Chapter 4

BETWEEN LOVE AND HATE: MODELS OF FRATERNAL RELATIONS

IN EUROPEAN CULTURE fraternal relations have been associated with positive values for centuries. Fraternal love, loyalty, and collaboration constitute an ideal to which other relations between people are compared. However, this is by no means an unequivocal picture. There is a darker side, a lurking threat of rivalry or even open hostility between brothers. In his comprehensive study devoted to the notion of brotherhood in the Middle Ages, Klaus van Eickels points to the danger facing a scholar trying to tackle the topic. It stems from the fact that the modern language used to describe fraternal relations is imbued with symbolic contents very different from the meanings attributed to them in the past. The idea of the Republican *fraternité* interwoven with the concepts of Christian brotherhood developed by today's theologians is an important element of the contemporary culture of Western European civilization, strongly rooted in collective ideas about social order.[1] Historians are not free from their influence. It is very easy, even unintentionally, to give in to the temptation of using conceptual patterns of one's own culture to interpret phenomena that seem to be, at first glance, so similar to what is known well from the world around us. Yet although in the past, too, fraternal relations were treated as exceptional, a recognition of this uniqueness does not have to mean that the meanings attributed to them are shared. It is therefore important is to carry out a detailed analysis of the models and anti-models of fraternal relations characteristic of the period, the sources of values that lay at their foundation, and the transformations they underwent.

Fraternal Love: *amor*, *dilectio*, *caritas fraterna*

What comes to the fore in research into the notion of brotherhood in the Carolingian era is reflection on the meaning of the term *caritas fraterna*. It is, in fact, the only problem associated with relations between brothers thoroughly explored in medieval studies generally. The choice is by no means accidental: the term *caritas fraterna* appears frequently in Carolingian sources; most importantly, it appears in sources concerning relations within the dynasty during the break-up of Charlemagne's realm and disputes between the sons of Louis the Pious in the mid-ninth century. Older, especially German, historiography regards these sources (including synodal records, documents issued during the successive divisions of the Carolingian realm, and pacts between the ruling brothers) as the key to any study of the transformations of the model of relations

1 Eickels, "Der Bruder als Freund," 195ff.

between the monarchs, the Church, and the ruling elites, which was the basis of the political order of late Carolingian and post-Carolingian Europe.

Reinhard Schneider, the author of a fundamental study devoted to the meaning of the notion *caritas fraterna* in the Carolingian era, set the direction of research and in some respects defined its scope, at least for German historians. Schneider was interested primarily in matters of the political system: he discussed the social and legal aspects of relations between brothers with regard to the relations between the sons of Louis the Pious during their fight for power and after the division of the empire. That is why he focused his attention on a group of texts produced during successive meetings and agreements concluded by Lothar I, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald as well as their successors, that is primarily royal diplomas, texts of agreements between the brothers, capitularies, and synodal records. According to this scholar, in the language and conceptual system of these sources the term *caritas* occupied a central place, while the transformations of its use reflected particularly vividly changes in the political organization of the Carolingian realm.[2]

In Schneiders opinion, the term *caritas fraterna* combined the secular ("Germanic") understanding of the relations between biological brothers, based on legally sanctioned collaboration and heritage sharing, with the Christian concept of fraternal love, which brought together all baptized people, and which was based on trust and faithfulness. In his interpretation, under the impact of clergymen representing the faction seeking to keep the unity of the empire (the *Reichseinheitspartei*), during the reign of Louis the Pious, there emerged a concept whereby Christian *caritas* was to cement the unity of Louis's sons. The combination of values derived from secular law (fraternal obligations) and from the teaching of the Church (love of one's neighbour) was to prevent an irreversible division of the Carolingian dominions. However, the plan failed in its confrontation with reality, and the language of the sources returned to the traditional "Germanic" understanding of the term *caritas* as a fraternal relation based on the renunciation of violence and mutual faithfulness, but not altruistic power sharing.

Another German scholar, Hans Hubert Anton, who more than a decade after Schneider resumed reflection on the definition of fraternal relations between Carolingian kings followed the path set by his predecessor. Anton was interested primarily in the question of why the notion of *caritas*, used to define the relations between the royal brothers in the 840s and 850s, practically disappeared from the language of royal charters in the 870s and was replaced by terms like *amicitia.* He tried to demonstrate what legal and political changes were reflected by this process.[3] His analysis was based on sources produced during the great synods of 828–829 and related legislation from subsequent years. At that time, representatives of the imperial elite discussed the reform and improvement of Christendom, plagued, by divine decree, by disasters seen as punishment for the sins committed by Christians.[4]

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2 Schneider, *Brüdergemeine und Schwurfreundschaft*, 49ff.

3 Anton, "Zum politischen Konzept," 211.

4 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 113.

Anton argued against the thesis advocated by Margret Wielers, who attributed the change in the language of the sources to the weakening role of traditional kinship ties in Carolingian politics and the emergence, under the influence of Christianity, of a new form of the law of brotherhood (*ius fraternitatis*).[5] He also questioned Schneider's interpretation, which assumed the existence of an opposition between the Germanic institution of brotherhood and the Christian concept of a sacred bond between brothers in Christ. Looking for another explanation, Anton examined the mutual links between the concepts of *caritas*, *amicitia* and *fraternitas*. According to him, in the mid-ninth century the meanings of these words were similar and encompassed the traditional obligations of brothers to help each other and remain friends (according to the *consilium et auxilium* formula). In the 840s, through deliberate actions by representatives of the Church, the term *fraternitas* was imbued with Christian content; and on this basis there emerged a new legal construct, which was to become the ideological and political foundation of the Carolingian realm. The changes were reflected, first of all, by the constitutions of Frankish councils. Bishops believed that *caritas fraterna* encompassed ideal relations between royal brothers based on peace and concord, but also on the resulting duty to maintain unity and peace in the Church. The spread of such a concept of *caritas* was to be of crucial significance when the Carolingian dominion was to be divided, at a time when it became an urgent problem for the ecclesiastical elites to reconcile the idea of *unitas Ecclesiae* and the right of all descendants of Louis the Pious to have a share in the inheritance. According to Anton, in response to this challenge among the intellectual elite emerged a concept of brotherhood or fraternity (*fraternitas*), the essence of which encompassed both Christian love (*caritas*) and blood-based brotherly solidarity, confirmed by an oath (*amicitia*). Thus two legal institutions deriving from the "secular" order were combined and reconciled with the Christian concept of fraternal love: traditional *germanitas*, which united biological brothers with bonds of loyalty, and friendship confirmed by an oath (*amicitia*). At least from the 850s onwards this was the legal and ideological basis of the relations between Lothar I, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald. When it was no longer possible to control centrifugal tendencies and smooth over the brothers' conflicting interests, the model ceased to serve its purpose. According to Anton, this was the moment in which the advocates of the concept of the unity of the realm (*regnum*) as a joint dominion of brothers united by Christian brotherly love ultimately failed, and the relations between the rulers had to be considerably revalued in the direction indicated by Schneider, i.e.by pacts, alliances, and friendships (but no longer brotherly love) between sovereign monarchs ruling independent kingdoms.

The problem with Schneier's and Anton's interpretations stems from their assumptions that brotherhood existed as a more or less precisely defined institution in law (*Brüdergemeine*). Even when Schneider criticized the legal historians' concept of pan-Germanic brotherhood as the basis for relations within the family, his criticism

5 Wielers, *Zwischenstaatliche Beziehungsformen*.

concerned the way of defining the institution and not its very existence. Consequently, all of Schneider's interpretations were on the one hand tangled up in the dispute over the Germanic-pagan or Christian origins of early medieval brotherhood and on the other focused on examining the legal aspects of its functioning. In addition, both Schneider and Anton used the traditional division into and juxtaposition of the private and the public, the secular and the sacred. As a result of these dichotomies Schneider in particular, but to a large extent Anton as well, saw the way relations between brothers were described in the sources not as a product of many overlapping and intermingling patterns, but as a clash of competing and clearly opposing models which belonged not only to different normative systems but even to different orders (*sacrum* versus *profanum*).

What is doubtful about Schneider's interpretations is first of all the adoption of these distinctions as key to understanding the legal order of the Carolingian era. In more recent studies historians agree about the complementary nature of the religious and so-called secular elements of legal customs, royal laws, and ecclesiastical laws of early medieval societies and, consequently, in the political life of the period. The very term "secular" used with reference to phenomena from these areas is imprecise and may even be misleading, as institutions of social life were rooted in religion both before and after the adoption of Christianity. Thus Christianization denoted not so much the sanctification of institutions of social life, but replacement, by the Christian system of values, of legitimizing functions earlier performed by pagan beliefs.

What also does not stand up to criticism is the very concept of brotherhood (*Brüdergemeinschaft*) as a legal institution, as has been mentioned earlier. Both the older legal historians and, to a large extent, Schneider himself were convinced that there existed legal criteria defining relations between brothers not only on the level of specific obligations concerning ownership or legal aid, but also on that of mutual relations in general. Notions like loyalty, faithfulness, love, or fraternal help appearing in sources were treated by these scholars as legal categories that could be precisely described. Such an understanding of social relations in the early Middle Ages seems debatable today, to say the least.

The model proposed by Schneider and Anton lacked a broader non-political and non-legal context. Both scholars focused on diplomatic and normative sources—moreover, on a special group of such sources: those produced in royal and episcopal chanceries. Other sources, such as, for example, moralizing or homiletic texts, were treated as marginal, and this inevitably led to a one-sided approach. In addition, building complex hypotheses concerning an ideological and political programme only on the basis of an analysis of individual source terms that are, furthermore, hard to define precisely, prompts us to approach these scholars' findings rather cautiously.

Focused on an examination of legal institutions as they are, Schneider's and Anton's studies are nevertheless important to the present analysis—despite all the reservations concerning the assumptions adopted by these scholars. The sources they examined confirmed the role played by the ideal of fraternal relations shared (or challenged) by the elites—relations understood both as an earthly blood tie and a spiritual bond—in the political game involving rival members of the Carolingian dynasty. The notion of

caritas fraterna (*caritas fraternitatis*), which is key to defining these relations, requires a broader approach and a look at its functioning also in other types of sources.

I have already mentioned the significance of Paul's concept of Christian brotherhood to the emergence of the dualist model of fraternal relations. A crucial role was played by his interpretation of the biblical notion of fraternal love (Greek *philadelphia*, Latin *caritas fraternitatis*). Speaking of the Church as a fraternal community, St. Paul pointed, in accordance with Christ's teachings, to mutual love as a goal towards which this community should strive (Rom. 12:10; 1 Thes. 4:9). Yet he did not provide a precise definition of the essence of this fraternal love, clearly concluding this obligation as obvious in itself as stemming from the words of Jesus himself.[6] Nor did he define the relation between the two terms appearing side by side and used to define the spiritual love between Christians, that is *philadelphia* and love of God and for God, *agape.* The very etymology of these words suggests a special link between the former and values traditionally associated with fraternal blood ties. In the Latin translation of the New Testament this original difference between the Greek terms was weakened, which resulted from the use of a single term to define them—*caritas* (sometimes replaced with the words *dilectio* and *amor*, used synonymously). A detailed discussion of the history and transformations of the very concept of *caritas* as one of the three theological virtues in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages goes beyond the framework of the present study.[7] However, it needs to be noted that the ambiguity of the term used in the Vulgate had a considerable impact on the interpretation of the essence of fraternal love in Latin culture.

The ninth-century dispute over the correct understanding of the Christian notion of (fraternal) love was part of a broader discussion about the principles that should govern the life of an individual and the functioning of the entire Christian community. It became particularly intense during the reign of Louis the Pious, an era marked by successive crises, but which also (and perhaps precisely because of that) produced many eminent thinkers, capable of original reflection on the order of the world, stretched as it was between the earthly and the eternal. The problem of the meaning of *caritas* in this order kept recurring in many exegetic works, especially in commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew and the Apostolic Epistles as well as in homilies.

An observation that is obvious but brings with it the furthest-reaching consequences—and which can be based on just a perfunctory analysis of references concerning Christian fraternal love in these sources—concerns the dialectical tension between the spiritual and the carnal in this relation. This dichotomy, which comes from Augustine, is combined with a fundamentally positive nature of fraternal relations: fraternal love stems from natural law; it is part of the eternal order created by God. Although by killing Abel Cain

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6 For more on fraternal love in Paul's teachings, see Aasgaard, *'My Beloved Brothers'*, 151–77; see also Dujarier, *L'Église-Fraternité*: *L'ecclésiologie du Christ-Frère*, 1.

7 For more on the origins and meaning of the term *caritas* in general, see the classic study by Pétré, *Caritas* (mainly lexicographically); on the functioning of the term in the early Middle Ages, Schneider, *Brüdergemeine und Schwurfreundschaft* (leaving aside most exegetical texts).

imposed fatalism on this relationship, he committed the deed against God's will, violating the social order of the first human family introduced by God. Thus brothers born of the same parents are morally obliged to love each other. This love is an unbreakable duty of mutual support, loyalty, and trust, but is based above all on renouncing all envy (*invidia*). However, given the fact that brotherhood of the flesh is naturally tainted by sin, the ideal of fraternal love cannot be fully put into practice among people without acquiring a special spiritual dimension. This dimension can be acquired only when love is liberated from carnal entanglement, becoming an all-encompassing love, directed through love of people towards God. Thus love between brothers is a moral obligation, but it always remains imperfect, unless it becomes spiritual love, going beyond the earthly family and encompassing all brothers in Christ.

Early medieval authors were convinced that the fraternal love which biological brothers should have for each other and love among brothers in Christ were, in fact, the same, and that it was expressed in the same moral values: loyalty, unity, mutual, selfless help, and ability to forgive. There was no difference between them in this respect. Yet the affection uniting biological brothers differs from true fraternal love in the reason behind their mutual obligations: affection between biological brothers comes from the flesh and not from the spirit, not from the will of the soul, but from being born in sin, from the community of earthly life, not from the community seeking salvation. It is, therefore, inevitably flawed.

In his treatise *De videndo Deum* Hrabanus Maurus explained this dichotomy by referring to the words of Julian Promerius, who lived at the turn of fifth and sixth century: "One does not love if he loves someone because he or she is his brother or sister, father or son, mother or daughter, grandson or granddaughter: for one that loves thus loves carnally; instead we should love not those who are bound to us by kinship, but those … who are of the same nature."[8] This idea by Promerius was also referred to in *De varietate librorum*, attributed to Haimo of Auxerre, when author explained the essence of Christian love.[9] For both theologians affection for one's relatives based only on the blood tie imperative is not truly Christian love; it may even lead to sin, for what it favours above selfless love for one's neighbour are earthly ties, which make humans unjust and blind to the misdeeds and defilement of the souls of those regarded as one's relatives.[10]

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8 Rabanus Maurus, *De videndo Deum,* cols. 1291–92: "Neque enim ideo se diligit quisque, quia sibi frater aut soror, pater aut filius, mater aut filia, nepos aut neptis est, carnaliter quippe amat, qui taliter amat, quoniam non illi tantum proximi nostri esse credendi sunt, quos nobis gradus sanguinis jungit, sed proximi nostri esse credendi sunt omnes homines naturae nostrae, sicut dixi, participes."

9 Haymo Halberstatensis, *De varietate librorum*, chap. 7, col. 894.

10 Rabanus Maurus, *De videndo Deum*, col. 1292: "Jam si propinquos nostros, quamvis incompositos, turpes ac male moratos, plusquam quoslibet sanctos, quos a nobis secundum sanguinem vocamus, extraneos diligamus, non solum carnaliter diligimus, sed etiam graviter in tali eorum dilectione peccamus."

Fraternal love may achieve perfection only if brothers go beyond the earthly, excluding category of shared origins defining a group bound by ties of blood. This state can be sought only by practising virtues, by thinking not about earthly benefits for oneself and one's family, but about becoming closer to God and saving one's own and one's neighbours souls. The theologians and moralists writing about brotherhood believed that the social relations between brothers (irrespective of whether the brotherhood was physical or artificial) had to acquire a special sacred dimension to become a true bond between souls (Augustine's *vinculum mentium*). *Caritas fraterna* interpreted in such a way is one of the forms that can be assumed by omnipresent and eternal love coming from God and directed towards God. This idea is clearly expounded by Hrabanus Maurus in his sermon *De charitate*, referring directly to St. Augustine.[11]

Blood ties and the obligations resulting from them were a constant point of reference for authors considering the essence of Christian fraternal love. They assumed that the closest relatives were bound by an unbreakable and innate positive bond—a bond which, however, was not selfless. By its very nature it was a relation limited to those sharing origins and, as such, it was exclusive and focused on those within a group. Such a love among brothers is uniting in opposition to the external world: of non-brothers. At the same time, it is a love entangled in earthly desires. Nevertheless, for authors writing in the early Middle Ages, as for their predecessors, this deficient fraternal love is the strongest and the best earthly relation between human beings—alongside paternal and maternal affection.

The superiority of spiritual fraternal love is based on going beyond this earthly, excluding category of shared origins defining a group bound by ties of blood. It is a love stemming from the fact of being chosen by the Father; all faithful in Christ become his children. God's all-encompassing love for human beings and human beings' love for God, and through God for all people, becomes the foundation of the Church. To describe this bond theologians used primarily categories applied to present relationships within earthly families—as these relationship were in their days. This is by no means surprising, given the fact that the metaphorical use of the concept of spiritual fatherhood and brotherhood has roots in the evangelical tradition. There are two obvious reasons. On the one hand, the authors referred to their own conceptual system, which enabled them to illustrate the complex meaning hidden in the words of Scripture; and on the

11 Rabanus Maurus, *Homiliae*, col. 86: "Quapropter, fratres charissimi, sectemini charitatem: ipsa videlicet est dulce ac salubre vinculum mentium, sine qua dives pauper est, et cum qua pauper dives est. Haec in adversitatibus tolerat, in prosperitatibus temperat, in duris passionibus fortis, in bonis operibus hilaris, in tentationibus tutissima, in hospitalitate latissima, inter veros fratres jucundissima, intra falsos etiam patientissima: in Abel per sacrificium grata; in Noe per diluvium secura, in Abrahae peregrinatione fidelissima, in Moyse inter jurgia lenissima, in David tribulationibus mansuetissima, in tribus pueris blandus ignis innocenter spectat, in Machabaeis saevos ignes fortiter tolerat, casta in Susanna erga virum, in Anna post virum, in Anna (sic) praeter virum, libera in Paulo ad arguendum, humilis in Petro ad obediendum, humana in Christianis ad confitendum, divina in Christo ad ignoscendum"; it is a nearly verbatim quote from a sermon by St. Augustine (Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermones*, no. 350, col. 1534).

other, their message could be understood only through reference to ideas concerning the social order shared by the writer and by the reader.

Writing about the consequences of love-based relations between Christians in his treatise *De fide, spe et caritate*, Paschasius Radbertus referred to concepts that in society's view were a constitutive element of the earthly fraternal bonds, a shared heritage. In any case, he invoked here the words of St. Paul himself, who in his Epistle to the Romans (8:14–17) wrote: "Quicumque enim Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei. Non enim accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus: Abba (Pater). Ipse enim Spiritus testimonium reddit spiritui nostro quod sumus filii Dei. Si autem filii, et hæredes: hæredes, quidem Dei, cohæredes autem Christi" ("For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. You did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ"). The concept of Christians as brothers and (co-)heirs of grace was for centuries strongly present in the writings of the Church Fathers. It was developed by St. Augustine,[12] whose argumentation was followed by early medieval theologians. According to Paschasius Radbertus, from the love of one's neighbour emerges the love of God, thanks to whom Christians may be granted grace and become children of God. As brothers in Christ and children of one Father, all Christians become rightful heirs to earthly and eternal possessions. Like co-heirs (*coheredes*), so too brothers should have a just, equal share, without any exception, in this heritage, without envy and without greed, in mutual love.[13] It is no coincidence that this metaphor referred the readers to their daily experience, in which disputes over heritage were a permanent element of social relations and equal sharing in the patrimony became a key political problem.

What early medieval texts have in common is the shared idea of an ideal state in which the fraternal bond appears as a relation of loyalty, solidarity, and mutual love. The ninth-century moralists often used terms like *caritas fraterna*, *dilectio fraterna*, or *amor fraternitatis* to define the fundamental value of both relations, that were both earthly and timeless. A brother truly loving his brother combined two forms of love into one perfect whole, as Christians should do with regard to their neighbours. However, in their carnal weakness humans easily give in to temptations, as a result of which the bond

12 Dujarier, *L'Église-Fraternité: L'ecclésiologie du Christ-Frère*, 2:682ff.

13 Paschasius Radbertus, *De fide, spe et caritate*, lib. 3, v. 770: "Vnde quicquid sine dilectione agitur Dei et proximi nihil prodest. Nam dilectio proximi germanitatem seruat. Germanitas autem in adoptionem transit. Adoptio uero per gratiam filios Dei nos efficit. Hinc quoque quia fratres et filii uni patrifamilias sumus hereditas celestis fide et substantia huius mundi communis nobis est. Sic ergo largiri debemus proximis quasi coheredibus et quod eorum est singulis non negare. Quia secundum apostolum nihil aliud debere debemus nisi ut inuicem diligamus. Hinc quoque caritas non inflatur non est ambitiosa non querit que sua sunt. Quia profecto nouit ius nature et hereditatis ac gratie consortium. Sic itaque singulis que huius mundi sunt largiri satagit quasi debitum."

between biological brothers, as one based on the sinful flesh, is constantly put to the test. Envy (*invidia*)—the source of all sin—leads to disagreements between brothers and to fatal rivalry over earthly possessions, and it puts an end to the original unity. Only through spiritual love can Christians be fully united with their brothers.

Love between the faithful united by Christian brotherhood does not give in to evil and is not diminished even by sinful deeds of the one to whom this love is directed. A true brother should seek his brother's salvation at all cost, that is, he should support him on the path towards God, also by means of fraternal admonition (*admonitio*). In a letter to Queen and Abbess Æthelthryth, Alcuin wrote openly that fraternal love should be manifested in spiritual admonition and earthly solicitude ("in ammonitione spiritali et in solatio saeculari").[14] Words to a similar effect were used by archbishop Amulo of Lyon in a letter sent in 851 or 852 to the rebel monk Gottschalk, in which he called on him to repent and return to the bosom of the Church. As he put it, truly Christian brotherly love did not demand reciprocity; instead, a brother loves his brother unconditionally, even despite his hatred.[15]

As the source of true brotherly love is beyond time and earthly bonds, a truly loving brother does not even have to know his brother in order to remain in a spiritual relationship with him. An embodiment of such selfless devotion was Justin, a martyr known from a Gallic hagiographical legend, who during the reign of Emperor Diocletian died for his faith, at the same time saving his elder brother from captivity. As a hagiographer wrote, Justin was still a child when he obtained the palm of martyrdom. Wanting to fulfil the will of God, miraculously revealed to him, the holy youth persuaded his father to undertake a risky search for his lost brother. During the journey they embarked upon together a reversal of roles took place: it was the juvenile but spiritually mature son who was the guide and teacher of his father. Inspired by grace, he overcame all obstacles and achieved his goal: he found his lost brother among the slaves of a nobleman. Miraculously, he was able to recognize him, although he had never seen his face before. He died a martyr's death when Roman soldiers pursuing the brothers and their father, the soldiers having been ordered to do so by the cruel Prefect of Gaul, Rictovarus. The decapitated body of the saint was found by his kinsmen. Obeying the martyr's will (the saint's severed head spoke to them), they buried the rest of his body and carried his head to his mother in Auxerre, where a cult of the martyr soon emerged.

The *Passion of St. Justin* (incorrectly attributed to the Venerable Bede) was written on the basis of the story of St. Just, a martyred youth venerated in Gaul already in the eighth

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14 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 2, no. 79, pp. 120–22.

15 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 3, no. 2, p. 368: "Quod te in huius sermonis exordio fratrem nomino, quem fraternae unitati contrarium non ignoro, ea, in quantum Deum largitur, facio caritate, quam scriptura nobis precipit dicens: 'Dicite his qui oderunt vos, fratres nostri estis'. Quia etsi ex illorum parte qui eiusmodi sunt fraternitas deperit, non idcirco etiam in nobis frigescere aut perire debet ipsius fraternitatis affectus. Quod autem non solum fratrem sed etiam dilectissimum dico, Dominus novit, quia te fideliter diligo, hoc tibi cupiens quod et mihi."

century or perhaps even earlier. It is known from an eleventh-century manuscript, but scholars agree as to its ninth-century provenance. As early as in the ninth century the text was known in a paraphrase in verse (*Passio metrica*).[16] The hagiographic pattern used in the story of St. Justin's martyrdom is subordinated to the overriding motif or perfect love. The seemingly hopeless journey of Justin—an innocent and defenceless child—is, at the same time, a journey of the soul towards perfection and a journey of the saint towards the martyrdom he longs for. It is no coincidence that the author of the *vita* stresses this many times: the "natural" emotional relation between brothers living under one roof did not matter much in this case. Justin set out on his journey having been inspired by God, and by God's will he found and recognized his brother in an unknown slave holding a lamp—for he was bound to his lost brother by a bond stronger than blood, a bond of spiritual love. He recognized his brother with the eyes of the soul and not with these of the flesh.

Obviously, in the hagiographical narrative the figure of the lost brother became a pretext enabling the saint to achieve the martyrdom he has longed for. What is important for the present analysis is an enhancement of the status of the fraternal bond, which could be achieved only by separating it from earthly entanglements and raising it to a higher, spiritual level. In both cases a fraternal relation was at the centre of the story, be it a relation between the protagonist and his brother or between his father and uncle. Another noteworthy fact is what the hagiographers treat as marginal—as something obvious, as it were—namely the biological brothers' duty to help each other. In the older story of St. Just, the pious boy urged his father to fulfil his brotherly duty in the name of God's love; St. Justin, on the other hand, encouraged his father to set out in search of his lost son, Justin's brother. As it seems, the story of sainthood in which loyalty to the family was harmoniously combined with the overriding principle of Christian love for one's brother was attractive for pilgrims arriving at the tombs of both saints also because of the fact that their stories could be referred to relations within families there and then.

Yet the evangelical ideal combining biological brotherhood with the perfect fulfilment of Christian love was embodied first of all by the Apostles Peter and Andrew. Drawing

16 An edition of the *Passio Iustini* in verse is in MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini 4/2: 841–56; the prose *Passio s. Iustini*, BHL 4579, is published in Röckelein, "Just de Beauvais," 351–56, where there is also an analysis of the history of the cult in which were merged two hagiographic traditions and stories of two martyrs: of Just of Beauvais and Justin of Auxerre. In a hagiographic tale of Just of Beauvais (ed. BHL 4590), known from several manuscripts written between the eight and the tenth centuries, e.g. at St. Gallen and Corbie, Just was looking not for his brother but for his uncle. The cult of St. Just is confirmed in the eighth and ninth centuries in Picardy, Neustria, Alemannia, and England among others; the centre of the cult was the basilica erected on the alleged site of the saint's martyrdom (Saint-Just-en-Chaussée) and around 900, after the translation of his relics, Beauvais. Interestingly, when writing his passion of St. Justin and preserving in it the model known from the story of St. Just, the hagiographer made basically just one significant change (apart from the location and time of the events)—he replaced the uncle with the brother of the saint. We might ask why. Did he just want to introduce an element making it possible to make a distinction between the "old" and the "new" saint, or was the decision motivated by a need to play out the story of the special—spiritual and physical—nature of the fraternal bond?

on St. Augustine, early medieval exegetes compared their calling to that of Moses and Aaron—as the brothers Moses and Aaron were called by God to lead the people of Israel out of Egyptian captivity, so too Peter and Andrew, fishermen of souls, were to show the path to the Heavenly Jerusalem to Christians. Their earthly brotherhood, stemming from their shared lineage, became a symbol of spiritual brotherhood of all faithful in Christ. As Paschasius Radbertus wrote in his commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew, "Their fleshly brotherhood should make us realize that all those are in Christ through regeneration [i.e. baptism], they should be brothers by faith and be called brothers." ("Quorum [Petri et Andreae] fraternitas carnis debet nobis insinuare quod omnes qui sunt in Christo secundum regenerationem vitae germanis debeant esse per fidem et fratres nomine appellari."[17]) The parallel use of terms referring to spiritual and biological brotherhood is striking. The faithful who will follow the path indicated by Peter and Andrew will become like biological brothers (*germani*) through their common faith, and through this bond they will be able to call themselves brothers in spirit (*fratres*).

Paschasius Radbertus expounded on the theme of the brotherhood of Peter and Andrew, as he explained the hidden sense of the order in which Matthew listed the Apostles called by Jesus (Matthew 10:2–4). This fragment of his commentary is of particular interest to us. The abbot of Corbie explained that it was no coincidence that the Evangelist first listed two pairs of brothers—Simon Peter and Andrew, as well James and John. The reasons were threefold. Apart of the grace of calling and perfection of merits, Paschasius Radbertus pointed, although hesitantly, the fraternal bond between these two apostles. He interpreted their bond quite specifically. As brothers, the first Apostles were chosen not because they were brothers of the flesh but because the love of God and fraternal love of their neighbours were combined twofold.[18] For the exegete the biological bond of brotherhood between the apostles became the foundation on which grew perfect spiritual love. The pairs of apostles—brothers of the flesh—were also pairs of people who should love one another, as the existence of a co-loving person

17 Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matthaeo*, lib. 3, vv. 1144–46.

18 Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Mattheo*, lib. 6, vv. 423–45: "Ordo autem eorum ut aiunt tribus ob causis ita distinguitur, quippe aut uocationis gratia aut perfectione meritorum. Et ideo Petrus forte in exordio Iudas uero Scariothis in fine ponitur cui elogium denotationis iure semper adscribitur ut et culpa pateat ex hoc et distinctionem habeat ab alio apostolorum qui et Iudas nominatur. In quo sane sciendum quod solus scrutator cordium qui merita nouit singulorum eos ita distinxit et preordinauit ut et sacramenta redoleant de relatu et diuina in eisdem uenerentur ex affectu. Tertiam uero fatentur causam quasi ex cognatione carnis quod non satis approbo licet Petrus et Andreas, Iacobus et Iohannes simul fratres iungantur. Qui nimirum bini propterea ponuntur quia sic ad predicandum mittendi erant ut et caritas in eis gemina Dei uidelicet ac proximi quam predicaturi erant patesceret et germanitas eorum in spiritu solidior firmaretur. Vnde et fraternitas Petri et Andree pene ubique a principio designatur. Constat igitur caritatem non minus quam inter duos haberi posse. Idcirco satis dispensatiue duo simul reor iunguntur quatinus et ipsi prius eadem fibula caritatis annectantur et ceteros iugo dilectionis in hac Domini agricultura binos ac binos consocient si quo modo omnis structura domus conpacta et consociata crescat in Domino. Habet enim Dei agricultura necesse ut sub uno iugo fidei bini caritatis loro adstringantur ne possit dissociari germanitas et lasciuire."

is a prerequisite for the existence of love (*caritas*). Thus a human being cannot follow the path to salvation alone, but always with the other, a spiritual brother with regard to whom he can grow in virtue and, at the same time, thanks to whose mutual love he can be saved from temptation and from going astray. A familiar idea recurs here: in the most perfect order a brother of the flesh should become a brother of the spirit, like the apostles, and the one who loves his brother with earthly love must rise above it in perfect spiritual love, thus coming closer to God. In Paschasius Radbertus's interpretation, Peter and Andrew are the first pair of the faithful who, through God's grace, were united through spiritual love, becoming role models for others and the beginning of the Church. Their brotherhood of the flesh should therefore be interpreted allegorically as a mark of brotherhood in Christ of all who will be reborn through baptism.

The multifaceted nature of the interpretations suggested by Paschasius Radbertus makes his work stand out from the writings of other exegetes, who focused—like the Fathers—primarily on reflections on the meaning of the calling of the apostles, the symbolism of the names, and the professions of the first fishermen apostles, paying little attention to explaining the significance of their physical bond.[19] If this theme did appear, it was usually used to demonstrate the superiority of spiritual love over affections stemming from consanguinity. Author of the *Sermon on the Feast of Andrew the Apostle* stated that it was no coincidence that the first apostles called by Jesus were full brothers: Jesus did so to indicate that "if we want to become his disciples, we need to be brothers not of the flesh but of the spirit, not in our origins (*genealogia*), but in love (*caritas*)."[20] Jesus chose them not to indicate through them that Christians should love both their neighbours and God, but to demonstrate that love was one, inseparable from God and through God encompassing all people above the ties of the earthly world. For Haimo, Andrew and Peter, and, in particular, James and John, sons of Zebedee, personified the overcoming of earthly entanglements, which restricted the human soul seeking the perfect love of God. The kinship of the apostles becomes here simply an

19 Christianus Stabulensis, *Expositio super Librum generationis*, 132; Rabanus Maurus, *Expositio in Matthaeum*, lib. 2, v. 51.

20 Haymo Halberstatensis, *Homiliae*, cols. 749–50: "Sed nec illud praetermittendum est, quod in prima sua vocatione carnales fratres elegit. Petrus enim et Andreas fratres erant non solum spiritu, sed etiam carne germani. Cum ergo carnis fratres elegit, ostendit, qui ejus discipulatui volumus adhaerere, fratres esse debemus non carne, sed spiritu: non genealogia, sed charitate. Omnes quoque qui in Christo regenerati sumus, unum Patrem habemus Deum, cui quotidie in oratione dicimus: 'Pater noster, qui es in coelis' de quo ipse ait in Evangelio: 'Et patrem nolite vocare vobis super terram, unus est Pater vester qui in coelis est.' Hujus filios nos esse gloriemur, dicentes cum Apostolo: 'Filii Dei sumus, sed nondum apparuit quid erimus.' Mater vero nostra sancta Ecclesia est, quae nos per fidem et sacramentum baptismatis quotidie spiritaliter generat. Quibus ergo unus est Pater Deus, et una mater Ecclesia, consequens est, ut fratres sint, id est ut unum sentiant, idipsum sapiant, non dissideant, non discordent, ut in eorum numero computentur quibus Salvator ait: 'Omnes enim vos fratres estis.' Hos enim spiritales fratres admirabatur Propheta, cum dicebat: 'Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum, habitare fratres in unum' Notandum autem, quod duos fratres elegit, ut non ostenderet quia suos discipulos geminam vult habere charitatem, dilectionem scilicet Dei et proximi." Attribution uncartain, probably written by Haimo of Auxerre.

antithesis of spiritual kinship: they become more perfect in their Christian love of their fellow men the more the earthly ties of blood had bound them to each other before they got to know Jesus's truth.

Although it requires extraordinary spiritual discipline, the evangelical ideal of love between the brother apostles is nevertheless achievable for Christians. Paschasius Radbertus referred to this ideal while describing the relations between Adalhard of Corbie and his half-brother Wala. He compared their unanimity and affection to the cooperation of the oxen in a yoke. Shared faith, spirit, love of peace, and piety were at the heart of this profoundly spiritual relationship.[21]

Also in the already-mentioned hagiographic story of the life of his patron and mentor Adalhard (written around 830) Paschasius Radbertus painted precisely such a picture of Christian siblings achieving perfect spiritual unity in their mutual love. Adalhard and his two brothers and two sisters became, thanks to their practice of the virtues and God's grace, a truly Christian community. In a complex musical metaphor Paschasius Radbertus described this unity as a perfect concord of souls ("in omnibus consoni et concordes atque conceleres").[22] Adalhard's family reflected in a microscale the command concerning the entire Christian people united by a bond of brotherhood with Christ and in Christ. In Paschasius Radbertus's writings it became an earthly embodiment of the *fraternitas celestis* praised a few years earlier by Agobard of Lyon.[23]

Given the circumstances in which the *Vita* was written—a time of crisis in Louis the Pious's kingship, conflicts between the emperor and his father's former advisers, including Adalhard's brother, Wala[24]—the hidden, polemical message of the work becomes clear. Painting a picture of a profound spiritual and earthly bond uniting Adalhard's family, Paschasius Radbertus implicitly contrasted it with the Carolingian ruling family torn by internal strife. Adalhard's conduct with regard to his siblings stood in clear contrast to the deeds of Louis, who not only deprived Adalhard and his relatives of their influence, but also sent his own sisters away from the court, exiled his stepbrothers to a monastery, and caused the death of his nephew. Critical of the emperor, Paschasius Radbertus touched upon a sensitive subject, expounding at length on the harmony among Adalhard's half-siblings—a clear sign of God's grace—which was clearly absent from the family of their royal cousin.

In the *Vita Adalhardi* and in the *Epitaphium Arsenii* the constitutive features of the bond uniting the five siblings, perfect in their mutual love and love of God, were unity, mutual assistance, and concord. Paschasius Radbertus reflects a long tradition: *unanimitas* (*unitas*), *concordia*, and *pax* are central concepts around which Christian authors, beginning with St. Paul and St. John, built their portrayals of the fraternal bond. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) put it succinctly in his sermon "De bono

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21 "Radbert's Epitaphium Arsenii," lib. 1, p. 40–41; De Jong, *Epitaph for an Era*, 52–56.

22 Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita sancti Adalhardi Corbeiensis abbatis*, chap. 34, col. 1527.

23 Agobardus Lugdunensis, "Aduersus legem Gundobadi," chap. 2.

24 De Jong, *Epitaph for an Era*, passim.

patientiae," which was frequently copied and read in the ninth century: "love (*caritas*) is the bond of brotherhood (*fraternitas*), the foundation of peace, the stability and strength of unity which is greater then hope and faith, which take precedence over works and martyrdoms, and which will be with us forever in the kingdom of heaven."[25] The concept was often invoked by Alcuin, who himself was united by a bond of fraternal friendship with Paschasius Radbertus protagonist, Adalhard. In his letters he clearly expounded on the essence of this special bond that could be experienced by those who were capable of loving each other with true spiritual love.[26]

Paschasius Radbertus story of the perfect harmony achieved by the siblings thanks to God's grace, was not unique in eighth- and ninth-century hagiography. A similar model appears—though without such complex symbolic and political connotations—for example, in the *vitae* of the brothers Willibald and Wynnebald written by Hugeburc, a nun from the Heidenheim monastery, in the late eighth century (around 786).[27] Around 720 the brothers decided to leave Wessex, England, where they were born, and set out on a pilgrimage to Rome with their father. Wynnebald decided to stay longer in the papal city, while Willibald continued his journey towards the Holy Land. After many years in Rome, Wynnebald, urged by St. Boniface, decided to go to *Germania*, to strengthen the faith among the newly converted or even pagan Thuringians. Around 752 he founded a double monastery in Heidenheim, where he settled. Later, after many years spent on pilgrimages, to the Holy Land among others, and after a long stay in the monastery of Monte Cassino, his brother Willibald, too, decided to travel to the European frontier of Christendom and, following the example of St. Boniface, to carry out missionary activities among the half-pagan people of Bavaria as bishop of Eichstätt.[28]

The stories of the two pious men described by Hugeburc intertwine in many respects, and fraternal love and collaboration has a significant impact on key decisions in their lives. It was Willibald who managed to persuade his brother Wynnebald to leave home and set out on a dangerous journey to Rome. United by their brotherly love, they both managed to reach Rome, where they lived in harmony as pious monks for two years. A serious illness that struck both brothers, almost killing both of them, was for them a kind of not only physical but also spiritual test from which they emerged—thanks to mutual assistance and God's grace—victorious, strengthened in their plans to work

25 Cyprianus Carthaginensis, "De bono patientiae," chap. 14: "caritas fraternitatis uinculum est, fundamentum pacis, tenacitas ac firmitas unitatis, quae et spe et fide maior est, quae et opera et martyria praecedit, quae nobis cum semper aeterna in regnis caelestibus permanebit."; Florus Lugdunensis, *Collectio ex dictis XII Patrum*, 30.

26 See, e.g., letters to Adalhard: MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 2, no. 9, pp. 34–35; no. 181, p. 300. On Alcuin's concept of spiritual friendship, see Fiske, "Alcuin and Mystical Friendship."

27 *Vitae Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, 80–117; on the basis of the MGH edition: Hugeburc di Heidenheim, *Vita Willibaldi episcopi Eichstetensis*. On the debatable authorship of the work, see Head, "Who Is the Nun"; Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion*, 91–103.

28 On Willibald, including bibliography, in Wendehorst, *Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz*, 24–32.

for the salvation of themselves and others. According to the hagiographer, when one was resting on his sickbed, the other took care of him, and thus they served each other week after week, never ceasing, even for a moment, even when in great pain, studying the Word of God.[29] Many years later, when Wynnebald was dying, it was Willibald who stood by his bed. It was thanks to his persuasion that the gravely ill abbot of Heidenheim gave up his plans to travel to the Monte Cassino monastery, where he wanted to die, and to remain with his spiritual family. The love between the brothers extended beyond death: Willibald promoted the cult of St. Wynnebald and elevated the body of his late brother. What is fascinating, also in the context of reflections on the emotional bond between the brothers, is the description of Willibald's dilemmas as he was waiting for Wynnebald's grave to be opened. According to Hugeburc, who witnessed the events, he did not assist in the exhumation of the body, being too afraid to see the remains of his beloved brother decomposing after more than a decade after the burial. This made Willibald's joy all the greater when it turned out that the body was perfectly preserved—a clear sign of Wynnebald's holiness. The following description of the elevation of the venerable relics strikes the reader by the author's emphasis on the physical contact between the deceased and his living brother. Bishop Willibald was the first fervently to kiss the saint's body and was followed in this by Wynnebald's other relatives and companions: the order was determined by the bond of kinship, in which a privileged position was given to the saint's brother and sister.

A recurring theme in the stories of Willibald and Wynnebald is that of collaboration and of the unity of both brothers' thoughts and intentions. In *Germania* they supported and complemented each other in their work for the salvation of themselves and that of people in their pastoral care. They also encouraged other relatives to devote themselves to this service; these included Wynnebald's other (probably younger) brother as well as women from the family. The ideal pursued by the pious brothers was complemented by deeds of their relative Walburga (regarded as their sister as early as in the ninth century), who, after Wynnebald's death, took charge of the monastery he had founded. The *vitae* of both brothers and the later *vita* of St. Walburga[30] show their kinship primarily as a circumstance facilitating spiritual perfection. Of key importance is the support given by the siblings to each other in seeking their common overriding goal: the Kingdom of Heaven. The eldest, Willibald, chosen to serve God already in his childhood, becomes a guide for his younger brother and then also for his sister. Wynnebald, on the other hand, set out for England especially to win over other members of the family, including their brother, to the cause. Ninth-century hagiographers stressed the genealogical bond uniting Willibald, Wynnebald, and Walburga. The three saints personified not only the ideal of individual sainthood, but also perfect unity of the siblings in the love of God.

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29 *Vita Willibaldi*, in *Vitae Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, 92; *Vita Wynnebaldi*, in *Vitae Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, 108.

30 The oldest, by Wulfhard, is dated to the late ninth century, AA SS, February, 6, 529–48.

The belief in the special strength of the relations between brothers who died in an aura of holiness may have been used as an argument in efforts to obtain relics. Such a motif can be found in the story of the translation of the relics of St. Gildard (Godard) from Rouen to the abbey of St. Medard in Soissons.[31] There are many uncertainties around the oldest version of the translation, uncertainties concerning both the time in which it originated (scholars date it variously to a period from the late ninth century or as late as the early eleventh century) and its authorship.[32] Generally, however, they agree that the main threads of the story must have originated shortly after the transfer of the relics to Soissons, that is probably between 843 and 847. According to the information preserved in the *Vita* of St. Gildard, he was apparently the twin brother of St. Medard and, like his brother, devoted himself to a career in the Church. The brothers were baptized on the same day, they were ordained bishops on the same day. Gildard was made bishop of Rouen, Medard—of Noyon (Vermand); they also died on the same day.

This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the literary origins of such parallel vitae; it should be noted, however, that the hagiographical story of Gildard, which features the theme of his and Medard's shared origins, was closely linked to the transfer of his relics to Soissons. Felice Lifshitz is inclined to see the link between Gildard and Medard as an attempt to justify the claims of the Soissons monks to the relics of the Rouen saint and to defend the method of their acquisition, which in the eyes of people unaware of the saint's real will could even be regarded as robbery. Thus, in the ninth century, the monks of Soissons, having discovered that Gildard was Medard's brother, simply drew a logical conclusion from the fact: if the brothers' earthly lives had been woven into one, and their spiritual vocation and its resulting special bond had made them follow the path to salvation in perfect harmony, it was fitting that in death their bodies should rest close to each other. Such arguments justifying the transfer of the blessed remains of St. Gildard were apparently used by no less a figure than Charles the Bald, on whose orders, according to the hagiographer, the monks from St. Medard's monastery were acting.[33]

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31 *Vita Sancti Gildardi*, 389–405.

32 For the overview of the state of research see Lifshitz, "The 'Exodus of Holy Bodies' "; Lifshitz, "The Migration of Neustrian Relics."

33 *Vita sancti Gildardi*, 403–4: "Si pater et mater beati Medardi carnales geminos carnaliter natos firmissimas sanctae ecclesiae Dei protulerunt columnas hum ana generatione, quos uno die natos, uno eodemque die clericatos ac simili modo in pontificatus honore sublimatos, unius vero horae tempore de hoc saeculo migrasse et regni caelestis bravia simul percepisse procul dubio cognoscimus, ut quid eorum corpora defunctorum spatia terrarum dividunt, quos in hac vita cum plenitudine divini operis caritas fidesque christianae religionis junxit ac sinus Abrahae in caelesti patria pariter complectitur? Studeat siquidem per nostram auctoritatem fraterna contio ad locum quantocius properare, in quo beatissimi Gildardi fratris domni nostri Medardi humana hactenus jacuisse noscuntur, et quia inibi indecenter tractari perpendimus, a Danorum finibus asportari faciamus, ac juxta fratrem condigno honore, prout ingenium nostrum fuerit, collocemus."

The whole story is framed, as it were, by two key events: birth from the same womb to earthly life at the same time, and simultaneous death, that is simultaneous birth to eternal life. The genealogical bond uniting the twin brothers on earth becomes key to understanding that their timeless spiritual bond began already when they were conceived by their pious parents. It was God's will that singled out Medard and Gildard by the honour of joint birth so that they could double their merits. It could be said that the two bodies of one blood were imbued with one spirit.

The above examples of siblings fulfilling the ideal, advocated by theologians, of spiritual brotherhood combined with physical kinship were at least to some extent associated with monastic life as a path chosen by them in life (although this was not a key motif in the hagiographic narratives). This brings us to the problem, frequently explored in historiography, of Christian fraternal love as the ideological foundation of the life and identity of monastic communities. A monastic community, organized like a family, was to embody the ideal of the spiritual fraternal bond, separate from physical bonds and fully focused on God. According to the *Rule of St. Benedict*, brothers should constantly practise fraternal love,[34] which cannot exist without humility.[35] Writings from the eighth and ninth centuries express a sense of the uniquely privileged position of monastic families as those that are above earthly and by nature imperfect families, that are free from worldly desires and disputes.[36] The love uniting all monks, bound by spiritual brotherhood, must be constantly cherished and strengthened in joint prayer of the entire monastic community.[37] In the ninth century, with the gradual spread of Benedict of Aniane's idea of reform and the related reflection on the essence of monastic life, this model of a monastic community of brothers became the most important point of reference for reflections on what a truly Christian *fraternitas* was. Writing in the ninth century in his commentary on the *Rule of St. Benedict*, Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel expounded on this idea, talking about love (*caritas*) as a prerequisite for preserving order and avoiding sin among monks.[38]

This way of seeing the monastic community sheds light on cases—known not only from hagiographical but also diplomatic sources—of brothers entering the same

34 *La Règle de Saint Benoît*.

35 Benedictus Anianensis, *Concordia regularum*, chap. 70, 7.

36 The idea was explained lucidly by Alcuin in his letters, see e.g. letters to Abbot Arnold from the late eighth century, MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 2, no. 54, pp. 97–98, to Bishop Eligius, MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 2, no. 269, pp. 427–28, a. 804.

37 Benedictus Anianensis, *Concordia regularum*, chap. 72, 27: "1 Fratres spiritales in uia, quando a se abscedunt, si uale sibi non faciant uel orationem communem offerant Domino uel pacem sibi tradant, 2 sciant se excommunicatos a caritate discedere, usque dum se reuideant et caritatis inter se uinculum nectant, 3 sicut in Vitas legitur Patrum: abscedens unus frater de partibus orientis, ueniens in partes occidentis, rememoratus quod uni fratri uale non fecerat, 4 praetermissae caritatis repedauit itinera, ut quod minus compleuit in fratre perficeret, 5 Vnde debent ad hanc caritatem fratrum fratres esse solliciti." Benedict quoted here the Regula Magistri.

38 *Smaragdi abbatis Expositio in Regulam S. Benedicti*, passim.

monastery. Such decisions may have been motivated—obviously—by the broadly defined interests of their families, but this is by no means the only explanation.[39] It can be presumed that these decisions were also based on a belief in the special merit of those brothers who would combine earthly fraternal love with the perfect Christian spiritual bond in the monastic family. Such a way of thinking about the mutual obligations of brothers may have been manifested by elder brothers' efforts to persuade their younger brothers to follow the monastic path together with them.

Returning to the topic with which I began this part of the present analysis—that is the ideological dimension of the relations between the brothers ruling the Carolingian kingdoms—as has already been said, values such as fraternal concord (*concordia*) and unity (*unitas*) became particularly significant during the normalization of the relations between Louis the Pious's sons in the 840s and 850s.[40] Theological reflection on the essence of the earthly and spiritual bonds between brothers translated into the way of thinking about the fratricidal political dispute and provided answers to the question of how the conflict should be resolved. The authors of the sources emerging in connection with the pacts concluded by the royal brothers (capitularies, agreements, or synodal proceedings) unanimously drew on a set of terms referring to the ideal social order present in the teaching of the Church and rooted in the conceptual system of the elite. These direct references to the evangelical understanding of fraternal love, which should reign among the crowned brothers after years of disputes, were a logical consequence of the way in which the text of Scripture was understood not as an external reality but as a continuum in which people lived and worked at the time. These authors did not create some new quality, allegedly a new political-theological construct, but drew on concepts that were clear to all well-educated readers and that were sanctified by the authority of the Church Fathers.

Contrary to Reinhard Schneider's position,[41] there is no need to introduce an artificial division into secular and religious inspirations behind the message of the texts emerging in the 840s and 850s. Both *caritas* and the parallel term *fraternitas* belong to the theological dictionary used to describe both eternal and secular reality in the sense in which barely twenty years earlier concepts like *correctio* and *admonitio*, also derived from the language of the Church, had been used by contemporaries as a key to a description of and understanding the reasons behind the crisis of the monarchy as well as a way of overcoming it. I could, following Mayke de Jong,[42] refer to the term "imagined community," coined by Benedict Anderson, which encompassed all actors on the political scene of the Carolingian kingdom. This was a community built around

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39 The question of family ties between monks, and their significance to the functioning of the community and interests of family groups, is analyzed by e.g. Zettler, "Fraternitas und Verwandtschaft."

40 The political events of this complicated period in the history of Carolingian state have recently discussed in detail in Schäpers, *Lothar I*, 345–553.

41 Schneider, *Brüdergemeine und Schwurfreundschaft*.

42 De Jong, *The Penitential State*, 120–21.

Scripture—the source of law and models of conduct, a record of the historical memory of the Christian people, and the announcement of future events.

The formulas of successive pacts written down as a result of agreements concluded by Lothar I, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald in the 840s and 850s include a constantly recurring idea: peace will reign only when there is true fraternal love between the brothers. Although consanguinity imposed mutual obligations on brothers, their relations should be based not on this earthly and fragile basis but on spiritual love (*caritas*), which came from God and gave real strength to fraternal relations.

It is no coincidence that the decisions written down after the assembly in Meerssen in February 847 open with a chapter devoted to true love. United in this love, the brothers are to persevere in peace, concord, and unity: "Of the peace and concord and unanimity of the three brothers and kings, and that they are united by the truest and not feigned bond of love, and that no one henceforth provide an opportunity for scandal to arise among them."[43] Behind the phrase *non fictum vinculum caritatis* lies a complex content which can be interpreted only in reference to the words attributed to St. Paul. In the First Epistle to Timothy (1:5) the author calls upon the faithful to devote themselves to love that comes from a pure heart (*de corde puro*) and to a sincere faith (*fides non ficta*), warning them against the danger stemming from a violation of this instruction. In the pact between the royal brothers what should be true and sincere is not faith, but love; however, the link between love and faith is obvious. After all, as St. Paul says (Gal. 5:6), faith is expressed through love ("fides, qua per caritatem operatur"). Educated as they were in Augustine's *Enchiridion* or *De natura et gratia*, the author and the readers of the document saw the overriding truth revealed to them by this laconic phrase: that true love between brothers, that is spiritual and comes from God himself, was a prerequisite of faith. Without true love there would be no peace and the faith of the quarrelling rulers seemed uncertain. There is a clear echo here of the episcopal admonition addressed to the royal brothers at the council of Thionville three years before.[44]

In a capitulary drawn up in 851 after yet another assembly featuring Lothar I, Charles, and Louis at Meerssen, the words attributed to St. Paul (Tim. 1:5) were quoted literally: the brothers pledged to preserve true love among them (*verae caritatis benignitas*) of a pure heart, with no insincerity, in order not to harm one another by devious scheming and unworthy deeds.[45]

What becomes clear in this context is the meaning of recurring phrases in successive agreements between the brothers, in which the rulers declared that they would behave towards one another "as befits brothers."[46] This was not about some ancient rule of

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43 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 204, p. 69: "De pace et concordia atque unanimitate trium fratrum et regum inter se, et quod verissimo et non ficto caritatis vinculo sint uniti et ut nullus deinceps scandalorum inter eos occasiones serere possit"; Schäpers, *Lothar I*, 495ff.

44 MGH LL Concilia 3, no. 6, chap. 1, p. 30.

45 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 205, chap. 2, p. 72; cf. no. 244, chap. 3, p. 166.

46 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 205, p. 74; no. 242, p. 154–55; no. 243, pp. 159–60; no. 245, p. 168.

secular "brotherhood,"[47] but about Christian love, which came from God and sought God, and the perfection of which should overcome the worldly urges of the sinful flesh that make a brother selfishly want to harm his own brother. *Consilium*, *auxilium*, *unitas*, and *concordia* are terms defining this true brotherhood of the rulers; the same terms were used by hagiographers to describe the ideal of fraternal holiness, and by members of monastic confraternities to define the essence of the bond uniting them. The *annuntiatio* attached to the 851 Meerssen capitulary delivered by Louis the German expounds clearly on the idea that the calamities that struck the lands and people ruled by the warring brothers were caused by a betrayal of these fraternal virtues.[48] However, concord, justice, and unity were not only a prerequisite for peace on earth. Without Christian brotherhood, born of true love, there can be no earthly order or salvation. Such arguments were apparently used by the bishops supporting Lothar II in his attempts to resolve another conflict between Charles the Bald and Louis the German in 860.[49]

A spiritual fraternal bond could make people united by resistance to temptations leading to sin and to threats stemming from the operation of the forces of darkness. In a 793 letter to Æthelhard, Archbishop of Canterbury, Alcuin called on English bishops to stay united at all cost in the face of the Viking threat, citing a fragment from Scripture (Prov 18:19): "Frater si a fratre adiuvatur, civitas firma est."("a brother supported by brother is like a fortified city")[50] The fragment appeared frequently in Alcuin's letters as an argument confirming the spiritual strength of united brothers: spiritual brothers living in monastic communities, united in the service of God, or united by a personal bond of friendship. The same words were quoted half a century later by the bishops gathered at the council in Yütz near Thionville (844), when they called on Lothar I, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald to persevere in peace and abide by the terms of the fraternal agreement. In one of the chapters of the extensive synodal constitution they indicated to the rulers how, thanks to the virtue of mutual love, they could demonstrate the grace granted to them by God and how, when united, they could overcome all the scheming that could, owing to Satanic prompting, threaten peace in the land entrusted to their rule.[51]

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47 Incidentally, the problems of interpretation that led, for example, Reinhard Schneider to try to make a distinction between the "secular" fraternal bond (*fraternitas*) and Christian spiritual love between brothers (*caritas*) stemmed from the above-mentioned broad definition of the term *caritas* in early medieval Latin texts. Of key significance here is a fragment of the First Epistle of St. Peter, in which the Apostle called upon the faithful to perfect themselves in their mutual fraternal love (1:7) in order to achieve through it the perfect love of God. The terms *philadelphia* and *agape* appearing in the Greek original were rendered in the Vulgate by the Latin terms *amor fraternus* and *caritas*. This combination of two complementary concepts in the epistle, concepts referring to two degrees of Christian love, influenced the language of the patristic and then early medieval Latin texts.

48 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 205, chap. 2, p. 74.

49 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 242, p. 153: "Post hoc laboravit adiuvante Domino iste carissimus nepos noster, ut inter nos pax fieret, sicut per rectum esse debet, et ut monentibus episcopis ad illam caritatem et fraternam concordiam rediret, sine qua nullus christianus salvus esse non potest."

50 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 2, no. 17, pp. 47, a. 793.

51 MGH LL Concilia 3, no. 6, pp. 30–31; Schäpers, *Lothar I*, 472–77.

A relationship between brothers can be lasting and just only when, derived from blood ties (or perhaps even against them), it is built on faith. This way of seeing fraternal relations was reflected in a letter sent by the Bishop of Konstanz to an unnamed Italian bishop (perhaps Anthony of Brescia), probably in 878, and concerning, among other matters, the regulation of the relations between the sons and heirs of Louis the German: Carloman, Louis the Younger, and Charles the Fat.[52] The bishop wrote emphatically that there was such great love (*caritas*) between the brothers that it seemed as if the change had happened through the Holy Trinity. The affection that united them was greater than any human weakness, with the brothers loving one another not only, as Scripture commanded, like themselves, but more than themselves.

Brothers united by love should complement each other, and the order born of love was a confirmation of the order encompassing the entire creation. An idea of this cosmic harmony can be found in the *Annals of Xanten*. Writing about the relations between Lothar I, Louis the German, and Charles the Bald after the death of Louis the Pious, the author described a miraculous phenomenon seen in the sky in mid-841, shortly after the bloody Battle of Fontenoy. The amazed believers saw three circles, the smallest of which, in the middle, shone the brightest, with the other two surrounding it, stretching from the east to the west.[53] The author did not comment on the phenomenon. However, for his contemporaries the parallel between the earthly order and signs in the sky was not difficult to interpret: three kingdoms belonging to three brothers should co-exist in peace, for the glory of God.[54] The supernatural sign was a warning, but it also brought hope that in the future the brothers would be united, in accordance with God's will.

Fraternal Hate: *malitia*, *invidia fraterna*

"Thus were destroyed the foundations of brotherhood, thus began vile parricides: when the just Abel was hated by the unjust Cain, when evil persecuted goodness with envy and hatred. The fury of envy pushed so hard for murder that there was no thought of fraternal love or the vileness of the crime, or fear of God, or punishment." This is what Hrabanus Maurus wrote about the first murder in human history.[55]

Medieval theological works regularly feature the theme of fraternal hostility born of envy. The biblical story of the first brothers is marked by a fatalist belief in man's innate proneness to envy, which is stronger than the strongest ties of blood. In this

52 *Collectio Sangallensis*, no. 40, pp. 421–22.

53 *Annales Xantensens et Annales Vedastini*, 11–12.

54 For more on this fragment of the *Annals* in comparison with Carolingian literature devoted to visions and with analogies, see Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming*, 120–21.

55 Rabanus Maurus, *Homiliae*, no. 61, col. 115, *Contra invidiam et odium*: "Hinc ergo violata sunt fraternitatis primordia, hinc parricidia coeperunt nefanda: dum Abel justum Cain odit injustus, dum bonum malus invidia et livore persequitur. Tantum valuit ad consummationem facinoris aemulationis furor, ut nec charitas fratris, nec sceleris immanitas, nec timor Dei, nec poena delicti cogitaretur."

sense, *invidia* is close to a concept present in pre-Christian Latin literature: it combines aversion to a person whose success seems undeserved with opposition to the unfairness of the supernatural forces allowing this unjust elevation to happen.[56] In the Christian interpretation, however, *invidia* is born not of human will but of Satanic prompting, which human beings cannot resist in their weakness. There is no earthly bond that could withstand this destructive force, nor is there a proximity of the flesh that would prevent diabolical hatred sneaking in between people. The only way to overcome this threat lies in a sublimation of the relations between people into a spiritual bond based on faith and love of one's neighbour (*caritas*). In his biblical paraphrase in verse, *De sobrietate*, Milo of Saint-Amand (d. 871/872) expressed the idea very concisely: "the antidote of love (*caritas*) can heal the poison of hate, if the law of love taught by Christ and which the gracious Creator placed in the human heart is obeyed, that if they love one another the proper affection will unite two brothers."[57]

Envy, which, according to Augustine, is the "hatred of another's prosperity," stands in opposition to love,[58] in opposition to the affection that should exist between brothers, both those bound by ties of blood and brothers in Christ. In the early Middle Ages it was treated as evil for which there was no justification. Cain not only envied his brother, but, above all, he challenged God himself, questioning the rightness of his judgments. Cain's rebellion against God's injustice was therefore an example of transgression against God's order of the world, which could not be questioned by a weak man. Cain's *invidia* was not only envy directed against another human being but also doubt in God's justice.

In Ambrosius Autpertus's (d. 784) dialogue between virtues and vices, written in the eighth century but popularized in the following centuries, envy is contrasted with brothers rejoicing together (*congratulatio fraterna*).[59] Envy, making human beings angry, was listed by ninth-century moralists right after pride among cardinal sins; it was closely linked to the crime of the first murder: fratricide.[60] In the history of mankind, the envy of Cain made real the death brought upon men by the pride of the first

56 Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community*, 84–103.

57 Milo, *De sobrietate*, lib. 1, 24, p. 635: "Antidoto poterit karitatis enorme venenum / Curari invidiae, si ius servetur amoris / Quem Christus docuit, quem conditor indidit almus / Pectoribus hominum, se si redamando vicissim / Debitus affectus fratrum coniungat utrumque."

58 Augustinus Hipponensis, *De Genesi ad litteram*, lib. 11, chap. 14, p. 346: "cum igitur superbia sit amor excellentiae propriae, inuidentia uero sit odium felicitatis alienae, quid unde nascatur satis in promtu est."

59 Ambrosius Autpertus, "Libellus de conflictu," chap. 1, v. 19–23.

60 The order of the cardinal sins changed between late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Among the eight cardinal sins listed by Gregory the Great (Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Iob*, lib. 31, chap. 45, p. 1610) envy comes third. After Gregory the order was followed by ninth century-moralists, including Haltigarius of Cambray (Haltigarius Cameracensis, *De vitiis et virtutibus*, col. 658). However, in the ninth century theologians would increasingly put envy at the top of the most serious transgressions of God's law committed by man, right after pride of which envy was born. For more on the medieval understanding of the notion of envy and its place in the catalogue of sins, although mostly in a later period, see Balint, "Envy in the Intellectual Discourse."

parents. After all, envy was pride's sister, as Milo of Saint-Amand wrote.[61] Ninth-century moralists, including Jonas of Orléans (d. ca. 843) in *De institutione laicali*,[62] Hincmar of Reims in *De cavendis vitiis*,[63] and Hrabanus Maurus in *De vitiis et virtutibus*,[64] lamenting the intrinsic weakness of human nature, pointed out, after Gregory the Great, that just as pride (*superbia*) prompted Eve to pick the forbidden fruit, so too envy (*invidia*), born of pride, prompted Eve's son, Cain, to shed his brother's blood. Thus Cain became a tool in the hands of Satan, who introduced death into the world because of envy (Wisd. of Sol. 2:24). Through the agency of the devil it was envy that guided Esau in his plan to kill his own brother. The same motif of fraternal envy prompting fratricide recurs in the story of Joseph's brothers.

For early medieval authors *invidia* was inextricably linked to the image of the evil brother: the one who violated the natural law telling brothers to love each other and live in peace. Such an opposition to the above-mentioned model of true brotherhood was the basis on which Prudentius, the author of the older part of the *Annales of St-Bertin*, built his portrait of Lothar I. It is worth quoting the entire fragment in which the annalist described the events of 840, as he used terms that are important to the present analysis:

> Lothar, when he heard the news of his father's death, left Italy and thrust into Gaul—thereby breaching the laws of nature. Puffed up by the imperial title, he took up arms against both his brothers, Louis and Charles, and attacked first one, then the other, engaging them in battle, but with very little success in either case. The business was settled to the satisfaction at any rate of his own vanity, and on terms of some kind he left his brothers alone for the time being. But he did not stop plotting against them, secretly and openly, with all the evilness of his greed and cruelty.[65]

As Prudentius wrote, Lothar violated the laws of nature. What did the author mean? Janet L. Nelson, who has analyzed and translated the *Annals*, seems to be linking this violation of natural laws with Lothar's departure from Italy ("left Italy and thrust into

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61 Milo, *De sobrietate*, lib. 1, 24, 634–35: "Quisque huius virtutis honorem habitumque requirit, / Invidiam fugiat genitam de felle diabli. / Hoc scelus immensum, quo mors intravit in orbem; / Hunc imitantur et hi, Satanae qui in parte tenentur. / Quippe soror scelerata huic superbia iuncta / Transtulit angelicum saevos in daemonas agmen. / Haec miseros penitrans fraternum rumpit amorem, / Quae documenta dedit quondam nimis impia Cain, / Displicuit cui nil aliud de fratre benigno, / Quam sua dedignans melioris munera misso / Caelitus igne deus flammis sibi grata probavit."

62 Jonas d'Orléans, *Instruction des laïcs*, 1, chap. 5, pp. 166–70.

63 Hinkmar von Reims, *De cavendis vitiis*, 160.

64 Rabanus Maurus, *De vitiis et virtutibus*, chap. 18, cols. 1358–59.

65 Transl. *The Annals of St-Bertin*, 49; *Annales Bertiniani*, 24: "Hlotharius, comperto genitoris obitu, ab Italia Gallias ingressus, iura naturae transgressus, imperatorio elatus nomine, in utrumque fratrem, Hludowicum videlicet et Karolum, hostiliter armatur, et nunc hunc, nunc illum praelio impetit, sed utrimque minus prospere. Secundum suam dumtaxat insolentiam patrato negotio, quibusdam conditionibus usque ad tempus ab utroque discessit; nec tamen contra eos, seu clam seu manifeste, pravitatem suae cupiditatis adque crudelitatis destitit machinari."

Gaul—thereby breaching the laws of nature").[66] It appears, however, that the phrase refers to a whole sequence of events (let us leave aside the pun used by the author) leading to Lothar taking up arms against his brothers. In the narrative all actions taken by Lothar to seize power came down to his actions against his brothers and his violation of the innate principle of fraternal loyalty. In his relations with his brothers, Lothar was apparently guided by insolence (*insolentia*), cupidity (*cupiditas*) and cruelty (*crudelitas*). These vices were in stark contrast to the virtues that should characterize brothers, virtues like fraternal love (*caritas fraterna*), concord (*concordia*), and unity/unanimity (*unitas/unanimitas*). Similar terms were also used by Nithard in his description of Lothar and of the iniquities committed with regard to his stepbrother and godson Charles.[67] In the imagination of early medieval authors, shaped as it was by St. Augustine's thought, the figure of Lothar is associated with a set of negative qualities, of key importance among them apparently being *cupiditas*, understood as the opposite of *caritas*.[68] *Caritas* is the beginning of all virtues, while *cupiditas* becomes the cause of all sin ("radix omnium malorum est cupiditas," 1 Tim 6:10), for desire for earthly things closes the path to true love, leading instead to sinful pride and violence against others. Thus an evil brother is one who does not love his brother with selfless love, but enviously desires earthly profits and power, even if they are to be gained at his brother's expense, and to satisfy his greed he is ready to raise his murderous hand to strike him.

The picture of the relationship between people closest to each other by virtue of their birth emerging from an analysis of historiographical works is deeply pessimistic. The durability of the fraternal bond—alongside the bond with one's parents, seemingly the most natural among the relations between people—is questioned.[69] Theologians, too, are wary of it, as they are with regard to any imperfect relations built on blood ties. Brothers are obliged to love one another, but even where harmony seems to be reigning between them, there is a hidden threat of a rift. In their weakness human beings vacillate between desires of the flesh and imperatives of the spirt, and a beloved brother can become a hated enemy at any moment. A question can be asked whether the frequent reference to the motif of hatred dividing brothers by mid-ninth-century authors of homilies and biblical commentaries was not associated with the political situation at the time and was not an allusion to the events taking place there and then. The image of a fratricidal conflict, known from political polemics and historiographical texts, was undoubtedly influenced by the theologians' vision of this world as a place of a constant clash between virtues and vices born of Satanic hatred. It is worth taking a closer look in this context at a fragment of the already-mentioned 876 letter by Pope John VIII to East Frankish bishops.

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66 *The Annals of St-Bertin*, 49.

67 See, e.g., *Nithardi Historiarum libri IV*, lib. 4, chap. 1, p. 40.

68 On the meaning of *cupiditas* in Augustine's writings, see Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*; on the relation between *caritas* and *cupiditas*, see especially 139 sq.

69 For more on the impact of the fratricidal war among the sons on the consolidation of this image of fraternal relations in the collective imagination of the Frankish elites, see Nelson, "The Search for Peace."

> For as those who, according to his command, guard the peace left to them by the Apostles are sons of God, those who violate this peace are sons of the devil. From the beginning he was a liar and did not stand in truth. It was because of his envy—as the Scriptures say—that death entered this world. For when hating the first people he laid the trap of deception, he gave the cup of death to the mortals, and those who through obedience were to be granted immortality in the future were contaminated by him with the poison of disobedience and thus he brought death on all people. Moreover, with the same deceptions with which he had led astray the progenitors he deceived the sons of Adam and with the hatred of his deception he separated the brothers' hearts, and so those who came from the loins of one father no longer rule the whole Gaul, but a brother hates the elevation of his brother; and just as he disregarded apostolic admonitions in matters of the highest importance, he now refuses to follow the admonitions of the Apostolic See, and just as Cain, a enemy of his brother, incited, rose against his brother, grinding his teeth, he tricked his faithful with deceptions, till perjury calling God's tremendous name, he breached the peace of the realm brought by his brother's efforts and, lured by accomplices in his sins, he directed his feet towards evil, despite the muddy fields of Fontenoy, which he had drenched in human blood in his youth. In his decrepitude, seething with threats and murder lust, he seeks to shed the blood of many Christians just for the sake of his ambition. And the one who out of fraternal love should hope for blessing through the merit of obedience to the Apostolic See, desires to subordinate another's realm by the force of arms, that is, to hold by force what he has gained by the force of arms and to burden the necks that were once free with a new yoke of servitude.[70]

Thus the conflict between the royal brothers became a part—through the pope's pen—of the eternal story of the fall of humankind, in which both Cain and Louis the German, sons of Adam, rose against their own brothers by Satanic prompting. The inherent unity of brothers with the same father (or rather fathers)—the ancient progenitor Adam and the emperor Louis the Pious—was destroyed by envy and lust for power. By rising against his brother, a brother also rose against all faithful Christians, his

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70 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 5, no. 7, pp. 320–21: "Quapropter sicut filii Dei, qui ex testamento eius sibi per apostolos derelicto pacem custodiunt, ita nimirum diaboli sunt filii, qui pacem confundunt. Ille quippe ab initio mendax fuit et in veritate non stetit, eiusque invidia, sicut scriptum est, mors introivit in orbem terrarum. Nam dum protoplastis invidens deceptionis laqueum iam deceptus utique a semet ipso composuit, mortis poculum mortalibus propinavit et quos immortales obedientiae merito futuros noverat, inobedientiae venenis infecit sicque in omnes homines mortis sententiam vitae hostis induxit. Denique iisdem laqueis, quibus protoplastos deceperat, adhuc Adae filios iugulat et odio suae ambitionis fraterna corda dissociat, ita ut quos unum patris femur tenuerat, iam Galliae omnes non capiant, fraternis provectibus frater invideat et quem monitis apostolicis saepius etiam in durissimis casibus obsequentem sequi despexerat, hunc a sede apostolica sibi praelatum doleat, immo ut Cain fratris hostia, scilicet obedientia, stimulatus contra fratrem frendens occurrat, fideles eius fraudibus diversis inficiat, ad peierandum terribilis Dei nomen impellat, pacem regni diuturno fratris studio radicatam corrumpere gestiat et lactatus a peccatoribus suis dumtaxat complicibus adquiescens pedes suos ad malum currere faciat, madentibus adhuc campis Fontanicis, quos in iuventute sua humano sanguine tinxerat, in senectute decrepita minarum et caedis spirans ad fundendum christianorum multorum sanguinem pro sua singulari ambitione discurrat. Et qui amore fratris a sede apostolica obedientiae suae merito benedictionem sperare suumque piis operibus propagare debuerat, alterius regnum pervicaciter sibi suis armis subiugare desiderat, scilicet ut quos armis acquirit, ditione possideat et colla vetustae libertatis ingenua nova servitute prosternat."

brothers in Christ. In the rhetoric of the papal letter, the battlefield at Fontenoy, which in 841 was bathed in blood in a fratricidal struggle, was akin to the field stained by the innocent blood of Abel. Although at Fontenoy Charles and Louis fought side by side against Lothar, the pope seems to put the main blame for the bloody slaughter on Louis.

The parallel between Louis and Cain, whose figure had acquired complex interpretations in exegetical writings, in fact denoted an accusation of not just violating the divine laws of kinship but also of acting against Christ himself. By comparing—though not explicitly—Charles to Abel, the pope perforce also drew on the Christological associations his figure evoked among his contemporaries. Charles's elevation, that is his recent imperial coronation, was a sign of God's grace just as the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice had been. The hatred between brothers, on the other hand, was born of Cain's envy of Abel and Louis's of Charles, when God refused them his favour.

The subject of fratricide appears frequently in works of early medieval authors, both in theological reflections and in commentaries on current events. The act of fratricide, as the form of murder seen, alongside matricide and patricide, as an attack on the most fundamental principles of the natural and the social orders, prompted writers to look for an explanation of the motives behind this deed, which violated all norms. It is therefore worth taking a closer look at the question of fratricide.

Fratricide

The ambivalent nature of the fraternal relation—stretched between love and solidarity on the one hand and hate and rivalry on the other—is a motif constantly presented, and not only in European culture. Conflict and the violence between brothers arising from it were part of the founding myth of ancient Rome and of Kraków, a city on the distant peripheries of Europe; Baldr, Odin's handsome son died at the hand of his blind brother Höðr; Eteocles and Polynices died in a fratricidal battle; the curse of fratricide plagued the Pelopids; a bloody feud separated the Pandavas and their elder brother Karna. Similarly, folk tales, those mirrors of collective experiences and perhaps also of the psyche of societies, feature many evil brothers and cruel sisters who are after their siblings' property or sometimes even their life. Examples can be listed endlessly, much to the delight of comparatists, who see in the recurring narrative and mythological threads a common Indo-European heritage and ascribe to them complex functions in systems of beliefs.

The crime of fratricide occupies a unique place in the Judaic and Christian traditions. The murder committed by Cain became man's first crime on earth and the burden of this guilt had to be borne by all generations. The story of the first brothers, alongside the story of the first parents, was of crucial significance to the understanding of God's plan implemented in the world and the place God allocated to man in this plan.[71] Esau and

71 Aptowitzer, *Kain und Abel*; Glenthøj, *Cain and Abel in Syriac*; Luttikhuizen, ed., *Eve's Children*, which also has a bibliography of studies devoted to Genesis 4, covering the period of 1980–2002, pp. 219–28; Byron, *Cain and Abel*; Kim *The Firstborn Son*, 49ff. An extensive study devoted to the motif of Cain and Abel in medieval exegetical texts is Dahan, "L'exégèse de l'histoire de Caïn." Dahan examines later sources, generally leaving out the legacy of early medieval exegetes; see also in a broad cultural context Quinones, *The Changes of Cain*.

Jacob, Ishmael and Isaac, Joseph and his brothers, Amnon and Absalom personified the dark side of the relationship between the closest blood relatives. Yet Cain was not only the first murderer and first fratricide: from him came all evil among people.

The fatalism of fraternal relations, stretched between hate and loyalty since the dawn of time, had an impact on the image of family bonds in society in the works of early medieval authors. It also determined the way history was perceived: a series of battles was how Gregory of Tours presented the history of the Merovingian dynasty, while the Venerable Bede often showed biological brothers in a negative context, in scenes marked by violence and death.[72]

The motif of Cain the fratricide as the father of evil and sin appears in a more or less transformed form also in early medieval literary works. In the Old English epic poem *Beowulf*, Grendel, a personification of all crimes and vices, is described as a descendant of Cain, like the giants, elves, and other demonic creatures.[73] In his *Deeds of Charlemagne*, Notker the Stammerer, who deliberately refers here to John Cassian, writes about giants begotten by the sons of Seth from the daughters of Cain.[74] Thus he creates a metaphorical description of Charles Martel's enemies. What all these authors have in common is a belief in the sources of evil pervading the world: although it arose out of original sin, it also stemmed from the most heinous crime of fratricide.[75]

The New Testament idea of the brotherhood of all Christians gives an additional meaning to Cain's crime. According to St. John (1 John 3:12–15), Cain, who belonged to the evil one, becomes a figure of all those who hate the righteous: "Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer" (1 John 3:15), for death is born of hate.[76] In this sense every murder, born of hate, is at the same time a fratricide. Every murder becomes a repetition of Cain's deed, a deed that brought death upon the earth. A fratricide becomes like Cain, and his sin, like Cain's crime, has fatal consequences for all people. In the many commentaries on the Book of Genesis originating in the ninth century much attention is paid to the story of Cain and Abel. The thread was interpreted by Alcuin, Hrabanus Maurus, Angelomus of Luxeuil, Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), and Remigius of Auxerre (d. ca. 908). They considered the question of satisfaction for every crime of murder, including fratricide, as the most terrible in terms of its consequences, a violation of the divine order, and looked for an explanation of the meaning of the first fratricide in the history of humanity.

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72 Szerwiniack, "Frères et sœurs dans l'Histoire," 239ff.

73 The theme of Cain's fratricide as a Judeo-Christian motif interwoven with the pre-Christian myth of the beginning in *Beowulf* has already been analyzed in detail e.g. in Mellinkoff, "Cain's Monstrous Progeny"; Williams, *Cain and Beowulf*; Quinones, *The Changes of Cain*, 42–48; Hodges, "Cain's Fratricide."

74 *Notkeri Balbuli Gesta Karoli Magni*, lib. 2, chap. 12, pp. 70–71.

75 For more on the links between the monstrous non-human creatures and the race of Cain, see e.g. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races*, 87–107.

76 Byron, *Cain and Abel*, 209ff.

Exegetes of the period found their point of reference primarily in the writings of St. Augustine.[77] Augustine interprets the motif of Cain and Abel in a twofold manner: following the Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria, he considers the conflict between the brothers as a clash between evil/sin and goodness/virtue, and at the same time as a struggle between two contradictory aspects of the human soul. Typologically, the elder brother Cain becomes for Augustine a figure of the Synagogue/Israel, while Abel becomes one of God's Church. At the same time, the figures of Abel and his death are considered as figures of Christ and his passion, while Abel becomes the first martyr. A Christological interpretation of the Old Testament story, with Abel being presented as a figure of Christ and the Church, while Cain is a figure of the Jews and the condemned Synagogue, was developed by Augustine in the treatise *Contra Faustum*.[78] The allegorical meaning of the first two brothers as two peoples of the Old and New Testaments, Jews and Christians, would be taken up and highlighted by ninth-century theologians, including Hrabanus Maurus. In *The City of God* the bishop of Hippo presented an original interpretation of the figure of Cain as the founder of the earthly city personifying the sinful desires of the flesh and the spirit.[79] The city he erected after Abel's death was at its very origin tainted by the sin of his crime, and as such until the end of time it will be the opposite of the City of God, existing in a state of eternal enmity with it, like Cain with Abel: although born out of the same womb they are mutual opposites and are doomed to be in conflict. The murder of Abel, personifying the spiritual element and moral virtues of man, becomes a turning point in the history of humanity. It is a moment in which the sin committed by Eve bears its first poisoned fruit. However, Augustine did leave the reader with some hope, pointing to the significance of God's grace, thanks to which Abel could rise above the original sin. This grace can be granted to those human beings who will, of their own will, rise above sin and desires of the flesh, and turn to God.

In comparison with Augustine, St. Ambrose's work *De Cain et Abel*[80] had a limited impact on early medieval exegetes. Although Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede did refer to Ambrose in their commentaries on the Book of Genesis, their references were mainly indirect. Great authors of the Carolingian era, including Alcuin, seemed not to know Ambrose's exegetical writings at all; in any case there is no direct evidence in their works that they read the archbishop of Milan's texts. It is known that *De Cain et Abel* was copied in the Carolingian period; however, only one ninth-century manuscript containing the work—a manuscript originating in Italy—has been identified so far.[81] Despite the fact that there are no traces of direct reception of the treatise, it is worth mentioning it, primarily because of the idea, developed by Ambrose, of penance as

77 Augustine's interpretations of Cain and Abel motif are discussed by Rick Benjamins, "Augustine on Cain"; cf. Byron, *Cain and Abel*, passim.

78 Augustinus Hipponensis, *Contra Faustum*, lib. 12, chap. 9–13, 337–43.

79 Augustinus Hipponensis, *De civitate Dei*, lib. 15.

80 Ambrosius Mediolanensis, *De Cain et Abel*, 339–409.

81 Gorman, "From Isidore to Claudius of Turin," 133.

satisfaction for the sin of fratricide, an idea which can also be found in writings from the early Middle Ages. Ambrose's thought found its way into the writings of early medieval theologians probably mainly through the writings of other early Christian authors.

Both Augustine and Ambrose considered the question of why Cain the fratricide was allowed to live and, by God's will, anyone daring to raise their hand against him should be punished. This thread would be of particular interest to exegetes also in the early Middle Ages. In this context Ambrose, after St. Cyprian, developed the concept of lifelong penance as the right form of satisfaction for the gravest of sins. According to Ambrose, God in his mercy gives the sinner a chance to atone for each sin and so He also orders a just judge to refrain from punishing a death by death. The sinner is punished by a life of fear and anxiety, to which Cain was condemned. However, while Ambrose stressed the significance of God's mercy, in their interpretations early medieval exegetes stressed above all the role of penance and the spiritual dimension of suffering to which continued life amounted for a fratricide. Invoking the authority of St. Jerome, the Venerable Bede[82] indicated that by protecting Cain's life God condemned him to the agony of conscience lasting seven generations, from which he could be liberated only by death. This, too, was apparently a manifestation of the will of the Almighty, who punished Cain both for the sin of fratricide and for the blasphemy he committed when condemning himself instead of asking God for forgiveness. Thus, contrary to human judgements and human understanding of satisfaction for sins, Cain's life was to become a warning to others. This way of interpreting Genesis 4:13 was shared by ninth-century commentators. Jerome was referred to by Angelomus of Luxeuil,[83] Freculf of Lisieux (d. ca. 850),[84] and Hrabanus Maurus.[85] Remigius of Auxerre attributed a similar meaning to Cain's fate in his glosses.[86]

Ninth-century theologians believed that Cain personified evil urges of the human soul, which prompted him to sin against God seven times.[87] He was guilty of unjustly dividing the sacrifice offered to God, of envying his brother, of leading him out into the field by deception and killing him there, and, finally, of denying his guilt and then, having confessed it, of condemning himself without penance. Every human being who out of hatred committed the crime of murder, especially fratricide, repeated Cain's monstrous crime and could redeem it only following Cain's example, not by death but by wandering through life in torment and suffering.

In the late eighth and early ninth century, the way murder and fratricide, a form of murder particularly dangerous to public order, were viewed was associated with

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82 Beda Venerabilis, *Libri quattuor in principium Genesis*, lib. 2, chap. 4, pp. 78–79; e.g. *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistvlae*, no. 36 (Ad Damasum), chap. 2, pp. 269–70.

83 Angelomus Luxoviensis, *Commentarius in Genesin*, cols. 149–50.

84 Frechulfus Lexoviensis, "Historiarum libri XII," lib. 1, chap. 7.

85 Rabanus Maurus, *Commentariorum in Genesim*, lib. 2, chap. 1, cols. 505–6.

86 Remigius Autissiodorensis, *Expositio super Genesim*, vv. 1602–30.

87 *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistvlae*, no. 36, chap. 6, pp. 273–74.

reflection developed at the time among Carolingian theologians on the relation between sin committed by an individual and prosperity of the community of the faithful, and also on ways of providing satisfaction to God for violating his laws. The duty of constant admonition (*admonitio*, *correptio*) and correction (*correctio*) of sinners as a prerequisite for obtaining God's grace was the duty of all Christians, but especially of priests and those who wielded secular power. The idea of sin and penance preached by church authorities led to a change in the understanding of the consequences of fratricide, which became not just an attack on the foundations of the social order, but above all a *scandalum*—a transgression of moral principles that had to be publicly redeemed for the good of the whole community.[88]

The moral teaching on the salvific role of penance found its way into legislation and social practice. Information about the mechanisms and the essence of this influence can be provided by an analysis of the regulations found in Carolingian capitularies. From the early ninth century, royal legislation and then gradually also judicial practice adopted a principle whereby those guilty of crimes regarded as the most serious transgressions of God's law should be subordinated to the jurisdiction of bishops. Only bishops as dispensers of penances could guarantee that the Christian community would avoid the fatal consequences of sin committed by any of its members. This change had far-reaching consequences.

In a capitulary promulgated in Aachen after 801 and addressed to all his subjects, Charlemagne made bishops responsible for the prosecution, within their dioceses, of persons guilty of the gravest sins, that is murder—especially patricide and fratricide, adultery, and idolatry (denial of their faith).[89] That these particular crimes were highlighted stemmed from an interpretation—going back to Origen and Tertullian—of the so-called *Apostolic Decree* from chapter 15 of the Acts of the Apostles. According to the early Christian tradition, those who had committed any of these deeds could not hope for absolution other than by the will of God himself, and thus they should perform a severe lifelong penance. In the early Middle Ages, following the teachings of St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, and St. John Chrysostom, subsequently developed by John Cassian and Gregory the Great, they were treated more leniently; it was accepted that they might atone for their sin in their lifetime. Murder (especially of a family member), adultery, and idolatry continued to be seen as special sins, not only defiling the sinner, but also dangerous to the entire community of the faithful.

The question of what to do with the guilty of fratricide and patricide appears several times in the great capitulary for envoys (*missi*) promulgated by Charlemagne shortly after the imperial coronation (probably in 802). Chapter 32 features an extensive explanation of the motives behind the emperor's decision to change the traditional

88 On the concept of *scandalum* and its impact on political and social life in the first half of the ninth century see De Jong, *The Penitential State*, passim, esp. 232ff.

89 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 1, no. 77, p. 170.

approach to murderers, including murderers of their closest relatives.[90] This argument deserves detailed analysis, for it is an interesting illustration of one of the major problems lawmakers had to face, namely the need to reconcile two different legal systems existing side by side, customary law and the Church's teachings.

In the 802 capitulary the description of the way of dealing with murderers is preceded by a rhetorical introduction in which the lawmaker warns patricides and fratricides against the wrath of God. It is impossible to hide from this wrath, and its inevitable consequences not only affect the perpetrator, but also constitute a threat to the whole people of God. That is why a ruler's task is to force the perpetrators to give satisfaction for their crimes, and to prevent hatred from proliferating in the hearts of his subjects through Satanic prompting. Therefore, what should the perpetrator do? His duty is to pay the murdered victim's family an appropriate compensation in line with the principles of customary law. The victim's relatives may not refuse to accept this *wergild*, but, having accepted it, they should renounce bloody revenge on the murderer and his family once and for all.

In the early Middle Ages similar royal decrees, seeking to eliminate the practice of bloody revenge from society's life, were not a rarity. However, Charlemagne's capitulary stands out among them by virtue of its extensive theological justification featuring, in addition to the duty of material compensation to people, a categorical injunction to provide satisfaction to God for violating His law. The emperor ordered especially those who had raised their hand against their brother or relative immediately to accept the penance imposed on them and their subordination to their bishop. To seek with all their might reconciliation with the deceased's relatives (eo ipso—their own relatives) and to try to satisfy their material claims. Those shying away from this obligation should be deprived of their property, and their case should be submitted to the imperial court.

The rules for dealing with the murderers of relatives are specified by the legislator in chapter 37 of the capitulary.[91] It lists patricides, fratricides, murderers of maternal and paternal uncles or other relatives as a group of murderers who should be specially controlled by imperial officials. If these murderers were to prove to be unrepentant sinners and did not want to submit to the penance imposed on them by priests, they should be seized and imprisoned in a place that would make them safe, but, at the same time, would prevent them from defiling the rest of the faithful with their presence until the ruler heard their case.

Thus patricides, fratricides, and murderers of other relatives were singled out among all murderers as a special group, whose deed, through its particularly monstrous nature, was a deadly threat not just to their souls, but also to the souls of all Christians. Emphasis was placed on the duty to do penance for the crime: it was not the death sentence for the murderers but serious penance that provided hope for the fatal consequences of God's

90 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 1, no. 33, p. 97; on the circumstances of promulgation and the political significance of this capitulary see Eckhardt, "Die Capitularia missorum"; Patzold, "Normen im Buch"; McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, 256–63.

91 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 1, no. 33, chap. 37, p. 98.

wrath to be averted from the community of the faithful. That is why the emperor had them subjected to the jurisdiction of bishops who, together with other priests, were the only ones with the right to impose penance on sinners and reconcile them with God. At the same time he ordered his officials to make the murderers safe, most likely in order for them not to be struck by bloody revenge on the part of their victim's relatives.

The capitulary chapters referred to above mark an important change in the way murderers of relatives were treated and, generally speaking, in the way the most serious crimes against life were dealt with. In customary law, a murder—both of a relative and of a stranger—remained a matter to be resolved between the feuding families, and the involvement of the ruler was restricted to limiting the fatal consequences of family vengeance and replacing revenge with financial compensation paid by the murderer to the victim's family. In fact, however, the life of the murderer remained in the hands of the avengers and this principle was not challenged by the legislator. It was the goodwill of the relatives and specific circumstances that determined which method of conflict resolution would be chosen in a particular case. This is not surprising, given the fact that what was at stake was the victim's family honour. Honour was the basis of the symbolic capital on which a group bound by blood ties built its social position.[92] In the case of fratricide or patricide, the murder became an internal matter of the family to which the victim and the murderer belonged. It was the kinship group that was to decide how to wash away the dishonour and rebuild its internal bonds.

Charlemagne's capitulary contains a different way of dealing with murder. A crime against human life was not an attack on the family group's property, but, above all, a sin, which was a violation of the eternal law established by God. Thus its consequences affected not just the murderer, the victim, and their milieu, but also all the faithful, just as the crime of the first murderer, Cain, had affected all Christians since the dawn of time. The goal of the legislator was to protect murderers—especially murderers guilty of the most scandalous crimes of patricide, fratricide, and parricide—from human revenge not to show them mercy, but primarily to given them time for penance that would avert the terrible danger of God's wrath.

In 818 or 819 Charlemagne's successor, Louis the Pious, threatened anyone raising their hand against a penitent with severe punishment.[93] In the same capitulary he forbade bloody revenge on murderers, ordering his officials to force the parties to come to a financial agreement.[94] That the problem was still relevant, and that bloody revenge on the perpetrators was a phenomenon constantly present in society's practice

92 There is a fierce discussion among medievalists about the social and cultural importance of feud in early medieval societies, see e.g. Meyer, "Freunde, Feinde, Fehde"; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*; Le Jan, *Famille*, 87ff.; Le Jan, *Société du haut Moyen Age*, 277ff.; Barthélemy, Bougard, and Le Jan, ed., *La vengeance*; Modzelewski, *Barbarian Europe*, 101–29; see also a classical study Wallace-Hadrill, "The Bloodfeud."

93 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 1, no. 136, chap. 5, p. 282.

94 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 1, chap. 13, p. 284; the order was repeated verbatim in the Worms capitulary of 829, MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 193, chap. 8, p. 20.

is evidenced by Charles the Bald's capitulary originating half a century later, in which the king defines the rules to be followed if a murderer was willing to do penance but, owing to a threat to his life on the part of avengers, could not do it. Charles ordered that the ordinances of his father, Louis the Pious, be observed.[95]

The motives prompting members of kinship groups to commit fratricide and patricide were—at least in the opinion of the legislators—rather mundane: they came down primarily to a desire of earthly goods. This is clearly shown in a capitulary of Louis the Pious promulgated in August 829.[96] The first two chapters of the capitulary deal with murderers, especially fratricides, patricides, and matricides. In the first chapter, the legislator lists punishments that should be inflicted on those who shed their neighbours' blood in a church or outside a church but on consecrated ground. Chapter 2 is devoted in its entirety to the murderers of the closest relatives. Under the imperial decision, they were to be barred definitely from inheriting from their victims, whom they had killed out of greed, and their public penance was to be decided by the local bishop.

The circumstances surrounding the issuing of the capitulary are well known and have recently been thoroughly examined by Mayke de Jong.[97] Its promulgation was part of actions undertaken to correct errors and provide satisfaction for the sins committed by the ruler and his entourage. The influential part of the elites at the time felt that it was precisely despicable deeds and negligence on the part of the emperor that had led to a loss of favour of the supernatural forces, and, consequently, to an internal crisis and military defeats. The need for correction (*correctio*) became a dominant theme of the councils and assemblies convened that year. Supported and inspired by his reform-minded entourage, Louis implemented a number of new decisions concerning the legal and religious form of the Carolingian empire. The regulations of this capitulary were to make it easier to eliminate those crimes and misdeeds that could bring God's wrath down upon the perpetrator and the entire community.

A comparison between Carolingian legislation, older codes of customary laws, and royal edicts suggests that the killing of one's closest relatives in order to seize their property was a phenomenon which various lawmaking rulers had tried for a long time—clearly unsuccessfully—to combat. Among the Lombards, under an old law recorded as early as in the seventh century and made even tougher by King Liutprand in 720, a man guilty of the death of his brother was banned from inheriting from him, and his entire property was to be confiscated and given as compensation to the victim's descendants. After their claims were satisfied, any remaining possessions were transferred to the closest relatives.[98] The laws of the Alemanni included a norm whereby murderers of

95 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 275, chap. 10, pp. 336, a. 869.

96 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 193, chap. 1, p. 18.

97 De Jong, *The Penitential State*, 148–84.

98 *Edictum Rothari*, in *Le leggi dei Longobardi*, chap. 163, pp. 45–47; *Liutprandi leges*, in *Le leggi dei Longobardi*, chap. 17, pp. 136–38.

relatives were to be deprived of all their property in the presence of all family members; the murderers' descendants, too, lost their inheritance rights.[99]

Property disputes, which sometimes led to the murder of one of the competing brothers, were seen as a visible sign of the operation of the infernal forces. They probably were not rare either. This is openly confirmed by Odo, the author of a mid-ninth century *Miracles of St. Maurus*.[100] The conflicts sometimes must have been so fierce that the common belief was that only a miracle could persuade the feuding sides to reconcile.

Examples of such supernatural interventions can be found in hagiographical sources. The miracles accompanying the translation of the relics of St. Calixtus to Cysoing, recorded in the second half of the ninth century, include a story of a reconciliation, by the agency of the saint, of two brothers mortally at variance with each other.[101] The brothers, torn by rage and hate, like Cain the fratricide, were led to a place where the mortal remains of the saint had been laid to rest. The saint brought about such a sudden and unexpected transformation upon them that, filled with the fear of God, they fell to the ground and confessed their sins. The congregation praised God's graciousness and the brothers lived in harmony from then on. The miracle was regarded by the locals as so extraordinary that they decided to erect a cross on its site in eternal commemoration. In the story of St. Calixtus's miracle the narrative is constructed in such a way as to make the intense hatred between the brothers look like possession from which the brothers could be liberated only by divine intervention through the intercession of the saint. Interestingly, in this particular case the brothers were not willing to resort to the saint's intercession to end the feud dividing them, but were forced to do so, as it were, by their milieu. It could be said that those who every day watched the escalation of the conflict between the brothers were the most interested in nipping in the bud the evil threatening everyone. The story of the miracle of St. Calixtus is rare evidence indirectly confirming the social dimension of disputes among brothers, including their extreme and dramatic consequence: fratricide.

Owing to their character, the normative and hagiographical sources presented so far do not provide us with an answer to the question to what extent the phenomenon of a bloody conflict between brothers was present in society's life. Information about examples of such conflicts is rare and scattered, which makes it all the more valuable. These unique pieces of evidence include two papal letters written in the second half of the ninth century and addressed to bishops in the Frankish kingdoms. Around 860, Pope

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99 *Leges Alamannorum*, title 39, pp. 99–100.

100 *Ex Odonis miraculis S. Mauri*, 470: "[Vulfuinus] Cinomanis profectus est, partem prediorum sibi competentium cum fratre suo Herveo nomine divisurus. Sed, exorta inter eos, ut in tali adsolet negocio, contentione, fratris dextera viscere tensu confossus interiit."

101 *Translatio S. Calixti Cisonium*, 421: "Qui [fratres] statim in conspectu aecclesiae adducti sunt. Et dum adhuc iniqua pleni cogitatione invidiaeque et iracundiae, ut Cain fratricida, facibus accensi ante presentiam martiris in medio constitissent, mirum in modum ita subito divinus eos timor perculit, ut in facies suas ruerent veniamque de suis erratibus similiter exorarent." On the translation, see Lorenz, "Papst Calixt I. (217–222)."

Nicholas I wrote to Bishop Donno and King Charles the Bald in the matter of a certain Hugo who had arrived in Rome on a penitential pilgrimage after the murder of his brother. As the pilgrim was zealously doing the penance imposed on him by the bishop, the pope asked the addressees of his letter for Hugo to have his property returned to him and to be allowed to be reunited with his wife, with all the restrictions and precepts binding on him as a penitent being preserved.[102] A few years before Pope Benedict III (d. 858) had sent a similar letter to Bishop Solomon of Konstanz. In it, he specified the type of penance imposed on a fratricide and allowed him to return to his wife and carry arms, that is: to return to public life.[103]

The letters are interesting for several reasons. Firstly, they confirm the very fact of cases of fratricide among the elites of the empire; secondly, they testify to jurisdiction being exercised over fratricides by the clergy as well as to the fratricide being bound by the precepts recorded in capitularies, synodal constitutions, and teachings of the Church Fathers. Moreover, the sources point to the existence of the practice of penitential pilgrimages in the case of the most serious transgressions against God's law. It should be noted that the bishops were aware of the risks involved in such pilgrimages and tried to limit them or to strengthen their control over the pilgrims.[104] The picture emerging form the papal correspondence is complemented by copies, preserved in Merovingian and Carolingian formularies, of a kind of safe conducts issued by local bishops to murderers of their closest relatives who set off on pilgrimages as part of their penance. In addition to the name of the contrite sinner, the documents contained a request to the clergymen from the countries through which the pilgrim was to pass to help him on his way, and they testified to the purity of the pilgrim's intentions.[105] A recurring reference in them concerns a seven-year period of penance for these gravest crimes, which is confirmed by information from other types of sources.

In this context, unique testimony dealing with penitential practices of fratricides—recorded probably in the ninth century, but preserved in a later edition (tenth–eleventh centuries)—is found in the *Miracle of St. Bertha*, the foundress of the monastery of Blangy-sur-Ternoise (Artois), who lived at the turn of seventh to eighth century. In the third quarter or the ninth century the saint's relics were transferred to Estrées (Strasbourg), when the entire convent left its original house because of a fear of a Viking invasion. The hagiographer places the events he describes during the reign of Charles the Bald.[106]

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102 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 4, no. 131, p. 652.

103 *Acta pontificum Romanorum inedita*, 3, no. 4, p. 4, a. 855–58.

104 "Concilium Cabillonense," in MGH LL Concilia 2/1, no. 37, chap. 45, pp. 282–83.

105 *Formulae Senonenses recentiores*, in MGH LL *Formulae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, no. 11, p. 217; *Formulae Salicae Lindenborgianae*, in MGH LL *Formulae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, no. 17, pp. 278–89; *Formulae Bituricenses*, in MGH LL *Formulae Merowingici et Karolini aevi*, no. 13, pp. 173–74.

106 *Ex miraculis et translatione S. Bertae*, 564; edition of the life, translation and miracles of St. Bertha: AA SS, July, 2: 49–60.

According to his account, a nobleman named Salomon, having committed fratricide, accepted the most severe penance and, bound in iron fetters, set off on a pilgrimage to Rome. While in Rome, he received a sign in his sleep to go back beyond the Alps, to the relics of St. Bertha, through whose intercession he was to be cleansed of his sin. Salomon arrived in the monastery church in Blangy at a moment when a priest was celebrating a mass. The iron shackles cracked as soon as the fratricide, standing by the church door, raised his hand to make the sign of the cross, and the fetters, like an arrow from a bow, flew straight to the place where the mortal remains of the saints had been laid to rest. Although details of the story (the names of the bishops appearing in it) suggest caution when trying to date and determine the provenance of the account, it does provide us with some interesting information. First of all, the author clearly indicates the motives which pushed Salomon to killing his own brother: this happened during a quarrel over their shares in the inheritance. Here, again, we find a cause of conflict among heirs constantly present in other sources. Secondly, this late account, too, points unequivocally to a pilgrimage as the basic form of penance for fratricides. In this case, it was accompanied by a symbolic mortification of the flesh (fetters[107]). It was the journey to Rome and other holy sites, ending with the penitent being readmitted to the community of the faithful by the saint's grave, that constitutes the central motif of the story and the essence of the penance.

An important source shedding light on the theological justification of such pilgrimages is Hrabanus Maurus's *Penitential*, prepared for Archbishop Otgar of Mainz and dated to the year 842.[108] The penitential later became the basis on which Carolingian synods clarified the rules of dealing with murderers. Hrabanus Maurus devotes a separate chapter to the murderers of relatives. He uses the term *parricida* to refer to this group. It encompasses all murders the victims of which were the perpetrator's relatives, that is also fratricide.[109] However, what constitutes a point of reference for him is Cain's crime of fratricide—Hrabanus invokes directly chapter 4 of the Book of Genesis as a justification of the recommended treatment of such criminals.

According to Hrabanus and the biblical precept, a *parricida* should live like Cain in a state of eternal uncertainty and, like an outlaw, wander across the world. However, writes Hrabanus, today such murderers roam the country with impunity, committing new crimes and perpetrating infamies. That is why it seems just to order them to stay in one place so that they can be controlled to see whether they do their penance

107 Other ninth-century sources suggest that the practice was by no means unique. Charlemagne's *Admonitio generalis* features a provision against those who roam the country *nudi cum ferro*, under the pretext of penance. The ruler recommended that perpetrators do their penance in one designated place (*Die Admonitio generalis* chap. 77, p. 230); this royal decree was included e.g. in Regino of Prüm's legal collection.

108 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 3, no. 32, p. 463. A fundamental study devoted to Hrabanus Maurus's *Pentitential*, especially the sources used by Hrabanus when compiling it, is Kottje, *Die Bussbücher Haltigars*; see also Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe*, 132ff.

109 On the unclear origins of the term *parricidium*, used in Roman and then in canon law, see Jońca, *Parricidium*, 11–17.

correctly.[110] This is how Hrabanus explained the reasons behind abandoning the treatment of murderers, including parricides, grounded in the Bible. It was precisely the practice of penitential pilgrimages in the case of these gravest crimes that preceded forced penance in one place under strict supervision, as recommended by Hrabanus. This is an interesting example of an attempt to solve a moral dilemma (as well as a rather practical problem) of reconciling the unequivocal biblical text and the consequences of a literal interpretation of this text, dangerous to the existing order. The danger in this case lay in the use of the scripture-backed argument as a pretext enabling murderers to avoid the punishment provided for in the customary law and, even more dangerously from the theological point of view, in facilitating evasion of designated penance. Under the royal law, a murderer leaving the place where he lived under the pretext of doing penance did not have to fear revenge on the part of the victim's relatives. At the same time, bishops did not have effective tools to control penitents outside their dioceses. Thus, remaining outside the control of his own social group and the local bishop, a murderer could commit other trespasses against divine and human laws with impunity. That is why Hrabanus Maurus, in demanding greater control for bishops over the penance performed by repentant sinners, sought to change the existing penitential practice, an integral element of which was the long-term stay of perpetrators of cardinal sins away from their homes and families.[111] Hrabanus's precepts from Otgar's *Penitential* were incorporated in 847 into the statutes promulgated at the Mainz council. This is hardly surprising, given that the council was chaired by Hrabanus Maurus himself as archbishop of Mainz.[112] The canons were subsequently included in Regino of Prüm's compilation *De ecclesiasticis disciplinis*,[113] and through it in Burchard of Worms's collection.

The practice of penitential pilgrimages, which spread across the continent under the influence of the teachings of Celtic monks, remained alive throughout the ninth century despite attempts by some bishops to restrict it. It was backed by the authority of popular penitentials. The penitential books used by the clergy from Italy to the Rhineland contained a precept whereby a murderer should spend at least part of his penance, lasting many years, in exile and return only after satisfying the claims of the victim's relatives.[114] The popularity of these tariffs was not diminished by royal and episcopal

110 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 3, no. 32, p. 463: "Sed quia in modernis temporibus parricidae profugi discurrunt per diversa loca, et variis vitiis atque gulae inlecebris deserviunt, melius mihi videtur, ut in uno loco manentes, paenitentia districta semeptisos castigent, si forte a Domini bonitate indulgentiam facinoris sui percipere mereantur." Cf. MGH LL Concilia 3, no. 14, chap. 20, p. 171.

111 For more on (monastic) seclusion as a form of penance that was to replace penitential pilgrimages, see Geltner, "Detrusio, Penal Cloistering in the Middle Ages," 93ff.

112 MGH LL *Capitularia regum Francorum*, 2, no. 248, chap. 20, p. 181.

113 Regino Prumiensis, *De ecclesiasticis disciplinis*, can. XXVII–XXIX (223–224), cols. 290–91.

114 The penance period in the case of fratricide ranged from fourteen years, including seven years in exile (Wasserschleben, ed., *Die Bussordnungen*, chap. 3, p. 538), or even fifteen years (a penitential from northern Italy known as *Poenitentiale Valicellanum II* provided for fifteen years of penance for fratricide, including five years in exile or in a monastery; Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher*, 351), to seven years (*Paenitentiale Merseburgense* from the late eighth century, providing for seven years of penance for fratricide, including three years on bread and water, Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher*, 313).

ordinances ordering penance rules to be harmonized and doctrinally suspect books to be destroyed.[115]

The form of penance in the case of fratricide was codified by Frankish bishops in the mid-ninth century. The bishops took as their point of reference primarily the regulations of general councils. Synodal legislation from the 860s provided for the following penance for fratricides: they were to stand for a year outside the church door in propitiatory prayer; after that year, they could be let inside the church, but were allowed only to listen to the Mass; after yet another year they could be allowed to receive the sacraments. They were banned from eating meat for life and had to fast every day, with the exception of feast days and Sundays; three days a week they were to refrain from drinking wine, mead, and honey beer. They were not allowed to use arms, unless fighting against pagans, nor were they allowed to travel on horseback or by means of any vehicle. They did not have to be separated from their wives and were allowed to get married during their penance period in order to avoid the sin of unchastity. The length of the penance period depended on the will of the local bishop, who should verify whether they meticulously abided by the restrictions imposed on them, and examine their conscience.[116] In this respect bishops, at least those from East Francia, observed the papal instructions defined in a letter sent in the early 860s to the council of the archdiocese of Mainz.[117] It should be noted, however, that although in the second half of the ninth century the penitential practice of fratricides gradually became stabilized, there was still much uncertainty concerning its details at the turn of the tenth century. This related, for example, to the decision whether penitents should remain chaste throughout the penance period. That the problem was serious is evidenced by a letter of Pope Nicholas I, in which he explained to Bishop Solomon of Konstanz that in exceptional cases a penitent could have sexual intercourse with his wife.[118] The penance could also vary depending on the local customs in the diocese and individual decisions of the bishop.

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The motif of fratricidal conflicts, both among rulers and in the lower strata of society, seems to have been an important element of the collective imaginary of the early Middle Ages. Descriptions of miracles in which only saints, thanks to God's grace, were able to rein in unreasonable hatred dividing brothers demonstrate human helplessness in the face of such feuds fuelled by the devious forces of evil. The vivid image of Cain—an exile stigmatized for his crime and wandering the earth—was made manifest by penitents on

115 See decisions of the Paris council of 829, MGH LL Concilia 2/2, no. 50, chap. 32, p. 633.

116 Council of Worms, May 868, MGH LL Concilia 4, no. 25, pp. 268–69; MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 4, no. 156, pp. 676–77.

117 MGH LL Concilia 4, no. 12, p. 131, a. 861–63. An identical canon dealing with the penance of fratricides can also be found in a letter by Pope Nicholas to the bishops of the Diocese of Worms, dated to the turn of the 860s. However, there are doubts as to the authenticity of the letter.

118 MGH Epp. *Epistolae Karolini aevi*, 4, no. 138, p. 658, a. 858–67.

pilgrimages to the holy sites of the Carolingian realm. On the other hand, the fields of Fontenoy became, in the imagination of the elites, a place in which the first human crime was repeated again and again, bringing God's wrath upon the combatants and the entire people. The fraternal bond, irrevocably tainted by sin, could be renewed only by being raised to a spiritual level and overcoming the earthly bonds of the flesh. The models of fraternal relations in these works were based on a paradox: on the one hand the bond uniting brothers and based on consanguinity became—as a synonym for loyalty and devotion—a point of reference for a description of the metaphorical spiritual bond of all brothers in Christ; and on the other hand this carnal bond was presented consistently as deficient and defiled by sin. Peace between brothers was by no means an intrinsic feature of this closest of human relationships; it could be achieved, but only if the love uniting them was truly Christian.