

Becoming Jeremiah: Paschasius Radbertus on Wala, himself and others

“Let our lamentation for these lost fathers be communal, from now on, for our gain was a communal one, since we lived with them under so much discipline. Recalling their activities and enumerating their virtues, the spirit cannot remain unmoved, yet in that very emotion of the spirit and in that grief we are invigorated, and our affection is renewed, above all for those of us who have known them. Moreover, as for me, who has been with them when they embarked on this [the foundation of Corvey], as by a trick of my brain I always see their absence as a presence: when they went on a journey, when they remained in a given place, when they disposed of assorted affairs, when they were in counsel, and when they conversed with each other; when with my eyes I drank in their grace, with my ears I absorbed the exhortations they uttered, and caught the words they spoke. If nowadays it is the joy of my mind to look back on all this, what do you think, my dearest brothers, how great the bliss was back then, how great the joy, how blessed those times, when in their presence I saw them engaging in all this? I tell you that I cannot recount how often I tacitly admired their virtues, and how much I congratulated myself that the Lord gave me such men as patrons, in whose company (consortium), however unworthy, I was the third party.”¹

This was how Adalhard, the abbot of Corbie, and his brother and successor Wala, co-founders of the monastery of Corvey, were remembered by the monk who called himself Paschasius Radbertus.² He did so in his Epitaphium Arsenii, a memorial for Wala which consisted of two books. The first was written shortly after Wala’s death in 836, while the second may have been finished as late as the 850s.³ The first book of the Epitaphium has attracted less interest, for this ‘only’ deals with Wala in a monastic context, but the second has fared differently, because of all its information on the rebellions against Louis the Pious in 830 and 833, and its occasionally trenchant criticism of this ruler and his spouse Judith. All the same, this second book presents obvious difficulties to those who want to use it as a source of information for the politics of the 830s, for, if this part of the text was only finished the 850s, how reliable then were Radbert’s recollections of the 830s and Wala’s role in the rebellions? How can one distinguish between the historical Wala and the concerns of a later generation, to

¹ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium Arsenii I, 15 (ed. Ernst Ludwig Dümmler, Abhandlungen der königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, phil.-hist. Cl. 2, Berlin 1900) 43: *Deinde communis sit noster gemitus pro amissis patribus: quia commune nostrum fuit lucrum, quia cum eis sub tanta disciplina viximus. Nam in repetendis eorum officiis, recensendisque virtutibus non potest non affici animus; sed tamen in ipsa affectione animi et merore recreamur, et renovatur affectus, maxime qui eos vidimus. Praeterea mihi, qui cum eis fui, quando eadem inchoarent, quasi reflexa cervice absentiam eorum semper praesentem intueor; cum irent in via, cum essent in loco, cum disponderent singula, cum essent in consilio, et fabularentur ad invicem; cum haurirem oculis eorum gratiam, et auribus perciperem sermones quos proponebant, et exciperem verba quae dicebant. Quod si mihi nunc jucunditas est mentis ea respicere, quid putatis, charissimi, quanta erat tunc gratia, quanta laetitia, quam beata tempora, cum eos viderem tanta et talia meditantes? Fateor quia non possum retexere, quantum virtutes eorum ipse mecum tacitus admirabar, quantumque mihi applaudebam, quod tales mihi Dominus dederit patronos, quorum in consortio, etsi indignus, tertius eram.*

² Dümmler’s edition is difficult to come by; the only alternative is Jacques-Paul Migne, PL 120 (Paris 1852) 1557–1650, which is Dom Jacques Mabillon’s text; for Paschasius Radbertus’ Vita Adalhardi, see *ibid.* 1507–1556. The translation by Allen Cabaniss, Charlemagne’s Cousins. Contemporary Lives of Adalhard and Wala (New York 1967), is often unreliable. On the Epitaphium Arsenii, including its literary models, see David Ganz, The Epitaphium Arsenii and opposition to Louis the Pious, in: Charlemagne’s Heir. New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious (814–840), ed. Peter Godman/Roger Collins (Oxford 1990) 537–550; *id.*, Corbie in the Carolingian Renaissance (Beihefte der Francia 21, Sigmaringen 1990) 112–120; see also Walter Berschin, Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter 3: Karolingische Biographie, 770–920 (Stuttgart 1991) 318–325. On the influence of the Rule of Benedict on the Epitaphium Arsenii, see Henry Mayr-Harting, Two abbots in politics: Wala of Corbie and Bernard of Clairvaux, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 5th ser. 40 (1989) 217–237. There is an excellent study by Chiara Verri, Il libro primo dell’*Epitaphium Arsenii* di Pascasio Radberto, in: *Bullettino dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 103 (2001/2002) 33–131, which I discovered too late to integrate into this article. The same holds true for Alexandru Cizek, Der “Charakterismus” in der *Vita Adalhardi* des Radbert von Corbie, in: *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 7 (1989) 185–204. I am grateful to Courtney M. Booker for sending me the latter two references.

³ Ganz, *Opposition* 538f.

which Radbert belonged, once he finished the entire work? In other words, how can one keep apart Radbert, the author, and his subject, Wala?⁴ And this is not the only problem of identification this text poses.

Wala's death had left his monks bereft like orphans grieving for a parent, Radbert said, and his Epitaphium, or funeral oration, was a consolation for their grief since remembering the dead abbot meant evoking his presence. Radbert's Epitaphium was inspired by Ambrose's *De excessu fratris*, a two-part commemoration and consolation upon the death of Ambrose's brother Satyrus. In the second oration, Ambrose meditated on death as an end to earthly sorrows, and on the promise of resurrection.⁵ Another important model, however, was the monastic dialogue, in which a younger monk interrogated an older and more knowledgeable brother. This genre was at the heart of late antique and early medieval monastic literature. John Cassian's *Collationes* is one well-known example, and the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great is another, but the model that comes closest to Radbert's Epitaphium Arsenii is Sulpicius' Severus' *Dialogues* on the virtues of St. Martin.⁶ Here as well, the usual interrogation of the master by the pupil was expanded to a confabulation between three interlocutors. Such a *confabulatio*, a religious conversation within an intimate and restricted circle of learned and learning participants, also determined the basic structure of the Epitaphium. All the monks who reflected on Wala's life and deeds – five in all in the first book, and three in the second – were referred to by nicknames, some of which were taken from classical literature (Chremes, from Terence, and Teofrastus, from Cicero).⁷ The main actors in the events discussed by the monks also went by the nicknames they already bore, or by aliases assigned to them in the Epitaphium. Some of these derived from a loosely defined 'world of Ambrose'. Wala's alias was Arsenius, after the Arsenius (d. 450) who had been counsellor to Theodosius the Great and tutor to his son Honorius; Radbert's nemesis, the Empress Judith, was named Justina, after the wife of the Emperor Valentinian I, who had been the relentless enemy of Ambrose. Radbert himself figures in the Epitaphium as Paschasius, the monastic teacher who, prompted by the questions and objections of his interlocutors, developed the narrative.⁸

Radbert did not use these by-names and aliases to hide anyone's identity, but to characterise the principals of his narrative, and clarify their moral status from the outset. Put differently, his characters derived their depth and meaning from the connotations with familiar figures from Scripture, Christian history and classical literature. Such by-naming already had a long insular and continental pedigree before Alcuin famously practised it, in York and at the Carolingian court.⁹ It certainly had a playful element, but there was nothing frivolous about it. The relationship between a person and his by-name most resembled the connection created by biblical typology. If David was the *typus* of Christ, calling Charlemagne 'David' meant that his qualities were associated not only with those of his Old Testament predecessor, but also, implicitly, with those of the Saviour. Something similar pertains for non-biblical typology; Wala's by-name 'Arsenius' defined him as a teacher and an imperial counsellor of the highest level, but it also linked the world of Carolingian politics with that illustrious Christian past of Ambrose and Theodosius. As Mary Garrison expressed it, "to devise a type or an archetype for a contemporary person is one way of attempting to link profane everyday time with a realm of transcendent

⁴ A problem also discussed more extensively in Mayke de Jong, *The Penitential State. Authority and Atonement in the Age of Louis the Pious (814–840)* (Cambridge 2009) 102–111, 195–201; I am preparing an English translation of the Epitaphium Arsenii, as well as a more extensive study of the text.

⁵ Ganz, *Opposition* 543; Peter von Moos, *Consolatio. Studien zur mittellateinischen Trostliteratur über den Tod und zum Problem der christlichen Trauer* (Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 3, München 1971–1972) 1, 140–142 and 2, 100–101. Ambrose, *De excessu fratris Satyri* (ed. Otto Faller, CSEL 73, Wien 1955) 207–325.

⁶ Cf. Verri, *Il libro primo dell'Epitaphium Arsenii* 34, n. 4; Sulpice Sévère, Gallus. *Dialogues sur les "vertus" de Saint Martin* (ed. and trans. Jacques Fontaine/Nicole Dupré, Sources Chrétiennes 510, Paris 2006). On *confabulatio*, see Detlev Illmer, *Erziehung und Wissensvermittlung im frühen Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Schule* (Kastellaun/Hunsrück 1979) 58–60; on the dialogue as a vehicle for biography, cf. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil* 325.

⁷ Ganz, *Corbie* 112–113; in the first book, both Allebigus and Chremes only intervene incidentally, so the basic number of interlocutors remained just three; on the importance of this number, see Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium II*, prologue, ed. Dümmler 60: ... *quatinus et veritas per eum, quasi sub tribus testibus, melius commendetur; et noster planctus non diversus vel numero inveniatur* (cf. 2 Cor. 13, 1).

⁸ Dümmler's edition refers to *Pascasius*, but in order not to create more confusion, I shall refer to the narrator of the Epitaphium as Paschasius.

⁹ Mary Garrison, *The social world of Alcuin. Nicknames at York and at the Carolingian court*, in: Alcuin of York, ed. L.A.J.R. Houwen/Alasdair Andrew MacDonald (*Germania Latina* 3, Groningen 1998) 59–79.

meaning”.¹⁰ This also held true for Radbert’s naming strategies: the by-names chosen revealed the deeper and eternal truth hidden behind the confusing events of one’s own life-time.

Radbert’s by-names and aliases deserve a more in-depth investigation than I can present here. In this contribution to a collective volume on authors and their identities in the early Middle Ages, I will concentrate on the way in which Radbert defined and presented himself in the *Epitaphium Arsenii*. He was present in his own text at different levels, as the narrator and teacher Paschasius, and as a main character in Paschasius’ stories. This Paschasius was part of the grieving monastic community which had lost its leader, but he was also in the foreground, as the ‘third man’ in the *consortium* with Adalhard and Wala, and he depicted himself as someone who knew his way around the palace. Furthermore, by calling himself ‘Paschasius’, Radbert made a clear statement about himself. But who was this alias, why did Radbert choose to identify with ‘Paschasius’, and why did he consequently refer to himself by this name in the *Epitaphium Arsenii*? Obviously, it is the connection between Radbert and his alias which interests me, but in order to discuss this clearly, I will have to distinguish them: in what follows, I will refer to the author and historical figure as Radbert, and to his literary creation as Paschasius. Before I get back to my central points of self-definition and self-presentation, I shall give a brief sketch of Radbert’s life. This was closely interwoven with the turbulent careers of Adalhard and Wala, of which I can only provide the barest outline here.¹¹ This article is the beginning of a more comprehensive project on Radbert’s reflections on his own world, in biography and exegesis, in which the *Epitaphium Arsenii* will serve as my point of departure.¹²

Radbert never mentioned his own parents, and he may not have had any clear memory of them. As a very young child, most likely as a child oblate, he was taken to the convent of St. Mary in Soissons, of which Theodrada, half-sister to Adalhard and sister to Wala, was the abbess. In later life, Radbert wrote to the nuns of St. Mary: “Nothing else are you except for a sacrifice to God, the vowed gift of your parents, the possession of the Holy Spirit by whose infusion you have been sanctified and nourished.”¹³ Something similar must have held true for Radbert himself. Throughout life, he remained deeply grateful to the nuns who had brought him up; among the last exegetical works Radbert wrote was the commentary on Psalm 44 which he dedicated to the community of St. Mary’s. There, he recalled that, before becoming a monk in Corbie, he had been “exiled for a long time in the world” (*exulatus longdiu in saeculo*). Temporarily, Radbert said, he had lost the crown, that is, his tonsure, which he received as a little boy (*puerulus*) at the altar of St. Mary’s, in a rite accompanied by the nuns’ praying and singing.¹⁴ Given that Radbert’s monastic profession in Corbie took place in 812 or shortly thereafter, his date of birth must have fallen sometime between 785 and 795, otherwise this ‘long exile’ would make no sense. In adolescence or young adulthood, Radbert led a worldly life, but one which enabled him to become very learned indeed; it is not impossible that he exchanged St. Mary’s for the court.

Spiritually and practically, Theodrada became Radbert’s mother, which explains much about his deep attachment to herself and her siblings. From 812 onwards, his life became dominated by monastic fathers: Adalhard and Wala. As Radbert stressed, this was a family of royal blood (*regalis prosapia*).¹⁵ Their father, Bernhard, was an illegitimate son of Charles Martel, and thereby a half-brother of King Pippin III. From his first union with a Frankish noblewoman Adalhard was born, but his younger siblings, including Wala and

¹⁰ Garrison, *Social world* 60.

¹¹ See Lorenz Weinrich, Wala. Graf, Mönch und Rebell. Die Biographie eines Karolingers (Historische Studien 386, Lübeck 1963); Brigitte Kasten, Adalhard von Corbie. Die Biographie eines karolingischen Politikers und Klostervorstehers (Studia humaniora 3, Düsseldorf 1986); also De Jong, *The Penitential State*.

¹² My new project on perceptions of early Christianity in the Carolingian period will take the *Epitaphium Arsenii* and the *Vita Adalhardi* as a point of departure; this will include an integral translation of both texts.

¹³ Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in psalmum 44*, 3 (ed. Beda Paulus, CC CM 94 [= PL 120, 1040B], Turnhout 1991) 104: *Nihil enim aliud estis quam sacrificium Deo, vota parentum, possessio sancti Spiritus cuius infusione sanctificatae estis et nutritae*. Cf. Henri Peltier, *Paschase Radbert, abbé de Corbie* (Amiens 1938) 30f.; Mayke de Jong, *In Samuel’s Image. Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden/New York/Köln 1995) 126–127.

¹⁴ Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in psalmum 44*, 3 (ed. Beda Paulus, CC CM 94 [= PL 120, 1040B], Turnhout 1991) 74: *Quas cum in dextris benignissimi Dei et Salvatoris nostri Christi contueor multiplici varietate decorates ingemisco valde eo quod coronam quam susceperam puerulus coram sancto altare Genitricis Dei vestris cum precibus et officio laudis quo vestra spons<o> Deo regi immortalis corda consecrantur et capita, longe diu exsulatus in saeculo perdidit eam, coinquinatus multis mundanis actibus*.

¹⁵ Paschasius Radbertus, *Vita Adalhardi* 7, PL 120, 1539.

Theodrada, had a Saxon mother.¹⁶ During the reign of Charlemagne, Adalhard and Wala had belonged to the monarch's favoured inner circle, Adalhard since 771 as abbot of Corbie, and Wala as a count. When Louis the Pious took over in 814, however, the tide turned. Adalhard, Wala and their siblings were banished from the court and the political arena by means of monastic exile; Wala was tonsured. Yet the two men still had a turbulent political career ahead of them. In 821 Louis decided that the time for reconciliation with his banished relatives had come, and recalled them from exile. Then, at the assembly of Attigny in 822, the emperor publicly confessed that he had sinned against various relatives, including Adalhard and Wala, and moved them back to their old role as prominent and trusted royal counsellors. By then, Radbert had risen to a similar position with regard to the two brothers. It was in the context of the joint foundation of Corvey (*Nova Corbeia*) in 822, by Adalhard and Wala, that Radbert depicted himself as the third party to their consortium.

When Adalhard died in 826, Radbert was sent as an emissary to the court to plead the case of Wala succeeding him as abbot, in both Corbie and Corvey. He also wrote the *Life of Adalhard*, a mixture of lament, praise and justification for his first monastic father. Radbert was outspoken about Adalhard's visionary qualities, as opposed to the blindness of the Emperor Louis. Whereas the latter fumbled around in moral darkness, Adalhard saw the truth and told it, uncompromisingly. As we shall see, this was also one of the virtues Radbert most admired in Wala, and a quality to which he himself aspired as an author. In 830, a new period of royal disfavour and exile began for Wala. Implicated in the rebellion against Louis and Judith, Wala was once more banished in 831, first to the monastery of St. Maurice d'Agaune and then to Noirmoutier, the island in the mouth of the Loire, whither his brother Adalhard had been sent to in 814. Radbert had attempted to mediate with Louis, without any success. He regularly visited Wala in exile, and apparently enjoyed a liberty of movement denied to his abbot. During the second rebellion against Louis in 833, the two men were briefly reunited, as part of Lothar's retinue. They were both present in July in the Alsace on the 'Field of Lies', but not in October in Soissons, when Louis submitted to the imposition of a public penance.¹⁷ Once the rebellious eldest son Lothar was defeated, in the summer of 834, Wala followed him to Italy, where he was appointed abbot of Bobbio, Columbanus' illustrious foundation – a suitable position for this grand old man. In spite of everything, Louis invoked Wala's help in effecting a reconciliation with his eldest son. Nothing came of this, for in 836 Wala died of an epidemic which killed a great many of Lothar's magnates in exile.¹⁸

Radbert had not followed Wala to Italy. He stayed behind in Corbie, which was by then a community in considerable disarray. At least part of this could be, and was, blamed on Abbot Wala and his having gotten on the wrong side of the emperor. The main accusation which Radbert tried to refute in his *Epitaphium*, was that Wala had been lacking in fidelity (*fides*) towards his lord, the emperor. Radbert's counter-argument was that the *fides* to one's heavenly Lord should override the loyalty to one's earthly lord. If love of God and one's neighbour was absent, all that resulted were animal-like and mindless oaths, and being held in thrall to the Devil; true fidelity was practised with God and one's future salvation in mind.¹⁹ When Wala joined the rebellion of 830, it had been because Louis' faithful men (*fideles*) – had been acting against the emperor, yet as Radbert explained, they as well as Wala had rebelled in the ruler's best interests.²⁰

Since 831, when Wala was banished, Corbie and Corvey had to manage without its powerful abbot and patron, who had represented the interests of both communities at the court. In 833, the unity of Corbie and its daughter house Corvey was dissolved, and thereby a formidable monastic bastion in the hands of powerful family, whose political reputation had by now become damaged beyond repair, however. Radbert's pupil Warin, a staunch supporter of Louis, was appointed abbot of Corvey.²¹ But for all Wala's political disgrace, replacing

¹⁶ Kasten, *Adalhard* 13; Weinrich, *Wala* 11–14 and 109. Adalhard was born from Bernard's first union; from the second came Wala, Gundrada, Bernarius and Theodrada.

¹⁷ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium II*, 17, 18, ed. Dümmler 85–89; De Jong, *Penitential State* 224–228.

¹⁸ Weinrich, *Wala* 85–89.

¹⁹ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium I*, 3, ed. Dümmler 25: *Idcirco quisque quod debet solvendo adimpleat, et implendo debeat, fidem videlicet, quæ per dilectionem operatur. Alias autem fides non est fides, quia non est ex dilectione Dei et proximi, sed terrena obiuratio animalis et diabolica devinctio. Nemo igitur bene servat fidem, ubi contempnitur Deus et negligitur futuræ vitæ proximi salus.*

²⁰ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium II*, 9, ed. Dümmler 73 (Adeodatus, on the revolt of 830): *A saeculo huiusmodi res gesta, quantum video, non legitur, ut populus pro principe contra principem sic ageret.*

²¹ Karl Heinz Krüger, *Zur Nachfolgereglung von 826 in den Klöstern Corbie und Corvey*, in: *Tradition als historische Kraft. Festschrift Karl Hauck*, ed. Norbert Kamp/Joachim Wollasch (Berlin/New York 1982) 181–196; on Warin, see Philippe Depreux,

Wala as the abbot of Corbie during his lifetime was not an option for the offended emperor. Only after his death was Wala succeeded in 836 by Heddo, and when the latter died, after just one year, Isaac took over. One can see why Radbert, who must have been a likely candidate, was too controversial in these years following Wala's death. He kept his head down and wrote, building a reputation as a prolific biblical commentator, and also, it now seems, starting on a canonical collection that would become famous as the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals.²² It was in this period, shortly after Wala's death, that Radbert wrote the first book of the *Epitaphium*. When Isaac died in September 843, however, Radbert's time as abbot had finally come. For some years, one can observe him attending West-Frankish synods, including the one of Quierzy (849) that condemned Gottschalk's teachings. Yet by 851 Radbert was no longer abbot of Corbie. He had been succeeded by Odo, with whom he was on friendly terms. It is not clear why Radbert stepped down; perhaps he got himself into some kind of trouble with Charles the Bald, as has been suggested.²³ Possibly, yet abbots who stepped down without fuss, either to avoid tensions within their community or with their royal patron, or simply because they were too elderly and frail to cope with their office, were nothing out of the ordinary. Of the first nine abbots of Fulda, for example, only three died in office. The others retired early, for a variety of reasons. As Janneke Raaijmakers observed, they usually established themselves in a monastic location nearby, retaining the good relations with their successor and the community they had governed.²⁴ Something similar seems to have happened in the case of Radbert's retirement. If he was indeed in his sixties when he stepped down, ill health may have been the main consideration. He moved to the monastery of St. Riquier, less than 60 kilometres from Corbie. Here, Radbert reached a peak of productivity, finishing his great commentary in twelve books on Matthew, and writing exegetical work for the nuns of St. Mary, the community that had raised him. Most likely he revised the *Epitaphium Arsenii* during these last years in St Riquier as well. Radbert's last project was a treatise on the Benedictions of the Patriarchs. It had been requested by Marcward, abbot of Prüm (829–853), but was only completed after Marcward's death, for Radbert dedicated it to Prüm's new abbot Eigil (853–860).²⁵ Radbert's death, therefore, must have occurred sometime during Eigil's abbacy, that is, between 853 and 860.²⁶

Already in his first major work, *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, Radbert identified himself as "Paschasius Radbertus the Deacon, scum of all the monks" (*Paschasius Radbertus levita, monachorum omnium peripsema*).²⁷ This expression of humility is unparalleled, as far as I can see. It was derived from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "We are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now."²⁸ As for his by-name Paschasius, there are several figures from Christian literature with whom Radbert may have identified. One likely candidate is the deacon Paschasius of whom Gregory the Great wrote in his *Dialogues*, a saintly man who wrote "illuminating and orthodox books" about the Holy Spirit. During the Laurentian Schism (498–506), Paschasius chose Laurentius' side, and he tenaciously stuck to this position, which earned him the punishment after death of having to become a servant in a bathhouse. Prayer released him, however. Because he had not sinned with evil intent, but because of misunderstanding and error, he could be purified from sin after death.²⁹ Radbert remained a deacon all his life, possibly because during his years outside the

Prosopographie de l'entourage de Louis le Pieux (781–841) (Instrumenta 1, Sigmaringen 1997) 394–396.

²² For a survey of Radbert's main works, see Ganz, *Corbie* 31–33; on Pseudo-Isidore, see Klaus Zechiel-Eckes, *Ein Blick in Pseudo-Isidors Werkstatt. Studien zum Entstehungsprozess der falschen Dekretalen. Mit einem exemplarischen editorischen Anhang*, in: *Francia* 28/1 (2001) 37–90; id., *Auf Pseudoisidors Spur. Oder: Versuch, einen dichten Schleier zu lüften*, in: *Fortschritt durch Fälschungen? Ursprung, Gestalt und Wirkungen der pseudoisidorischen Fälschungen*, ed. Wilfried Hartmann/Gerhard Schmitz (MGH Studien und Texte 31, Hannover 2002) 1–28.

²³ Ganz, *Corbie* 32, on possible trouble about a run-away monk of Corbie which may have displeased Charles the Bald.

²⁴ Janneke Raaijmakers, *Sacred Time, Sacred Space. History and Identity at the Monastery of Fulda (744–956)* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam 2003) 135 and 181; see also Mayke de Jong, *The empire as ecclesia: Hrabanus Maurus and biblical historia for rulers*, in: *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen/Matthew Innes (Cambridge 2000) 191–226, at 208–209.

²⁵ Ganz, *Corbie* 32.

²⁶ See Ganz, *Epitaphium Arsenii* 539–540.

²⁷ *Paschasius Radbertus, De corpore et sanguine Domini, Prologus ad Karolum Calvum* (ed. Beda Paulus, CC CM 16, Turnhout 1969) 8.

²⁸ 1 Cor 4, 13; *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* (ed. Robert Weber, Darmstadt 1994): ... *tamquam purgamenta huius mundi facti sumus omnium peripsima usque adhuc* ...

²⁹ Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* IV, 42 (ed. Adalbert de Vogüé, Grégoire le Grand: *Dialogues*, SC 265, Paris 1980) 150; Conrad Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford 1980) 108.

monastery he had committed sins which barred him from the priesthood. If this were indeed the case, one can see why he would have identified with this particular Paschasius, who was a deacon, and a sinner who was ultimately granted mercy. Radbert's singularly abject self-designation lends some support to this supposition. But there is yet another Paschasius, who was also known as 'Paschasius the Deacon': the monk of Dumio in present-day Portugal, who sometime before 583 translated a collection of Greek lives of the Desert Fathers into Latin.³⁰ This collection of desert stories not only features an Abbot Antony (Adalhard's alias was Antony) but also, quite prominently, an Abbot Arsenius. Some of the oldest manuscripts extant, dating from the late eighth and early ninth century, hail from southern Germany, which indicates that these Latin *apophthegmata* were known in the Carolingian monastic world.³¹ If Radbert owed his by-name to Paschasius of Dumio, the analogy between him and his model was monastic authorship; furthermore, there was a possible identification with the great monks of the past, whose profound humility led them to go into hiding when anyone attempted to ordain them to the priesthood.³² A desire to emulate their example may well have strengthened Radbert's resolve to remain a humble deacon. More importantly, however, the desert fathers represented the early and authoritative Christianity to which Ambrose also belonged, at least according to the perception of Radbert and his contemporaries. Wala's by-name Arsenius thus gained a double association, connecting Wala with the great monastic past as well as with imperial court of Theodosius. Moreover, the Arsenius who was Theodosius' counsellor and Honorius' tutor eventually became a hermit, so there was no fundamental contradiction between the various models Radbert may have had in mind for Wala's 'type.'

Radbert's naming strategy in the Epitaphium was elaborate and complex. On the one hand, there were the aliases used to identify and define the moral character of a person for the benefit of an audience. These literary aliases were not used in normal communication, as a form of address or a way to refer to the person concerned. These were literary 'types' with associations that informed a reader as to what kind of person he or she was dealing with. On the other, there were by-names or nicknames which were used in regular communication, identifying the person but also drawing together the group that was privileged to use this nickname. A number of aliases of the first kind, given to Louis and the members of his family, were inspired by church history, such as Epiphanius-Cassiodorus' *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita*.³³ Radbert's allocation of aliases was eclectic, and suggestively so. For example, Lothar was called Honorius, after the son of Theodosius the Great who became emperor himself, but Lothar's father Louis the Pious was emphatically not the great Theodosius with whom Louis' supporters tended to associate their emperor.³⁴ In the Epitaphium Louis was Justinian, a name which above all stressed the emperor's deplorable dependence on his wife Judith, whose alias, as we saw, was Justina, after the wife of Valentinian I who had persecuted Ambrose. Clearly these designations were not chosen for their historical accuracy, but for the powerful associations they evoked, all them more so if this was strengthened by ambivalence. For example, Louis' alias 'Justinian' could be connected with Justinian I (527–567), the great lawgiver, but also with the second emperor of this name, whose reign (681–711) was interrupted by mutilation, deposition and exile, ending miserably with his execution.

Arsenius, however, fell into the category of by-names used by third parties among each other, and probably to Wala's face as well. In 831–832 when Radbert dedicated the first version of his *De corpore et sanguine Domini* to his former pupil Warin, then head of the monastic school in Corvey, he already referred to 'our

³⁰ Paschasius of Dumium, *Apophthegmata* (ed. José Galdes Freire, *A versão latina per Pascásio de Dume dos Apophthegmata Patrum*, 2 vols., Coimbra 1971); (transl. Claude W. Barlow, *Iberian Fathers 1: Martin of Braga, Paschasius of Dumium and Leander of Seville. The Fathers of the Church 63*, Washington D.C. 1969); I am grateful to Irene van Renswoude for alerting me to this possible model for identification.

³¹ Manuscript tradition in Freire, *A versão latina 2*; cf. Albrecht Diem, *Das monastische Experiment. Die Rolle der Keuschheit bei der Entstehung des westlichen Klosterwesens (Vita Regularis 24*, Münster 2005) 76–77. As yet, I have not been able to find any manuscript connected with Corbie.

³² Paschasius of Dumium, *Apophthegmata* 33, ed. Barlow 154–155.

³³ Cassiodorus/Epiphanius, *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita* (ed. Walter Jacob/Rudolf Hanslik, CSEL 71, Wien 1952); Cf. Rosamond McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge 2004), with references to other literature. As Zechiel-Eckes (see above, n. 22) has shown, a scholar from Corbie, possibly Radbert himself, annotated a copy of the *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita* in a highly selective way, with interests which concur with those of 'Pseudo-Isidore'.

³⁴ Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris* 35 (ed. Ernst Tremp, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. sep. ed. 64, Hannover 1995) 279–555, at 410; cf. Ernst Tremp, *Die Überlieferung der Vita Hludowici imperatoris des Astronomus* (MGH Studien und Texte 1, Hannover 1991).

Arsenius' as a matter of course.³⁵ I would speculate that this was what the younger monks called their stern and exacting abbot, whose proverbial austerity reminded them of what they read in the Lives of the Desert Fathers. Such nicknames stuck, especially if it was an older monk who bestowed it on a younger one, as an expression of affection and esteem. Hraban Maur, abbot of Fulda and later archbishop of Mainz (d. 856) is still known to us by these two names, because his teacher Alcuin called him Maurus, after one of St Benedict's favourite pupils, portrayed in the Dialogues of Gregory the Great.³⁶ It was by his nickname that Hraban referred to himself: when inserting any commentary of his own into his exegetical work, he would indicate this in the margin by the letter 'M', distinguishing his own contribution from the patristic commentary he also identified by a marginal indication.³⁷ Radbert himself was another master who called his pupils by affectionate and even complementary names. In the dedication letter of 831–833 which I just mentioned, Radbert addressed Warin as 'Placidius'. This was the child oblate in St Benedict's monastery who, as a little boy, was saved from drowning by the afore-mentioned Maurus.³⁸ Probably Warin came to Corbie in childhood; like Maurus, the by-name Placidius signalled a model relationship between a master and a pupil, seen from the master's perspective.

Most likely all of Paschasius' interlocutors in the Epitaphium were monks who went by the by-names used there. The monk Odilman was older than Radbert, and someone he admired. This senior monk was called Severus not only in the Epitaphium, but also in Radbert's preface when he received Radbert's commentary on Jeremiah's Lamentations. This was written not long after the Vikings plundered the Seine valley of 845, an event which Radbert described as both deeply shocking and quite recent: not so long ago, he said, no earthly king, nor any inhabitant of this earth, could have imagined that the enemy would invade 'our Paris' (*Parisius noster*).³⁹ In the Epitaphium, Severus distinguished himself by the severity of his judgement, and by his delivery of harsh and uncompromising truths.⁴⁰ Adeodatus and Teofrastus were by-names of unidentified monks of Corbie; in the first book Adeodatus played the part of the young monk who asked questions that were sometimes naïve but always pertinent, a role taken over in the second book, written at least a decade later, by Teofrastus. Adeodatus still participated in the confabulation, but as an experienced adult.⁴¹ Teofrastus was a name perhaps taken from Cicero, while the monk Chremes, who had left Corbie when Radbert started on the second book, was named after several characters from Terence.⁴² Such nicknames, I suspect, emerged in the schoolroom among clever boys who enjoyed their classics, together with their masters. This was, after all, the monastic milieu, in which those who converted tended to change names, to show that they had left behind their secular identity. Apart from this, there could be concrete situations and events, character traits or external features which contributed to the acquisition of a nickname which then stuck for a lifetime. Surely, the grumpy Severus did not earn his by-name as a babe in arms, but may well have been perceived as 'severe' when the young Radbert encountered his friend Odilman in Corbie. Similarly, Radbert's staunch refusal to become a priest, remaining a deacon because of humility and other concerns, may have reminded his fellow-monks of this funny deacon from Gregory's Dialogues who haunted the bathhouse. We do not know how any of these

³⁵ Paschasius Radbertus, *De corpore, prologus ad Warinum*, ed. Paulus 3: ... *quod Arsenius noster quem nostra nunc nobis saecula Hieremiam alterum tulerunt ab illo, in fidei te mihi commiserit ratione.*

³⁶ Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* II, 4, ed. de Vogüé 6f.

³⁷ References to this practice in Hraban Maur, *Epistola* 8 (ed. Ernst Dümmler, MGH EE 5, *Epistolae Karolini aevi* 3, Berlin 1899) 394, ll. 4–7; id., *Epistola* 14, ed. Dümmler 401–403, and id., *Epistola* 23, ed. Dümmler 429–430. These marginal indications by means of an 'M' have been preserved in BAV, Pal. lat. 293, a Lorsch manuscript of his commentary on Kings from Lorsch, s. XI/2; See Bernhard Bischoff, *Die Abtei Lorsch im Spiegel ihrer Handschriften* (Geschichtsblätter für den Kreis Bergstrasse, Sonderband 10, Lorsch 1989) 55; see also Hans Butzmann, *Der Ezechiel-Kommentar des Hrabanus Maurus und seine älteste Handschrift*, in: *Bibliothek und Wissenschaft* 1 (1964) 1–22.

³⁸ See above, n. 26.

³⁹ Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in lamentationes Hieremiae libri quinque* IV, 14 (ed. Beda Paulus, CC CM 85, Turnhout 1988) 282, ll. 1218–1221. Cf. also *ibid.* ed. Paulus 3: *Paschasius Radbertus monachorum omnium peripsema seni Odilmanno Severo plurimam et sempiternam salutem.* Please note that Radbert dropped the designation of *levita* here, but it is resumed in later works. In opting for this date I follow Ganz, *Corbie* 31, who thinks the commentary was written in 846.

⁴⁰ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium* I, ed. Dümmler 20, 21, 24, 47; Ganz, *Corbie* 113.

⁴¹ See Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium* II, prologue, ed. Dümmler 60f., where Paschasius and Adeodatus reflect on a by now distant past, and the beardless Teofrastus is introduced as the new junior member of the confabulating threesome.

⁴² Ganz, *Corbie* 113.

men came by their nicknames, but the extra name had become part of their identity: this was what they called themselves, and what they were called by others, as a matter of course.

Wala's other identification, the one with Jeremiah was of a different order. He was called 'our Arsenius', but never 'our Jeremiah', for obvious reasons, for his relation with the prophet belonged to the delicate domain of sacred typology.⁴³ Wala was 'like' Jeremiah, but in a very special way which required explanation. In the prologue of the Epitaphium, the relation between Wala and Jeremiah was clarified from the outset. Paschasius, reminiscing about their deceased abbot, challenged Severus. Did he remember how the unhappiness of the present had turned their abbot into another Jeremiah (*Hieremias alterus*), and how often 'this Arsenius' had burst out in tearful lament, bewailing the universal discord around him?⁴⁴ Shortly thereafter, Severus reflected on Wala as he had known him. Once, Wala had seemed to have the moral traits of 'the earlier Arsenius' – that is, the Arsenius after whom Wala was named – but now he thought of him more as having assumed the *persona* of Father Benedict. Yet in the period that lay in between 'then' and now', Severus declared, their abbot had performed the office (*officium*) of Jeremiah, with all the bitterness that went with it, even though he was the mildest of men.⁴⁵ In other words, the stern abbot's character had once resembled that of Arsenius, but on second consideration, now that he was dead and much missed, Wala seemed to have been more like Benedict.

All this was in the eye of the beholder: from Severus' point of view, Wala had become milder than he used to be. In the meantime, however, there had been this phase of 'becoming Jeremiah', which had nothing to do with how these monks experienced Wala and to whom they likened his character, but everything with Wala's stance in the rebellions against Louis the Pious. In his letter of 831–832 to Warin, otherwise known as Placidius, Radbert referred to "our Arsenius, whom the our times have now made into another Jeremiah".⁴⁶ What did it mean, to be another Jeremiah? In the Epitaphium, Severus spoke of "this Jeremiah, of which he (Wala) bore the type".⁴⁷ The expression used is *typus ferre*, which has been translated as "bearing the image", but this is both too weak and too awkward.⁴⁸ One has to think of Severus' earlier remark about Wala who had assumed the office (*officium*) of Jeremiah. What the 'bearing the type' means is that Wala carried his typological similitude to Jeremiah like a divinely bestowed burden. It was not a role he had chosen to play. On the contrary, as Severus explained, becoming Jeremiah and being him had obscured Arsenius' mild nature; but then again, the invectives which both Jeremiah and Arsenius had hurled at their people did not spring from hatred, but from love.⁴⁹

Though Wala may well have been Arsenius as long as he was associated with Corbie, or even before, it was the troubles of Louis' reign which brought out the Jeremiah in him. As I explained, the comparison between Wala and Jeremiah is first attested explicitly in 831–832. Wala's banishment was the obvious common denominator, but the simile may well have emerged some years earlier, when Louis' deposition of Counts Hugh and Matfrid in February 828 sent shock-waves through the Frankish political system. The situation was then made worse in the summer of 829 by Lothar's displacement from his position as co-emperor, and the appointment of Bernard of Septimania as chamberlain and the emperor's second in command. During the winter assembly of 828–829, Wala had operated as a prophet of doom, warning the powers that God's wrath would strike because of their manifold sins.⁵⁰ As in Jeremiah's case, nobody would listen. Finally, Wala could do nothing else than

⁴³ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium I, prologue, ed. Dümmler 19 (introduction of Wala as Jeremiah by Paschasius); *ibid.* prologue, ed. Dümmler 20 (Wala with the morals of Arsenius, the *persona* of Benedict and the *officium* of Jeremiah); *ibid.* 2, ed. Dümmler 23 (Wala as the *typus* of Jeremiah); *ibid.* 2, ed. Dümmler 24 (as with Jeremiah, Wala's *invectio* stemmed from *amor*, not *odium*; as Jeremiah prayed for Jerusalem, Wala now prays for his brothers of Corbie); *ibid.* II, 2, ed. Dümmler 63 (Wala is *acsi Hieremias alter*; someone who dares to speak up against rulers); *ibid.* 6, ed. Dümmler 66 (because of Wala's *caritas Christi, dilectio patriae et populi, amor ecclesia, fides imperatoris* he could speak up constantly, like another Jeremiah); *ibid.* 8, ed. Dümmler 71 (like Jeremiah, Wala had to turn from *inrepatio* to *lamentatio*).

⁴⁴ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium I, prologue, ed. Dümmler 19.

⁴⁵ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium I, prologue, ed. Dümmler 20.

⁴⁶ See above, n. 35.

⁴⁷ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium I, 2, ed. Dümmler 23.

⁴⁸ Cabaniss, Charlemagne's cousins 91.

⁴⁹ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium I, 2, ed. Dümmler 24.

⁵⁰ De Jong, Penitential State.

what the prophet Jeremiah had done, after all the rebuke (*inrepatio*), pursuit and effort to avoid disaster: “He began to lament, and bitterly bewailed all that had befallen because of [these] sins.”⁵¹

Did Wala himself identify with Jeremiah? If Radbert signalled the likeness between this prophet and his master in exile to Warin, it is likely that he did so to Wala himself as well. One suspects that the comparison was of some comfort to the illustrious exile. What is clear, however, is that at least some of Wala’s pupils in Corbie and Corvey thought of him as someone who had to become Jeremiah’s ‘type’ because of, as Radbert said, the turbulence of the times. Wala was someone who carried this identity as an unavoidable burden. As always, the the most interesting questions are also the most difficult ones to answer. To which extent did those who were given by-names subsequently try to live up to the identity this conveyed? Did Wala become bolder and harsher in his prophecies of doom, once he realised that people likened him to Jeremiah? Did he consciously assume this stance to encourage others to see him as someone with a biblical kind of authority? Did Hraban try to live up to what he knew of the Maurus from Gregory’s Dialogues, who had been the most obedient of monks, walking on water because his abbot commanded him to do so? Had Radbert become so much a deacon, like the Paschasius with whom he was identified, that when he was appointed abbot in 843, finally, he could not longer contemplate being ordained a priest, after all these years?⁵²

There is something to be said for all of this, but that is all that can be said at this point. What we can observe more closely, however, is how in the Epitaphium, Radbert himself modelled his own role as an author after the example set by his deceased abbot: as someone who uncompromisingly and fearlessly spoke the truth. From the beginning, Radbert positioned himself within his own text as a man who dealt in *veritas*, however unpalatable, not fables. Severus reminded Paschasius – and his audience – of the aim of the operation: to paint an image of morals and character, and to compose history as it had been accomplished. As Severus would, given his ‘type’, he objected that Paschasius was indulging in story-telling, but the innocent Adeodatus protested: “It is amazing, Severus, how you always resort to [your] usual verbal acrimony. For it seemed to me that he did not say ‘fabula’ to you, but to those to whom everything bolstered by truth is a fable and a game. Yet history (*historia*) you read in your conscience (*conscientia*), which is why you are not told a story, but the truth.”⁵³ From the mouth of babes ... All this is about the veracity of those who operated with legitimate moral authority, such as ‘our Arsenius’, but it was Wala in his guise as Jeremiah who stood up and spoke most frankly to the powers that were, warning them of moral danger. There are interesting connections – which I shall not pursue – with classical and late antique ideals of *parrhesia* (‘free speech’).⁵⁴ Ambrose’s confrontation with the Emperor Theodosius in 391 was an influential example of ‘free speech’, in the ninth century and beyond. Yet in Radbert’s Epitaphium, it was not Ambrose who took pride of place as the relentless truth-teller, but Jeremiah. Wala’s fearless rebuke (*inrepatio*) of Louis and his entourage was of a prophetic nature, connected to transcendent realities because he was growing into his *typus* of Jeremiah. Of course, all his dire warnings came true. Radbert gave an indication of what becoming Jeremiah had actually meant to his master, once more in that revealing letter to Warin of 830–831: Wala “suffers exile because of *fides*, in the manner of that writer of comedy, because he was full of leaks (*plenus rimarum*), and knowing the truth he did not want to remain silent.”⁵⁵ The writer of comedy was Terence, from whose *Eunuchus* Radbert took the expression *plenus rimarum*, but not much else. Terence’s slave says he leaks like a cracked pot and will only be silent about true secrets, which is exactly the opposite of Radbert’s comment on Wala (and, implicitly, himself): knowing the truth, he could not be silent. In other words, Wala’s ‘leaks’ are those of a compulsive truth-teller – or whistleblower, in modern parlance – on a divine mission.

⁵¹ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium II, 8, ed. Dümmler 71: *Sic itaque Hieremias propheta post increpationes, post persecutiones et impulsiones, ad lamenta se convertit, et omnia quae acciderunt pro delictis amarissime deflevit.*

⁵² See second preface to Paschasius Radbertus, De corpore, ed. Paulus 8–9 (Prologus ad Karolum Calvum) where Radbert is *abbas* and *levita*.

⁵³ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium I, prologue, ed. Dümmler 21: *Historiam autem huius tua in conscientia legis, unde non fabula tua, sed veritas declaratur.*

⁵⁴ Mary Garrison, Les correspondants d’Alcuin, in: Alcuin de York à Tours. Écriture, Pouvoir et Réseaux dans l’Europe du Haut Moyen Âge, ed. Philippe Depreux/Bruno Judic (Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l’Ouest 111, 3, Rennes/Tours 2004) 319–331, at 328f.; also Irene van Renswoude’s forthcoming dissertation: Licence to Speak. Free Speech from Ambrose to Rather.

⁵⁵ Paschasius Radbertus, De corpore, ed. Paulus 3f.

By writing the Epitaphium, Radbert attempted to vindicate Wala, showing how all that this Jeremiah-like figure had foretold had in fact come true. The scant manuscript transmission⁵⁶ should not lead us to the conclusion that the Epitaphium was a work meant only for internal consumption in Corbie. The first book concentrates on Wala as an abbot, and it is here that one finds all the references to Terence and most citations of other classical authors. This may well have been intended primarily for a monastic audience, which could appreciate this level of learning. By contrast, explicit references to classical texts are absent in the second book, which focuses on the rebellions against Louis the Pious in the 830s. Its vivid evocations of Wala's confrontations with Louis and Judith, and of Radbert's own dealings with the emperor, suggest an audience that had itself some experience with, or at least a memory of these events. The range of Radbert's apology for Wala most likely included the court of Charles the Bald, and anyone else who was still simmering with frustration in the aftermath of the rebellions of the 830s, or eager to engage in the naming and shaming of culprits and heroes – a process that continued, quite relentlessly, in the 840s and 850s, as is clear from the second book of the Epitaphium Arsenii.

Radbert's contribution to these debates was more than just prophecy in reverse: the Epitaphium contained Radbert's exegesis of Wala's dire predictions, at a time when Arsenius/Jeremiah had died. What happened 'nowadays' (*hodie*) justified Wala's visions when he had become Jeremiah, in the 830s, but Wala's role as truth-teller and prophet of doom had now been taken over by Radbert. In his *confabulatio* with a few chosen monastic interlocutors who, like him, were unafraid of the consequences of truth, Radbert projected himself as a *veritatis assertor*. This expression Radbert used with regard to Adalhard, whose clear moral vision he contrasted with the fumbling blindness of Louis and his court,⁵⁷ yet this was clearly the ideal to which he himself aspired in the two commemorative works he devoted to his monastic fathers, Adalhard and Wala. They had been maligned, precisely because they had told the truth without any holds barred; this needed to be refuted and redressed. In doing so, Radbert never likened himself to Jeremiah, but by proxy, and by his impassioned defence of a man who spoke the truth and hang the consequences, he defined himself as Wala's pupil and successor, who humbly assumed the burden of being Jeremiah without ever saying so.

Radbert was associated so closely with Wala that one can read the Epitaphium Arsenii as if it were self-defence, against common enemies. In the first book Paschasius was still fairly reticent on the rebellions of 830 and 833, claiming that there would come a time when he could reveal the full truth of what had happened.⁵⁸ This time had come by the mid-840s, when his two main evil characters, Judith and Bernard, had both died. The overarching theme of the Epitaphium, which comes into its own in the second book, is Wala's unstinting fidelity (*fides*) towards God and the emperor, and his duty to give precedence to the former when the two loyalties clashed. Yet *fides* was also one of Radbert's most central and visible qualities. He had broken his commitment to God by becoming a worldling, temporarily, which left him with a lifelong feeling of being scum, or at least the need to project himself as such. And then there was this deep and enduring loyalty to the members of that illustrious family which adopted him in infancy: first Abbess Theodrada, and then her brothers Adalhard and Wala. Belonging to this family determined Radbert's identity more than anything else. Luckily, Radbert's fidelity to the children of Bernard never conflicted with his fidelity to God.

With the members of his adopted family, Radbert shared a sense of pride in serving the ruler. Both Adalhard and Wala had served Charlemagne; Louis' suspicion mortified these grand old men, as did their exile from the court and the ruler's favour. Radbert shared these feelings, reiterating time and again, almost mantra-like, that Wala had been driven by the *caritas Christi, dilectio patriae et populi, amor ecclesia, fides imperatoris* – this was why he spoke up constantly, like another Jeremiah, holding forth *pro statu regni, pro salute populi, pro stabilitate ecclesiarum et religione pacis* ...⁵⁹ Radbert was indeed the *consors* of the two brothers, their partner in adversity, but most of all he was Wala's *consors*, his closest companion and confidant who played an important but not always enviable role as an intermediary between the intransigent old Arsenius and his younger but autocratic emperor. In 826, when Adalhard had died, it was Radbert who was sent to the palace to negotiate Wala's succession of his brother. At the palace, one of the magnates (*optimates*) present, at Louis' behest, as

⁵⁶ Paris, BNF lat. 13909; cf. Ganz, Corbie 145.

⁵⁷ Paschasius Radbertus, Vita Adalhardi 51, PL 120, 1534–1535.

⁵⁸ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium II, 11, ed. Dümmler 39.

⁵⁹ Paschasius Radbertus, Epitaphium II, 5, ed. Dümmler 66.

Radbert sensed, commented that there was no way in which the monks would be capable of following Wala's abstinence and rigour. Radbert wittily replied, "Hey, what do you take us for? Would we ever elect the tail rather than the head, in the fashion of monsters, as some do?"⁶⁰ What is emphasised in this story is not only Radbert putting a courtier in his place with a quick repartee from Deuteronomy (28, 13), but also his conviction that his comment had been reported, with an approving smile, to the emperor.⁶¹ This kind of banter was the quintessence of the *familiaritas* with the ruler which was prized by those courtiers who called themselves *homines palatini*. Regardless of whether they were in or out of favour with the emperor, it mattered deeply that the monarch would smile at one's witty repartee, recognise it as wisdom, and act upon it.⁶² From this charmed circle of royal counsellors with direct access to the ruler Wala had been banished twice, but the second time round, in 831, rankled most. By then, Wala had become Jeremiah, assuming prophetic authority in order to get Louis and his court back onto track, but others did not recognise the old courtier as a prophet – let alone as the *typus* of Jeremiah himself. To counter their objections was the aim of the *Epitaphium's* second book.

When Paschasius, Radbert's alter ego, learned that Wala had been exiled, he was still in Louis' good books. As he reminded his monastic discussion partners, he learned of his abbot's exile in Cologne, "in bygone days, when I was sent on business by Augustus, as you know."⁶³ It had happened in the refectory of some religious community where Paschasius was staying. When he heard of Louis' decision to banish Wala, in February 831, the lector in the refectory had just proceeded to Isaiah 19, 2. In the King James Bible, this passage is translated as: "And I will set the Egyptians to fight against the Egyptians: and they shall fight brother against brother, and friend against friend, city against city, kingdom against kingdom." Radbert's furious rendering of this text was both shorter and more ferocious: "The Egyptians fought against Egyptians, and Egypt was disembowelled."⁶⁴ His alter ego Paschasius collapsed into a paroxysms of tears and grief; some of those present in the refectory were nonplussed, others thought Radbert's emotions were an admission of Wala's guilt. As Radbert commented, scathingly, none of all those who witnessed this consoled me, then or now. "But I must say", he continued, "that in that hour, all those events which happened later came to me, in my mind. Thus it should not be doubted that the divine spirit infuses everything, everywhere, and even whatever it does not possess."⁶⁵ The last part of this sentence expressed Radbert's monastic humility: never would he have pretended to have become possessed by the divine spirit as Wala once was, carrying the 'type' of Jeremiah as his burdensome identity. Nonetheless, during that dramatic moment when he learned that his master had been banished, Radbert was involuntarily and unworthily touched by Wala's divinely bestowed gift of prophecy, and could see all that was coming.

As Wala grew more distant, first in exile and then in death, Radbert projected a literary identity which associated him ever closer with his master. To write a commentary on Lamentations for his old friend Odilman/Severus in 846, some years after Radbert had become abbot of Corbie and was finally back in the public lime-light, seems like another way of honouring Wala's memory and sharing it with those who had known their old Arsenius. After Louis' three remaining descendents fought a bloody battle in Fontenoy in 841, and after Vikings went on the rampage in Paris in 845, the time had come for Radbert to become the truth-telling prophet, following the example of Wala/Jeremiah and assuming, however modestly, some of his prophetic identity. Sustained by his dignity as an abbot, at a time when the main protagonists of the discord and turbulence of the 830s had died – Louis, Judith, Bernard – Radbert embarked upon the second book of his *Epitaphium*. He may well have worked on this project alongside his commentary on Lamentations, for the two works, however different, addressed similar themes: admonition of a people led astray by its leaders, and lament for the disasters

⁶⁰ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium* II, 11, ed. Dümmler 39: *De cuius nimirum vitę abſtinentia et rigore caſtigationis tunc mihi a quibusdam optimatum, ut perſenſi, auguſto iubente ſuaſum eſt, quod non eum ferre poſſemus, neque vitę veſtigia imitari. Ad quod ego quaſi arridens: An nescis, heus tu, nos qui ſumus? Numquid caudum pro capite, ut quidam adſolent, monſtruoſe volumus eligere?*

⁶¹ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium* II, 11, ed. Dümmler 39: *Tum ille pauliſper ſubridens auguſto haec, ut credo, retulit.*

⁶² Matthew Innes, He never even allowed his white teeth to be bared in laughter. The politics of humour in the Carolingian renaissance, in: *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Guy Halsall (Cambridge 2002) 131–156.

⁶³ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium* I, 8, ed. Dümmler 33: *... cum olim ab auguſto directus cauſa negotii ut noſtis ...*

⁶⁴ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium* I, 8, ed. Dümmler 33, in an abbreviated version: *Concurrent Aegyptii aduerſus Egyptios, et diſruptetur Aegyptus in viſceribus ſuis.*

⁶⁵ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium* I, 8, ed. Dümmler 33: *Fateor tamen eadem hora omnia mihi in animo veniſſe, quae poſtea contigerunt. Unde non dubitandum, quod diuinus ſpiritus ubique omnia repleat, etiam et et quae non poſſidet.*

wrought by divine retribution. Jeremiah would therefore have been constantly on Radbert's mind, as would the parallels between himself and Wala, his much maligned and beloved teacher and mentor, who had come to resemble Jeremiah as a result of the 'turbulence of times'. Radbert would never pretend to be Jeremiah's *typus* himself, yet his strenuous denial to be anything of the sort, as well as his preoccupation with Jeremiah's Lamentations indicate how much he aspired to become Jeremiah – if only because it evoked Wala's much-missed presence. When all was said and done, Radbert's adoption of Wala's role as Jeremiah, however tentatively and timidly, was the inevitable consequence of Wala having adopted Radbert.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ I am much indebted to Walter Pohl and the Wittgenstein project for inviting me to contribute this paper, and to the supportive and skilful editors of this volume.