THE FLAILING WOMEN OF DIJON: CROWDS IN NINTH-CENTURY EUROPE*

Crowds of artisans and traders who smashed liturgical vessels in Italy, open-air religious gatherings in southern France, bands of heretics in northern France, mass slaughter of foreigners in England, massacres of Jews in the Rhineland, peasant unrest in Normandy, urban unrest in the Low Countries and the armed mass pilgrimage which historians call the First Crusade (1095–9): these collective phenomena have led scholars to conclude that in the eleventh century 'the crowd' burst onto the 'stage of public events' for the first time in European history since Roman Antiquity.[1]

The period of European history before 1000, the early Middle Ages (*c.* 500–1000), is not known for its crowds. And why should it be? After urban and demographic decline in the fifth and sixth centuries, Western Europe lost the urban multitudes which had made 'the crowd' central to Roman civilization.[2] By 'crowd',

* I am grateful to audiences of versions of this paper at the 'Texts and Identities' conference at the Institut für Mittelalterforschung in Vienna, the 'Material World of the Early Middle Ages' conference at Pacific University and the Johns Hopkins History Seminar. For corrections, references and suggestions I would like to thank Rowan Dorin, Paige Glotzer, Campbell Grey, Ian Kumekawa, Régine Le Jan, Michael McCormick, Rosamond McKitterick, Warren Pezé, Jake Ransohoff, Arafat Razzaque, Emma Rothschild, Dan Smail, Joshua Specht, Charles West and Julian Yolles.

[1] R. I. Moore, 'The Weight of Opinion: Religion and the People of Europe From the Tenth to the Twelfth Century', in Kate Cooper and Conrad Leyser (eds.), *Making Early Medieval Societies: Conflict and Belonging in the Latin West, 300–1200* (Cambridge, 2016), 214–16, reprising (while thoughtfully nuancing) his 'Family, Community and Cult on the Eve of the Gregorian Reform', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., xxx (1980), 49. See also G. Dickson, 'Medieval Christian Crowds and the Origins of Crowd Psychology', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, xcv (2000), 58–9; Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), 301.

[2] The literature on the Roman crowd is vast: see Elio Lo Cascio, 'Introduzione', in Elio Lo Cascio and Giovanna D. Merola (eds.), *Forme di aggregazione nel mondo romano* (Bari, 2007). Classic works include P. A. Brunt, 'The Roman Mob', *Past and Present*, no. 35 (Dec. 1966), on riots, and Paul Veyne, *Le pain et le cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (Paris, 1976), on public entertainments. For the enduring clout of the urban crowd in Late Antiquity, see Peter Brown, *Through the Eye of a Needle: Wealth, the Fall of Rome, and the Making of Christianity in the West, 350–550 AD* (Princeton, 2012), 110–9, 125–6, 339–58.

Past and Present, no. 240 (Aug. 2018)
doi:10.1093/pastj/gty011 Advance Access published on 27 April 2018

scholars usually mean collective behaviour as a way for non-elites (particularly a middling artisan class) to make their voices heard.[3] Medieval historian R. I. Moore has recently recapitulated this point of consensus by writing that only after eleventh-century demographic and urban growth could crowds again become 'vehicles of popular participation in public events'.[4]

This article contends that this widely accepted view is true in one respect, but misleading in another. 'Crowds' in Moore's sense — popular, motivated gatherings powerful enough to resist dominant authorities — were rare in Europe between Late Antiquity and the high Middle Ages.[5] But that observation can be deceptive for two reasons. First, crowds in many other forms continued to regulate social and religious life in the early Middle Ages: in gatherings focused on the cult of relics, in liturgical ceremonies and in the royal and local assemblies of early medieval political life. Second, and this is the focus of the article, the misdirection of these crowds could dislodge elite authority.

This article uses a ninth-century case study to explore religious crowds, usually involving women and non-elites, which were treated as threats by dominant elites in Carolingian Europe during the eighth and ninth centuries. It focuses on a vivid case of flailing women from the 840s, who were condemned by their archbishop. It argues that misbehaving gatherings like this one were threatening to elites because crowds — albeit crowds of a

[3] Moore, 'Family, Community and Cult', 50–1. Social historians stress the rationality of crowds: George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730–1848*, revised edn (London, 1981), 3–16, esp. 3–4; E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, no. 50 (Feb. 1971), esp. 78–9; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past and Present*, no. 59 (May 1973), esp. 55–7, 90, though she criticizes Rudé, Thompson and others for excluding the religious crowd (53–4). See also Suzanne Desan, 'Crowds, Community, and Ritual in the Work of E. P. Thompson and Natalie Davis', in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley, 1989); Stefan Jonsson, 'The Invention of the Masses: The Crowd in French Culture from the Revolution to the Commune', in Jeffrey T. Schnapp and Matthew Tiews (eds.), *Crowds* (Stanford, 2006), 53; William Beik, 'The Violence of the French Crowd From Charivari to Revolution', *Past and Present*, no. 197 (Nov. 2007).

[4] Moore, 'The Weight of Opinion', 215.

[5] Nor is this focus limited to historians; see, for example, Clark McPhail, 'Crowd Behavior', in George Ritzer (ed.), *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 11 vols. (Malden, 2007), i, 880: 'Most scholarly concerns have been with political gatherings that challenge the status quo'.

different nature from those described by Moore — remained central to early medieval social relations and to resource extraction (tithes, dues, services).

Women and men in illicit gatherings endangered elite power not directly, by resisting dominant authority, but in an indirect fashion which anthropologists have called 'slantwise'.[6] In a society whose orderly crowds constituted, rather than undermined, authority, unregulated assembly posed a threat to governance itself. Elite polemics against such 'slantwise' crowds, this article argues, also worked indirectly. Political and material tensions about dangerous crowds in the eighth- and ninth-century West manifested themselves as social and gendered anxieties. Elite polemics used tropes of rustic or female pliability as a way to explain why unregulated crowds were 'dangerous', while upholding the normal role of peasants and women in the crowds upon which order depended.

I

DANGEROUS CROWDS, 'SUPERSTITION' AND WOMEN

From a synchronic as well as a diachronic perspective, the crowd in the early medieval West was unusual. Ancient Rome's other heirs around the Mediterranean, Islam and Byzantium, lived with 'the crowd' in ways that early medieval Western societies did not. In the eighth and ninth centuries, Umayyad and then 'Abbasid rulers faced nearly annual rural Coptic uprisings in the Egyptian delta, while in Syrian cities urban mobs played a role in civil wars and ousted or crucified hated governors.[7] Early medieval Arabic sources were attuned to 'the rabble', 'the common folk' and the 'riff-raff'.[8] Meanwhile, in their capital at Constantinople, Byzantine rulers cajoled and appeased urban crowds and

[6] Howard Campbell and Josiah Heyman, 'Slantwise: Beyond Domination and Resistance on the Border', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, xxxvi (2007).

[7] Paul M. Cobb, *White Banners: Contention in 'Abbāsid Syria, 750–880* (Albany, 2001), 105–6; Chris Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford, 2005), 140–1.

[8] Cobb, *White Banners*, 104–5: *'ayyārūn* ['rabble']; *al-'āmma* ['the common folk']; *al-ghawghā* ['the riff-raff']. Qur'anic and Classical Arabic possessed an evocative vocabulary for different kinds of gatherings: *jami* [crowd, assembly], *jamāia* [group, association], *al-nās* or *qawm* [people], *lafīf* [dense enveloping], *ghumār* [crowd cover], *sawād* [masses, common people], *zaḥm* [jostle]. I would like to thank Arafat Razzaque for his guidance on these medieval Arabic terms.

unruly armies, and sometimes lost their thrones to them. The capital's Hippodrome, its great churches, its forums and broad streets were the venues for crowd politics. In a regime where spontaneous gatherings could depose emperors, 'the multitude', 'the common people' and 'the crowd' were central subjects of political discourse.[9]

By contrast, in the eighth- and ninth-century Latin West, 'the crowd', at least as social historians define it, appeared only in a few Italian cities within the 'Byzantine' cultural sphere, like Rome, Ravenna and Naples.[10] North of the Alps, acts of non-elite mass resistance were ineffectual, as with the so-called Stellinga revolts of the 840s.[11] An eighth-century peasant revolt in northern Spain

[9] Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. Carl de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883), i, A. M. 6187, p. 369, lines 20–30, for the depiction of '*ἅπαν . . . τὸ πλῆθος*' [hapan . . . to plēthos, 'the whole multitude'], '*πᾶς ὁ λαός*' [pas ho laos, 'all the people'] and '*ὁ . . . ὄχλος*' [ho . . . ochlos, 'the crowd'] in the deposition and mutilation (695) of Emperor Justinian II (r. 685–95, 705–11). For other urban crowds, see Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. Carl de Boor, i, A. M. 6305, p. 501, lines 3–21 (fake miracle in 813); John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. Johannes [Hans] Thurn, *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Series Berolinensis, v, Berlin, 1973), Constantine VII, first reign, c. 2, pp. 197–9 (failed revolt in 913). For hagiography, see, for example, the probably ninth-century *Vita Leonis ep. Cataniae* (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca, no. 981b), ed. A. G. Alexakis, *The Greek Life of St. Leo Bishop of Catania* (Subsidia hagiographica, xci, Brussels, 2011), c. 25, p. 170, depicting a '*δημώδης ὄχλος*' [dēmōdēs ochlos, 'popular crowd'] being calmed. Nevertheless, Byzantinists often argue for an eleventh-century resurgence of the crowd: Michael Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025–1204: A Political History*, 2nd edn (London, 1997), 57–8; Paul Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XIe siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 290–3, both building on Speros Vryonis, 'Byzantine *Δημοκρατία* and the Guilds in the Eleventh Century', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, xvii (1963), 291–3, who links the rise of popular politics with urban craft guilds. But see A. P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, 1985), 50–3. Many thanks to Jake Ransohoff for his advice on Byzantine crowds and their historiography.

[10] T. S. Brown, 'Urban Violence in Early Medieval Italy: The Cases of Rome and Ravenna', in Guy Halsall (ed.), *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 1998), esp. 77–8. See also Judith Herrin, 'Urban Riot or Civic Ritual? The Crowd in Early Medieval Ravenna', in Dietrich Boschung, Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp and Claudia Sode (eds.), *Raum und Performanz: Rituale in Residenzen von der Antike bis 1815* (Stuttgart, 2015), 224, arguing that 'instances of urban violence appear to be quite common' in the early Middle Ages. Outside of Rome and Ravenna, where this may be the case, she gives no other examples.

[11] *Annales Xantenses*, ed. B. von Simson (Monumenta Germaniae Historica (hereafter MGH), Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum in Usum Scholarum (hereafter SRG), xii, Hanover, 1909), s.a. 841, p. 12; *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Friedrich Kurze (MGH, SRG, vii, Hanover, 1891), s.a. 842, pp. 33–4; [Prudentius of Troyes], *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Félix Grat, Jeanne Vieilliard and Suzanne Clémencet, with notes and introduction by Léon Levillain, *Annales de Saint-Bertin* (Paris, 1964), s.a. 841, pp. 38–40; s.a. 842, pp. 42–3; Nithard, *Historiae*, ed. Philipe Lauer, revised by Sophie

(cont. on p. 7)

probably owed its temporary success not to strength of numbers, but to the local peasants' ability to withdraw into the hills.[12] The crowd's early medieval quiescence is usually explained, if at all, as a socio-demographic phenomenon. After late antique demographic decline, few cities supported crowds large enough to threaten established power.[13] Even Italian cities, Christian Europe's largest, were shadows of their former selves; the population of early medieval Rome was an order of magnitude smaller than it had been in Late Antiquity.[14] Meanwhile, coercive power was monopolized by a military aristocracy easily able to quell resistance. The crowd was thus neutralized as an effectual weapon of the weak until the recovery of populations and towns in the later tenth or early eleventh century.[15]

An understudied corollary to this shift in power relations was a shift in discourse, visible in the evolution of Latin words. The negative rabbles of elite Roman discourse gave way to ordered, Christian assemblies which populate early medieval sources. For a first-century CE moralist, the word *turba* (classically: 'crowd', 'riot', 'rabble') was a one-word answer to the question, 'What should you avoid above all else?'[16] Yet under the influence of the Latin Bible, by the eighth and ninth centuries, *turba* often

(n. 11 cont.)
Glansdorff, *Histoire des fils de Louis le Pieux* (Paris, 2012), 4.2, pp. 130–4; 4.4, p. 142; 4.6, pp. 152–4.

[12] Wickham, *Framing*, 584.

[13] The causes and extent of post-Roman demographic decline have been much debated; see Kyle Harper, *The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease, and the End of an Empire* (Princeton, 2017).

[14] From *c.*500,000 (fifth century) to *c.*30,000 (ninth century): Roberto Meneghini and Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani, *Roma nell'Altomedioevo: topografia e urbanistica della città dal V al X secolo* (Rome, 2004), 21–8.

[15] Eric J. Goldberg, 'Popular Revolt, Dynastic Politics, and Aristocratic Factionalism in the Early Middle Ages: The Saxon Stellinga Reconsidered', *Speculum*, lxx (1995), 500; Wickham, *Framing*, 578–88. See also Siegfried Epperlein, *Herrschaft und Volk im karolingischen Imperium: Studien über soziale Konflikte und dogmatisch-politische Kontroversen im fränkischen Reich* (Berlin, 1969), esp. 15–28, and Wolfgang Eggert, 'Rebelliones servorum: Bewaffnete Klassenkämpfe im Früh- und frühen Hochmittelalter und ihre Darstellung in zeitgenössischen erzählenden Quellen', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, xxiii (1975). Goldberg, 'Popular Revolt', 468–70, gives a balanced assessment of these Marxian approaches.

[16] Seneca, *Epistola*, ed. L. D. Reynolds, *Epistulae Morales*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1965), i, 7.1, p. 11: 'Quid tibi uitandum praecipue existimes quaeris? turbam' ['You ask what, above all else, you ought to avoid? The crowd'].

denoted ordered assemblies.[17] 'Let the "throng" (*turba*) of brothers sing a hymn', runs an early medieval liturgical text. 'Here let the pious "assembly" (*turba*) debate healthful counsel', reads a caption in a ninth-century plan of an ideal monastery. A spontaneous crowd in a saint's life became 'a kind of miracle'.[18]

Yet one kind of crowd regularly disturbed early medieval authors: popular so-called 'superstitious' religious gatherings. Idols carried through fields, pseudo-prophets with credulous followings, bonfires with pagan roots, men and women who shouted to the moon in eclipse and mobs who lynched 'sky-people' whom they believed had fallen from the heavens all prompted criticism in early medieval sermons, laws, letters and treatises.[19] Such phenomena remained a feature of popular religiosity and elite critique throughout the Middle Ages.[20] They are one of the few collective behaviours habitually painted in negative colours by early medieval ecclesiastical writers.

Eighth- and ninth-century texts which condemn such illicit religious crowds have some consistent features. First, this

[17] *Turba* was used by Jerome to translate the Greek word ὄχλος [*ochlos*]. For crowds (*turbae*) that observed Jesus' miracles and heard his sermons in the Gospels, see B. Fischer, *Novae concordantiae bibliorum sacrorum, iuxta Vulgatam versionem critice editam*, 5 vols. (Stuttgart, 1977), v, cols. 5265–7.

[18] For the hymn, see Guido Maria Dreves *et al.* (eds.), *Analecta hymnica Medii Aevi*, 55 vols. (Leipzig, 1886–1922), li, 214; for the plan, see Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of, and Life in a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery*, 3 vols. (Berkeley, 1979), iii, 81; for the saint's life, see Einhard, *Translatio Petri et Marcellini* (Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina (hereafter BHL), no. 5233), 2.4, ed. G. Waitz (MGH, Scriptores, xv/1, Hanover, 1887), 247.

[19] On idols, see *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, ed. Alfred Boretius (MGH, Capitularia regum Francorum (hereafter Capit.), i, Hanover, 1883), c. 28, p. 223; on pseudoprophets, see Boniface, *Epistolae*, no. 59, ed. Michael Tangl (MGH, Epistolae selectae, i, Berlin, 1916), 111; on bonfires, see *Concilium Germanicum* (742), c. 5, ed. Albert Werminghoff (MGH, Concilia (hereafter Conc.), ii/1, Hanover, 1906), 3–4; on shouting to the moon, see *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*, ed. Boretius, c. 21, p. 223; Hrabanus Maurus, *Homilia*, no. 42 ('Contra eos qui in lunae defectu clamoribus se fatigabant'), in *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter *PL*), ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–1864), cx, cols. 78C–80A: a new edition is in preparation by C. Woods for the Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis (hereafter CCCM). On sky people, see Agobard of Lyon, *De grandine et tonitruis*, c. 2, in *Agobardi Lugdunensis Opera omnia*, ed. L. van Acker (CCCM, lii, Turnhout, 1981), 4. See Bernadette Filotas, *Pagan Survivals, Superstitions, and Popular Cultures in Early Medieval Pastoral Literature* (Toronto, 2005), 365–86, for the early medieval sources for pagan and superstitious practices.

[20] R. N. Swanson, *Religion and Devotion in Europe, c.1215–c.1515* (Cambridge, 1995), 182–90.

behaviour is classed as 'superstitious' or 'rustic'. Second, critics highlight female involvement. The perpetrator or perpetrators may themselves be women, they may target women, or the witnessing or participating crowds may involve women. Third, crowds engaged in superstitious behaviour are said to be tricked into giving away donations. These elements had appeared as early as Gregory of Tours's depictions of unscrupulous pseudo-prophets in the sixth century.[21] The same features coalesce in several cases from the eighth- and ninth-century Carolingian world. For example, in mid eighth-century Francia, a self-proclaimed prophet named Aldebert said that he conversed with angels and claimed parity with the Apostles. In exchange for donations, he distributed his own fingernails and hair as relics. Boniface, the church leader who describes these events, wrote in horror that Aldebert led 'young women' (*mulierculae*) astray and attracted a 'multitude of simple people'.[22]

Agobard, the fiery archbishop of Lyon (r. 816–34, 837–40), was the author of several texts against superstition.[23] In one letter, Agobard advised the archbishop of Narbonne how to deal with superstitious crowds assembling at the church of St Firmin in Uzès in what is now southern France.[24] Certain persons were faking seizures and stigmata, drawing large crowds of men and women motivated by 'unreasoning fear', who brought gifts of all

[21] Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum X*, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison (MGH, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum, i/1, Hanover, 1951), 7.44, pp. 364–5; 9.6, pp. 417–20; 10.25, pp. 517–9.

[22] Boniface, *Epistolae*, no. 59, ed. Tangl, 111; Nicole Zeddies, 'Bonifatius und zwei nützliche Rebellen: Die Häretiker Aldebert und Clemens', in Marie Theres Fögen (ed.), *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt, 1995), esp. 262–3.

[23] See Franz Brunhölzl, *Histoire de la littérature latine du Moyen Âge*, trans. Henri Rochais with Jean-Paul Bouhot, 3 vols. (Turnhout, 1990–6), i, pt 2, pp. 171–4; Adrien Bressolles, *Doctrine et action politique d'Agobard* (Paris, 1949), 89–99. For his chequered career, see Egon Boshof, *Erzbischof Agobard von Lyon* (Cologne, 1969), and the introduction to *Agobard de Lyon, Œuvres*, ed. Michel Rubellin (Sources Chrétiennes, dlxxxiii, Paris, 2016), 15–69. This new edition and translation contains useful commentary (see 101–9, for discussion of Agobard's writings on superstition) and bibliography but since the editors rely on van Acker's critical text, I have cited van Acker's edition in what follows.

[24] Agobard, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, c. 2–10, ed. van Acker, 238–42. Agobard does not mention Uzès by name: c. 1, ed. van Acker, 237; the location is given by Amolo, *Epistolae*, no. 1 (hereafter ep. 1), c. 6, ed. E. Dümmler (MGH, Epistolae (hereafter Epp.), v, Berlin, 1899), 366.

sorts to the church.[25] Agobard analysed biblical examples to show that the unseen blows and stigmata observed in Uzès were not real miracles, but signs of divine anger. Another case from Agobard's pen described weather-wizards called *tempestarii* who collected a fee called the *canonicum* as payment for altering the weather.[26] Agobard describes how men and women from all classes assembled to see these wizards and pay them to change the weather. To illustrate the gullibility of his flock, he connects the reliance on *tempestarii* to local belief in cloud-vessels from Magonia, a kingdom in the sky.[27]

A case from 847 is especially famous.[28] A woman named Thiota from Alemannia travelled around claiming that 'she knew the exact day of the end of the world together with innumerable other secrets known only to God, as if by divine revelation to her alone, and in that year she was preaching that the last day of the world was coming'. In response, 'many of the common folk of either sex, prompted by fear, came to her and offered her gifts and commended themselves to her prayers; and, what is worse, men of holy orders followed her as if she were a

[25] Agobard, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, c. 1, ed. van Acker, 237. The 'stigmata' here are not the marks of Christ but 'stigmata exustionis' (literally 'burn marks') which resembled sulphur burns.

[26] Agobard, *De grandine et tonitruis*, c. 15, ed. van Acker, 14. For this letter, see Jean Jolivet, 'Agobard de Lyon et les faiseurs de pluie', in Mireille Chazan and Gilbert Dahan (eds.), *La méthode critique au Moyen Âge* (Turnhout, 2006); Boshof, *Agobard*, 176–8; Paul Edward Dutton, 'Thunder and Hail Over the Carolingian Countryside', in his *Charlemagne's Mustache and Other Cultural Clusters of a Dark Age* (New York, 2004); Rob Meens, 'Thunder over Lyon: Agobard, the *tempestarii*, and Christianity', in Carlos Steel, John Marenbon and Werner Verbeke (eds.), *Paganism in the Middle Ages: Threat and Fascination* (Leuven, 2012); Geoffrey Koziol, 'Truth and Its Consequences: Why Carolingianists Don't Speak of Myth', in Stephen O. Glosecki (ed.), *Myth in Early Northwest Europe* (Tempe, 2007), 78–9. For enduring medieval belief in weather magicians more generally, see Monica Blöcker, 'Wetterzauber: Zu einem Glaubenskomplex des frühen Mittelalters', *Francia*, ix (1981).

[27] Agobard, *De grandine et tonitruis*, c. 2, ed. van Acker, 4. See Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriengeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1979), 266–8.

[28] *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Kurze, s.a. 847, pp. 36–7. Suzanne Fonay Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500 to 900* (Philadelphia, 1981), 144–5; Julia M. H. Smith, 'The Problem of Female Sanctity in Carolingian Europe, *c.*780–920', *Past and Present*, no. 146 (Feb. 1995), 35; Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, 'Female Sanctity: Public and Private Roles, ca. 500–1100', in Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, Georgia, 1988), 116; Janet L. Nelson, 'Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages', in her *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), 218. For a millenarian interpretation, see Richard Landes, *Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience* (Oxford, 2011), 37–49, 61–6, 81–3.

teacher sent from heaven, thus spurning church teachings'.[29] After Thiota had 'unsettled' the whole see of Constance, she was dragged before a synod of bishops at Mainz, where she was flogged 'by synodal judgment' until she repudiated her prophecies and admitted they had been fed to her by 'a certain priest'.[30] This kind of episcopal intervention was not unusual. In 867, two priests from Saxon lands in monastic garb 'simulated sanctity' by an ostentatious display of asceticism. 'A great multitude of the local people flowed to them, both rich and also poor, bringing diverse gifts' until Archbishop Liutbert of Mainz forced the men to reveal their deception publicly.[31]

The collective religious behaviours above fell under the medieval category of 'superstition' (Latin *superstitio*).[32] This concept encompassed incorrect doctrine or observation, illicit practices like witchcraft, pagan recidivism and Muslim or Jewish beliefs.[33] A standard medieval definition stressed that 'superstition' referred to excess.[34] This excess had a social dimension: 'superstition' was closely tied to the figure of the 'rustic' (*rusticus*), and 'rusticity' was a synonym for bad belief.[35]

[29] *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Kurze, s.a. 847, pp. 36–7.

[30] *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Kurze, s.a. 847, p. 37.

[31] *Annales Xantenses*, ed. von Simson, s.a. 867 (*recte*: 866), p. 24: 'Et confluebat ad eos multitudo magna gentis huius, tam divitum quam etiam ceterorum, diversa munera deferentes'.

[32] Harmening, *Superstitio*, 14–25. Compare Koziol, 'Truth and Its Consequences', 79, for related categories like folly (*stultitia*), madness (*dementia*, *insania*), absurdity (*ridiculositas*) and error (*error*).

[33] Harmening, *Superstitio*, 33–42; Filotas, *Pagan Survivals*, 11–8, 25–8. See also the comprehensive entry on *superstitio* in R. Ashdowne, D. Howlett *et al.*, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (Oxford, 2013), fasc. 16 (Sol–Syr), 3317–8 (including Bede and Alcuin, both popular on the Continent).

[34] Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, *Etymologiarum siue Originum libri*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1911), i, 8.3.6, n. p.: 'superstition (*superstitio*) is so-called because it refers to a superfluous (*superflua*) and superseded (*superinstituta*) practice'. For the etymology (from *supersto*, 'to stand above'), see Alfred Ernout and Antoine Meillet, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine, histoire des mots*, 4th edn (Paris, 1967), 653–4; Harmening, *Superstitio*, 26–32. Compare the influential later formulation by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2^{a}–2^{ae}, q. 92, a. 1, arg. 1, in *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia*, ix, ed. Leonine Commission (Rome, 1897): 'Superstition is said to be religion observed beyond measure (*supra modum*)'.

[35] Agobard, *Adversum dogma Felicis*, c. 2 (lines 1–5), ed. van Acker, 74, for 'rustic simplicity' (*rustica simplicitas*). See Valerie J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1991), 112; Filotas, *Pagan Survivals*, 28, 84. Crowds of rustics (*rustici*) were stock villains in saints' lives, as for example: *Vita Vigoris* (BHL 8608–13), c. 8, in *Acta Sanctorum*, 3rd edn (Paris and Brussels, 1863–1940), Nov. 1, pt 1, col. 301B.

Thus 'superstition' was a matter of degree or perspective. The behaviours listed above mirrored licit doctrine and practice. Men and women in crowds were supposed to venerate saints' relics. Parish priests celebrated masses against ill weather, and received tithes and dues in return. Preachers and ascetics were expected to draw crowds of admirers. Crowds were encouraged to give pious donations at nodes of spiritual authority. This thin line between norm and wrongdoing has led historians to give radically differing interpretations to behaviours deemed 'superstitious' in chronicles, sermons, letters, treatises, penitentials, saints' lives and law books.

For nineteenth-century confessional historians, one period's superstitions were no different from another's. Convulsionaries in the ninth century and in the eighteenth century were 'exactly the same'.[36] Collective excesses were the predictable result of 'imposture, superstition and hysteria'.[37] Yet, in the course of scholarly work aimed at reconstructing pagan practice and popular belief, scholars began to notice how much medieval authors borrowed, or plagiarized, from their patristic predecessors, like Caesarius of Arles (d. 542).[38] In the twentieth century, this led to a shift in focus to the topoi and guiding metaphors of the critics of superstition.[39] Dieter Harmening was influential in asserting that the sources for superstitious practices were 'essentially literary' and 'could hardly be defined as a reflection of contemporary facts'.[40] Efforts to disentangle literary description from actual practice have resulted in a scholarly division of labour. Some have attempted to see beyond biases and topoi to glimpse 'popular' religion or local

[36] J.-E. Darras, *Histoire générale de l'église* (Paris, 1855), 449.

[37] L. Chomton, *Histoire de l'Église Saint-Bénigne de Dijon* (Dijon, 1900), 67–8, 67: 'l'imposture, la superstition et le nervosisme'.

[38] Wilhelm Boudriot, *Die altgermanische Religion in der amtlichen kirchlichen Literatur des Abendlandes vom 5. bis 11. Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1928), 5–6. For a representative attempt to reconstruct 'Germanic religion', see, for example, H. Vordemfelde, *Die germanische Religion in den deutschen Volksrechten* (Giessen, 1923).

[39] Filotas, *Pagan Survivals*, 2–7, provides a useful historiographical genealogy with fuller bibliography. By 'topos', I mean a literary commonplace, drawing on Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, 1953), 70, while noting the caveats proposed by Peter Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages: New Departures in Poetry, 1000–1150*, 2nd edn (London, 1986), 11–22.

[40] Harmening, *Superstitio*, 318.

social dynamics at work.[41] Others focus on elite authors' thought-worlds, noting how elite narratives or categories effectively silenced alternative ways of knowing.[42]

Consider the multiple readings of the 'weather-wizards' (*tempestarii*) condemned by Agobard of Lyon. One historian sees the *tempestarii* as local magicians in an agrarian society with low yields; the *canonicum* was an agricultural payment for the essential service of fending off storms. In this view, Agobard 'never got inside' the logic of these 'local belief systems', and could only see them as 'superstition'.[43] By contrast, another scholar argues that Agobard used the label of 'superstition' to delegitimize rival priests. In this interpretation, Agobard was targeting rogue clerics and monks in the countryside who demanded payments for liturgical rites against storms.[44] So Agobard's 'literary' polemics overwrote either an unthinkable or an unacceptable reality.

One scholar has taken this line of reasoning even further by arguing that through the master-category of 'superstition', Carolingian elites defended a totalizing idea of truth which was designed to silence alternative narratives.[45] This may be going too far (the 'Carolingians' were not quite so unified intellectually).[46] Yet early medieval writers — disproportionately male, aristocratic and clerical — certainly both misunderstood and deliberately mischaracterized unpleasant realities. This has implications for

[41] Foundational contributions include Raoul Manselli, *La religion populaire au Moyen Âge: Problèmes de méthode et d'histoire* (Montreal, 1975); Oronzo Giordano, *Religiosità popolare nell'alto medioevo* (Bari, 1979); Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'Les "superstitions"', in J. Le Goff and R. Remond (eds.), *Histoire de la France religieuse*, vol. 1: *Des dieux de la Gaule à la papauté d'Avignon* (Paris, 1988); Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge, 1990).

[42] Koziol, 'Truth and Its Consequences', most radically. To some extent, Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Dissent and Reform in the Early Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1965), 4, 10–7, 247–8, argued earlier for systematic repression of early medieval 'popular' religious movements, but his focus was more on power in practice.

[43] Dutton, 'Thunder and Hail', 171–2.

[44] Meens, 'Thunder over Lyon', 165–6. Compare Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, esp. 87–126, who argues that local priests and monks in early medieval Europe replaced the function of magicians or pagan priests.

[45] Koziol, 'Truth and Its Consequences', esp. 76–9 and 86–94.

[46] Warren Pezé, 'Doctrinal Debate and Social Control in the Carolingian Age: The Predestination Controversy (840s–60s)', *Early Medieval Europe*, xxv (2017), 86, questions the scholarly view that a Carolingian society 'ruled by unsurpassable patristic authority and straitjacketed by hierarchy' was thereby prevented from carrying out complex doctrinal debates.

how modern scholars interpret the second feature of early medieval crowd-criticism noted above: the connection between 'superstitious' crowds and women.

Eighth- and ninth-century medieval writers marked religious crowds as dangerous in part by pointing to the involvement of women. Scholars of later periods will recognize this gesture. Reports of female involvement in crowd unrest are common in modern European history. This may or may not reflect traditionally female provisioning roles tested by scarcity, or women's ability to act collectively with less risk of legal reprisal.[47] Whatever the causes, a connection between women and crowds has been a persistent feature of discourse about both.[48] Early modern constructions of female 'disorderliness' painted disturbing pictures of collective misbehaviour.[49] In nineteenth-century France, anti-democratic politicians and crowd theorists de-legitimized collective behaviour by gendering crowds as essentially 'female' (also as alcoholic, childlike and savage).[50] The gendered coding of the early

[47] The causes and validity of female involvement in food riots have given rise to a large historiography. For subsistence as a possible reason for female participation in crowd unrest, see Olwen Hufton, 'Women in Revolution, 1789–1796', *Past and Present*, no. 53 (Nov. 1971), esp. 94–5; Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and Their French Revolution*, trans. Katherine Streip (Berkeley, 1998), 114–8, with important caveats (for example, 366). For legal immunity, see John Walter, *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2006), 40–1. For doubts, see John Bohstedt, 'The Myth of the Feminine Food Riot: Women as Proto-Citizens in English Community Politics, 1790–1810', in Harriet B. Applewhite and Darline G. Levy (eds.), *Women and Politics in the Age of the Democratic Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1990); John Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England, c. 1550–1850* (Farnham, 2010), 44–5. John E. Archer, *Social Unrest and Popular Protest in England, 1780–1840* (Cambridge, 2000), 34–6, offers a useful summary of this historiography. Other approaches focus on how female involvement varies contextually: for example, Cynthia A. Bouton, *The Flour War: Gender, Class, and Community in Late Ancien Régime French Society* (University Park, Pa., 1993), explores why pronounced female involvement in one series of food riots was an urban, not a rural, phenomenon. Micah Alpaugh, *Non-Violence and the French Revolution: Political Demonstrations in Paris, 1787–1795* (Cambridge, 2015), 63–74, examines how female involvement contributed to non-violent collective action during the French Revolution.

[48] Michael Gamper, *Masse lesen, Masse schreiben: Eine Diskurs- und Imaginationsgeschichte der Menschenmenge, 1765–1930* (Munich, 2007), 150–9.

[49] Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Women on Top', in her *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), esp. 128–9.

[50] See esp. Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, 1981), 43–72, also discussing associations between the crowd and alcohol. Gustave Le Bon, *La psychologie des foules*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1896), 24, 34, expounded on the female and childlike (and sometimes racial)

(cont. on p. 15)

medieval crowd worked differently than in early modern and industrial Europe, however. In a world where the default crowd was 'a kind of miracle', dangerous crowds were vilified by attribute, not essence. In the ninth century, rustic or female manipulability tainted the crowd, but did not define it.

The early medieval vilification of female involvement in religious gatherings fits into a wider debate about female roles in early medieval spirituality. It is difficult to know when 'reality has been simplified, idealized, hardened, unified' by clerical authors.[51] One group of scholars observes the consistently anti-female discourse of early medieval ecclesiastical writers and concludes that female roles were sharply limited in Carolingian spirituality. Women, they argue, were enclosed in monasteries and excluded from male religious spaces.[52] Some have traced out a broader horizon of the possible. Julia Smith has used clerical condemnation of female religious practice to assess the limits of early medieval 'female religious expression'; she contrasts the licit 'private visionary insights' of enclosed nuns with the 'dangerously public religious enthusiasm' of crowds.[53] Other historians have questioned the Carolingian 'clampdown' on female religiosity altogether.[54] Liturgical and hagiographical sources, they explain, reveal that women had a central place in eighth- and ninth-century spiritual life. In the countryside of Francia, communities of nuns even attended to pastoral needs.[55] For scholars of these female liturgical communities, elite criticism of female spiritual behaviour is either the

(n. 50 cont.)
nature of the 'psychological crowd'. For Le Bon's gendered crowd, see Jaap van Ginneken, *Crowds, Psychology, and Politics, 1871–1899* (Cambridge, 1992), 142–3.

[51] Jean Leclercq, 'Medieval Feminine Monasticism: Reality versus Romantic Images', in E. Rozanne Elder (ed.), *Benedictus: Studies in Honor of St Benedict of Nursia* (Kalamazoo, 1981), 70.

[52] Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, 127–48, remains fundamental. See also, Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500–1100* (Chicago, 2001), 59–125.

[53] Smith, 'The Problem of Female Sanctity', 35. See also Nelson, 'Women and the Word', at 203–4.

[54] Nelson, 'Women and the Word', 203, for the phrase 'clampdown'.

[55] Felice Lifshitz, *Religious Women in Early Carolingian Francia: A Study of Manuscript Transmission and Monastic Culture* (New York, 2014), xvii–xix, 193–206; Gisela Muschiol, *Famula Dei: Zur Liturgie in merowingischen Frauenklöstern* (Münster, 1994), 1–3.

miscomprehension or the purposeful silencing of female Christianities.[56]

This diversity of opinion owes, in part, to inconsistency in the sources and, in part, to variety in practice.[57] While there is no shortage of misogyny in early medieval texts, normative sources also encouraged women to participate in collective piety. In the late eighth century, Angilbert, the enterprising abbot of the monastery of St Riquier (Centula), drafted local lay people — men and women, adults and children, nobles and peasants — into processions around his abbey in Picardy.[58] Angilbert had women instructors train unlettered girls to sing Latin psalms in these processions, just as monastic schoolteachers trained the unlettered boys.[59] Women in the local communities were required to participate in these collective church rituals.

Here it is useful to turn to the third feature in early medieval ecclesiastical polemics against illicit religious crowds (in addition to their rusticity and their feminine involvement): the role of misplaced resources. Aldebert, the stigmatics of Uzès, the weather-wizards, Thiota and other focal points of collective misbehaviour were all said to have attracted spontaneous donations. The issue of misplaced resources helps explain why ecclesiastical writers like Agobard of Lyon waged such fierce 'campaigns against superstitions'.[60] Donations did not invalidate spirituality, but their unexpected misdirection upset the normal ecosystem of gathering, worship and resource management in Carolingian society.

[56] Lifshitz, *Religious Women*, 185–6.

[57] Compare Julia M. H. Smith, 'Women at the Tomb: Access to Relic Shrines in the Early Middle Ages', in Kathleen Mitchell and Ian N. Wood (eds.), *The World of Gregory of Tours* (Leiden, 2002), 179: 'there was no uniformity of women's experience' in access to relic shrines.

[58] Angilbert of Saint-Riquier, *Institutio de diversitate officiorum*, c. 9, ed. K. Hallinger, M. Wegener and H. Frank (Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum, i, Siegburg, 1963), 296. See Carol Heitz, 'Architecture et liturgie en France de l'époque carolingienne à l'an Mil', *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, i (1995), 58–9; Susan A. Rabe, *Faith, Art, and Politics at Saint-Riquier* (Philadelphia, 1995), 122–32.

[59] Angilbert, *Institutio*, c. 9, ed. Hallinger, Wegener and Frank, 298: 'Now, boys (*pueri*) from outside [of the monastery] and girls (*puellae*) without letters (*sine litteris*) should get assistance from *scholarii* [male instructors] and *geniciariae* [women instructors], so that they should be able to sing psalms and also understand what they have learned'. 'Without letters' probably refers to comprehension of Latin.

[60] Bressolles, *Doctrine et action politique d'Agobard*, 89, although he posits a different (though not mutually exclusive) motivation: 'Love of sane reason, horror at everything chimerical and false'.

The remainder of this article examines an illustrative case from the 840s which shows how crowds still threatened early medieval elites by behaving in ways that early medieval crowds were not supposed to behave.[61] The story comes from Agobard's successor as the archbishop of Lyon, Amolo of Lyon (r. 841–52), who is best known for a lengthy treatise against the Jews.[62] A letter written by Amolo is the sole source for these extraordinary events. That letter survives in one small ninth-century manuscript booklet, which contains only two texts: Amolo's letter and Agobard's earlier letter about Uzès (cited explicitly and appended because of its relevance).[63] Amolo's letter reveals how concerns about resources and social order together underpinned religious and gendered anxieties about crowds.

II

THE FLAILING WOMEN OF DIJON

Sometime in the early 840s, Archbishop Amolo of Lyon received disturbing news from the chorepiscopus (assistant bishop) of one of his four suffragan bishops.[64] Crowds, and women 'especially',

[61] Usually treated in passing: Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, 2013), 329; Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900* (Cambridge, 2001), 287 n. 14; Smith, 'The Problem of Female Sanctity', 35; Cécile Treffort, *L'Église carolingienne et la mort: Christianisme, rites funéraires et pratiques commémoratives* (Lyon, 1996), 165–7; Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, revised edn (Princeton, 1990), 28–9; Boshof, *Agobard*, 313–4. The first in-depth study is C. M. A. West, 'Unauthorised Miracles in Mid-Ninth-Century Dijon and the Carolingian Church Reforms', *Journal of Medieval History*, xxxvi (2010), whose conclusions I discuss below.

[62] Amolo [also spelled Amulo] of Lyon, *Liber de perfidia Iudaeorum*, ed. Cornelia Herbers-Rauhut (MGH, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, xxix, Wiesbaden, 2017); previously *PL*, cxvi, cols. 131–84. For this work, see Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs chrétiens latins du moyen âge sur les juifs et le judaïsme* (Paris, 1963), 195–200. Johannes Heil, 'Agobard, Amolo, das Kirchengut und die Juden von Lyon', *Francia*, xxv (1999), esp. 65–76, argues that Amolo's anti-Semitism is largely literary, but see Warren Pezé, 'Amalaire et la communauté juive de Lyon: À propos de l'antijudaïsme lyonnais à l'époque carolingienne', *Francia*, xl (2013).

[63] Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 717. Max Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 3 vols. (Munich, 1911–31), i, 389; West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 303 and n. 46; Bernhard Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts (mit Ausnahme der visigotischen)*, ed. Birgit Ebersperger, 3 vols. (Wiesbaden, 2014), iii, 10 (no. 3923): 'Frankreich, IX. Jh., ca. Mitte'.

[64] Amolo of Lyon, *Epistolae*, ep. 1, ed. E. Dümmler, 363–8. A new text and French translation of Amolo's letter also appears as an appendix to *Agobard de Lyon, Œuvres*,

(cont. on p. 18)

were congregating at St Bénigne, the major church of the city of Dijon, where they flailed as if struck by unseen blows and refused to leave the building. Their behaviour centred on mysterious new relics. These bones had been conveyed from Italy by two men claiming to be monks, although scandalously neither man could recall the name of the saint or martyr whose remains they had carried over the Alps.

The flailing persisted, drawing ever larger crowds to the church. The practice was said to be spreading to other parishes, and even to other dioceses in Amolo's sprawling see. These were the early 840s — years of civil war — when the new archbishop of Lyon had other matters to contend with. Yet Amolo felt it was 'our fraternal duty to come up with advice'.[65] That advice, in a letter sent between 841 and 844 to Bishop Theobald of Langres, Amolo's suffragan and Dijon's episcopal guardian, was to disperse the crowds, conceal the relics and condemn the 'vanity of novelties' which had seized Theobald's flock. Should the flailing continue, Amolo told Theobald, he was to flog the perpetrators.[66]

Amolo's letter was written, he tells us, about a year after the relics were brought to St Bénigne.[67] Despite Theobald's concerns about their authenticity, the 'bones' had been laid 'reverently' (Amolo does not say by whom) next to the body of Saint Benignus in Dijon in the church dedicated to him.[68] Around

(n. 64 cont.)
ed. Rubellin, 428–57, with an introduction by Jean-Paul Bouhot at 424–6 (proposing a single editorial correction at 425). As an archbishop (metropolitan bishop), Amolo held authority over the bishops of Autun, Langres, Chalon-sur-Saône and Mâcon, who were thus his suffragan bishops. Early medieval bishops, especially in large sees like Langres, frequently had assistant bishops called 'chorepiscopi' (the name is Greek: 'country bishop'). See Jörg Müller, 'Gedanken zum Institut der Chorbischöfe', in Wolfgang P. Müller and Mary E. Sommar (eds.), *Medieval Church Law and the Origins of the Western Legal Tradition: A Tribute to Kenneth Pennington* (Washington, DC, 2006), esp. 78–80; A. Schröder, 'Über die Chorbischöfe des 8. und 9. Jahrhunderts', *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie*, xv (1891); R. Kottje, 'Chorbischof (Westkirche)', in Robert Auty *et al.* (eds.), *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 10 vols. (Munich and Zürich, 1977–99), ii, 1884–6; H. Leclercq, 'Chorévêques', in Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq (eds.), *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 15 vols. (Paris, 1907–53), iii, pt 1, cols. 1423–53.

[65] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 1, ed. Dümmler, 363.

[66] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 8, ed. Dümmler, 367. The dating of the letter to between 841 and 844 is based on Amolo's accession (841) and the death (844) of Bartholomew of Narbonne, called 'still living' at c. 6, ed. Dümmler, 366. See L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, revised edn, 3 vols. (Paris, 1907–15), i, 305.

[67] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 1, ed. Dümmler, 363.

[68] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 2, ed. Dümmler, 364.

Lent, 'certain quasi miracles' began to take place, consisting of invisible 'blows and strikes',

> which seemed to cause miserable little women in that house of prayer suddenly to collapse and jerk about, just as if they were being beaten; yet nevertheless no wounds appear on any part of their bodies, and no traces of any sort of blow seem to be visible. By virtue of this momentous occurrence, a crowd of amazed and astonished people rushes to that place, with the following effect, as we have learned not only from that brother of yours [Theobald's chorepiscopus], whom you sent to me, but also from several other people: now three hundred or four hundred persons, or even more than this, are said to be there, and now they too in the manner I just described are collapsing and being jerked about, and, after a little while, when it seems that they have been cured and their senses have been restored, they utterly refuse to leave from that place. For as soon as they try to return to their households, at once they are struck by I know not what new blow, and are compelled to return to the church from which they had departed. Among them, they say that there are not only girls but also married women, young and old, both of greater status and of lesser status.[69]

Amolo had this news at second hand. He indicates that his knowledge is incomplete.[70] His source was Theobald's chorepiscopus, though he also mentions 'several other people' reporting the same thing.[71] It is obvious that the archbishop

[69] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 2–5, ed. Dümmler, 364–6. In the phrase 'trecente sive quadringente aut eo amplius personae' (c. 2, ed. Dümmler, 364), *personae* is a gender- and value-neutral noun (grammatically feminine). Amolo uses it to refer to males (ep. 1, c. 2, ed. Dümmler, 364: 'a tam vilibus personis', 'by such lowly persons', the two monks) and also in reference to Christ's 'divine person' (c. 8, ed. Dümmler, 367). Compare male and gender-neutral uses of *persona* in Amolo, *Liber de perfidia Iudaeorum*, c. 13, 14, 36, 47, 51, 53, 57, ed. Herbers-Rauhut, 22 (line 25), 24 (line 16), 70 (lines 7 and 25), 94 (lines 30 and 31, quoting Roman law), 108 (line 11), 112 (line 21, quoting Roman law), 118 (line 14, quoting conciliar law). Note also that the phrase 'ad domos suos' (c. 2, ed. Dümmler, 364) refers not just to physical houses, but households.

[70] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 3, ed. Dümmler, 364: 'Now, we waited a number of days so that . . . you might narrate to us by letter more accurately . . . But since you subsequently wrote nothing back, it seemed to us better that we should not delay our set duty of responding to your beloved self'.

[71] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 1, ed. Dümmler, 363: 'You have sent [this news] to us through that beloved brother, your chorepiscopus'; c. 2, p. 363: 'our aforesaid brother'; c. 2, p. 364: 'by that brother of ours, whom you sent'. The chorepiscopus goes unnamed in Amolo's letter, but it was probably one Ingelramnus, whose name we know from contemporary charters and later histories: Georges Chevrier, Maurice Chaume and Robert Folz (eds.), *Chartes et documents de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon: Prieurés et dépendances des origines à 1300*, 2 vols. (Dijon, 1943–86), i, 84, no. 51 (November 23, 840): 'domno Ingelranno episcopo atque abbate'; *Chronique de l'Abbaye de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon, suivie de la Chronique de Saint-Pierre de Bèze*, ed. E. Bougaud and Joseph Garnier (Dijon, 1875), 94–5. See also Pierre Gras, 'Le séjour à Dijon des évêques de Langres du V^{e} au IX^{e} siècle: Ses conséquences sur l'histoire de la ville', in *Recueil de travaux offert à M. Clovis Brunel*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1955), i, 552.

was biased against these 'quasi miracles', but Amolo also made clear that word of them had spread throughout the region. It would be strange for Amolo to devote so much attention to the sources of his knowledge, if the story were entirely fabricated.[72] Assuming the broad outlines of his description can be trusted, what can be made of this event?

Amolo had his own answer. Considering the 'order of events' as he had heard it, Amolo spelled out a story of how these events 'might have happened'. As is 'the custom in many places', he wrote, 'perhaps' the new relics were 'displayed to the rustic crowds (*populares turbae*) for veneration'. With 'Easter celebrations upon them', certain 'lowly and useless little people' (*viles et nequam homunculi*) seized their opportunity, 'whether prodded by necessity of hunger or goaded on by greed for wealth', to 'make up or show off (*fingere atque ostentare*) such blows and strikes and manias and restorations of health'. When the people (*populus*), 'deluded by superstitious opinion', began to bring gifts to these pseudo-afflicted, the fakers 'not only had no desire to leave that place, but pretended that, battered by some new blow or debility, they could not at all bring themselves to leave'.[73]

Traditionally, scholars have seen this incident at Dijon as one of 'the inevitable abuses and scandals' that accompanied the Carolingian expansion of the cult of relics.[74] The transfer of relics from one site to another attracted and even required crowds, which proved and publicized the validity of new relics.[75] Such crowds could be manipulated for profit, as Amolo suggests, and they could also be manipulated for the authority which relics and crowds conferred to a shrine, monastery or church. Charles West has argued that the 'community' of St Bénigne encouraged the new relic cult 'to gain a measure of autonomy' in the vacuum caused by the civil war among the Carolingians during the 840s.[76] West suggests that largely

[72] Compare his concern to verify the 'order of events': Amolo, ep. 1, c. 3, 4, ed. Dümmler, 364 ('ordinem huius rei'), 365 ('ipsius rei gestae ordo').

[73] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 4–5, ed. Dümmler, 365–6.

[74] Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 29.

[75] Hedwig Röckelein, *Reliquientranslationen nach Sachsen im 9. Jahrhundert: über Kommunikation, Mobilität und Öffentlichkeit im Frühmittelalter* (Stuttgart, 2002), 359–70.

[76] West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 302.

unspoken but influential Weberian ideal types, 'charisma' and 'routine', have distracted historians into overly systematic readings of cases like this one in terms of elite (rational) versus popular (irrational) religiosity.[77] In order to bring the discussion down to local power politics, West evokes Edward Shils's reframing of 'charisma' as 'awe-arousing centrality'.[78] The monks proposed or manipulated one source of 'awe-arousing centrality' in the relics they had received from Italy. Amolo countered, as we will see below, with the ordered liturgy of the parish system as the locus of the sacred.[79]

West's thoughtful conjecture is plausible. In the late 830s and 840s, tensions between the monks of St Bénigne and the bishops of Langres were high. Traditionally, bishops of Langres had been based at Dijon, where they had also served as abbots of St Bénigne.[80] But in the mid eighth century, the bishopric fell to a series of Bavarian nobles who ruled from afar.[81] Under absentee bishops, the monks acquired greater autonomy.[82] Later, local

[77] West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 306–10; on scholars who see late antique 'charismatic' sanctity as institutionalized by the Carolingian church see, for example, Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200–1000*, revised edn (Oxford, 2013), 435–62 and R. W. Southern, *Western Church and Society* (London, 1971), 173–4. Bressolles, *Doctrine et action politique d'Agobard*, 89–99 and Allen Cabaniss, *Agobard: A Ninth Century Ecclesiastic and Critic* (Chicago, 1941), 13–4, saw Agobard's attacks on superstition as Carolingian 'rationalism'. See criticism by Boshof, *Agobard*, 8–10, 60–1, 173.

[78] Edward Shils, 'Charisma, Order, and Status', in his *The Constitution of Society* (Chicago, 1972), 121–2. For a helpful assessment of Shils's charisma, see Clifford Geertz, 'Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power', in his *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York, 1983), esp. 122–3.

[79] West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 309–10.

[80] Gras, 'Le séjour à Dijon', 550–2. The monastery had been founded by Bishop Gregory of Langres.

[81] Otto Gerhard Oexle, *Forschungen zu monastischen und geistlichen Gemeinschaften im westfränkischen Bereich* (Munich, 1978), 163–9. See also Wilhelm Störmer, 'Bischöfe von Langres aus Alemannien und Bayern: Beobachtungen zur monastischen und politischen Geschichte im ostrheinischen Raum des 8. und frühen 9. Jahrhunderts', in his *Mittelalterliche Klöster und Stifte in Bayern und Franken: Aufsätze*, ed. Elizabeth Lukas-Götz, Ferdinand Kramer and Andreas Otto Weber (St. Ottilien, 2008).

[82] Oexle, *Forschungen*, 165–6. See H. Flammarion, 'Quartier canonial et croissance urbaine au Moyen Âge: L'exemple de la cité épiscopale de Langres', *Bulletin de la société historique et archéologique de Langres*, xxiv (2003), 112, for Langres's gradual return to significance. At Dijon, the local count played a larger role in the city by the ninth century: J. F. Böhmer *et al.*, *Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter den Karolingern*, 3rd edn (Regesta Imperii, i, Hildesheim, 1966), no. 800, pp. 317–8.

tradition remembered that in the ninth century 'monastic order was almost in ruin'.[83] The situation changed with Theobald's predecessor Alberic (d. 838).[84] Alberic was later remembered for restoring 'order' to St Bénigne, but also for overseeing 'shake-ups and seizures of land'.[85] Alberic, from Langres, transferred personnel across his see, moving monks at St Bénigne to Bèze (thirty km north-east of Dijon) and to St Mammès in Langres (seventy km away).[86] Alberic seems to have wanted to impose neat distinctions between monastic and canonical identities not previously used in Dijon.[87]

Alberic's 'muscular direct management' may have been seen as a threat by the community of St Bénigne.[88] After Alberic's death in 838, promoting new relics was, West argues, a way to fight back. The see had a new, untested bishop, who spent his days in Langres, not Dijon.[89] After 841, Lyon also had a new archbishop in Amolo. Secular power in the region was unsettled too; as civil war raged, it remained to be seen which Carolingian king would triumph in Dijon.[90] The timing was right for the monks of St Bénigne. If this interpretation is correct, the monks

[83] *Chronique de l'Abbaye de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon*, ed. Bougaud and Garnier, 91–2: 'iam pene dilapso monastico ordine'. This is, however, a common topos of monastic histories. See Steven Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process: Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900–1100* (Ithaca, 2013), 30.

[84] Josef Semmler, 'Zu den bayrisch-westfränkischen Beziehungen in karolingischer Zeit', *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte*, xxix (1966), 388–91; Boshof, *Agobard*, 294. Alberic was an imperial *missus* in 825, a reformer and an active local figure. In 838, the deacon and polemicist Florus of Lyon turned to him (among others) to restore the exiled Agobard and to remove his interim replacement Amalarius: Florus of Lyon, *Epistola ad Drogonem, Heti, Aldricum, Albericum et Hrabanum*, in *Flori Lugdunensis Opera Polemica*, ed. K. Zechiel-Eckes and E. Frauenknecht (CCCM, cclx, Turnhout, 2014), 49–61. Compare Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, *Florus von Lyon als Kirchenpolitiker und Publizist* (Stuttgart, 1999), 52.

[85] *Chronique de l'Abbaye de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon*, ed. Bougaud and Garnier, 92: 'plurime commutationes vel coemptiones terrarum'.

[86] Oexle, *Forschungen*, 163–83.

[87] Semmler, 'Zu den bayrisch-westfränkischen Beziehungen', esp. 389–90. Semmler saw Alberic as a follower of Benedict of Aniane, but Oexle, *Forschungen*, 173–4, counters that there is little evidence of this, pointing to Chrodegang of Metz and Leidrad of Lyon as likelier reforming models. For Carolingian ideals about the separation of religious professions, see esp. Josef Semmler, 'Monachus – clericus – canonicus', in Sönke Lorenz and Thomas Zotz (eds.), *Frühformen von Stiftskirchen in Europa: Funktion und Wandel religiöser Gemeinschaften vom 6. bis zum Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Leinfelden-Echterdingen, 2005).

[88] West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 301. See also Oexle, *Forschungen*, 181–2.

[89] Gras, 'Le séjour à Dijon', 552.

[90] Duchesne, *Fastes*, ii, 156–7.

would have had to make their bid for authority under the nose of an episcopal agent. In the 840s, while it is true that Bishop Theobald held only notional authority over St Bénigne, the monastery's acting abbot was Theobald's chorepiscopus Ingelramnus, who informed Amolo about the relics and the crowds.[91] Nevertheless, it is possible to imagine that a faction of monks hoped to encourage crowds precisely in order to force their abbot's hand.

If the monks had their reasons, what inspired the crowds?[92] It is still necessary to explain the 'three hundred or even four hundred' persons — astonishing figures for ninth-century Dijon (it is possible that Amolo or his informant was exaggerating) — who packed into St Bénigne and refused to leave. Gatherings even an order of magnitude smaller would have made a strong impression on an early medieval city. And what about the crowds that 'mimicked' this behaviour as far away as Saulieu, in a separate diocese some seventy-five km to the west?[93] They were unlikely to have been part of a monastic power play at Dijon. Unfortunately, the patchy evidence for ninth-century Dijon makes it difficult to reconstruct the faces of the crowd.[94] The fact that women were key participants adds another complication: the reduction of

[91] *Chronique de l'Abbaye de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon*, ed. Bougaud and Garnier, 94: 'In that time, upon the death of Chorepiscopus Herlebert, who had held the role of pastor in that place, Ingelramnus succeeded him in the care of souls, carrying out his office in ecclesiastical matters'. See also n. 71 above. Charters preserved in the St Bénigne cartulary acknowledge that Theobald presided as bishop over St Bénigne, but they never describe Theobald as abbot, *pace* Gras, 'Le séjour à Dijon', 552. While it is true that Theobald notionally presided in these cases, he was always styled 'bishop' and not 'abbot'. *Chartes et documents de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon*, ed. Chevrier, Chaume and Folz, i, 86–7, no. 54: 'venerabilem virum Teutbaldum episcopum'; 87, no. 55: 'ubi venerabilis vir domnus Teutbaldus preesse videtur episcopus'; 90, no. 58: 'domni Tedbaldi episcopi'; 92, no. 59: 'domno Teotbaldo episcopo'; 94–5, no. 62: 'domno Teutbaldo episcopo'; 98, no. 66: 'domino Teudbaldo pontifici'.

[92] West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 298, conjectures that 'the arrival of relics provided an opportunity for a local population justifiably nervous about what the Frankish civil war would mean for them to express, and perhaps to alleviate, that nervousness'.

[93] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 3, ed. Dümmler, 364.

[94] For this 'obscure period' in Dijon's history, see Pierre Gras, 'Les temps obscurs (VI^{e}–XI^{e} siècles)', in Pierre Gras (ed.), *Histoire de Dijon* (Toulouse, 1981). See also Jean-Charles Picard, 'Dijon', in Brigitte Beaujard *et al.* (eds.), *Topographie chrétienne des cités de la Gaule des origines au milieu du VII^{e} siècle*, vol. 4: *Province ecclésiastique de Lyon (Ludgunensis Prima)* (Paris, 1986).

female subjects to topoi through what Jacques Dalarun called 'the clerical gaze'.[95] Yet some informed conjectures are possible.

The popular draw of new relics is not in itself surprising. Relics held a powerful appeal for early medieval men and women.[96] Relics were, in a common phrase, 'more precious than treasure', because they aided against sickness, famine, trouble and war.[97] They were not felt to be mute repositories of sanctity, but saints acting on earth. New relics occasioned bursts of local giving. Donations to churches and monasteries were made to the saints themselves; bishops and abbots merely acted on their behalf. Churchmen encouraged lay people to visit shrines, churches and monasteries where relics were kept. Sermons and saints' lives, which were read in the context of the saints' feast days, praised crowds who 'gave honour' to God by witnessing the miracles of his saints. The whole fourth book of Einhard's influential *Translatio Marcellini et Petri*, recounting his pious theft and transfer of relics from Rome to what is now Germany in 830, depicts crowd upon crowd observing miracles of healing and giving alms in response.[98]

The physical spaces of the cult of relics were also designed to accommodate crowds. Large monasteries built guesthouses for both distinguished lay visitors and the sick and poor.[99] The ninth-century Plan of St Gall depicted an idealized monastery's gate as open 'to all crowds'.[100] The monks of St Germain in Auxerre

[95] Jacques Dalarun, 'The Clerical Gaze', in Christiane Klapisch-Zuber (ed.), *A History of Women in the West: II Silences of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1994).

[96] Heinrich Fichtenau, 'Zum Reliquienwesen des früheren Mittelalters', in his *Beiträge zur Mediävistik: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1975), i, 108–44, is fundamental. See also Geary, *Furta Sacra*, 28–43; Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?*, 27–56; and Edina Bozóky, *La politique des reliques de Constantin à Saint Louis: Protection collective et légitimation du pouvoir* (Paris, 2006), esp. 171–202. For the early history and logic of saints' cults, see Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les origines du culte des martyrs*, 2nd revised edn (Brussels, 1933).

[97] Einhard, *Translatio Marcellini et Petri*, 1.10, ed. Waitz, 243; *Miracula S. Genesii* (BHL 3314), c. 2, ed. W. Wattenbach, 'Die Übertragung der Reliquien des h. Genesius nach Schienen', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, xxiv (1872), 10: 'cum thesauro pretioso'.

[98] Einhard, *Translatio Marcellini et Petri*, 4, ed. Waitz, 256–64; compare 2.4, p. 247, where a spontaneous crowd is 'something of a miracle' (*quid miraculi*).

[99] Matthias Untermann, 'Kirchenfamilien, Grossklöster, Cellae: Schweizer Klöster im karolingischen Umfeld', in Markus Riek, Jürg Goll and Georges Descœudres (eds.), *Die Zeit Karls des Grossen in der Schweiz* (Zurich, 2013), 49.

[100] Horn and Born, *The Plan of St. Gall*, iii, 17: 'omnibus turbis'.

built a museum-like crypt designed to make visiting the monastery's relics easier.[101] New shrines might even be built at strategic locations for crowds.[102] Einhard moved the remains of Petrus and Marcellinus from an isolated forest village, Michelstadt, to a busy milling site on the Main River called Mulinheim ('Mill-Town'), soon renamed Seligenstadt, 'Saint-City'.[103]

Female initiatives were not discouraged. One saint's life praises a rich lay woman for seeking out a distant shrine for largess because she knew that needy crowds gathered there.[104] A miracle collection written around 875 describes a transfer of saints' relics to the monastery of Fleury, attracting 'no small crowd of men and women'. When the relics were brought into the monastery, the women in the crowd were left standing outside, 'since, by ancient authority, women (*feminae*) were prohibited from having any entry whatsoever beyond the monastery's outermost doors'.[105] The women loudly begged to be allowed in, until certain noblemen (*nobiliores*), 'incited by this great clamour', persuaded the monks temporarily to relocate the relics to a tent (*tentorium*) outside the monastery. At first, this might seem to be an admonitory tale, but in fact the women's actions had fortunate results. For 'multitudes of people (*multitudines plebium*), not only from the surrounding area, but from far off, assembled at that place'.[106] They experienced miraculous cures: the blind, the weak, the lame, the demon-infested and those with incurable tumours were all healed.[107]

[101] Christian Sapin (ed.), *Archéologie et architecture d'un site monastique, V^e–XX^e siècles: 10 ans de recherches à l'abbaye Saint-Germain d'Auxerre* (Auxerre, 2000), 237–56 and plates VIII–X.

[102] Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000* (Cambridge, 2000), 29.

[103] Einhard, *Translatio Marcellini et Petri*, 1.11–14, ed. Waitz, 244–5. Another German town, Xanten, was also named after its saints (*Sanctos super Rhenum*, 'Saints on the Rhine'): Friedrich Wilhelm Oediger, 'Analecta Xantensia II: Das älteste Zeugnis für den Namen Xanten (Sanctos super Rhenum): Zur Datierung eines Briefes aus der Karolingerzeit', in his *Vom Leben am Niederrhein: Aufsätze aus dem Bereich des alten Erzbistums Köln* (Düsseldorf, 1973).

[104] Rimbert, *Vita Anskarii* (BHL 544–5), c. 20, ed. G. Waitz (MGH, SRG, lv, Hanover, 1884), 45.

[105] Adrevald, *Miracula Benedicti* (BHL 1123–4), 1.28, in *Les miracles de saint Benoit*, ed. E. de Certain (Société de l'histoire de France, xcvi, Paris, 1858), 64.

[106] Adrevald, *Miracula Benedicti*, 1.28, ed. de Certain, 64–5.

[107] Adrevald, *Miracula Benedicti*, 1.28, ed. de Certain, 65.

Ninth-century texts even urged the faithful against neglecting new relics. When the relics of Genesius were brought from Jerusalem to Schienen on Lake Constance early in the ninth century, three local peasants (*rustici*) debated whether to trek to visit them:

> "Now where," asked one of them, "should we attend a church gathering tomorrow, for it'll be a Sunday?" "Why don't we look into that place where everybody is rushing in droves from all sides: the nearby hill," proposed the second, "why don't we also visit, with similar devotion, the relics recently brought there?" But the third peasant, assuming that a closer church would be easier to get to, quoted a vulgar proverb: "Who travels on a river to seek out water?" The retribution that followed showed how perversely he reasoned. For at once he collapsed like a paralytic, all of the joints of his limbs going slack . . . So the next morning he was placed on a cart and was carried to that very church where he had refused to go the day before, and there, to the great glory of Christ, through the intercession of the saints he recovered his previous health. Who could doubt that this was done for the example of others?[108]

Such examples, incorporated into sermons and pastoral instruction, help to explain why relics attracted 'everybody rushing in droves from all sides'. The risks of ignoring relics were as great as the benefits of visiting them.

Yet Archbishop Amolo was not disturbed because crowds were assembling at the new relics in the church of St Bénigne. He was alarmed, instead, by the invisible 'blows and strikes' the women experienced and by their refusal to leave the church. Their behaviour was also something of a personal affront. The institutions affected by the unruly crowds all involved saints with a connection to the archbishopric of Lyon. Not only Benignus, but also the three saints worshipped at Saulieu in the Autun diocese (Andochius, Tyrsus and Felix), had been sent forth to their martyrdoms by Irenaeus, the saint-patron of Lyon.[109]

[108] *Miracula S. Genesii*, c. 3, ed. Wattenbach, 13. For the 'vulgar proverb', see Samuel Singer (ed.), *Thesaurus Proverbiorum Medii Aevi: Lexikon der Sprichwörter des romanisch-germanischen Mittelalters*, 13 vols. (Berlin, 1995–2001) xii, 382–3, no. 16.2, 'Wasser': 'Wasser in einen Fluss tragen'.

[109] At least, in the entirely invented local hagiographical tradition: Joseph van der Straeten, 'Les actes des martyrs d'Aurélien en Bourgogne: Le texte de Farfa', *Analecta Bollandiana*, lxxix (1961); Joseph van der Straeten, 'Actes des martyrs d'Aurélien en Gaule', *Analecta Bollandiana*, lxxx (1962). See Duchesne, *Fastes*, i, 51–9, for discussion of this family of texts. See also Ian Wood, 'Constructing Cults in Early Medieval France: Local Saints and Churches in Burgundy and the Auvergne 400–1000', in Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), esp. 159–64; Ian Wood, 'Topographies of Holy Power in Sixth-Century Gaul', in Mayke de Jong and Frans Theuws (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden, 2001), 142–5.

By mentioning these saints, Amolo signalled his own responsibility for their living flocks.[110]

What inspired the flailing in St Bénigne? Was this the ninth-century equivalent of the trances or possessions experienced by people in many societies?[111] Was ecstatic religiosity an answer to social dislocation, as historians have argued for similar behaviours in other historical settings?[112] It is difficult to say how much political disruption affected localities in the Carolingian period, but the 840s were certainly a time of dislocation in the region around Dijon. These were years of civil war between the grandsons of Charlemagne: Lothar, Louis the German and Charles the Bald.[113] Burgundy was one of the conflict's theatres. The battle of Fontenoy on June 25, 841 took place about 150 km to the west of Dijon. King Charles was with Amolo in Autun in January 842.[114] Charles' brother and foe Lothar passed through Chalon-sur-Saône, Troyes and Lyon later the same year.[115] Royal armies seized resources, pressed men into service and attacked local populaces.[116] At the same time, Viking invaders used the hostilities of the Franks as a pretext for attack. An eleventh-century Dijon chronicle remembered that the 'horrific internecine wars' of the

[110] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 3, ed. Dümmler, 364: 'at the church in which the holy martyrs Andochius, Tyrsus, and Felix are entombed'. Abigail Firey, *A Contrite Heart: Prosecution and Redemption in the Carolingian Empire* (Leiden, 2009), 138, notes that both Amolo and Agobard 'have a noticeable preference for citing authors with local associations, such as . . . Irenaeus'.

[111] For a useful review of approaches to possession, see Mary Keller, *The Hammer and the Flute: Women, Power, and Spirit Possession* (Baltimore, 2002), 5–17. See also the essays in Bettina E. Schmidt and Lucy Huskinson (eds.), *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London, 2010).

[112] Compare David Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York, 1994), 361–74, for one example of ecstatic religious behaviour interpreted as anomie.

[113] For the politics, see Janet L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), 105–59; Eric J. Goldberg, *Struggle for Empire: Kingship and Conflict under Louis the German, 817–876* (Ithaca, 2006), 86–116. For the cultural manifestations of anxiety over civil war, see Paul Edward Dutton, *The Politics of Dreaming in the Carolingian Empire* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1994), 113–56.

[114] Lupus of Ferrières, ep. 26, ed. Léon Levillain, *Loup de Ferrières: Correspondance*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1927), i, 122–8, at 124; Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Konzilien der karolingischen Teilreiche 843–859* (MGH, Conc., iii, Hanover, 1984), 45–6. See also Wilfried Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), 244.

[115] *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat, Vieilliard and Clémencet, s.a. 842, p. 41.

[116] For example, *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat, Vieilliard and Clémencet, s.a. 841, pp. 39–40.

Carolingians permitted an 'innumerable multitude' of barbarians to enter Francia. 'Everywhere there was slaughter of Christians, depredations, raids, burnings'.[117]

How might this disorder (the letter cannot be dated more accurately than between 841 and 844) have caused 'a multitude of hapless folk, and especially women' to behave so strangely in front of new relics?[118] We ought to take seriously Amolo's suggestion that the central figures in this drama — he calls them 'lowly and useless little people' (*viles et nequam homunculi*), which evokes people at the social margin — may have been 'prodded by necessity of hunger'.[119] Parish churches were expected to meet physical needs of 'their own poor', but war and invasion affected their power to play this social role.[120] Famines which struck Francia across the 830s and 840s were exacerbated by administrative disruption.[121] One ninth-century historian described how 'the greater part' of a bumper crop was lost 'due to people's sins'.[122] The disruption of tithes, likely when sees like Lyon were split among warring kings, probably worsened the situation. Half a century earlier, Charlemagne had responded to famine by insisting upon the prompt payment of church tithes, because tithes were distributed to the poor of the church.[123]

[117] *Chronique de l'Abbaye de Saint-Bénigne de Dijon*, ed. Bougaud and Garnier, 93–4. This passage builds on Ermentarius, *Miracula Filiberti* (BHL 6807), book 2, preface, ed. René Poupardin, *Monuments de l'Histoire des Abbayes de Saint-Philibert* (Paris, 1905), 60–1.

[118] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 7, ed. Dümmler, 366.

[119] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 4, ed. Dümmler, 366.

[120] 'Synod of Tours' (567), c. 5, in *Concilia Galliae a. 511–a. 695*, ed. C. de Clercq (Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina (hereafter CCSL), cxlviii/A, Turnhout, 1963), 178; Egon Boshof, 'Armenfürsorge im Frühmittelalter: *Xenodochium*, *Matricula*, *Hospitale Pauperum*', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, lxxi (1984), 156.

[121] *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat, Vieilliard and Clémencet, s.a. 838, pp. 29–30; s.a. 843, p. 44. Fritz Curschmann, *Hungersnöte im Mittelalter: Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte des 8. bis 13. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1900), 95; Ferdinand Lot and Louis Halphen, *Le règne de Charles le Chauve (840–877)* (Paris, 1909), 84.

[122] *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat, Vieilliard and Clémencet, s.a. 838, pp. 29–30. Compare the earlier case (from 828 or 829) of a famine (*fames*) caused by the burning of food stores: Frothar of Toul, ep. 11, ed. Michel Parisse, *La correspondance d'un évêque carolingien: Frothaire de Toul (ca. 813–847)* (Paris, 1998), 112. Amartya Sen, 'Ingredients of Famine Analysis: Availability and Entitlements', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, xcvi (1981), esp. 459–62, observed that poor distribution more than food shortage leads to famine.

[123] 'Council of Frankfurt' (June 794), c. 25, ed. Alfred Boretius (MGH, Capit., i, Hanover, 1883), no. 28, p. 76; Adriaan Verhulst, 'Karolingische Agrarpolitik: Das *Capitulare de villis* und die Hungersnöte von 792/93 und 805/06', *Zeitschrift für*

(cont. on p. 29)

Beggars and the needy knew that popular shrines were a good place to seek out alms.[124] A set of curious references to feasts and drinking parties in the churches where the flailing took place speaks obliquely to another way these gatherings may have supplied 'needs of hunger'.[125] For Amolo, drinking and feasting in church, particularly during Lent, betokened a serious breakdown in spiritual order.[126] Amolo's description of food and drink may simply reflect topoi of clerical misbehaviour, but perhaps the charity cook-outs practiced by modern American churches offer a comparison. It is possible that the complicit churchmen ('some in the holy places and basilicas of the holy martyrs') in Amolo's see were not only acting 'for the sake of filthy lucre' and 'in order to fill their coffers and money-bags', but also from charitable motivations.[127] Given the ninth-century cultural imperatives for assembling at the site of miracle-working relics, the behaviour of the crowds of onlookers was only to be expected.

That still leaves the ecstatic flailing unexplained. Are the 'blows and strikes and manias and restorations of health' at the heart of these events instances of those 'outbursts of mass hysteria' which, to quote George Rudé, are 'fascinating material for the student of crowd psychology, but . . . of only casual interest to the historian'?[128] Is ecstatic religious behaviour incommensurate with the 'dogmatic secularism' of the historical discipline?[129]

(n. 123 cont.)
Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie, xiii (1965), 186. See also Timothy P. Newfield, 'The Contours, Frequency and Causation of Subsistence Crises in Carolingian Europe (750–950 CE)', in Pere Benito i Monclús (ed.), *Crisis alimentarias en la Edad Media: Modelos, explicaciones, y representaciones* (Lleida, 2013), 148–50, 156, 169–71, for the natural and environmental causes of these food shortages.

124 Heinrich Fichtenau, *The Carolingian Empire*, trans. Peter Munz (Oxford, 1968), 153–5.

125 Amolo, ep. 1, c. 5, ed. Dümmler, 366.

126 On illicit gatherings and drinking, see Janet L. Nelson, 'Peers in the Early Middle Ages', in her *Courts, Elites, and Gendered Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 2007), Essay VI, 37–8.

127 Amolo, ep. 1, c. 5, ed. Dümmler, 366: 'turpis lucri gratia' (Titus 1:7).

128 Rudé, *The Crowd in History*, 4.

129 See Luke Clossey *et al.*, 'The Unbelieved and Historians, Part I: A Challenge', *History Compass*, xiv (2016) and 'The Unbelieved and Historians, Part II: Proposals and Solutions', *History Compass*, xv (2017), building on Dipesh Chakrabarty's insight in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000), 104, that historical explanations 'cannot be based on a relationship that allows the divine or the supernatural a direct hand in the affairs of the world'. See also Steven Justice, 'Did the Middle Ages Believe in Their Miracles?', *Representations*,
(cont. on p. 30)

Natalie Davis, in her celebrated study of violent sixteenth-century French crowds 'set on religious goals', like those of the St Bartholomew Day's Massacre (1572), argued that Rudé excluded such crowds too eagerly.[130] While such crowds may appear exceptional, irrational events, they often reprise norms in abeyance. Thus, the crowds in sixteenth-century France played out clerical or magisterial roles which political crisis had interrupted.[131]

Even with the limitations of ninth-century evidence, it may be possible to glimpse women and men whose behaviour was not merely manipulated or hysterical, but shaped by the values and norms of the society in which they lived. The violent nature of the 'miracles' at Dijon is arresting given the Lenten timing.[132] Sermons reminded laymen that their struggles — from bad weather to war to invasion to pests — were the result of sins which had to be purged. The new relics inspired physical actions which bore similarities to monastic corporal penance.[133] Theobald's successor as bishop of Langres took pains to reorganize the practice of collective penance in his episcopal see.[134]

In other words, the behaviour of the crowds at Dijon may have been unusual, but it is comprehensible. Gift-giving was a regularized and indeed heavily encouraged reaction to new relics. Normative texts recounted in church on holy days encouraged assembly and largess, and warned of the consequences of spurning relics. At the same time, in a period of military disruption, the regular flow of resources through tithes and church gatherings may have been interrupted. With a largely

(n. 129 cont.)
ciii (2008), 10–11, for the tendency of medievalists to offer functionalist explanations to medieval miracle stories while 'bracketing' the truth-content of those stories, leading to what Justice calls 'an idiot deadpan' (11).

130 Davis, 'Rites of Violence', 52.

131 Davis, 'Rites of Violence', 65.

132 Amolo, ep. 1, c. 4–5, ed. Dümmler, 365–6.

133 Columbanus, *Regula Coenobialis*, c. 1–2, 4, 5, 7–9, 15, in *Sancti Columbani Opera*, ed. G. S. M. Walker (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, ii, Dublin, 1957; repr. 1970), 146, 148–50, 152, 154, 164, for the public blows (*percussiones*) used by Columbanian monks to punish transgressions. See Rob Meens, *Penance in Medieval Europe, 600–1200* (Cambridge, 2014), 54–5.

134 Robert Folz, 'La pénitence publique au IX^{e} siècle d'après les canons de l'évêque Isaac de Langres', in *L'encadrement religieux des fidèles au Moyen-Age et jusqu'au Concile de Trente* (Paris, 1985).

absent bishop, the city of Dijon may have also faced a spiritual crisis. The instigators, like the women who raised a 'great clamour' outside the gate of Fleury, may well have been women acting on their own initiative. This does not rule out either that there were fakers among the convulsionaries, or that local religious leaders used the crowds to collect extra donations. Yet the 'three hundred or four hundred people' who crowded into St Bénigne probably acted in good faith.

In this sense, the crowds of Dijon may be an instance of what two anthropologists of irregular migrant settlements (*colonias*) on the US-Mexico border call 'slantwise' behaviour.[135] The power relations between migrant settlements and government agents, they argue, do not sit easily on an 'axis' of domination and resistance. For when residents of *colonias* build homes without permits or construct identities which confound census takers, they do not intend to resist state power. Instead, they act 'simply to make the best of the limited resources and services available to them'.[136] Yet from the perspective of a dominant or elite group, this 'slantwise' behaviour is legible as resistance. That is because it challenges core tenets of what James C. Scott calls the 'public transcript', the account of society given by its 'dominant elites'.[137]

III

'AND ESPECIALLY WOMEN': THE ARCHBISHOP'S TRANSCRIPT

This dynamic helps to explain Amolo's reaction. For the illicit monastic autonomy highlighted by Charles West was not Amolo's only target. Amolo did censure 'some in the holy places and basilicas', as well as the 'lowly and useless little people' who were flailing. He addressed both groups by instructing Theobald to hide the mysterious relics 'far from holy sites and any busy place', while forbidding the gatherings.[138] Obstinate convulsionaries were to be flogged.[139] But the bulk of Amolo's

[135] Campbell and Heyman, 'Slantwise', 4–5.

[136] Campbell and Heyman, 'Slantwise', 11.

[137] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (London, 1990), 18. See also Michael Hanchard, *Party/Politics: Horizons in Black Political Thought* (Oxford, 2006), 25–67.

[138] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 3 (hiding the relics), c. 7 (forbidding the gatherings), ed. Dümmler, 364, 366.

[139] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 8, ed. Dümmler, 367.

letter is an exhortation aimed at Theobald's misguided flock: they were his chief focus.[140]

Here West's reading of Amolo's letter is helpful in capturing the archbishop's ambitions. West argues that Amolo hoped to institutionalize 'awe-arousing centrality' by highlighting the power of what Amolo called ecclesiastical *institutio* ('organization'): the regular churchgoing which characterized the daily life of parishes, as opposed to the 'vanity of novelties'. In this way, Amolo hoped 'to guarantee and to disseminate the holy into every rural community', not just in places with new relics.[141]

This is largely compelling. What is still missing from this story about duelling charismas, however, is the resources that underpinned them. Amolo's references to 'filthy lucre' may be primarily delegitimizing.[142] Yet early medieval ecclesiastical, as well as secular, organization depended on predictable gatherings for revenues as well as legitimacy. Both religious and secular elites, without Roman tools of resource extraction, relied on regular gatherings for pastoral care, justice and taxation. Reduced to more decentralized forms of control and resource exchange than in Antiquity, governance in the early Middle Ages depended upon the regular assembly and ritual manipulation of gatherings. This is one reason peasants owed dues and services to their ecclesiastical lords on festival days.[143] It is reflected in the telling polysemy of words like *populus*: the *populus* ('crowd') you assembled was the *populus* ('populace') you ruled.[144] The great danger posed to early medieval elites by unregulated assembly — even if the danger was 'slantwise' — was that it destroyed this delicate balance.

At the heart of Amolo's corrective to disordering crowds is the notion of propriety. People must not think that one shrine is more

[140] Esp. Amolo, ep. 1, c. 7, ed. Dümmler, 366–7, discussed further below.

[141] West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 310.

[142] West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 303.

[143] Harry Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*, ed. Hans-Walter Klewitz, revised edn, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1958), ii, 404–5; see Arno Borst, *Die karolingische Kalenderreform* (Hanover, 1996), 238–41, for attempts to coincide agricultural time with liturgical time. See also Dmitri Starostine, '. . . *In Die Festivitatis*: Gift-Giving, Power and the Calendar in the Carolingian Kingdoms', *Early Medieval Europe*, xiv (2006), 478.

[144] See M. Ottink, 'populus', *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, 11 vols. (Leipzig, 1900–), x, pt 1, pp. 2713–36, line 54.

efficacious than another and flock there in neglect of their own churches.[145] Each *plebs*, each 'congregation', had to cleave to its own parish.[146] The crowds of St Bénigne threatened propriety by dissolving important boundaries between male and female, young and old, rich and poor, stranger and neighbour, parish and parish.[147] Christians must assemble at *their own* churches, with *their own* priests, at *their own* sites; nor could women be kept from *their own* homes.[148] If 'deluded or deluding people' were truly seized by devilish power, let them be dealt with 'in their own places by their own priests', guided by their own relatives and friends, 'and not hounded after foolishly by mobs and tumults of people'.[149]

Amolo here referred Theobald to his predecessor Agobard's letter on the Uzès crowds, which he had appended to his own missive in the booklet he sent to Theobald.[150] Agobard had there stressed the chaotic misdirection of gifts and oblations at Uzès:

> People of both sexes and various ages offer up certain gifts at the site or, as you tell me, multiple sites, for now it seems this is also going on elsewhere. They offer whatever gifts each one of them can, either in gold and silver or in livestock, or in whatever other kind; in this, they are counselled by

[145] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. Dümmler, 367–8.

[146] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 7, ed. Dümmler, 366–7. See Treffort, *L'Église carolingienne et la mort*, 166.

[147] Compare Elias Canetti, *Masse und Macht* (Düsseldorf, 1978), 14–16. For Canetti, the definitive moment of the formation of any crowd is an 'Entladung' (discharge) which consists in the elimination of distinctions.

[148] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 2, ed. Dümmler, 364: 'ad domos *suas*'; c. 5, 365: 'ad domos eorundem parentum *suorum*', 'in *suis* sanctuariis', 'ad virorum *suorum* domos' and throughout in c. 7, 366: 'a sacerdote *suo*'; 367: 'decimas et primitias *suas*', 'filios *suos*', 'vota et oblationes *suas*', 'orationes et supplicationes *suas*', 'in istiusmodi *suis* et proximi salubribus utilitatibus', etc.

[149] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. Dümmler, 368: 'non populorum turbis ac tumultibus inaniter prosequi'.

[150] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 9, ed. Dümmler, 368: 'We have also sent to you a copy of the letter of our aforementioned pious father and patron to the recently mentioned bishop of Narbonne, so that if anyone should wish to know about cases of this nature in greater detail and depth, he might be informed more fully and profoundly by reading it'. The manuscript witness, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 717, contains both letters: first Amolo's (fols. 1^{r}–5^{r}) and then Agobard's (fols. 5^{r}–8^{r}). West, 'Unauthorised Miracles', 304, argues that this manuscript is an 'original' ninth-century letter, but van Acker is probably more correct to believe that it was a copy of Amolo's original missive, albeit in the same format: introduction, ed. van Acker, lv. See also Shane Bobrycki, 'An Early Medieval Epistolary *Libellus* and the Question of Originality: Paris, Bibliothèque De l'Arsenal, MS. 717', *Scriptorium*, 71 (2017), 153–73.

> no man's urging, by no reason, but rather they are utterly terrorized by irrational fear.[151]

Amolo too worried that clerical or monastic officials were using fear 'to fill their coffers and money-bags'.[152] Worse still: ties created by grants of land, money or livestock to the saints could lead to enduring bonds of allegiance between lay communities and religious institutions, and thus to financial atrophy for neglected parish churches.

Unregulated crowds, by neglecting their own home churches to assemble before novelties, threatened the flow of resources — tithes especially — upon which episcopal administration was built.[153] By the mid ninth century, the ecclesiastical tithe had been established and normalized in Francia, even as the parish system was slowly coming into effect.[154] Carolingian legislation had strengthened the trinity of baptism, tithe and parish, although the system remained fragile.[155] Across the Carolingian world, the tithe was commonly understood as payment for pastoral care, especially baptism.[156] One paid one's tithes at one's 'own' church.[157] Paying tithes to a religious institution acknowledged not only an institutional but also a spatial commitment, and this glue held the parish system together.[158]

[151] Agobard, *De quorundam inlusione signorum*, c. 1, ed. van Acker, 237. See Boshof, *Agobard*, 177, for the language of 'unreasoning fear'. Compare the similar language in the case of Thiota: *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Kurze, s.a. 847, p. 37: 'timore perculsi'.

[152] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 5, ed. Dümmler, 366. See McCormick, *Origins*, 287 n. 14: 'Amulo manifestly considers this a case of fraud for profit'.

[153] Giles Constable, *Monastic Tithes from Their Origins to the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1964), 36 and 43–4 for the usual division of tithes among bishop, clergy, buildings and the poor.

[154] Paul Viard, *Histoire de la dîme ecclésiastique, principalement en France jusqu'au Décret de Gratien* (Dijon, 1909), esp. 87–148; H. Leclercq, 'Dîme', in Cabrol and Leclercq (eds.), *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, iv, pt 1, esp. cols. 1001–3.

[155] See Josef Semmler, 'Zehntgebot und Pfarrtermination in karolingischer Zeit', in Hubert Mordek (ed.), *Aus Kirche und Reich: Studien zu Theologie, Politik und Recht im Mittelalter: Festschrift für Friedrich Kempf* (Sigmaringen, 1983), esp. 41. See also John Eldevik, *Episcopal Power and Ecclesiastical Reform in the German Empire: Tithes, Lordship and Community, 950–1150* (Cambridge, 2012), 35–53.

[156] Constable, *Monastic Tithes*, 36–7: 'a parochial revenue given almost in return for the sacraments'.

[157] Jean-Pierre Devroey, 'L'introduction de la dîme obligatoire en Occident: Entre espaces ecclésiaux et territoires seigneuriaux à l'époque carolingienne', in Michel Lauwers (ed.), *La dîme, l'église et la société féodale* (Turnhout, 2012), 105–6.

[158] For the parish system's development, see Gabriel Fournier, 'La mise en place du cadre paroissial et l'évolution du peuplement', in *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo* (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di

(cont. on p. 35)

This quid pro quo understanding was controversial. Some churchmen condemned the notion that the tithe was a payment for pastoral care, and the 909 council of Trosly declared this uncanonical (the tithe was supposed to be a biblical obligation).[159] But the idea was widespread. One early ninth-century parish priest refused communion to his parishioners until they paid their tithes.[160] Agobard himself pointed out the delicacy of the system; monks and clerics paid their own tithes with the tithes of their parishioners.[161] Anxiety about misplaced tithes lies behind Agobard's condemnations of 'weather-wizards' (*tempestarii*) who charged a *canonicum*.[162] Paul Dutton has suggested that, in the case of the *tempestarii*, Agobard was especially alarmed because his flock was spending their tithe money on 'weather wizard' fees.[163]

The weather wizards' *canonicum* reminds us that one kind of payment could threaten another. Bishops and archbishops frequently had to arbitrate when religious establishments vied for the same tithe-paying parishioners.[164] Laymen, for their part, were often reluctant to pay.[165] The customary dues of the average rural denizen in the ninth century could be exacting. Churches asked for tithes and 'first-fruits' (agricultural taxes), votive oblations, alms to the needy and hospitality dues (including work services).

(n. 158 cont.)
studi sull'alto Medioevo, xxviii, Spoleto, 1982); Arnold Angenendt, *Geschichte der Religiosität im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1997), 325–30; Susan Wood, *The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2006), 66–91.

159 'Council of Trosly' (909), c. 6, ed. Wilfred Hartmann, Isolde Schröder and Gerhard Schmitz (MGH, Conc., v, Hanover, 2012), 523–8.

160 Constable, *Monastic Tithes*, 37.

161 Agobard, *De dispensatione ecclesiasticarum rerum*, c. 8, ed. van Acker, 125.

162 Agobard, *De grandine et tonitruis*, c. 15, ed. van Acker, 14. Bressolles, *Doctrine et action politique d'Agobard*, 97, for the *tempestarii* as 'malhonnêtes' who know how to profit from popular error, leading the people to abstain from paying their tithes.

163 Dutton, 'Thunder and Hail', 185–8. Compare Meens, 'Thunder over Lyon', 161–2.

164 See J. Courtois (ed.), *Chartes de l'Abbaye de Saint-Étienne de Dijon* (Paris and Dijon, 1908), 31–3, no. 17, in which Bishop Argrimus of Langres in 903 mediated a multi-party dispute over tithes. See Constable, *Monastic Tithes*, 75. Argrimus's tenure of the bishopric of Langres was contested, so this settling of disputes about tithes occurs in a crisis of local legitimacy. Duchesne, *Fastes*, ii, 189–90.

165 Einhard, *Translatio Marcellini et Petri*, 3.14, ed. Waitz, 253–4, describes a young woman possessed by a Latin-speaking demon who admits that he and his brothers had been allowed to cause havoc in the region because of the sins of the local populace, but chiefly their refusal to pay tithes.

That is why it was so important for lay people to understand what they were getting in return. Amolo told Theobald to remind his people what 'their own' churches provided: baptism, Eucharist, sermons, health, last rites, charity, penance. The passage which makes this argument shines with rhetorical bravura:[166]

> Each individual congregation should confine itself in tranquillity to the parishes and churches to which it is espoused. For it is to those holy places, where it receives sacred baptism, where it experiences the body and blood of the Lord, where it has become accustomed to hear the celebration of mass, where it obtains from its own priest penance from wrongdoing, visitation in sickness, burial in death, where too it is commanded to offer its own tithes and first-fruits, where it rejoices to have its own sons admitted by the grace of baptism, where it regularly hears the word of God, and learns how to act and how not to act: There! I say, let them eagerly bring forth their own votive offerings and oblations, there! let them eagerly pour out their own prayers and supplications to the Lord; there! let them seek out the aid of all saints, who, as it is written, 'follow the lamb wherever he goes' (Rev. 14:4) — for the saints are always present for those who faithfully call upon them, and so is omnipotent God, through them and in them . . . There!, in sum, let each individual congregation show forth, to orphans and widows, to paupers and pilgrims, from whatsoever means God has granted, the largess of its alms; let it fulfil its duties of hospitality; and whatever it once wasted on feasts and drinking parties and on the greed of empty men, let it pay out instead to its own folks of this sort [orphans, widows, paupers and pilgrims] and for the salutary needs of a neighbour. For this is the legitimate and ecclesiastical form of religion, this is the ancient custom of the faithful, through which both the vanity of novelties is cut off and the old and right road of evangelical and apostolic organisation (*institutio*) is kept strong![167]

Most striking is the emotive motion from multiplicity to uniformity. From a sevenfold repetition (the rhetorical device called 'anaphora') of the word 'where', Amolo moves to a threefold anaphora ('there'), and then a twofold anaphora ('*this* is . . . the form, *this* is the custom'). The passage ends triumphantly in the one 'old and right path' of evangelical and

[166] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 7, ed. Dümmler, 366–7. There is alliteration: *studium et sacerdotalem sinceritatem ac severitatem*; *maxime mulierum multitudo*; chiasm: *istiusmodi commentum et figmentum diabolicum*. Anaphora: *ubi . . . ubi . . . ubi*, etc. *ibi . . . ibi . . . ibi*; *haec . . . haec*. Isocola: *novitatum vanitas amputatur . . . institutionis semita custoditur*; homophonic pairs: *dolende ac pudende*, *captiva et mente capta*, *annuntiando . . . atque optestando*. A good candidate for ghost-writing is the deacon Florus of Lyon, who assisted Agobard with his letters (including the letter to Bartholomew) and his treatises (see the introduction to Amolo, *Liber de perfidia Iudaeorum*, ed. Herbers-Rauhut, xxxviii). For Florus, see Zechiel-Eckes, *Florus von Lyon*, 218–45; Boshof, *Agobard*, 254–300. For the multiple authorship of medieval letters, see Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections* (Turnhout, 1976), 49–52.

[167] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 7, ed. Dümmler, 366–7.

apostolic 'organisation': *institutio*, the semantic opposite of the word *superstitio*.

Amolo, like his predecessor and model Agobard, did not attack the cult of relics. Few went so far.[168] Instead, Amolo clarified that collective worship of the saints was correct within *institutio*, at 'fixed and legitimate days' (*dies certi et legitimi*) of the calendar: during rogations, in emergency litanies organized by authorities, during the Lenten fast and on proper feast days.[169] In the cult of the saints, space and time were supposed to shape crowds of bodies into a meaningful social order.

Despite the stirring rhetoric, however, it is easy to see how tenuous Amolo's case could have seemed to the crowds in Dijon and elsewhere in his archdiocese. To be sure, condemnations of unruly crowds had not disappeared. Half a century earlier, Alcuin had cast aspersions against misbehaving crowds when it suited his interests.[170] Agobard had done the same. Yet ninth-century Christians would have had reasons for scepticism faced with such arguments. Against Amolo's defence of 'fixed and legitimate' times and places, participants in these crowds might have pointed to stories in saints' lives which threatened divine punishment to those who ignored new relics. Against Amolo's arguments for reciprocity to one's 'own' church, the people of Dijon might have complained that the city's bishop was absent and the services were in abeyance. And against the argument that 'filthy lucre' delegitimized relic worship, they might have objected that alms inspired by the saints were anything but unholy.

Amolo's line of reasoning may have seemed especially tendentious to the people of Dijon. For the cult of Saint Benignus had itself begun with mysterious bones. In the sixth

[168] For one exception, see Claudius of Turin, *Epistolae*, nos. 6–7, ed. E. Dümmler (MGH, Epp., iv, Berlin, 1895), 600–5 (also *PL*, cv, cols. 459–64). On Claudius, see Brunhölzl, *Histoire*, i, pt 2, pp. 242–4; and Janneke Raaijmakers, 'I, Claudius: Self-Styling in Early Medieval Debate', *Early Medieval Europe*, xxv (2017).

[169] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 8, ed. Dümmler, 367. Compare the 'Council of Mainz' (813), c. 36, ed. Albert Werminghoff (MGH, Conc., ii/1, Hanover, 1906), 269–70, for a list of 'legitimate feasts'. See also Michael Sierck, *Festtag und Politik: Studien zur Tagewahl karolingischer Herrscher* (Cologne, 1995), 18–28.

[170] For example, Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 132, c. 9, ed. E. Dümmler (MGH, Epp., iv, Berlin, 1895), 199; ably discussed by Courtney M. Booker, '*Iusta Murmuratio*: The Sound of Scandal in the Early Middle Ages', *Revue Bénédictine*, cxxvi (2016), 261–2; and Alcuin, *Epistolae*, no. 249, ed. Dümmler, 403, analysed by Samuel W. Collins, *The Carolingian Debate Over Sacred Space* (New York, 2012), 115–20.

century, local people observed healing miracles at the site of a large sarcophagus.[171] Bishop Gregory of Langres (d. 539–40) at first ordered local people to stop venerating the unknown tomb, but he experienced a vision (later corroborated by a passion brought from Italy) which revealed Benignus's identity as a Christian martyr. He then founded St Bénigne, which became a site of miraculous cures, especially for vision problems.[172]

Benignus, whose rather improbable name means 'Kindly One', is famous among scholars as a quintessential 'invented' saint.[173] Amolo does not mention the story of this invention — though he praises Benignus as 'most proven' and 'most glorious' — but he does cite the parallel example of Saint Martin, who like Gregory of Langres stepped in when local people were worshipping unknown bones.[174] Those turned out to be the bones of a criminal, not a saint, and Martin discovered this not by 'the opinion of the vulgar mob' but by the divine revelation of a vision.[175] Yet how could people learn to distinguish between a Benignus and a criminal, between the truth and a fraud? How could bishops like Amolo and Theobald convince those who knew of Benignus' miraculous discovery from sermons read aloud on his November 1 feast day? Amolo made invalidating accusations of avarice or need against complicit church leaders as well as flailing participants. He also drew attention to the low social status of the participants. Above all, however, the archbishop targeted the involvement of women 'especially' (*maxime*).[176]

[171] Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, c. 50, in *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis Miracula et Opera Minora*, ed. Bruno Krusch (MGH, SRM, i/2, Hanover, 1885), 72–4. Élie Griffe, *La Gaule chrétienne à l'époque romaine*, revised edn, 3 vols. (Paris, 1964), i, 138, 142–3.

[172] Gregory of Tours, *De gloria martyrum*, c. 50, ed. Krusch, 73.

[173] Delehaye, *Les origines*, 354–5; Griffe, *Gaule chrétienne*, i, 142–3; René Aigrain, *L'Hagiographie: Ses sources, ses méthodes, son histoire* (Mayenne, 1953), 187–8. See also H. Leclercq, 'Dijon', in Cabrol and Leclercq (eds.), *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, iv, pt 1, cols. 841–2, for the dubious historical value of the legends associated with Benignus. See also n. 109 above.

[174] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 3, ed. Dümmler, 364–5. This passage borrows the episode from Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini* (BHL 5610), ed. Jacques Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, corrected edn, 2 vols. (Sources Chrétiennes, cxxxiii, Paris, 2004; originally 1967), i, 11.1–5, p. 276. For Benignus's merits, see Amolo, ep. 1, c. 4, ed. Dümmler, 365: 'probatissimi atque gloriosissimi martyris merita' ('the merits of the most tested and most glorious martyr').

[175] Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Martini*, ed. Fontaine, i, 11.4, p. 276.

[176] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 1, ed. Dümmler, 363: 'et maxime, immo, ut nonnulli affirmant, tantummodo in feminis'; c. 7, p. 366: 'tanta infelicium hominum et maxime mulierum multitudo'.

Female involvement on its own did not delegitimize the crowd. As we have seen, women were encouraged to be involved in the cult of relics. But Amolo uses a telling phrase to describe the women in Dijon: they are *miserae mulierculae*, 'miserable little women'.[177] *Muliercula*, the diminutive of *mulier*, 'woman', was an established pejorative for errant women in early medieval texts.[178] This is because the Latin version of Paul's second letter to Timothy warned that wicked men foretelling the end of the world would 'creep into households and capture *mulierculae* burdened with sins and led astray by various passions' (2 Timothy 3:6).[179] Amolo too spoke of 'households' and professed to find it strange that God's martyrs would want to separate daughters from parents, wives from husbands.[180] Amolo's declaration that the people must avoid 'the vanity of novelties' (*novitatum vanitas*)

[177] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 2, ed. Dümmler, 364. *Miser* can mean 'impoverished', but also implies social powerlessness (compare French 'misérable'). Compare *pauper*, which did not mean 'poor in a socio-economic sense' until later: Karl Bosl, 'Potens und Pauper: Begriffsgeschichtliche Studien zur gesellschaftlichen Differenzierung im frühen Mittelalter und zum "Pauperismus" des Hochmittelalters', in his *Frühformen der Gesellschaft im mittelalterlichen Europa: Ausgewählte Beiträge zu einer Strukturanalyse der mittelalterlichen Welt* (Munich, 1964), 134. See also Jean-Pierre Devroey, *Puissants et misérables: Système social et monde paysan dans l'Europe des Francs (VI^e–IX^e siècles)* (Brussels, 2006), 57–64.

[178] Sixth century: Fulgentius of Ruspe, *De ueritate praedestinationis et gratiae dei*, 1.24, in *Sancti Fulgentii episcopi Ruspensis opera*, ed. J. Fraipont (CCSL, xci/A, Turnhout, 1968), 473; Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum*, 67.31, in *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Expositio Psalmorum I–LXX*, ed. M. Adriaen (CCSL, xcvii, Turnhout, 1958), 600; Primasius of Hadrumetum, *Commentarius in Apocalypsin*, ed. A. Adams (CCSL, xcii, Turnhout, 1985), 3.9.7–8, pp. 149–50; Gregory of Tours, *Libri historiarum X*, ed. Krusch and Levison, 10.25, p. 519; seventh century: Isidore of Seville, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*, ed. C. Lawson (CCSL, cxiii, Turnhout, 1989), 2.19, [line 33]; eighth century: Ambrosius Autpertus, *Expositio in Apocalypsin*, 4.9.7b–8a, ed. Robert Weber, *Ambrosii Autperti opera, Expositionis in Apocalypsin libri I–V* (CCCM, xxvii, Turnhout, 1975), 349–51; Bede, *In epistolas VII catholicas*, 5.18, in *Bedae Venerabilis opera*, ii, *Opera exegetica*, pt. 4, ed. David Hurst (CCSL, cxxi, Turnhout, 1983), 222–3.

[179] *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. Robert Weber, Roger Gryson and Bonifatius Fischer, 5th edn (Stuttgart, 2007), 1838 (2 Timothy 3:6): 'ex his enim sunt qui penetrant domos et captivas ducunt mulierculas oneratas peccatis quae ducuntur variis desideriis'. For the Greek ('γυναικάρια'), see *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. E. Nestle *et al.*, 28th edn (Stuttgart, 2015), 647. Vetus Latina Bibles also consistently use *muliercula* to translate 'γυναικάριον' [*gynaikarion*], diminutive of 'γυνή' [*gynē*]: Hermann Josef Frede (ed.), *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel* (Freiburg, 1949–), xxv, fasc. 10.10, 763–4.

[180] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 5, ed. Dümmler, 365. On contemporary ideals of women's home life, see Hans-Werner Goetz, *Frauen im frühen Mittelalter: Frauenbild und Frauenleben im Frankenreich* (Weimar, 1995), 221–31; Valerie L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca, 2009), 170–223.

may be an intertextual allusion to 2 Timothy 3:6, for this phrase derives from a late antique exegesis of that very passage.[181]

Carolingian authors regularly used this passage to attack 'superstition' and its instigators. When Boniface condemned Aldebert, the eighth-century heretic who distributed his hair and nails as relics, he quoted 2 Timothy 3:6 to explain that Aldebert 'captured *mulierculae*'.[182] Carolingian churchmen like Theodulf of Orléans and Amolo's predecessor Agobard both quoted a phrase in which Jerome wrote against *mulierculae* who showed veneration 'to little gospel-books, to the wood of the cross, and to things of that sort; who do have zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge'.[183] Inherent in the biblical allusion was the notion of manipulation of women by male others. Compare Thiota the 'pseudo-prophetess', who confessed that a priest had goaded her into making prophecies.[184] Later in the ninth century, a famous canon of the council of Nantes (895) would condemn *mulierculae* who 'endlessly disturbed general councils and public gatherings'. The canon ended by opining that 'this disgraceful presumption should be blamed more on the instigators than on the women themselves'.[185]

The word *mulierculae* thus evoked women as playthings of forces beyond their control, susceptible because of their sin. Amolo even claimed that the appearance of such women convinced him that the 'miracles' at Dijon were the work of 'human trickery'.[186] Amolo noted that he would have hesitated even to raise the possibility of 'faking' (*fictio*) had he not seen 'such things' 'among certain little people' (*in quibusdam homunculis*) in

[181] Ambrosiaster, *Commentarius ad Timotheum II*, in *Ambrosiastri qui dicitur Commentarius in Epistulas Paulinas*, ed. H. Vogels (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum, lxxxi, Vienna, 1969), iii, 312.

[182] Boniface, *Epistolae*, ed. Tangl, no. 59, p. 111.

[183] Jerome, *Commentarii in Evangelium Matthaei*, ed. D. Hurst and M. Adriaen (CCSL, lxxvii, Turnhout, 1969), 4.23.5, p. 212; [Theobald], *Opus Caroli*, ed. Ann Freeman and Paul Meyvaert (MGH, Conc., ii, Suppl. 1, Hanover, 1998), 1.18, p. 191; Agobard, *De picturis et imaginibus*, c. 26, ed. van Acker, 175. See also Agobard, *De cauendo conuictu et societate iudaica*, ed. van Acker, 232, for another case of *mulierculae*.

[184] *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Kurze, s.a. 847, p. 37.

[185] 'Council of Nantes' (895), c. 19, in *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. G. D. Mansi, 31 vols. (Florence and Venice, 1759–1778), xviii, 171–2: 'Quæ ignominiosa præsumptio fautoribus magis imputanda videtur, quam fœminis'. See Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, 105–6; Nelson, 'Women and the Word', 203.

[186] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 5, ed. Dümmler, 366: 'per astutiam hominum'.

Agobard's time.[187] Those *homunculi* (the term is a gender-neutral parallel of *mulierculae*) had pretended to be possessed by devils, but Agobard had them beaten until they 'publicly' confessed that 'need and poverty' compelled them.[188] This reveals the narrative purpose of the 'little people' and 'little women' in Amolo's letter: delegitimizing unregulated crowds in suitably apocalyptic terms. Amolo accomplished this not by gendering the crowd itself as 'female' (like nineteenth-century critics), but by attributing to the crowd damning traits drawn from the clerical construction of female weakness.

CONCLUSION

For Geoffrey Koziol, early medieval polemics against superstition reveal a disturbing inflexibility in the Carolingian notion of 'truth', 'a totalizing, unified, consistent, coherent way of knowing the world' that silenced alternatives.[189] That is certainly one way to read Amolo's letter. The control of the written word in the early medieval period by ecclesiastical elites means that educated guesses are necessary in reconstructing unthinkable or unacceptable realities excluded from their narratives, including the motives and experiences of religious crowds.[190] This bleak vision accords with the traditional explanation for the physical causes of 'the crowd's' powerlessness during the centuries before 1000.[191] When scholars have asked why the crowd was not a weapon of the weak during the early Middle Ages, they have answered that the military aristocracy possessed an effective monopoly on violence. Aristocratic domination was 'close to complete' in Carolingian Francia.[192] As Eric Goldberg has argued, 'In this age of relatively sparse population, poor nutrition and high mortality rate among the peasantry, successful rebellion against their lords simply was not possible as long as these well-fed, disciplined, armored men with iron weapons were united against them'.[193]

[187] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 6, ed. Dümmler, 366.
[188] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 6, ed. Dümmler, 366.
[189] Koziol, 'Truth and Its Consequences', 94.
[190] Compare Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston, 1995), 82–3.
[191] Moore, 'The Weight of Opinion', 215.
[192] Wickham, *Framing*, 581, also 140–2, 578–88.
[193] Goldberg, 'Popular Revolt', 500.

Secular elites were jealous of their power too. A shocking example comes from 859, when a heterogeneous crowd (*vulgus promiscuum*) between the Seine and the Loire banded together to resist Viking raids, which had worsened as internecine conflict raged among the Franks.[194] Having formed a sworn association or *coniuratio*, these defenders fought bravely against a Danish army on the Seine. Yet in doing so they acted (in the words of the reporting annalist) 'incautiously' (*incaute*). For the oath-takers were 'easily slaughtered', not by the Vikings, but by their own lords (*a potentioribus nostris*).[195] As historians have concluded since the nineteenth century,

> to the great vassals, this unauthorized levy of the lower folk seemed far more dangerous than the ravages of the heathens, since it threatened their whole standing (*ihre ganze Stellung*): with little effort they overwhelmed and thrashed the peasants, who had arrogated to themselves the right to defend their possessions against the raiders.[196]

As another historian has argued, horizontal social bonds, like those provided by sworn-associations or guilds, undermined the vertical bonds which reinforced elite power.[197] Amolo's response to the crowds at St Bénigne was the ecclesiastical version of the same violent reaction.

[194] *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat, Vieilliard and Clémencet, s.a. 859, p. 80.

[195] *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. Grat, Vieilliard and Clémencet, s.a. 859, p. 80: 'Sed quia incaute sumpta est eorum coniuratio, a potentioribus nostris facile interficiuntur'. Some historians doubt this reading (despite manuscript support) and propose emending *nostris* to *nostri*, which would change the meaning to 'our people (*nostri*) were easily killed by the more powerful ones (*a potentioribus*), i.e. the Vikings': N. D. Fustel de Coulanges, *Les transformations de la royauté pendant l'époque carolingienne*, ed. Camille Jullian (Paris, 1892), 679 n. 1 and Ferdinand Lot, 'La grande invasion normande de 856–862', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, lxxix (1908), 32 n. 2. Most scholars disagree, including the text's editors (Grat, Vieilliard and Clémencet, 80 n. 1), though the latter agree with Lot's interpretation (by taking *nostris* as a comparative ablative).

[196] Ernst Dümmler, *Geschichte des ostfränkischen Reiches*, 2nd edn, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1887), i, 447. See also Epperlein, *Herrschaft und Volk*, 49; Eggert, 'Rebelliones servorum', 1152; Karl Brunner, *Oppositionelle Gruppen im Karolingerreich* (Vienna, 1979), 11–2, 131–2; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, 194; Richard Landes, 'Rodolfus Glaber and the Dawn of the New Millennium: Eschatology, Historiography, and the Year 1000', *Revue Mabillon*, vii (1996), 65; Wickham, *Framing*, 581, 585; Burkhard Apsner, *Vertrag und Konsens im früheren Mittelalter* (Trier, 2006), 229; Marios Costambeys, Matthew Innes and Simon MacLean, *The Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2011), 249–50.

[197] Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Conjuratio und Gilden im frühen Mittelalter: Ein Beitrag der sozialen Kontinuität zwischen Antike und Mittelalter', in his *Die Wirklichkeit und das Wissen*, ed. Andrea von Hülsen-Esch, Bernhard Jussen and Frank Rexroth (Göttingen 2011), 496–501, esp. 498–9. But see Nelson, 'Peers', 30–40.

After all, bishops did not rule by the word alone. Bishops were invested with a *virga* or *baculus* ('rod' or 'staff') during their ordinations.[198] Upon the bestowal of this sign of authority, they were instructed to 'receive the staff of the episcopal office, so that you may be fierce (*seviens*) in the correction of vices'.[199] Bishops were expected to flog priests guilty of repeated fornication.[200] An undated capitulary commands that women ignorant of the lord's prayer should be 'punished with flogging or fasts'.[201] In 847, the bishops at Mainz put a stop to Thiota's preaching by having her flogged in public.[202] In 867, one of the false ascetics condemned in the *Annals of Xanten* was 'prostrated' and 'stripped of his rank' by the archbishop of Mainz; the annalist calls him 'canonically defeated'.[203]

'Take hold of sacerdotal scrupulousness and severity', Amolo told Theobald.[204] Like Christ, who whipped the dove-sellers out of the Temple, Theobald might need to safeguard his Father's house by force.[205] Amolo had witnessed his predecessor put a stop to superstition by an application of 'multiple blows and strikes'.[206] He recommended the same to his suffragan: 'If some should happen to wish to appear more obstinate in a case

[198] Michel Andrieu, 'Le sacre épiscopal d'après Hincmar de Reims', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, xlviii (1953), 57.

[199] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1217, fol. 72^{v}. Cf. Psalm 22(23):4; see also the 'Benedictio episcopalis' in St. Petersburg, Rossijskaja natsional'naja biblioteka, lat. Q.v.I., no. 35, fols. 19^{v}–22^{r}, at 21^{v}, ed. A. Staerk, *Les manuscrits latins du V^{e} au XIII^{e} siècle conservés à la bibliothèque impériale de Saint-Pétersbourg*, 2 vols. (Saint Petersburg, 1910), i, 156.

[200] 'Concilium Germanicum' (21 April 742), c. 6, ed. Alfred Boretius (MGH, Capit., i, Hanover, 1883), 26.

[201] *Capitula duo incerta*, c. 2, ed. Alfred Boretius (MGH, Capit., i, Hanover, 1883), 257.

[202] *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. Kurze, s.a. 847, pp. 36–7; see Nelson, 'Women and the Word', 218.

[203] *Annales Xantenses*, ed. von Simson, s.a. 867 (866), p. 24: 'canonice victus'.

[204] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 7, ed. Dümmler, 366–7: 'arripiatis . . . sacerdotalem sinceritatem ac severitatem'.

[205] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 7, ed. Dümmler, 366, referring to Matthew 21:13, Luke 19:46, John 2:14–16.

[206] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 6, ed. Dümmler, 366: 'For we often saw in Agobard's presence people pretending to be demoniacs in upheaval, but, as soon as they were punished with multiple blows and strikes, they at once confessed their miserable fraud, and publicly revealed their poverty and their needs (which they hoped to assuage by giving these shows), and appeared unscathed, as indeed they were, from any demon's assault'.

of this nature, it seems to us they should be compelled, coerced by very harsh blows, to confess the truth'.[207] Here then seems to be a striking instance of the 'truth' uniting with 'very harsh blows' to limit the possibilities for crowds in ninth-century Francia.

Elite domination, however, was not total. There was a great deal of disagreement among Carolingian elites about the proper role of women, non-elites and crowds in religious behaviour.[208] Enthusiastic behaviour condemned in a normative text like a canon or a capitulary may be praised in a saint's life. The limits of the possible varied from place to place. Even the events of 840s Dijon stirred up, as Amolo acknowledged, a great deal of 'uncertainty' (*ambiguitas*) in episcopal hearts.[209]

This blurring of the lines between good crowd and bad crowd relates to the unusual social role of gatherings during the early Middle Ages. There is no denying that early medieval European elites wielded considerable power over 'the crowd' as a manifestation of non-elite autonomy. Yet kings, counts, bishops, abbots and other local lords also depended on predictable gatherings to extract resources and maintain their authority. Early medieval societies were organized around the behaviour of such gatherings: festivals, fairs, legal and secular courts, liturgical celebrations and, above all, assemblies.[210] Such collective phenomena, which crowd theorist Elias Canetti would call 'closed' as opposed to 'open' crowds, are rather different from the usual subjects of crowd history: 'strikes, riots, rebellions, insurrections and revolutions'.[211]

In that sense, it is true that the crowd, as a manifestation of non-elite power, appeared 'on the stage of public events' more obviously in the eleventh century.[212] The early Middle Ages was an unusual period in European history when crowds

[207] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 8, ed. Dümmler, 367: 'ita ut si forte aliqui obstinatiores in tali facto apparere voluerint, duris omnino verberibus coerciti ad confessionem veritatis compellendi nobis esse videantur'.

[208] A point rightly emphasized by Smith, 'Women at the Tomb', 179–80.

[209] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 1, ed. Dümmler, 363: 'Your soul has been troubled by a sort of uncertainty (*ambiguitas*), and you judged that it was our duty, our fraternal duty, to come up with advice'.

[210] For the particular importance of assemblies, both large and small scale, in shaping an early medieval public sphere, see Timothy Reuter, 'Assembly Politics in Western Europe from the Eighth Century to the Twelfth', in his *Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities*, ed. Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), 207–8.

[211] Canetti, *Masse und Macht*, 12–14; Rudé, *The Crowd in History*, 4.

[212] Moore, 'Family, Community and Cult', 49.

were smaller, less spontaneous and easier for elites to control than before and after. Yet these 'closed crowds' were still bound up with power, legitimacy and resources. Religious and secular elites in Carolingian Europe depended upon their regularity and predictability. The 'legitimate and fixed days' when crowds could celebrate the saints were also deadlines for dues and services. Closed crowds remained central to public life because early medieval kingdoms, with weak institutions and infrastructure, needed them to regulate information and resources.[213]

This explains why the crowds which did attract the concern of early medieval elites tended to threaten power indirectly. The crowds of Dijon threatened the normal forms of collective behaviour by imitating them: penitential ritual, donations and alms, and assembly before relics. For the 'hundreds' allegedly drawn to the crowds of Dijon, these strange behaviours recapitulated religious norms in abnormal circumstances. One of the problems with the enduring explanatory 'axis' of domination and resistance is that it commits a kind of intentional fallacy in cases of this sort.[214] The knowing monks of St Bénigne enhance their authority with the cult of relics (resistance); the knowing archbishop fights back with the power of the written and spoken word (domination).

Yet Amolo was concerned with the crowd's misdirection, not the crowd's resistance. This was not a world, like the late medieval urban societies analysed by Patrick Lantschner or the contemporary Byzantine and Islamic East, accustomed to an 'intrinsic' logic of crowd conflict.[215] In ninth-century Syria, a governor knew when to tear up the cobblestones lest restive crowds make them into weapons.[216] The crowds that alarmed early medieval Western elites, on the other hand, were similar

[213] The dichotomy of public/private is troublesome in an early medieval context. See Janet L. Nelson, 'The Problematic in the Private', *Social History*, xv (1990), 363–4. See also Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Die Wahrnehmung von "Staat" und "Herrschaft" im frühen Mittelalter', in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (eds.), *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2006), 50–1.

[214] Campbell and Heyman, 'Slantwise', 5–8.

[215] Patrick Lantschner, *The Logic of Political Conflict in Medieval Cities: Italy and the Southern Low Countries, 1370–1440* (Oxford, 2015), 23.

[216] Cobb, *White Banners*, 106.

to the forms of collective behaviour that ordered society: oaths for the wrong reason, tithes to the wrong pastor, charity in the wrong place. 'For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light', as Amolo wrote to Theobald.[217]

Bishops and nobles were able to repress crowds that got out of hand. Gendered vilification was one retort to such misdirected crowds; violence was another. But the social dynamics of these reactions were less straightforward than historians have imagined. Early medieval elites were quick to use the power of the word and the rod to challenge collective behaviour that threatened order and resources. Yet their readiness also shows that the crowd, albeit in a shape unfamiliar to historiography, was already on the stage of public events in the centuries before 1000.

Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology *Shane Bobrycki*

[217] Amolo, ep. 1, c. 3, ed. Dümmler, 364, quoting 2 Corinthians 11:14.