

5-1-2021

Patronage and Polemic: Constructing and Destroying a Chapel in 10th-Century Lotharingia

Philip Muijtjens

University of Cambridge, King's College, Ph.D. candidate in History of Art

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal>



Part of the Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture Commons

Recommended Citation

Muijtjens, Philip. "Patronage and Polemic: Constructing and Destroying a Chapel in 10th-Century Lotharingia." *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 7, 3 (2021): 27-58.
<https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal/vol7/iss3/2>

This Feature Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Art History at Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* by an authorized editor of Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact noltj@kenyon.edu.

PEREGRINATIONS

JOURNAL OF MEDIEVAL ART AND ARCHITECTURE

VOLUME VII, NUMBER 3 (SPRING 2021)

Patronage and Polemic: Constructing and Destroying a Chapel in 10th - Century Lotharingia

PHILIP MUIJTJENS

University of Cambridge, King's College, Ph.D. candidate in History of Art

During the last three decades, much research has been done on the political history of Lotharingian religious communities in the 9th and 10th centuries, but there are still various lesser-known individual sources to be studied which give significant insights into the interplay of power and patronage on religious buildings. This article therefore presents a detailed study of a proclamation letter written *c.* 944 on the destruction of a chapel in a small hamlet then known as Masiriacus. As will become clear, this document is an important source on the way in which patronage in the political and religious climate of 10th-century Lotharingia was a continuous power struggle among several actors with differing interests. By studying the contexts and possible motives of all the parties connected with the chapel and/or its destruction, this article will not only give more insight into the workings of the many-faceted process of patronage in a small community in Lotharingia, but it will also provide an example of the importance of both construction and destruction in early-medieval patronage. Because the chapel in question is entirely lost and no visual sources remain, its importance can only be understood through an historical approach to

which some contemporaneous artistic projects might contribute, including a possible identification of the patron of the chapel.¹

Around 944, several notable clerics gathered in the village of Essey (Lorraine). Bishop Gauzelin of Toul (r. 922-962) and bishop Adalbero I of Metz (r. 929-954) met with several archdeacons, ministers of the church, seven presbyters, fourteen noblemen, and fifteen other individuals of a non-aristocratic background. Their meeting resulted in a fiery proclamation.² “Let it be known,” the document begins, “to all the followers of the Christian faith how there have been events with regard to some chapel unjustly built in a place called Masiriacus” (Maizerais).³ It then describes how the chapel was constructed “irrationably and against the law of canonic authority” (*inrationabiliter et contra legem canonicae auctoritatis*) in a supposed attempt to receive a part of the benefices of the church of the village of Aciaco.⁴ The severity of this claim is underlined by a following description of the history of the chapel and of the subsequent reaction against its existence. The document claims that many years earlier a certain *comes* Widricus, who was “corrupted by the advice of some injurious men” (*depravatus consilio quorundam iniquorum*), had ordered the

¹ I would like to express my gratitude to Mats Dijkdrent and to the anonymous reviewers for their important remarks and insights on earlier versions of this article.

² The original proclamation from c. 944 was originally in the abbatial archive of Saint-Mihiel. It is now preserved in the Archives départementales de la Meuse (AD55) under the inventory number 4 H 74/1. This document was transcribed in J. DeLisle, *Histoire de la célèbre et ancienne abbaye de Saint-Mihiel* (1757), pp. 438-439. It was transcribed and edited again by Étienne Baluze for his *Miscellanea novo ordine digesta*, vol. III (1762), p. 38. It is the latter edition which I use for this article.

³ *Notum maneat omnibus Christianae fidei cultoribus qualiter actum sit de quadam capella injuste constructa in loco nuncupato Masiriaco [...]*. Baluze, *op. cit.* no. 2. All translations in this article are by the author unless stated otherwise.

⁴ *Auferre cupientes partem decimae Aciacensis Ecclesiae, quae jure illi debebatur ex die quo primum fundata est.* Idem.

construction of the chapel. Soon after, news reached bishop Ludelmus of Toul who took immediate action by travelling to the village of Masiriacus. There he destroyed the separate bell tower (*nolarium*) of the chapel and by taking the bells with him. Then he desacralized the chapel “in accordance with ecclesiastical authority” (*secundum ecclesiasticam auctoritatem*).⁵

Ludelmus was bishop of Toul from 895 to 905, so the chapel central to the proclamation must have been built within that time period.⁶ The existence of the c. 944 letter means that Ludelmus’s actions were not successful in the long run. This is true even though Ludelmus’s successor, bishop Drogo of Toul (r. 907-922), denounced the chapel at a synod and reconfirmed his predecessor’s actions against the chape. The author of this letter, bishop Gauzelin, may have reinforced his presentation of Drogo’s strategy as ineffective by emphasizing that the latter confronted the situation “with nothing but words and excommunications” (*nihilominus verbis et excommunicationibus*).⁷

The chapel and its cult remained active during the twenty-odd years under Drogo because Gauzelin writes the “case itself [of the chapel] came to a certain end in the presence of bishops Gauzelin and Adalbero.” Gauzelin destroyed the chapel “again” (*rursus*), stating that it is “better suited as a house for dogs than for holy

⁵ *Sicque veniens Ludermus Tullensis Episcopus ad eundem locum, nolarium ipsius capellae evertit, campanas cum vestibus sacerdotalibus secum detulit, ipsam capellam anathematizavit secundum ecclesiasticam auctoritatem [...].* Idem.

⁶ J. Mabillon, *Annales ordinis S. Benedicti occidentalium monachorum patriarchae* (1706), vol. III, p. 297.

⁷ *Quam rem Drogo Episcopus successor ipsius in synodo sancta nihilominus verbis & excommunicationibus confirmavit. Et tali ordine praescripta cappella in omni tempore detenta est.* Baluze, *op. cit.* no. 2.

relics.”⁸ After the foundation of the religious building had been declared illegitimate (again) by a large gathering of the two bishops, archdeacons, ministers and presbyters, the chapel was razed to the ground and condemned for eternity.⁹ The letter was signed and dated in the courtyard of the church of Saint Martin in the village of Aciaco (modern-day Essey), located next to Maizerais.¹⁰

Although bishop Gauzelin’s proclamation letter was written to make the destruction of the chapel more ceremonious and permanent, it was in vain: a shrine dedicated to Saint Gibrien (d. 509) was built not long after the destruction.¹¹ The original dedication of the controversial chapel at Maizerais remains unknown, but it is possible that Saint Gibrien was venerated there because of the long association of his cult with Maizerais. Several accounts of Gibrien’s life note that he travelled with his siblings from Ireland to Gaul as missionaries in the late 5th century and that they were received by Saint Remi, after which Gibrien enjoyed a particularly close bond with the famous bishop of Reims. After that, the accounts disagree. According to one version, Gibrien died in Maizerais and was buried there. And the erection of a shrine

⁸ [...] *rursus Gauzlinus Episcopus eandem Ecclesiam destruxit, domum magis canum quam sanctorum reliquiarum esse destinavit.* Idem.

⁹ [...] *ipsa capella a fundamentis destructa est et aeternaliter ecclesiastico more damnata ne unquam instauretur.* Idem.

¹⁰ M. Buchmüller-Pfaff, *Siedlungsnamen zwischen Spätantike und frühem Mittelalter. Die –(i)acum-Namen der römischen Provinz Belgica Prima* (1990), p. 190. See also H. Lepage, *Dictionnaire topographique de la France comprenant les noms de lieu anciens et modernes. Dictionnaire topographique du département de la Meurthe* (1862), p. 47. Although there is no visible trace of this church in Essey, the present one is still dedicated to Saint Martin, which suggests that it stands on the spot where once the letter was drawn up. This church, constructed in the 13th and 14th centuries, was enlarged in 1742. A. Joanne, *Géographie du département de Meurthe-et-Moselle* (1881), p. 61.

Today, Essey and Maizerais are incorporated into one community called Essey-et-Maizerais, formerly also known as Essey-en-Woëvre. H. Lepage, *Les communes de la Meurthe: journal historique des villes, bourgs, villages, hameaux et censes de ce département*, (1853), vol. I, pp. 327-329.

¹¹ DeLisle, *op. cit.* no. 2, 43-44.

for his cult right after the destruction of the chapel in Maizerais shows that the saint was still important for the hamlet in the 10th century. Another version stated that the monastic community of Saint-Remi in Reims had received Gibrien's relics at some point in the 11th century because Gibrien was recognized as a close associate of Remi. While it is not known if these relics came from Maizerais or not, but a century later, Étienne de Bar, bishop of Metz (r. 1120- 1163), donated the village of Maizerais to the abbey of Saint-Remi in Reims. The cult of Saint Gibrien created an important link between Maizerais and Reims, and, to this day, Saint Gibrien is venerated in both the church of Saint Martin in Essey and in a 20th-century shrine in Maizerais.¹² Despite Gibrien's long association with the village of Maizerais, the original dedication of the controversial chapel is unknown.

Nothing remains of the chapel or shrine constructed for Saint Gibrien, making it difficult to make concrete observations about the structure of the chapel. Moreover, the locations of the chapel and the shrine are unknown because there have never been any excavations, despite the observations of some authors on the presence of various remains in and around Essey-et-Maizerais.¹³ One may assume that the chapel and its accompanying bell tower were fairly simple, wooden constructions or they could not have been destroyed so rapidly. Fortunately, Gauzelin's letter presents tantalizing pieces of information about the demolished structure. There was a

¹² See Flodoard of Reims's account of Saint Gibrien and his siblings in *Historia Ecclesiae Remensis*, chapter IX (PL 135, 0288B). E. Badel, *Terre de Lorraine* (1917), pp. 330-331; Dom G. Charvin, "Comptes Rendus," *Revue Mabillon*, Series II, no. 29 (1928), p. 72; Canon Martin, *Diocèse de Nancy et de Toul. Répertoire-guide des oeuvres* (1927), p. 74.

¹³ E. Salin, "Répertoire archéologique du département de Meurthe-et-Moselle," *Revue historique de la Lorraine*, vol. 84, no. 3 (1947), p. 110.

separate bell tower (*nolarium*) with more than one bell, as noted by Gauzelin who stated that Ludelmus took the bells “together with priestly robes” (*cum vestibus sacerdotalibus*), suggesting the presence of not only liturgical vestments, but also of other objects necessary for worship. Too, Gauzelin’s description of the chapel as being better suited to dogs than holy relics may indicate the presence of the physical remains of a saint or holy person (perhaps Saint Gibrien?). The bell tower, liturgical vestments, and relics in the chapel at Maizerais reflect a fair number of resources had been put into the establishment of the place of worship. Yet how could a small chapel in a seemingly unimportant village have been a cause of so much concern and trouble for several decades? What were the intentions behind this chapel? The rest of this article will be dedicated to providing answers to these questions.

The chapel at Maizerais interacted with many local interests, including the nearby Benedictine abbey of Saint-Mihiel. As Saint Martin at Essey and its appertaining possessions and lands had been donated to the abbey in 846 by Charles the Bald, king of West Francia since 840, along with various benefices, to ensure the continuing existence of the religious community.¹⁴ The abbey thus controlled the cult at Essey and drew income from it. Still Gauzelin’s 944 letter confirms that the chapel in Maizerais had been constructed against canonical authority, implying that neither the bishops of Toul nor the abbey of Saint-Mihiel had given their approval.

Consequently, the cult at Maizerais would not have brought in any resources for the

¹⁴ DeLisle, *op. cit.*, no. 2, 434. P. Benoist, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de la ville et du diocèse de Metz*, 1718, BnF NAF 6693, f. 11. G. Halsall, “Civitas Mediomatricorum: Settlement and Social Organization in the Merovingian Region of Metz, c. 450-750”, (PhD Diss., University of York, 1990), vol. I, pp. 65-66, 127-128.

abbey. Moreover, Gauzelin wrote that the chapel at Maizerais even led to a loss of income for the church of Saint Martin.

Although it is unknown in which way the controversial chapel resulted in a negative situation for the church at Essey, there is one possibility. Because the chapel at Maizerais probably housed the relics of Saint Gibrien, local pilgrims might have therefore preferred this chapel over the church of Saint Martin, Essey. Moreover, both Maizerais and Essey are close to Toul, an important stop on the route to Santiago de Compostela. If the local stream of pilgrimage was already being diverted away from Essey to Maizerais, it is possible that international pilgrims travelling through the area followed the local pilgrims' lead, thereby decreasing the importance of the church at Essey as a place of pilgrimage even further. The church of Saint Martin might have been losing the competition, which made Essey's endowment less profitable for the abbey of Saint-Mihiel.

This situation could have dealt a heavy blow to the Benedictine community. From its foundation in 709, the abbey of Saint-Mihiel led a troubled existence. Its original location on Mount Castellion made it impossible to attract a sufficient number of pilgrims, as illustrated in 779, when the abbey received the relics of Saint Anatole of Cahors.¹⁵ Ermengaudus, who was then abbot, decided that, due to the inaccessible location of the monastery, the relics were to be placed in a church dedicated to SS. Cyriacus/Quiriacus & Julitte in the village of Godoncourt along the

¹⁵ Nothing is known about this saint, as DeLisle points out. He believes that Anatole may have been bishop of Cahors some time between 662 and 751. DeLisle, *op. cit.* no. 2, 14.

river Meuse so that they could be venerated more easily by more people.¹⁶

Ermengaudus's successor Smaragdus (r. 805-840), a man praised for his knowledge and connections with the court, undertook several drastic steps in order to strengthen the status of the abbey. In about 814, Smaragdus relocated the abbey from Mount Castellion to Godoncourt (which was subsequently re-named Saint-Mihiel) to be closer to the more-public places of worship owned by the community.¹⁷ The transferral to the shores of the Meuse made the monastery more accessible to a wider public, from which (more) income could be generated. Moreover, the new location allowed for the construction of bigger abbatial buildings over which Smaragdus presided himself.¹⁸ The new abbey maintained a close relationship with the old abbey on Mt. Castellion.¹⁹

Unfortunately for Smaragdus and his monks, the construction of a new monastery does not seem to have eased their minds for long, because the abbey still lacked stability. In *Diadema monachorum*, a compendium of 100 chapters on asceticism and monastic life under the rule of Saint Benedict from between 814-817,²⁰ Smaragdus ferociously admonished his monks at Saint-Mihiel more than once to

¹⁶ Idem, 13.

¹⁷ Gaillard stresses the mostly undocumented nature of this event. M. Gaillard, *D'une réforme à l'autre (816-934). Les communautés religieuses en Lorraine à l'époque carolingienne* (2006), pp. 150-152.

¹⁸ See also H. Willjung, "Zur Überlieferung der Epistola de processione Spiritus sancti Smaragds von Saint-Mihiel," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, vol. 47, no. 1 (1991), pp. 161-166; R. Kramer, *Rethinking Authority in the Carolingian Empire. Ideals and Expectations during the Reign of Louis the Pious (813-828)* (2019), p. 129.

¹⁹ Smaragdus wished to be buried there, like the succeeding abbots until the end of the 11th century. Gaillard, *op. cit.* no. 17, 151.

²⁰ M. Ponesse, "Standing Distant from the Fathers: Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel and the Reception of Early Medieval Learning," *Traditio*, vol. 67 (2012), pp. 75-76, 95; D. Barry OSB, *Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel: The Crown of Monks* (2013), p. 1. See also P.-M. Bogaert, "Smaragde, Éphrem latin et le titre du Diadema monachorum," *Revue bénédictine*, vol. 129, no. 2 (2019), pp. 284-289.

relinquish any cares for material possessions and instead to focus on the wealth rewarded in heaven “where we do not have to fear a hidden thief, or a violent plunderer.”²¹ Perhaps this admonition might refer to the uncertainty which Smaragdus and his community felt in the early stages of rebuilding their monastery. It is striking that, in the same period when he wrote this exposition on the Benedictine rule, Smaragdus undertook several efforts to secure the future of Saint-Mihiel. In 816, he travelled to the court of Louis the Pious in Aachen to attend the Council, where he petitioned for a reconfirmation of the immunity of Saint-Mihiel and its endowment,²² which was granted in June 816.²³ Although this must have provided security for some time, the immunity of the abbey and its possessions needed to be re-confirmed in 841 by Emperor Lothair I, when he was passing through.²⁴ Another confirmation came with the 846 donation by Charles the Bald, in which the church of Saint Martin at Essey was included for the first time.²⁵

Even though the abbey’s immunity had been given imperial approval three times already, the grip of Saint-Mihiel on its endowment, including Essey and its surrounding area, required continuous effort in the coming decades, as shown by a fourth confirmation years later. When Zwentibold became king of Lotharingia in 895 through the efforts of his father Arnulf of Carinthia, the young ruler ceded various

²¹ *Thesaurum ergo nostrum, fratres, in coelo ponamus, ubi hostem et expugnatorem non timeamus. Thesaurum itaque operum vel virtutum nostrarum collocemus in coelo, ubi non timeamus occultum furem, neque violentum raptorem. Diadema monachorum, PL 102, 644. See also PL 102, 678-679.*

²² DeLisle, *op. cit.* no. 2, 25-27; Barry, *op. cit.* no. 20, 1-3.

²³ DeLisle, *op. cit.* no. 2, xlvi, 10; Ponesse, *op. cit.* no. 20, 80-81.

²⁴ DeLisle, *op. cit.* no. 2, 32.

²⁵ *Idem*, xlvi.

benefices to the abbey of Saint-Mihiel in the same year. Surprisingly, the list of endowments, which included the church of Saint Martin in the village of Essey again, was almost exactly the same as before, but with one important clause added.

Zwentibold donated these lands and possessions not to the religious community, but placed them under direct control of the abbot of Saint-Mihiel. The reason for this peculiar transfer is telling. Zwentibold writes that “we have taken into consideration the need regarding the oppression of heathens when we concede the aforementioned possessions to them [the abbey of Saint-Mihiel].” This evasive phrasing seemingly tries to cover up the reality that lay behind this unusual transfer, namely that, by 895, the abbey’s grip on its endowment was still not secure. The abbot at the time of the donation was likely Heinard who had been appointed Chancellor to Charles the Fat not long after the latter’s coronation in 881.²⁶ It is likely that the king placed his trust in Heinard who, with his political experience and his close royal connections, might have had a solution for the abbey’s precarious position.

Unfortunately, nothing materialized because Heinard died the same year, plunging the community into another crisis. Joseph DeLisle, prior at Saint-Mihiel and the author of the 1757 printed history of the abbey, even went so far as to say that at that point the existence of the abbey had been reduced *à une extrême misère*.²⁷ It is not clear who succeeded Heinard as abbot of Saint-Mihiel, although Étienne, later bishop

²⁶ According to Calmet, this appointment took place in 884. A. Calmet, *Histoire ecclésiastique et civile de Lorraine* (1728), p. clviii. DeLisle was also keen to point Heinard’s knowledge and *capacité*. DeLisle, *op. cit.* no. 2, p. 34. See also N. de Wailly, *Éléments de paléographie* (1838), vol. II, p. 224.

²⁷ DeLisle, *op. cit.* no. 2, xlviiii.

of Tongres or Liège, is a possibility.²⁸ While we cannot be entirely sure who presided over the monastery during the years of 895-905, the period when the chapel at Maizerais was most likely constructed, we can infer that the construction of the chapel occurred at a time when Saint-Mihiel was at its most vulnerable -- likely no coincidence, for the foundation of the chapel not only caused a loss of income for the already struggling abbey, as Gauzelin's letter reports, but it had also interfered with the abbey's efforts to control the lands which had been donated time and again. Its position was still, or at least perceived to be, quite far from secure.

Loss of resources and the inability to control endowments on the part of the abbey were not the only motivations for the drastic measures taken by Gauzelin against the chapel at Maizerais. The case of the illegal cult struck at the heart of salient issues elsewhere because the construction of the Maizerais chapel and its continuous use occurred at a problematic time for the diocese of Toul too. In 895, the town of Toul and its cathedral were sacked by Hungarian invading troops.²⁹ The monumental cathedral of Saint Étienne which had been constructed in the 820s-830s by the learned and ambitious bishop Frothar of Toul (r. 814-849) was lost.³⁰ Ludelmus, who was consecrated as the new bishop in the same year, was left with the reconstruction of both the town and cathedral, which he did with great effort if we may believe the descriptions.³¹ The excavations in 1851-1854 in the transept of the

²⁸ *Idem.*

²⁹ Abbot Guillaume, "La cathédrale de Toul," *Mémoires de la Société d'archéologie lorraine*, vol. 5, no. 2 (1863), p. 96.

³⁰ J. Choux, "La cathédrale de Toul avant le XIIIe siècle," *Annales de l'est* no. 2 (1955), pp. 17-18; J. Thirion, "La cathédrale de Toul avant le XIIIe siècle," *Bulletin monumental*, vol. 114, no. 4 (1956), p. 280.

³¹ Mabillon, *op cit.*, no. 6, 297.

Cathedral of Toul brought to light the foundations of some walls of the west and east ends of the cathedral from Ludelmus's time. A contemporary analysis of those remains showed that the construction was probably less grand and the walls less high than those one built by Frothar of Toul.³² Although the cathedral may have been more humble, it did have a crypt with an altar dedicated to Saint Martin,³³ and Ludelmus would be buried near the high altar of his restored cathedral in 905.³⁴

Accounts of Drogo's episcopacy (r. 907-922) show that the bishops of Toul also had to face issues of a different nature. In the 11th-century *Miracula post mortem Sancti Apri*, Drogo is described as being loved by all members of his diocese, but only as the result of a long and arduous process. Though being from high birth, Drogo had had to obtain his episcopal power "now through force, or sympathy, then through the universal consent of the populace," because he found the latter "unwilling to be governed by rulers."³⁵ "Now," the *Miracula* asserts, "Drogo nobly carried out his work with popular assent from the civilians. For despite all the dignity of his family, through the subtlety of his singular character he worked himself to sweat, in one place for public affairs, in another for spiritual matters."³⁶ Documentary evidence shows that Drogo endeavoured to reinforce the loyalty of various local communities and religious institutes. For example, at an episcopal synod which he convened in Toul in 916, he lavished his favour on the cult of Saint Èvre by ceding benefices to a

³² Mabillon, *op cit.*, no. 6, 97.

³³ Choux, *op. cit.* no. 30, 17-19; Thirion, *op. cit.* no. 30, 280.

³⁴ Ludelmus likely died of a disease affecting his arm. Mabillon, *op. cit.*, no. 6, 321.

³⁵ *Idem*, p. 322.

³⁶ *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. 5, 74f.



Figure 1 19th-century engraving after a 13th-century (?) seal of the Abbey of Saint-Èvre depicting Saint Èvre, France. Photo: After M. Chéry, *Saint-Epvre, VIIe évêque de Toul: sa vie, son abbaye, son culte*, 1866, 51.

church dedicated to this saint and to the abbey of Saint-Èvre where the eponymous saint was buried.³⁷ Saint Èvre (**Fig.1**), who had been the seventh bishop of Toul and who was venerated as a saint, held a particularly important position in the diocese. The abbey which housed the saint's tomb was a highly popular site of pilgrimage and was a significant presence in the diocese, as is illustrated by the efforts taken by succeeding bishops to maintain the fluctuating cordiality between the see of Toul and the abbey.³⁸

Nevertheless, Drogo's apparent popularity remained uncertain, becoming

³⁷ M. de Brequigny, *Table chronologique des diplomes, chartes, titres et actes imprimés, concernant l'histoire de France* (1749), vol. I, p. 377; M. Chéry, *Saint-Epvre, VIIe évêque de Toul: sa vie, son abbaye, son culte* (1866), pp. 51-60; J. Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons in the Gorze Reform: Lotharingia c.850-1000* (2001), pp. 133-140.

³⁸ Nightingale, *op. cit.* no. 37.

painfully evident in c. 918, about two years after the Synod at Toul and the donations to Saint-Èvre. The *Miracula* recounts how, due to a rising fear of invasions by the Hungarians, Drogo concocted a plan together with his secretary Bulso to secretly take the precious relics of Saint Èvre from his tomb in the abbey of Saint-Èvre and transport them to Toul. Saint Èvre's body was subsequently taken from the abbey in the middle of the night, transported to the church of Saint John the Baptist in Toul, and reburied there in a chapel, after which those involved were sworn to secrecy.³⁹ This appears to have worked because the sacred remains were not rediscovered until 978.⁴⁰ Drogo's actions caused a wave of dismay. According to the *Miracula*, the outrage was mostly targeted against the bishop's secretary Bulso, but the tone suggests that the anonymous author of this account attempted to dissociate the memory of Drogo from this controversy and put the blame on a second party.⁴¹ No matter how much Drogo was involved or not, his insecure position cannot have improved because of this. Drogo died in 921 or 922 and, like his predecessor Ludelmus, he was laid to rest in a stone casket near the altar in the cathedral of Toul, where his remains were rediscovered in 1853.⁴²

The actions against the chapel at Maizerais by both Ludelmus and Drogo can be typified as a reaction against a situation. Their successor Gauzelin (r. 922-962),

³⁹ In the 10th century, Toul boasted three churches dedicated, respectively, to Saint Étienne, the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist. Saint Étienne was the senior church and therefore the cathedral. Guillaume, *op. cit.* no. 29, 96.

⁴⁰ Mabillon selects 918 because the author of the *Miracula* mentions that the body was hidden "for about sixty years." *Acta sanctorum*, vol. 5, 75e.

⁴¹ *Idem*, 75a.

⁴² P. Labbe, *Bibliothecae Manuscript Librorum* (1757), vol. I, p. 124; J. Lionnois, *Histoire des villes vieille et neuve de Nancy* (1788), vol. I, p. 596; Abbot Georges, "Notes sur la cathédrale de Toul," *Journal de la Société d'archéologie et du Comité du Musée lorrain*, No. 2 (1853), p. 124.

who was responsible for the destruction of the chapel and for the drawing up of the proclamation letter, took a more systematic approach during his episcopacy and added reasons of a more idealistic nature to his possible motivations for the destruction of the chapel at Maizerais. In the 930s-940s, Gauzelin endeavoured to reinstate privileges and properties to monasteries in his diocese and to revive the rule of Saint Benedict. At the abbey of Saint-Èvre, Gauzelin made sure that unlawful claims on abbatial lands were abolished so as to ensure the unobstructed observance of religious life by its monks.⁴³ He found a kindred spirit in bishop Adalbero of Metz (r. 929-954) who, for example, took great effort to “introduce” the rule of Saint Benedict in the abbey of Saint Arnould in Metz in c. 941.⁴⁴

Despite Gauzelin’s and Adalbero’s actions, the assertion of episcopal authority on the religious communities in their dioceses remained a task which required continuous effort. As John Nightingale wrote in the introduction to his monograph on monastic reform in Lotharingia in 850-1000, “[t]he wealth and status of the bishops of Trier, Metz, and (to a lesser extent) Toul should not obscure the precariousness of their power; they were often at loggerheads with their dependent abbeys, their cathedral communities, and their followers, the majority of whom enjoyed close links with other bishops and rival lords.”⁴⁵ Now referred to as the “Gorze reform” after the abbey, this should be regarded as a movement in which

⁴³ Nightingale, *op. cit.* no. 37, 114. For other, more detailed examples, see M. Parisse, “Un évêque réformateur: Gauzelin de Toul (922-962)” in J.-F. Cottier, M. Gravel & S. Rossignol (eds.), *Ad libros! Mélanges d’études médiévales offerts à Denise Angers et Joseph-Claude Poulin* (2010), p. 69, 82.

⁴⁴ Calmet, *op. cit.* no. 26, lviii.

⁴⁵ Nightingale, *op. cit.* no. 37, 8-9.

ecclesiastical parties attempted to restore the position of Lotharingian abbeys in both religious and administrative terms. Bishop Gauzelin's actions were therefore part of a larger process which others before and after him continued in Lotharingia in the 9th and 10th centuries.

The abbey of Saint-Mihiel, to whose endowment the church at Essey belonged, had witnessed some of the intellectual and spiritual antecedents of the ideals which were to inform the Gorze movement in the diocese of Toul. In the early 9th century, Smaragdus made Saint-Mihiel a centre of monastic renewal by relocating the monastery, which provided him with the opportunity to shape the buildings and habits of the community according to the principles which he penned down in *Diadema monachorum*. Also, Smaragdus's fear of the furtive thief or violent plunderer of earthly property in *Diadema* suggests that he shared with later advocates of the Gorze reform a concern for the status of abbatial property and its (negative) impact on the contemplative life. During his own lifetime, Smaragdus found a parallel spirit in bishop Frothar of Toul (r. 813-847) who had received his education from the abbey of Gorze. In the 820s, Frothar wrote a letter to Louis the Pious pointing out Smaragdus's attempts to further the Benedictine rule at the abbey of Moyenmoutier.⁴⁶

Gauzelin's intervention in Maizerais should not be seen as solely an attempt to solve a financial problem for a religious community in need. The connection of the

⁴⁶ For more information on Frothar's life, see A. Calmet, *Bibliothèque lorraine ou histoire des hommes illustres* (1751), pp. 394-396 and Calmet, *op. cit.* no 26, clx. For the letter written by Frothar and Smaragdus, see *PL* 106, 865-866.

illegal cult with Saint-Mihiel would have provided Gauzelin with an excellent opportunity to protect religious fervour and reinstate authority to the abbey which had once been at the forefront of the development of those ideals of the Gorze reform.

Beside destroying an illegal place of worship, the creation of other art and architecture proved to be another means of advocating religiosity. The extent of Gauzelin's patronage is largely conjecture, but some instances are known. In his efforts to advocate the ideals of the Gorze reform, he was responsible for the foundation of new Benedictine abbeys, including one for women at Bouxières-aux-Dames near Nancy in 935-936.⁴⁷ His actions were also motivated by the political situation. After a Hungarian invasion in 954 left Toul sacked and destroyed again, Gauzelin was tasked with the reconstruction of the cathedral.⁴⁸ He likely ordered repairs to the existing structure built by Ludelmus because there is no evidence to suggest he initiated the construction of a new building. Choux has suggested that, at the time of Gauzelin's death in 962, the cathedral was in such a bad state that the bishop expressed a wish to be buried in the Benedictine abbey of Bouxières-aux-Dames instead.⁴⁹ This is unlikely. Even though the new cathedral of Toul may have been less grand than it was in Ludelmus's time, and even less so compared with Frothar's, Gauzelin nevertheless had the means to fill the structure with great

⁴⁷ Lionnois, *op. cit.* no. 42, 597-600.

⁴⁸ Georges, *op. cit.* no. 42, 124; Straehli, *Dictionnaire biographique des prêtres du diocèse de Nancy et de Toul*, 15-16. Guillaume, *op. cit.* no. 29, 96-97; M. Barrucand, "Le trésor de saint Gauzelin à la cathédrale de Nancy," *Le Pays lorrain: revue régionale bi-mensuelle illustrée* no. 2 (1982), p. 92.

⁴⁹ Barrucand *op. cit.* no. 48, 89; Choux, *op. cit.* no. 30, 99-143.

Figure 2 Binding of Bishop Gauzelin's Gospels depicting the Lamb of God with *vexillum* surrounded by the four creatures symbolizing the four Evangelists, c. 950-1000, France. Photo: Cathedral of Nancy. After E. Molinier & F. Marcou, *Exposition rétrospective de l'art français des origines à 1800, 1900*, p. 72, cat. no. 1583.



splendour. We get an impression of this from various surviving, magnificent liturgical objects which are possibly from the time of his episcopacy. After Gauzelin's death in 962, this collection of liturgical and artistic objects was ceded together with his mortal remains to the abbey of Bouxières-aux-Dames, where the bishop was venerated as a saint and his tomb became a place of enduring pilgrimage.

The surviving collection consists of a chalice and plate made of gold studded with gems, an evangeliary with a gold-chased binding (**Fig. 2**), a ring, an ivory comb

and an ivory plaque depicting the Crucifixion.⁵⁰ Supposing that at least a part of the collection dates from Gauzelin's time, the liturgical objects give a sense of the splendour and artistic productivity with which Gauzelin might have been able to surround himself. Moreover, although it is not possible to know if or ascertain how Gauzelin redecorated the cathedral in Toul, one may assume that he would have endeavoured to create a religious space that would match the visual impact of the liturgical objects.⁵¹

Here too the writings of Frothar and Smaragdus may provide a theoretical framework. Frothar's career had brought him to various instances which showed the power of art and architecture as means of communication. He had been responsible for several additions to the royal residences at Aachen and Gondreville, as can be found in his surviving correspondence with Abbot Hilduin of Saint-Denis (d. c. 855). For example, at Gondreville he was charged with the construction of a roofed balcony connecting the palace with its chapel. He also constructed a stone wall as a replacement for a wooden structure.⁵² His surviving writings show that his education at the abbey of Gorze and his career also provided him with an awareness of the connection between art and religiosity in a rhetorical sense. In another letter to the same Hilduin, who himself undertook the reform of his abbey to the Benedictine rule, Frothar wrote how he wanted to "contemplate the face of your [Hilduin's] dignity [...] indeed to gaze upon the temples of most pious religiosity through which

⁵⁰ Barrucand, *op. cit.* no. 48, 90-95.

⁵¹ *Idem*, 92, 94, 97, 100-105.

⁵² *PL* 106, 870-871.

I receive spiritual guidance and also gain the redeeming ornaments of sainthood.”⁵³

Frothar’s choice for the words *templa*, which can be interpreted as houses of worship or as the temples of one’s head, and *ornamenta*, which can be read as artistic decoration and liturgical objects or more transcendental honours, shows his knowledge and capacity to conjure up a close association of artistically minded terms with theological and rhetorical principles which would have been well known to his contemporaries.⁵⁴ Smaragdus, who called his own work on asceticism and the contemplative life a “diadem,” was very much part of this tradition.

Frothar’s focus on the importance of the gaze and contemplation (which he mentions in his letter to Hilduin) is also reflected in his patronage for the cathedral of Toul. During his episcopacy, he commissioned frescoes or murals for the cathedral he built, showing a notable interest in expressive colour schemes.⁵⁵ This is illustrated by a letter to abbot Aglemare of the abbey of Saint-Claude (Jura) in which Frothar asked to send him the best (and coincidentally the most expensive) colours he could find for the murals in Toul, namely gold, indigo, azure, vermillion, green, and mercury.⁵⁶ Although nothing has survived of these works, Frothar’s focus on colour gives a sense of the visual impact he intended for the cathedral. Within the spatial experience of a church, brightly coloured visual narratives could accommodate the

⁵³ *Cupimus nihilominus vestrae Dignitatis ora contemplari, vestrae solertiae eloquiis in Domino perfrui: quin etiam templa piissimae religionis intueri, quibus et spiritalia Monita capiamus, et salutaria sanctitatis ornamenta sumamus. PL 106, 863.*

⁵⁴ M. Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (1989), pp. 115-120.

⁵⁵ Calmet, *op. cit.* no. 47, 395.

⁵⁶ Calmet could not identify the abbot and only describes Aglemare as being “from a monastery far away.” Calmet, *op. cit.* no. 47, x. Choux and Thirion, however, say Aglemare was from an abbey of Saint-Claude, which is possibly the one located in the Jura. Choux, *op. cit.* no. 30, 17-18; Thirion, *op. cit.* no. 30, 280.

gaze he found so important and incite certain feelings or emotions.

Emotions were important vehicles for religiosity according to Smaragdus. He put quite a lot of emphasis on the sincerity of emotion in *Diadema*, which he wrote in the decade before Frothar started work on the new cathedral of Toul. This is most evident in those passages in which the act of crying receives attention. In chapters 17 and 19, Smaragdus explains that the worth of one's tears, when shown at a moment of confession or remorse, is only guaranteed by true intention.⁵⁷ For "heart-felt remorse is humility of the mind mixed with tears, borne from the recollection of sin and the fear of judgement."⁵⁸ Although *Diadema* had been composed for a monastic audience with the specific aim to revive the Benedictine rule, the formulation of these chapters is such that it could apply to any Christian. Frothar must have known that art could tap into the genuine experience of particular emotions which Smaragdus described as essential to the "true" existence of a Christian, whether an audience was literate or not.

Inciting emotions and religiosity through the interplay of religious art and architecture remained important in Gauzelin's time, as is illustrated by a fairly-contemporaneous altar and fresco erected and painted at some point between 888-915 for the crypt in the abbey church of Saint Maximin in Trier (**Fig. 3**).⁵⁹ Although the ensemble is now housed in the Museum am Dom in Trier and the altar itself is

⁵⁷ *PL* 102, 613-614, 615-616.

⁵⁸ *Compunctio cordis est humilitas mentis cum lacrymis, exoriens de recordation peccati, et timore iudicii. PL* 102, 613.

⁵⁹ For more information on the dating of the frescoes by various authors, see M. Exner, *Die Fresken der Krypta von St. Maximin in Trier und ihre Stellung in der spätkarolingischen Wandmalerei* (1989), pp. 30-44.



Figure 3 Crucifixion altar and frescoes, originally in the crypt of the abbey church of St. Maximin in Trier, now in the Museum am Dom, c. 888-935, Germany. Photo: Museum am Dom Trier / Rudolf Schneider (CC BY-NC-SA). After <https://rlp.museum-digital.de/index.php?t=objekt&oges=2435>.

lost, we can reconstruct a part of the original experience. The altar was framed by a large Crucifixion fresco above and on either side by low, protruding walls which contained relics and which are decorated with a cycle of eight saints standing underneath arches. Due to the altar's central position, liturgical objects would have stood at the feet of the crucified Christ and interacted with the attributes of the



Figure 4 Detail of the Crucifixion altar from St. Maximin, Trier. Photo: After: J. Mercieca "La Crucifixion: iconographie et spatialisation des peintures murales entre le IXe et le début du XIe siècle dans l'Occident chrétien," *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre | BUCEMA*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2017), 11, fig. 6. With kind permission of the author.

chalice and the serpent depicted below. These last two elements were salient.

Mercieca has shown that various frescoes of the Crucifixion in the Carolingian

Empire from the 9th century onwards showed innovation in terms of composition

and iconography in an attempt to find new ways of inciting a physical and mental experience of the depicted scene.⁶⁰ Commissioned at a time when numbers of pilgrims to Trier were growing, the fresco incorporated two elements introduced to representations of the Crucifixion in the 9th century, namely the chalice below Christ's feet and the crawling serpent (**Fig. 4**).⁶¹ While the chalice symbolizes the blood of Christ, the serpent recalls the relationship of death, brought on by sin, with everlasting life through Christ's redemption. The pilgrim's gaze would inevitably be guided to these two iconographical elements because of their location right behind that part of the altar where visually appealing liturgical objects would have stood at certain times.⁶² From there, the gaze would go up to Christ who seems to rise from the altar which is filled with relics and replete with liturgical objects, especially those associated with the celebration of the Eucharist. With the addition of shimmering of candlelight, the air heavy with incense, and the presence of praying pilgrims whose gazes were directed towards the altar and the crucified Christ, it becomes clear how the St. Maximin fresco anticipated a close association between the subject matter and the objects present on the altar; all of which echoed Frothar's focus on the gaze and inciting emotions -- not too dissimilar from those described by Smaragdus.

The altar and frescoes from the abbey of St. Maximin date from before the destruction of the cathedral of Toul in 954. It is tempting to think of the theory that

⁶⁰ J. Mercieca, "La Crucifixion: iconographie et spatialisation des peintures murales entre le IX^e et le début du XI^e siècle dans l'Occident chrétien," *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre | BUCEMA*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2017), pp. 1-3. See also M. Exner, *Die Fresken der Krypta von St. Maximin in Trier und ihre Stellung in der spätkarolingischen Wandmalerei* (1989), pp. 1-20.

⁶¹ Mercieca, *op. cit.* no. 60, 11.

⁶² Exner points out the former presence of candles and precious reliquaries. Exner, *op. cit.* no. 60, 43-44.

Gauzelin commissioned some of the valuable liturgical objects kept in Nancy in an attempt to create a similar place of pilgrimage in his own cathedral, perhaps even for the altar for Saint Martin in the crypt constructed by his predecessor Ludelmus. Even though Toul did not have the same resources at its disposal as the abbey of Saint Maximin, which was one of the eldest and wealthiest at the time, the close communication of precious liturgical objects with their spatial context on the Crucifixion altar in Trier is something to which Gauzelin might have aspired for the cathedral of Toul, both before and after the destruction in 954.

Compared with his actions at Maizerais, Gauzelin's mission to safeguard the future of his diocese and of its religious communities resulted in both the construction and destruction of religious art and architecture. While this may seem like a paradox to the modern eye, it would not have been a strange phenomenon to Gauzelin or his contemporaries in Lotharingia. For example, some years earlier, in 939, a nobleman called Adalbero, who collaborated with Otto I in a punitive expedition against Lotharingia, had destroyed an abbey church in Thionville which was dedicated to Saint Maximin. Three years later, in 942, Adalbero consecrated a new church with the same dedication on the same spot with great pomp.⁶³ This was not done without its reason, for to rebuild a church was to assert authority.

To Gauzelin, religious art could be used to promote his ideals. In Toul he could create it as a polemical act against constructions like the chapel at Maizerais

⁶³ Benoist, *op. cit.* no. 14, f. 17; Nightingale, *op. cit.* no. 37, 241

which he would destroy. The openly hostile reaction displayed by the three bishops of Toul against the cult at Maizerais should be seen in the larger context of ecclesiastical hierarchy and authority trying to assert itself in the face of local, divergent practices. At a time when power structures were perceived to be fluid and unstable, art and architecture played a significant role as one of the few means of communicating messages and propaganda to large crowds. Consequently, control over systems of artistic patronage meant having influence over at least a part of public discourse.

Yet the question remains *why* a chapel was constructed in Maizerais without the approval of either Saint-Mihiel or the bishops of Toul. An answer may lie in the patron of the chapel, who is identified by Gauzelin's proclamation letter as a *comes* Widricus. I argue that this person is the same as the nobleman Widricus who served as *comes palatii* under various rulers of Lotharingia.

Nothing is known about this Widricus's early years, his education, or his background, but his title of *comes palatii* suggests that he was from an aristocratic background. Widricus's first documentary appearance dates from 899, when Zwentibold granted the monastery of the Cathedral of Trier the right to abstain from certain taxes to the Crown. Widricus and his relative Richquinus, who are described as "revered counts" (*venerandi comites*), had mentioned the financial hardship they were in after hosting Zwentibold's retinue at their expense at the said monastery in

Trier.⁶⁴ Later documents confirm Widricus's important position in courtly circles and beyond. After Zwentibold's untimely death, Widricus appears to have retained his influence, especially within his own lands. In 902, he was the first to sign Louis the Child's decision to bestow more financial privileges on the Cathedral of Trier.⁶⁵ Seven years later, in 909, we find him again as the first signing attendant in his capacity as *comes* in the province Bidgau in Lotharingia for the transferral of some lands that were located *in comitatu Widrici*.⁶⁶

During the estimated period in which the chapel at Maizerais was built, between 895 and 905, Widricus was already a powerful figure with the means to construct and furnish a chapel with the objects described earlier. One can only guess why he would do this in Maizerais. As mentioned earlier, the inhabitants of the diocese of Toul had proved to be unwilling to obey to existing authorities. Moreover, the abbey of Saint-Mihiel kept struggling to retain its grip over its endowments and local religious practices, resulting in the peculiar re-donation by Zwentibold in 895. It has been shown that communities in Lotharingia could easily switch loyalties to rival lords and patrons waiting for the right moment.⁶⁷ Given the instability of existing power structures in the diocese of Toul to which Maizerais belonged, it is possible that Widricus took or received the opportunity to shower his patronage on the

⁶⁴ Here he appears as "Uuidiacus." H. Beyer, *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der jetzt die Preussischen Regierungsbezirke Coblenz und Trier bildenden mittelrheinischen Territorien* (1860), vol. I, p. 212. [...] *quod Richquinus et Uuidiacus venerandi comites nostri iudicante nobis homines s. Petri in civitate manentes* [...]. *Idem*.

⁶⁵ His name is spelled "Wigericus" here. T. Schieffer, *Diplomata 11: Die Urkunden Zwentibolds und Ludwigs des Kindes* (1960), pp.120-121.

⁶⁶ Beyer, *op. cit.* no. 64, 216.

⁶⁷ Nightingale, *op. cit.* no. 37, 10.

community of Maizerais without consent from Saint-Mihiel or Toul. The construction of a new chapel, especially if it was dedicated to Saint Gibrien whose cult was significant in Maizerais, would have been a powerful and conspicuous move to gain favour from the local populace. Nevertheless, this leaves open the question of Widricus's ulterior motives for the foundation of a chapel at Maizerais. Beside the opportunities offered by the fluidity of power structures in the area, religious concerns may have also motivated him to construct a votive chapel.

If this Widricus is the same Widricus who was deemed responsible by Gauzelin for the construction of the chapel at Maizerais, it will provide some answers. In the formulation of bishop Gauzelin letter from 944, it is striking that, when describing how the chapel at Maizerais was built, Gauzelin chose to describe the patron Widricus as "corrupted by the advice of some injurious men" (*depravatus consilio quorundam iniquorum*). The formulation suggests that Gauzelin was keen to put the actual blame of the illegal construction on the retinue of the count instead of on Widricus himself. The Widricus *comes palatii* would have been a powerful enemy, both for his close connections at court and for the resources he had access to.

Widricus's influential position may also explain the difference in the behaviour of the bishops Ludelmus, Drogo, and Gauzelin against the controversial chapel. As we saw earlier, the letter stated that bishop Ludelmus responded quickly after hearing of the chapel. He stripped the chapel of its religious objects and bells and he (unsuccessfully) tried to condemn it. His successor bishop Drogo appears to have been much less active against the cult, if we may believe Gauzelin's letter and

his formulation of “only words and excommunications.” Gauzelin, on the other hand, took a more active approach like Ludelmus. What may have motivated Drogo’s comparatively hesitant approach? His career may have been an important factor. A nobleman himself, Drogo had enjoyed royal patronage. He was appointed abbot of a monastery of Bonmoutier (Val-et-Châtillon, Vosges) through the efforts of Charles the Simple and later abbot of a monastery in Poulangy, some 120 km south of Essey-et-Maizerais, in the diocese of Langres by Louis the Child in the early part of the 10th century.⁶⁸ Schneider has shown that the appointment of Drogo to the religious community at Poulangy was because Poulangy was located in the *pagus* of Bassigny which, together with the diocese of Toul, had been assigned to the kingdom of Lotharingia at the Treaty of Meerssen in 870.⁶⁹ By placing members of their courtly circles in certain positions all over Lotharingia, Charles the Simple and later Louis the Child endeavoured to keep tight reins on the loyalty of local communities in their newly shaped kingdoms.

Was Drogo’s apparent lack of physical interference with the chapel at Maizerais, as suggested by Gauzelin, a result from his desire to avoid conflict with the court and with Widricus in particular? His interference with the chapel at Maizerais would have been a direct attack against Widricus *comes palatii* who, as several documents suggest, remained an important player in courtly circles throughout Drogo’s episcopacy at Toul. In 911 and 915, Widricus and his son

⁶⁸ Mabillon, *op. cit.*, no. 6, 322; Calmet, *op. cit.* no. 26, lxxviii; Gaillard, *op. cit.* no. 17, 399-403.

⁶⁹ J. Schneider, “Spatializing Meerssen: Monasteries in Jurassian Burgundy (6th - 9thc.),” *Bulletin du centre d’études médiévales d’Auxerre | BUCEMA*, vol. 22, no. 1 (2018), p. 11.

Adalbero were given the *advocatus* of, respectively, the abbeys of Mechelen and Hastière, by Charles the Simple, which meant that they performed certain secular responsibilities for both religious communities.⁷⁰ On 19 January 916, Widricus was present in the Pfalz at Herstal near Liège as a member of “the gathering of all our loyal nobles,” as a decree by King Charles put it, in order to discuss the transferral of the abbey of Susteren to the Abbey of Prüm.⁷¹ At some point Widricus married Charles the Simple’s niece Kunigunde.⁷² The count therefore exercised power at court and was close to several monarchs.

If we bear in mind the efforts of Drogo to gain the favour of the inhabitants of his diocese and the damage done to his reputation following the translation of the body of Saint Èvre in c. 918, Drogo may have felt he had to pick his battles. The chapel at Maizerais then, despite posing a financial threat to the abbey of Saint-Mihiel and defying ecclesiastical authority, may have been a topic not high on Drogo’s agenda among the many other issues which he had to face. Widricus died in 921-922, the same period in which bishop Drogo drew his last breath. Consequently, Drogo’s entire episcopacy had proceeded under the shadow of the count’s influence.⁷³

Although Gauzelin was appointed bishop of Toul through royal interference,

⁷⁰ H.-C. Wampach, *Urkunden- und Quellenbuch zur Geschichte der altluxemburgischen Territorien bis zur burgundischen Zeit* vol. I, (1935), pp. 164-166.

⁷¹ *Receuil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. IX, pp. 526-527; Nightingale *op. cit.* no. 37, 72; H. Lösslein, “Possibilities of Royal Power in the Late Carolingian Age. Charles III ‘the Simple,’” (PhD Diss., Ludwigs-Maximilians-Universität München and Université de Limoges, 2017), p. 177.

⁷² Nightingale, *op. cit.* no. 37, 72-73; Lösslein, *op. cit.* no. 71, 171.

⁷³ Nightingale states that Widricus died between 916-919, but Lösslein has shown that this more likely took place in 921-922. Nightingale, *op. cit.* no. 37, 72; Lösslein, *op. cit.* no. 71, 180-181.

Widricus's demise would have meant that he did not have to deal with the possible threat posed by the count.⁷⁴ Moreover, it may be no coincidence that Gauzelin was accompanied by bishop Adalbero of Metz during the demolition at Maizerais, for the latter was the son of Widricus *comes palatii*.⁷⁵ There appears to be no source on Adalbero's relationship with his father Widricus, so we may only speculate about the possible motivations behind his interference with his father's foundation. Idealism and genuine belief probably played a significant role. As we saw earlier, Adalbero was one of the most important advocates of the Gorze reform. Although the chapel at Maizerais may have well been a product of his father's patronage, Adalbero would have also been more than aware of the implications which the unlawful patronage of an illegally established chapel encompassed for both religious practices and existing power structures.

The case of the illegal cult at Maizerais is a prime example of the position of art and architecture within the complex relationship with authority which went far beyond local suspicion against episcopal power in and around Toul. In the preceding, it has been argued that the destruction of the chapel in the hamlet of Maizerais was not an isolated event but that it was reflective of various larger developments taking place in 10th-century Lotharingia. Motivated by a mix of factors born from political instability and the ideals of the Gorze reform, the attempts by bishops of Toul to destroy a chapel in a small village give a sense of their anxiety to

⁷⁴ Labbe, *op. cit.* no. 42, 124.

⁷⁵ M. Parisse, "Généalogie de la maison d'Ardenne," *Publications de la section historique de l'Institut G.-D. de Luxembourg* vol. 95 (1981), pp. 9-50.

re-assert their authority.

Due to the perceived fluidity of power structures, it had been possible to construct a cult without ecclesiastical consent. Whatever the motivations were, its patron Widricus obviously had paid no attention to either the interests of the bishops of Toul or the abbey of Saint-Mihiel. Like many other abbeys and religious institutes before and after, the abbey of Saint-Mihiel suffered from its ever-loosening grip on its endowments. The gradual loss of authority had been one motivation for a surge in the revival of the rule of Saint Benedict and the re-organizing of abbatial administration, now broadly known as the Gorze reform.

Moreover, the identification of Widricus *comes palatii* as the patron for the chapel at Maizerais not only illustrates the complexity of the situation in which adherents of the Gorze reform had to act to safeguard the interests of their abbeys or dioceses. It also shows that battling unlawful patronage could be a lengthy process with many setbacks due to the highly political nature of donations of religious constructions. Beside the extreme measures sometimes taken against unlawful donations and appropriations, the recurring plundering and destructions of Toul paradoxically placed succeeding bishops of Toul in the simultaneous position of active patronage. Restoring and destroying a chapel or church could be two sides of the same coin. 🐞