed the newly crowned king and shouted, *vivat rex in aeternum!*²

This rite took place less than two hundred years ago, on May 29th, 1825, marking the dramatic conclusion of a liturgical tradition that had begun over one thousand years before. The

¹ The Latin words for the French, *sacre*, are *consecratio* and *coronatio*; the two are used interchangeably and should be regarded as synonyms (Jackson 1984:225 n. 1.). For the purposes of clarity, I will use the terms ‘consecration,’ ‘coronation rite,’ ‘rite of coronation,’ and ‘sacramental coronation’ to refer to the whole of the king-making rite. At the end of this introduction (pg. 9), I introduce the distinction between sacramental unction and juridical crowning which are the two parts of a king’s consecration: unction is the sacramental action of anointing the king with chrism oil and crowning is the physical placing of the crown on the head of the king.

² Jackson 1984:192f.

sacre of Charles X stands as a major question mark in French history, occurring only a short thirty-six years *after* the infamous storming of the Bastille and the terrors of the French Revolution. This ceremony had indeed been thoroughly edited so as not to offend the modern sensibilities of post-revolution France, but as was summed up at that time in a Parisian newspaper: “whatever changes the coronation ceremony has been subjected to, it resembles the old ceremony more than the public today resembles that of the past.”³ What was it about the *sacre* that demanded that it still be celebrated for the restored Bourbon? Was it a political ploy or does it represent something deeper? Why was it necessary that Charles X’s *legitimacy* be recognized by a liturgy of the Church, years after the French state had become thoroughly secular?

To answer this question is to investigate the depth of the significance not only of Charles X’s coronation in particular, but that of the entire French tradition of the *sacre* in general. To answer this question is to ask another: whence comes this rite? Of what bygone age is it a relic? Who were the actors of this liturgical and regal drama? Long before any Bourbon occupied the French throne and long before there was even such a thing as ‘France,’ coronation rites were penned and celebrated for the Frankish Carolingians. The oldest surviving collection of royal coronation *ordines* from continental Europe were written and celebrated by a ninth century archbishop, Hincmar of Rheims, who while reigning as metropolitan of Rheims from 845 to 882 celebrated two coronations for kings and two for queens. Without a doubt, Hincmar is the father of the French liturgical tradition of crowning. In fact, “the combination of anointing and crowning in a single ceremony was given a clear form [for the first time] by Archbishop Hincmar.”⁴ Hincmar’s influence was equally felt in all corners of Europe with his rites having

³ Jackson 1984:199.

⁴ Jackson 1984:203.

influenced not only the French but also the Holy Roman Emperors in Germany and even the still reigning kings and queens of the House of Windsor in England and Scotland: “the subsequent history of anointing and crowning in all the kingdoms of western Europe built upon the foundations” laid by Hincmar.⁵ So influential were the rites of Hincmar that half of the prayers he penned for Charles the Bald were still prayed over Charles X almost one thousand years later. So sweeping, that only one of nearly a dozen benedictions prayed over Louis the Stammerer was not repeated over the last Bourbon.⁶ Hincmar was responsible for nothing short of a revolutionary change in the king-making practices of the ninth century Franks, which bled into the heart of all European monarchy: “from the times of Hincmar of Rheims... [the] ceremony of accession ceased to be a secular practice, for it had become a liturgical rite through which the Church inextricably associated itself with the monarchy.”⁷ To understand Hincmar, and his rites, is to understand an ideology that lays buried deep within the heartland of Europe: the marriage between the throne and the altar.

The rites and doctrines of Christianity are at the historical center of the Western world, thanks in part to Hincmar and other actors, but also thanks to the ever-penetrating force of Christianity. Christianity extends its influence to every sphere of human life due to its incarnational outlook. The incarnational faith of Christianity views the world with sacramental eyes: the world of matter is but one world, behind which lies the world of grace. These two worlds do not remain separate, but are united together in seven sacraments instituted by Christ. Baptism, so that man may be born again into the life and death of Christ, being set aside as a

⁵ Jackson 1984:204.

⁶ Jackson 1984:204.

⁷ Jackson 1984:204; Jackson opts for the newer French spelling, *Reims*, but for the sake of continuity I have chosen older French spelling, *Rheims*, because this is the spelling most frequently employed by English-speaking scholars. For a discussion of the secular practices of royal inauguration that were still in play during the long ninth century, see Nelson: 1996:99-131.

member of the Faithful; Confirmation, so that man may be invigorated with the power of the Holy Spirit; Eucharist, so that man may have the bread of life to be his food and share intimate connection with Jesus; Penance, so that man may receive pardon for his faults and reconciliation with his God; Anointing of the Sick, so that the sufferings of earthly life may be borne with the grace of the life to come; Matrimony, so that man may not have to walk this life alone, but have a companion in the flesh to walk beside him; and Holy Orders, so that man may not walk in blindness, but have guides on the straight and narrow path, who will help to correct him when he errs.

These seven Sacraments were defined in scope and number by the successors of Christ's apostles at the Council of Florence in the 15th century. They have been reaffirmed by their successors time and time again, most notably at the Council of Trent in the 16th century and II Vatican Council in the 20th. So important are these sacraments to apostolic Christianity that they are the primary mark of distinction between the Protestant and Catholic faiths. But just as with every doctrine defined, there exists a continuum of authentic development, through which the Church comes to a greater understanding of the faith She proclaims as time goes on. Before the Council of Florence, it was not explicit that the number of sacraments was restricted to seven. St. Augustine included the recitation of the creeds and the Lord's Prayer as sacraments; other Church Fathers had lists of more or less than seven. One such pre-Florence sacrament that was commonly mentioned on longer lists was the sacrament of the coronation of Christian kings. The inclusion of coronation as a sacrament stands to reason given what has already been said of the nature of the sacraments, viz., that they engage each aspect of earthly life and instill divine grace into them. Why should the political life be any different? What could be any more important than an inward grace to guide a man in the office of his kingship? We are not alone in asking this

question. In fact, after the 15th century council “strictly defined the Church’s sacraments and limited their number to seven...the French continued to insist that the consecration of their king was an eighth sacrament.”⁸ With this insight, we begin to understand why Charles X’s *sacre* may have been necessary even though six centuries had passed since the definition: “the French conception of the *sacre* as an eighth sacrament and the king’s special position in the Church (...) made it impossible for a man to become king of France without the direct and immediate aide of the ecclesiastically administered balm.”⁹ In this estimation, we come to understand that, for the French, it is not bloodline that bestows the legitimacy of kingship, but rather the fact that a sacrament of the Church had installed a man to that office. This fact may seem controversial given the absolute nature of the Bourbon monarchy which is exemplified in Louis XIV and the elevation of the status of the Princes of the Blood above the Peers of the Realm over the course of the *Ancien Régime*, but will ultimately be given more clarity in the second chapter of the present work.¹⁰

The French view of a sacramental coronation that granted legitimacy to their kings was emboldened by the sacramental privileges given to the king after his *sacre*; for example, the fact that the king and his queen were allowed to receive holy communion in the form of both bread and wine during the mass that immediately followed his elevation to the office of kingship. Despite the French claim of the sacramental status of their king-making rite, with such scope in the conclusion that could be gathered from confirmation of such a claim, “the conception of the French royal consecration as an eighth sacrament has yet to be satisfactorily investigated.”¹¹ This will serve as the point of departure for the present investigation. It is not my goal to attempt to

⁸ Jackson 1984:32.

⁹ Jackson 1984:205.

¹⁰ Jackson (1984) makes the elevation of the Princes of the Blood out to be one of the most important ideological shifts of the French *sacre*.

¹¹ Jackson 1984:232.

resolve the unsatisfactory state of the secondary literature with regards to this question, but rather to provide a foundation upon which such an investigation would find significant meaning. Given the fact of doctrinal development which dictates the preservation of type in any legitimate development, my task is to search for the originary shadow of that type.¹²

To search out the origins of potentially sacramental coronation is to be confronted with the man, Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims, who is the conduit of their continued use and the earliest locus of our access to them. Hincmar, of course, has been studied before, but particularly within the field of coronation studies, too little attention has been paid on Hincmar's own reflexive understanding of his rites or their potentially sacramental purpose. Hincmar's four coronation *ordines* and the events surrounding them have been studied in great detail, but not with an eye to sacramental questions. This is due perhaps, in part, to a lack of understanding of the significance of the sacramental questions, especially as it relates to the bestowal of legitimacy, but also responsible is the difficulty of such questions. Given that sacraments are visible signs of invisible grace, the historian is required to adopt a second set of esoteric, heavenly eyes to complement his exoteric, earthly ones.

This second set of eyes begs a second set of questions. When presented with an actively politically involved bishop, one must ask, "what here is merely political and what here is merely theological?" One must then broach the question of whether such dichotomy is fair. Is it ever the case that man acts with a double motivation? Or is there, rather, a single vision which connects his every pragmatic decision with subtle reason and *vice versa*? While it is perhaps beyond the

¹² 'Preservation of type' is one of the notes of legitimate doctrinal and liturgical developments outlined by John Henry Cardinal Newman in his 19th century work *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. While the work itself is not considered dogmatic, the II Vatican Council did dogmatize the fact of doctrinal development—so influential was Newman's essay. Given that Newman's work was directly responsible for II Vatican Council's claim, his essay is an exemplary tool in discerning legitimate developments—hence its application here.

scope of this introduction to answer if this question is true in general, the present study will show that this is absolutely true of Hincmar. And this is the subject of the first chapter.

In chapter one, I analyze Hincmar's oft-ignored *De Ordine Palatii*. In the relatively few examples where the work has been studied, particularly recently, the work is used to broach questions that, in my estimation, are as interesting as they are speculative. Summarily, the work is an admonition of an old clergyman to the young King Carloman II, exhorting him to adopt customs of palatial and imperial governance that date to the latter's great-great grandfather Charlemagne. Scholars have thus attempted to study the work in order to better understand the government that flourished at the turn of the 9th century. While I do believe that such study is useful and has not been without results, it has had the negative consequence of isolating the *De Ordine Palatii* to this purpose and has not allowed the work to stand on its own merits. When we remove the *De Ordine Palatii* from its pre-war, post-war, and contemporary reception, we find a work replete with subtle, caring, and forceful admonition. We find a politics imbued with theology, yet possessing not even a flavor of theocratic tendency. We discover that Hincmar has a robust, but realistic conception of how the Church and the State ought to be related. He does not see either of the two subordinated to the other in a power relationship, but rather acting in inherently separate spheres of power. Despite the veritable separation of the two, they are united towards one common end: the peace and stability requisite for the practice of right religion. I have called this Hincmar's theopolitical vision and I argue that his theopolitical vision is the proper hermeneutic for interpreting Hincmar's coronation rites.

Seen through this lens, we understand that Hincmar's goal in the celebration of the coronation rites was to unify the Church and State in such a way that the Carolingian Empire would receive the peace and stability of the solidly formed hierarchical structures of the Gallican

Church; on the other hand as well, the Church would receive temporal protection and thus a new level stability on its own. This is Hincmar's theopolitical vision: explained in the *De Ordine Palatii* and lived in his coronation *ordines*. This generally is the subject of chapter two: the fullness that is brought to Hincmar's vision by his coronation rites. The Church, embodied in priesthood, and the State, embodied in kingship, are united together for the safety, both earthly and heavenly, of the people who are entrusted to them. Insofar as Hincmar's ideal of Church-State collaboration is both theological and political, we will see that, beyond simply having an idealistic vision of the theopolitical, Hincmar frequently acts *theopolitically*. This is to say that, more often than not, we can ascribe both a theological and a political justification for any particular actions. Hincmar's political savvy serves to promote his theological aims and *vice versa*, because in Hincmar's vision the theological cannot be separated from the political. This point becomes clear in chapter two through a series of double explanations for the particularities of Hincmar's coronation of Charles the Bald as King of Lotharingia in 869. The historical details of that coronation serve to reveal several sacramental principles that guided Hincmar through the rite. The most notable of these include a devotion to the Old Testament theology of Israel as the people of God and the understanding that the coronation rite is fundamentally divided into two parts: sacramental unction performed by a legally acting metropolitan and juridical crowning performed by the competent juridical authority.

Of course, it would be fallacious to consider Hincmar the sole actor who attempted to bring about the 'inextricable association' between the Church and the State during the reign of the Carolingians, which is indeed the aim of his vision. For instance, it was Pope Zachery who in 751 declared that a Carolingian should become the King of the Franks in place of a Merovingian. But with that having been said, I will argue in the conclusion of the present work that Hincmar's

coronation rights are ultimately responsible for the marriage of the altar and the throne which is exemplified in the understanding that it is the coronation rite *itself*, having been celebrated by the proper authority with the general consent of the people, which bestows legitimacy upon any king. This is to say that Hincmar marks the final shift in a process that had begun as early as the 5th century in the East and the 7th century in the West. While Hincmar did not invent the concept of coronation in a liturgical setting, what he received out of the tradition, he beat into a lasting form and thus in the development of sacramental coronation, Hincmar deserves extraordinary credit and even final mention.

The vast historical influence of Hincmar's coronation rites has already been summarily mentioned and, as will be seen in chapter two, a major part of this influence, at least in France, was due to Hincmar's legend of the Holy Ampulla. The Holy Ampulla, as Hincmar's legend goes, was said to have been delivered from heaven to the hands of St. Remigius for the baptism of the first King of the Franks, Clovis, in 481. Hincmar himself is the earliest source of the legend of the Holy Ampulla which he told for the first time in a speech before the coronation of Charles the Bald. It would take several centuries, but by 1230 there were lengthy sections of the coronation *ordines* devoted to the handling and movement of the Ampulla.¹³ The Holy Ampulla and the cult around it ensured that Rheims would forever remain the spiritual capital of France and the location of the coronations of the Capetian, Valois, and Bourbon kings—long after the metropolitan archdioceses of Sens and, subsequently, Paris had risen to higher ecclesiastical ranks.

Both Hincmar's 'finalization' of coronation rites and his legend of the Holy Ampulla were directly responsible for what would become over the course of the Middle Ages the idea that kingly unction and crowning were constitutive of a sacrament of the Church. For us in the

¹³ Jackson 1984:204.

21st century, that is, after the definition of seven sacraments, the question of coronation as an eighth sacrament must itself fit squarely within the doctrine of seven sacraments as defined by the Council of Florence and reaffirmed by Trent and II Vatican. This will ultimately entail dropping the designation as an ‘eighth’ sacrament. If indeed coronation is a Sacrament, it must be a particular expression of a kind of sacrament. It is necessary, then, to look at a parallelism in one of the defined sacraments in order to see if there is one into which coronation could neatly fit. This would give coronation the status of a sacrament without asserting that it is an eighth independent sacrament and compromising the definition of seven.

If we examine the development of coronation together with the development of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, we can discern a basis to hazard the hypothesis that coronation is a *kind* of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The evidence for such a claim is historical and has been explored by, among others, Ernst Kantorowicz. He indicates in his *Laudes Regiae* that there certainly exists a reciprocal relationship between the rites for the creation of both kings and bishops.¹⁴ If the link between the two rites is as strong as Kantorowicz argues, and even if it is *only* that Holy Orders that is strongly influenced by coronation, it is still difficult to see how the king-making rite was not sacramental, or even wrapped up in the Sacrament of Holy Orders as was then understood.

When we turn our attention to this question, we notice that there is some level of conflation between regal coronation and episcopal ordination, even if not in the actual rituals themselves, but certainly in the ends to which both offices are oriented. This conflation is most evident in Hincmar’s *De Ordine Palatii* with its presentation of his theopolitical vision. I will contend, on the basis of Hincmar’s unification of the offices of the king and the priest towards the same common end, that Hincmar indeed understood coronation and ordination to be

¹⁴ Kantorowicz 1946:63f.

intimately tied together. Both rites take a man and set him aside to fulfill a special role patterned after Jesus Christ who is the eternal priest, prophet, and king. Both rites fundamentally change the way in which that man is viewed in the sight of God, causing him to be judged not only according to his own religiosity, but also that of the people entrusted to him. Because of the similar change that both rites impart, we can understand both to fit into the common definition of Holy Orders that was above supplied: so that man may not walk in blindness, but have guides on the straight and narrow path, who will help to correct him when he errs.

Chapter I: The Theopolitical Vision of Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii*

“Princes, take warning; learn your lesson, you that rule the world. Tremble, and serve the Lord, rejoicing in his presence, but with awe in your hearts. Kiss the rod, do not brave his anger, and go astray from the sure path. When the fire of his vengeance blazes out suddenly, happy are they who find refuge in him.”

Psalm 2:10-13.

To understand Hincmar's coronation *ordines*, we need to ensure that we interpret them properly; we need an appropriate hermeneutic. This is not true of the *ordines* alone, but of every text. When confronted with any text an important question arises: what does this text mean? This question is better asked in French: *Qu'est-ce que ce texte veut dire?* What does this text want to say? The French way of asking the question better gets at the reality that the meaning of a text can be difficult to discern, because it may not be explicitly stated by the author within the text. The mind of an author, the times in which he is writing, the person for whom a text is written, and—most importantly—what the text actually says: all of these things and a myriad of others must be held in tension when exploring the meaning of a text. The question of meaning is one that guides a reader towards proper understanding. The purpose of this chapter, then, is to tease out the proper hermeneutic which we can then apply to Hincmar's coronation *ordines*. Given that Hincmar's coronation *ordines* and his historical accounts of the coronations themselves involve multiple Church and State actors working together toward the common end, it seems appropriate that a work of similar theme would provide an excellent backdrop over and against which the *ordines* can be properly interpreted. And given that our search for the origins of the sacramental coronation led us ultimately to Hincmar's work, it seems all the more appropriate to remain *chez lui* to find a text to serve as the proper hermeneutical tool. Luckily,

Hincmar left us with such a suitable backdrop: his *De Ordine Palatii*. Of course, simply finding a suitable text does not solve the hermeneutical question, because the text we choose to answer that question can be subjected to the same question of meaning. So regarding Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii*, we must first ask: what does *this text* want to say? When we have satisfactorily answered this question, we can then set our answer to task by applying it to Hincmar's coronation *ordines*.

The *De Ordine Palatii* was written by Archbishop Hincmar in the last months of his life in 882. Understanding of the historical context in which this treatise arises is crucial to understanding the meaning—the wanting-to-say—of the work. Thus, I will begin this chapter with a focused summary of the events of the five years prior to the writing of the *De Ordine Palatii*, in order to place the political and social realities facing the progeny of Charlemagne in opposition to the ideal political and social realities of Hincmar's treatise. I contend that Hincmar's work contains a summary of his theopolitical vision, i.e. the work expresses the ideal relationships and interplay between the State and the Church, not as monolithic and distinct bodies, but as two aspects of one reality. This can be best denoted as the Church-State, within which the King, the bishops, and other magnates (both lay and clerical) are working in tandem to bring about, as much as possible, the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii* was written for King Carloman II of Western Francia in the year 882, the last year of Hincmar's life. Carloman II was the son of Louis (II) the Stammerer, grandson of Charles the Bald, great-grandson of Louis (I) the Pious, and therefore great-great-grandson of Charlemagne.¹⁵ The years leading up to the writing of the *De Ordine Palatii* were nothing if not chaotic and confusing. The evidence of this fact is not only in the many shifts of

¹⁵ Appendices I and II include an abbreviated family tree of the Carolingians as well as some maps. Both may be useful to consult while reading through the historical narratives of this work.

political power and allegiances (which will be discussed presently), but also in the tone of Hincmar's own historical account of these shifts in his *Annals of St-Bertain*.¹⁶ The relative stability that Western Francia, and Hincmar's *Annals*, had achieved during the three-decade reign of Charles the Bald (843-877) died with him. Neither the Bald's son nor his grandson would have the blessing of such a long reign and, as we have seen throughout Frankish history, short reigns lead to instability. Louis (II) the Stammerer would only rule for two years, dying in 879 at the age of 32. With the death of the Stammerer, Western Francia was facing the immanent division of its lands between his two sons, Carloman II and Louis III, given that this was the long-standing Frankish tradition. Despite the tradition, a group of nobles, most notably including Boso of Provence, was in favor of crowning Louis III as the sole king of Western Francia. In the end, however, it was agreed in the spring of 879 that both Carloman II and Louis III would be made kings. The two brothers divided the realm the following year in March of 880 at Amiens. It was agreed that Louis would take possession of Neustria and Francia while Carloman would receive the Kingdoms of Burgundy and Aquitaine. The party of nobles who wished to see only one king of Western Francia was not pleased by this agreement and thus, in July 879, Boso of Provence renounced his allegiance to both Carolingian rulers. That fall, on the 15th of October, Boso had himself elected King of Provence by the magnates and bishops of that realm.¹⁷ This event is significant in that it is regarded as the first 'free election' of a Frankish king with no regard to royal descent, giving rise to the short-lived Bosonid line. All previous Frankish kings had been either Merovingians or Carolingians. Western Francia was divided in two and a

¹⁶ Beginning with the *Annals* for 879, Hincmar's pace quickens and his lines of narration are frequently interrupted by the next chaotic event. The following summary of Carolingian history is a simplified form of that provided by Hincmar (*AB* 217-226).

¹⁷ The Kingdom of Provence was made up of the following ecclesiastical jurisdictions: the metropolitanates of Arles, Aix, Vienne, and Lyons (though the Lyonese diocese of Langres remained independent). The archbishopric of Besançon was also most likely part of this kingdom along with the independent dioceses of Tarantaise, Uzes, and Viviers.

pretender-king was ruling in Provence, but despite this, there was still a strong sense of Carolingian unity even though the empire was ruled by multiple Carolingians. Unlike their grandfather and great-uncles, the sons of Louis the Pious, Louis III and Carloman II were not constantly busied vying for control of Frankish lands. This is likely due to the fact that they faced too many obstacles from without to worry about petty fighting within: not the least important being Boso's southern kingdom. At the behest of Hincmar of Rheims, Louis III and Carloman II joined forces with their eastern Frankish first cousins, once removed, Charles (III) the Fat and, by proxy, Louis (III) the Younger (sons of Louis (II) the German) in order to lay siege to Boso's forces at Vienne in the summer and fall of 880. And though the siege proved ultimately unsuccessful, it was thanks to Boso's insurrection that there remained an idea of Carolingian unity; of this idea, Hincmar would remain ever *un apotre convaincu*.¹⁸ The four reigning Carolingians, all patrilineal heirs of Louis (I) the Pious and Charlemagne, saw the reign of a non-Carolingian as a major threat to their power. And despite the fact that the unification was never entirely successful in getting rid of Boso who would rule a much shrunk Kingdom of Provence until his death in 887 (passing the crown to his son Louis the Blind, a 'faux' Carolingian through his mother, the granddaughter of Emperor Lothar I), it is evidence enough that the fate of the Carolingian dynasty had not yet been sealed in the opening years of the 880s.¹⁹ Even with the tragic deaths of two of the four reigning Carolingians in 882, not all hope was lost (but things would have been better off had they produced heirs): Louis (III) the Younger died passing his kingdom to his brother Charles the Fat, who became sole ruler of Eastern Francia, and Louis III

¹⁸ Halphen 1938:3.

¹⁹ Louis the Blind's status as a Carolingian was never taken seriously because Salic law, the Frankish laws of succession established under Clovis, prevented titles of nobility from passing through maternal lines, but that did not stop him from assuming formerly Carolingian titles after the deposition of Charles the Fat in 888. Louis the Blind would later receive the Iron Crown of Lombardy and the title of Holy Roman Emperor, but he was deposed and blinded (hence, the name) only to be made again King of Italy.

(son of Louis (II) the Stammerer) died tragically, while chasing a peasant girl who suited his fancy, on August 5th, 882, passing his domains to his younger brother Carloman II. And so it was, in the summer of 882, that the Carolingian Empire was ruled (almost in its entirety) by the seventeen-year-old Carloman II in the West and his first cousin once removed, Charles the Fat, in the East. And so it was, in the autumn of that same year, that Hincmar would take up his pen and write his *De Ordine Palatii* for Carloman II, the sole King of Western Francia.

With so many shifts in domains and regimes, Hincmar decided to set down a life-full of theological and political wisdom for the young king and he did so under the pretext that he was simply reporting on what he saw at the court of Louis (I) the Pious as a young man. Despite this fact, this document should not be read *simply* as an historical report of the actual runnings of the palace at the times of Louis the Pious and his father Charlemagne. The work does indeed convey some reporting, but it also represents a culmination of Hincmar's work and therefore we need to understand it as a presentation of his theopolitical vision. By this term, I mean the ideal unification of the Frankish church and the Carolingian government which would best bring about peace and stability throughout the empire. Peace after all is very good for the stability which it provides and it provides the necessary conditions for the consistent practice of religion and the development of church art, music, liturgical services, etc. Alone, this is an unfairly utilitarian and unilateral approach to Hincmar's purpose in writing his admonition. Hincmar believed that the Franks could be likened to a new Israel: God's new chosen people. Therefore, his *De Ordine Palatii* represents the ideal means for the bringing about of God's kingdom. That being said, however, I am arguing that the *De Ordine Palatii* contains Hincmar's theopolitical vision—in and amongst real historical details about the state of Carolingian governance at the beginning of the ninth century and proposed reforms based on a lifetime of political involvement. For this

reason, it will not be necessary to analyze the entirety of Hincmar's work. Maurice Prou explores the historical nature of the *De Ordine Palatii* and Louis Halphen explores some of Hincmar's attempts at reform.²⁰ Both of those scholars made laudable discoveries about the *De Ordine Palatii*, but without having read the work as a focused summary of Hincmar's political and theological ideas, they missed a crucial insight about the work. For the present study, I will focus on those chapters of the *De Ordine Palatii*, which I believe expressly convey or at least indicate Hincmar's theopolitical vision.

It is important to clarify what I mean by 'theopolitical vision' and draw a sharp line of distinction between it and theocracy. In short: a theopolitical vision does not amount to theocracy nor does it imply one. In a theocracy, there is no sphere of power that is separate enough from that of religion to justify that sphere being ruled by anyone who is not only a member but a leader of that religion. Hincmar has no such conception of the Church or Carolingian government. He is not attempting to augment the Church's power at the expense of the king's. Rather, Hincmar lays out the true separation of the ecclesial and secular spheres of power. There is power given to priests and there is power given to kings. The end goal of both powers, however, is what justifies calling this theopolitics and not simply politics. For Hincmar, nay for any believer in the sacramental life of Christianity, there is nothing in this life that can be separated from the end goal that is the achievement of eternal life in heaven. Political life is no different: it is also oriented toward salvation. The kind of structure that Hincmar suggests to King Carloman II to adopt is ultimately the one that he believes will be the most effective towards this end. One needs peace and stability, after all, to have time to worship God and the end of the 9th century was anything but stable. Hincmar sees an opportunity to influence a young

²⁰ Prou 1884:passim; Halphen 1938:passim.

king and his government by introducing a conception of secular institutions that would map on more closely to ecclesial institutions.

I will stand beside this claim: that the stability of the Empire through the assimilation and meshing of the temporal and spiritual powers of the Church and Carolingians was the overall lifelong project of Hincmar. The Church after all was an eight hundred year old institution that had survived even the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Its leadership positions and hierarchies had been beaten into a stabilizing force in what had been a very unstable world. The Frankish empire, on the other hand, and its ruling institutions had never reached such a point of stability. The Franks as one of the great people of Western Europe date back to Clovis at the beginning of the sixth century, but the Merovingian lines that followed him were anything but consistent European powers. The Franks, as a force to be reckoned with, are not seen until the eighth century with the military conquests of Charles Martel, who was content to be the *de facto* ruler, even if a puppet Merovingian held the throne and the power *de jure*. Thus the formation of truly Carolingian institutions does not begin until Charles' son Pepin the Short asks Pope Zachary in Rome to legitimize him and officialize his right to be king in place of a Merovingian—this takes place in 751. All told then, the Carolingian system of governance, while theoretically just as Frankish as the Merovingian but unique in its imperial character, was not even a century and a half old. It was still in flux: at the death of each king, significant shifts in policy and institution occurred. Hincmar wanted to help beat the institutions of the Carolingian government into a final, stable form by introducing the wisdom of the Church's ancient system of governance. This, however, was not simply an attempt to augment his own power; his motivations were much loftier—more sublime. Hincmar was trying to have the best worldly and temporal conditions possible for the salvation of souls and the protection of the Church. In laying out his theopolitical

vision, we get some sense of the relationship between kings and priests: the differences between their offices, but the similarity of their functions. The similarity of the functions of kings and priests is Hincmar's most important theopolitical claim of the *De Ordine Palatii* and unmasking it will bring to light the fullness of the theopolitical vision. Beyond that, such a connection will serve as evidence that the coronation of a king must be the same kind of sacrament as the ordination of a priest. Because the offices map on to one another, as will be shown, it becomes necessary that the ceremonies which confer these office also be corollaries.

Without further ado, we can attend to our original question, "What does Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii* want to say? What does it mean?" Holding on to the historical context out of which the treatise arises and keeping in mind that Hincmar was *not* a would-be theocrat, we can dive into the text itself and discover exactly what it is that Hincmar wanted to build out of the young and potentially docile King Carloman II and his recently unified Kingdom of Western Francia.

Hincmar introduces his work by stating that he was called upon by the younger generation to write this work. He establishes his ethos as a wise and experienced sage, citing his age and the duration of his holy orders. He also includes the fact that he was alive during the reign of Charlemagne and was present and active in the court of Louis the Pious. He is writing his instruction for the new king for "the restoration of the honor and peace of the church and the kingdom, the governance of the church and the administration of the royal household within the sacred palace" (*DOP* 1).²¹ And especially so that the king, "in governing the kingdom, he may please God, and attain the eternal one." Here in the preface to his letter, he is laying out the groundwork for his theopolitical vision. The peace of the Kingdom and the stability of the Church go hand in hand. The one cannot exist without the other, nor the other without the one.

²¹ English translations of *De Ordine Palatii* are taken from Dutton 2004.

He also indicates that the king is in some way different from any other Christian: he will have to answer before God for how well or ill he governed his earthly kingdom and this will determine whether or not he will be able to share in the Kingdom of God. This will be a constant theme throughout this analysis. Hincmar concludes his introduction by highlighting the importance that a king have virtuous counselors and not simply wise ones. For even if a counselor be wise, he may still infuse his pupil with any vice he himself possesses.

The second chapter of the treatise is a group of scriptural admonitions that a king must keep ever in mind if he is to be simultaneously a good king and a good Christian—which naturally go hand in hand. Hincmar opens saying, “the lord king should understand to what office he has been elevated, and he should pay close heed to the admonitions and the warning of the King of kings” (*DOP* 2). This statement is rather telling about Hincmar's conception of kingship and how it is to be understood. Kingship is an office to which one must *be* elevated (emphasis here on the passive voice). This indicates that one must be made a king, namely by a coronation rite like that to be analyzed in Chapter 2 of this work. Carolman II was consecrated king (along with his brother Louis III) by Ansegis of Sens. Further, by citing a particular title of God, the King of kings, Hincmar is communicating that the office of kingship is very much connected to God, in its essence. The king then must conform himself unto God, be the face of God to his people, and rule in His stead in the worldly kingdom that he possesses. Hincmar follows this with three scripture verses that serve as admonishments to worldly rulers to sin not, fear the lord, and love justice.

In the third chapter, Hincmar revisits his ethos: claiming not to write from his own eloquence or wisdom, but simply to be passing on what he learned from his time in the court of Louis the Pious and in his service to Charles the Bald. Despite that this is not a purely historical

report, Hincmar is not lying when he claims to be handing down traditions, for indeed he was. But to interpret the entire work with respect to this claim is a fallacy, because it does not keep in mind Hincmar's intentions or his vision. With this, Hincmar revisits the concept of office: "Holy Scripture imposes upon every official in every order and profession the obligation that he understand all that he says. If he understands the origin of the office which he occupies, he will want even more solicitously to render an accounting for the 'talent' of the administration entrusted to him" (*DOP* 3). Hincmar has already established (although perhaps only implicitly) that the office of the king finds its origin in the essence of God and thus it is necessary that the king come to know God, no doubt by following the admonitions of the previous paragraph. If the king is successful in this, his first task, he will be able to render service to his maker and be welcomed into the kingdom of God upon his death. Hincmar's emphasis on the salvation of the king is striking and indicative of his real purposes; he is acting as a spiritual director of the king. This is why he concluded the first chapter by speaking about the need of a king's counselors to be wise *and* virtuous. Hincmar understands the role he is playing as an advisory to the king. He knows he has a responsibility in ensuring the salvation of his king.

For a work entitled, *De Ordine Palatii*, we might find it interesting that after the introductory matter is concluded, the fourth and fifth chapters are expositions on Church hierarchy. But rather than simple juridical expiations, these chapters rely on Scripture and the traditions of the Church Fathers to explain the theological and sacramental characters of the offices of priests and bishops. Given, however, that chapter three discusses the responsibility of a wise counselor to ensure that a king hears from Christ upon his death, "Well done my good and faithful servant," it stands to reason that Hincmar must explain at least something about those who are responsible for the king's salvation. Hincmar's own seemingly disorganized bouncing

from kings to priests and back again characterizes the real dependency that the kings have on the priests and *vice versa*. Chapter four begins with a rudimentary theological reflection on the three-fold office of Christ who is priest, prophet, and king *par excellence*. King David, Hincmar says, “prefigures our Lord Jesus Christ” in that he was at once king and prophet (DOP 4). Only Christ can fully possess the three offices simultaneously, but the earth still has need of these offices and so Christ divided them. He established the secular office of kingship and, quite separately, “[He] established two orders among the priests: that is the supreme pontiffs and the priests in lower orders, who now fulfill the office of priesthood” (DOP 4). Hincmar goes on to cite scriptural evidence to support his claim that Christ Himself established these orders: the twelve apostles, “the place [of which] the bishops hold in the church,” and “seventy-two others who under the twelve apostles prefigure priests, that is, the ministers of the second rank” (DOP 4). By placing the discussion of the office of the priesthood before the office of the king, Hincmar is indicating the prime importance that the Church and Her pastors possess in the regulation of the palace and the kingdom at large.

The fifth chapter begins with the scriptural precedent for the priests’ right to anoint and crown kings: “in the holy Book of Kings, we read that the chief of the priests anointed the kings to their office by holy unction. They set the crown signifying victory on the kings’ heads and placed the book of laws in their hands” (DOP 5). (Notice the two-fold action that Hincmar has just mentioned as requisite to king-making: first unction and then crowning. This will be important in Chapter 2.) Hincmar needs to explain why it is that the priests (i.e. bishops), whose temporal authority does not come close to rivaling that of kings, have not only the right, but even the capability, of placing the signs of temporal authority into the hands of the kings. The purpose, he explains, harkening back to the role of holy counselors in directing the king to salvation, is

that the kings “might know how to rule themselves, correct the wicked, and direct the good along the path of righteousness” (*DOP* 5). We thus see a striking similarity between the role of bishops and kings, namely, they are both set on the salvation of their own souls and the souls of those entrusted to them. This, it seems, is their primary *function*.²² The way this function is carried out, however, is different due to the real distinction between the *offices* of kings and priests. Each office corresponds to its proper sphere of influence: “there are two powers by which this world is principally ruled. Certain things are specifically given to the rule of one or the other. These are the sacred authority of the priests and royal power” (*DOP* 5). Notice that while the distinction is real, its manifestation in Hincmar’s treatise is in the context of a conversation about the *function* of a bishop—this chapter ends with a discussion of the meaning of the Greek word *episcopos* and its relationship to the function of a bishop. This can indicate that while the Church and the State are two really distinct bodies, ideally they cannot be thought apart because they share in the same function. They are not separate corporations, but rather two mutually interdependent bodies that work together towards a common end: not worldly dominion, but spiritual—the attainment of the Kingdom of Heaven. To further corroborate the claim that the offices of priest and king, while distinct, share a common function, Hincmar concludes saying that the *watchman* “ought, therefore, to pay close attention to the life of those entrusted to him...[and] correct them by word and deed” (*DOP* 5). Hincmar employs the same verb (*corrigere*) when discussing the king above. By indicating that the *watchman* must *correct* those entrusted to him, we see that part of the function of the bishop is to act as a *corrector*.

In the same vein, in chapter six, Hincmar makes an implicit etymological argument about the kings role as a ‘corrector.’ *Et rex in semetipso nominis sui dignitatem custodire debet.*

²² My thesis hinges on a clear and real distinction between the offices of kings and priests, but in that they share, in some cases, the same *functions*, they can both be understood as different iterations of an office that is unified in Christ: the priest-king and the king-priest.

Nomen enim regis intellectualiter hoc retinent ut subjectis omnibus rectoris officium procuret (DOP 6).²³ The etymological connection between the Latin nouns *rex* and *rector* (both of which derive from the Latin verb *regere*, as does the verb *corrigerere*) serves to bolster his point that kings share in the function of bishops. In this same chapter, Hincmar draws another connection between the function of king and bishop. Just as Hincmar explains in the opening chapters of the treatise, he must provide for the spiritual care of the king with the end of his receiving the everlasting glory of heaven; the king shares in this *function* as well: “How can he who does not correct his own morals be able to correct others when they are wicked?” (DOP 6). It becomes clear, then, that while the offices of king and priest are really distinct in their earthly manifestations, they are united in that they share common functions: correcting their subjects and themselves. Hincmar hounds this point home again and again in order to show that the Kingdom and the Church are indeed a unity, sharing in the same goals with sometimes the same functions, but possessing different spheres of influence. This is a fundamental point of Hincmar’s theopolitical vision. The Church and the State are united in the task of bringing about the Kingdom of God.

Hincmar’s seventh chapter again deals with the episcopacy and indicates the divine nature of laws which are promulgated by councils. The sacred canons explain how it is that one might climb the rungs of the ecclesial ladder and become a bishop. This sets the stage for Hincmar’s major claim of the chapter: that no bishop, or priest of the lower orders, may be ignorant of canon law: “To no priest it is permitted to be ignorant of the canons or do anything against those rules which the Fathers established” (DOP 7). Using this as his springboard, Hincmar claims that “schism and heresy are related” (DOP 7). He argues: “the schismatic

²³ “The king ought to maintain within himself the dignity of his own name. For the name ‘king’ intellectually signifies that he should fulfill the office of ‘corrector’ for all his subjects.”

offends no less when by the denial of the holy rules he contemptuously separates himself from the unity of the holy church, which is the body of Christ, than does the heretic, who holds wrong opinions concerning God, the head of the church” (DOP 7). Such an argument seems commonsensical enough, but to simply overlook such a claim as common-sense does an injustice to the depth of what Hincmar has just said. Hincmar is claiming that the Church is not simply a body of dogmas and teachings that must be believed and observed. Further, the Church is not simply an institutional hierarchy that must be served and obeyed. It is both. And neither of these two qualities of the Church outweighs the other in importance. Hincmar is arguing that the schismatic is just as bad as the heretic and that the heretic is just as bad as this schismatic. The fact that this argument is presented in his *De Ordine Palatii*, is quite significant. What does Hincmar want to say with this argument? We must look to the next chapter to fully make sense of the significance.

The eighth chapter begins with the same claim that chapter seven does: applying this time to secular rulers and secular laws: “When it is said that no one may licitly remain ignorant of the laws or scorn what has been established, no person in any particular secular status is exempt; all are bound by this sentence” (DOP 8). We might expect, then, that the whole of chapter eight would map on precisely to chapter seven. If this were so, Hincmar may have argued that the revolutionary (the parallel character to the schismatic) and the criminal (the parallel character to the schismatic) are one in the same. While Hincmar does not verbalize this, I think the teaching is implicit. Criminals are revolutionaries and revolutionaries are criminals, because both seek to disobey what has been established: just as the heretic and the schismatic do as well. And all four of them are in need of ‘correction.’ Despite that Hincmar does not outline the argument which I have laid out, he *does* explain that what has been established by the secular power must be absolutely respected: “The rulers have established the capitularies of the Christian kings, their

ancestors, which, with the general consent of their subjects, that have ordered to be lawfully maintained” (*DOP* 8). Thus we see in two consecutive chapters, Hincmar drawing the same picture of two different institutions.

There are a couple of ways to understand this. We might say that this is a historical report about how things were done in the times of Louis (I) the Pious. Louis did not promulgate as many capitularies as his father Charlemagne did. Given that Hincmar cites older capitularies far more often than new ones, this stands to reason. Given that it is an historical detail, Hincmar could be proposing it as a necessary reform—basically telling Carloman II, “use the laws which your fathers have made unless it is absolutely necessary to make new ones.” Further, we might say that Hincmar is looking at the way the Church does things and given the stability which the Church enjoys is trying to impart that stability to the Carolingian government. All of the above interpretations of Hincmar’s conservatism are sensible, but I think the theopolitical interpretation is more significant. Hincmar is arguing that the same system of precedents be binding on both the Church and the State, viz., that the State be as committed to tradition as the Church and that the Church recommit itself to the traditions as well. If it were universally accepted that the Church does things this way, he would not have need to argue this in an admonition to the new king. The *De Ordine Palatii* is also addressed *ad episcopos*. Hincmar is defending two positions that are not universally accepted in either episcopal or royal circles. Further, in that he argues that they must act analogously, we are able to see (as we did above regarding kings and bishops) that while the ‘office’ of the Church is clearly distinct from the ‘office’ of the State and *vice versa*, they share the same function. Namely, to defend and protect what has been established. The new exists for the sake of the old. The fact that chapter seven began by placing a responsibility on the bishop to know the laws of the Church and chapter eight with the same

regarding the king and the laws of the State, we see another major instance of the kingly office and the episcopal office being united in their functions. The king is like a bishop to his subjects and the bishop is like a king to his flock. Both are responsible for civil peace and both are responsible for the salvation of souls. This is a key insight to Hincmar's theopolitical vision. The reason the line between Church and State is so blurry is because both are simply tools to the actualization of the coming of the Kingdom of God. Hincmar summarizes the result of the amalgamation of the Church and the State through kings and bishops by warning the king: "Let a lord also know that, as he has been made first among men in leadership, so he will earn for himself in the future world unremitting punishment unless upon this present earth he *corrects* the sinners places under him" (*DOP* 10).

It is probably the language of this warning and the generally blurry line between king and priest and Church and State that led Maurice Prou, in the preface to his Latin-French side-by-side edition of the *De Ordine Palatii*, to call the ideal of Frankish royalty (at least, the one described by Hincmar) *essentiellement théocratique*.²⁴ It is easy to understand whence this view arises, even if a fuller understanding of the *De Ordine Palatii* prevents it from holding any water. Prou understands the *De Ordine Palatii* to be an historical report which reveals the *conservative* nature of the reforms that Hincmar is suggesting: *[il] a un double intérêt : il nous permet...de tracer un tableau des institutions carolingiennes vers 814, et en même temps il nous éclaire sur les vues politiques d'Hincmar et les réformes qu'il jugeait nécessaires en 882*.²⁵ Such an understanding of Hincmar's treatise could indeed lead one to find the *De Ordine Palatii* as an essentially theocratic work, but only if one applies the modern connection between

²⁴ Prou 1884:xxx.

²⁵ Prou 1884:xx.

‘conservatism’ as a political doctrine and ‘the religious right.’ This, I think, is the mistake Prou made.²⁶

Louis Halphen, another French scholar who wrote on the *De Ordine Palatii*, pushes back against reading the work as purely an historical window.²⁷ Following Halphen’s lead, I reject reading the *De Ordine Palatii* simply as a report on the Carolingian government, but I want to take his conclusion one step further. He concludes, putting a wish in Hincmar’s mouth: *Que chaque chose soit remise à sa place, que chacun soit remise à son rang, et la royaume carolingien renâtra de ses cendres.*²⁸ I believe that Hincmar did indeed wish that the Carolingian Empire ‘be reborn from its ashes,’ and that such a wish influenced his writing of the *De Ordine Palatii*, but he did not simply *constitue [le De Ordine Palatii] comme son testament politique.*²⁹ It is far bigger than that because Hincmar’s vision is not so shortsighted to consider only an earthly restoration of Frankish glory under the leadership and guidance of the Church. Such an ordering (or re-ordering) of the Carolingian government was intended to bring about the Kingdom of God for the salvation of souls—it was *not* for the purposes of a theocratic power-grab.

The purpose of this chapter has been to show the essence of Hincmar’s theopolitical vision and his conception of the offices of kingship and priesthood being united toward the same end. Hincmar understands that both the king and the priest have been elevated to their offices and they are both responsible for correcting the sinners over whom they stand watch. Hincmar also understands that this function, and the office to which it is proper, will fundamentally change the way in which God judges the office-holder. Given that so solemn a change has taken

²⁶ He was, after all, a Frenchman writing only 20 years after the fall of Napoleon III’s Empire.

²⁷ Halphen 1938:1.

²⁸ Halphen 1938:9.

²⁹ Halphen 1938:9.

place, Hincmar naturally understands that a solemn rite must occur to bring about that change. It had always been true of bishops—the first traces of episcopal ordination are scriptural. But for kings, Hincmar knows that he himself will have to bring about a liturgical finalization of coronation. And Hincmar does not disappoint.

Chapter II: The Curious Case of Charles the Bald

“His estrangement from Alexander now come to an open breach, what must he do next but enter the city of Antioch, and there assume the double crown as ruler of Egypt and Asia both?”

I Maccabees 11:13.

When Hincmar crowned Charles (II) the Bald as King of Lotharingia, it was Hincmar’s first time celebrating such a rite... but it was hardly the first Frankish coronation; neither was it the Bald’s, nor would it be his last.³⁰ The first Carolingian coronation was that of Pepin the Short performed by St. Boniface in 751. In 754, Pepin was reanointed by Pope Stephen and this set a long precedent for papal and episcopal consecrations of Carolingian rulers.

The tripartite division of the Carolingian Empire set at Verdun in 843 remained relatively stable until 869.³¹ The central kingdom of Middle Francia, however, which had been given to Lothar I along with the imperial title, had been divided by the Treaty of Prüm among Lothar’s three sons after his death in 855. Middle Francia ceased to be a unity (and, basically, would remain so forever) and was divided into Lotharingia ruled by Lothar II, Provence ruled by Charles (II) of Provence (not the Bald), and Italy ruled by Louis II who was Holy Roman Emperor. So while Middle Francia was divided in three, the rest of the Carolingian Empire

³⁰ The *Annals of St-Bertin* are not silent with regards to a first coronation. Nelson (1996) claims that Louis the German and Lothar I were never anointed and that Charles the Bald alone was anointed and crowned: not as King of the Western Franks, but as King of the Aquitainians in 848. The historical circumstances behind this coronation are interesting. Although the Treaty of Verdun divides Louis (I) the Pious’ empire into three parts for his three legitimate sons, there was also a fourth legitimate son, Pepin, who had already been made King of the Aquitainians during the reign of his father. He died before Verdun and passed Aquitaine to his son Pepin II. Aquitaine fit squarely inside the territory to be given to Charles. Charles the Bald, Lothar I, and Louis the German wrote their nephew out of inheritance in 843, but he remained in power until the local nobles forced him out and turned to Charles the Bald to be their king. The main precedents for this ceremony were Charlemagne’s consecration in Rome on Christmas Day, 800 by Pope Leo III, Louis (I) the Pious’ consecration by Pope Stephen IV in Rheims on October 5, 816, and re consecration on February 28, 835 by Bishop Drogo in Metz. Charles the Bald’s coronation and unction as king in Aquitaine by the Archbishop of Sens sets an important precedent whereby such a ceremony becomes an essential factor in becoming a king. Charles (II) the Bald would later be crowned Holy Roman Emperor on December 14, 875 by Pope John VIII.

³¹ I direct the reader, again, to Appendices I and II for maps and a Carolingian genealogy that may prove useful while reading this section.

looked much the same as it did in 843. This held generally true with the splitting of the Kingdom of Provence when Charles (II) of Provence died in 863 (the title of king and the majority of the land being given to Emperor Louis II, but with some given to Lothar II as well): Middle Francia changed a bit, three crowns for two kings, but the rest of the Empire looked about the same. In 869 when Lothar II died without an heir, that was going to change.

Both Charles (II) the Bald and his brother Louis (II) the German knew that their nephew (Lothar II) was heirless and married to a barren wife whom he had tried repeatedly and unsuccessfully to divorce, so in 868 the two kings made an agreement that equally divided Lotharingia (which at this time included a decent portion of Provence) among themselves.³² But when Lothar II did die on August 8, 869, Charles proved himself to have negotiated in bad faith. The Bald learned of his nephew's demise no later than August 23 and hastened toward Metz (the capital of Lotharingia) with Hincmar among his retinue.³³ The *Annals of St-Bertin* (*AB*, hereafter) indicate that two parties formed among the Western Frankish nobles upon hearing of the death of Lothar II. One faction, the much smaller one, urged Charles to honor the agreements made with his brother and await word from the German before attempting to enter Lotharingia. The other faction, with Hincmar party to it, encouraged Charles to take all of Lotharingia for himself.³⁴ They arrived in the city on September 5 and four days later, Hincmar would perform the king-making rite.³⁵ Hincmar himself had good reason to urge his king to take full possession of his late nephew's holdings. In 843, when the Treaty of Verdun divided the Carolingian Empire amongst Louis (I) the Pious' sons, it cut off the diocese of Cambrai from its

³² Jackson 1994:37.

³³ Jackson 1994:37.

³⁴ Nelson 1999:23; Jackson 1994:37.

³⁵ Jackson 1994:37.

archiepiscopal province of Rheims.³⁶ Rheims lay in West Francia and Cambrai in Middle Francia. This would have been a political nightmare for the archbishop of Rheims who would have to deal with two different monarchs in two different kingdoms for the sound administration of his province.³⁷

Hincmar recounts the events of September 869 in a capitulary which he later inserted in the *Annals of St-Bertin*; he was also the author of the coronation rite that he celebrated. Although the politicking just described appears rather straightforward (that is, once the events are neatly laid out), there was one major problem for Charles and Hincmar: namely, Hincmar had no juridical authority in Metz, which was in the archiepiscopal province of Trier (Trèves, in French). How then was Hincmar to celebrate this king-making rite? To make things more problematic, but which would ultimately provide useful to Hincmar's objective, the see of Trier was vacant. Between the vacant see of Trier and the attempt to add a crown to the Bald's head, there was a perfect storm of events that reveal to several interesting juridical and sacramental principles and shed much more light on what actually takes place in the course of a coronation.

On September 9, Adventius the bishop of Metz opened the coronation ceremony (which would involve three more speeches by Charles and Hincmar, the rite of coronation itself, and then a mass) with an address to the people. Hincmar includes in his documentation of the day that Adventius' words were written out before hand (*AB* 158). Adventius begins by expressing that there was much upheaval during the reign of their late king and that after his death, the entire kingdom supplicated God to deliver them a king of His choosing. He goes on to say that with unanimous agreement, the nobles of Lotharingia had decided to freely commit themselves to Charles who was a rightful heir of his nephew's kingdom and asks Charles to speak to his new

³⁶ Jackson 1994:38.

³⁷ For Hincmar's relationship with Middle Frankish rulers, particularly Emperor Lothar I, see Screen 2015:76-86.

subjects.³⁸ Charles reaffirms that he had been given proof by unambiguous signs and unanimous approval that the people of Lotharingia wished to have him as king makes the following promise:

I, with the Lord's help shall preserve the honour and worship of God and His holy churches and shall honour and make safe, and shall wish to keep honoured and safe, each one of you according to the dignity of his order and according to his person, so far as I know and can, and shall preserve law and justice for each man in his order according to the laws that apply to him, both ecclesiastical and secular, to this end that by each one of you, according to his rank and means, there may be shown to me royal honour and power and due obedience and aid for the holding and defending of the realm given to me by God, just as your ancestors showed unto my ancestors faithfully, justly and in accordance with reason.³⁹ (*AB* 159)

The words of this promise would later serve as the model for the royal *promissio* in 877.⁴⁰ There is one part of this oath which is potentially problematic for Hincmar and the whole affair of coronation: Charles has just promised to uphold the laws both secular and ecclesial. This being the case, it is Hincmar's turn to take the stage and argue why his involvement in this coronation is legal at all.

Hincmar, knowing that this is indeed a necessary step to take, wastes no time in acknowledging the potentially problematic nature of this situation. He begins:

Lest it might perhaps seem to anyone that I and the venerable bishops of our province are acting incongruously or presumptuously in involving ourselves in an

³⁸ Nelson 1999:25 indicates that the claim of unanimity was at best a far cry from the truth, but it serves to show one of Hincmar's lifelong theopolitical goals: namely a people united under, serving, and being served by its king.

³⁹ English translations of the *AB* are taken from Nelson 1991.

⁴⁰ Jackson 1994:38.

ordination in another province and in the affairs of that province, let such a one know that we are not acting contrary to the sacred canons. (AB 160)⁴¹

Being the great proto-canon lawyer that he was, Hincmar has prepared a legal argument to explain why he and his fellow bishops from the province of Rheims are perfectly within their bounds to perform this coronation. It is interesting to note as well, and this will be discussed at more length below, that Hincmar is arguing in just the same way that he would have been required to argue if this were a case of Hincmar trying to ordain a bishop in the province of Trier. The argument is actually designed to argue for *that* case. This is a very insightful clue when discerning what Hincmar understands himself to be doing by making Charles the King of Lotharingia.

Hincmar's argument runs as follows. He begins by indicating that the churches (or provinces) of Rheims and Trier can be historically shown to be one large 'super' province: "the churches of Rheims and Trier, along with the churches committed to them, are deemed sisters and fellow-members of one province in this Belgic region" (AB 160). He goes on to say that this is an ancient development and is in no way his own invention, but he does not cite a canon or capitulary to support his argument.⁴² Few commentators have made a fuss about Hincmar's claim, because it does not seem to really be of any consequence: Charles was indeed crowned the King of Lotharingia, but in the following year much of this territory, including the entire province of Trier (Metz included) was ceded to Charles' brother Louis (II) the German.⁴³ Nelson

⁴¹ My emphasis on the word 'ordination.' It is *ordinatio* in Latin.

⁴² It is very likely that Hincmar is making reference to the Roman Empire and its province *Belgica*, which had Rheims (then called *Durocortorum*) as its capital. Trier (which was then called *Augusta Treverorum*) was the most populous city of *Belgica*.

⁴³ Nelson 1999:25; It is very interesting to note that the *Annals of St-Bertin* include some very interesting snippets about the Pope's involvement in all of this. When Lothar II died, his brother Louis II was still alive and well and was the Emperor of the Romans. Pope Hadrian (on behalf of the emperor) sent envoys to Charles when he still claimed all of Lotharingia at the end of 869, commanding that no one should invade or stir up division in Lotharingia as the territory would be ceded to Emperor Louis II. Charles the Bald and Louis the German received

claims that Hincmar indeed “could advance good canonical reasons” for his own involvement. Jackson takes the opposite position saying that “the entire proceeding amounted to a near usurpation of spiritual authority.”⁴⁴ But in the end, why does it matter? It doesn’t seem to, so neither author discusses the issue at any length. The question becomes, then, if it doesn’t matter anyway, why does Hincmar dedicate an entire speech to such an argument. The copout answer would simply be to say that it mattered to the subjects of Lotharingia, but this answer does not satisfy, because in Hincmar’s own biased account of the situation, the Lotharingians were in universal agreement about accepting Charles as king (as we saw in Adventius’ speech). Why would Hincmar present the story of universal acceptance of Charles as king and then turn around and have basically one third of the historical narrative justify his actions? It doesn’t seem to add up. Hincmar continues his description of the ‘super’ province of the Belgic region explaining that the Archbishop of Rheims or the Archbishop of Trier, depending upon who has been a bishop longer, takes precedence over the other. Once again, Hincmar does not provide any evidence, but it just stating this as if it was fact.

Assuming then that his argument is juridically sound, Hincmar needs to go on to explain that this particular action does not go beyond the principle he has just set out: namely, that the bishop of the longer duration of order takes *precedence*, but he does not supersede the other entirely. To do this, Hincmar turns to the scripture:

Divinely inspired law gives this command: “if thou shalt pass through thy friend’s harvest to collect ears of corn, thou shalt rub them in thy hand to eat. Put not thy sickle to them,” and “Reap them not with thy sickle.” (AB 160)

more envoys after formally splitting the kingdom in two the following year. Eventually, the issue seems to get dropped because of an attempted coup in Louis II’s kingdom that distracted everyone’s attention. Eventually Louis II dies heirless and his kingdom and imperial title pass to Charles (II) the Bald.

⁴⁴ Jackson 1994:38.

Hincmar connects this Old Testament law to the words of Christ to explain the meaning of the ‘harvest’ as it applies to this present situation: “the harvest is the people, as the Lord shows in the Gospel, saying, ‘the harvest is great, but the workmen are few. Ask the lord of the harvest, therefore, to put workmen to work in the harvest’” (AB 160). Hincmar explains that these two passages amount to the following proscription:

You ought to pray for us bishops, that we may speak worthy things unto you. The friend’s harvest is the people in the province committed to another metropolitan. Hence, by exhorting you, as it were rubbing you by the hands of our labors, we can and should draw you towards the will of God and your salvation in the body of the unity of the Church. (AB 160)

And just as the Old Testament law disallowed one from taking the sickle to a friend’s field, Hincmar explains that he cannot “put the sickle of judgment, however, because it does not belong there nor do we consider that our work” (AB 160). Hincmar has thus limited the power of the ‘super’ metropolitan over the people of the other constituent province: namely, the power of excommunication does not belong to that bishop. Hincmar has also then defined what sort of action it is to participate in the *ordinatio* of a king, it is one that draws the people to the will of God and is meritorious for their salvation. Given what we saw in the first chapter about the role of a king with regards to the salvation of his people, it seems that Hincmar’s actions to fall within the kind that he has described as appropriate.

In summary, Hincmar’s first juridical argument states that Rheims and Trier are united in the ‘super’ province of the Belgic region with the respective bishop who possesses longer duration of orders to take a certain precedence over the other that does not involve excommunication, but does allow to him exhort the people of the other province towards the will

of God and their salvation and, thereby, to act in the *ordinatio* of that people's king, because it directly contributes to both their following of God's will and their salvation. From here, Hincmar makes a completely separate, and very short, legal argument justifying his involvement in this *ordinatio*: Trier has no archbishop. Why is this argument not sufficient enough to be the primary argument? The see of Trier is vacant and thus I, the Archbishop of the neighboring province, am coming over to ordain your new king. If we accept Jackson's interpretation that Hincmar was usurping the spiritual authority of the see of Trier, we would not expect him to say that sometimes the Archbishop of Trier can take precedence over an Archbishop of Rheims. Furthermore, this second argument seems to be the more usurpatious one. You happened to not have a bishop, therefore, by the very fact, I will take his power to ordain your king. Hincmar only includes this second argument in order to set the stage to ask for a unanimous consent of the suffragan bishops of Trier: "these venerable lords and confères of ours, the bishops of this province, not having a metropolitan bishop, with fraternal love, are ordering and pressing our insignificance to take action in their affairs as we do in our own particular ones. Is that true, lord brothers?" (AB 160). The AB report that indeed those bishops were in unanimous assent.

With the bishop's assent having been heard before the entire assembly, Hincmar begins what basically amounts to a second speech. But before we turn our attention to it and the theological and historical principles of coronation that it lays out, we must parse out in greater detail the significance of Hincmar's legal arguments. If we simply take Hincmar's word on the historical nature of the province of the Belgic region and his application of the law of Deuteronomy (which may or may not be a fair assumption), the first legal argument would seem to be so forceful that the second would not even be needed, nor would the verbal assent of the bishops of the province of Trier need to be heard. I can offer two explanations: both of which I

hold to be true which shows once again that Hincmar is on the one hand a pragmatic and problem-solving political actor who is trying to get things done well and effectively and on the other hand is faithful to high minded ideals of theopolitical unity. The first explanation is this. As Nelson explains, “The *AB* is a work of ideology. The power to shape the past is itself an historical fact.”⁴⁵ And while this may encourage us to be skeptical of Hincmar’s accurate representations of the facts, such a skepticism and knowledge of Hincmar’s willingness to intentionally misrepresent the fact should be useful to us in deciphering what actually took place in the Cathedral of St. Stephen on September 9, 869: “where the *AB* shows unanimity, divisions remained.”⁴⁶ Divisions among what class of Lotharingians? We have only two options: the bishops or the nobles. While these two classes are effectively interwoven, they are most certainly distinct. If we look back to the text, it becomes clear that it is the Lotharingian nobles who remain divided and not the clergy.

We hear first of the unanimity among the subjects of Lotharingia in the speech of Adventius, the bishop of Metz: “Because, then, we in our unanimous agreement see it to be the will of God...that this man to whom we have freely committed ourselves is the legitimate heir of this kingdom” (*AB* 158). Adventius was himself a bishop and he seems to be speaking on behalf of all of the bishops there present. At the end of Hincmar’s first speech, we hear the universal willingness on the part of the bishops to have Hincmar officiate the coronation. Let us then assume that it was only the bishops who unanimously, for some reason or another, wanted to have Charles as their king. Many nobles must have had their reservations and Hincmar would have known this. By demanding and receiving an auditory and unanimous allowance of the bishops of the province of Trier for himself to celebrate the rite of coronation outside of his own

⁴⁵ Nelson 1999:25.

⁴⁶ Nelson 1999:25.

province, Hincmar was indirectly showing a cathedral-full of potentially uncertain nobles that siding with Charles was good for them. Hincmar showed that the bishops of Trier wanted the Archbishop of Rheims and thereby he hoped that the nobles of Lotharingia would want the King of West Francia. This amounts to the first reason why Hincmar included his second, throwaway legal argument for his presence: the pragmatic, political one.

But as always the case with Hincmar, it seems necessary to dig for the idealistic, theological reason that the second legal argument was included. Ultimately, this question becomes one of Hincmar's understanding of himself as a bishop and the relationship between juridical and sacramental power. For Hincmar, before a bishop is a sacramental actor, he is a juridical one. The sacraments, while their power and effects lie entirely outside the domain of law, are entirely dependent upon the law. This notion is not at all Hincmar's own invention, nor is it entirely forgotten today.⁴⁷ When we view Hincmar's two legal arguments in light of his thoughts on the relationship between law and sacrament, it becomes immediately clear that not only are both arguments necessary, the second one—the apparent throwaway—is actually more important by far. The first argument, that Hincmar can act as 'super' metropolitan by providing sound *exhortation* for the salvation of the souls of the people of the Trier province and that they might be drawn closer to the will of God, establishes nothing more than Hincmar's right to ask for the permission that he does after presenting his second argument. Being a metropolitan, Hincmar has the sacramental power to ordain kings, this is not in question, but he can only do this licitly and in accordance with the canons in his own province. He does indeed argue that Trier is in some sense 'his' province, but not with the force that justified Jackson's claim of 'spiritual usurpation.' It is only his insofar as he can advise the bishops of Trier to—

⁴⁷ Because a priest's celebration of the sacrament of penance is firmly established only in his *bishop's* right to bind and loose the sins of those in his diocese, he *technically* cannot give valid absolution in another bishop's diocese without that bishop's permission.

themselves—take Charles as their king. Hincmar advises the bishops, as is his right as ‘super’ metropolitan of the Belgic region, who give their unanimous consent as is reported by Adventius’ speech. Only then, after they have taken the advice of Hincmar and decided to make Charles their king, can *those bishops* of Trier, acknowledging that they stand without a metropolitan ask Hincmar to come in and celebrate the rite that he alone, being a metropolitan, has the right to perform: ordaining a king.

The distinction here is paramount. Hincmar has the sacramental ability to create a king, but his juridical authority to do so is dependent upon the locality over which that king will rule. Thus, even though he has the sacramental power to make Charles a king, he needs the expressed consent—order—from the bishops of the province of Trier to exercise this power and make Charles the King of Lotharingia. Hincmar has the power to *ordain* (via sacramental unction) Charles as king, with the expressed consent of the to-be-ruled, but only those bishops of Trier have the power to *crown* Charles as king (which is a purely juridical act that must be accomplished by the competent ecclesial authority). *This* is why both of Hincmar’s juridical arguments for his proper role in the ceremony are so important. In order for the sacramental unction to be valid and licit, Hincmar needs to act under the direction of the competent juridical authorities, in this case, the bishops of Trier. After making his legal arguments, Hincmar makes a second speech that deals with an assurance that it is indeed God’s will that Charles be made the King of Lotharingia.

This second speech is separated from the first by the vocal, unanimous assent of the bishops of Trier that Hincmar act as the presider of the ceremony. From there, Hincmar moves on to reinforce the claims made by Adventius in his speech. Adventius had claimed that it was by the will of God that Charles had arrived in Metz seeking the crown of Lotharingia. In his attempt

to continue to sway and reassure the nobles—clergy as well as lay—that this was not a bad idea, Hincmar briefly says that both the people and the churches of West Francia have profited well under the rule of Charles. The implicit argument being that his kingship of Lotharingia will yield no different results. As to assuring the people of it being God’s will and not merely Charles’ imperial ambitions, Hincmar states that God led him there (which we know from earlier in the *AB* that Charles took counsel with his advisors and nobles and was swayed to proceed into Lotharingia, respecting not his accord with his brother from the year prior about the equal division of the kingdom) and that an indication of it being God’s will for Charles to rule was the fact of the unanimous consent of the Lotharingians. This may or may not be a good divination of the will of God, but it was a very good political tactic on the part of Hincmar to assure calm and consent. Charles had only arrived in Metz four days earlier and the coronation was only one month and one day after the death of the late King Lothar II, leaving very little time for the Lotharingians to take counsel among themselves and decide the best course of action. This is speculation, but it stands to reason. A certain noble would likely not have known the thoughts of the vast majority of the other nobles in attendance, so when Adventius first and Hincmar second say that it is unanimous, any doubters must have thought themselves a tiny minority, not capable of mounting any fruitful opposition. So whether or not God actually willed Charles to be king, Hincmar’s evidence for this being the case was evidence that proved itself—making it the best kind of evidence.

Hincmar’s second speech then turns and discusses some of Charles’ legendary lineage. Not only was Charles descended from Louis (I) the Pious and Charlemagne, the Carolingians all were descended from the first Merovingian and first Christian King of the Franks: Clovis. Hincmar does not spare this opportunity to plug the importance of his archiepiscopal see of

Rheims. According to the history, Clovis was baptized in Rheims along with three thousand of his nobles by the then bishop of Rheims: St. Remigius. As the legend goes (of which Hincmar is likely the author), Remigius while baptizing and anointing the newly converted Franks ran out of holy chrism oil used in the ceremony. He had his ministers place two empty glass vials on the altar and began to pray. As he did, the vials miraculously began to fill with oil. Hincmar claims to be in possession of this oil “got from heaven” implying that he would be using this oil to anoint Charles just a few minutes later. Unfortunately from an historical perspective (ironically told by Hincmar himself), we know that Hincmar was with Charles in Senlis when he learned of the death of his nephew Lothar II and the royal retinue hastened from Senlis to Attigny to Verdun, and finally, to Metz: meaning that Hincmar would not have been able to return to Rheims to bring along some of this holy oil from heaven (if indeed he had it). This does not mean that Hincmar could not have sent for it, but he does not mention this in the *AB* or anywhere else. Regardless, Hincmar is probably just trying to boost the ethos of this king-to-be in the minds of those present and assure them of the divine ordinance of his reign—uniting the political with the theological according to a unified vision. Of course, everything that Hincmar says of Charles is also applicable to the only other possible candidate for the throne of Lotharingia, namely, his brother Louis (II) the German or their nephew, the Emperor Louis II. But what those kings do not have is the Ampulla. This most likely explains why Hincmar is willing to overlook Charles’ former agreement with Louis the German and the fact that Lotharingia ought to be ceded to Emperor Louis II.

Hincmar then briefly mentions that Louis (I) the Pious was first crowned Emperor of the Romans in Rheims by Pope Stephen IV and subsequently reinvested and recrowned in the very

cathedral in which he was speaking by Drogo, then bishop of Metz.⁴⁸ This second speech, broadly speaking, outlines Hincmar's qualifications for legitimate kingship: 1) it is necessary that one have the unanimous consent of the magnates of the land; 2) one must be a Carolingian; and 3) one needs to be anointed (preferably with oil from the Ampulla). To finish off his speech, Hincmar has to address the last two potential elephants in the room (or cathedral, if you like): firstly that Charles is already a king of a separate kingdom and secondly that for all this talk of unanimity among the Lotharingians that they wanted Charles to be king, only one Lotharingian had advanced this claim: Adventius. Referencing a passage from the Old Testament, Hincmar says, "We read in the sacred histories that kings when they obtained kingdoms placed on their heads the diadems of their separate kingdoms" (AB 161). If Ptolemy could do it, well, so could Charles. With a legal justification given and an Old Testament precedent reference, with much talk of unanimity among the subjects of Lotharingia, Hincmar finally asks the *people* to give the command to the *bishops* to perform the rite:

For all these reasons, therefore, it seems to these venerable bishops not inappropriate, if it is pleasing to your unanimity, that in the possession of the realm from which you have freely gathered to him and commended yourselves to him, he should be crowned by priestly ministry before this altar and consecrated to the Lord by sacred unction. If this pleases you, make a noise together with your own voices. (AB 161-162)

⁴⁸ The reign of Louis (I) the Pious involved three civil wars instigated by his sons Louis (II) the German and Lothar I. At one point, in 833 Louis (I) the Pious was deposed by a synod of bishops presided over by Ebbo of Rheims (Hincmar's immediate predecessor). In 835, however, he was restored to his full rights as Emperor and, hence, recoronated.

The *AB* then narrate that “all shouted their agreement to this” (*AB* 162). It seems that Hincmar’s rhetorical ploy to inspire a sense of universal accord when perhaps there were great divisions paid off.

As we transition, then, into a discussion of the rite of coronation itself, note again the distinction that Hincmar has just made: Charles is to be “crowned by priestly ministry... and consecrated to the Lord by sacred unction” (*AB* 161). Hincmar is announcing for all in the cathedral and for us twelve hundred years later that there is a double action in king-making. One, crowning or coronation, is a purely juridical matter which can only be done by the rightful juridical authority. The other, unction or consecration, is a sacramental matter, but as we now know the sacraments stem from and depend on the laws. The rite on the whole can be called an *ordination*, because it elevates a man to a new ‘rank,’ but also because (harkening back to Hincmar’s theopolitical vision) this kind of ceremony is directly analogous to a bishop’s ordination on account of the shared function of the king and the priest. Remember too that it is Hincmar who designates this rite and ordination: “Lest it might perhaps seem to anyone that I and the venerable bishops of our province are acting incongruously or presumptuously in involving ourselves in an **ordination** in another province and in the affairs of that province” (*AB* 160).

The rite itself begins immediately after the verbal acclamation of the nobles and the singing of the *Te Deum Laudamus*. The coronation rite is divided into about four sections: 1) the seven present bishops pray benedictions over Charles; 2) Hincmar anoints the king-to-be with a formula; 3) ‘those bishops’ (*illi episcopi*) then crown the king with a formula; 4) the king is then invested with the symbols of his office, the *palma* and the scepter. Hincmar’s *ordo* also includes special prayers for the mass which followed immediately after the coronation. The first and

fourth sections, while interesting and worthy of study will receive only summary attention here, while the second and third will be analyzed in depth.

There were a total of seven benedictions prayed over King Charles the Bald to officially begin the rite. The first four were pronounced by the bishops of dioceses suffragan to Trier: Adventius of Metz, Hatto of Verdun, Arnulf of Toul, and Franco of Tongres. The final three benedictions were pronounced by the bishops from the province of Rheims: first, Hincmar of Laon (Archbishop Hincmar's nephew), second Odo of Beauvais, and lastly Archbishop Hincmar of Rheims himself. The first six benedictions are relatively short and ask for various favors and graces which are suitable for a king on the day of his coronation: a spirit of wisdom to remain a suitable governor of an earthly kingdom and thereby receive the eternal kingdom of heaven, a grace to receive consolations in his present and future life, that under his guidance the kingdom possess security and Christian devotion, for health of mind and body, that he may submit to God and find His mercy, that he may be purified and preserved to receive knowledge and gifts. Each of these first six benedictions end with the doxology, *per dominum nostrum Jesum Christum filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritu sancti, Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum*. Together, these benedictions are a reiteration of all that Hincmar had to say about kings in his *De Ordine Palatii*. The king rules on earth so as to bring peace, protect the church, and correct sinners. As Jackson notes, these benedictions and the one that follows are unique in that this is the only surviving *ordo* in either the Frankish or French traditions of coronation in which seven bishops pronounce such prayers.⁴⁹ The last benediction, sung by Hincmar of Rheims, is much longer than the first six and is divided into four parts. Jackson suggests, based on the text of this last benediction which does not seem to be appropriate to the historical situation of 869, that this *ordo*, while most definitely compiled and somewhat adjusted for use at

⁴⁹ Jackson 1994:40.

this particular coronation, was actually based on a no longer extant *ordo* for the recoronation and reinvestiture of Louis (I) the Pious as emperor in 835.⁵⁰ We know from the description of that recoronation by the Astronomer, that 1) there were seven bishops who prayed over Emperor Louis and 2) that there was no unction performed to reinvest Louis. But as well shall see below, Hincmar has created a formula of unction for use at this coronation, the significance of which shall be discussed presently.

The unction which Hincmar performs after finishing his long benediction is introduced with the following rubric: *Ad ista verba "Coronet te Dominus," inunxit eum Hincmarus archepiscopus de chrismate ad dexteram auriculam, et in fronte usque ad sinistram auriculam, et in capite.*⁵¹ Since Hincmar's 'Ordo of Charles the Bald' is the oldest surviving western, continental coronation *ordo* of a king, it's hard to say if this rubric is Hincmar's own invention or if he pulled it from an older rite. In the two queen-making rites that Hincmar also compiled, there were formulae for unction, but no rubrics. We know for certain that the rubric does not come from recoronation of Louis (I) the Pious, because that rite had no unction. We can therefore say, whether Hincmar 'invented' this rubric or took it from a no longer extant rite, that he selected it very intentionally. One potential explanation for the unction in such particular places is that the king is anointed every place that his crown shall touch his head. This may be suitable and to the liking of Hincmar's pragmatic side, but I would like to offer an explanation true to Hincmar's theological side as well. In the Old Testament (in which as we have seen Hincmar is well versed) there is a rubric of unction that is not terribly dissimilar from the one in Hincmar's *ordo*: "Moses took some of the blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and

⁵⁰ Jackson 1994:40-47.

⁵¹ Text from the Ordo of Charles the Bald is given in Jackson 2000. "At the words 'The Lord crowns you' Archbishop Hincmar anointed him with chrism on the right ear, and on the forehead to the left ear, and on the head." My translation.

the great toe of his right foot” (Leviticus 8:24). This verse is from the ‘ordination’ of Aaron and his sons as the priests of the people of Israel in Leviticus 8. Just about a dozen verses before, Aaron and his sons are anointed on the head with oil. By their anointing with oil, they are set apart for priestly service and by their anointing with the blood of sacrificial victims, they are made to be living sacrifices hearing, doing, and going about their lives ever in mind that they too are victims of sacrifice. Hincmar’s rubric for the anointing of Charles with oil is very similar in form to the ‘rubric’ for anointing Aaron and his sons with the blood of the ram; both are divided into three parts and both begin by anointing the right ear. While it is perhaps a stretch to connect these two disparate liturgical actions, their parallelism is very worth mentioning. We saw above that Hincmar is very capable of citing obscure passages from the Old Testament to justify his present actions, so this analogy is not beyond consideration. Further, Hincmar specifically referred to his taking part in the *ordinatio* of Charles as king (*AB* 160). Properly speaking, ordinations are the ceremonies for creating priests: the implication being here and elsewhere that in the mind of Hincmar the coronations of kings are verily priestly ordinations, but of a different species than those of ministerial priests. We may intuit that Hincmar sees his king, like Aaron and his sons, as set apart as a sacrifice to God, called to always hear His word, do His work, and walk His way. The *ordinatio* that Hincmar is performing will similarly ‘set apart’ Charles to act as and to be judged as a king.

Such an interpretation of this rubric is only strengthened when we turn to the words of the formula for unction itself. Divided into four prayers, the *ordo* begins:

Coronet te Dominus corona gloriae in misericordia et miserationibus suis, et ungit te in regni regimine oleo gratiae Spiritus sancti sui, unde unxit sacerdotes, reges, prophetas, et martyres, qui per fidem vicerunt regna, et operati sunt iustitiam,

atque adepti sunt promissiones: eisdemque promissionibus gratia Dei dignus
efficiaris, quatenus eorum consortio in coelesti regno perfrui merearis. Amen.⁵²

As Hincmar is anointing Charles with physical oil, he is invoking that Charles may be anointed as well with the Holy Spirit who anointed not only other kings, but priests, prophets, and martyrs as well. In the theology of the New Testament, Christ is the eternal priest, prophet, and king and all who hold such offices are sharers in the work of the Savior.⁵³ Just as ‘christus’ means ‘anointed one,’ priests, prophets, and kings must be anointed—physically with oil and spiritually with the Holy Spirit—to so share in the office of Christ: the culmination of which was His death on the cross as a ‘martyr,’ a witness to the Kingdom of God. To be a priest or prophet or king is to be a witness to the Kingdom of Heaven. When one is conformed to Christ in a sacrament of anointing to be a partaker of His office, one assumes the responsibility to fulfill that office after the pattern of Christ and only by such fulfillment of that office can the office holder merit the joys of heaven. This formula of anointing reveals the sacramental nature of the coronation. By being made a king, Charles is being set apart—like a priest—from other Christians. No longer will he be judged only by his deeds and his love of God, but now he will be judged by the efficacy with which he imitated Christ the eternal priest-king in the carrying out of his new office.

⁵² “The Lord crowns you with a crown of glory in His mercy and compassion, and anoints you in the reign of a kingdom with the oil of the grace of His Holy Spirit whence He anointed priests, kings, prophets, and martyrs who through faith conquered kingdoms and worked justice and achieved promises: May you be made worthy of the same promises by the grace of God, until you may merit to enjoy their company in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.”

⁵³ It is well worth noting that at this time in the 9th century, neither priests nor bishops were anointed with oil in the course of their ordinations, but kings had been since the times of at least the Christian Visigoth kings of Spain. It was only after the widespread use of coronation anointing in the 9th and 10th centuries that the Roman Church eventually brought unction into the rite for ordaining priests. Given this fact, when the formula mentions “priests, prophets, and kings” who were anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit, it is expressly referencing Old Testament episodes of anointing like Moses’ of Aaron, Samuel’s of David and Elijah’s of Elisha. This acts to justify our comparison of Hincmar’s rubric for anointing with the ‘rubric’ for Moses’ anointing Aaron with the blood. For information regarding the initial non-anointing of New Testament priests see Kantorowicz 1946:63f: “The spiritual climate of the Frankish ideal of rulership affected, in the first place, the Frankish clergy. The rite of anointing the bishop’s head, though perhaps first indicated in the Sacramentary of Gellone, belongs to the age of the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals and of Hincmar of Rheims. This rite thus *followed* rather than preceded the ritual of royal anointment. It implied that bishops, by their unction, became the king’s peers; that they, too, and in their way, became representative of the idea of *rex et sacerdos*” (My emphasis).

This was the whole of Hincmar's drift in the *De Ordine Palatii* and we see it playing out here in his coronation rite. This unction, physical and spiritual, brings about an essential change in the man who received it. He has been given a new purpose and is now bound by this unction to adhere to that purpose and become a martyr of the faith. It is not an exaggeration to say that this unction fundamentally changed the way in which the receiver is viewed by God and will be judged by Him upon his death. This is the primary evidence that the whole of the king-making rite is veritably a sacrament. The sacraments 'set apart' the ones who receives them and elevate them to a new status. Baptism sets a Christian apart from a pagan, enacting a real change in status. So too, Holy Orders sets a man apart from other Christians, enacting a real change in rank and giving new tasks and responsibilities. Since Hincmar's theology coronation clearly maps on to this language of 'setting apart,' it becomes clear that coronation is a constituent part of Holy Orders.

The first part of the formula of unction is more significant than its subsequent parts, but a summary presentation of the latter parts may help to reveal a more tangible theology of kingship. The formula ends with seven supplications for the new king: first, that he be triumphant over his enemies visible and invisible; second, that the Lord may fill the heart of the king with love and fear of His name; third, that reigning in peace the Lord will conduct the king to heaven; fourth, that the king may be happy in this world and a partaker of eternal happiness in heaven; fifth, that the king may govern happily over his clergy and people whom the Lord made subject to him; sixth, that the king may obey the commands of God, be not opposed, rejoice in the gifts which had been given him, and follow the dictates of his ministry lovingly; and lastly, that he may merit to enjoy peace in this world and to become a citizen of the eternal kingdom. All of these supplications are very sensical for a new king and they reveal that one of the real functions of a

king is to be an effective peacekeeper and peacemaker. Additionally, these prayers strengthen the notion that the king will now be judged not simply as a Christian, but as a king. Further, it is efficacious to point out that on the basis of the sixth supplication (*tuo ministerio fideli amore obsequentes*) we can say that there is a definite ‘ministry’ of the king and that he is bound by the grace of God to follow that dictates of that ministry. Kingship is not a blank check, but rather an office given by God that makes rather harsh demands on the officeholder. A definite ministry of kingship is further evidence of the sacramental status of coronation. It indicates that there is a universal office of kingship that exists outside of any particular king. This office is in Christ. Coronation sets a man apart and makes him to share in that office by participating veritably in the person of Christ. Just as priests act *in persona Christi [sacerdotis]*, kings act *in persona Christi [regis]*.

Having concluded the formula of unction, *quod ipse praestare dignetur*, Hincmar’s *ordo* next supplies an interesting rubric with regard to the actual coronation of the king, the placing of the crown upon his head. The rubric says, *ad ista verba, “Coronet te Dominus,” miserunt illi episcopi coronam in capite*. On the surface this appears to be a simple liturgical instruction, but with a little analysis and some cross-referenced historical examination, we will find it contains far more than meets the eye. The first surprising observation is that the rubric does not specify the bishops who are to place the crown on the king’s head, referencing simply *illi episcopi*. The rubric for unction specifically dictates that it was Archbishop Hincmar who anointed the king. Armed with this fact, we can say that *either* the rubric demands that all seven bishops, including Hincmar, place the crown on the king’s head *or* that some group of bishops *not including* Hincmar were to do it. The ambiguity is vexing, but given the sacramental/juridical distinction that Hincmar went to such pains to establish in his speeches before the rite, there may in fact be an

insightful resolution to this problem. In a footnote, Jackson quotes the annals of the Eastern Frankish Kingdom, *The Annals of Fulda*, to shed some light on this problem. The annalist faithful to Charles the Bald's brother, Louis (II) the German, writes: "Furthermore, taking the advice of evil men, he had a crown set on his head in the city of Metz by the bishop of that city (Adventius) and ordered that he should be called emperor and *augustus* as one who was to possess two kingdoms."⁵⁴ Jackson notes that the annalist could have simply been wrong, "but it is equally possible that it was indeed Adventius who placed the crown on the king's head, which would explain why Hincmar avoided identifying a coronator, but turned him into a vague 'episcopi.'"⁵⁵ I would like to take Jackson's possibility a step further. It does not make sense to me that Hincmar would specifically write a rubric that specifies bishops plural, when he only intended one bishop to do it. That said, I do not want to discount the annalist of Fulda and thus I propose an alternate possibility. It could be the case that this rubric is specifically indicating that it is the bishops of Trier (Adventius included)—*not the bishops of Rheims*—who ultimately place the crown on the king's head. If Hincmar intended all seven bishops to do it, he would not have used the demonstrative adjective *illi* to demarcate a specific group—those ones there—but more likely would have simply written *episcopi*. Further, such a conclusion is perfectly in line with the legal principles behind coronation that we have already seen. We said above that in his role as 'super' metropolitan of the Belgic province, Hincmar has the right to advise the bishops of Trier for their spiritual benefit, but cannot force their hand. Further, we saw that even though he is in a position of precedence, he still needs the consent of the bishops of Trier to officiate the rite. And even with this consent, Hincmar can only create a king *sacramentally*; that is, perform the rite so as to specifically elucidate a sacramental grace that will prepare the king-to-be for his office. He

⁵⁴ Jackson 1994:39 n. 38.

⁵⁵ Jackson 1994:39 n. 38.

can ordain the king by sacramental unction, making him *a* king, but he cannot legally make him *the* King of Lotharingia. This is the essence of the unction and its formula. Outside his province, Hincmar cannot create a king *juridically*; that is, endow him with the legal rights to act as king in that land. Only the bishops of *that* province, in this case, the bishops of Trier, can do that.

In the coronation rite, Charles was “crowned by priestly ministry... and consecrated to the Lord by sacred unction” (AB 161). These are two separate actions, but in normal circumstances they would have been performed by the same bishop. But in this perfect storm of vacant sees and double crowns, the unction and the coronation needed to be done by separate individuals—a happy coincidence that reveals to us the underlying sacramental and legal principles of king-making. Ultimately the purpose of this chapter has been two fold. On the one hand to show how Hincmar’s *ordines* show forth the theopolitical vision of the *De Ordine Palatii* and on the other hand to reveal the sacramental and juridical principles at work in the *ordines* that justifies considering the coronation of a king, by unction and crowing, as a constituent part of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Conclusion: The Sacrament of Coronation as the Source of Post-Carolingian Legitimacy

When Hincmar died in December of 882, it was certainly not clear that the Carolingian Empire would collapse before the decade was out, but it did. The young Carloman II died in 884 leaving no heirs of his own. He did have a younger half-brother, Charles (III) the Simple, but he was far too young to inherit the kingdom. As a result, all of Carloman's realms passed to his cousin, once removed, Charles the Fat who was now the sole ruler of the entire Carolingian Empire. Charles, too, was heirless and, amid Viking raids and general chaos, he ended up being deposed as Emperor in 887 and died just six weeks later at the beginning of 888. What now was to be done? The only legitimate Carolingian was a mere child:

For a hundred and fifty years, kingship had been associated with the legitimate male heirs of the Carolingian family; others had occasionally sought to challenge or mitigate it in the long history of Carolingian kingship. But 888 changed the game. Elites now had to ask themselves a question: **how do you make a king from your own guts?**⁵⁶

Hincmar, too, had been a strict legitimist—that is, he believed that the ability to hold the throne was dependent upon one's Carolingian blood. But Carolingian blood was not Hincmar's only requirement for legitimacy; he actually had three qualifications, as was mentioned briefly above in Chapter 2.

Hincmar outlined these three qualifications in his speech before the coronation of Charles the Bald as King of Lotharingia. Recall, his first speech began by reinforcing the unanimity of the support (among the nobles) for Charles the Bald to receive Lotharingia and that this was a sign of divine providence. Hincmar then summarized the deeds of the bloodline in which Charles shared, before going on to tell the story of the Holy Ampulla: oil from which would be used to

⁵⁶ Bobrycki 2009:6; my emphasis.

anoint Charles as king. From this speech then, we see that Hincmar's three qualifications for legitimate kingship are 1) unanimity of support from the magnates, 2) Carolingian bloodline, and 3) unction and coronation by the proper ecclesial authority. These three qualifications for legitimacy might explain why Hincmar supported Charles the Bald's attempt to take all of Lotharingia for himself (Louis the German had never before been consecrated as a king, but Charles had been anointed King of the Aquitainians). It also explains why Hincmar did not view Boso of Provence to be a legitimate king despite the fact that he was elected by the nobles and consecrated by competent authority—he lacked Carolingian blood.⁵⁷ The goal of this present study has been to dive deep into the third of Hincmar's conditions for legitimate kingship; namely sacramental coronation by the proper ecclesial authority.

Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii* provided the theopolitical framework in which we could understand the office of kingship and its relationship to the office of priesthood. We saw that both the king and the priest, while having two clearly distinct offices, share in a common function. Both the priest and the king must act as *watchmen* and *correctors* for those who are entrusted to them. The king has a responsibility to first make himself virtuous and then to correct the sins of his subjects. Additionally, the king must provide the temporal peace necessary for the Church to thrive and to cultivate the practice of right religion. On the flip side, the Church, through the priests must contribute to the stability of the kingdom and also correct the sins of the king. Both the king and priest share fundamentally in the office of Jesus Christ who is the eternal

⁵⁷ “Both in his record of Boso's consecration, and in his setting of it, Hincmar has packed a judgment. The omission of reference to primores (though other sources imply just such backing for Boso) is surely deliberate. For a man who lacked any hereditary right, only aristocratic invitation could have supplied legitimacy. A consecration performed by bishops under such circumstances was inoperative as far as Hincmar was concerned: in his remaining annals, he pointedly denies Boso the title of king. Far from elevating episcopal consecration to the cardinal constitutive act of king-making, Hincmar shows here his contempt for what the relationship of king to bishops could all too easily become: a mere matter of bribes and threats. By juxtaposing this to the very different case of the Stammerer's sons, Hincmar highlights the absence of the primores from Boso's inauguration and hence implies that no true king-making was effected” (Nelson 1999:22).

priest, prophet, and king. Because Christ is the source of both offices, they tend toward the same end. They have been divided here on earth, but they are actually united. The function common to both offices is the earthly manifestation of the heavenly unity.

Both the priest and the king have been set apart, over and above the rest of Christians. This is to say, that in the sight of God, they will be judged more harshly. Thus, the priest and the king do not have a merely symbolic role, but one with real consequences. If either fails in the common task set before them, even if they themselves are good Christians, they will be subject to the fires of hell. Just as the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation set Christians apart from the world, and cause Christians to be viewed differently in the sight of God, a sacrament of the Church must be necessary to set the king and priest over and above other Christians. We know that this is the case for priests. The sacrament of Holy Orders bestows a character onto the soul of the man ordained and elevates him to a new rank within the Church.

Given that Hincmar cites the connection between the offices of kingship and priesthood in the person of Jesus Christ and asserts subtly that there is a function common to both, we can establish that Hincmar's coronations are veritable sacraments—constituent of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The *De Ordine Palatii*, thus, provided us with the theoretical framework that allowed us to look directly at one of Hincmar's king-making rites with the attempt to draw out sacramental and juridical principles from that liturgy. We saw just how important the legality of the rite was for Hincmar. His attitude towards the rite betrays a commonality of legal principles between the coronation of kings and the ordination of priests. The argument that Hincmar levies for his participation in a coronation outside of his own province would have been the exact same were it for the ordination of a priest. In fact, Hincmar is not mute on this reality. He called Charles the Bald's coronation an *ordination* at the beginning of his first speech! (AB 160) As the

rite unfolded we saw that within the coronation rite, there was actually a double action. There was first the unction, done by Hincmar himself, which seems to be the sacramental portion of rite, and then there was the crowning. Hincmar, being the only archbishop and one with some amount of privilege in the see of Metz, though it was not in his province, was the only one who had the ability to anoint Charles the Bald, but he could only do so with the expressed legal permission of the local bishops. The sacrament of coronation, we learn, just like the rest of the sacraments, stems from and depends upon the laws. The actual crowning, the purely juridical act, was performed by those same bishops who bestowed upon Hincmar the legal right to anoint. What we see here is parallel to the ordination of a priest. A priest must be first ordained by the competent juridical authority, but then, quite separately, the priest then receives his faculties, the legal right to act as a priest. The same is true for a king it seems, who must be ordained sacramentally by the competent authority and then receive the legal faculties to act as king.

Despite his very robust understanding of the sacrament of coronation, Hincmar himself, as we saw above, did not believe that it alone could bestow legitimacy upon a ruler. In some sense, Hincmar's own views of the sacrament of king-making contradict his views of kingship. The result of this, however, is not very surprising. Once the game changed in 888 and there were no more Carolingians, the various sub-kingdoms of the former empire were required to find some way to legitimize their rulers. The rest of this conclusion will argue that the source of post-Carolingian legitimacy was Hincmar's sacrament of king-making. To do this, I will rely on an analysis of the late 9th century Pontifical of Sens provided by Shane Bobrycki. The coronation *ordines* of this Pontifical follow Hincmar's chronologically, making them the second oldest surviving set of *ordines*.

In Bobrycki's estimation, "the picture of kingship gleaned from [the Pontifical of Sens] is resolutely Carolingian."⁵⁸ He means that these "*ordines* betoken a conception of rulership...in which kingship (...) is an office or ministry bestowed by a prelate."⁵⁹ He clearly has Hincmar on the brain. Hincmar's *De Ordine Palatii* and his king-making *ordines* are what brought about this conception of kingship, as the present study has shown. The *ordines* for king-making in the Pontifical of Sens make the same kind of claims that Hincmar's *ordines* did. Further, they are compiled from Hincmar's own *ordines*: "This whole *ordo* is based upon the consecration texts for earlier Carolingian kings, especially those of Louis the Stammerer."⁶⁰ Hincmar wrote the *ordo* of Louis the Stammerer and as Jackson has shown, it relies heavily upon his *ordo* of Charles the Bald.⁶¹ Excepting some differences in stage-managing, much of the Bald's *ordo* is preserved in the Stammerer's. The king-making rite in the Pontifical of Sens "preserves the text [of Louis and Charles' *ordines*], but it loses particular references" to the Carolingians.⁶² This is to say that "the king's *ordo* is stripped of localizing references."⁶³ This is significant. Kingship now is not definitively tied to a family, but rather the *ordines* now exist to extend the legitimacy of kingship to anyone who receives episcopal consecration. It has the effect to stress the "transpersonality of royal ordination."⁶⁴ The royal ordination stands independent from the man who will be ordained. The rite itself takes precedence over the man.

Bobrycki sums up the importance of the 'de-Carolingianification' of the Pontifical of Sens:

⁵⁸ Bobrycki 2009:11.

⁵⁹ Bobrycki 2009:11.

⁶⁰ Bobrycki 2009:12.

⁶¹ Jackson 1994:37.

⁶² Bobrycki 2009:12.

⁶³ Bobrycki 2009:13.

⁶⁴ Bobrycki 2009:13.

The whole manuscript serves to reinforce the idea that these royal consecration *ordines* are *ordines* in the transpersonal, liturgical sense – just as repeatable (and independent of the peculiar bloodline or qualities of any given king or queen) as the *ordo* for dedicating a church or for ordaining a priest.⁶⁵

We thus have seen that Hincmar’s king-making rites have been elevated to a new status. Where for Hincmar the coronation by the competent ecclesial authority was just one of three conditions for the legitimacy of kingship, the Pontifical of Sens betrays the view that *only* the coronation is necessary to legitimize the king. This has the profound effect of elevating the status of archbishops in the immediate post-Carolingian period. The Pontifical of Sens was put together for an archbishop who now found himself in the middle of various non-Carolingians vying for legitimacy. And in this struggle, “episcopal ordination [into kingship] became a *sine qua non*.”⁶⁶ We see now how the ‘inextricable association’ between the monarchs of Europe and the Church was brought about. The marriage of the altar and the throne was one of necessity. The Church had to step in to the chaos of the post-Carolingian world and assert a new method of legitimacy.

Bobrycki responds wittily in answer to the original question, “how do you make a king from your own guts?”⁶⁷ “Use a book,” he says.⁶⁸ Given the fruits of this present study, I think we have discerned a more appropriate way to answer the question. In the post-Carolingian world, Hincmar’s work and his conception of kingship and king-making took on profoundly new significance. His theopolitical vision fell apart, not on its own merits, but because of the frailty of human bloodlines. When, however, the vision receded into blindness, its teaching that a king could not simply be a king by claim but by a solemn coronation inaugurating him into his office

⁶⁵ Bobrycki 2009:17.

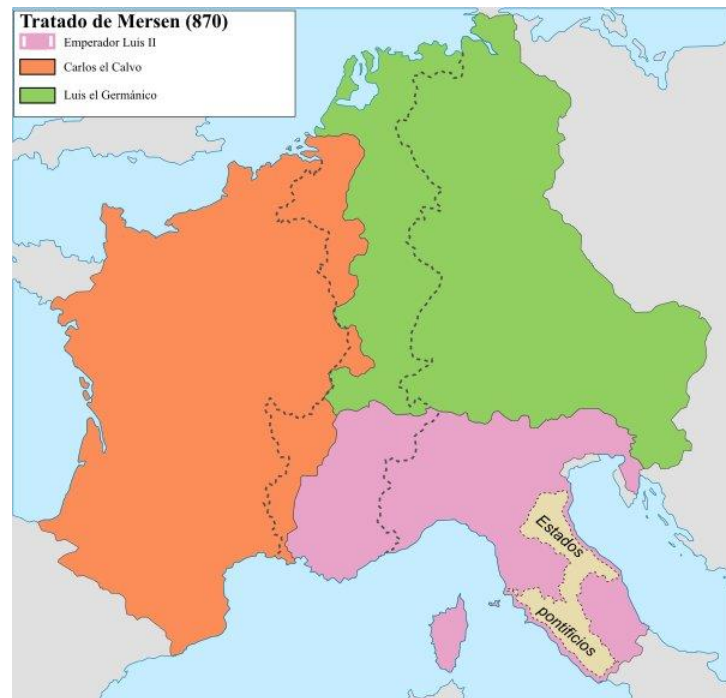
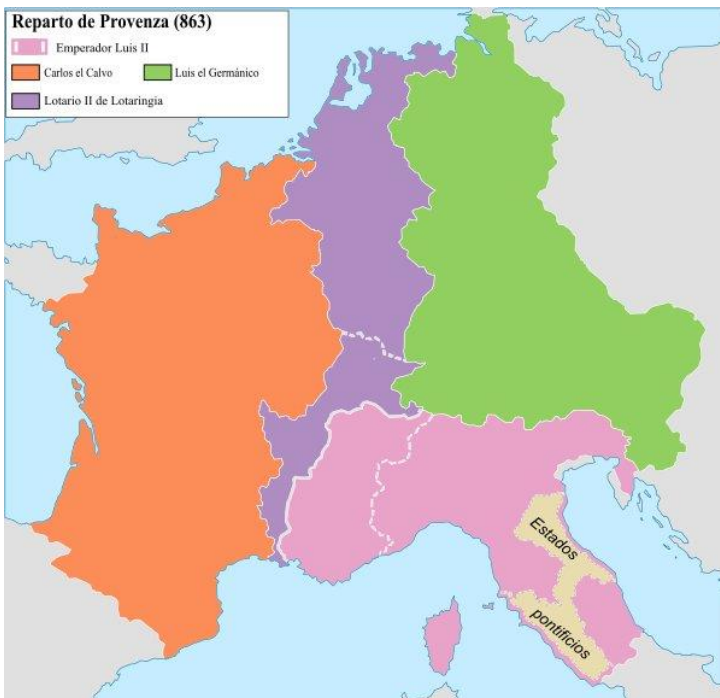
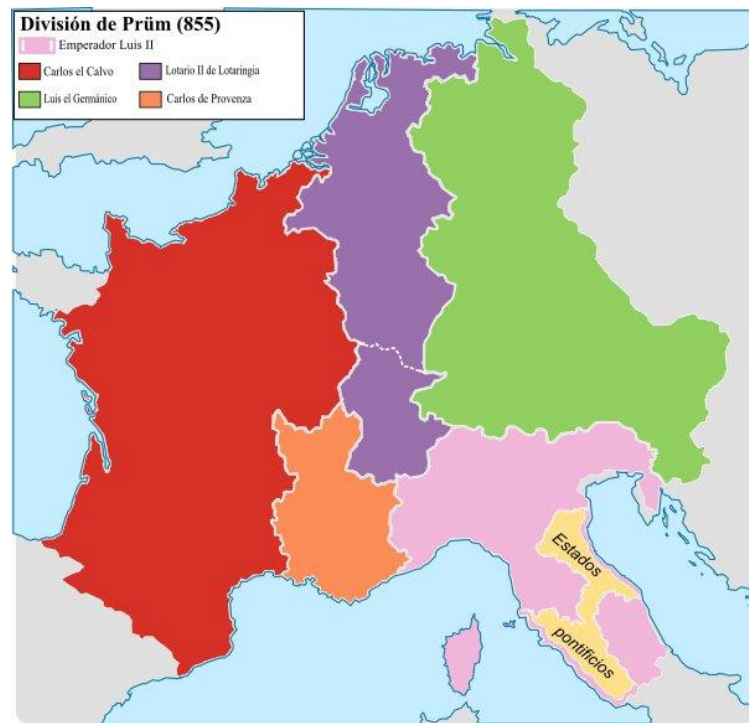
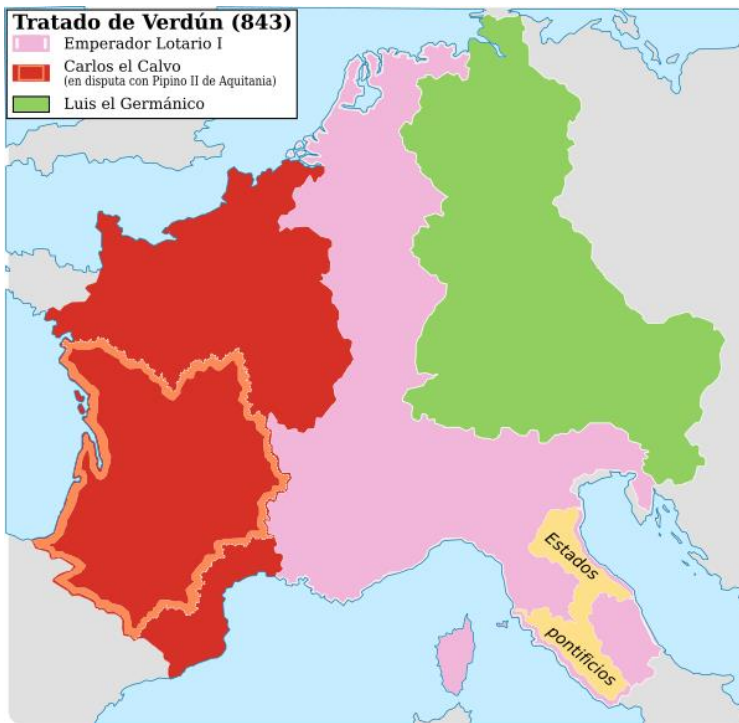
⁶⁶ Bobrycki 2009:20.

⁶⁷ Bobrycki 2009:6.

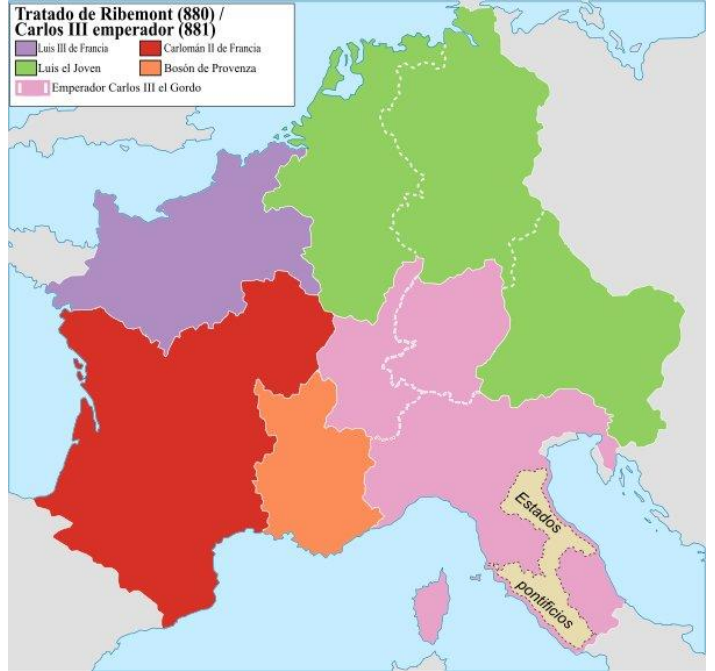
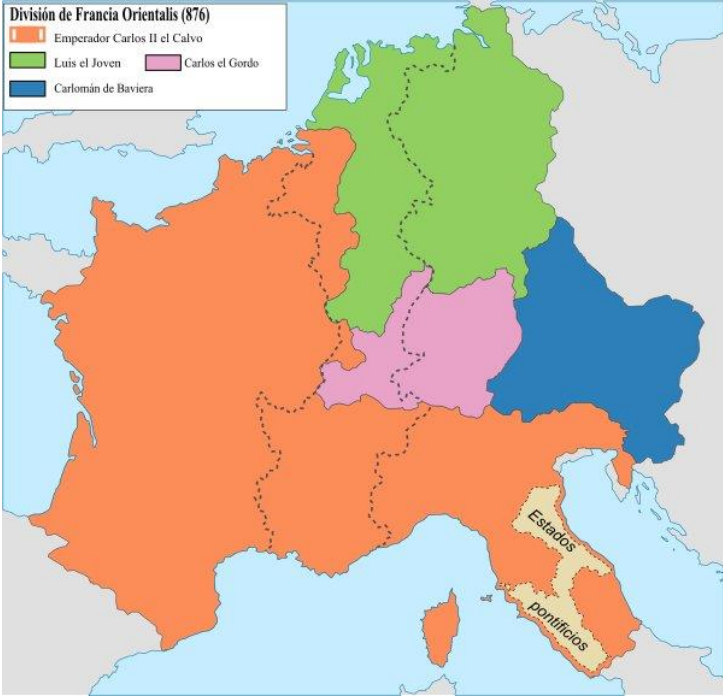
⁶⁸ Bobrycki 2009:22.

took on a new importance. Hincmar probably never could have imagined that his rites would become the source of a king's legitimacy, but then again he probably did not imagine that the Carolingian bloodline would ever fail. Deprived of legitimate Carolingians and with the magnates all fighting and vying for control, the nations began to ask: How do you make a king from your own guts? And the Church answered: Not simply with a book, but with a sacrament.

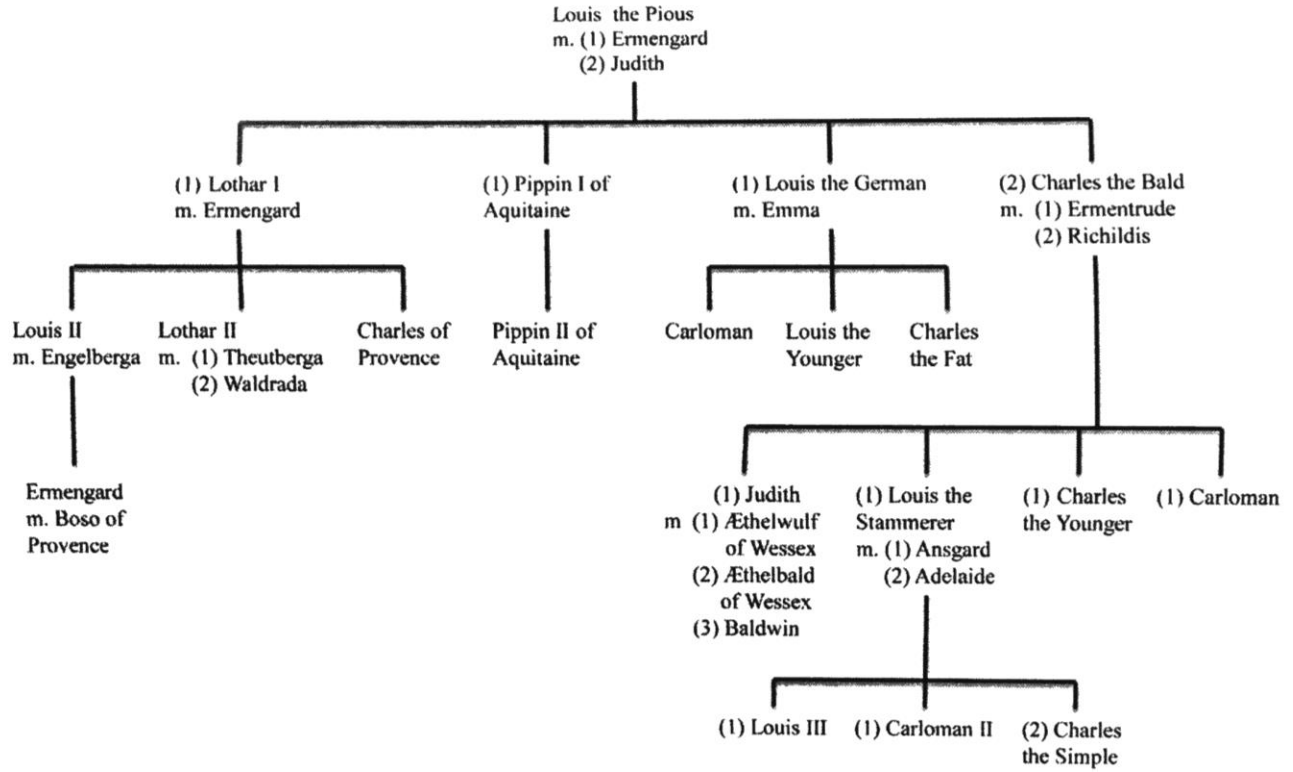
Appendix I: Useful Maps⁶⁹



⁶⁹ All maps in this appendix from Trasmundo 2017.



Appendix II: Simplified Carolingian Genealogy⁷⁰



2 Simplified genealogy of Carolingian rulers.

⁷⁰ Stone and West 2015:xv.

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