



Nemo militans Deo implicat se saecularia negotia: Carolingian interpretations of II Timothy II.4

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In II Timothy II.4, the apostle Paul forbids the servant of God to involve himself in saecularia negotia. While traditionally understood as a reference to commercial activities, for Carolingian thinkers the verse became a way to reflect on the political engagement of prelates and the relationship between religious and secular duties carried out by ecclesiastical office-holders. This article traces the changing significance of II Timothy II.4 in the first half of the ninth century, as councils and exegetes grappled with the question of whether there was a 'neutral' secular beyond the saecularia negotia prohibited by Paul.

In 811, towards the end of his reign, Charlemagne issued a capitulary containing a series of probing questions for the bishops, abbots, and counts of his realm.

In this place it has to be discussed and intervention has to be made [to find out] about how far a bishop or abbot ought to involve himself in secular affairs (*saecularia negotia*) or how far a count or any other layman ought to involve himself in ecclesiastical affairs. Here enquiry is to be made most searchingly: what did the Apostle [Paul]

* Research for this article was carried out in the context of a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowship project on 'The Bible and the Law in Carolingian Europe', which has received funding from the EU's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement no. 655748. I am grateful to Mayke de Jong, David Ganz, Stefan Esders and the Berlin Forschungskolloquium zur Geschichte des frühen Mittelalters for comments and advice, as well as to Conor O'Brien for his patience and careful editorial work.

mean in saying: 'let no one who serves God involve himself in secular affairs' (II Timothy. II.4) and to whom does that saying apply?¹

In a second text, probably drafted soon afterwards and this time addressed to the prelates only, Charlemagne pressed on. He desired to know

how far it is permitted to any ecclesiastic, whether bishop, abbot, or monk, to involve himself in secular affairs [. . .] so that we ought to demand of them no other than what is permitted to them to do, and none of them should seek from us those things in which we ought not to give them our consent.²

Charlemagne's phrasing of the problem is remarkable. He did not ask whether ecclesiastics ought to involve themselves in secular affairs, but to what extent they were allowed to do so. Obviously, there were different opinions among royal advisers, yet the king needed to know how he could legitimately involve ecclesiastics in the government and administration of the realm, and what the limits of such an involvement were. The starting point for Charlemagne's question was the problem of cooperation and coordination between ecclesiastical and secular office-holders, notably bishops and counts. As the first capitulary suggests, there were tensions between bishops and counts, especially in border zones.³ Given that 810–11 had been difficult years,

¹ *Capitula tractanda cum comitibus episcopis et abbatibus*, c. 5, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1 (Hanover, 1883), p. 161: 'In hoc loco discutiendum est atque interveniendum, in quantum se episcopus aut abbas rebus secularibus debeat inserere vel in quantum comes vel alter laicus in ecclesiastica negotia. Hic interrogandum est acutissime, quid sit quod apostolus ait: "nemo militans Deo implicet se negotiis secularibus" vel ad quos sermo iste pertineat'; trans. J. Nelson, 'The Voice of Charlemagne', in R. Gameson and H. Leyser (eds), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages. Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 76–88, at p. 85.

² *Capitula de causis cum episcopis et abbatibus tractandis*, c. 2, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, p. 162: 'ut scire possimus, in quantum cuilibet ecclesiastico, id est episcopo vel abbate seu monacho, secularibus negotiis se ingerere; aut quod proprie pertineat ad illos qui dicuntur et esse debent pastores ecclesiae patresque monasteriorum; ut aliud ab eis nec non quaeramus, quam quod ipsis facere licet; et ut quislibet ex eis a nobis ea non quaerat, in quibus eis consentire non debemus'; trans. Nelson, 'Voice', p. 86. S. Patzold, *Episcopus. Wissen über Bischöfe im Frankreich des späten 8. bis frühen 10. Jahrhunderts* (Ostfildern, 2008), p. 76 suggests that this text was only drafted somewhat later to be discussed at the autumn assembly in 811. See F. Ganshof, 'Notes sur les Capitula de causis cum episcopis et abbatibus tractandis de 811', *Studia Gratiana* 13 (1967), pp. 1–25. Ganshof rightly emphasized the text's aggressive and sometimes ironic tone. That Charlemagne's (exegetical) questions were far from purely rhetorical but reflected growing concerns about the tension between ecclesiastics' involvement in secular government and their obligation to renounce the world, however, is clearly shown by the sustained attempt at addressing this concern during the synods of 813 (see below). Cf. J. Nelson, *King and Emperor. A New Life of Charlemagne* (London, 2019), pp. 473–4.

³ *Capitula tractanda*, c. 2, ed. Boretius, p. 161.

which saw not only the death of Charlemagne's sons Pippin and Charles, but also campaigns at the northern frontiers and in Spain, it is also possible that bishops had protested about undue burdens placed upon them, and about military service owed by their churches.⁴ That Charlemagne was reacting to ecclesiastical complaints about excessive worldly obligations is suggested by the second capitulary, in which he plays back this critique to those prelates whose affiliation with the *militia Dei* did not prevent them from pursuing the accumulation of property by all licit (and illicit) means, from engaging in legal disputes, from seeking the company of women and even from entertaining a military retinue.⁵ Clearly, the prohibition contained in II Timothy II.4 could be used both ways: by the prelates, to reject demands by the emperor or his officials they deemed excessive, or by the emperor, to criticize the prelates' behaviour and secular ambitions. Moreover, the emperor insisted that the answer to the problem lay in finding the correct interpretation of the relevant biblical passages. This concerned both the range of meaning of the term 'secular affairs (*saecularia negotia*)' and the addressees of Paul's prohibition.⁶

In this paper, I will trace the answers given to this exegetical question in normative texts as well as in biblical exegesis, in the period between Charlemagne and Charles the Bald. Looking at the changing definitions of the *saecularia negotia* provides a window onto Carolingian debates about the coordination and cooperation between ecclesiastical and royal authority. To what extent was the political involvement of churchmen perceived as compatible with their religious vocation, and what were the limits of such cooperation between the 'soldiers of God' and the secular state? With this approach, I build on the work of scholars such as Mayke de Jong, Janet Nelson, Steffen Patzold and Stefan Esders, whose research into Carolingian conceptions of *ecclesia* on the one hand, and on the functioning and the limits of Carolingian statehood on the other, have helped to overcome anachronistic notions of a 'separation' between church and state, as well as unquestioned assumptions about a necessary antagonism between the two. Instead, my starting point is the Carolingian concept of an *ecclesia* which encompassed the entire polity and which kings and

⁴ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 74–5; F. Ganshof, 'The Last Period of Charlemagne's Reign. A Study in Decomposition', in *idem*, *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy: Studies in Carolingian History* (London, 1971), pp. 240–55, at 248–9. For a critique of Ganshof, see J. Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 347–77; Nelson, *King and Emperor*, pp. 457–74 and 489–93.

⁵ *Capitula de causis*, cc. 5–8, ed. Boretius, p. 163.

⁶ *Capitula de causis*, cc. 3–4, ed. Boretius, pp. 162–3. Alongside the interpretation of II Timothy II.4, the king also enquired about the meaning of the expression 'to leave the world (*saeculum*)'.

emperors governed together with bishops and abbots, relying on the resources provided by the landed wealth of the churches.⁷ This notion of the *ecclesia* as polity complicates our understanding of the early medieval secular. It certainly does not mean that Carolingian thinkers were incapable of distinguishing between the religious and the political (or the sacred and the secular); rather, the two spheres were interdependent and complementary, and their relationship needed to be constantly debated and re-negotiated.⁸ Within this political space defined by Christianity, then, what did Carolingian thinkers mean when they spoke about the ‘secular’? Where did they localize its boundaries, and how did they evaluate it?

As the changing interpretation and use of II Timothy II.4 in ninth-century texts shows, the *saecularia negotia* forbidden by Paul acquired a new significance in the Carolingian period. Patristic (and canonistic) tradition reads the Pauline verse in a rather restricted sense, as a prohibition against engaging in commerce and the management of private estates, which embargo functions as a boundary between the ‘secular’ and the institutional church with its professional members. By contrast, Carolingian exegetes used the biblical passage in a new way to reflect on the political engagement of prelates and the relationship between religious and secular duties carried out by ecclesiastical office-holders.

The *saecularia negotia* in late antique tradition

Charlemagne’s question was daring, and it was new in its explicit link between the *saecularia negotia* mentioned in II Timothy II.4 and the role which prelates could legitimately fulfil in the sphere of worldly governance and politics. Some earlier Carolingian capitularies and conciliar decrees either cited II Timothy II.4 or forbade ecclesiastics to get involved in secular affairs in more general terms. Here, *saecularia*

⁷ M. de Jong, ‘The Two Republics: *Ecclesia* and the Public Domain in the Carolingian World’, in R. Balzaretto, J. Barrow and P. Skinner (eds), *Italy and Early Medieval Europe. Papers for Chris Wickham* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 486–500; *eadem*, ‘*Ecclesia* and the Early Medieval Polity’, in S. Airlie, H. Reimitz and W. Pohl (eds), *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), pp. 113–31; *eadem*, ‘The State of the Church: *Ecclesia* and Early Medieval State Formation’, in W. Pohl and V. Wieser (eds), *Staat und Staatlichkeit im frühen Mittelalter – Internationale Perspektiven* (Vienna, 2009), pp. 241–54; J. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 57–64; *eadem*, ‘“Not bishops’ bailiffs but lords of the earth”: Charles the Bald and the Problem of Sovereignty’, in *eadem*, *The Frankish World 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 133–43; Patzold, *Episcopus*; *idem*, ‘Bischöfe als Träger der politischen Ordnung im Frankenreich des 8./9. Jahrhunderts’, in Pohl and Wieser (eds), *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*, pp. 255–68; S. Esders and G. Schuppert, *Mittelalterliches Regieren in der Moderne oder modernes Regieren im Mittelalter* (Baden-Baden, 2015).

⁸ De Jong, ‘Two Republics’, pp. 487–8.

negotia were mostly defined in economic terms: the verse was often specifically taken as a prohibition against engaging in commerce, pursuing dishonourable profits, or managing private estates; in some texts, the term was not defined at all.⁹ At the same time, debates existed regarding the addressees of the Pauline prohibition. Some capitularies related it to monks only, some to priests and (higher) clergy, and some to both.¹⁰

With this definition of the *saecularia negotia* as economic activities, the capitularies followed a well-established canon law tradition. For example, when the *Admonitio generalis* (789) called on monks and clerics to avoid secular affairs, it evoked the Council of Chalcedon (451) which had treated the matter in two widely transmitted canons.¹¹ Canon 3 bans bishops, other members of the clergy, and monks from assuming secular obligations, and justifies this prohibition through a verbatim citation of the Pauline text. Among those obligations, the management of private estates was singled out and assumed to be motivated by the quest for dishonourable profits (*turpe lucrum*). Exception was explicitly made, however, for the bishop's duties as a protector of orphans, widows, and destitute persons, as well as for activities related to the administration of church property, which may be performed on the bishop's command.¹² Canon 4 formulates an even stricter prohibition for monks, who were to refrain from both secular and ecclesiastical affairs; again, exemption is made for tasks which were entrusted to them by the local bishop.¹³ A range of other late antique canons, most notably the *Canones apostolorum* and those of African councils, contain similar prohibitions centred on commerce, dishonourable profits and

⁹ See H. Siems, *Handel und Wucher im Spiegel frühmittelalterlicher Rechtsquellen* (Hanover, 1992), pp. 717–848.

¹⁰ Monks only: *Frankfurt* (794), c. 11, ed. A. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1 (Hanover, 1906), p. 75; *Capitula de examinandis ecclesiasticis*, c. 17, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, p. 111. Monks and higher clergy: *Duplex legationis edictum*, c. 30, ed. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, p. 64. Monks and canons/clergy: *Council of Cividale/Friuli* (797), c. 5, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Conc.* 2.1, p. 191; *Capitulare missorum generale*, c. 1, ed. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, p. 92; *Missi cuiusdam admonitio*, ed. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, p. 240; *Capitulare missorum item speciale*, c. 9, ed. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, p. 102; *Capitula ad lectionem canonum et regulae S. Benedicti*, c. 1, ed. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, p. 108.

¹¹ *Admonitio generalis*, c. 23 ed. H. Mordek, K. Zechiel-Eckes and M. Glatthaar, *MGH Fontes iuris germanici antiqui in usum scholarum separatim editi* 16 (Hanover, 2012), p. 195; Siems, *Handel und Wucher*, pp. 730–2.

¹² *Chalcedon* (451), c. 3, ed. Eduard Schwartz, *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* 2.2.2 (Berlin, 1936), pp. 54–5.

¹³ *Chalcedon* (451), c. 4, ed. Schwartz, p. 55; c. 9, p. 56 forbids clerics from bringing their disputes before secular courts.

property management.¹⁴ These different versions of the prohibition were available in a number of canon law collections circulating around 800.¹⁵

The interpretation of the *saecularia negotia* in Latin patristic exegesis on the Pauline epistles parallels that in late antique canon law (indeed, the two traditions may well have mutually influenced each other).¹⁶ The most important of the late antique commentaries was written by an anonymous scholar, the so-called Ambrosiaster, and was often attributed in early medieval manuscripts to Ambrose of Milan himself. Ambrosiaster, working probably in Rome in the second half of the fourth century, clearly understood in an economic sense the *saecularia negotia* which Timothy should avoid. Economic activities which generate profits not by manual labour, but in other ways, were considered to be unavoidably sinful: their pursuit is usually motivated by greed (*avaritia*) and accompanied by lies and deception. Therefore, churchmen are prohibited from conducting this kind of business. Ambrosiaster contrasted these *saecularia negotia* with the *res divinae*, to which churchmen should devote all their efforts. Following two professions, one secular and one religious, at the same time is impossible.¹⁷ Ambrosiaster shared this negative evaluation of commerce as inherently sinful with a number of other patristic writers, as Harald Siems has shown.¹⁸

A second fourth-century commentator, Pelagius, picked up on the metaphor of the (Roman) soldier used by Paul.¹⁹ The churchman is compared to the soldier, who is exempt by law from other duties in order to fully devote himself to his service to the emperor. While the *saecularia negotia* can thus assume a broader meaning including military (or civic) service, the economic interpretation is clearly in the background. Like Ambrosiaster, Pelagius used the following verse ('it is the hard-working farmer who should have the first share of the crops') to affirm that Paul had given permission to the preachers of Christ to

¹⁴ For example: *Canones apostolorum*, c. 7, ed. by C.H. Turner, *Ecclesiae occidentalis monumenta iuris antiquissima*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1899–1939), I, p. 3; *Carthage* (345/8), c. 6, ed. C. Munier, CCSL 149 (Turnhout, 1974), p. 6; *Carthage* (419) [*Canones in Apiarii causa*], c. 16, ed. Munier, CCSL 149, p. 138.

¹⁵ Siems, *Handel und Wucher*, pp. 667–78, for a discussion of the individual canons and their early medieval reception.

¹⁶ Overview in P. Boucaud, 'Corpus Paulinum: L'exégèse grecque et latine des Épîtres au premier millénaire', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 230 (2013), pp. 299–332.

¹⁷ Ambrosiaster, *In epistulas Paulinas (ad Timotheum)* II.2.4, ed. H.J. Vogels, CSEL 81.3 (Vienna, 1969), pp. 302–3. On text and author, see J. Papsdorf, "Ambrosiaster" in Paul in the Middle Ages', in S. Cartwright (ed.), *A Companion to St. Paul in the Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2012), pp. 53–77; S. Lunn-Rockcliffe, *Ambrosiaster's Political Theology* (Oxford, 2007); A. Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster* (Cambridge, 1905), remains fundamental.

¹⁸ Siems, *Handel und Wucher*, pp. 679–85.

¹⁹ Pelagius, *Expositio in 2 Timotheum* II.4–5, ed. A. Souter, *Pelagius' Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1922), II, p. 511.

use the community's donations or the church treasury to support themselves. Pelagius' arguments are repeated in an edited version of the commentary compiled in Cassiodorus' *Vivarium* in the sixth century.²⁰ Finally, the Pauline commentary written by Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) circulated in the west in a Latin translation.²¹ Like the Latin exegetes, Theodore understood the *saecularia negotia* primarily as commerce (*negotiatio*), yet he also included forms of manual labour (*corporalia negotia*) in the prohibition, since these, too, form an obstacle to contemplation. He was more outspoken about the use of material resources provided by the community: ecclesiastics like Timothy were entitled to demand indiscriminately (*indiscrete*) from their flock the means to cover their necessities. By contrast, II Timothy II.4 could also be used in a very different sense, namely to substantiate the religious prohibition on retaining private property. It is cited to that end in the *Regula magistri* regarding monks and by Caesarius of Arles with regard to clerics.²²

The economic interpretation of II Timothy II.4, which defines the *saecularia negotia* in terms of commerce and the administration of property thus clearly dominates in Pauline commentaries, as well as in late antique handbooks on the duties of monks and clergy.²³ Some patristic authors, however, use the *saecularia negotia* in a broader sense to advocate a complete renunciation of worldly activities, thereby drawing a distinction between different groups within the church based on their lifestyle. Abstaining from such secular affairs marks the special position of members of the ecclesiastical *ordines*, freeing them for service to God.²⁴ A very influential formulation of this idea is found in Augustine's *Quaestiones evangeliorum*, which distinguished between monks, laymen and clergy according to their involvement in *saecularia negotia*.²⁵ The *Regula pastoralis* by Gregory the Great contains a passage

²⁰ Cassiodori discipuli-Pelagius, *Commentaria in epistula s. Pauli*, II Tim II.4, *PL* 68, cols 506–686, col. 674.

²¹ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *In epistulas Paulini commentarii*, II Tim II.4–7, ed. H.B. Swete, 2 vols (London, 1882), II, pp. 203–5.

²² *Regula magistri*, 82.18, 91.10, ed. A. de Vogüé, *Sources Chrétiennes* 105–7, 3 vols (Paris, 1964–5), pp. 338–9, 400; Caesarius of Arles, *Sermo* 230.4–5, ed. G. Morin, *CCSL* 114 (Turnhout, 1953), pp. 912–13.

²³ Ambrose, *De officiis* I.36–7 (184–5), ed. and trans. Ivor J. Davidson, *Ambrose: De officiis*, 2 vols (Oxford, 2002), I, pp. 224–5; II, pp. 614–15. Augustine, *De opere monachorum*, c. 15 (16), ed. J. Zycha, *CSEL* 41 (Vienna, 1900), pp. 557–8.

²⁴ Examples: Origines-Rufinus, *In Numeros homiliae*, 2.1.1–3, 26.2.1, ed. L. Doutreleau, *Sources chrétiennes* 415, 442, 461, 3 vols (Paris, 1996–2001), I, pp. 54–8; III, pp. 228–30. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* V.31.55, XIII.16.19, XXIII.20.37, ed. M. Adriaen, *CCSL* 143 (Turnhout, 1979), pp. 257–8, 680, 1171–2. Isidore, *Mysticorum expositiones sacramentorum seu quaestiones in vetus testamentum*, Deut. c. 15, *PL* 83, col. 366.

²⁵ Augustine, *Quaestiones evangeliorum libri duo* II.44, ed. A. Mutzenbecher, *CCSL* 44B (Turnhout, 1980), pp. 104–6.

in which II Timothy II.4 is used to reflect on the balance between spiritual and secular obligations faced by the *rectores*.²⁶

This broader interpretation does not play a role in the Carolingian debate before 811, as far as it can be reconstructed through the normative texts, even though Gregory's work, for example, formed an important point of reference for Carolingian prelates already during Charlemagne's reign.²⁷ Another document deserves to be mentioned here, namely the Legatine Capitulary of 786, which records the results of a papal legation to Mercia and Northumbria. It contained a series of *capitula* for the reform of the Northumbrian church, providing 'Carolingian answers to Northumbrian questions', to quote Joanna Story. One of the chapters cited II Timothy II.4 to prevent bishops from adjudicating secular cases.²⁸ One of the legation's masterminds was George, bishop of Ostia and Amiens, who had excellent connections to both the papal and the Carolingian court; another Carolingian member of the legation was Wigbod, a biblical scholar at Charlemagne's court. Alcuin of York, who attended the synod on behalf of King Aelfwald, may have been involved in the drafting of the document.²⁹ The application of II Timothy II.4 to the role of bishops in the dispensation of judgement would therefore have been known in the circle of Frankish advisers – yet the *Admonitio generalis*, a text which exhibits close parallels to the Legatine capitulary regarding other matters, did not take up this definition of the *saecularia negotia*, but rather cited II Timothy II.4 through the lens of Chalcedon, as we have seen above.³⁰ The capitularies and synodal acts rather focus on the economic aspect of the *saecularia negotia*, although in a letter of the 790s to Charlemagne, Paulinus of Aquileia related the forbidden

²⁶ Gregory, *Regula pastoralis* II.7, ed. B. Judic, C. Morel and F. Romme, *Sources chrétiennes* 381–2, 2 vols (Paris, 1992), I, pp. 218–30. See also Isidore, *De ecclesiasticis officiis* II.2, ed. C.M. Lawson, CCSL 113 (Turnhout, 1989), pp. 53–4.

²⁷ See S. foryszczak, *Die 'Regula Pastoralis' Gregors des Großen: Studien zu Text, kirchenpolitischer Bedeutung und Rezeption in der Karolingerzeit* (Tübingen, 2005); B. Judic, 'La tradition de Grégoire le Grand dans l'idéologie politique carolingienne', in R. Le Jan (ed.), *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne (début IXe siècle aux environs de 920)* (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1998), pp. 17–57.

²⁸ Legatine Capitulary (789), c. 10 = Alcuin, *Epistolae* 3, ed. by E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae IV* (Berlin, 1895), pp. 19–29 (23). J. Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c.750–870* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 55–92, who relates the clause on episcopal judgement to a local Northumbrian context (84).

²⁹ Story highlights the influential role of George of Ostia in the legation; Nelson, *King and Emperor*, p. 225 stresses Charles's initiative. For the debate on Alcuin's authorship see C. Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils, c.650 – c.850* (London, 1995), pp. 153–90; B. Carella, 'Alcuin and the Legatine Capitulary of 786: The Evidence of Scriptural Citations', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 22 (2012), pp. 221–56.

³⁰ Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 160–5; see also the introduction *Admonitio generalis*, ed. by Mordek et al., p. 2.

saecularia negotia to military service, arguing that priests, as members of Christ's army, should concern themselves exclusively with the battle against invisible enemies, using spiritual weapons only.³¹ It is only in the capitularies of 811 that the question of how the interpretation of II Timothy II.4 related to the role of prelates in the government and administration of the realm was really taken up and moved centre stage. The canonical and patristic tradition provided little material with which to answer this question.

The bishops' answer: the *saecularia negotia* and the councils of 813

The Carolingian bishops (and abbots) responded to Charlemagne's exegetical challenge two years later, at the five synods which met in Reims, Tours, Chalon-sur-Saône, Arles and Mainz in 813. The thematic overlap between the acts of these synods suggests that they followed a common agenda provided by the court closely resembling the capitularies of 811.³² Consequently, the interpretation of II Timothy II.4 and the question of delineating and coordinating the secular and the ecclesiastical spheres is central to the acts of these councils. According to Steffen Patzold, the overall outcome was not particularly successful: although the councils defined various 'zones of contact' between the secular and the ecclesiastical spheres, they did not provide a conceptual framework for their heterogeneous and sometimes even contradictory rules, instead deferring the problem to the level of individual prelates and their moral conduct.³³ By contrast, Sebastian Scholz highlights that the prelates in 813 proposed a new and overarching concept of the *ecclesia* as encompassing the *regnum*, which rendered the distinction between the spheres less urgent, as long as that *ecclesia* was governed according to traditional ecclesiastical norms.³⁴

Although no detailed discussion of each of the synods' different responses to the question of the *saecularia negotia* can be provided here, a few points should be made. First, the councils not only associate the

³¹ Paulinus of Aquileia, *Epistola* 18a, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae* 4 (Berlin, 1895), p. 525; repeated in *Frankfurt* (794), Letter of the Italian bishops, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 141–2; Prinz, *Klerus und Krieg*, pp. 11–12, 80.

³² S. Scholz, 'Normierung durch Konzile. Die Reformsynoden von 813 und das Problem der Überschneidung von geistlicher und weltlicher Sphäre', in R. Große and M. Sot (eds), *Charlemagne: les temps, les espaces, les hommes. Construction et déconstruction d'un règne* (Turnhout, 2018), pp. 271–9; R. Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire. Ideals and Expectations during the Reign of Louis the Pious (813–828)* (Amsterdam, 2019), pp. 69–91.

³³ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 77–80.

³⁴ Scholz, 'Normierung', pp. 277–80.

saecularia negotia with economic activities in accordance with late antique tradition, but formulate an even more restricted definition, which no longer covers commerce, estate management and similar activities, but identifies the *saecularia negotia* more specifically with dishonest business practices and dishonourable profits (*turpe lucrum*).³⁵ Although Chalon prohibits other activities traditionally associated with the *saecularia negotia*, such as the management of private estates, these are treated in separate chapters and not connected to the notion of the *saecularia negotia*.³⁶ By associating the *saecularia negotia* with *turpe lucrum*, the 813 councils built on a particular strand found within canon law texts dating to the sixth and seventh century, which prohibited clerics from engaging in unjust and improper business practices such as usury (but without connecting this to the Pauline notion of the *saecularia negotia*).³⁷

The synod of Mainz went one step further. It distinguished reprehensible forms of business as prohibited by Paul, for example usury and the use of unjust weights and measures (which must have been considered illicit also for laymen), from legitimate forms of commerce (*iustum negotium*), stating explicitly that the latter were not affected by the biblical prohibition.³⁸ In Mainz alone, this narrow definition of the prohibition's scope is embedded in a longer chapter (c. 14) entitled *de negotio saeculari* and entirely devoted to the interpretation of II Timothy II.4. The chapter defines the addressees of the Pauline prohibition broadly as all *ministri altaris* as well as monks, and the forbidden *negotia* as 'everything which exceeds proper moderation'. In addition to forbidden economic practices, the canon prohibits the appeal to secular courts and engagement in legal disputes, except to defend persons in the care of the church. It also adds a list of worldly pleasures to be eschewed, most notably hunting. This extensive inventory of *saecularia negotia* ends with a verbatim citation of II

³⁵ Chalon (813), c. 5, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, p. 275; Tours (813), c. 23, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, p. 289 prohibits *turpia negotia*; Reims (813), c. 30, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, p. 256, speaks of *illicita negotia*, which are defined in somewhat circular fashion through a citation of II Timothy II.4. See Siems, *Handel und Wucher*, pp. 777–86.

³⁶ Chalon (813), cc. 12, 44, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 276 and 282; Reims (813), c. 32, ed. Werminghoff, p. 256 prohibits *turpe lucrum* and usury for priests and monks, adapting canon 16 of the 419 Council of Carthage.

³⁷ Siems, *Handel und Wucher*, pp. 685–95, 715–16. On *turpe lucrum*, see also G. Calvet, 'Cupiditas, avaritia, turpe lucrum: discours économique et morale chrétienne chez Hincmar de Reims (845–882)', in J.-P. Devroey et al. (eds), *Les élites et la richesse au Haut Moyen Âge* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 99–113.

³⁸ Mainz (813), c. 14, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, pp. 265. See Siems, *Handel und Wucher*, pp. 778–81, 738–45.

Timothy II.4.³⁹ A chapter devoted to the lifestyle of canons again condemns usury and *turpe lucrum*, and includes a citation from Isidore's *De officiis*, which contains another list of forbidden activities as well as the exhortation to abstain from secular affairs and public office (*saecularia officia negotiaque*).⁴⁰

My second point concerns the addressees of the prohibition: while Mainz targets the entire ecclesiastical *ordo*, Reims names monks and priests (as distinguished from bishops and abbots), whereas Tours names canons and Arles does not explicitly debate the matter. Bishops and abbots appear to have been tacitly omitted from the group addressed by Paul's prohibition (except as regards the appeal to secular courts). While it would thus seem that the prelates assembled in 813 avoided addressing the larger implications of the problem raised by Charlemagne, they did discuss two main issues related to the prelate's role in governing the realm, namely the dispensation of justice, and the management of church property. They did so, however, in separate chapters, thus making no link between these issues and the *saecularia negotia* mentioned in the letter to Timothy.

With regard to church property, the councils of Mainz, Chalon and Tours all reaffirmed the bishops' *potestas* to oversee its administration. In Tours, the bishops felt the need to explain that this belonged to the office of the bishop and had nothing to do with avarice and profit seeking. However, they warned their fellow bishops not to treat church lands as private property; the same warning was issued at Mainz and Chalon.⁴¹ Notwithstanding some episcopal self-critique, this can be interpreted as a reaction to mounting criticism, and it is easy to imagine such critics wielding the quotation from the letter to Timothy against the prelates.⁴² The councils also confirmed the bishops' role in the administration of justice. This not only concerned a bishop's defence of the socially weak, an exemption to the ban on attending secular courts which had already been mentioned in Chalcedon, but also included exhortations to both bishops and counts to work together in establishing justice. Bishops were to ensure the conformity of secular justice with biblical law and to admonish secular judges accordingly.

³⁹ Mainz (813), c. 14, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 264–5. On the legal immunity of clerics, see Charles West's article in this volume.

⁴⁰ Mainz (813), c. 10, ed. Werminghoff, p. 263, citing Isidore, *De officiis* II.2.

⁴¹ Tours (813), cc. 10–11, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 287–8; Mainz (813), c. 8, ed. Werminghoff, p. 262; Chalon (813), c. 6, ed. Werminghoff, p. 275.

⁴² See the accusations of clerical avarice in *Capitula de causis*, cc. 5–7, ed. Boretius, p. 163, explicitly rejected in Tours (813), c. 51, ed. Werminghoff, p. 293; but see Chalon (813), cc. 6–8, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 275–7. Cf. M. Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik im frühmittelalterlichen Bayern. Arn von Salzburg, Karl der Große und die Salzburger Sermones-Sammlung* (Berlin, 2015), pp. 309–17; Scholz, 'Normierung', pp. 273–4.

They were also charged with protecting the poor against unjust judges, and with reporting cases to the king in which the judges did not pay heed to episcopal admonitions.⁴³

While the councils unanimously affirmed the role of bishops in these two fields, the acts are less outspoken on the status of abbots, whose increasingly active and powerful role in royal government during Charlemagne's reign has been charted by Franz Felten.⁴⁴ Regarding the duties of an abbot, the records either refer back to the prescriptions contained in the *Rule of Benedict*, or do not specifically mention them.⁴⁵ Only the Council of Mainz insisted that abbots (like monks) were not allowed to participate in secular *placita* unless they received the permission of their bishop.⁴⁶ It is difficult to judge whether the councils' silence about abbots means that their involvement in royal government was tacitly accepted or considered unproblematic, or whether no consensus was reached in these matters.⁴⁷ In any case, the councils are more outspoken about female leaders of monasteries, who were reminded of their obligation not to leave the monastery, except when travelling to the royal court or acting on behalf of the king.⁴⁸

The synod of Mainz was the only assembly to address the problem of military service owed by churches and their prelates to the king: it affirmed the prohibition to bear arms for 'all of us who have renounced the world'. Obviously, the prelates included themselves among this group, who should by implication not undertake military duties in person.⁴⁹ However, the synod also stated (in direct response to Charlemagne's critique) that keeping an armed retinue of laymen was

⁴³ *Arles* (813), cc. 13, 17, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, p. 252; *Chalon* (813), c. 11, ed. Werminghoff, p. 276; *Reims* (813), c. 19, ed. Werminghoff, p. 255; *Mainz* (813), c. 14, ed. Werminghoff, p. 264; *Tours* (813), c. 41, ed. Werminghoff, p. 292. See W. Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter. Zum geistlichen Gericht über kriminelle Vergehen von Laien im früheren Mittelalter (6.–11. Jahrhundert)', *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 28 (1986), pp. 103–24, at pp. 109–10; L. Jégou, *L'évêque juge de paix: L'autorité épiscopale et le règlement des confits entre Loire et Elbe (milieu VIIIe–milieu XIe siècle)* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 186–93, 198–201; P. Fouracre, 'Carolingian Justice', *Settimane* 42 (1995), pp. 771–803; Diesenberger, *Predigt und Politik*, pp. 214–92.

⁴⁴ F. Felten, *Äbte und Laienäfte im Frankenreich. Studie zum Verhältnis von Staat und Kirche im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1980), pp. 143–256; S. Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 269–79; M. de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History 2, 750–900*, (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 622–63.

⁴⁵ *Chalon* (813), c. 22, ed. Werminghoff, p. 278.

⁴⁶ *Mainz* (813), c. 12, ed. Werminghoff, p. 264. In pursuit of their own cases, they were required to be represented by an advocate. But see *MGH Capit.* 1, no. 40, c. 14, p. 116; no. 58, c. 5, p. 145; Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 158–9.

⁴⁷ *Reims* (813), c. 23, ed. Werminghoff, p. 256, can be interpreted to assume obligations towards both God and the emperor. Cf. *MGH Capit.* 1, no. 102, c. 3, p. 209; Felten, *Äbte*, p. 161.

⁴⁸ *Chalon* (813), c. 57, ed. Werminghoff, p. 285; *Tours* (813), c. 30, ed. Werminghoff, p. 290; *Mainz* (813), c. 12, ed. Werminghoff, p. 264.

⁴⁹ *Mainz* (813), c. 17, ed. Werminghoff, p. 266.

entirely acceptable for bishops.⁵⁰ The other councils pass over this delicate matter in silence.

The five synods thus answered Charlemagne's question about the role of churchmen in the political sphere by more or less systematically dissociating the secular duties of prelates from II Timothy II.4, while at the same time promoting a very narrow definition of the *saecularia negotia* as dishonest business practices (only the synod of Mainz formulated a broader definition, which was, however, aimed at the clergy in general rather than at prelates specifically). The synods also affirmed the control of bishops over church property, as well as their authority in matters of justice. Even though other texts associated with the councils of 813 suggest that no substantial consensus was reached regarding these matters,⁵¹ the synods had thereby identified problems which were to remain central to the conversation for decades to come.

Synods in the reign of Louis the Pious

The *saecularia negotia* were closely connected to the problem of defining the core tasks and lifestyle of different ecclesiastical *ordines*, a problem which was addressed at length at the beginning of Louis the Pious's reign in the monastic legislation of Aachen 816/17. These texts clarify some of the problems regarding the secular involvement of abbots, but do so indirectly and without reference to the Pauline prohibition. While the direct involvement of abbots in the management of monastic estates was restricted, the capitularies make some room for their need to engage with secular and ecclesiastical magnates, and to participate in royal assemblies.⁵² Likewise, the *Institutio canonicorum* defends prelates who engage in the world and secular affairs to facilitate the contemplative life of others.⁵³ II Timothy II.4 is cited verbatim, however, only in the *Institutio sanctemonialium* in order to remind abbesses, particularly those of high-status backgrounds, that they were

⁵⁰ Mainz (813), c. 17, ed. Werminghoff, p. 266.

⁵¹ *Concordia episcoporum* (a. 813), c. 9, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, p. 298 retains Chalon's economic definition, while omitting most other chapters discussed above. The *Capitulare ecclesiasticum Karoli magni* (806/13), c. 14, ed. H. Mordek and G. Schmitz, in Mordek, *Studien zur fränkischen Herrschergesetzgebung: Aufsätze über Kapitularien und Kapitulariensammlungen ausgewählt zum 60. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt, 2000), p. 404, reverts to the *Admonitio generalis* in citing the canons of Chalcedon.

⁵² *Capitulare monasticum I* (816), cc. 24, 25, ed. J. Semmler, *Corpus consuetudinum monasticum 1: Initia consuetudinis Benedictinae* (Siegburg, 1963), p. 464; *Regula Benedicti sive collectio capitularis* (818/19), cc. 20, 21, 56, ed. Semmler, *Corpus consuetudinum*, pp. 515–36 (521, 530). See J. Semmler, 'Die Beschlüsse des Aachener Konzils im Jahre 816', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 74 (1963), pp. 15–82, at pp. 40–2; de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism', p. 633.

⁵³ *Institutio canonicorum*, c. 31, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, pp. 352–3 and 356–7.

to eschew secular affairs as far as possible, although they too, of course, had to take the necessary steps to keep the monastery running.⁵⁴

The debate about the political involvement of prelates and clergy, and about the distinction between legitimate and illicit crossings of the boundary between the ecclesiastical and the secular, was taken up with vigour at the synod of Paris in 829, which met on Louis and Lothar's order to address a growing sense of crisis within the empire. Between 813 and 829, Louis and his advisers, including a new generation of bishops, had established a framework for conceptualizing the order of the Christian empire and the modes of cooperation between the different lay and secular actors within it.⁵⁵ In the *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines* of 825, the role of the emperor was defined as a divinely bestowed office (*ministerium*) in which bishops, abbots and lay magnates shared. By fulfilling their own offices dutifully, they participated in the emperor's responsibility to secure the status of church and realm as well as the salvation of the people.⁵⁶ At the synod of Paris in 829, the bishops built on such concepts to develop a model of the empire as *ecclesia*, guided by the king and the bishops, who fulfilled distinct yet complementary roles. Recent work has shown that the bishops' concern was not to separate secular and religious power or to assert the church's supremacy, as an older tradition of historical scholarship maintained, but rather to define the modes and limits of cooperation between the two spheres.⁵⁷ The efforts of the synod of Paris to delineate the role of bishops and kings, respectively, arose from the conviction that the central problem which had precipitated the crisis of the empire consisted in the 'confusion between the two orders.'⁵⁸

Verbatim citations of II Timothy II.4 in the acts of 829 occur only in chapters concerning subordinate clergy and monks. Chapter I.28 prohibits engagement in secular business and illicit profit-seeking, which is reinforced by the citation of II Timothy II.4 alongside Luke IX.62 ('No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God'). This was seen as directed at monks and priests especially, thus marking the boundary between the *militia Dei* and the lay world, and combined with citation of canons 3 and 4 of

⁵⁴ *Institutio sanctimonialium*, c. 7, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.1, pp. 442–4.

⁵⁵ Charted by Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 135–84; de Jong, 'Ecclesia', pp. 121–31.

⁵⁶ *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines*, ed. Boretius, *MGH Capit.* 1, pp. 303–7; O. Guillot, 'Une ordination méconnue. Le Capitulaire de 823–35', in P. Godman and R. Collins (eds), *Charlemagne's Heir. New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 451–86; de Jong, *The Penitential State: Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious, 814–840* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 131–3; Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 140–6.

⁵⁷ Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 149–59; de Jong, *Penitential State*, pp. 170–84; *eadem*, 'Ecclesia', pp. 128–31.

⁵⁸ De Jong, *Penitential State*, p. 177.

Chalcedon.⁵⁹ The bishops assembled in Paris in 829 thus positioned themselves in the tradition of Chalcedon rather than taking up any of the detailed discussions of 813.⁶⁰ However, they also updated the Chalcedonian prohibition to fit contemporary circumstances: they condemned prelates making use of the loophole left by Chalcedon for activities pursued by monks and clergy on behalf of their superiors. The bishops reminded their fellows that the deployment of priests as emissaries to conduct their business on their behalf was not covered by the canonical exception, and that the practice deprived parishes in their diocese of proper pastoral care.⁶¹ Priests who claimed to act on behalf of their bishop but in reality were pursuing their own interests were condemned even more harshly, using a passage from Gregory's Pastoral Rule that warned priests against tarnishing their sanctity of life by secular activities.⁶²

With regard to the role of bishops, the synod defined a set of core tasks, including pastoral care and the liturgy, as well as the supervision and education of priests. These core tasks were contrasted with episcopal secular obligations, the synod complaining that the former had been unduly neglected in favour of the latter. In the summary of chapters which was added to the synodal letter to the emperors, the bishops vowed to hereafter 'be involved not so much in secular desires, obligations and preoccupations (*cupiditates, curae et sollicitudines mundanae*) as in the divine office'.⁶³ In the final chapters of the summary, the synod identified the imbalance between secular and spiritual duties of the bishops as the central problem to be confronted by the emperors in the reform of the realm:

that on the one hand, royal power on various occasions has interfered with things ecclesiastical, contrary to divine authority, and on the other, the bishops have been led partly by negligence, partly by ignorance, partly by greed to become preoccupied with the affairs and offices of this world (*saecularia negotia et sollicitudines*) more than was appropriate.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ *Paris* (829) I.28, ed. A. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.2 (Hanover, 1908), p. 630.

⁶⁰ See also *Paris* (829) I.46, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 640–1, which cites Chalcedon, canon 4 to forbid monks from entering female monasteries.

⁶¹ *Paris* (829) I.29, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 631–2.

⁶² *Paris* (829) I. 29, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 631–2.

⁶³ *Paris* (829) III.1 (68), ed. Werminghoff, pp. 668–9.

⁶⁴ *Paris* (829) III.26 (93), ed. Werminghoff, p.679: '[. . .] specialiter unum obstaculum ex multo tempore iam inolevisse cognovimus, id est quia principalis potestas diversis occasionibus interventibus secus, quam auctoritas divina se habeat, in causas ecclesiasticas prosilierit et sacerdotibus partim negligentia, partim ignorantia, partim cupiditate in saecularibus negotiis et sollicitudinibus mundi ultra, quam debuerant, se occupaverint'.

Saecularia negotia here designate the main area of responsibility of secular rulers, as opposed to the *ecclesiasticae causae* entrusted to bishops. However, the secular sphere is at the same time a shared space: the problem was not that bishops had participated in it, but that they had done so excessively. Indeed, as the synod stated in the next chapter on episcopal *libertas*, it was necessary to re-establish a reasonable balance between the episcopate's pastoral duties and their service to the emperor. The bishops acknowledged the latter as part of their office as well, and they conceded that the current situation of crisis in the empire called for an even more intensive engagement of the church in support of the polity, presumably not least with regard to the maintenance of troops. However, further discussion was deferred to a later, more authoritative meeting including the rulers.⁶⁵

The *Relatio episcoporum*, which presented the synodal decisions of 829 for debate at the assembly of Worms, contains a chapter not derived from the acts of Paris, in which bishops rebuke their colleagues for leaving their dioceses because of greed rather than because of *necessitas* or *utilitas*, thereby abandoning their pastoral duties. Although the text does not give more specific information as to what kind of situation is covered by *necessitas* and *utilitas*, one may surmise that these categories included tasks (including military service) undertaken on behalf of the king and for the common good.⁶⁶ This chapter was in turn repeated in the acts of the synod of Aachen in 836, as was the bishops' bid for episcopal *libertas*.⁶⁷

The synod of Paris also admonished monastic leaders to maintain a good balance between the temporal and spiritual duties of their office, an admonition that was obviously formulated mainly with regard to the material government of the community itself rather than to any duties outside. The warning was addressed to abbesses, regular and canonical abbots as well as lay abbots, suggesting a sense of compatibility between the monastery and the political sphere.⁶⁸ In Aachen 836, regular abbots were likewise reminded that they were obligated to provide for the material resources necessary to fulfil the religious tasks of the monastery, but they were also warned to limit

⁶⁵ Paris (829) III. 27 (94), ed. Werminghoff, p. 680. See H.-H. Anton, 'Zum politischen Konzept karolingischer Synoden und zur karolingischen Brüdergemeinschaft', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 99 (1979), pp. 55–132, at p. 74; Patzold, *Episcopus*, p. 165 with n. 396; H. Hürten, 'Libertas in der Patristik, libertas episcopalis im Frühmittelalter', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 45 (1963), pp. 1–14.

⁶⁶ *Relatio episcoporum*, c. 14 (17), ed. A. Boretius and V. Krause, *MGH Capit.* 2 (Hanover, 1890), pp. 34–5.

⁶⁷ Aachen (836), cc. 12, 56, ed. Werminghoff, *MGH Concilia* 2.2, pp. 708, 721.

⁶⁸ Paris (829) III.18 (85), ed. Werminghoff, p. 676; see Felten, *Äbte*, p. 289; Wood, *Proprietary Church*, pp. 312–28; lay abbesses: I.39, p. 637.

their secular activities to that goal. The chapter continues by rehearsing the canons of Chalcedon which ban monks from all secular as well as ecclesiastical business, especially from property management (*villicatio*), except in cases of urgency and with the consent of the bishop.⁶⁹ Similarly, the abbots of canonical communities were reminded that it was not part of their office to seek ‘shameful (*turpia*), secular, or vane things’ which contradict their religious vocation.⁷⁰ Both synods exhorted the emperors to choose the *pastores* and *rectores* of the church carefully and with regard to the dignity of the Christian religion.⁷¹

The acts of the synods of Paris 829 and Aachen 836 thus reveal an intensified debate on the *saecularia negotia*, with a clearer focus on prelates as office-holders whose responsibilities included both the divine cult and political service. Despite the prohibition of II Timothy II.4 and the negative evaluation of the *saecularia negotia* implied by it, these synods delineated a sphere of secular (political) activities for prelates which were considered legitimate. However, the tension between the secular and the pastoral aspects of their office was now discussed more directly than it had been in 813.

Shifting exegetical arguments and the debate on the *saecularia negotia* in the 840s and 850s

It is no coincidence that in the following years, Carolingian exegetes took up the question of the *saecularia negotia* in a dramatically new exegetical fashion.⁷² In the first decades of the ninth century, exegetical debates on II Timothy II.4 do not seem to add any new perspectives beyond the patristic material. Alcuin did not comment on the second letter to Timothy; the commentary on Paul contained in the exegetical miscellany compiled by Theodulf of Orléans (Paris, BNF lat. 15.679), which abbreviates Ps-Jerome/Pelagius, does not contain an explanation on the verse in question.⁷³ Claudius of Turin wrote commentaries on the Pauline epistles between 815 and 23, but it is unclear whether the commentary on I–II Timothy, which circulated under Claudius’ name, is really his own work rather than having been added later to complete

⁶⁹ *Aachen* (836), c. 26, ed. Werminghoff, p. 711.

⁷⁰ *Aachen* (836), c. 25, ed. Werminghoff, pp. 710–11.

⁷¹ *Paris* (829) III.22–3 (89–90), ed. Werminghoff, p. 677 for abbesses. *Aachen* (836), cc. 49–50, ed. Werminghoff, p. 719; Felten, *Äbte*, p. 296.

⁷² For an overview of ninth-century commentaries on Paul, see J. Heil, *Kompilation oder Konstruktion? Die Juden in den Pauluskommentaren des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Hanover, 1998), pp. 33–4; I. Levy, ‘Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles in the Carolingian Era’, in Cartwright (ed.), *Companion*, pp. 145–74; Boucaud, ‘Corpus Paulinum’, pp. xxii–xxx.

⁷³ Ps-Jerome, *Commentarii in epistulas Pauli*, Ad 2 Timotheum, *PL* 30, col. 890C, repeats Pelagius.

the corpus.⁷⁴ Pierre Boucaud has made a case for the authenticity of the commentaries as transmitted in the manuscript Monte Cassino, Badia 48.⁷⁵ According to Boucaud, the compiler interwove Ambrosiaster's commentary with parts taken from the revision of Pelagius undertaken by Cassiodorus' disciples, thus repeating Ambrosiaster's economic definition of the *saecularia negotia* and his negative evaluation of commerce.⁷⁶ Ambrosiaster's text itself was easily accessible already by the time of Charlemagne, given that there are a number of extant manuscripts produced in the late eighth and early ninth centuries.⁷⁷ The patristic tradition with its focus on the economic aspect of the *saecularia negotia* continued to be influential throughout the ninth century. Florus of Lyon interpreted the *saecularia negotia* as commerce and property management by including a chapter from Augustine's *De opere monachorum* in his collection of Augustinian texts on the Pauline epistles.⁷⁸ Sedulius Scotus, probably writing between 840 and 874, repeated the interpretation of the Vivarium Pelagius verbatim.⁷⁹

In contrast to the economic interpretation of the *saecularia negotia* represented by these works, two commentaries on Paul written around the middle of the ninth century mark a new departure. Hrabanus Maurus and Haimo of Auxerre, both of whom wrote commentaries on the entire Pauline corpus, develop the theme of the *saecularia negotia* in ways differing markedly from patristic tradition to make points closely related to contemporary debates about prelates' involvement in the political sphere. This is remarkable given that Carolingian exegetes are usually known for their close dependence on patristic sources and for conveying their points of view through selecting, re-arranging and subtly changing these sources. The texts also differ from the

⁷⁴ On Claudius' life and career, see P. Boulhol, *Claude de Turin: un évêque iconoclaste dans l'occident carolingien. Étude suivie de l'édition du Commentaire sur Josué* (Paris, 2002), pp. 15–35; Heil, *Kompilation*, pp. 224–36, 229–30, does not list the commentary on II Timothy among Claudius' genuine works; M. Gorman, 'The Commentary on Genesis of Claudius of Turin and Biblical Studies under Louis the Pious', *Speculum* 72 (1997), pp. 279–329.

⁷⁵ Boucaud, 'Corpus Paulinum', p. 323; *idem*, 'Commentaires pauliniens inédits du haut moyen âge dans un manuscrit du Mont-Cassin', *Revue d'histoire des textes*, ns 7 (2012), pp. 159–219. For the manuscripts, see Mirella Ferrari, 'Note su Claudio di Turino "episcopus ab ecclesia damnatus"', *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 16 (1973), pp. 291–308.

⁷⁶ Boucaud, 'Commentaires pauliniens', p. 215.

⁷⁷ H. Vogels, 'Die Überlieferung des Ambrosiasterkommentars zu den paulinischen Briefen', *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philolog.-hist. Kl.* 7 (1959), pp. 107–42.

⁷⁸ Florus of Lyon, *Expositio in epistolas Pauli ex operibus sancti Augustini collecta* (Ad 2 Tim.), c. 2, PL 119, col. 405B. See also Florus, *Collectanea ex dicta XII patrum*, cc. Cyprian ad Tim II (84), Hilary ad Tim II (110), ed. P.-I. Fransen, CCCM 193 (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 59–60, 169–70 (again in an economic sense).

⁷⁹ Sedulius Scotus, *Collectaneum in Apostolum*, II Timothy II.4, ed. H.J. Frede and H. Stanjek, *Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel* 31–2, 2 vols (Freiburg, 1996–7), II, p. 685.

capitularies and conciliar decrees on the issue of prelates' involvement in secular affairs: their concern is less demands made on churchmen, either by their superiors or by secular rulers, but more the danger of them becoming worldly. To the two Pauline commentaries, we can add a long discussion of II Timothy II.4 contained in Paschasius Radbertus' Matthew commentary, written during the same time span. In order to situate these commentaries as voices within a broader debate on the relationship between the 'sacred' and the 'secular' during the 840s and 850s, it is useful to examine them alongside other texts by the same authors such as letters and political dialogue, and to compare them to contemporary church councils. This will allow us to consider to what extent exegetical knowledge and arguments were incorporated across other genres, and to consider similarities and differences between the interpretations of II Timothy II.4 in exegetical commentaries and those underlying its use in the broader political debate.

When Hrabanus completed his commentary on the Pauline corpus around 840/1, he was already a distinguished exegete, whose commentaries were read and sought after by bishops, abbots, and kings.⁸⁰ For the commentary on II Timothy, Hrabanus mainly relied on the Latin translation of Theodore, who he followed in initially defining the *saecularia negotia* not only as business activities in the stricter sense of the word, but also as other forms of corporeal labour which distract churchmen from fully devoting themselves to the *militia Dei*.⁸¹

After that, however, Hrabanus' exegesis takes an entirely different turn. Through a citation from Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Rule*, Chapter II.7, Hrabanus takes the warning not to engage in *saecularia negotia*, that is, the secular duties of ecclesiastical office-holders, and relates it specifically to prelates. While this is a theme entirely absent from the patristic commentary tradition on II Timothy II.4, it reacts to an increasingly lively debate on this issue, as revealed by the synods of 829 and 836. Moreover, Gregory's *Pastoral Rule* had become a key text in the debates about new models of episcopal leadership as they took shape in the 820s and 30s.⁸² Hrabanus inserted Gregory's text

⁸⁰ M. de Jong, 'The Empire as *ecclesia*: Hrabanus Maurus and Biblical *historia* for Rulers', in Y. Hen and M. Innes (eds), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 191–206. On the Pauline commentary, see Heil, *Kompilation*, pp. 257–63; Boucaud, 'Raban Maur'; S. Cantelli, *Hrabani Mauri Opera exegetica: Repertorium fontium*, 3 vols (Turnhout, 2006), I, pp. 358–65.

⁸¹ Hrabanus, *In epistulas Pauli*, II Tim c. 2, *PL* 112, cols 642B–D.

⁸² See above, n. 27. The Rule was required reading for bishops in Mainz (813), Chalon (813) and Aachen (836). See Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 169, 213–15; Judic, 'Grégoire', pp. 39–40; Floryszczak, *Regula pastoralis*, pp. 328–35.

deliberately into a long block of passages taken from Theodore of Mopsuestia.⁸³

Gregory had criticized prelates who completely immersed themselves in the worldly aspects of their office because of the prestige, power and self-esteem attached, while eschewing contemplation and pastoral care.⁸⁴ Gregory cited II Timothy II.4 as one in a series of biblical passages which warn against such an imbalance between spiritual and temporal duties. More specifically, he interpreted the passage as a prohibition against participating in the ‘association of this world (*consortium mundi*)’. This probably included social relations with (high-ranking) lay people, given that it was preceded in Gregory’s text by a warning against drunkenness and feasting.⁸⁵ Finally, Gregory advised prelates to delegate as much of their secular (especially judicial) responsibilities to their deputies as possible, citing another Pauline passage (I Cor. VI.4) in support. Gregory read this latter passage as an exhortation to entrust legal cases to ‘those of low standing in the church’, although Paul’s original intention was probably precisely to rebuke the community for doing so.⁸⁶

Given that Gregory’s language was not very technical (*saeculares curae, terrena negotia/studia, mundana tumultu*), his definition of the *saecularia negotia* could easily be understood to include all activities which a Carolingian bishop or abbot would have encountered during his office: the administration of his church and its property, judicial responsibilities, as well as assemblies and negotiations with secular office-holders. Such activities led to worldliness creeping in and undermined a prelate’s holiness. While Hrabanus repeated this criticism almost verbatim, he did not take up Gregory’s reverse argument, who had also warned prelates against neglecting their temporal duties. Gregory vividly reminded his *rectores* that preaching usually fell on deaf ears when the hearers had an empty stomach or were concerned about securing their livelihood.⁸⁷ Hrabanus, on the other hand, obviously did not think his colleagues were prone to neglect the secular part of their ministry.

This exegetical argument forms the background to more specific advice that Hrabanus gave to his former fellow student Haimo, in a letter marking the latter’s elevation to the see of Halberstadt with a

⁸³ Cantelli, *Opera exegetica* III, p. 1071. Besides two short excerpts from Gregory, the entire commentary on II Timothy II stems from Theodore.

⁸⁴ Gregory, *Regula Pastoralis* II.7, ed. Judic *et al.*, pp. 218–31.

⁸⁵ Gregory, *Regula Pastoralis* II.7, ed. Judic *et al.*, p. 220.

⁸⁶ Gregory, *Regula Pastoralis* II.7, ed. Judic *et al.*, pp. 220–2.

⁸⁷ Gregory, *Regula Pastoralis* II.7, ed. Judic *et al.*, pp. 226–8.

gift, a copy of the encyclopaedia *De natura rerum*.⁸⁸ In the letter, Hrabanus reflected upon the balance between the pastoral and secular duties of a bishop, in his own words but in terms clearly inspired by Paul's prohibition of the *saecularia negotia* and Gregory's interpretation thereof. Hrabanus admonished Haimo to prioritize the study of scripture and teaching even if the challenges of the office were manifold.⁸⁹ He criticized colleagues who took delight in being involved in the leading circles of the realm as a result of their ecclesiastical office:

Woe, many among the clergy neglect the office of the preacher and the spiritual lifestyle. They are puffed up because they have been appointed as leaders in secular affairs, frequently assisting in the consultations of laypeople, and almost presiding over their assemblies as mediators and acting as judges in their conflicts.⁹⁰

Both fields – political assemblies, not least those convoked by rulers, as well as the dispensation of justice – were of course all too familiar to a Carolingian bishop such as Haimo. Hrabanus criticizes the ambition and lust for power of many prelates, using harsher terms than even Gregory. In condemnation he cites II Timothy II.4, and as in the Pauline commentary, follows Gregory in quoting I Cor. VI.4 to demand that judicial duties should be delegated to subordinate officials. Referring to Luke XII.14 ('Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?'), Hrabanus concludes with a passionate plea against episcopal involvement in secular courts, which according to him amounts to a confusion between the ecclesiastical and the secular sphere:

Christ thus demonstrates that he does not want the teachers of the gospel to engage with or participate in secular obligations and disputes. For it is not the same office to stand on the pulpit preaching the gospel to the people, and to discern causes brought forward by litigants in secular courts.⁹¹

Given the regular involvement of Carolingian bishops in the different levels of the administration of justice, Hrabanus' passionate critique is somewhat puzzling. He may have responded to a growing workload placed on the shoulders of prelates during the reign of Louis the Pious,

⁸⁸ Hrabanus, *Epistola* 36, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epistolae* 5 (Berlin, 1899), p. 471.

⁸⁹ See B. Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche und die Reichskirche im ostfränkischen Reich: 826–876* (Husum, 2002), pp. 119–20, 219–20.

⁹⁰ Hrabanus, *Epistola* 36, ed. Dümmler, p. 471. Cf. E. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire. Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876* (Ithaca, 2006), p. 219.

⁹¹ Hrabanus, *Epistola* 36, ed. Dümmler, p. 472.

when the bishops were even more intensely involved in the dispensation of royal justice than under Charlemagne.⁹² Hrabanus' exhortation to install deputies, in which he followed Gregory, may be related to the frequent demand to let advocates oversee judicial matters in the context of ecclesiastical immunities.⁹³ Hrabanus himself was a politically versatile abbot, who actively supported Louis the Pious and then Lothar in the struggles of the 830s and 840s.⁹⁴ He is also known to have been critical of the episcopal verdict after the battle of Fontenoy, which exonerated the followers of Louis the German and Charles the Bald with regard to the killings committed during the battle. By the time he wrote to Haimo of Halberstadt, he had been compelled to step down as an abbot of Fulda after Louis the German had succeeded in establishing power over the eastern part of the realm.⁹⁵ Moreover, Haimo's own difficult position as one of Louis the German's few loyal supporters among the eastern episcopate may also have played a role.

Although Hrabanus' personal experiences as the abbot of one of the most powerful monasteries in Francia certainly shaped his take on the question of the *saecularia negotia* in the letter to Haimo, it would be misleading to interpret his texts on a purely individual level. They also indicate that the tension between the prelates' various roles – as pastors and ecclesiastical leaders, royal advisers, and landlords – continued to be problematized among leading ecclesiastics during the last years of Louis the Pious. Such tensions may have become especially relevant in the years of political instability following Louis's death.

It is interesting to contrast Hrabanus' exegetical critique with the perspective of the synods of Mainz in 847 and 852, over which he presided after he had become the city's archbishop. The first of these

⁹² This is explained by their more regular deployment as *missi* as well as by regular grants of immunities and *tuitio*: Jégou, *L'évêque*, pp. 183–93; Goldberg, *Empire*, pp. 219–20; K.F. Werner, 'Missus-marchio-comes. Entre l'administration centrale et l'administration locale de l'Empire carolingien', in *idem*, *Vom Frankenreich zur Entfaltung Deutschlands und Frankreichs: Ursprünge-Strukturen-Beziehungen. Ausgewählte Beiträge, Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag* (Sigmaringen, 1984), pp. 108–56, at pp. 114–21. In the second half of the ninth century, the earliest evidence for local episcopal courts (*Sendgerichte*) appears: Hartmann, 'Der Bischof als Richter', pp. 112–16; *idem*, *Kirche und Kirchenrecht um 900. Die Bedeutung der spätkarolingischen Zeit für Tradition und Innovation im kirchlichen Recht* (Hanover, 2008), pp. 243–60.

⁹³ See Charles West, 'The Significance of the Carolingian Advocate', *EME* 17 (2009), pp. 186–206; Wood, *Proprietary Church*, pp. 328–38.

⁹⁴ B. Bigott, 'Politische und ideologische Positionen Hrabans unter Ludwig dem Frommen und seinen Söhnen', in P. Depreux *et al.* (eds), *Hraban Maur et son temps* (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 77–89; Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 57–8, 74–5, 90–2; M. de Jong, 'Hraban Maur as a Mediator: De honore parentum (Autumn 834)', in S. Joye *et al.* (eds), *Splendor Reginae. Passions, genre et famille. Mélanges en l'honneur de Régine Le Jan* (Turnhout, 2015), pp. 49–58.

⁹⁵ De Jong, 'Empire as ecclesia', pp. 207–9; Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 90–2. Hrabanus had attended the assembly at Nijmegen 838, which reduced Louis the German's prospects to Bavaria, see Bigott, p. 63; Goldberg, *Empire*, pp. 87–90.

synods can be interpreted as a signal for the newly established consensus and cooperation between the east Frankish episcopate and Louis the German. In order to express that consensus, the synod reverted to the tradition of 813.⁹⁶ The fourth canon affirms the ideal of consensual cooperation between bishops and counts and their shared role as bearers of *ministeria*, perceived as complementing each other.⁹⁷ Canon 7 describes the role of bishops in the concise terms of Mainz 813: bishops hold the *potestas* over the administration of church property, act as protectors of the weak, have authority over laymen in matters pertaining to their *ministerium*, and, most importantly, they should cooperate with counts and judges in the administration of justice, where they are tasked especially with prohibiting justice from being undermined by perjury and bribery.⁹⁸ Likewise, the definition of the *saecularia negotia* as contained in Mainz 813 was integrated in the acts of the synod of 847, where it appears under the rubric ‘On the lifestyle of clerics and monks’, and is complemented by two chapters from Reims 813 which prohibit drunkenness and worldly entertainments.⁹⁹ II Timothy II.4 is thus (again) firmly associated with the life of subordinate clergy and monks rather than with that of the prelates. Notwithstanding the message of cooperation and consensus, the synod also strongly condemned the usurpation of church property by lay magnates, asking the king to withdraw his tacit consent.¹⁰⁰

The second commentary on the Pauline epistles written in this period was by Haimo of Auxerre. The commentary began as a series of homilies and subsequently underwent several stages of redaction, but was probably completed in the early 850s.¹⁰¹ Whether or not Haimo knew and used Hrabanus’ commentary is difficult to establish, since similarities

⁹⁶ See Bigott, *Ludwig der Deutsche*, pp. 104–11; Goldberg, *Empire*, pp. 159–64; W. Hartmann, ‘Die Mainzer Synoden des Hrabanus Maurus’, in R. Kottje and H. Zimmermann (eds), *Hrabanus Maurus. Lehrer, Abt und Bischof* (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 130–44.

⁹⁷ Mainz (847), c. 4, ed. W. Hartmann, *MGH Concilia* 3 (Hanover, 1984), p. 165, based on Mainz (813), c. 5, ed. Werminghoff, p. 261 to which Chalons (813), c. 20, ed. Werminghoff, p. 277 about mutual support in the fulfilment of the office was added. The canon was repeated at Mainz (852), c. 1, ed. Hartmann, *MGH Concilia* 3, p. 241.

⁹⁸ Mainz (847), c. 7, ed. Hartmann, p. 166, based on Mainz (813), c. 8, ed. Werminghoff, p. 262.

⁹⁹ Mainz (847), c. 13, ed. Hartmann, pp. 168–9, combining Mainz (813), c. 14, ed. Werminghoff, p. 264 with Reims (813), cc. 17–18, ed. Werminghoff, p. 255 and Arles (813), c. 6, ed. Werminghoff, p. 251.

¹⁰⁰ Mainz (847), c. 6, ed. Hartmann, p. 166.

¹⁰¹ Heil, *Kompilation*, pp. 280–8; *idem*, ‘Haimo’s Commentary on Paul: Sources, Methods, and Theology’, in S. Shimahara (ed.), *Études d’exégèse Carolingienne: autour d’Haymon d’Auxerre* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 103–21; date to 850s: C. Levy, ‘Trinity and Christology in Haimo of Auxerre’s Pauline commentaries’, in I. van ‘t Spijker (ed.), *The Multiple Meaning of Scripture. The Role of Exegesis in Early Christian and Medieval Culture* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 101–24. On Haimo as an exegete, see S. Shimahara, *Haymon d’Auxerre: un exégète carolingien* (Turnhout, 2013) and the papers in *eadem* (ed.), *Études d’exégèse*.

between the two texts could be explained by common recourse to the same patristic sources.¹⁰²

Certainly, Haimo like Hrabanus used II Timothy II.4 to problematize the political involvement of prelates. From the start, he left no doubt that he understood the *saecularia negotia* in a wide-ranging sense far beyond commerce and economic affairs: he compared the verse to another key biblical passage about the distinction between the ecclesiastical and the secular sphere, namely Luke XVI.13 ('No servant can serve two masters'), identifying these two masters not with God and money as in the gospel text, but rather with God and the *saeculum*. There follows a very specific definition of the *saecularia negotia*: 'Secular affairs consist in acquiring worldly profits through usury and blandishment, as do those who serve kings and counts for the sole reason to receive temporal benefices from them in return.'¹⁰³ This pertained to bishops specifically, but more generally to the entire *ordo ecclesiasticus*, whose members should prove themselves 'insusceptible to such business'. Haimo reminded the members of this *ordo* that they had committed, first and foremost, to service to God. Although the comparison to the oath of fidelity is only implicit, Haimo thereby evokes the tension between two kinds of *fides* (to God and to the emperor).¹⁰⁴ Haimo's critique targets prelates who view their role mainly as serving the king or his secular magnates, using this as a means to personal advancement and profit. He may also have had in mind prelates who gained office due to their loyal service and personal relations rather than their spiritual qualities. Brought to its logical conclusion, Haimo's argument challenges pragmatic assumptions about the compatibility of ecclesiastical office-holding and royal service: there were too many moral compromises to be made by such prelates.¹⁰⁵

As John Contreni has shown, Haimo voiced a similar critique at other points in the commentary on the Pauline letters, where he denounced bishops as apostles who were man-made, advanced through corruption, kinship ties and adulation, rather than appointed by God.¹⁰⁶ As a

¹⁰² Heil, *Kompilation*, pp. 325–8.

¹⁰³ Haimo of Auxerre, *In epistolas Pauli*, II Timothy II.4, *PL* 117, col. 802B.

¹⁰⁴ On *fides*: M. de Jong, *Epitaph for an Era: Politics and Rhetoric in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 188–92; O. Phelan, 'The Scope of Fidelity in Nithard's Ninth Century', *Viator* 48 (2017), pp. 21–47.

¹⁰⁵ In four of his homilies, Haimo cites II Timothy II.4 in a more traditional sense, arguing that striving for wealth and possessions undermines one's ability to serve God. See Haimo of Auxerre, *Homiliary*, 22, 112, 135, *PL* 118, cols 170C, 603A–B, 720A–B. A fourth homily (*Homiliary* 13, col. 88A–D) uses II Timothy II.4 to exhort widows to chastity. See H. Barré, *Les homéliaires carolingiens d'Auxerre* (Vatican, 1962), pp. 33–42, 49–70.

¹⁰⁶ J. Contreni, "'By Lions, Bishops are Meant, by Wolves, Priests': History, Exegesis and the Carolingian Church in Haimo of Auxerre's Commentary on Ezechiel', *Francia* 29 (2002), pp. 29–56, at p. 40.

monk of Auxerre, Haimo knew such prelates from direct experience: from 853 onwards, the abbacy was in the hands of Hugh, the son of the count of Auxerre and a relative of Charles the Bald.¹⁰⁷ In view of similar discontent voiced by Haimo in his later *Commentary on Ezechiel*, John Contreni has suggested personal disappointment at not having been 'called to the post'. Just like in Hrabanus' case, however, Haimo's exegesis also formed part of a wider political discussion beyond the personal or local level: west Frankish synods of the 840s likewise debated the practice of entrusting monasteries to loyal (lay) supporters of the king. Among the most vociferous critics was Paschasius Radbertus, another commentator on II Timothy II.4.

Although Paschasius Radbertus did not write a commentary on II Timothy, he dealt extensively with the prohibition against engaging in secular affairs in his commentary on Matthew. The starting point is the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. XXII.1–14): a king extends invitations for his son's wedding banquet, but the invited guests refuse to attend, preferring to farm their land or to attend to their businesses.¹⁰⁸ This belongs to the second part of the commentary (Books V–XII), which Radbert wrote after he had been an abbot of Corbie himself for some years, that is, after 849/50.¹⁰⁹

Radbert devoted the major part of his commentary on the parable to defining the *saecularia negotia* and the acceptable limits for their exercise. Taking his cue from the two kinds of occupations mentioned in the biblical text, work on the *villae* and *negotiationes*, Radbert distinguished between various forms of making one's living, as Ambrosiaster had. The *villae* predictably signify agriculture, but Radbert extended the category to include other forms of manual labour such as the cultivation of woodlands or craftsmanship. Likewise, the *negotiationes* covered all kinds of occupations where profits are not generated through manual labour. These included not only trade, but also military service and the exercise of public offices.¹¹⁰

While Radbert took care to underline that manual occupations were only sinful if pursued immoderately or dishonestly (that is, if they were motivated by *turpe lucrum*), he viewed commercial, military and

¹⁰⁷ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 177–9, 233–4; Shimahara, *Haymon*, pp. 34–9 provides a list of counts, bishops and abbots in Auxerre during Haimo's lifetime.

¹⁰⁸ Paschasius Radbertus, *In Matthaeo* X.22.5–6, ed. B. Paulus, *CCCM* 56 (Turnhout, 1984), pp. 1076–7.

¹⁰⁹ Books I–IV, by contrast, were written in the 820s. On Radbert's life and career, see de Jong, *Epitaph*, pp. 35–43; on the Matthew commentary and its date, see B. Paulus, 'Einleitung', in *CCCM* 56, p. viii; D. Ganz, *Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance* (Sigmaringen, 1990), pp. 82–3; A. Schönbach, *Über einige Evangelienkommentare des Mittelalters* (Vienna, 1903), pp. 142–74.

¹¹⁰ Radbertus, *In Matthaeo* X.22.5–6, ed. Paulus, p. 1076.

political activities as 'rarely without sin'. Radbert thus extended Ambrosiaster's negative evaluation of commerce to cover military service and office-holding.¹¹¹ More specifically, however, all kinds of professions are sinful to the extent that they form an impediment to faith and service to Christ, which, according to Radbert, explains the meaning of Paul's prohibition in II Timothy II.4. Thus, the degree to which a person may be legitimately involved in worldly activities depends on their status and obligations towards the divine cult. II Timothy II.4 is therefore addressed not only to monks and clergy, but to every Christian, with the religious demands varying according to the person's status. In that sense, the common people were hindered in their fidelity to Christ by labour, and members of the secular and ecclesiastical elite by *negotiationes*, that is, by 'seeking profits or public office, avarice and ambition'.¹¹²

Like Haimo, Radbert criticized these powerful persons for their ambition and avarice. He moreover worried about the side effects of ecclesiastical office-holding: prelates were led by their legitimate tasks and duties into the morally questionable field of politics. On the other hand, Radbert created space for a more 'neutral' (or even positive) evaluation of members of that elite whose exercise of their office did not conflict with their fidelity to Christ. Radbert thus placed the responsibility at the feet of the individual prelate rather than describing it as a systematic problem of the political order.

II Timothy II.4 also plays an important role in Radbert's most famous work, the *Epitaphium Arsenii*. In Wala's speech to the assembly in 829 as reported by Radbert, II Timothy II.4 functions to establish the limits for the legitimate use of church property by the secular state.¹¹³ While Wala/Radbert acknowledged the obligations of the churches to support the empire (and its armies) in times of crisis, church property became the focal point for a conceptual distinction between the ecclesiastical and the secular *res publica*.¹¹⁴ Apart from proper control by the bishops and appropriate use for the common good (rather than for private purposes), he demanded that churchmen should not be compelled by this arrangement to engage in secular affairs as forbidden by Paul. Here, the *saecularia negotia* thus refer, in the traditional sense, to the

¹¹¹ Radbertus, *In Matthaeo* X.22.5–6, ed. Paulus, p. 1077.

¹¹² Radbertus, *In Matthaeo* X.22.5–6, ed. Paulus, p. 1077.

¹¹³ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii* II.3, ed. E. Dümmler, *Radbert's Epitaphium Arsenii*, Abhandlungen der kgl. preuss. Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin, 1900), pp. 64–5. For an in-depth discussion of the text, see de Jong, *Epitaph*, pp. 193–9; *eadem*, *Penitential State*, pp. 164–70.

¹¹⁴ Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii* II.2, ed. Dümmler, pp. 62–4. On the notion of *res publica*, see de Jong, 'Two Republics'.

pursuit of worldly professions necessitated by lacking material support. Radbert's rendering of the debates during Wala's lifetime was clearly shaped by the even more vigorous debates precipitated by the war among the royal brothers, which we can trace in the records of a series of west Frankish synods of the 840s and 850s.¹¹⁵

With regard to the political role of prelates, these synods, notably that of Meaux-Paris (845/6), also took up other aspects of the debate as they had emerged during the reign of Louis the Pious. Looking back on the recent civil war, the synod of Meaux-Paris stated that royal reliance on episcopal support in economic and military terms had been excruciatingly high. Although the bishops were obviously willing to put these matters in the past, they demanded henceforth to be granted appropriate liberty (*libertas*) to devote themselves to the administration of their dioceses and the pastoral care of their flock. They explicitly warned their colleagues (and reminded their king) that this withdrawal of episcopal energy from contributing to the consolidation of the realm had nothing to do with *otium*, but was meant to free up time for what they called *divina negotia*. *Otium* and *negotia divina* thus form the opposite of the secular obligations (though these were not described as *saecularia negotia*).¹¹⁶

Another hotly debated point was the bestowal of monasteries to lay abbots. At Meaux-Paris, an earlier canon from Yütz was confirmed, according to which the abbots of regular monastic communities must also follow the Rule of Benedict, thus prohibiting the instalment of laymen. Even so, the canon describes abbots as office holders with obligations towards the (secular) *res publica*, who were responsible for striking a balance between the spiritual and secular duties of their office (*divina religio* and *utilitas rei publicae*). Neglecting either part of these duties was considered grounds for a deposition.¹¹⁷ While Yütz had conceded the temporary installation of lay abbots in canonical

¹¹⁵ De Jong, *Epitaph*, pp. 195–7; *eadem*, 'Paschasius Radbertus and Pseudo-Isidore: The Evidence of the Epitaphium Arsenii', in V. Garver and O. Phelan (eds), *Rome and Religion in the Medieval World. Studies in Honor of Thomas F.X. Noble* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 149–78; P. Breternitz, 'Ludwig der Fromme und die Entfremdung von Kirchengut. Beobachtungen zum Epitaphium Arsenii', in K. Ubl and D. Ziemann (eds), *Fälschung als Mittel der Politik? Pseudoisidor im Licht der neuen Forschung* (Wiesbaden, 2015), pp. 187–206. Church property (and royal access to it) was already a matter of debate in the late 820s: S. Esders and S. Patzold, 'From Justinian to Louis the Pious: Inalienability of Church Property and the Sovereignty of a Ruler in the Ninth Century', in R. Meens *et al.* (eds), *Religious Franks: Religion and Power in the Frankish Kingdoms: Studies in Honour of Mayke de Jong* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 386–408.

¹¹⁶ *Meaux-Paris* (845/6), c. 28, ed. Hartmann, *MGH Concilia* 3, p. 99; W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), pp. 208–17; Patzold, *Episcopus*, pp. 266–71.

¹¹⁷ *Meaux-Paris* (845/6), c. 9, ed. Hartmann, p. 89, building on Yütz (844), c. 3, ed. Hartmann, *MGH Concilia* 3, p. 32.

communities, provided that an ecclesiastic oversaw the *negotia religionis christianaе*, this concession was not repeated at Meaux-Paris.¹¹⁸ Another problem discussed in Meaux-Paris (which had already been raised in Paris in 829) was the status of the members of the palatine chapel. The solution proposed in Meaux-Paris was fairly liberal: monks and canons who were needed at court or proved useful to either the bishop or the king were allowed to commit themselves to royal service, provided they ensured the consent of their bishop.¹¹⁹ The palatine clerics, who stood outside the normal ecclesiastical hierarchy and were likely to receive important abbacies or bishoprics, were the targets of Radbert's critique in the *Epitaphium Arsenii*, and they may have been on Haimo's mind when commenting on II Timothy II.4.¹²⁰ The synod's clear affirmation of the prelates' role as office-holders in service of the *res publica*, as well as the licence for monks and clergy to enter royal service at court, explicitly legitimized this kind of service. These were not *saecularia negotia* as forbidden by Paul, but duties compatible with the status of monks and clergymen, as long as there remained some episcopal control in place.¹²¹ Unsurprisingly, II Timothy II.4 is not cited with regard to such political involvement, but only in chapters dealing with the economic activities of priests.¹²² Instead, Yütz and Meaux-Paris cited a different biblical verse in the chapter on the secular duties of abbots, which encapsulates the reverse exegetical argument: 'give unto Caesar what is Caesar's' (Matt. XXII.21).¹²³ The synods' emphasis is not on the danger of growing worldliness from 'within', but rather on limiting illicit encroachment by the king and his lay magnates.

When Paschasius Radbertus problematized the political duties of ecclesiastics as a form of *saecularia negotia* in the Matthew commentary, he thus contributed to the debates as conducted at Meaux-Paris (which he may have attended). Radbert also shared with the synod the passionate condemnation of lay abbacies. In his commentary on Matthew XXI.12–13 (the purge of the temple), he not only warned prelates that they were not supposed to act like merchants, abusing ecclesiastical *res* to acquire illicit profits of their own. He also included

¹¹⁸ Yütz (844), c. 5, ed. Hartmann, p. 34. See Felten, *Äbte*, pp. 408–16.

¹¹⁹ *Meaux-Paris* (845/6), cc. 57–8, ed. Hartmann, pp. 110–11.

¹²⁰ Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii* II.5, ed. Dümmler, p. 66.

¹²¹ By contrast, II Timothy II.4 is evoked in a canon prohibiting all members of the clergy from taking up arms: *Meaux-Paris* (845/6), c. 37, ed. Hartmann, p. 102.

¹²² *Meaux-Paris* (845/6), c. 49, ed. Hartmann, p. 108.

¹²³ Yütz (844), c. 3, ed. Hartmann, p. 32; *Meaux-Paris* (845/6), c. 9, ed. Hartmann, p. 89. G. Calvet-Marcadé, *Assassin des pauvres. L'Église et l'inaliénabilité des terres à l'époque carolingienne* (Turnhout, 2019), pp. 186–91, discusses the canons on lay abbots in the context of the synods' decisions on church property and places more emphasis on the exclusion of laymen and the attempt to separate the spheres.

a particularly fierce denunciation of both unworthy abbots and those responsible for committing the churches to the mercy of men he described as ‘vicious and greedy’, ‘undisciplined and irreligious’.¹²⁴ The text of a privilege for Corbie confirmed at the synod of Paris in 846/7, which was likely drafted by Radbert himself, seeks to deflect some of the consequences of the definition of the abbot’s position as outlined in Yütz and Meaux-Paris. It insists on the right to freely elect an abbot even in cases where the former incumbent of the office had been removed due to negligence of his (political) duties.¹²⁵ When writing about Matt. XXII.21, the verse quoted in the canons of Yütz and Meaux-Paris, Radbert – like the synods – conceded that churches and ecclesiastics had to render their dues to the ruler before devoting themselves to God’s service. Following Hilary of Poitiers, he argued that Christ’s intention had been to find a way of encouraging contempt for this world while avoiding offending secular authorities. However, Radbert went on to criticize strongly the excessive and partly illicit burdens placed on the churches (i.e. monasteries) according to the ‘miserable custom of the Gauls’ in his own day, lamenting the fact that in the present state, they remained inextricably enmeshed in this world and therefore bound by secular laws and by their obligations to the ruler.¹²⁶

Radbert – like Haimo and Hrabanus – thus sounded a sceptical note regarding the compatibility of ecclesiastical office and secular service, alerting his audience to the inherent danger of moral corruption and to potential conflicts of loyalty. Yet he comes closer than the other two exegetes to articulating a neutral space in which secular duties could be legitimately carried out by virtuous and faithful prelates. In the concluding paragraph to his exegesis of the parable on the nuptials, he suggests an overarching *ecclesia* as the framework for the cooperation of the different *ordines*, each of which possesses its own virtues.¹²⁷

Conclusion

In tracing the answers given to Charlemagne’s question about the meaning of II Timothy II.4 in normative and exegetical texts up to the reign of Charles the Bald, this paper has revealed a remarkable shift. The biblical prohibition on engaging in secular affairs suggests a notion

¹²⁴ Radbertus, *In Matthaeo* IX.21.13, ed. Paulus, p. 1027; but see *ibid.* X.22.21, ed. Paulus, pp. 1086–7.

¹²⁵ M. de Jong, *Epitaph for an Era*, pp. 57–64.

¹²⁶ Radbert, *In Matthaeo* X.22.21, ed. Paulus, p. 1087.

¹²⁷ Radbert, *In Matthaeo* X.22.5–6, ed. Paulus, pp. 1077–8.

of the secular as activities from which religious professionals, monks and clergy, were supposed to abstain because they were perceived as potentially sinful or as an obstacle to the functioning and autonomy of the divine cult. Patristic tradition (and late antique canon law) defined these activities in rather narrow terms as commercial, and sometimes even more specifically as the pursuit of economic profits by illicit means. Carolingian exegetes, by contrast, used the biblical prohibition of II Timothy II.4 to debate a different 'secular': the sphere of political action and service to the ruler and the political commonwealth. Hrabanus Maurus, Haimo of Auxerre and Paschasius Radbertus problematized the extent to which prelates could legitimately involve themselves in political assemblies, seek office and positions of power, take on judicial responsibilities, or place their churches' material resources at the disposal of the secular polity. The background for this exegetical shift was a growing concern about whether this kind of engagement in the secular sphere was compatible with the pastoral responsibilities of ecclesiastical leaders, a concern first raised explicitly by Charlemagne in 811. Was there a 'neutral' secular beyond the *saecularia negotia* prohibited by Paul? How 'secular' was the institutional church supposed to be?

The synods of Paris 829, like those of the 840s, clearly understood the obligations of bishops and abbots towards the ruler and the secular polity as an integral part of their office, while at the same time distinguishing them from the core responsibilities, which were pastoral and religious. At stake was the proper balance between the two fields of action. The conciliar texts avoid evoking the Pauline prohibition and thereby questioning the secular leadership of ecclesiastics, although they regulate some of their activities in the secular sphere; to a certain extent, they thus affirm the notion of a 'neutral' secular in which churchmen could legitimately participate. However, the notion of *saecularia negotia* could still be used to control and delimit both the demands placed on the churches and their leaders by the secular polity, and the political leeway of abbots, monks and subordinate clergy.

When the Carolingian exegetes around the middle of the ninth century made an explicit link between this debate and Paul's prohibition on engaging in secular affairs, this did not, however, amount to a fundamental critique of the cooperation and interdependence between the spheres. The exegetes emphasized the tensions between the two fields of activity more than the conciliar records, which reflect a more pragmatic and compromise-oriented approach, but their fierce criticism was directed not least towards other prelates, warning them against the dangers of moral corruption and secularization inherent in the political aspects of their office. All the

texts reveal the concept of the secular as rhetorical strategies to classify certain sets of activities from a Christian perspective.¹²⁸ II Timothy II.4 and the notion of the *saecularia negotia* could be deployed to differentiate between various fields of activity, to negotiate their boundaries and hierarchies, and to claim autonomy for ecclesiastical office-holders with regard to their main responsibilities.

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¹²⁸ See the Introduction by Conor O'Brien, as well as Robin Whelan's article in this issue.