

at may have been a very unequal trial by battle when a Goth called Senila. Being defeated, Bera was subsequently exiled to Rouen.⁸⁹ His destitution and establishment on the March of the sons of William and later Bernard of Septimania.⁹⁰ Not surprisingly, Bera appeared as an ally of the rebel Aizo.⁹¹ A more important point, though, is that of the accuser Senila with the beneficiaries La and Gozhelm fled from the March together after the emperor's death, and were later captured by Lothar in the region where they were both put to death.⁹² Senila's main claim may have been his close association with this family, and the resonances from the judicial destruction of Bera in many years later.

Lothar had manipulated judicial processes to achieve a victory in 820, in 828 they were striking at a larger game, and can be seen as they did as collaborators with a faction, best represented by Agobard and her brothers, with a similar interest in the 'old guard' amongst Louis's advisers. However, the resulting strains were to prove fatal to the emperor, and led to the civil war. For in dismissing Agobard, the emperor deliberately offended Lothar, and in punishing the Aquitanian army he also struck at Pippin, who had been a major ally for the campaign, as well as having other ties in the upper Loire valley.⁹³ This slighting of his two eldest sons marks the public opening of the political crisis of Louis's reign.

The events of the summer of 828 take on an ominous hue. In June Louis resolved to send Lothar and Pippin in command of Aquitanian armies to the March. After a slow period of travel, they proceeded from Thionville to Lyons to rendezvous with Agobard, and there, as the annalist cryptically suggests, they remained, and there, as the annalist cryptically suggests, it is legitimate to wonder, was Agobard during the summer. In conformity with the impression given by the *Royal Frankish Annals*, led by the Amir in person, was campaigning in the

⁸⁹ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 820, p. 152; for a fuller if perhaps over-dramatized account see *Vita Hludovici*, II, 1806-73, ed. Faraud, pp. 138-42. It is interesting that the end-point of book III of his work, and cites Louis's 'clemency' to Bera as a reward to Pippin, II, 1874-5.

⁹⁰ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 827, p. 172.

⁹¹ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 827, p. 172.

⁹² *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 41, ed. Pertz, p. 630, states that Louis had Agobard and sent them as his *missi*.

⁹³ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 828, ed. Kurze, p. 175; cf. *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 42, Pertz,

Ebro valley that year, even if it did not approach the March, and so the decision of the two Frankish rulers not to continue their advance but to disperse their forces and to return to Aachen and Aquitaine respectively looks somewhat surprising.⁹⁴ Their discussions in Lyons were conceivably the last they held before the coup against their father in the spring of 830. In 829 Lothar was relegated to Italy and Bernard arrived in Aachen, the reward perhaps not only for his military services in 827 but also for the outcome of the assembly of 828, with its ultimately fatal adjustment to the balance of rival factions.⁹⁵ The winter of 829/30 saw Hilduin, as arch-chancellor, still overseeing the addition of new entries to the court annals, but by early the following year he and the other survivors of the once dominant group of the emperor's advisers were ready to join an open revolt against their master.

In the coup against the emperor and his recently appointed chamberlain in the spring of 830 Pippin I seems to have played a leading role, at least until the arrival from Italy in May of his elder brother Lothar. The sequence of events is more or less clear, though certain grey areas exist. In February of 830 an assembly was held at which a campaign against Brittany was projected, apparently entirely at the persuasion of Bernard.⁹⁶ On 2 March the emperor left for the coast to begin preparations for the expedition, while his wife remained at Aachen. The whole undertaking, however, aroused growing disquiet and discontent, because of 'the difficulty of the journey', particularly amongst the nobility of western Neustria, the leading lights amongst whose number, Hugh and Matfrid, had so recently been disgraced.⁹⁷ The nucleus of the ensuing rebellion was centred on Orléans, and Pippin of Aquitaine appears to have been directly involved, joining the conspirators at their point of assembly. In the light of the speed with which he and his forces were able to arrive from Italy, it also seems likely that Lothar was involved in the planning from an early stage.⁹⁸ Indeed, so rapid was the sequence of events that it is hard not to suspect that some form of conspiracy had existed from an earlier date than the assembly of February 830, and that the Breton expedition provided a useful focus for the discontent rather than providing the cause of it. Though it must be admitted that so politically risky had military undertakings become since 827 that reluctance to take a lead in it on the part of counts and other office-holders is quite understandable.

The aims of the opposition were clear, at least in their first stages, and consisted of intentions to separate the emperor from his wife, limit if not end

⁹⁴ E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, 3 vols. (Paris and Leiden, 1950), I, 216-17, citing Ibn Hayyân. A marginal note in a 9th-cent. MS from Gerona may suggest that an Arab army raided the March in autumn 828: F. Avril et al., *Manuscrits enluminés de la Bibliothèque Nationale: Manuscrits de la péninsule ibérique* (Paris, 1982), no. 7.

⁹⁵ *Annales regni Francorum*, s.a. 829, ed. Kurze, p. 177.

⁹⁶ *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 830, ed. Grat, p. 1.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁹⁸ *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 44, p. 633.

kill Bernard.¹⁰⁰ The concentration of forces for the campaign against the Bretons enabled the conspirators to assemble a military force. The very direction chosen for the campaign into western Neustria, played into their hands. Their forethought seems to have brought the revolt into the open. No effective counter-moves that Louis did or could take, and which would have led immediately to the March, leaving one of his sons in exile. Pippin and the leading Frankish conspirators gathered at Compiègne on 24 April and there imposed their terms, which Lothar, still not arrived from Italy.¹⁰¹ According to Nithard, deprived of his power, though what that implies in practical or institutional means were applied remain unclear, and many were imprisoned by forcible admission to monasteries. In the case of Judith the house chosen was the principal residence at Sainte-Croix in Poitiers, making her the hostage of Lothar the following month a *placitum* or trial was held resulting in the judicial blinding of Bernard's brother Herebert; the details of the case would be interesting to know.¹⁰²

Lothar, however, witnessed possibly the most dramatic reversal of support in the whole troubled reign, and yet this is concealed from us in the sources. Both the *Annals of St Bertin* and the *Vita Hludovici* indicate the outcome: both are totally silent as to how the coup was achieved.¹⁰⁴ In an assembly held in October at Noyon Lothar recovered the full exercise of his authority, and the conspirators, in the spring, who under Lothar must have been in custody, were taken into custody and held for a future trial. The names of those arrested are named as the abbots Helisachar, Wala, and Lambert.¹⁰⁵ Hugh and Matfrid already seem to have been arrested. At the same time the bishops and abbots there were ordered to reverse their earlier judicial condemnation of Judith to be 'unjust'.

This 'counter-revolution' was delayed until the following year when an assembly begun in February at Compiègne, the result of the humiliation nearly a year previous, and then transferred to Noyon, where the conspirators were sentenced. The death penalties there imposed were commuted to various forms of imprisonment.¹⁰⁶ There too the conspirators reappeared and following the judgement of the

Franks' purged herself, probably by oath, of the charges that had been laid against her. These were the accusations of infidelity with Bernard, later to be given full rein in the *Epitaphium Arsenii*.¹⁰⁷ The final stage may be seen as having occurred at the third assembly of the year, held at Thionville, at which Bernard presented himself to take a similar oath.¹⁰⁸ He was not restored to office either at court or on the March. At the same time a reallocation of territories took place, in which Pippin of Aquitaine proved to be the main beneficiary, being immediately given the county of Anjou and the promise on his father's death of receiving all of western Neustria between the Seine and the Loire.¹⁰⁹

The reason for linking the decisions of the Thionville assembly with the series of events stretching back to the gathering at Noyon in October 830 is not just that the oath taken by Bernard ended a series of protracted judicial processes, but also because there are grounds for suspecting that the territorial redistribution represented the payment made for a crucial switch of support on the part of Pippin I in the summer of 830. The coup that had been carried out in the spring of that year was largely the work of the Neustrian nobility and the partisans of Lothar, aided by the active support of Pippin. Some resentment of their actions in other regions, notably Austrasia, was inevitable, but it is unlikely that this would have been strong enough or well enough orchestrated to have brought about by itself the dramatic *volte-face* of October 830. Nithard, however, provides the key to these events in his brief references to how the emperor, in the power of Lothar, was able to forge a secret alliance with his two younger sons Pippin and Louis the German, using as his intermediary a monk called Guntbald, who visited their courts ostensibly to discuss religious matters.¹¹⁰ The offer made to them was of territorial additions to their kingdoms. Although Nithard implies that this was enough in itself, their attitude cannot have failed to have been influenced by the predominance achieved by Lothar as a result of the events of April and May. He had secured control of their father, rule over all of the Frankish regions proper, and had relegated his brothers to Aquitaine and Bavaria.¹¹¹ In practice, the terms of the *Ordinatio* of 817 had been put into premature effect. This was a state of affairs that neither Pippin nor Louis the German had any interest in prolonging. The result was a change of alliance and the humiliation of Lothar at the Noyon assembly, when Louis not only recovered his authority but also obliged his eldest son to sit with him in judgement on his own former associates. At the same time a political compromise was clearly devised in that whilst the leading non-royal conspirators were punished, and this meant the final elimination of

¹⁰⁰ 830, p. 2.¹⁰¹ *Vita Hludovici pii imperatoris*, ed. G. Pertz (MGH SS 2), p. 597.¹⁰² 830, p. 2.¹⁰³ 830, p. 2.¹⁰⁴ 830, pp. 2-3; Anon., *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 45, p. 633.¹⁰⁵ *Annals*, s.a. 831, p. 3.¹⁰⁶ Paschasius Radbertus, *Epitaphium Arsenii*, ed. E. Dümmeler (Berlin, 1900); see ch. 22 in this vol. by David Ganz.¹⁰⁷ Anon., *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 46, p. 634; *Annales Bertiniani*, s.a. 831, p. 4.¹⁰⁸ Anon., *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 46, p. 634.¹⁰⁹ Nithard, i. 3, ed. Lauer, p. 12.¹¹⁰ Anon., *Vita Hludovici*, ch. 45, p. 633.