SOCIETY AND WARFARE IN LOMBARD ITALY
(c.568–652)

by

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to re-evaluate the role of warfare and the military from the establishment of the Lombards in Italy to the end of King Rothari’s reign (c. 569–652). A thorough reassessment of the source material suggests that the Lombard kingdom was a breakaway section of the Byzantine army in northern Italy, which, seceding from the Empire, produced an independent government in Italy. Chapter one analyzes the evidence connecting the advent of the Lombards in Italy with a military rebellion, and produces a picture of the social context of the army in the 560s, highlighting the reasons behind the rebellion and the connections between mutiny and barbarian gentes. Chapter two tackles the trajectories of the Lombard policy after the rebellion, the role of Kings Alboin and Cleph, and the collapse of the Lombard monarchy (c. 574—84). Chapter three analyzes the role of the Franks in the re-establishment of the Lombard monarchy, and the importance of northern Italy for Frankish Alpine policy. The fourth chapter covers the period from Agilulf to Rothari examining the political and military achievements of Agilulf and Rothari, and evaluating the changes in the performance of the army, to suggest that the social conditions behind the support of the army had changed from the early to the mid seventh century. The social aspects of the army in the seventh century are discussed in chapter five, which looks at Italian society under Lombard rule, analyzing the evolution of economy and social organization, and the impact of the military on society. Finally, chapter six uses the data on the performance of the army and on the social structure presented in the previous chapters,
to provide an analysis of the mechanisms of recruitment and the impact of military policy and changes on Italian society under the Lombards.
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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this dissertation is to revaluate the role of warfare in the creation of the Lombard Kingdom in Italy in 569 and its development up to mid-seventh century. Warfare is understood here in a broad sense, which encompasses not only performance (i.e. combat and strategy) and organization (institutions and hierarchy), but also the social role of soldiers, and in particular the social demands of raising, organizing and supplying an armed force. This dissertation is not intended to be a traditional military history: battles, troop formations, sieges, equipment, or military discipline are only dealt with if they relate in some aspect to the impact of the army on society. For instance, while the present thesis is not concerned with the details of any particular engagements (to which our sources seldom inform beyond the minimum), it pays close attention to the overall result of battles, since it informs us about the conditions of the army. Similarly, there is little about the exact nature of the soldiers’ equipment, but instead, an analysis of who supplied and who paid for it. Warfare is thus understood as social action, and military activities as a manifestation of social organization. The role of the military informs us about Italian society and about the changes it underwent during the first decades of Lombard rule.

The period of Lombard rule in Italy is especially suitable for such analysis, given the close connection society had with the armed forces. The organizational influence of the Roman army on the Lombards has long been recognized: here we further develop this idea, suggesting that the creation of the Lombard kingdom was not the result of a long migration, but instead the breakdown of the Byzantine army in northern Italy, which united rebelling soldiers of different backgrounds into an independent kingdom. It is my contention that, as a breakaway army, the Lombards inherited institutions similar to the late Roman army, and that the development of the Lombard society mirrors, to a certain extent, the developments in Byzantine Italy and in the East. This new reading of the early years of the Lombards is

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2 A note on terminology: although traditionally ‘Byzantine’ is reserved for the period following the death of Justinian, here, given that much is said about this very moment of transition, I used constantly ‘Byzantine’ to qualify the Roman Empire in the East.
facilitated by a different approach to the source material, favoring contemporary evidence, which has also conditioned the timeframe of the dissertation. The chronology encompassed by the present work starts at the eve of the Lombard conquest and stops after Rothari, after whom a large gap in documentation follows.

The dissertation is divided in six chapters focusing on the military development of the Lombards from a breakaway detachment of the Byzantine army into an independent kingdom. **CHAPTER ONE** analyzes the evidence connecting the advent of the Lombards in Italy with a military rebellion, and produces a picture of the social context of the army in the 560s, highlighting the reasons behind the rebellion and the connections between mutiny and barbarian gentes. **CHAPTER TWO** tackles the trajectories of the Lombard rule after the rebellion, the role of Kings Alboin and Cleph, and the collapse of the Lombard monarchy. Additionally, this chapter deals with the question of accommodation, and how the rebelling soldiers adjusted the local tax-system to supply the army, suggesting reasons for how and why it failed. **CHAPTER THREE** analyzes the role of the Franks in the re-establishment of the Lombard monarchy, and the importance of northern Italy for Frankish Alpine policy. This chapter also looks at the creation of new methods to supply the army, and considers the benefits of the new system to Authari’s successful campaigns in his final years. In addition to that, the chapter examines the evidence for the independent role of the dukes, scrutinizing their relationship with the recently established central power. **CHAPTER FOUR** covers the period from Agilulf to Rothari: paying close attention to the developments in Francia and in the Empire, this chapter examines the political and military achievements of Agilulf and Rothari, evaluating the changes in the performance of the army, to suggest that the social conditions behind the support of the army had changed from the early to the mid seventh century. The social changes in the seventh century are discussed in **CHAPTER FIVE**, which looks at Italian society under Lombard rule, analyzing the evolution of economy and social distribution, and the military organization of society. Finally, **CHAPTER SIX** uses the data on the performance of the army and on the social structure presented in the previous chapters, to provide an analysis of the mechanisms of recruitment and the social aspect of the army.

**The source material**

The surviving contemporary sources for the period are limited and often fragmentary, as is often the case for late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. These sources can be divided
mainly in three different groups: Eastern sources, Western literary sources, and Western legal sources:

1) *Eastern Sources*: the attention Greek authors gave to Italy varied with the importance the imperial government attributed to the peninsula. Italy received much attention by Procopious and Agathias during the period of the Justinianic Wars (535–54) and its aftermath, but faded into the background in the following generations of historians, such as Menander, Theophylact Simocatta, John of Ephesus, amongst others. Although their silence is often frustrating for the historian, it provides valuable information on the decreasing role of the peninsula in Byzantine politics. In addition to the literary sources, the Empire produced a large amount of legal sources, especially Justinian’s *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, which often inform on the condition of the imperial army.

2) *Western Literary Sources*: the production of historical narratives in the period was mostly limited to chronicles and consular lists, the importance and value of which have recently been reassessed by scholarship.3 With respect to Italy, the most significant surviving chronicle/consular sources were produced by Marius of Avenches, John of Biclarum and Isidore of Seville in the late sixth-early seventh century, and by the anonymous Copenhagen continuator of Prosper, Fredegar, and the (relevant sections of the) *Liber Pontificalis* in the mid-seventh century. The only ‘narrative history’ proper (that is, not in the chronicle format) written in the period is Gregory of Tours’s *Histories*. In addition to the surviving sources, the present work attempts to reconstruct three lost sources, fragments of which can be detected in the surviving works that relied on them. The first of these reconstructed sources, which we labeled ‘consular source’, was produced (we suggest) in northern Italy in the 580s (see 1.1); the second, called ‘chronicle source’, was written in Ravenna in the 570s (1.1); and the

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third, named ‘chronicle source II’, composed in the Lombard court in Milan under Agilulf (4.1).

3) Western Legal Sources: the post-Roman West produced, in addition to chronicles, a large amount of legal material, assembled in legal collections such as the Liber Indicium for Spain, the Pactus legis Salicae for Gaul, or Rothari’s Edict for Italy. To these collections, we can add judicial decisions, stand-alone laws and treaties, and charters. For Italy, this material is mostly restricted to Rothari’s Edict (643), the Ravennate papyri, and a handful of royal charters preserved in later manuscripts.

Paul the Deacon

Every history of the Lombards is, to some extent, a commentary on Paul the Deacon’s Historia Langobardorum. Paul not only preserved a large amount of evidence about (although not necessary from) the early days of the Lombards up to his own time, but he also organized, classified, and reconstructed the information he had into a consistent narrative about the Lombard past. The information contained in the Historia Langobardorum is at the same time valuable and misleading. It is valuable because it preserves sources we no longer have, while providing a clear narrative of the confusing events of two centuries of Lombard rule. It is misleading because Paul arranged his narrative in accordance with an eighth-century audience and agenda. More recent scholarship has shown the influence of Paul’s career in composing his historical works, as well as his use of literary devices. 4

Scholarship has long established which of the extant sources Paul had access to: Bede’s chronicle, the Liber Pontificalis, Gregory the Great’s Registrum, (some version of) the anonymous Origo gentis Langobardorum, Gregory the Tours’ Histories, (possibly) Fredegar’s Chronicle, amongst a few others. 5 For the period concerned here, which Paul covers from

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5 The fundamental work was done in the nineteenth century, and it is still somewhat valid, see Reinhard Friedrich Jacobi, Die Quellen der Langobardengeschichte des Paulus Diaconus, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte deutscher Historiographie (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1877); Th. Mommsen, “Die Quellen der Langobardengeschichte des Paulus
Book 2 to Book 4.47 of the *HL*, he also relied on sources that are no longer extant: the entries dependent on those display an uncharacteristic chronological precision and have been usually attributed to Secundus of Trent. We suggest here, instead, that Paul had access to two of the sources we reconstructed, namely, the ‘consular source’, for his information up to the early 580s (although he relied more often on Gregory of Tours), and the ‘chronicle source II’, for his material between 590–612 (the relation of those sources to Secundus remains elusive). For the period comprised by book 4.40 to 4.47 (Rothari’s death), Paul is mostly on his own, relying on the information from the prologue of Rothari’s *Edict* and on the short entries of the *Origo*. His lack of sources is made patent by the arrangement of the material: for the twenty two years between the death of Authari (590) and the death of Secundus (612), Paul has 41 chapters, while for the forty years between the death of Secundus and that of Rothari (652), only seven.

The present work
Looking beyond most of Paul’s narrative for the first Lombard kings produces interesting corrections to our understanding of early years of the Lombard kingdom. In the first place, it highlights the importance of the Franks for the creation of the Lombard kingdom. While Gallic sources have a distinct Frankish take on the events, they certainly attest to an enduring Frankish presence in northern Italy (confirmed by Byzantine writers such as Procopius and Agathias), a presence that is mostly sidelined in Paul’s narrative. Secondly, setting aside Paul’s migration narrative, we can focus on the evidence available for barbarians in the Byzantine army preserved by Greek historians in the sixth and early seventh centuries. Such evidence allowed us to perceive the connection between the disorder that followed the dismissal of Narses (and led to the creation of the Lombard kingdom under Alboin) and similar upheavals involving dissatisfied Byzantine soldiers, not only a few years earlier in Italy (such as Sinduald’s rebellion in 565, or Totila’s in 541) but also in Africa (such as Stotzas in the 530s). In other words, dismissing Paul’s migration narrative secures the Lombards a place within a social context of soldiers of diverse ethnic origins, conscripted into Justinian’s expeditionary army, and experiencing the toils of wars and deprivations of his campaigns. As

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a corollary, the developments of Italian society (and military organization) from the late sixth century onwards shared interesting parallels with the evolutions of the Byzantine army in the period, although on a much more localized scale. Similar to the East, the Lombard army shifted from wages to support by landholding, although we argue here that this system, which was to have a long life in the East, nearly collapsed amongst the Lombards in the mid-seventh century.

There are two major subjects that have not been tackled by the present work, namely, the religious history of Italy and the relationship between the Lombards and the cities. The religious history of Italy in the period—marked by schisms, conspiracies, and exiled popes—has been recently reevaluated by Francesco Mores, in a work that is yet to receive the recognition it deserves. Mores argued strongly for a greater role of the ecclesiastical politics in the rupture between Italy and the empire, highlighting the interconnections between Rome, the northern Italian bishoprics, and the Frankish church. In doing so, Mores departed from the already discredited opposition between Arians and Catholics, suggesting instead a complex interplay between orthodox and tricapitoline clergy, involving the pope, the bishoprics in northern Italy, and the Franks. The present work aims to provide a political and military dimension for the complex and gradual reorientation of Italian politics as suggested by Mores.

The second omission is the role of the cities, which figure only briefly: the main reason behind this is the methodological problem to connect the written sources from the period contemplated by the present work with the rich archaeological material that is constantly being uncovered. For the period covered by this dissertation, however, much of the work has focused on Byzantine cities. In the Lombard territories, although the cities are present both in the literary and the legal sources in our period, their precise social role and their importance to the military organization only become evident with the charters and the literary sources of the eighth century.

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9 Recent works have highlighted the role of early medieval Italian cities: see, for example Bryan Ward-Perkins, From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy, AD 300-850 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984); Dick Harrison, The Early State and the Towns: Forms of Integration in Lombard Italy,
Chapter One

THE LOMBARD REBELLION

1.1 Invasion or Invitation: 1.1.1 The source material; 1.1.2 Rehabilitating the ‘invitation hypothesis’ 1.2 The Lombards as military rebellion: 1.2.1 Conditions of service; 1.2.2 Mutiny and military rebellion in sixth-century Western Mediterranean; 1.2.3 Rebelling soldiers and barbarian kings.

The advent of the Lombards in 568/9 came after more than three decades of political instability in Italy. In 535, Justinian extended to Italy his policy of reclaiming former Roman territories, using the excuse of the death of Amalasuntha to intervene. The resulting war (535–54) was certainly not as easy as the swift conquest of North Africa from the Vandals (533–4), nonetheless, in five years Belisarius was sailing to Constantinople with the Gothic king, Vitiges, to parade him before the emperor (535–40). Fearing that Belisarius would become a new Theodoric in Italy—the defeated Goths had already suggested he take the kingship—Justinian relocated the general without delay and reestablished a civilian government. The new administration, obsessed with rebalancing the budget, quickly turned the population against the Romans and, not even a year after Belisarius had left for Constantinople, the remaining Goths gathered the support of dissatisfied Roman soldiers and raised a rebellion. Totila, who eventually assumed the command of the rebellion and was


dutifully made king of the Goths, resisted the Romans for another decade, until he was finally put down by Narses in 552. Italy was, however, far from pacified: after Totila, Teia continued the resistance until 553. In 554, the Franks sent two dukes of the Alamanni, Leutharís and Bútlinus, into Italy with a large army, dragging out the conflict for yet another year. The situation improved for the Byzantines slightly in 555, when Narses was able to subdue Lucca and the Goth Aligern in Cuma (who surrendered and joined the imperial army), and finally put down the Frankish forces, bringing Venetia back to the empire. The defeat of the Franks was not the end of resistance. A few years later, the Goths rebelled in Verona and Brescia with the help of a Frankish duke, Ammigus, but once again Narses was victorious. The truce was, again, brief: in 566/7 Narses had to scramble the army against another rebellion—this one led by the magister militum-cum-rex Sindual, a Herul. In the following year (568/9) Narses was dismissed: the Roman government nearly collapsed and the Lombards slowly emerged as new rulers of northern Italy.

The establishment of the Lombards has long been a central issue for scholarship. Traditionally, the violence of their invasion was thought to mark the end of classical civilization—which held on by the skin of its teeth under the Ostrogoths—and the beginning of medieval Italy. In this reading, the Lombards, renowned for their violence and cruelty, devastated the peninsula and enslaved the Roman population. Despite their military prowess, the Lombards were unable to conquer the entire peninsula—the Byzantines held a few fortresses on the coastline and an entire strip of land linking Rome to Ravenna. “À l’abri des murailles,” comments Paul Goubert, “[les Byzants] contemplent tristement les cavaliers lombards razziant la plaine et emmenant en esclavage les paysans des alentours.”

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13 Agathias, 1.5–6; Bútlinus, or Buccelinus, as Gregory of Tours calls him, had been responsible for Theudebert I’s campaigns in Italy, and was most likely the Frankish local commander, and we have no reason to believe he ever returned (campaigning for Theudebert: Greg. Tur. LH 3.32; killed by Narses: Greg. Tur LH 4.9). For the date, see Stein, Histoire, 2, 606–07.

14 Agathias, 1.18–20; Agn. c. 79. Frankish army: Agathias, 2.1.1–5; Destinies of Leutharís: Agathias, 2.2–3; End of Frankish control of Venetia: Mar. Av. ad a. 556.5; but cf. Agn. c. 90, who dates the final expulsion of the Franks to 565; Bútlinus: Agathias, 2.4–9; Mar. Av. s.a. 555, 4; Greg. Tur. Hist. 4.9; Greg. Dial. 1.2; LP Iohannes III, 63.2.

15 Menander, fm. 3.1; Agn. c. 79 Theop. Chron. AM 6055. The dating is rather problematic, probably between 561–63. Cf. HL 2.2. Ammigus is also mentioned in Ep. Aust. 13, on a different context. Goffart has suggested 562 for the defeat of Ammigus and the end of the effective Frankish presence in Veneto, see Walter Goffart, “Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: the Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald (579–585),” Traditio 13 (1957): 73–118, 76.

16 Mar. Av. s.a. 566.4; Exc. Sang. s.a. 567; LP Iohannes III 63.2.

In recent years, the impact of the Lombard invasion has been reconsidered. The outcomes of archaeological research have established that the rupture in material culture in Italy should be traced back to the fifth century, not with a catastrophic bang but with a whimper. The material impoverishment of Italy has been connected with a general slowdown of Mediterranean economy, intensified by wars, weather shifts, and plague (of which Italy certainly saw more than its share). The central half of the sixth century had been especially bleak: the combination of Justinian’s wars and plague crippled productive forces, spreading sorrow, hunger and tribulation. Times were dire, but the Lombards were certainly not to blame: when they established themselves in the Po valley, the conditions already looked grim (see 2.2.2).

In addition, historians have begun to question the invasion altogether: instead of a violent conquest, it has been suggested that the advent of the Lombards was, in one form or another, the result of Roman policy in the region. The argument is supported by contemporary sources that suggest the Lombards were invited to Italy by Narses, the commander-in-chief of the Roman troops in the peninsula. An authorized settlement, instead of an invasion, would explain why our sources fail to mention any military resistance to the Lombards. In this reading, the Lombards would have some connection to the Roman army before they turned against the Empire. The ‘invitation hypothesis’ has been based on a new understanding of the negotiations between the Roman Empire and the various barbarian gentes, and has recently been depicted in terms of ‘Integration und Anerkennung’.

This chapter furthers this hypothesis, and attempts to understand the mechanisms that led to the loosening of large parts of Italy from imperial control. Here, the focus shifts towards

20 Narses’s title by the end of the Gothic Wars is somewhat hard to pin down: after the victory over the Goths he was probably made patricius (Isidore, Chr. Mai. s.a. 402; Cont. Har. 1520, Fred. 3.65; Bede, Chr. Mai. s.a. 523), before, however, he is referred to as vir illustrius, sacellarius, and praepositus sacri cubiculi, see Narsis I, in PLRE, Vol 3, 913ff.
an analysis of the social interaction between soldiers—whether ‘barbarians’ or ‘Romans’—
and their conflict with the central government in Constantinople. If the laconic evidence for
the second part of the 560s reveals little of the context of the advent of the Lombards, the
evidence for the army and military unrest is comparatively plentiful. By contextualizing Italy
in the late 560s within the broad range of military unrest in the sixth-century Mediterranean,
we can perceive a clear pattern of dissatisfied soldiers, rebelling armies and barbarian leaders.
In the light of this documentation, the advent of the Lombards can be understood as a
military rebellion in northern Italy. The soldiers, dissatisfied with their conditions of service,
mutinied against their commanders and flocked behind the Lombards, who provided a
viable leadership and a new political allegiance. In such an analysis, we will first revisit the
sources for the Lombard ‘invasion’, and evaluate the evidence for an invitation; and then, we
will turn to the life of the men-at-arms and their constant unrest in the sixth century.

1.1. INVASION OR INVITATION?

When Paul the Deacon composed his Historia Langobardorum, Narses’s invitation was part of
the Lombard tradition. Unlike many recently ‘invented traditions’, however, the invitation is
present in many sixth- and seventh-century works—though not in the two older extant
sources, namely Gregory of Tours and Marius of Avenches. A close reading of the source
material is necessary to demonstrate the reliability of the sources that point toward an
invitation. We start with Paul, and then trace back his sources to the sixth century. After
investigating the state of the documentation, we reassess the present state of the ‘invitation
hypothesis’ and adjust it to our present understanding of sixth-century Italy.

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22 The traditional view is that that Histories were written over the course of Gregory’s episcopacy, its units of
composition more or less synchronized to the events it recounts. Recently, Alexander C. Murray has argued
convincingly for a composition date beginning after 585, with the perspective of Histories reflecting the period
around 590; see Alexander C. Murray, “Chronology and the Composition of the Histories of Gregory of Tours,”
Journal of Late Antiquity 1.1 (2008): 157-98. On Gregory of Tours, see also Giselle de Nie, Views from a Many-
Windowed Tower: Studies of Imagination in the Works of Gregory of Tours (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987); Goffart,
Narrators 112–234; Martin Heinzelmann, Gregory of Tours: History and Society in the Sixth Century, trans.

23 Marius finished his work at some point between his last entry (581) and his death (593). The fundamental
work on Marius of Avenches is now Justin Favrod, La Chronique de Marius d’Avenches (455-581) / texte, traduction
et commentaire (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1991). Monod’s work on Merovigians sources, nonetheless,
still carries some relevant information on Marius, see Gabriel Monod, Études critiques sur les sources de l’histoire
1.1.1. The source material

The fascination with Paul the Deacon is easy to grasp: Paul produced the most complete surviving history of the Lombards.\textsuperscript{24} Other compilers certainly existed—Secundus of Trent, the ‘Copenhagen continuator of Prosper’, the hive mind behind the \textit{Origo gentis Langobardorum}—but their interests were invested elsewhere, be it in ecclesiastical history or in royal genealogy. Paul, conversely, compiled older documents to build up a picture of the past that he considered to be best represented as being Lombard, even though he saw it as a mere part of Italian history (which, as such, he might as well be credited with having created).\textsuperscript{25} To the modern historian, Paul is not only a fundamental primary source for his own age; he is also a historian of the Lombards, making him an essential secondary source for more distant history. Controversy arises when scholars try to draw the line between Paul the eighth-century Lombard aristocratic monk and Paul the historian of the distant past, in other words, between Paul the primary source, and Paul the secondary source. Born an aristocrat in the 720s, Paul was in position to gather a good deal of first hand information, not only from his lifetime, but also from witnesses going back to the last decades of the seventh century. For the early days of the Lombards, however, Paul was at the mercy of the surviving sources, and, as a historian, he smoothed out his sources to produce the coherent narrative that makes him such a tempting authority for modern historians. The final result was, nonetheless, a historical construct, not a primary source.\textsuperscript{26}

Fortunately, most of Paul’s work on his sources can be tracked, and his take on the advent of the Lombards is no exception. The contemporary sources, however, are much less explicit than we would expect, and the information they preserve is very limited (a problem that Paul, certainly, also had to face). Even more significant, the sources do not agree on how the Lombards entered Italy, nor when. On account of that, most scholars have preferred to focus on Paul’s description of the invasion, even if such narrative is more a source for the eighth-century perception of the conquest than for the conquest itself. The result, as Francesco More has rightly put it, is the “uso consueto del racconto paolino: il racconto di


\textsuperscript{25} Goffart, \textit{Narrators} 378.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Narrators} passim.
Paolo e ciò che accadde quasi concidono.”

This modern reliance on the *Historia Langobardorum* makes it a necessary starting point.

**Paul the Deacon and the arrival of the Lombards in Italy**

Paul the Deacon sets the Lombard invasion as a major event in his *Historia Langobardorum*. The invasion is the topic of his Book II, which starts with co-operation between Narses and the Lombards and ends with the destruction of Italy by the unruly Lombard dukes. As Walter Goffart has suggested, the second book was written as a tragedy. Paul carefully laid out the sources he had at his disposal to build a narrative of Roman sin and redemption, and of the fall of human endeavor by lust. The brave Narses had re-conquered Italy from the Goths, but was demoted by the jealousy of the Romans; the brave Alboin replaced him in Italy without bloodshed, but was killed by his hubris and his resentful wife.

The story starts at the beginning of Book II, where Paul relates how the successes of Alboin had spread his reputation far and wide, and how Narses sent to him asking for help against Totila. At that point, the Lombards were living in Pannonia, and were allied to the Romans against their rivals in the region. In Italy, Narses was victorious against the Franks, and later against the usurpation of Sindual. Narses was a good Christian and a man of great virtue: he receives from Paul the most positive portrait a man of arms can receive, to win his battles more by prayers than by feats of arms. The tide, however, soon changed for the Romans: a pestilence engulfed Italy, especially Liguria, in the upper Po Valley. In one of the most poetic passages in his works, Paul describes how the plague devastated Italy, leaving the fields abandoned and the grapes untouched on the vineyards. The fields of men returned to the wildness and became lairs of beasts. Paul describes the pest advancing as an army, conquering and devastating the country,

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28 *HL* 2.1; 2.32.
30 Hence, the book can be divided in two major parts: (1) the tragedy of of Narses (2.1–8) and (2) the tragedy of Alboin (2.30–32). In between (2.9–29) we have the description of Italy and Alboin’s conquests of the provinces. For a similar view—though with a different division—see *Narrators* 388–94.
31 *HL* 2.1. This information Paul obtained from Jordanes, *Romana*, 386–7. NB Paul chose not to mention the connection between the Lombard king and Theodoric’s family (Jordanes mentions the marriage with the daughter of the sister of Theodehad, given in marriage by the emperor, cf. Procopius, *Bella*, 8.25.11–15).
32 *HL* 2.2–3.
34 *HL* 2.4.
a trumpet of warriors resounded through the hours of the night and day and something like the murmur of an army was heard by many. There were no traces of those who had passed by, no murderer was seen, yet the corpses of the dead were more than the eye could see. Meadows had been turned into a graveyard for men, and human homes, refuges for wild beasts. And these evils happened to the Romans only and within Italy alone, up to the boundaries with the Alamanni and the Bavarians.\textsuperscript{35}

The plague invaded Italy and punished the Romans—and only the Romans—for the tragedy they were about to unleash. Paul misplaced the plague (which probably happened a few years after the advent of the Lombards)\textsuperscript{36} and used it to highlight the sinfulness of the Romans, and to show how God had opened the way to the Lombards. The second act of this tragedy confirms the iniquity of the Romans. Out of jealousy, they turned their backs on the devout Narses, and delivered thus Italy to the Lombards:

Now, once all the Goths had been destroyed or overthrown, as has been said, and once also those of whom we have spoken [i.e. the Franks and Siduald] had been in like manner conquered, Narses, after he had acquired much gold and silver and riches of other kinds, endured the great envy of the Romans, for whom he had laboured much against their enemies. The Romans petitioned against him to the emperor Justin and his wife Sophia, saying, “It would have been better for the Romans to serve the Goths rather than the Romans as long as Narses is in command and oppresses us with servitude; and this situation our most devout emperor ignores. When Narses heard this he retorted with this: ‘If harm I did to the Romans, then, harm I shall get [in return]’.”\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{36} For the dating of the plague, Mar. Av. s.a. 570–71; Exc. Sang. 570; see Goffart, Narrators 389.

\textsuperscript{37} HL 2.5. “Igitur delata, ut dictum est, vel superata Narsis omni Gothorum gente, his quoque de quibus diximus pari modo devictis [i.e. the Franks and Sinduald], dum multum auri sive argenti seu ceterarum specierum divitias adquisset, magnam a Romanis, pro quibus multo contra eorum hostes laboraverat, invidiam pertulit. Qui contra eum Justiniano augusto et eius coniugi Sophiae in haec verba sugererunt, dicentes quia: ‘Expedierat Romanis, Gothis potius servire quam Grecis, ubi Narsis eunuchus imperat et nos servitio permit; et haec noster piissimus princeps ignorat. Aut libera nos de manu eius, aut certe et civitatem Romanam et nosmet ipsos gentibus tradimus’. Cumque hoc Narsis audisset, haec breviter retulit verba: ‘Si male feci cum Romanis, male inveniam’.”
The Byzantine court supposedly took the Roman threat seriously and Justin sent Longinus right away to replace Narses. The commander, having heard of the news, was terrified; he dared not to return to Constantinople and face the empress Sophia because, “among other things, because he was a eunuch, she is said to have said to him that she would put him together with the girls, to weave.” And to this, Narses answered he would weave such a web that the queen would never be able to lay it aside.\(^{38}\) Subsequently, moved by hate and fear, he fled to Naples and “soon sent messengers to the Lombards, urging them to abandon the poor fields of Pannonia, and come take possession of Italy, bustling with all kinds of wealth.” To reinforce his invitation, he sent a sample of the many riches of the Italian countryside. Immediately, terrible signs appear in the skies, foreboding the blood that would be shed.\(^{39}\) Receiving the invitation, Alboin moved the people from Pannonia into Italy, gathering wives and children, not before agreeing with the Huns, his friends, that if eventually the Lombards needed to return, they could have their fields back.\(^{40}\)

_Earlier and near contemporary sources_

Paul paints a vivid picture of the establishment of the Lombards that cannot be fully reproduced by the sixth- and seventh-century evidence. The surviving sources dealing with Italy are restricted to a handful of chronicles, mostly written sometime in the seventh century. From the late sixth century, there are the two Gallic works mentioned above, Gregory of Tours’s _Histories_ and the _Chronica_ of Marius of Avenches, both authors writing in the late 580s–early 590s, more than a decade after the advent of the Lombards.\(^{41}\) In addition to that, Secundus of Trent, a tricapitoline cleric whose chronicle Paul used, was probably writing around the same time: even though Paul records the date of his death in 612, a surviving snippet—possibly the _explicit_ of his chronicle—claims it was finished in 580.\(^{42}\)

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\(^{38}\) _HL_ 2.5. [from Fred. 3.65]: “cui [i.e. Narses] illa inter cetera, quia eunuchus erat, haec fertur mandasse, ut eum puellis in genicio lanarum faceret pensa dividere. Ad quae verba Narsis dicitur haec response dedisse: talem se eidem telam orditurum, quale ipsa, dum vivaret, deponere non possit.”

\(^{39}\) _HL_ 2.5. “...legatos mox ad Langobardorum gentem dirigat, mandans, ut paupertina Pannoniae rura desererent et ad Italiam cunctis refertam divitis possidendam venirent. (...) Continuo aput Italiam terribilia noctu signa visa sunt, hoc est ignae acies in caelo apparuerunt, eum scilicet qui postea effuses est sanguinem coruscantes.” Nick Everett has pointed out that the offer of riches is a classical topos; see Everett, _Literacy_, 65–66. The signs in the sky are from Greg. _Dial._ 3.38, cf. Greg. _Homil. in Ev._

\(^{40}\) _HL_ 2.7.

\(^{41}\) See nn.13–14, above.

\(^{42}\) The surviving few final lines attributed to a certain ‘Secundus servus Christi’ were preserved in a twelfth-century manuscript, might be the _excipit_ of Secundus’s work: “A principio usque ad passionem Domini sunt anni 5229, passo Christo usque in presentem annum sunt 554, et a presente pascha iuxta prophete eloquium, secundum quod humane fragilitati datur capere intellectum, restant de presenti seculo anni 217. Et in hoc supra
From the very beginning of the seventh century, there is the chronicle of John of Biclarum, produced as a continuation of the chronicle of Victor of Tunnuna and finished around 603, and shortly later Isidore's *Chronicle*, finished during Sisebut's reign (612–21), probably in 615 (for the first edition, 626 for the second). Subsequently, the anonymous *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper* was produced in northern Italy, around 625 (or as late as 643). Possibly around 660s, there is the composition of Fredegar's *Chronicle*, for Book 3 a continuation of Gregory's *Histories*, but with independent interpolations. Harder to date is the *Liber Pontificalis*, which preserves much material from the late sixth and early seventh century: usually, the papal biographies were written shortly after the decease of each pope, but a precise date (especially for sixth- and early seventh-century *Vitae*) is often hard to establish, but it is safe to assume that the *vitae* in the late sixth century were put together

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around 640.\(^47\) Finally, Bede wrote his chronicle in the beginning of the eighth century, already distant from the event, but of interest for Paul the Deacon’s reliance on it for his chronology.\(^48\) To these sources, we must add the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*. The dating of this text is complicated: the *Origo* is a regnal list up to Grimoald, with comments, which seems to have originated from the list in the prologue of Rothari’s *Edict* (643). It has been suggested that the *Origo* was composed under Percratit (672–88),\(^49\) although the later date of the surviving manuscripts might compromise the integrity of the text.\(^50\)

Comparing contemporary and near contemporary sources allows us to envision at least three (possibly primary) texts as the main sources for the event. The first source is John of Biclarum, who was at Constantinople at the time, and attests to the (lack of) impact of the events in Italy in the East. The other two sources did not survive, and must be reconstructed from later works: first one, which we will call the ‘consular source’, informed Marius of


\(^50\) The *Origo* is preserved in four late tenth-early eleventh-century manuscripts, one of which, the *Codex Gothanus*, from Gotha, has a somewhat rewritten and interpolated version, taking the story to the ninth century. It is impossible to fathom the extent of re-creation of the surviving *Origo* received, nor the level of its dependency on Paul (who, in his turn, also used a version of the *Origo* for the composition of the *HL*). See Everett, *Literacy*, 92–98; for a different contextualization, see A. Bracciotti, ed. *Origo gentis Langobardorum: introduzione, testo critico, commento* (Roma: Herder, 1998); see also Walter Pohl, “Paolo Diacono e la costruzione dell’identità longobarda,” in Paolo Diacono, uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinascimento carolingio, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine: Forum, 2000), 413–26; and now “Origo.”; Alheydis Plassmann, *Origo gentis: Identitäts- und Legitimitätstiftung in früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Herkunftserzählungen* (Orbis mediaevalis, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 204–06; Coumert, *Origines des peuples: les récits du Haut Moyen Âge occidental* (550-850), 153–57; Paolo Delogu, “Kingship and the Shaping of the Lombard Polite Body,” in *The Langobards before the Frankish Conquest: an Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. Giorgio Ausenda, Paolo Delogu, and Chris Wickham (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 251–88, 260–61; Borri, “Romans.”
Avenches and Gregory of Tours (and possibly also Paul the Deacon), and was written possibly after 580; the second, which we will call ‘chronicle source’, informed Isidore’s Chronica (the first edition [615], but not the second [626]) and the LP, and was written certainly before 615, but possibly as early as the 570s. Taken together, the three primary sources highlight three important points, namely, that the Lombards were introduced in Italy by some sort of agreement, which could be described as an ‘invitation’; that their presence in northern Italy created a considerable level of disruption; and finally, that altogether the event did not cause much of an impact in the East.

### SOURCES FOR THE LOMBARD INVASION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work/Author</th>
<th>Final Date of Composition</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Invasion</th>
<th>Invitation?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul the Deacon, HL</td>
<td>Post-774</td>
<td>LP, Fredegar, Origo, ‘consular source’</td>
<td>April, 2nd 568</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bede, Chr. Mai.</td>
<td>Post-725</td>
<td>LP</td>
<td>= LP</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origo gentis Langobardorum</td>
<td>680s?</td>
<td>Isidore?</td>
<td>April, 1st 568</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fredegar</td>
<td>c.660</td>
<td>Isidore + Greg. of Tours</td>
<td>[Post 567]</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rothari’s Edict ( prol.)</td>
<td>643</td>
<td>‘Chronicle source’</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cont. Haur.</td>
<td>620s</td>
<td>‘Chronicle source’ + ‘Consular source’</td>
<td>569/70</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isidore, Chr. Mai. 402</td>
<td>615/16</td>
<td>‘Chronicle source’</td>
<td>Invitation (post 567); invasion (post 567)</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secundus of Trent</td>
<td>Ante 612</td>
<td>‘Consular source’</td>
<td>May 568</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP, Vita Iohannis</td>
<td>Early seventh century?</td>
<td>‘Chronicle source’</td>
<td>[Invitation (ante 574); Invasion (post 575)]</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Biclarum</td>
<td>c.602</td>
<td>Primary?</td>
<td>Not mentioned</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory of Tours, L.H.</td>
<td>c.590</td>
<td>‘Consular source’</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51 Paul had access to the ‘consular source’, but he mostly relied on Gregory’s rendering of it—which was as a rule more elaborated and closer to Paul’s own style. There are two entries that Paul might have taken from the ‘consular sources’ that are not in Gregory: the capture of Milan by Alboin (HL 2.25, only in Paul), and Cleph’s reign and death (HL 2.31, also in Mar. Av. s.a. 573.1; 574.1). It is also likely that Paul found reference to fara in the ‘consular source’, which he used on his account of the creation of Friuli.

52 For the difference between consularia and chronicle, see Burgess and Kulikowski, Mosaics, 35–57.
1) John of Biclarum’s *Chronica*: John, who was living in Constantinople from 567 to 578, was in best position to gather information about Italy; however, he not only fails to mention the invasion, but also attests to the Lombards in Pannonia until at least 571, when they are said to have destroyed the Gepids. John’s report, at least as regards the Lombards, seems to be independent from the other sources, and based on an Eastern perception of the event. From Constantinople, whatever took the Lombards into Italy was presumably not a main event—a usual recruitment?—and did not terminate the Lombard kingdom in Pannonia.

2) The ‘consular source’: the second primary source did not survive, and has to be reconstructed from extant sources that possibly relied on it. Given its dependency on a consuls/indiction system for dating, we can call this second source a ‘consular source’, presumably a consular list similar to Marcellinus Comes’s *Chronicon*. Such work has already been suggested as the source for Marius of Avenches, who relied extensively on it for his entries on Italy: Marius used this source from 527 up to 580, which suggests that it was probably finished at some point after 580 (and certainly before Marius’s death in 593). The ‘consular source’ was also used by Gregory for what concerns Italy, and might also have been used in a marginal note on the Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper and maybe likewise by Secundus’s lost historical work.

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53 The date is based on Isidore’s biography of John in *De viris illustribus*, 44. The chronology is, however, unclear, since John’s exile (and education) in Constantinople is rendered in some MSS as starting at his “septimo decimo anno”, while other MSS render “septimo demum anno.” In the introduction to his edition, Mommsen opted for the former, and suggested 567 to 576 (*MGH AA* 11, 207–10); Condoñer, more familiar with the textual tradition of *De viris*, preferred the latter, dating the exile to 570/1 to 577/8; see Carmen Codoñer Merino, El “*De viris illustribus*” de Ildefonso de Toledo, Acta Salmanticensia Filosofía y letras (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 1972), 114; see also Cardelle de Hartmann and Collins, *Crónica*, 37, and n.43. Other dates have been suggested: for Campos, 558–576 [Juan de Biclaro, obispo de Gerona; su vida y su obra, 17–25.]; for K. Wolf, from c. 559–576, [*Conquerors, 1.*]; for Collins, c. 562–c.579 [*Spain*, 42.]

54 Joh. Bicl. s. a. 571.

55 Note also that the other surviving Greek sources of the period also fail to mention the Lombard invasion/invitation, such as the work of Menander, the last Greek historian who, at least apparently, included Italy, came to us in fragments and no assertion can be made of the full content of his work. Later historians, as John of Ephesus or Theophylact Simocatta are focused almost exclusively on the east.


57 The possible relationship between the ‘consular source’ and Secundus’s work require further investigation. Traditionally, scholars believed that Secundus’s *historiola* (as Paul the Deacon calls it in *HL* 4.40) was carried up to his death in 612 (*HL* 4.40), and attribute to him all the dated entries in the *HL* up to this point. This
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mar. Av. s.a. 569</th>
<th>Hist. 4.41</th>
<th>HL 2.7</th>
<th>Cont. Hav. (marg.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That year, Alboin, king of the</td>
<td>Alboin, king of the Lombards, who had for his</td>
<td>Then the Lombards,</td>
<td>In the fifth year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Lombards, leaving and</td>
<td>wife Chlothosind, the daughter of Chlothar,</td>
<td>abandoning Pannonia,</td>
<td>of Justin, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burning all Pannonia, his</td>
<td>abandoned his own region, sought out Italy.</td>
<td>advanced to take possession</td>
<td>Lombards entered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatherland, with wives and all</td>
<td>Once the army was assembled, they set off with</td>
<td>of Italy with their wives and</td>
<td>Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>his people occupied Italy in</td>
<td>wives and children, planning to dwell there.</td>
<td>children, and all their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fara. And there some were</td>
<td>Once they entered the country, they wandered</td>
<td>belongings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>killed by disease, some were</td>
<td>for almost seven years, despoiling churches,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>killed by hunger, others</td>
<td>killing priests, and submitted the region to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(nonnulli) by the sword.</td>
<td>their power.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the surviving evidence, there are three points that characterize the ‘consular source’: in the first place, the use of consular and regnal dates: Marius of Avanches dates the event the second indiction, and the third consulate of Justin (569), and the marginalia in the ‘Copenhagen continuator’ points to the fifth year of Justin II, i.e. 569/70; Gregory of Tours does not give a precise date because the event falls in the section of his *Histories* that preceded his rigorous set of annals based on the reign of Childebert II, beginning Christmas 575; and finally, the fragment of Secundus also dates the advent of the Lombards to the second indiction, to which he added the month, May. This date, 569, is also suggested in the prologue of Rothari’s *Edict*. Second, both Gregory’s and Marius’s accounts suggest that

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59 Mar. Av. s. a. 569; Cont. Hav. 1520.

60 *Frag. Secundi*; (see n. 33 above).

61 The *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, c. 5, suggests a three-phased occupation, starting with a migration on April 1st 568 (first indiction), followed by the beginning of attacks in the next year (“[Langobardi] coeperunt preadare in Italia”), and finally by control (“[Alboin] factus est dominus Italiae”). The *origo* is hard to date, but it was
the ‘consular source’ described the Lombards leaving Pannonia, and moving into Italy not as a razzia but bringing their families with the intention of being settled (Marius describes as “occupied [occupavit] Italy,” while Gregory favors “sought [petit] for Italy”) which could have a hostile meaning, but need not have, and also added that some destruction followed the process (more for Gregory, less for Marius). Marius, in addition to that, suggests the Lombards occupied Italy in *fara*, a military detachment. Neither Gregory nor Marius mention Narses’s involvement in any capacity. The attention to the impact of the Lombards in northern Italy, combined with the ignorance about the interplay involving Narses, makes it tempting to place the composition of the ‘consular source’ in northern Italy, maybe even around Trent. A northern origin would also explain the reason this source was used later on prominently by Gallic (and northern Italian) authors. And finally, it is the ‘consular source’ that records information about Alboin: both Gregory and Marius register that Alboin was commanding the Lombards.

3) The third source, also non-extant, was possibly a chronicle, organized by reigns, and as such we will call it the ‘chronicle source’. The ‘chronicle source’ is the one to preserve the report on Narses’s invitation as the reason behind the advent of the Lombards. All the seventh-century texts that depict the advent of the Lombards (with the exception of the fragment of Secundus and the prologue of the *Edit*, which refer to the advent of the Lombards simply for dating purposes), report the story and are, presumably, dependent on this source: the two oldest texts are the *Liber Pontificalis* and the first edition of Isidore’s *Chronica Maiora* (615/16):

**TEXTS DEPENDENT ON THE CHRONICLE SOURCE**

*LP* V.Iohan. III. 63.3 & V. Bened. 64.1

Thus, the Romans, moved by envy, suggested to Justinian and Sophia that “it would benefit better the Romans to serve the Goths than the Greeks, as Narses, the eunuch, commands and submits us to [Under Justin], the Patrician Narses, after he triumphed in Italy over Totila, the Gothic king, during the reign of Justinian, was terrified by the threats of the empress Sophia, and invited the Lombards from

probably the most important source for Paul’s narrative of the conquest, and from where he got 568 as an initial date: he changes the day from the 1st to the 2nd, not to have the Lombards entering Italy during Easter, which he considered impious (compare with Paul’s reproach of Stilicho’s attack on Alaric during Easter in *Historia Romana* 12.13). The *Origo* also mentions Narses and the invitation, but it is impossible to establish whether it was dependent on Isidore, the *LP*, or even if the extant version was contaminated by Paul’s *HL*.

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62 On the definition of *fara*, see below 5.2.2.

63 Even though the exact nature of his position, as we will argue in 2.1 was presumably less ambiguous to their source in the 580s than it would have been by 569.
servitude, and our most devout emperor ignores that.” When Narses heard this he answered briefly with these words: “If I have done harm to the Romans, harm I will find myself. “Thus, Narses, after he left Rome, came to Campania, and wrote to the Lombards, so that they would come and take possession of Italy. Once pope Iohannis learnt that they had sent his suggestions against Narsis to the emperor, he rushed to Naples, and started to beg Narses to come back to Rome. Narses then said: “tell me, most holy pope, what evil have I done to the Romans? I will go to the feet of the one who sent me, and let all Italy learn how I worked with all strength for her.” The pope replied: “I will go myself, before you leave this land.” Narses returned to Rome with the pope. (...) Narses actually died many years after he returned to Rome, and his body was placed in a bronze urn, and was returned with all his wealth to Constantinople. (...) [During Benedict’s pontificate], the Lombards invaded all Italy at the same time as there was also great famine, so that furthermore, a multitude of fortresses surrendered to the Lombards to escape the misery of hunger.64

Even though both texts agree on the invitation, they present the story in clearly different scenarios. For the LP, the invitation was a result of a chain of events that started with a


petition from the citizens of Rome to Justin and Sophia, to which the disheartened Narses replied by leaving Rome in order to explain himself to the emperor and, for some reason, by calling in the Lombards. The pope, however, managed to dissuade Narses from leaving Italy, taking him back to Rome, where he eventually died. The Lombard invasion *per se* is not directly connected with the invitation, which, according to the *LP*, took place only later, at some point in the pontificate of pope Benedict (575–79). Overall, the *LP* is generous towards Narses, who received a pep talk from the pope and ended his life in peace in Rome: Narses’s reputation as a pious man is confirmed by various sources, and as far as the *LP* informs us, he had a good rapport with the Church, having even intervened with the imperial court for the liberation of the then exiled pope Virgilius (537–55).

Narses’s portrait is certainly less positive in Isidore: there is nothing in his *Chronica* about the petition, but instead, the reason for Narses’s invitation to the Lombards is his fear of threats he received from the empress—a motif that is absent from the *LP*. Curiously, in the second edition (626) Isidore removed the invitation and added a conquest of Italy, but now under Tiberius (578–82). The accounts of the invitation in the remaining seventh-century sources depend mostly on Isidore, and not on the *LP* (even though both Fredegar and the *Cont. Hav.* possibly had access to the *LP*). To Isidore’s account, Fredegar presumably added the weaving motif, which would later be appropriated by Paul the Deacon. The sources that depend directly on the *LP*, namely Bede’s *Chronica* and Paul the Deacon, are all from the eighth century:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isidore’s <em>Chon. Mai.</em></th>
<th>Cont. <em>Hav.</em> 1520</th>
<th>Fred. 3.65</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Under Justin], the Patrician Narses, after he had triumphed in Italy over Totila, the Gothic king, during the reign of Justinian, <em>terrified by the threats of the empress Sophia</em>, invited the Lombards from...</td>
<td>The Patrician Narses, when he was administering prosperously Italy for twelve years, and when he was restoring the cities and the fortifications to their pristine glory and fostering its people with law...</td>
<td>Not long after [the Lombards had moved to Pannonia], the Patrician Narses, was <em>terrified by the threats of the emperor Justin and the empress Sophia</em>. Because Narses was a eunuch, the empress sent him a...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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66. *LP*, Vita Iohannis, 63.3; Vita Benedicti 64.1.
67. For example, Evagr. 4.24, Proc. *Bella* 8.33.1; but cf. Agath. 1.12.9. However, he might have been a monophysite: see Joh. Eph. 3.2.46; Mich. Syr. 10.5.
69. Isidore, *Chr. Mai.* 402.
70. Which Paul rephrased completely, changing Fredegar’s (3.65) “Filo filabo, de quem Iustinus imperator nec Augusta ad caput venire possit” to (*HL* 2.5) “talem se eidem telam orditurum, quale ipsa, dum viveret, deponere non possit.” Nonetheless, Paul preserved the word play on ‘filo-filabo’, shifting it to ‘talem-telam’.
and wisdom, became terrified of the threats of the empress Sophia, wife of Justin, and disturbed by threats and reproaches of the ignoble woman, invited Alboin, king of the Lombards, with all his army from Pannonia. device, made of gold, with which women could do their spinning, and so he might lord it over spinners not a people. To such, he answered: “A thread I shall spin of which neither the emperor Justin nor the empress will ever reach the end of.” Thus, inviting the Lombards from Pannonia, brought them under their king Alboin into Italy.

Next, [Narses], because of envy of the Romans, on whose behalf he had worked so hard against the Goths, was accused before Justin and his wife Sophia of oppressing Italy with exactions. He withdrew to Naples in Campania and wrote to the Lombards, so that they would come and take possession of Italy.

Now, once the all the Goths had been destroyed or overthrown, as has been said, and once also those of whom we have spoken [i.e. the Franks and Siduald] had been in like manner conquered, Narses, after he had acquired much gold and silver and riches of other kinds, incurred the great envy of the Romans, for whom he had labored much against their enemies. The Romans made insinuations against him to the emperor Justin and his wife Sophia, saying in these words, “It

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72 Cont. Hav. 1520: “Narses patricius cum Italiam florentissime administraret et urbes atque moenia ad pristinum decorem per XII annos restauraret et populos suo iure atque prudentia foveret, Sophiae Augustae Iustini coniugis minis mutus et obprobiis ignavae feminae perturbatus Alboenum regem Longobardorum cum omni exercitu suo ab Pannoniis invitavit.” (emphasis added)

73 Fred. 3.65: “Nec multo post tempore [i.e after the Lombards moved to Pannonia], Narsis patricius misas Iustini imperatoris eiusque agustae Sophiae perterritus, eo quod agusta ei adparatum ex auro facto muliebri, eo quod conucus erat, cum quo filaret, direxit; et pensilaris regerit non populo. At ille respondens: ‘Filo filabo, de quo Iustinus imperator nec agusta ad caput venire possit’. Tunc Langobardus a Pannoniis invitans, cum Albueno regi Aetaliem introduxit.” (emphasis added)
would be benefit better the Romans to serve the Goths than the Greeks, as the eunuch Narses commands and oppresses us with servitude, and that our most devout emperor ignores: either free us from his hands or surely we will betray the city of Roma and ourselves to the heathens.” When Narses heard this he answered briefly with these words: “If I have done harm to the Romans, harm I will find myself.”

The comparison between the reports on the LP and Isidore’s Chronica raise the question of the relationship between the two texts. It is relatively certain that Isidore did not use the LP, whose segments on the late sixth century were probably only composed a few decades later. Jose Carlos Martí has recently suggested that the Italian material in the passages from 401 to 404 in Isidore’s first edition came instead from a “chronique italienne inconnue de nos jours.” Conversely, the use of Isidore’s Chronica by the LP is hard to substantiate. As for the content, both texts agree on the invitation as the reason why the Lombards got into Italy in the first place, and also that the invitation and the later invasion were separate events: the details of their report on the invasion indeed vary on important points—namely, the expulsion of the Romans for Isidore under Tiberius (578–82), the surrender of fortresses for

75 Bede, Chr. Mai, s.a. 523: “[Narsis] deinde per invidiam Romanorum, pro quibus multa contra Gothos laboraverat, accusatus apud Iustinum et coniugem Sophiam, quod servitio praemeret Italianam, secessit Neapolim Campaniae et scripsit genti Langobardorum, ut venirent et possiderent Italianam.” (emphasis added)


76 Above, n.28.

77 Martín, Isidori Hispalensis Chronica, 33.
the LP during the pontificate of Benedict (575–79). Moreover, as we have established, they disagree on the motivations behind the invitation.

Two possible explanations can be suggested for the relationship of the two texts: they could have had access to different (primary?) sources, from which they obtained the essential information on the invitation and the divergent information on Narses’s motivations and on the subsequent conquest; alternatively, both could have been working from a singular source—Martín’s ‘chronique italienne’—out of which they elaborated their versions. Of the two possibilities, the latter seems more likely: the fact that the LP mentions the empress Sophia as it describes the petition, even though she plays no role in the following account, might suggest that the text the hagiographer of the LP had in hand included the report of the empress and Narses. Not surprisingly, the hagiographer chose to omit this bit of information from the rather positive account of Narses he included in the LP, while adding information on the petition (placing the blame instead on the “envy of the Romans”) and on Narses’s later destiny (information apparently unavailable to Isidore). In addition to that, we can suggest that this common source had no information on an actual conquest, since Isidore would only add this later in 626 (after Agilulf had effectively submitted most of the peninsula to his rule, see 4.1), and place it under Tiberius (578–82), while the LP would add it to the next Vita (the Vita Benedicti [575–79]) and place it thus in the last years of Justin: notice also that the ‘chronicle source’ never mentions Alboin.

The ‘chronicle source’, then, had notice of the Narses’s invitation, together with his fear of the empress, and expressed a view that was not fully supported by the Church in Rome, who tinkered with the story to partially exculpate Narses (although the invitation itself was presumably too well-known to be simply denied). Given that Isidore and the LP have very different accounts of the actual ‘invasion’, it is safe to assume that the chronicle source did not mention it: Isidore added the invasion later on possibly using John of Biclarum’s Chronica, while the LP had a different (unknown) source. The only certain terminus ante quem for the ‘chronicle source’ is Isidore’s use in his Chronica, hence, 615. However, the source Isidore used in the 610s presumably had no information on Italy under Tiberius (since later on Isidore added the conquest to his reign), which could produce a possible terminus ante quem to c. 578–82. Moreover, given that the entry on the invitation is the last information Isidore had on Italy in 615/16 (to which his later edition only added the conquest), it is tempting to push back the terminus ante quem to some point in the earlier 570s. A possible
context for this chronicle—or, at any rate, for the invitation story in its original form—might have been Ravenna under Longinus (c.568–574/75), the praetorian prefect sent by Justin to replace Narses. One might conjecture that, once the Lombards got out of hand in the north, the government in Ravenna chose to scapegoat Narses, who had incorporated the Lombards in the first place—and who had since, at least according to the LP, retired in Rome (and might have been already dead)—and attributed his actions to his cowardice: the eunuch who was afraid of a woman.

Summing up the evidence of the earlier sources, we can suggest that they portray the Lombards entering Italy in an organized movement, prompted by an invitation coming from Narses, attested by the ‘chronicle source’, which explains the lack of organized resistance. Marius’s mention of *fara* as the form by which the Lombards occupied Italy, further supports the idea that they were invited in as organized military detachments. Narses’s policy produced no especial reaction in Constantinople, or at least none that John of Biclarum cared to report: as far as his *Chronica* suggests by its silence, nothing happened in that time that changed the status of Italy, nor the status of the Lombards in Pannonia (who were still in place to destroy the Gepids three years later). The best guess for a date would be 569 (second indiction), preserved by the ‘consular source’, even though, since the process seems not to have been an invasion, there was no single event that could establish a firm initial date. The ‘consular source’ attests to the friction cause by the new troops (presumably) in northern Italy, which after sometime escalated into violence, especially in a period of hunger and disease: the previous use of the Lombards in Italy was also marked by series of unfortunate events. After the invitation, Narses was dismissed from his office and replaced by Longinus, resulting in resistance in the north that would, as will be demonstrated below, lead to a breakaway regime in Italy. At some point (likely after Narses was removed from office), the Lombards got out of control in the north, and Longinus might have fiddled with the information on Narses’s recruitment of the Lombards in order to create a scapegoat for the situation.

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78 Contemporary references on Longinus are extremely meager, restricted to a reference in an inscription in Ravenna (CIL XI, 317). Later sources (viz. *Origo* c.5; *HL* 2.29–30; Agn. 95–96; see *PLRE* IIIb, Longinus 5 (p.797).

79 Curiously, the source that emphasizes that Narses was a eunuch was the *LP*, not Isidore.

80 *Proc*, *Bella*, 8.33.2.
1.1.2. Rehabilitating the ‘invitation hypothesis’

The invitation story, although present in many of the sources, has a rather legendary ring to it, as an explanation after the fact of an event whose importance only gradually became apparent. It is not surprising that many generations of scholars have duly ignored the story. More recently, reassessments of the context of the establishment of the Lombards have allowed for a higher level of negotiation between the empire and the barbarians, and have rehabilitated the ‘invitation hypothesis’. The Lombards, it was suggested, should be understood in similar terms with other barbarian groups, as foreign troops engaged as foederati in the Byzantine system. The hypothesis, however, in the form in which it was presented, requires some adjustments to better conform to the context. The Lombards, rather than conforming to the traditional formula ‘army with a people’, should be seen as soldiers attached to the Byzantine army, and it is in the context of a rebellion of the Roman army that they managed to craft a kingdom in Italy.

Traditionally scholarship tended to dismiss the hypothesis that the Lombards entered Italy by an invitation, considering the reports of the story as gossip against Narses. Bringing in Italy’s enemies, considered an act of vile and petty revenge, would not be fit for the character of the great general. In addition to that, the dismissal of the invitation goes, the sources

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closer to the event, Gregory of Tours and Marius of Avenches, fail to mention any invitation. In 1991, Neil Christie brought the debate alive again, suggesting that the idea of invitation might be grounded in real facts: even though the invitation as an act of revenge sounds unlikely, the episode might hide official Byzantine policy. The Lombards had for long been federates of the empire, and had occupied Pannonia on imperial grant; it would not be too farfetched, Christie suggests, to assume they were settled in Venetia not only to create a buffer zone between Italy and the Avars, but also to keep the northern tricapitoline church in check. The new reading is part of a tendency to see the settlement of the Lombards as grounded on the Roman policy of settlement and accommodation, either in the traditional ‘hospitalitas’ interpretation (land) or in the Goffartian model (taxes) (see 2.2). Christie’s model, however, requires a closer re-reading of the sources. It is very unlikely that the Lombards would be settled in a recently acquired territory as foederati, on similar terms as they were allowed to settle in Pannonia, a territory that had not been held directly by the Romans for a while, especially given Justin's policy of a strong hand against barbarians. It is also hard to accept that mostly pagan barbarians would be settled in Italy to supress the tricapitoline church in Venetia.

It is more likely, however, that Narses incorporated the Lombards in order to reinforce the army in the north after the casualties fighting against Sindual (566/67): even though he presumably reinstated most of the rebelling rank-and-file, Narses would need fresh recruits

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83 Greg. Tur. Hist. 4.41; Mar. Av. s.a. 569;
84 Proc. Bell. 7.33.10 (Justinian settles Lombards in cities in Noricum); 7.34.37–47 (alliance with Justinian).
85 Christie, “Invitation,” 102–06.
to bring the army again up to strength.\textsuperscript{89} Furthermore, it has been suggested that, at that point, Narses reorganized the military defence of northern Italy, creating four duchies: one in Susa, one around lake Como, one in Trento and one in Istria (Cividale?), to which he assigned, instead of regular dukes, \textit{magistri militum vacantes}.\textsuperscript{90} Even though the sources are silent, we could suggest that, to bring the force in the north up to strength, Narses collected recruits in the Danubian area, gathering soldiers of both Roman and barbarian background (and incorporating them as \textit{foederati}, as we will argue in the next section): amongst them, the Lombards, who were across the border from Venetia and had already provided soldiers to the Roman army, were possibly one of the best options.\textsuperscript{91} The process probably started at some point after 567, although the troops might have arrived in Italy only in 568/69, as the ‘consular source’ suggests. In this sense, Narses did indeed ‘invite’ the troops that would eventually switch allegiance to Alboin. Once those troops turned against the Romans, the ‘chronicle source’ had a point in placing the blame on Narses for bringing the Lombards in, a fact the \textit{Liber Pontificalis} could not deny.

In 568, while the new troops were moving into Italy, Narses was removed from his position.\textsuperscript{92} Justin was presumably following the example of Justinian, who, once the Gothic wars were (thought to be) over in 540, recalled Belisarius to Constantinople and suppressed the position he held as commander-in-chief of all troops in Italy, leaving behind c.15,000 men, as Ernst Stein depicts it, “éparpillés à travers le pays et commandés par une dizaine de généraux.”\textsuperscript{93} Justin seems to be doing the same with Narses: shortly after the situation

\textsuperscript{89} Everett, \textit{Literacy}, 66.

\textsuperscript{90} The basic layout of Narses’s defense system in Italy was suggested by Hartmann, see “Iter Tridentinum,” \textit{Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts} 2 (1899): 1–14; and also \textit{Geschichte Italiens in Mittelalter}, vol. I (Leipzig: G. H. Wigand, 1897), 348–53; for the reception, see Stein, \textit{Histoire}, 2, 612–13, n.1; Schmidt, \textit{Ostgermanen}, 586–88; Jones, \textit{LRE}, 292; Christie, \textit{Constantine to Charlemagne}, 324–31. The basic references are, for Susa: Greg. \textit{LH}, 4.44; Como: \textit{HL}, 3.27; Trent: \textit{HL}, 2.3; Istria: Greg. Reg. 9.161. Even though Hartmann’s model is very convincing, it requires a certain level of flexibility towards the sources.

\textsuperscript{91} See \textit{HL}, 2.26, discussed in 1.2.

\textsuperscript{92} Mar. Av. s.a. 568.

seemed to have stabilized, Justin dismissed the commander and (possibly) replaced him with a praetorian prefect.\textsuperscript{94} Both emperors were arguably suspicious of granting too much military power to a single commander, who could rekindle the idea of an independent Italy (a suggestion that Goths had indeed presented to Belisarius in 540).\textsuperscript{95} Consequently, Justin removed Narses and, again following the lines used by Justinian almost three decades before,\textsuperscript{96} ensured the reestablishment of civil government responsible for the collection of taxes, about which the Romans soon started to complain and denounce as ‘servitude’ (servitium).\textsuperscript{97} By doing so, Justin was presumably extending Justinian’s \textit{Pragmatica Sanctio} (554), which was intended to regulate the de-militarization of Italy after the defeat of Totila.\textsuperscript{98} By removing Narses and (possibly) reinstating a praetorian prefect, Justin most likely expected to restore proper juridical order under civilian authority and defuse the risk of a military tyranny. Justin, however, miscalculated the stability of Italy: when the emperor removed Narses, he probably alienated the local military commanders—dukes and \textit{magistri militum}—already under the stress of the recurrent arrears. By 569, a good part of the Po Valley was out of control, not as a result of an invasion, but of an uprising of the northern army.

\textbf{1.2. The Lombards as military rebellion}

We have suggested that the Lombards were part of the troops that Narses deployed in Italy after the defeat of Sindual, which justifies the emphasis in the Italian sources have on an ‘invitation’ instead of an ‘invasion’. We should not be misled by the prominence of the Lombards after the rebellion: within this new army in northern Italy, the Lombards were part of a larger contingent of troops gathered from various regions within and without the Empire. In the present state of the sources, we have much more evidence for the dynamics

\textsuperscript{94}HL 2.5; Longinus, however, is poorly attested in the contemporary sources: \textit{CIL} XI 317, a tombstone of his \textit{cancellarius} Appollinaris (dead: 574/75), mentions him as “praefecti Longini,” leading scholars to believe he was praetorian prefect after Narses, from 568 to, at least, 574/75 (when he is attested). Other references are later: \textit{Origo}, 5; and Agn. c. 95. See \textit{PLRE} IIIb ‘Longinus 5’. Justinian also named a praetorian prefect (Athansios) in 540, as soon as he considered the conflict in Italy to be over: \textit{Proc. Bella} 6.23.24; 6.29.30, and again in 542, with precise instructions to supervise the military commanders: \textit{Proc. Bella}. 7.6.9.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{Proc. Bella} 6.29.18; 6.29.26.
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Proc. Bella} 7.1.29–33.
\textsuperscript{97} \textit{LP}, Vita Iohannis III, 63.1.
of the sixth-century army than we have for the recruits before enlistment, whether they were barbarians or Romans. Conditions of service in the imperial army deteriorated sharply in the sixth century, as the economy contracted and the state’s capacity to support the army dwindled. The result was a growing number of mutinies, as the lack of payment drove soldiers over the edge. At the same time, the sixth century marks the lowest point in political influence of the army, as the stability of the imperial government in Constantinople safeguarded the emperors from usurpers and military uprisings.99 The overwhelming odds against rebellions made higher commanders in the army maintain a healthy distance from mutinies, leaving the rebelling soldiers to their own devices. These, caught between terrible conditions of service and unbending imperial institutions, often sought different banners under which to rally their cause, and barbarian kings offered a perfect political alternative.

1.2.1. Conditions of service

The sources for the sixth-century Roman army provide a comprehensive picture of the conditions of service faced by the armies assembled in northern Italy in the 560s. By the sixth century, the conscription army of the fourth century had become an army mostly of volunteers, dutifully provided by military families all over the empire. Such military families were a result of hereditary obligations on veterans that, since the fourth century, produced a class of middling landowners of military tradition.100 More than providing soldiers, military families (and their properties) provided a great deal of support for their enlisted members, as their units dug deeper into the territories they were set to defend. In time of financial duress, when the economy stagnated and the arrears multiplied, soldiers could always rely on their family’s land (and sometimes even the family’s trade).101 When the government in Constantinople decided to assemble an expeditionary force, however, soldiers were moved beyond this safety net.

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101 Jones, LRE, 678.
Join the army, they said…

The fresh batch of soldiers raised in the Balkans was composed not only of Lombards, which Narses had already used against the Goths, but also a multitude of other nations, provincial Romans and barbarians, as was the usual for late Roman armies. Paul the Deacon attests to the late traces of this variety of peoples, claiming retrospectively that “whence, up to the present day, we call the villages (vicus) in which they live Gepids, Bulgars, Sarmates, Pannonians, Suevians, Norici or by other names of this sort.” Even though Paul believed that those were the many peoples Alboin led into Italy, their composition arguably points to the pool of recruits Narses would have found in the Danubian region: a collection of new and old barbarian groups and Roman provincials. The exact role of the Lombards within the army Narses put together after the defeat of Sindual is hard to determine: the fifth-century distinction of Roman vs. foederati—that is, troops formed of conscripted Romans and those troops supplied by foreign gentes under their own leaders—was out-dated in the sixth century, and Procopius mentions that the term foederati had changed meaning since the fifth century. From Procopius, we can perceive three different kinds of troops, namely, regular Roman troops, foederati troops (φοιδέρατοι), now composed of volunteer-based semi-regular soldiers, and troops Procopius calls ‘allies’ (σύμμαχοι), troops provided by allied gentes, resembling the fourth- and fifth-century foederati. By the sixth century, then, the distinction between Roman troops and (the troops now called) foederati was certainly hazy, given that the foederati included Roman troops, for, claims Procopius, “there is nothing to prevent anyone from assuming this name,” and that both served under regular commanders (and not local leaders). A sharper distinction was made between these two kinds of troops, which served as regulars units, and the allied troops, provided for a specific campaign and commanded by their own leaders.

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103 HL 2.26: unde usque hodie corum in quibus habitant vicos Gepidos, Bulgares, Sarmatas, Pannonios, Suavos, Noricos sive alis hiusucomodi nominibus appellamus.” The description, often seen as a picture of the process of ethnogenesis of the Lombards [see, for example, Reinhard Wenskus, Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Werde der frühmittelalterlichen gentes (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1961); Jarnut, Geschichte; “Gens, Rex and Regnum of the Lombards,” in Regna and Gentes, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz, Jörg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 409-28], makes much more sense if we accept it was a consequence of Roman conscription much similar to what Belisarius and Germanus did on the 540s and 550s; see Proc. Bella 7.10.1–3; 12.4; 39.9–16.
107 See, for example, Agathias description of Narses making Sindual king of the Herules; Agath. Hist. 1.20.8. Agathias composed his Histories as a continuation of Procopius, probably after 573; see Averil Cameron,
Were the Lombards Narses led to Italy enlisted as *foederati*—that is, incorporated into a (semi-) regular Roman army, under the command of a local official, or were they provided by the Lombard king as allied troops? The question has bearing on the later developments of the Lombards into a kingdom: if the Lombards were indeed a force under their own leaders, we could expect some level of continuity between the Pannonian kingdom and the new polity in Italy; conversely, if the basic organization of this group of Lombards was indeed the Roman army, the former political (and social) institutions of the Pannonian kingdom (whatever they might have been) would be of less importance. Procopius describes the Lombards that had formerly fought under Narses in the 550s (against Totila) as allies, provided by Auduin: not surprisingly, Narses had them sent back home once the campaign was over.\(^\text{108}\) The evidence for the Lombards’ enrolment in 568 is much less certain: nonetheless, if Paul’s list of peoples within Alboin’s army can be trusted, the picture we have is of an army composed not only of Lombards, but also other barbarian groups and even provincial Romans from Noricum and Pannonia, which would point to *foederati* (in the sixth-century sense), and not allies (see 1.1.1). Moreover, as we will argue in the next chapter, it is possible that Alboin was no longer in command of the Pannonian kingdom when he moved to Italy (2.1). In addition to that, the ‘consular source’ attests to a movement on a permanent basis (hence the Lombards bringing their families), which would not fit with a one-campaign agreement, but rather for the usual life of a Roman soldier quartered in military camps.

Such mixed troops were typical of late antique Balkans. Since the collapse of the Danubian frontier in the fifth century, the Balkans became a cultural buffer zone, dividing the clearly Roman Mediterranean shoreline from the barbarian lands across the Danube. The region was for long the best source of troops for the Roman army. The tough peasant population and a well-established martial tradition made the Balkans an important reservoir of military manpower, combining the original mountaineer population with several groups of barbarian *gentes* that had moved across the Danube since the fifth century. It is this military

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\(^{108}\) *Proc. Bella* 8.26.12 (Lombards as allies); 8.33.2–3 (sent back home): Procopius adds a note on their unruly behavior in Italy, although he certainly does not attribute their return home to that.

potential that accounts for the instability of the region, which would supply troops not only to the official conscription, but also to usurpers and barbarian leaders on the north of the Danube. In the sixth century, the Balkans were a grey zone, administratively still part of the empire, but socially controlled by many different military groups that went under several affiliations, ethnic and otherwise—Goths, Gepids, Lombards, foederati. These groups would oscillate in their loyalty here and there, and attach themselves to or against the Empire. They were military men in search of work, either in the service of Constantinople, or a successful local military commander: in both cases, they would be dealing with a contractor offering money in exchange for military service.\footnote{For the military culture on the Balkans, see Amory, \textit{People and Identity}, esp. 280; P. J. Heather, \textit{Goths and Romans}, 332-489 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 225–308.}

These large-scale enlistment campaigns had been the usual form of muster for the expeditionary forces since Justinian. Already in the fifth century, the Roman state found it more and more complicated to circumvent local resistance against conscription, while the growth of power of local magnates assured local labour force would remain untouched by the army recruiter.\footnote{Whether the modes of recruitment set by the time of Diocletian continued into the sixth century is a matter of much debate. The fact that the Justinian Code has not incorporated the laws on conscription preserved in the \textit{Theodosian Code}, has led many scholars to believe that conscription was abandoned for voluntary enlistment; see A. Müller, “Das Heer Justinians,” \textit{Philologus} 71 (1912): 101–38, 127; Ernst Stein, \textit{Studien zur Geschichte des Byzantinischen Reiches, vornehmlich unter den Kaisern Justinus 2 u. Tiberius Constantinus} (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1919), 122; Robert E. Grose, \textit{Römische Militärgeschichte von Gallienus bis zum Begin der byzantinischen Themenvorfassung} (Berlin: Weidmann, 1920), 301; Jones, \textit{LRE}, 668; A. Pertusi, “Ordinamenti militari, guerre in Occidente e teorie di guerra dei Bizantini (secc. VI–X),” \textit{Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo} XV (1968): 631–700, 663; John F. Haldon, \textit{Recruitment and conscription in the Byzantine army c. 550-950: a study on the origins of the stratistika ktemata} (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1979), 17–28. More recently, however, Michael Whitby has convincingly argued for the continuation of conscription, arguing that the purging of conscription laws in the Justinian Code only removed extraordinary laws: the basic rules of conscription, a daily reality since Diocletian, were absent from both codes, since their mechanisms were taken for granted; see Whitby, “Recruitment,” 75–87.}

The solution was to supplement the regular troops with mercenaries, either fighting in the entourage of powerful commanders as \textit{buccellarii}, or employed by the state in the guise of \textit{foederati}.\footnote{On \textit{buccellarii}, see 6.2.2.} The bulk of the troops, and especially in the crack units, was voluntary: whenever there was a need of fresh troops, generals would go to the traditional recruiting grounds—like Isauria or the Balkans—offering money.\footnote{For example, Proc. \textit{Bella} 7.10.1–3; 12.4; 39.9–16.} Officially, the law only barred from the army certain categories, like slaves, \textit{coloni adscripticii, curiales and cohortales}.\footnote{Cod. Jus. XII.xxxiv.2, 3, 4.} In practice, however, military service became the privilege of a hereditary group: in 505, for example, in a letter from the duke of the Thebaid, in Egypt, to the tribune at Hermopolis,
the duke recommends a certain Heracleon to serve under the addressee, as long as he “came from military stock” (ex genere oritur militar). Conscripts, thereby, were sought within families that held military service as a tradition and an honour. For the standing army, the evidence—mostly preserved from Egypt—suggests that recruits served mostly close to home. Thus, the army was manned by a social group of small landowners, whose sons followed in the footsteps of their fathers.

Logistic also evolved from the fourth century, and the burden of supporting the army shifted slowly but inexorably towards the military families. In their homelands, many soldiers were able to pursue other occupations to complement their wages—one soldier in Egypt, for example, is also described as a boatman—and the family property offered a safe support in times of need. The Justinian Code did not preserve the laws that established grants of land for veterans, supporting the idea that most soldiers, or at least their families, were already settled as landowners. From the fifth century on, the degree to which landholding was necessary to support the soldiers increased, while the capacity of the state to support a standing army dropped significantly. Chris Wickham rightly argued that the shift from armies based on redistribution of taxes to armies based on direct distribution of land was an essential part of the transition from Roman to post-Roman states.

In the West, the post-Roman kingdoms ascribed shares of the public revenues directly to the army, simplifying the tax-system and guaranteeing the military a safer access to the available resources. The result was the coupling of landholding and military service, which put the imperial tradition of rewarding veterans with land on its head: henceforth, military service was the consequence, not the cause, of tenure of land. Soldiers, and especially mercenary groups, could still be rewarded with land, but henceforth military service was seen as a prerogative of an already landowning elite. In the East, however, the resilience of the Roman state

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115 LRE, 669. Carrié rightly suggests that one should look to the prosperity of the army, as well as to the laws constraining the sons of veterans to enlist, for the origins of this relatively well defined military 'caste', see Carrié, “l'État,” 45; see also Whitby, “Recruitment,” 65–66.
116 P. Monac. 1 (574).
117 Jones, LRE, 676.
118 Wickham, Framing, 84; 120–21; see also Guy Halsall, Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West (London: Routledge, 2003), 47; 53; Petersen, Siege Warfare, 55.
119 For the debate on modes of settlement, see 2.2.
prevented this adaptation.\textsuperscript{120} By the sixth century, the empire still maintained a standing army, in which troops remained largely paid with gold (or equivalents in kind). However, the money to support such a large army no longer existed, and the result was frequent delays and arrears (see 1.1.2). To support themselves during such times, the soldiers would rely on their family properties, and on side jobs.\textsuperscript{121} In order not to hinder that flexibility, the regulation for leave became more elastic, while Justinian also made dispositions to prevent corrupt officers from imposing illegal charges.\textsuperscript{122} By and large, the conditions of the soldiers were probably worse in the imperial service than in the barbarian armies in the West.

The situation of expeditionary forces, such as the one Narses brought into Italy in the late 560s, was even worse than regular service in the eastern provinces. Drawn from similar backgrounds or from barbarian communities just across the border, the soldiers brought to fight in Italy, Africa, and Asia, had no access to their family possessions or to any kind of community to support them besides the army. In cases of arrears, expeditionary soldiers had no resources on which to rely, and were exposed to debt or starvation. The fragile situation of the soldiers in expeditionary forces, combined with the structural conditions that limited the capacity of Constantinople to afford a regular flow of cash towards the army, resulted in a series of military rebellions throughout the empire that would only subside in the later seventh century.

\subsection*{1.2.2. Mutiny and military rebellion in sixth-century Western Mediterranean}

The 560s had been especially bad for the military, and Agathias is probably correct when he suggests that, in his last year, Justinian mostly neglected the army.\textsuperscript{123} The army that Narses ‘invited’ into Italy—a bunch of soldiers out of the Balkans, with diverse backgrounds—soon faced the real conditions of service. Once in Italy, the new troops were in touch with the northern army—including, in all likelihood, several units from the recently rebellious Herules. Though the soldiers did not lack reason to complain, the usual motive of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{120} For the resilience of the Roman state in the East, see Wickham, \textit{Framing}, 124–44; Jean Gascou, \textit{Fiscalité et société en Égypte byzantine} (Paris: Association des amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance, 2008); and with especial emphasis on the role of large properties, Peter Sarris, \textit{Economy and society in the age of Justinian} (Cambridge UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

\textsuperscript{121} Often, soldiers would look for job as paid swords of local landlords, an occupation imperial legislation struggled to prevent, see, for example, Iust. Nor. 116.

\textsuperscript{122} On leaves: \textit{Cod. Iust. Lxxvii.2.9}. See Jones, \textit{LRE}, 674.

\textsuperscript{123} Agath, 5.14.1–2
\end{footnotesize}
dissatisfaction was payment. To Agathias, arrears were one of the main causes of the decay of the army. Delayed payment was, consequently, the most common cause of military sedition, and it played an important role in most revolts of the time. Connected to the complaints with arrears, were demands for land, which the soldiers often saw as the only safe source of income. The imperial government, however, had little room to fix the problem, and Justin was not concerned enough to negotiate. It was only a matter of time for the harsh conditions of service to turn the new comers into rebels.

Arrears

Problems with payment are behind most of the military unrest during the sixth century. As we have seen, structural conditions prevented the empire from maintaining a regular flow of cash—or, more often, products—to support a standing army, resulting in endemics arrears. For example, in 541, after the defeat of the Goths, Belisarius called attention to the constant delays and the unpreparedness of the armies in Italy. In a letter to Justinian reported (or fabricated) by Procopius, he says:

We have fallen behind in regard to the payment of the soldiers, we find ourselves unable to impose our orders upon them; for the debt has taken away our right to command. This too you must know well, my master, that the majority of those serving in your armies have deserted to the enemy.

The situation in Italy was so dire that Belisarius could not count on his troops to actually fight; elsewhere, troops did not fare any better: the magister militum per Armeniam faced the same standoff in 579, while his troops would not fight unless their salaries were paid. Fifteen years later, Gregory the Great voiced similar concerns: “The Theodosiaci indeed, who remained here without payment, are barely guarding the walls, and if the city, abandoned by

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124 Agath, 5.14.3–4; the other being the corruption of auditors.
125 Problems of payment: Kaegi, Unrest, 90–91; 94–95. While the slow down of the economy seems to be a given, the underlying causes are not. Wickham defends a structural shift, aggravated by the crisis in the fifth-century; see Wickham, Framing. Cf. Sarris, who suggests that the drop in income is more a result of the growing private power of landowners, who were in a better position to evade taxes, than macroeconomic patterns; see Sarris, Economy, 228ff; the idea is not particularly new, see Stein, Histoire, 2. See also Wolfram Brandes, Finanzverwaltung in Krisenzeiten: Untersuchungen zur byzantinischen Administration im 6.–9. Jahrhundert, Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte (Frankfurt am Main: Löwenklau, 2002). The strains to maintain the army generated competition, and henceforth extra tension, between the army and the population, contribute to unrest; see Kaegi, Unrest, 43; for dissent in urban and rural milieu, see now P. N. Bell, Social Conflict in the Age of Justinian: Its Nature, Management, and Mediation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), esp. 51–210; for the context of expeditionary forces, see Jones, LRE, 678.
127 Joh. Eph. 6.28.
everyone, does not have peace, how will it survive?”

Dissatisfied soldiers and arrears were also behind Totila’s fantastic recovery, a risk of which Belisarius (or Procopius) was well aware.

Frustrated with the lack of payment, some soldiers simply deserted: as Totila advanced into the south, a unit of Illyrian soldiers, tired of waiting for their dues, just abandoned their commander, Vitalian, and headed back home. According to Procopius:

But not long after [being stationed near Bononia] the whole body of the Illyrians who were serving under [Vitalian], suddenly and without having either experienced any hard treatment or heard any rebuke, withdrew secretly from the town by night and betook themselves homeward. And sending envoys to the emperor, they begged him to grant them pardon, seeing that they had come to their homes in this manner for no other reason than that, after their long service in Italy, without receiving the regular pay at all, the state now owed them a large sum of money. But it so happened that a Hunnic army had fallen upon the Illyrians and enslaved the women and children, and it was because of this intelligence, and also because they had a scarcity of provisions in Italy, that they withdrew.

It would be relatively easy for the Illyrians to just pack and go back home. For a group of Isaurians defending Rome from Totila in 549, however, that option was certainly not available. Instead, they opened negotiations with Totila to surrender the city to the Goth:

After the siege of Rome had continued for a long time, some of the Isaurians who were keeping guard at the gate which bears the name of Paul the Apostle—men nursing a grievance because for many years nothing had been paid them by the emperor (…) very secretly opened negotiations with Totila and agreed to hand over the city.

Other soldiers would simply change sides. Rebel soldiers provided much of the muscle for the Goths’ fantastic recovery of Italy, not only on account of Totila’s exemplary treatment of prisoners, but especially on account of the terrible treatment the soldiers suffered in the years following the victory over Vitiges. This moral flexibility was not limited to the troops quartered in Italy. During Justinian campaigns in Asia (527–32), the garrison of Aleppo, in Syria, tired of waiting for their payment, shifted sides to the Persians.

The lack of pay was

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128 Greg. Reg. 2.38: “Theodosiaci vero, qui hic remanserunt, rogam non accipientes vix ad murorum quidem custodiam se accommodant, et destituta ab omnibus civitas, si pacem non habet, quomodo subsistet?”
133 Proc. Bella 2.7.37.
also one of the main causes of the rebellion of the troops in Africa after Justinian’s conquest (536–46). The soldiers in Carthage, dissatisfied with the rewards they received and with the accumulation of arrears, rebelled against the local command, electing Stotzas, a bodyguard serving under the magister militum Martinus. Stotzas moved the rebelling soldiers out of Carthage and resisted the loyalist troops for almost a decade. Due to the continuous arrears, Roman troops kept flocking to him, and Procopius claims that, at a certain point, some two thirds of the Roman forces in Africa had joined him. Procopius, who was in Africa during the rebellion, paints a clear picture of the complaints of the soldiers in a speech attributed to Stotzas. According to Procopius, when facing the Roman troops sent to put down the rebellion, he came alone towards the opposing troops and said:

‘Fellow-soldiers, you are not acting justly in taking the field against kinsmen and those who have been reared with you, and in raising arms against men who in vexation at your misfortunes and the wrongs you have suffered have decided to make war upon the emperor of the Romans. Or do you not remember that you have been deprived of the pay which has been owing you for a long time back, and that you have been robbed of the enemy’s spoils, which the law of war has set as prizes for the dangers of battle? (…)

Independent of how close Procopius’s eloquence was to Stotzas’s actual words, the rebel leader was able to turn the loyalist troops to his side:

So spoke Stotzas; and the soldiers listened to his words and greeted him with great favour. And when the commanders saw what was happening, they withdrew in silence and took refuge in a sanctuary, which was in Gazophyla. And Stotzas combined both armies into one and then went to the commanders. And finding them in the sanctuary, he gave pledges and then killed them all.

Until his death in 545, Stotzas frequently received reinforcements from Roman soldiers, dissatisfied with the endless arrears. His death did not set things straight for the men in Africa: in that same year, the soldiers again mutinied in Carthage, following the promises of another rebel, Gontharis, to pay their salaries, which continued being delayed.

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What most soldiers asked for was the payment of their delayed salaries. They had no especial political claim or religious demands, nor were they advancing candidates to the imperial throne, as Roman armies had often done. It is not surprising, thus, that the most effective measure to counter mutinies was to bring money to pay the soldiers. That was the tactic used first by Belisarius, and later by Germanus in Africa, to fight off Stotzas’s rebellion.\(^\text{140}\) When Narses moved into Italy to subdue Totila (551), he requested from Justinian not only troops, but also money to pay the arrears of the Italian troops. Every successful mission against rebels was based on setting right their payment.

*The quest for land*

Some of the soldiers, however, might have been interested in more than their usual paycheck. Back home, many soldiers came from traditional landowning military families, whose properties were an important part of their income. It is not surprising that, once settled overseas, they would look for acquiring property. Many soldiers would become landowners in the traditional way, by investing their wages into land.\(^\text{141}\) As we have seen, a few family acres would guarantee support for the rainy days, and was in fact, though still not by law, part of the soldier’s income.\(^\text{142}\) Without access to their family property, it is safe to assume that many soldiers would think it was in their right to get access to grants of land, as it had always been a resource for enduring the constant arrears. The demand for land, as a reason for troops to rebel, was a result of the ever-present arrears.

For instance, Procopius mentions that the soldiers in Africa, who joined Stotzas rebellion in 536, had their eyes on the lands that were formerly held by the Vandals. According to him:

> After the Vandals had been defeated in battle, (...) the Roman soldiers took their daughters and wives and made them their own by lawful marriage.\(^\text{143}\) And each one of these women kept urging her husband to lay claim to the possession of the lands which she had owned previously, saying that it was not right or fitting if, while living with the Vandals, they had enjoyed these lands, but after entering into marriage with the conquerors of the Vandals they were then to be deprived of their possessions. And having those things in mind, the soldiers did not think they were bound to yield the lands of the


\(^{141}\) See, for example, *P. Ital.* 22, *P. Dip.* 122; Jones, *LRE*, 678.


\(^{143}\) Cf. Proc. *Bella* 3.18.7ff.
Vandals to Solomon [Magister Militum Africae], who wished to register them as belonging to the commonwealth (δηµόσιος) and to the emperor’s house (…).\textsuperscript{144}

It has been suggested that Procopius is referring to the sortes Vandalorum, allotment made out of public funds to support the barbarian troops.\textsuperscript{145} As mentioned above, the Western governments had solved the growing gap between military expenses and revenue by connecting soldiers directly with their supply units, either in the form of tax collection or landownership.\textsuperscript{146} For the soldiers coming to Africa, the system was all they could ask for: the access to land (directly or on the form of taxes revenue) would guarantee their support throughout the long delays in payment, and in all likelihood the sortes Vandalorum were more generous pieces of property than they had left behind before joining the forces. And after leaving home and hearth behind and risking their necks for the emperor, were those lands not the rewards they deserved for their victory?\textsuperscript{147} Even though some soldiers might have married the widows and daughter of the defeated Vandals as a way to strengthen their claim, as Procopius suggests, the main issue was the belief that the military land in Africa should go to the soldiers.\textsuperscript{148}

Procopius’s description of the rebellion in North Africa is the only clear extant evidence for soldiers of expeditionary forces claiming to be settled on public land. The fight for the sortes Vandalorum, however, could be used a key to understand two other passages, both in Italy, fifty years apart from one another. In 541, as mentioned above, the Roman troops in Italy were dissatisfied to the point of rebellion. According to Procopius, what drove the soldiers to mutiny was not only the arrears—to which Procopius alludes in Belisarius’s letter

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{146} For the debate, see 2.2.
\textsuperscript{147} cf. Proc. Bella 4.15.54–57.
\end{flushleft}
to Justinian quoted above—but also the mistreatment they received at the hand of Alexander, the auditor sent by Justinian to normalize the finances in Italy. Once in Italy, the auditor not only alienated the Italian population, changing them reparations they thought were illegal, but he failed to maintain the support of the army.

[Alexander] disappointed the soldiers by the stinginess (µικρολογία) of the reckoning with which he repaid them for their wounds and dangers. Hence not only did the Italians become disaffected from the Emperor Justinian, but not one of the soldiers was willing any longer to undergo the dangers of war, and by wilfully refusing to fight, they caused the strength of the enemy to grow continually greater.\(^\text{149}\)

It is hard not too see in this passage similarities with the episode in Africa, where the soldiers were dissatisfied with their rewards, considering they should also be entitled to the Vandal sortes. It is tempting to see similar demands for land from the soldiers in Italy complaining about their rewards. At least in 591, land as an alternative income was part of the soldiers’ agenda in the peninsula, when they rebelled against the Byzantines, flocking behind a commander of Lombard stock, Ariulf—we will see more on that context in 3.2. Relevant here are the claims of the rebelling soldiers. Gregory the Great wrote to the bishop of Ravenna, reporting the situation:

Thus I attribute to my sins that the person who is here now [i.e. the exarch Romanus] is pretending to fight against our enemies, while he forbids us from making peace. And yet at the present moment, even should he wish to make peace, we cannot do so at all, since Ariulf has the troops of Authari (Auctarit) and Nordulf, and wants their precaria to be given to him, so that he might deign to talk to us about peace.\(^\text{150}\)

The rebel commander would not negotiate peace unless he could secure the grant of precaria, temporary allotments of land, possibly similar to the system developed in the West.\(^\text{151}\) In

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\(^{149}\) Proc. Bella 7.1.33.

\(^{150}\) Greg. Reg. 2.38 [=MGH 2.45]: “Peccatis ergo hoc meis deputo, quia iste, qui nunc interest [i.e. Romanus, exarch Ravennae], et pugnare contra inimicos dissimulat et nos facere pacem vetat, quamvis iam modo, etiamsi velit, facere omnino non possimus, quia Ariulfus exercitum Auctarit et Norduli habens eorum sibi dari precaria desiderat, ut nobiscum loqui aliquid de pace dignetur.” (emphasis added). For the context, see 3.2.2.

\(^{151}\) Gregory mentions Precarium in three other letters (Greg. Reg. 9.132, 9.134 and 10.8), in all cases referring to a certain form of income granted by a special dispensation from Ravenna (which Gregory calls capitular, and the Lib. Ind. 10.1.12 precaria epistula), different thus from regular payments, usually called stipendium, donatio or, more rarely, roga. Isidore defines precarium as a property, which remains in possession of the ‘creditor’ but whose production is granted to the ‘debtor’ by a plea (hence, precarium, from precor), see Etymologiae, 5.25.17 (compare with Lib. Ind. 10.1.12), a definition not unlike the use Roman legal vocabulary, see Iust. Dig. 43.26.1 (compare with Edictum Theodorici).
other words, Ariulf, would not join the table to talk about peace before he secured access to land, in all likelihood, for his supporters.

1.2.3 Rebellingsoldiers and barbarian kings

Rebellions in the sixth century tended to involve mostly soldiers, who often elected one of themselves as their leader. Commissioned officers—dukes and magistri militum—usually stayed as far away as they could from mutinies: when rebellions failed (and they always failed) it would be their heads, and not the soldiers’, that would roll. The bleak prospect of military rebellions prevented the dissatisfied soldiers from coopting support and promoted the perpetuation of the idea that rebellions always failed. This routine only changed in 602, when Phocas—himself a lower NCO—marched into Constantinople and set Maurice’s head on a spike, claiming the purple for himself. This effectively reset the cycle and military rebellions resumed their emperor-making tradition of the third and fourth centuries. Sixth-century soldiers, however, were usually left to their own devices when it came to organizing their resistance. In that scenario, soldiers often forged new political allegiances to fill the vacuum created by the non-commitment of popular generals. To play that role, barbarian kings were the best available.

The problem of leadership

One of the most remarkable characteristics of sixth-century military rebellions was the reluctance of commissioned officers to get involved.152 Compared with other periods, that is highly unusual: the fourth century had its share of great leaders, popular with the troops, raising their armies to grapple with the empire—one must think of Constantine, or Julian after him—while later rebellions in the East were also headed by strategoi, by generals.153 In the sixth century, however, the leaders elected by the soldiers were most of the time lower officers in the army. The sources for the sixth century preserved the background of some of these men, illuminating the social milieu of the mutineers. Stotzas, who was elected by the troops as their leader (τυραννος, says Procopius) in 536,154 is a good example. Before the rebellion, Stotzas was a bodyguard of the magister militum Martinus (Ματτίνου δορυφόρους)

152 Kaegi, Unrest, 61–62.
153 Unrest, 61.
or, as Jordanes puts it, “almost the last of the soldiers, a little client of the magister militum Martinus.”\footnote{Proc. Bella 3.11.30; 4.15.1.} Shortly after Stotzas’s rebellion had been put down, another mutiny in Africa raised as commander Gontharis, also a former bodyguard (δορυφόρος).\footnote{Iord. Rom. 369: “(...) paene ultimus militum et Martini clientulus magistri militum.”} The army in Asia did not behave differently. When the garrison in Dara rebelled against the empire (537), they established a ‘tyranny’ electing one of the soldiers, John, as their leader.\footnote{Background: Proc. Bella 4.19.5–6; rebellion: 4.25.4–11.} By the end of the century, when the army fighting in Persia rebelled against the imperial authorities—this time against outrageous cuts in their salary—the soldiers managed to secure the support of a duke, whom they elected their leader. This episode, which happened during the Monokarton mutiny (588–89), shows the reluctance of commanding officers to line up with their men against the empire.\footnote{Proc. Bella 1.26.5–12.} According to Theophylact Simocatta,

(...) the soldiers assembled and sanctioned the election of a general. It was for this reason that they summoned Germanus [dux Phoenitiae], introduced him into the council, and decided to entrust to him the reins of generalship. But when he rejected the camp’s demand, they insisted that he comply with the election, and added threats that the punishment for disobedience would even be death; the soldiers’ resolution prevailed, and Germanus was proclaimed general (...).\footnote{Theo. Sim. 3.2.4–5. Cf. Evag. 6.5.}

The most famous leader of lowly origins is, nonetheless, Phocas, who became emperor after the Balkan army rebelled en masse against Maurice in 602. Phocas, before being Augustus (602–10), was a lower soldier in the Roman army in the Balkan. The sources refer to him as centurion (ἐκατόνταρχος),\footnote{Theo. Sim. 8.7.7.} or simply as soldier (στρατεώτης).\footnote{Chron. Pasch. s.a. 602; Joh. Ant. frg. 218d; Theoph. s.a. 6092. Cf. HL 4.26.}

It is not hard to grasp why top commanders would not step up as leaders of the rebellions, independently of how many emperors had sprung as military usurpers in the past. They were certainly much better off than the regular soldier, and arrears would not harm them as much. The annona of a soldier, after Justinian incorporatated the quinquennial donative into the salary, amounted to 5 solidi a year.\footnote{Jones, LRE, 670.} A duke—as far as the extant evidence can show, for the case of Lybia—would earn up to 1,400\textsuperscript{1/2} solidi, counting his salary in cash

\footnote{Jones, LRE, 670.}
plus perquisites in kind; a sum that, given his position, he was more likely to see than his soldiers. Magistri militum received much more. In addition to that, there was a myriad of illegal profits higher officials could capitalize on. Besides their more comfortable position, higher officers were very aware of the outcome of rebellions: usurpers never won. And when the Empire finally mustered the strength to strike back, soldiers would be sent back to their proper quarters—some would be punished, some might be sent to less desirable frontiers: generals would be killed. Procopius summarized the state of affairs in a short dialogue between Euphemia, the daughter of John the Cappadocian, the pretorian prefect per Orientem, and Antonia, Belisarius’s wife. When Euphemia questioned Antonia why Belisarius would not depose Justinian:

Antonia replied quickly: “It is because we are not able, my daughter, to undertake revolutions in camp, unless some of those here at home join with us in the task. Now if your father were willing, we should most easily organize this project and accomplish whatever God wills.”

Revolution in the camp was courting death without strong support from within Constantinople. After Theodosius I (379–95), no emperor took the field with the army; instead, they remained safely inside the capital, invulnerable not only to foreign aggression, but also from homegrown rebel armies. Even if one army rebelled, from the safe position in the capital the emperor could draw on the resources of the rest of the empire to counter the threat. One by one, all the usurpers were cut down by the central authorities. The power of the army to influence politics was drastically reduced—especially if compared to the emperor-making soldiers of the third century. The destinies of the empire were set from Constantinople and only the court or popular pressure from the streets had actual influence

164 For a duke in Lybia inferior: Iust. Ed. XIII.18; cf. Ed. XIII.3, see LRE, 677.
165 The central work for corruption in the Roman Empire is still Ramsay MacMullen, Corruption and the Decline of Rome (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 171–77; [MacMullen's take on corruption should, however, be read together with Peter Brown, Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire (Madison: Winsconsin University Press, 1992)].
167 Kaegi, Unrest, 20–25.
in the process. The result was a lack of trust amongst the higher officers in the possibilities of a successful rebellion.

**Rebelling soldiers and barbarian kings**

Once an army rebelled, the clock would start ticking for when the empire would muster its incommensurably larger resources to set the soldiers back on track. Without a leadership, a clear objective or local support, mutinies would not take the soldiers far. Kaegi has rightly pointed that

Sixth-century seditions generally failed, among other reasons, because of the participants' lack of specific goals, their lack of leadership, and their alienation from the rest of the population. It was not always difficult to begin a mutiny, but it was not easy to organize a government and maintain it.

A closer look at sixth-century rebellions reveals an additional pattern: since mutinies lacked political support and usurpers were renowned for their short life expectancy, soldiers would often seek new political options. Such allegiances could not only provide an alternative to open opposition against the powers that be (i.e. rebellion and the threat of usurpation), but also grant a certain level of local support. In effect rebelling Roman armies could associate either with local political groups or with barbarian groups within the army. In the previous centuries, while Roman emperors would never negotiate with usurpers, barbarian kings had been incorporated as foederati (in the fifth-century sense), and developed peaceful relations with the Empire, as the establishment of the Frankish and Gothic kingdoms in the fifth and sixth century show. The option to flock behind a barbarian name (and become a barbarian king or shift allegiance to a barbarian king), was not a matter of self-representation or cultural assimilation (or dissimulation), it was instead a political maneuver to escape the usually funereal consequences of the traditional antagonism between legitimate and illegitimate imperial contestants.

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169 “Senat und Volk.”; Kaegi, *Unrest*, 42.

170 *Unrest*, 61.

171 The debate on ethnicity and identity has produced a vast number of publications, some of them more informative than others. The question of identity has been closely related to the concept of 'ethnogenesis', and has been operational in most of the debates on the topic. The fundamental theoretical text is Geary's problematic attempt to appropriate the concept of 'situational identity' to support readings on ethnogenesis; see
The search for alternative political allegiances to the empire is clear in many sixth-century rebellions. Once again, Stotzas’s rebellion (536–46) provides a good example. From the start, Stotzas tried to capitalize on the Vandals as a source of legitimacy. It is not unlikely that some of the Vandals actually joined Stotzas’s ranks: even though Justinian had sent the entire Vandal army to fight on the eastern front, Procopius suggests that a group had escaped, and made their way back to Africa, joining the rebelling soldiers. It is probable, however, that Stotzas simply used the Vandals as a political banner of opposition to the empire: his group of dissatisfied soldiers had a better chance of success associating itself with whatever was left of the previous government than as deserters. After a major defeat at the hands of Germanus, Stotzas fled with the Vandals to the countryside. Soon he found a new political allegiance, joining the Mauri and marrying the daughter of one of their rulers. Victor of Tunnuna suggests that in 541 “in Africa, Stotzas received the kingship with tyranny, in the desert,” and unified the peoples of Africa. Up to his death, Stotzas would use Mauri troops against the Empire. Stotzas used both Vandals and Mauri as political banners around which he could articulate his resistance against the empire: there is no deep social reengineering behind his choices (nor a cunning change of identity), but instead a maneuver to establish an alternative (and more viable) political affiliation. By associating his followers


173 Vic. Ton. s.a. 541.2 & 543: “Stutzas apud Africam regnum in heremi partibus cum tyrannide assumit.”

first with the Vandals and later with the Mauri, Stotzas was able to maintain his opposition against the Empire for a decade.

In Italy, shifting allegiances between Romans and Goths were also a common element in military rebellions. For instance, in the rebellion against the Romans in 541, even if Totila used his Gothic background to marshal the resistance in transpadane Italy, he actually represented a larger chunk of Italian society. Resentful members of the old Gothic regime were prominent, like Ildibadus and Totila, but rebel Roman soldiers and dissatisfied civilians added volume to the rebellion. According to Procopius:

When Ildibadus learned that Belisarius had departed from Ravenna and was on his way [to Constantinople], he began to gather about him all the barbarians and as many of the Roman soldiers as were inclined to favour a revolution (νεώτερα πράγματα, lit. ‘new deeds’). And he sought by every means to strengthen his rule, and labored diligently to recover for the Gothic nation the sovereignty of Italy. Now at first not more than a thousand men followed him and they held one city, Pavia, but little by little all the inhabitants of Liguria and Venetia came over to his side.\(^{175}\)

The rebellion started in Pavia—soon to become the centre of Lombard power—and was supported not only by ‘all the barbarians’, but also by Roman soldiers and the rest of the transpadane provinces. After the death of Ildibadus, the command fell shortly to a Herul, Eraric, before it passed on to Totila.\(^{176}\) The Gothic army under Totila was a combination of barbarians of different origins, dissatisfied Italians, and rebel soldiers. Their allegiance had nothing to do with their ‘real’ or ‘perceived’ identity (to which one could hardly attest), but to a political affiliation in opposition to the empire. Joining the Goths was clearly a political—in contrast with an ethnic—position, and even Procopius, imbued with Justinian’s propaganda of Romans fighting back barbarians, could not mask it.\(^{177}\)

The rebellion of the magister militum Sindual provides another interesting example: only a few years before the Lombards, he led a new rebellion against the Empire in Italy. In 566/67 soldiers in the northern army rebelled, raising their magister militum, the Herul Sindual, as king. Sindual commanded the Herul federates within the army, and had faithfully fought

\(^{175}\) Proc. Bella 7.1.25–27.

\(^{176}\) For Ildibadus death and Eraric’s short reign, see Proc. Bella 7.1.37–7.2.

\(^{177}\) For the ideological appropriation of ethnical terms during the Gothic War, see Amory, People and Identity, 149–94.
under Narses, who made him commander over the Herules. In the reorganization of
the north, Sindual was made magister militum and placed in one of the new duchies, possibly
around Trent. The participation of the magister militum is unusual, given his high rank, and
his claim to power is not at all clear. Our three near contemporary sources present him in
different forms: for the Liber Pontificalis, the Eruli raised a rebellion (intarsia) and made
Sindual their king, for Marius of Avenches, the Herul Sindual “tyrannidem adsumpsit”,
became a tyrant, while the Excepta Sangallensis simply mentions “rex Sindual.” It is not
unlikely that Sindual used his Herul background to support his claim among the numerous
Herulian troops fighting in Italy. In addition to the Herules, however, as a magister militum,
Sindual commanded a regular Roman army, composed of soldiers of diverse backgrounds
(either Roman citizens or barbarians), who probably rebelled with him—or else they would
presumably have killed him on the spot. His soldiers supported his rebellion and made him
king: the rebellion, nonetheless, did not make any of them Herules (besides those who were
born so), but instead it was intended to create a political alternative to the empire, which
would, presumably, be a new Herul kingdom composed of soldiers of multiple origins. As
was the case with Stotzas and Totila, the Herules became a political banner behind which
dissatisfied soldiers could flock. At any rate, Narses was present to put Sindual down before
he could gather any more support. Had Sindual succeeded, however, we might well be
writing about Herul, instead of Lombard, Italy.

178 Narses makes him commander: Agath. 1.20.8; Sindual fighting under Narses: Agath. 2.7.6; 2.8.6; 2.9/7–8,
5–34; Alexander Sarantis, “The Justinianic Herules: from Allied Barbarians to Roman Provincials,” in Neglected
barbarians, ed. Florin Curta (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 361–402; for an analysis of the ancient origins
of the Herules (often independent of the limitations of the sources), see Alexander Steinacher, “The Herules:
179 Magister militum: Reg. Pont. Rom. 990; 1031. The title Sindual received from Narses (above, fn. xxx) might have
already been that of magister militum: Agathias refers to στρατεγος, which could mean different positions in the
army. The association of Sindual with Trent, and more specifically with the Brenner Pass is a passage from Paul
the Deacon’s HL 2.3 in which he calls Sindual rex Brentorum, “qui adhuc de Herulorum stirpe remanserat, quos
secum in Italiam veniens olim Odoacar adduxerat” (Cf. Paul the Deacon, Hist. Rom. 15.8–9). The Brenti would
be a misreading of the Alpine people Breones or Briones. See Waitz comments on his edition of the Historia
Langobardorum (MGH SRL p. 73, fn. 4), see also Stein, Histoire, 2, 613, n. 1; Schmidt, Ostgermanen, 558; “Zur
Geschichte Rätiens unter der Herrschaft der Ostgoten,” Zeitschrift für schweizerische Geschichte 14, no. 4 (1934):
451-59, 458–59. Though the explanation stretches the sources, the location of the mag. mil. there is not overall
unlikely.
180 Mar. Av. s.a. 566.4; Exx. Sang. 710; LP Iohannes III 63.2.
182 Mar. Av. s.a. 566.4; Exx. Sang. 710; Evagr. 4.24, LP Iohannes III 63.2.
The Lombard Rebellion

Even though the sources are tacit about the events that led to the advent of the Lombards in 569, the surviving evidence from the sixth-century army provides a reliable picture for Italy in the late 560s. The conditions of the army in northern Italy remained bad after Narses intervened and defeated the Goths (551–54). Even though he brought money and new recruits, it was not long before wages started to lag behind again: in 553, payment was delayed again.\(^{183}\) Even so, Narses was able to handle the troops and defeat the last resistance in Italy, as well as a Frankish invasion commanded by the Alamanni Leutharis and Butilinus.\(^{184}\) The victory, however, is not likely to have improved the situation of the army. In 566/7, the soldiers rebelled and flocked behind the Herules, electing Sindual king: but Narses, always efficient, put down the rebellion. To replace the troops killed in the rebellion, it is possible that Narses enlisted more recruits in the Balkans: a mishmash of provincials and barbarians—including Lombards, but also, Gepids, Bulgars, Sarmatians, Pannonians, Suaves, Norics, to cite only those Paul had named\(^{185}\)—the kind of band one could put together in a rush.\(^{186}\) This new army was formed as a *foederati* army, introduced into Italy—which in a few years the ‘chronicle source’ would label as ‘invitation’—and likely quartered (not without some confusion) in the Po Valley. What I will argue in the next chapter is that Narses might have also conscripted Alboin, the son of the Lombard king Auduin, who had supplied allied troops to the Romans before.\(^ {187}\)

At some point after 568, Justin II (565–78) removed Narses from his position, fearing, we suggested, what a military commander could do with all the power of the Italian forces concentrated in his hands and no real enemies to fight. Justin then suppressed the central military command in Italy, and sent a praetorian prefect, Longinus, to re-organize the province and supply for the army, a job that was well within the competences of the office but proved to be beyond Longinus’s available resources. By dismissing Narses, however, not only did the empire lose any possibility of a coordinated military response in Italy, but constant imperial meddling with military hierarchy also did damage to the morale and


\(^{184}\) Agath. 1.16; 2.1–3.

\(^{185}\) *HL* 2.26.


discipline of the troops. As long as the Italian army was under a single military command, the threat of combined response by the military forces in the area was a powerful tool to keep dissident armies in line: rebelling forces, like Sindual’s, could be easily put down if they had to bear the weight of the combined forces in Italy. Without a capable military command, a rebelling army could easily set the example for other armies, resulting in a general conflagration.

It is possible that Narses was removed from command while the new army was on the move into Italy (which, given that the new troops were not rushed towards a specific campaign, might have taken several months), and that they were relocated in Italy before Longinus could take hold of the situation. In any case, even in normal circumstances, as we have seen, the logistics of the Italian army was far from effective, and very soon the new soldiers would have found out the real conditions of service. The ‘consular source’ registered the ensuing conflicts, as soon after their arrival in Italy, the soldiers started living off the land—presumably, much worse conditions than previously agreed with Narses upon recruitment. Soon, the removal of Narses, combined with the dissatisfaction of the Italians with imperial rule and the pervasive arrears presumably took the situation to a point of rebellion, as had often been the case in recent years (and even as recently as 566/7, with Sindual). The rebels—or some of them—quickly flocked to the Lombards, who were numerous amongst the new troops in the north. Before long, the Lombard king, Alboin, would be head of the movement. The deposition of Narses created a vacuum of military command that the mutinous troops in the north quickly seized. Similar to Sindual’s rebellion in 566, the soldiers shifted allegiances to a barbarian group, but this time they were left unchecked: no unified command in Italy was there to muster the loyal troops against the rebellion. As with Idalbadus and Totila before them, after this initial success, the rebelling soldiers soon found the support of most of transpadane Italy. By the 570s, the rebels had succeeded in creating a political alternative to the imperial government in Italy: now they could operate as independent Lombards.

Understanding the advent of the Lombards as a rebellion (or their appearance in the midst of one)—though not specifically mentioned in the sources—solves the issue of the incapacity of the not inconsiderable Roman army in the north to challenge an ‘invasion’,

188 See Kaegi, Unrest, 35.
189 Agath. 1.16; 2.1–3.
especially in Venetia. Even though we have no idea of the extent of this army, we know it was experienced and that it had been proved efficient many times since it was put together under Narses to fight off Totila, and most recently to suppress Sindual’s rebellion. Even if such an army was unable to resist the Lombards, they would certainly have engaged them in battle, and our contemporary sources would have some record of that. However there is none: the only mention of resistance is the siege of Pavia, preserved much later in Paul the Deacon, and most likely legendary. In addition to that, it is likely that at least two of the four magistri militum established by Narses in the north—both in the western Po Valley, in Susa and around the lake Como—were still in place at least until the mid 570s. This army did not simply disappear—or hid behind the walls afraid of the invaders, as it has been suggested. On the contrary, the army in the north banded together against the Byzantine commanders and rebelled, shifting their allegiance to an alternative polity centered on the Lombards. As with Stotzas, Totila, and Sindual, the Lombards provided rebelling Roman soldiers (of varied backgrounds) a political possibility that was more viable than rebellion and usurpation. Henceforth, they would be part of a newly created Lombard kingdom in Italy.

190 For the military organization of northern Italy, see below, 1.1.2, p. 31, n.81.
192 HL 2.26–27; for the problems, see 2.1.1.
193 The mag. mil. Sisinnius is mentioned in Susa in ca. 574, in a rather peculiar relationship with the Lombards of Zaban, fleeing from Mummolus (Greg. Tur. Hist. 4.44); The mag. mil. Francio is mentioned by Paul, around Lake Como up to ca. 586 (HL 3.27).
194 For example, Christie, “Invitation,” 106–07.
195 Which is not to say they became ethnically Lombards: Paul’s report of the long lasting place names referring back to Sarmatians, Gepids, Norics, Pannonians (HL 2.26) attests for the resilience of those groups in Italy. These soldiers probably became Lombards in the same sense that they had been Romans: a diverse group fighting under the Roman flag.
CHAPTER TWO

THE OUTCOMES OF THE REBELLION (569–74)

2.1 The Conquest of Italy: 2.1.1 Alboin, 2.1.2; Cleph and the End of Monarchy. 2.2 The Settlement of the Army: 2.2.1 Accommodation; 2.2.2 Economic Woes and the Breakdown of Taxation.

We have seen in the last chapter that in 568 Narses recruited a new batch of soldiers to replenish the forces of the army in northern Italy after the engagements (among others) against the last Gothic resistance and the Franks, as well as recent casualties incurred in fighting off Sindual’s rebellion (566/7). This new troop, we suggested, was composed of a multitude of different groups collected in the Danubian region, both barbarian and Roman provincials, among whom were a significant group of Lombards, and was incorporated into the forces in northern Italy (also composed of soldiers of various backgrounds). In 568, Justin II (565–578) dismissed Narses, suppressing at the same time his position of commander-in-chief of the army of Italy, restoring civilian oversight over the military under the command of a praetorian prefect, Longinus. Without a central military command, and subject to recurring arrears, the northern army rebelled, shifting their allegiance to Alboin and the Lombards who could provide a political alternative. As a result, the rebellion swiftly assumed the form of a less than gentle Lombard occupation, and would soon be understood as an invasion.

As it would turn out, Alboin’s reign in Italy was short, but firmly established the Lombards as the dominant political alternative available for the soldiers. His murder, followed shortly by the murder of his successor, Cleph, turned Italy into an in-between-zone, similar to the Balkans, in which military manpower was available for the hire. This chapter tackles the consequences of the rebellion: first, we will analyze the surviving evidence to track Alboin and Cleph and the first attempts to impose order on the rebellion; secondly, we will turn to the mechanisms of accommodation, and how the rebelling
soldiers—now generically called Lombards—attempted to replace ineffectual imperial logistics to supply for themselves.

2.1 THE CONQUEST OF ITALY

The sources for the events between 569 and 574 are more limited than the sources for the advent of the Lombards in 569, and most of the material available is both of later composition and legendary nature, mainly preserved in book two of the HL. Paul’s narrative can be summarized in a few points: 1) before entering Italy, Alboin (king of the Lombards after Audoin) attacked and destroyed the Gepids, old enemies of the Lombards, capturing along with the booty, the skull of the Gepid king Cunimund (out of which Alboin made a goblet) and Rosemond, the king’s daughter; 2) Subsequently, by Narses’s invitation, Alboin entered Italy, waltzing in from Venetia to Pavia, and conquering most of the peninsula, except for Rome and Ravenna, and a few fortresses on the coast. 3) After seven years, Rosemund avenged her father and murdered Alboin. 4) Cleph replaced Alboin, but being a ruthless ruler, was murdered: after his death the Lombard monarchy was suppressed by the dukes and Italy descended into violence.

Walter Goffart has correctly identified this narrative (and the main topic of book two) as the sins of the Romans and the tragedy of Italy.

The information preserved by contemporary and near contemporary sources is much more limited. Out of the three sources we suggested for the invitation (1.1), only two of them preserved information about Alboin and Cleph, namely John of Biclarum and the ‘consular source’. The ‘chronicle source’, as far as the material preserved by Isidore and the LP suggests, stopped shortly after the invitation, and neither Alboin nor Cleph were mentioned. The information available in John of Biclarum and the ‘chronicle source’ create serious problems to Paul’s narrative, both as regards his chronology and his concatenation of events. The destruction of the Gepids, which constitutes a fundamental event in Paul’s narrative, seems, as we will see, to have taken place in 571, once the Lombards were already in Italy, compromising not only Paul’s chronology, but also complicating the role of the

196 *HL* 1.27.
197 *HL* 2.5 (invitation); 2.9 (invasion without resistance, creation of duchy of Friuli); 2.12 (takes Treviso); 2.25–27 (Pavia, Liguria, and the rest of Italy apart Rome, Ravenna and a few fortresses).
198 *HL* 2.28.
199 *HL* 2.31–32.
Gepid princess Rosemund in Alboin’s death. This section intends to extricate distorting contemporary perspectives from Paul’s narrative in order to address the first years of the Lombard presence in Italy on the basis of the earliest sources. We will first tackle Alboin’s reign (and death), and then turn to the information available for Cleph.

2.1.1 Alboin
When the rebellion broke out in Italy, Alboin was certainly in the best position to lead: he came from a royal line of a nation with a respectable name, who could claim a respectable past in Roman ethnography; he was also, by his mother’s family, an heir of Theodoric; by marriage, he established good relations with the Franks.201 Paul’s report on Alboin revolves around three main themes, which we will cover in this section. First, the destruction of the Gepids and the capture of Rosemund; second, the conquest of Italy; and finally the revenge of Rosemund and the murder of the king.

The defeat of the Gepids and the end of the Pannonian kingdom

Alboin’s background in Pannonia is mostly absent from contemporary sources and the information we have on him relates mainly to his father, Audoin, who ruled the Lombards in Pannonia from the 540s to 550s (or maybe as late as 560s). According to Procopius, Audoin deposed the former Lombard king, the minor Waltari, and assumed the control of the kingdom (c.549), not without internal resistance.202 Audoin enjoyed Byzantine backing, and it was probably on account of his good relations with Justinian that he managed to maintain his position: after his coup, Justinian consistently favoured the Lombards over the Gepids, and settled them in Noricum/Pannonia; in exchange, Audoin provided military help.203


202 Proc. Bella 7.35.17–18. Audoin persecuted Hildigisal, according to Procopius the rightful heir of the throne (8.27.1) until he finally managed to have him killed (8.28.28).

203 Procopius portrays both Lombards and Gepids petitioning Justinian for help, with full use of his traditional Thucydidean speeches: see Proc. Bella 7.34. For Justinian’s support of the Lombards under Audoin, see Proc. Bella 7.34.37–40 (settlement in Noricum/Pannonia and Byzantine military help); 8.18.2 (expect Byzantine as allies); 8.25.7 (alliance with Justinian against the Gepids); 8.25.15; 8.26.19; 8.30.18; 8.31.5 (sent assistance to
In Paul’s narrative, presumably following the information he found in the Origo, Alboin succeeded Audoin at some point after 561, and ruled the Lombards in Pannonia after him. Alboin entered an alliance with the Avars (which Paul calls ‘Huns’) and with their help destroyed the Gepids, killing their king Cunimund (and making a goblet out of his skull) and capturing his daughter, Rosemund. Still according to Paul, given that Alboin’s wife, the Frankish princess Chlotoind, had died at some point before the victory over the Gepids, Alboin married Rosemund, who in due time killed him (HL 1.27; 2.28).

The contemporary evidence presents a different picture. Even though Procopius refers to the conflicts between the Pannonian Lombards and the Gepids (and how Justinian, even if usually favouring the Lombards, craftily kept both people in check by using one against the other), his narrative stops at 552, and his last information on the Lombards is that Narses sent the allied Lombard forces in Italy back home, thanking them with gifts, albeit reproaching their unruly behaviour. The evidence for the developments of the following two decades (552–72) is mostly fragmentary and the final defeat of the Gepids by the Lombards is, consequently, poorly attested.

Two near contemporary sources preserve information on the conflicts between Gepids and Lombards in the late 560s: Menander, whose work (surviving only in fragments) was composed under Maurice (582–602), and John of Biclarum, who, although finishing his work only around 602, was living in Constantinople at least until 578. Menander confirms Paul’s account of Alboin’s conflict against Cunimund and the negotiations between the

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Narses against Totila); Justinian married Audoin to Amalafrida, one of Theodoric heirs the emperor kept in Constantinople (8.25.11–12); nonetheless, Justinian also found it useful to keep Hildigisal, the legitimate heir to the Lombard monarchy, in Constantinople, instead of delivering him to Audoin (8.27.4–5)

Scholars have tended to follow Paul’s account to the letter: see, for example, Hartmann, Geschichte, II.1, 2/1 17–18; Schmidt, Ostgermanen, 583; Hermann Frohlich, "Studien zur langobardischen thronfolge von den anfangen bis zur" (PhD Thesis, 1980), 64–65; Jarnut, Geschichte, 19–26.

The conflict between the two kingdoms, however, should be traced originally to Justinian’s interventions in the area, see Proc. Bella, 7.341–2; 7.35.19.

Given that Menander survived only in fragments, however, we cannot fully grasp the author’s intentions: Menander was commissioned by Maurice (Fig. 1.1): considering this emperor’s renewed interest in the peninsula (see 3.1.3), it is possible that Menander portrayed the Lombards as the treacherous conquerors of Italy, especially. On Menander, see the introduction of Blockley’s edition, in R. C. Blockley, ed. The History of Menander the Guardsman: Introductory Essay, Text, Translation and Historiographical Notes (Liverpool: Cairns, 1985), 1–30; see also B. Baldwin, “Menander the Protector,” Dumbarton Oaks Papers 22 (1978): 99–125; Michael Whitby, “Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality,” in The Byzantine and early Islamic Near East, ed. Averil Cameron, et al. (Princeton, N.J: Darwin Press, 1992), 25–80, 39–45; more recently, see M.R. Cataudella, “Historiography in the East,” in Greek and Roman historiography in late antiquity, fourth to sixth century, A.D, ed. Gabriele Marasco (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 391–447, 422–29; Treadgold, Early Byz. Hist., 293–99. On John of Biclarum, see above 1.1, n.34
Lombards and the Avars, while adding that the Lombards also sought help from the Byzantines, but were refused:

Alboin, the king of the Lombards, did not set aside his hatred for Cunimund but thought that he should use every means to destroy the power of the Gepids. He, therefore, sent envoys to Baian [Khan of the Avars] inviting him to make an alliance. When the envoys arrived, they asked him not to ignore those who had suffered terribly at the hands of the Gepids, especially since the Romans, the Avars' worst enemies, were allied to the Gepids. (...) The envoys of the Lombards declared that it would be to the advantage of the Avars to launch a war against the Romans. Otherwise, the Romans would act first and use every means to destroy the power of the Avars, wherever they happened to be. When Baian received the envoys of the Lombards, he decided to toy with them since he wished to make an alliance with them that was more to his advantage (…) on condition that the Avars received immediately one tenth of all the livestock that the Lombards possessed and that, if they prevailed, they should have half of the booty and all the land of the Gepids. This was agreed, and they prepared to make war on the Gepids.209

The Gepids sent an embassy to Justin II (565–78), who was unwilling to trust Cunimund, but did not want to openly break the alliance the Romans had with the Gepids. After receiving an embassy from the Lombards, the emperor committed not to commit, and stayed out of the conflict.210

The fragments do not offer a precise date for the negotiation (apart from Justin’s regnal years), nor include the outcomes. Nevertheless, a later anecdote might refer to the outcomes of this campaign. A Gepid soldier, recounts Theophilact Symocatta,211 was accused of possessing a stolen belt: in his defense, he claimed that he acquired the belt from the bastard son of king ‘Albuis’, whom he had killed in battle in the war against the Lombards. The reason for this war, the soldier reports, was that Albuis had raped the daughter of ‘Conimundus’, and the king declared war in revenge. With the support of the Byzantines, the Gepids defeated Albuis and, amongst the spoils, claimed the soldier, was that belt. One of the praetor’s assistants caught his lie when he realized the war happened thirty years before the theft, and that the suspect was not old enough to have lived through it. The way Theophylact refers to Alboin’s defeat at the hands of the Gepids and his remarks about the

The wit of the assistant to spot the flaws in the soldier’s chronology suggests that the event was of general knowledge when Theophylact was writing (c.630).\textsuperscript{212} The story takes place at the end of Maurice’s reign [c.600], which would date the battle to the late 560s, shortly before Alboin moved to Italy. If the campaign described by Theophylact was the one whose preparation Menander recounts, it was a Lombard defeat.

The battle leading to a Lombard victory is mentioned by the second contemporary source that reports on the conflict, John of Biclarum. According to John, the Lombards destroyed the Gepids, and after the battle the Arian bishop Trasaricus took the treasure and Reotilan, the Gepid heir, to Constantinople:

The kingdom of the Gepids came to an end when they were overcome in battle by the Lombards: king Cunimund lay dead in the field of battle, and his treasures were brought to Justin in Constantinople by Trasaric, an Arian bishop and Reotilan, his grandson.\textsuperscript{213}

For his position, and his proximity to the events, John of Biclarum is certainly our most reliable witness. Similar to Paul, John grants the final victory to the Lombards, although his dating contradicts Paul’s chronology: for John, the destruction of the Gepids happened in the sixth year of Justin, or 571, placing the destruction of the Gepids in the year before the death of Alboin, still according to John, in 572.\textsuperscript{214} On that chronology, the destruction of the Gepids would have taken place when Alboin had been in Italy for at least two years. In addition to that, it is worth highlighting that, although John attributes the defeat of the Gepids to the Lombards, he does not mention Alboin as their leader.

To account for the near contemporary documentation, we must uncouple the defeat of the Gepids from the narrative of the Alboin’s advent to Italy. To coordinate the sources, we

\textsuperscript{212} Theophylact is the first to mention the legend of Alboin and the Gepid princess, a story that had a long life in the West from the seventh century on (see below).

\textsuperscript{213} Joh. Bic. s.a. 572.1:”Gepidorum regnum finem accepit, qui a Longobardis proelio superati: Cuniemundus rex campo occubuit et thesauri eius per Trasaricun Arrianae sectae episcopum et Reotilanem Cuniemundi nepotem Iustino imperatori Constantinopolim ad integrum perducti sunt.”

\textsuperscript{214} Destruction of the Gepids: Joh. Bic. s.a. 572.1; Death of Alboin: s.a. 573.1. John of Biclarum’s chronology is problematic, and his dating system for the events in Spain seems to be inconsistent with his dating system for the events in the East. Mommsen, in his edition, noticing the consistent discrepancy of the dates, argued that John of Biclarum’s dates should be adjusted by about a year after the given imperial year, on account of an error in the last entry of Victor of Tunnuna, whose chronicle John of Biclarum continued; recently, Modérán followed Mommsen chronology; see Yves Modérán, Les Maures et l’Afrique romaine: IVe–VIIe siècle (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, 2003), 660, n.61. More recently, Hartmann has scrutinized John of Biclarum’s dating system for a pattern but found it lacking. Notwithstanding, dates tend to diverge by a year or two: for the argument here, such deviation would still firmly place the destruction of the Gepid after 569. I have adopted Hartmann’s dating (571) for the battle, see Cardelle de Hartmann and Collins, Victoris Tunnunensis Chronicon: cum reliquis ex Consularibus Caesarugustanis et Iohnannis Biclarensis Chronicon, 63.
have to assume that the Lombards destroyed the Gepids in 571, as John of Biclarum says, but that Alboin, who had been in Italy since 569, was no longer commanding them. Even though Alboin—and, for a fact, his father before him—had a long history of conflicts with the Gepids (to which Menander also refers), the final battle between Lombards and Gepids happened after Nareses moved Alboin and his troops into Italy. Even though Menander describes Alboin plotting to destroy the Gepids at some point in the 560s, if Theophylact’s anecdote can be trusted, his campaign probably ended in a Lombard defeat.

This new chronology of events produces three corollaries. First, it attests that, as we have already suggested, Nareses did not relocate the Lombard kingdom in Pannonia into Italy, but instead, recruited from various peoples, and a number of Pannonian Lombards. The Pannonian kingdom, indeed, survived after Alboin and his Lombards moved into Italy, since around 571, the Pannonian Lombards defeated the Gepids (as recorded by John of Biclarum). Shortly after, the kingdom was presumably absorbed by the Avars, which would explain why both Marius of Avenches and Gregory of Tours (apparently following the ‘consular source’) believed the Lombards abandoned and burned Pannonia before moving to Italy. Second, it suggests that Alboin might not have been in control of the Pannonian kingdom by 569 when he was enlisted by Nareses, or else we would have to accept that Alboin moved to Italy with some of the Lombards, leaving the kingdom behind to its own demise, which is possible, but unlikely.

As we have seen, Audoin came to power by a coup, and succeeded by guaranteeing Byzantine support: once in power, Audoin made sure to dispose of the former royal family, expelling Hildigisal, who fled, initially, to Italy. Menander hints at a change in the Roman engagement with the Lombards since Justinian: unlike his predecessor, Justin was no longer


216 Proc. Bella 7.35.17–22; 8.27.1; 8.28.28.
supporting the Lombards (who, according to Menander, opened negotiations with the Avars); Theophylact’s anecdote goes even further, suggesting the Byzantines sent troops to succour the Gepids against the Lombards. Such shift in policy agrees with what we know of Justin’s policy of reducing support to barbarian gentes.\(^{217}\) After the death of Justinian, Alboin (who succeeded his father at some unknown date), failed to guarantee Byzantine support against the Gepids; worse than that, Cunimund, the Gepid king, outsmarted him and used the Byzantines in his favour. It is possible that the party that had brought Audoin—and eventually also Alboin—into power, without Byzantine backing and after a military defeat, was overthrown and that Alboin found himself exiled or expelled, not unlike Hildigisal before him.\(^{218}\) At this point, offering his services to Narses and moving to Italy would have been a logical next step. Without Alboin, the Pannonian Lombards eventually defeated the Gepids in 571, only to be incorporated later on by the Avars. Finally, to what pertain to Paul’s narrative, Alboin’s marriage to the Frankish Chlothsind should be uncoupled from the defeat of the Gepids and (for Paul) the subsequent relocation to Italy: since Alboin did not destroy the Gepid kingdom, he did not capture Rosemund, nor marry her before entering Italy (and consequently, Chlothsind was not necessarily dead in 569). The marriage between Alboin and Chlothsind, attested by Gregory of Tours and by a letter from bishop Nicetius, happened at some point before 572, but not necessarily before 569, as usually dated (see below).\(^{219}\)


\(^{218}\) Suffering a similar fate of Hildigisal (at some places called Hildiges), the royal heir who, after escaping Audoin, assembled an army to fight for the Goths in Italy, see Proc. Bella 7.35.22.

\(^{219}\) Eps. Aust. 8. See also Greg. Tur. Hist 4.41. The dating of the marriage is connected to dating Eps. Aust. 8, traditionally dated between 561 and 567; see Elena Malaspina, Il Liber epistolarum della cancelleria austrasica: sec. V–VI, Biblioteca di cultura romanobarbarica (Roma: Herder, 2001), 86, n.188. The terminus post quem is rather simple, since Nicetius never mentioned Chlothar and addresses Clothsind’s brothers as “Francorum reges, tuos germanos,” implying that the letter was drafted after the death of Chlothar in 561. The terminus ante quem, however, is connected to Alboin’s marriage to Rosemund and, hence, the defeat of the Gepid that must have happened before the Lombards entry in Italy in 568, all according to Paul the Deacon. If we dismiss Paul’s narrative in this point it all falls to pieces. If we consider the letter from Nicetius actually addressed Clothsind in Italy and not in Pannonia, it is easier not only to understand the Gothic envoys who would have preached Arianism to Alboin (now that he was ruling a part of Italy that held a significant Arian population), but also Nicetius’s invitations for Alboin to send envoys to Saint Peter and Saint Paul and even to St. Martin of Tours.
The contemporary sources are also scanty on what happened once the Lombards were in Italy. As we have mentioned, the ‘chronicle source’ preserved no information about the events after 569. The ‘consular source’, interested in the details of the establishment of the Lombards in the north, seems to have described the event in general terms, suggesting simply that Alboin “occupied” (occupavit) or “sought” (petiit) Italy, in the words of Gregory and Marius.220 The ‘consular source’, however, preserved information about Alboin’s death, which can also be found in John of Biclarum: the story (spiced with exciting themes of murder and betrayal) became a legend shortly after the fact, and, as such stories often do, became more and more elaborated as time passed by. As for the actual conquest, the earliest surviving detailed evidence for Alboin’s victories in Italy is the eighth-century HL.

Given the centrality of the HL for the scholarly reconstruction of the events,221 it is necessary to first underline the limits of Paul’s narrative, before moving back to the contemporary evidence. After reporting Narses’s invitation, Paul describes how Alboin entered Italy and established the first duchy, selecting as duke his nephew Gisulf, who was then his strator. To accept the offer, Gisulf demanded to select the best farae—which Paul wrongly retrospectively glosses as “families or lineages” (“generationes vel lineas”)—to which Alboin acceded.222 Following the conquest of Venetia, Paul describes a meeting between Alboin and Felix, the bishop of Treviso, as the king was about to cross the Piave: Alboin granted Felix his petition to confirm Church properties in the region, producing some sort of official document (a “pracmaticum”).223 After that, Paul narrates how Alboin captured Vicenza, Verona, and all the cities in Venetia, except Padua, Monselice and Mantua,224 and (after a long list of the Italian provinces)225 finally how he captured Milan “at

221 See, for example, Mor, “La marcia.”; Delogu, “Il regno,” 12–16; Jarnut, Geschichte, 33–36; Christie, Lombards, 73–79; Pohl, “Alboin.”
222 HL 2.9: “Igitur, ut diximus, dum Alboin animum intendet, quem in his locis ducem constituere, Gisulfum, ut furtur, suum nepotem, virum per omnia idoneum, qui eidem strator erat, quem lingua propria ‘marpahis’ appellant, Foroiulanae civitati et totae illius regioni praeficere statuit. Qui Gisulfus non prius se regimen eiusdem civitatis et populi susceptorum edixit, nisi ei quas ipse eligere voluisset Langobardorum faras, hoc est generationes vel lineas, tribuere. Factumque est, et annuente sibi rege quas obtaverat praeipias, ut cum eo habitarent, acceptit. Et ita demum doctoris [doctoris?] honorem adeptus est. Poposcit quoque a rege generosarum equarum greges, et in hoc quoque liberalitate principis exauditus est.”
223 HL 2.12: “…per suum pracmaticum postulata firmavit.” The term ‘pracmaticum’ (placmaticum in ms A2) is rare word in Latin, but has currency in Greek in the context of official legislation; cf. πραγματικος (e.g Pragmatica Sancti).
224 HL 2.14.
the beginning of the third indiction, in the third day before the Nones of September” (September 3rd 569), and “all the cities of Liguria except those close to the sea.” Paul then describes the three-years siege of Padua, and how Alboin, in order to finally enter the city, had to abjure an oath he had taken to put all the citizens to the sword on account of their stubborn resistance. Until he had abandoned that vow, his horse would not cross the gate of St. John, leading into the city.

Finally, Paul narrates how, after ruling Italy for three years and six month (cf. Origo, three years), Alboin was murdered by a man named Peredeo, at the instigation of his wife Rosemund (the daughter of the Gepid king Alboin had slaughtered) together with one of the king’s squires (scilpor), Helmechis. The wrath of the queen was said to have been unleashed when Alboin forced her to drink from a goblet the king had made from the skull of her father. Helmechis and Rosemund fled to Ravenna, and eventually killed each other at the instigation of Longinus, the praetorian prefect. Peredeo was taken to Constantinople, where he died, not before defeating a lion at the circus, being blinded, and killing two of the emperor’s patricians.

Paul’s narrative consists mostly of a collection of legends connected to anecdotes from locations with which he was familiar. We could suggest two different types of sources behind Paul’s report. The first type of sources consists of stories connected with places Paul had lived in, such as his native Friuli, and Pavia, where he had served the court under Ratchis.

Both the creation of Friuli and the conquest of Pavia can be better characterized as origin legends: in the first case, for the duchy and the aristocracy of Friuli, of which Paul was a scion; in the second, for the special relationship between Pavia and the Lombard kings, which, by the late eighth century, was certainly a well-established tradition. Similarly, Paul

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225 HL 2.15–24.
226 HL 2.25: “Alboin igitur Liguriam introiens, indicatione ingrediente tertia, tertio Nonas Septembris, sub temporibus Honorati archiepiscopi Mediolano ingressus est. Dehinc universas Liguriae civitates, praeter quae in litore maris sunt positae, cepit.”
227 HL 2.9: “Igitur, ut diximus, dum Alboin animum intendet, quem in his locis ducem constituere, Gisulfum, ut furtur, suum nepotem, virum per omnia idoneum, qui eidem strator erat, quem lingua propria ‘marpahis’ appellant, Foroiulanae civitati et totae illius regioni praeficeret statuit. Qui Gisulfus non prius se regimen eiusdem civitatis et populi suscepturum edixit, nisi ei quas ipse eligere voluisset Langobardorum faras, hoc est generationes vel lineas, tribuere. Factumque est, et annuente sibi rege quas obtaverat praecipuas prosapias, ut cum eo habitarent, acceptit. Et ita demum doctoris [ductoris?] honorem adeptus est. Poposcit quoque a rege generosarum equarum egreges, et in hoc quoque liberalitate principis exauditus est.”
228 HL 2.28–30.
229 For Paul’s biography, see Goffart, Narrators 333–47. For Paul’s connection to Ratchis, see HL 2.28.
230 As Walter Pohl has already pointed out, the three-years siege is recurrent in Paul’s narrative, and is most likely symbolic; see “L'armée romaine,” 292. Paul uses the same three years to describe Attila’s siege of Aquileia
used local stories to expand the narrative around Alboin’s murder. For example, he reports that he had learnt the story of the skull goblet from Ratchis, who used to show the goblet around as a proof. The second type of source is the literary material Paul found in his sources, such as the general plot of Alboin’s murder he found in Gregory of Tours and in the *Origo*, which he expanded and re-elaborated. In addition to that, Paul made use of at least one non-extant earlier source to reconstruct the events. As far as we can tell, this is certain for the capture of Milan, which Paul dates to the September 3rd 569. The notice, conspicuous by its precise dating, came either from the ‘consular source’ or from a later chronicle source Paul seems to be using for books two to four (that we called ‘chronicle source II’). As we will argue in 4.1, we can recognize the use of this source by the precise dates, such as the one given for the capture of Milan. It is also possible that Paul had access to the *pracmaticum* Alboin gave to Felix, although impossible to know whether this document could be original or authentic. In sum, the material preserved in Paul provides interesting information on the invention of traditions in the eighth century, on Paul’s capacity to elaborate on his sources, and, in a very limited way, on the capture of Milan in 569 and (maybe) of Treviso at some unknown date.

By turning to the contemporary and near contemporary material, we can try to sketch a pre-legendary layer to the first years of the Lombards in Italy. As we mentioned above, the contemporary sources provide no information for the occupation, besides the fact that Alboin and the Lombards “occupied” (“occupavit”) or “sought” (“petit”) Italy, “intending to move there” (“illuc commanere deliberantes”). Marius of Avanches, however, provides

(Hist. Rom. 14.9) and Theodoric’s siege of Ravenna (Hist. Rom. 15.17). For the importance of Pavia for the Lombard kingdom, see Harrison, *Early State*, 62–94, passim; Brogiolo, “Capitali e residenze regie nell’Italia longobarda.”

231 *HL* 2.28.
232 *HL* 2.25.
233 The capture of Milan is also traditionally connected to the relocation of (part of) the clergy to Genoa, mentioned in *HL* 2.25. Recently, however, Francesco Mores has questioned Paul the Deacon’s claim that Honoratus’s escape was motivated by the Lombard conquest of Milan, suggesting that the exile was more likely to be associated with the Three Chapters; see Mores, *Invasioni d’Italia*, 189–90. The presence of the Ambrosian clergy in Genoa is, nonetheless, well documented in the letters of Gregory the Great, for example, Greg. Reg. 3.30. There is also the possibility of an ‘anti-bishop’ of tricapitoline disposition, one named Fronto, ruling for eleven years (Landulfus, *Historia Mediolanensis* [ed. L.C. Bethmann and W. Wattenbach, *MGH SS* 8, 1848] II, 3. See Georg Hauptfeld, “Zur langobardischen Eroberungen Italiens. Das Heer und die Bischöfe,” *Österreichische Geschichtsforschung Mitteilungen* 91 (1983): 37–94, 48 & n. 48.
extra information: according to him, in the same year, the Lombards attempted to attack Gaul, and “a multitude of captives of this people were sold.”

The murder of Alboin, however, was recorded both by John of Biclarum and the ‘consular source’:

‘Consular source’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greg. LH 4.41</th>
<th>Mar. Av. s.a. 572</th>
<th>Joh. Bic. s.a. 573.1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After the death of Chlothosind, Alboin's wife, he took another wife, whose father he had recently killed. Because of that, the woman always hated her husband and was waiting for the moment in which she could avenge the wrongs done to her father. And thus it came about that becoming enamored with one of the servants, she poisoned her husband. After his death, she fled with the servant, but they were both caught and killed.</td>
<td>That year, Alboin, king of the Lombards was killed in Verona by his own people, that is Hilmaegis along with others, with the agreement of Alboin's wife. And the above mentioned Hilmeegis with the said wife, whom he married, surrendered at Ravenna to the empire with all the treasure, both what Alboin brought from Pannonia, as well as what the king had gathered in Italy, along with part of the army.</td>
<td>Alboin, king of the Lombards, was killed in the night by his own people at the instigation of his wife; his treasure, with the queen along, fell into the hands of the Roman empire, and the Lombards remained without king and treasure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear that Gregory heavily re-elaborated the story—or, possibly, he is working from a different source—, and consequently it is impossible to reconstruct the ‘consular source’ for this entry beyond what Marius preserved. All the sources agree that the king was killed by his own people, with involvement of his wife: note that there is no reference to Rosemund or

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235 Mar. Av. s.a. 569: “eo anno etiam in finitima loca Galliarum ingredi preasumpserunt, ubi multitude captorum gentis ipsius venundata est.”

236 Greg. Tur. Hist. 4.41: “Mortua autem Chlothosinda, uxore Alboeni, aliam duxit coniugem, cuius patrem ante paucum tempus interfecerat. Qua de causa mulier in odio semper virum habens, locum opperibat in quo possit iniurias patris ulscisci; unde factum est, ut unum ex famulis concupiscens, virum veninu medificaret. Quo defuncto, cum famulo it, sed adprehensi pariter interfeci sunt.”

237 Mar. Av. s.a. 572: “Hoc anno Albuenus rex Langobardorum a suis id est, Hilmaegis cum reliquis consentiente uxore sua, Verona interfectus est: et supra scriptus Hilmeegis cum antedicta uxore ipsius, quam sibi in matrimonium sociaverat, et omnen thesaurum, tam quod de Pannonia exhibuerat quam quod de Italia congregaverat, cum partem exercitus, Ravennae rei publicae et Longobardi sine rege et thesauro remansere.”

the Gepids, and that neither Marius nor John mentioned the murder of her father. Again, both agree that the murderer fled to Ravenna (or “the Romans”) together with the royal treasure. In addition to that, Marius provides two important details: first that the murder took place in Verona (repeated by Fredegar, the Origo and the Cont. Hav.), and that a part of the army followed the party that got rid of Alboin.

The contemporary sources narrow Alboin’s conquest to three cities: Verona (attested by Marius, possibly from the ‘consular source’), Milan (attested by Paul, also possibly from the ‘consular source’), and Treviso (also attested by Paul, from a possibly reliable source, the præmaticum). These cities appear again in a different kind of evidence: the name of units in the Byzantine army. In seventh-century Byzantine army, it is possible to identify three units that could have been among those defecting to Ravenna. There is evidence for a numerus Mediolanensis (Milan) and a numerus Veronensis (Verona) in Ravenna. A third unit—the numerus Tarvisianorum (Treviso) was located in Grado, at an unknown date. It is very likely that these units were some of the ones that broke away from the Lombard rebellion and turned their backs on the Alboin loyalists. That would fit with Alboin’s control of units originally from Verona—to which other sources clearly attest—and Milan, and possibly also Treviso. (The Trevisan unit in Grado, however, since it is impossible to be sure about the date it was moved there, could have different origins.)

Summing up the evidence, we can sketch some general events of the conquest and Alboin’s rule in Italy. The Lombards, who had moved into Italy by the doings of Narses to join the northern army in 569, rebelled and flocked behind Alboin: the contemporary sources suggest that the rebelling soldiers took control of at least two cities, namely Milan (in September of that same year) and Verona (at an unknown date), both to the north of the Po, but possibly also Treviso, on the access to Venetia. Milan was probably the furthest West Alboin’s rebellion could go, since there is evidence for a magister militum in Susa around 574/5 and another one in Como until the 590s, although their position in relation to the

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239 Fred. 3.65–66; Origo, c. 5; Cont. Hav. 1521.
240 Mar. Av. s.a. 572.
241 N. Mediolanensis: P. Ital. 20 (610), still operational in 710, when it was among the troops mobilized by duke George in 710 (see Agn. c. 140); n. Veronensis: P. Ital. 22 (639); n. Tarvisianorum: CIL v. 1591 (not dated). I see no reason to follow the traditional explanation that those troops were brought together by refugees of conquered cities; for example, see Brown, Gentlemen and Officers, 86; followed by Christie, “Invitation,” 104. Traditionally, scholarship defended the idea that the troops that abandoned Alboin were then moved to Syria, see Stein, Studien, 70; Schmidt, Ostgermanen, 595.
242 Verona: Mar. Av. s.a. 572; Cont. Hav. s.a. 1521; Fred. 3.66; Milan: HL 2.25; Treviso: HL 2.12.
Lombards seems to be more ambiguous than a loyalist alignment would allow. Given that we have no reports of resistance, it is likely that these cities turned to the Lombards, similar to what happened a few decades earlier when Totila used the rebellion in the Po Valley to rekindle the Gothic resistance.

In any case, after 569, Alboin assumed control of a significant part of the Po Valley (but likely not all of it, and not Venetia and Histria), and ruled it “as a king” (“ius regale”) as the seventh-century Continuation of Prosper puts it. In the period, Alboin presumably attempted to attend to the essential logistical needs of the troop, by redirecting taxation on the territories he commanded (see 2.1). It is tempting to place Alboin’s marriage to Chlothsind at this point, around 570, as an attempt to connect with Franks on the other side of the border. That would explain better not only Alboin’s intention in marrying a Frankish princess, namely to secure good relations with the new neighbours to the north, but also provide another instance of the long political project of the Franks to control northern Italy. Nonetheless, in 572 the king was killed by an internal intrigue that involved his wife (which may have been Chlothsind, although Gregory of Tours assures us it was a different wife), probably together with a part of his close circle: the conspirators took hold of the royal treasure and fled with a part of the troops to Ravenna. As we will see in the next section (2.2), it is possible that financial problems behind the mechanism of settlement might be among the causes of this coup.

After the events, Alboin’s murder very soon became a legend. It is clear that Gregory of Tours is already elaborating on the story, and turned it into one of his moral lessons: the wicked king entered Italy, killed priests and despoiled churches, and was punished by an ignominious death at the hands of the woman whose father he had killed and whom he took as wife: the king died of a direct result of his evil acts (the murder of his father-in-law), but also as a general punishment for his wickedness. To wrap up his tale, Gregory had the wife and servant killed, since it would be unacceptable to have a murderous wife with a happy

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243 Mag. mil. Sisinnius (Susa c. 574); Greg. Tur. LH 4.44. Mag. mil. Francio (around Lake Como c. 586); HL 3.27; for the date, see Hartmann, Geschichte, II.1, 59.
244 Proc. Bella 7.1.25–27
245 Cont. Hav. 1521.
247 Hist. 4.41.
The connection with Rosemund and the Gepids, however, would appear only in the seventh century, in different forms, first in the east (in which Alboin kidnaps the Gepid princess) and then in the west (in which Alboin marries her).

### 2.1.2 Cleph and the end of monarchy

After Alboin’s death, the Lombards elected king Cleph, one of the Lombard dukes. Our sources for Cleph are extremely meagre, and the only near contemporary source to report on his reign is Marius of Avenches, presumably using the ‘consular source’. In addition to Marius, Paul the Deacon has a chapter on Cleph, which might have also come from the same source.

> Mar. Av. s.a. 573.1; 574.1

In that year, a Lombard duke called Cleph was made king of that people, and many higher ranked (seniores) and lower ranked (mediocres) people were killed by him. In the next year, king Cleph was killed by one of his servants.

> HL 2.31

All the Lombards in Italy, in common agreement, established Cleph, one of the most noble of their men, king, in the city of Pavia. Here he annihilated a great number of powerful Romans, some by the sword, and others he drove out of Italy. Cleph, a year and six months after he had obtained the kingship with his wife Masane, had his throat cut by one of the servants in his entourage.

Although there is little textual similarity, the variations seem well within Paul's usual re-elaboration of his sources, and we can suggest that both Marius and Paul are relying on the same text, presumably using the ‘consular source’. HL 2.31 is the only reference in Paul that can be traced directly to the ‘consular source’ (by comparing his text with Marius’s, which he did not seem to have access to), and not surprisingly, the only entry Paul used from that source.

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248 For Gregory’s style and his use of anecdotes, see Goffart, Narrators 168–74.

249 Theoph. Sim. 6.8 (see above).

250 The first mention is in Cont. Hav. 1521; later, Origo c.5. For a recent overview of the development of the legend, see Borri, “Murder by Death.” The tragic story of the hero king spread far and wide, as Paul suggested (HL 1.27). For Agnellus, in ninth-century Ravenna, the story, recounted in many lively details, was a warning for men to better control their wives (Agn. c. 96–97).

251 Mar. Av. s.a. 572


253 Compare, for example, HL 3.29 and Greg. Hist 9.25 (s.a. 588).
that he could not find in Gregory’s *Histories*: apparently, Paul favored Gregory’s narrative style over the terse chronicle entries.

The traditional reading of Cleph’s reign is to rely on Paul and see Cleph killing Romans from all ranks, the beginning of the violent occupation of the land that would continue during the interregnum.\(^{254}\) The main problem with following Paul’s equation of Marius’s *seniores* with Paul’s *potentes Romanorum* is to identify the powerful Romans living in the regions then controlled by Cleph. If Alboin did not control, as we have argued, much beyond the Po Valley from Milan to Treviso, it is hard to imagine how his successor could have controlled more than that, since he commanded a smaller army; we have no notices of new conquests.

In the sixth century, the Po Valley was deep Gothic territory, and it would in all likelihood hardly have *potentes viros Romanorum* in the traditional sense, i.e. senators and other aristocratic landowners.\(^{255}\) Furthermore, we still remain clueless about who were Marius’s *mediocres*: was he referring to a smaller, middling group of landowners or the actual peasants? It is hard to know, but certainly the Lombards could not simply kill the productive part of the population, for whatever state they were planning to put together would have to rely on them.\(^{256}\) Marius, however, does not mention Romans, but simply *seniores* and *mediocres*: Paul’s rendition of the passage might owe more than we can account for to his overall intention of bridging Roman and Lombard Italian histories, as well as his own experience of a nobility being killed or exiled by a conqueror (namely, the fate of Friulian nobility crushed by the Carolingians after 776).\(^{257}\)

A possible reading of Cleph’s assassination is that after the death of Alboin the Lombard rebellion broke down, and many soldiers were eager to return to Byzantine service. As we have seen, after the murder of Alboin a part of the army joined the Byzantines in Ravenna,


\(^{255}\) Both Procopius and Agathias attest to the Goths been sent home north of the Po; see Proc. *Bella* 8.34.16, 19–24; 8.35.7–38; Agath. pref. 1.1; cf. Agn. c.79, Mar. Av. s.a. 554.

\(^{256}\) As Gregory the Great clearly remarked to Agilulf a few decades later, see Greg. *Reg.* 9.66 (from 598).

and, to our knowledge, were well received. This presumably motivated other soldiers to do the same—the fear of retaliation was commonly one of the main obstacles for mutineers to surrender. Cleph, ahead of the rebelling Lombards, had to bring the army back into control, and he probably had many killed for desertion: not only soldiers, but also well placed officials (i.e. Marius’s *seniores* and *mediocres*). His actions were, however, resented: in 574 he was killed by one of his house slaves (*puer*).

Traditional scholarship usually sees the death of Cleph as a collapse of the Lombard kingdom, leading to the anarchy of the interregnum. At that point, however, there was not much of a kingdom to collapse. Alboin assumed the command of the rebelling soldiers in northern Italy, but it is likely that he did not even aggregate all the rebelling forces under his command: we have suggested that his influence did not go beyond a rather small track of land in the Po Valley, from Milan to Treviso. The position of the remaining military forces in the peninsula is unknown, and they were probably fomenting their own local agenda: most conspicuous, the three *magistri militum*, one in Susa, one in the area around lake Como, and the other in Istria (of whom we have notice later in the sixth century), but also the one in Trent (of whom we have no information) and what remained of the Byzantine contingent in the south. Even though they were not fighting for the Empire, they seem to be outside the Lombard sphere of influence at least until Authari and Agilulf started rebuilding the kingdom in the 580s and 590s (see 3 and 4.1). The legacy of Alboin was not a kingdom, but a political idea: Alboin’s Lombards were a viable local solution to a variety of individuals—some Lombards by birth, but most of various backgrounds—who were dissatisfied with the Byzantine rule of Italy. This political idea turned the rebellion into a kingdom.

### 2.2 The Settlement of the Army

In the background of the political theatre, the rebels were experimenting with a different system to supply the troops. The mechanisms of settlement have long been a major historiographic question, and a central issue for the debate on the nature of the Lombard

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258 See above 2.1.1.
260 Mar. Av. s.a. 574; cf. *HL* 2.31; *Orig*., c. 6; Fred. 4.45. For Delogu, he might have been killed to avenge Alboin’s death, but no source points in that direction; see Delogu, “Il regno,” 17.
261 See above, n.59.
occupation and for the significance of the period for Italian history. 263 The parameters of the interaction between the incoming Lombards and the local population has animated a long academic debate on the settlement, which has oscillated between expropriation of property from the local population, 264 on one hand, to a more peaceful accommodation, on the other. 265 In recent scholarship, the balance has tended towards a negotiated accommodation, in which the Lombards would have initially been incorporated into the tax-system. 266 Though the source evidence is rather shaky, the ‘accommodation theory’ is a better fit to the context, and better accounts for the surviving evidence. 267


264 For classical works, see Hartmann, Geschichte, II.1, 34–55; Hodgkin, Italy and her Invaders, vol. 5, 150–73; more recently, Tabacco, Ezemonie; Delogu, “Il regno,” 28–31; slightly modified in “Altre congetture,” 93–105.

265 The classical works focusing on continuity are usually skeptical of extending their finds to the Lombards, see, for example, Ernst Theodor Gaupp, Die germanischen Ansiedlungen und Landbevölkerung in den Provinzen des römischen Westreiches in ihrer völkerrechtlichen Eigenständigkeit und mit Rücksicht auf verwandte Erscheinungen der alten Welt und des späteren Mittelalters (Breslau: J. Max, 1844), 503–15; Ferdinand Lot, “Du régime de l’hospitalité,” Revue Belge de Philologie et Histoire 7 (1928): 975–1011, 1005, n.4; La fin du monde antique et le début du moyen âge (Paris: Renaissance du livre, 1927), 311–12. More recently, Goffart has suggested that the same mechanisms of accommodation used in the fifth century could be applied to the Lombards, see Goffart, Barbarians and Romans, 176–205. Walter Pohl expanded this interpretation into what may be the current form, see “The Empire,” 112–31; Pohl, “Per hospites.” Goffart appears to be satisfied with Pohl’s additions, which he calls “far and away the furthest-reaching recent effort to come to terms with barbarian settlement.” He does not, however, position himself, claiming that “[t]he Lombard evidence is so thin and so late that I have nothing more to say about Italian conditions than I have already said” (Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 119, n.2).

266 In Lombard studies, Goffart’s reading of the settlement of the Lombards has been acknowledged, though cautiously and rather unenthusiastically; see, for example, Jarnut, Geschichte, 49; Christie, “Invitation,” 105–06; Lombards, 83. Pohl’s extensive work on the subject brought the theory to a more general acceptance and eventually even Italian scholarship, especially invested in a violent rupture, brokered a compromise that acknowledged some level of negotiation in the process and the preservation of free status for part of the Roman population, see for example, Everett, Literacy, 72–79; Wickham, Framing, 115–17; see also, Delogu, “Altre congetture.”; cf. “Il regno.”; “L’Editto di Rotari e la società del VII secolo,” in Visigoti e Longobardi, ed. Javier Arce and Paolo Delogu (Firenze: All’ingressa del Giglio, 2001), 329–56.

267 The literature around Goffart’s ‘accommodation theory’ has grown exponentially in the last three decades. For the most significant critics, see Maria Cesa, “Hospitalità o altre techniques of accommodation? A proposito di un libro recente,” Archivio storico italiano 140 (1982): 539–52; see also Impero tardobizantino e barbari: la crisi militare da Adrianopoli al 418, Biblioteca di Ateneaenum (Como: Edizioni New Press, 1994), 161–75; S. Barnish, “Taxation, Land and Barbarian Settlement in the Western Empire,” Papers of the British School at Rome 54 (1986): 170–95; J. H. Liebeschuetz, “Cities, Taxes and the Accommodation of the Barbarians: the Theories of Durliai and Goffart,” in Kingdoms of the Empire, ed. Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 135–79. See also Goffart’s responses in Goffart, Barbarian Tides, 119–86. For favorable receptions, see for example Barbarian Tides, 119–86. For favorable receptions, see, for example, Herwig Wolfram, “Zur Ansiedlungen reichsangehöriger Föderaten. Erklärungsversuche und Forschungsziele,” Mitteilungen des Institut für Österreichisches Geschichtsforschung 91 (1983): 5–35; and also in his History of the Goths (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), 222–31; 95–300; and The
2.2.1 Accommodation

What can be called ‘accommodation theory’ results from Walter Goffart’s revaluation of the process of settlement of the barbarian gentes on Roman soil. In its major lines, Goffart’s interpretation suggested that the barbarian armies were settled in the west not by rights of conquest or by expropriation of property (or redistribution along the lines of the late antique practice of hospitalitas), but by an organized allocation of taxes, presumably based on tax registers. According to this system, a specific share of the taxes (usually one or two thirds) would be redirected to the army, without any changes to the existing distribution of landownership. Goffart extended the system to Lombard Italy, relying on the information from two passages from the HL, namely 2.32 and 3.16, suggesting that, in them, Paul is using an earlier source that described not a general expropriation of land, but instead a process by which the Lombards were allotted shares from public taxes revenues.
Settlement, military service, military land

HL 2.32 and 3.16 have received much attention from scholarship, and their interpretation is controversial.\textsuperscript{269} In the passages, commonly accepted as coming from Secundus of Trent,\textsuperscript{270} Paul the Deacon deals with the settlement of the Lombards in two different moments, after the death of Cleph and after the restitution of the monarchy.\textsuperscript{271} In the first instance, he mentions the chaos of the rule of the dukes, and how the Roman population was subjected to the Lombards and made tributary:

After [Cleph’s] death the Lombards had no king for ten years, but were under dukes (...). In these days, many noble Romans (\textit{multi nobilium Romanorum}) were killed out of greed. The remainder (\textit{reliqui}) were divided among the “guests” (\textit{per hospites divisi}) and made tributaries (\textit{tributarii}), so that they should pay a third part of their products to the Lombards. Because of these dukes of the Lombards, in the seventh year from the coming of Alboin and of the whole people, churches were despoiled, priests killed, cities overthrown, and their people, who had grown up like crops, annihilated; with the exception of those regions that Alboin had taken, the greater part of Italy was seized and subjugated by the Lombards.\textsuperscript{272}

Paul returns to the topic of the destinies of the population in HL 3.16, when he recounts the restoration of the monarchy with Authari (for the context, see 3.1):

But the Lombards indeed, when they had been under the power of the dukes for ten years, determined at length by common agreement that they should establish as their king Authari, the son of their sovereign Cleph, above mentioned, (...) In his days, on account of the restoration of the kingdom, the dukes of that time granted half of their resources to royal use, so that there could be a king, and from which the king and those connected to him and enrolled in his service in many offices could be supported. The oppressed people that were burdened (\textit{populi adgravati}), however, were parcelled out among their Lombard guests. There was something admirable in the kingdom of the Lombards: there was no


\textsuperscript{270} On Secundus, see 4.1.

\textsuperscript{271} Paul also mention the reception of Alboin’s Lombards in other passages, namely the exchanges with the Trevisian bishop Felix (HL 2.12) and Alboin’s negotiation with the population of Pavia (HL 2.26–27)

\textsuperscript{272} HL 2.32: “Post cuius [Clephis] mortem Langobardi per annos decem regem non habentes sub ducibus fuerunt (...) His diebus multi nobilium Romanorum ob cupiditem interfecti sunt. Reliqui vero per hospites divisi, ut terciam partem suarum frugum Langobardis persolverent, tributarii efficiuntur. Per hos Langobardorum duces, septimo anno ab adventu Alboin et totius gentis, spoliatis ecclesiis, sacerdotibus interfecit, civitatis subratis populisque, qui more segetum exixerant, extinctor, exceptis his regionibus quas Alboin ceperat, Italia ex maxima parte capta est et a Langobardis subiugata est.”
violence, no snares were laid; no one burdened anyone else unjustly, no one pillaged; there were not thefts, no brigandage; every one could go wherever they wanted in security.  

The central questions for the interpretation of the passage revolves around a problem of identification of the groups and terms mentioned by Paul. In the first place, there is the question of whether in 2.32 “remainder” (reliqui) refers to “nobles” (nobilium), meaning that the nobles who were spared from massacre were submitted to tribute, or to “Romans” (Romanorum), meaning the rest of the population was thus made tributary. Secondly, it is not clear who were the people that Paul described in 3.16 as “burdened” (adgravati), which the Lombards divided amongst themselves after the creation of the monarchy.

Traditionally, scholars, who accepted the establishment of the Lombards as a brutal conquest, understood that Paul meant the “remainder [of the Romans],” reading in that phrase that very few nobles survived and, of those who did, the Lombards deprived them of their position (and of their land) and submitted them to exactions with the rest of the population. By 584, with the restoration of the monarchy, the Lombard army would have settled as lords over the subdued Roman population, which they distributed as serfs—usually equated with the aldiones of the Lombard laws—amongst themselves.

Goffart suggested a different reading, arguing that the process Paul described was similar to what happened elsewhere in the west. He contested the reading of “remainder” as connected to “Romans,” which he suggested was “contrary to its obvious grammatical sense, the remaining nobiles.” According to him, HL 2.32 meant that surviving Roman

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273 HL 3.16: “At vero Langobardi cum per annos decem sub potestate ducum fuissent, tandem communi consilio Authari, Clephonis filium supra memorati principis, regem sibi statuerunt. (…)Huia diebus ob restaurationem regni duces qui tunc erant omnem substantarian suarum meditatem regalibus usibus tribuunt, ut esse possit, unde rex ipse sive qui ei adhaerent eiisque obsequis per diversa officia dediti alerentur. Populi tamen adgravati per Langobardos hospites partiantur. Erat sane hoc miracile in regno Langobardorum: nulla erat violentia, nullae strenuentes insidiae; nemo aliquem inustae angariabant, nemo spoliabant; non erant furta, non latrocinia; unusque siquidem qui libebat secure sine timore pergabat.”


276 Goffart, Barbarians and Romans, 181. The question of the grammar was already pointed out in P. Villari, Le invasioni barbariche in Italia (Milan: U. Hoepli, 1901), 244; followed by Everett, Literacy, 73.
landowners were henceforth made tributary—a term that not necessary translates as ‘bondsmen’ (although might have result in some loss of status),277 and a part of their taxes was redirected to support the Lombards.278 HL 3.16 would represent a second phase: in 584, the system described in HL 2.32 received a major modification to accommodate the monarchy. Henceforth, the public resources available to were divided equally between the dukes and the king, while the Roman landholders were forced to relinquish the “people that were burdened,” which Goffart understood as “the settled, hereditarily burdened slaves and coloni of the late Roman world.”279 More recently, Walter Pohl, rightly questioned how much this reading would fit into Goffart’s own ‘accommodation theory’: Lombard Italy was the only instance in which Goffart envisioned a large scale transference of property (even if in terms of workforce), a process he had rightly dismissed throughout his book. Pohl also questioned the viability of the model, which would require the Roman landholders to pay a heavy tax while deprived of their workforce. Finally, for Goffart’s explanation to work, we must take for granted that the Roman estates involved were already organized thoroughly as bipartite estates, which is a possibility but certainly not a given.280 Pohl suggested instead that we should take populi adgravati as the population submitted to taxation, and thus 3.16 would refer to the same process mentioned in 2.32, namely, the distribution of taxes of the Romans to the Lombards.281 The different descriptions in Paul would be grounded on an ideological

278 Goffart, Barbarians and Romans, 182–4; followed by Pohl, “The Empire,” 118–21; and esp. “Per hospites,” 197–202. The idea that the Romans were actually submitted to taxes is, nonetheless, much older: see, for example, Friedrich Karl von Savigny, Geschichte des römischen Rechts im Mittelalter, 2. Aufl. ed., 7 vols. (Heidelberg: Mohr, 1834), vol. I, 388ff.
279 Goffart, Barbarians and Romans, 187.
281 Pohl, “The Empire,” 117–22; “Per hospites,” 197–200. For the suggestion that the populi adgravati refers to the those burdened by taxes, see F. Thibault, “L’impôt direct et la propriété foncière dans la royaume des Lombards,” Nouvelle Revue Historique de Droit Français et Etranger 28 (1904): 53–79; (see, Everett, Literacy, 75,
support (by Paul or by his source) to the Lombard monarchy, presented as an organizing and pacifying force. If the process changed at all, it would only be in the amount of violence involved.  

In sum, the ‘accommodation theory’, as elaborated by Goffart and adjusted by Pohl, argues that the Lombards did not expropriate the Roman landowners, but instead were settled receiving allotments from the global tax, which was henceforth earmarked for the support of the army. In HL 2.32 and 3.16, Paul describes the details of the implementation of the system, which an older source, likely Secundus, had registered: the surviving Roman aristocracy (which Paul calls ‘nobles’) was divided between the Lombard “guests” and turned into taxpayers. In the process, there was no confiscation of property, nor were nobles reduced into serfs.

The ‘accommodation theory’ is certainly the best explanation to date for the first years of Lombard rule. To which extent Paul’s testimony is reliable, however, is debatable: even though Paul probably had access to sources now lost to us—in the case, usually ascribed to Secundus—we know enough of his manipulation of his material to mistrust his rendering of it. For Paul the Deacon, the contrast between 2.32 and 3.16 highlighted the importance of royal authority and central government, stressing the chaos of the rule of dukes (see 3.2) and hence it is not unlikely that Paul rearranged his source to conform to his narrative. Furthermore, it is impossible to know what the terms he borrowed, such as adscripti and hospites, would mean to him in the eighth century, or if he could grasp the technical usage required to detail the process of accommodation. In any case, the passages in HL 2.32 and 3.16 are excessively cryptic—as attests the diversity of possible explanations—and have been accurately described as the “most tortured” passages in Paul the Deacon. Appropriately, Paolo Delogu has proclaimed that any attempt to understand the complex process of settlement “sul fondamento di un paio di frasi tratte da una cronaca posteriore di circa

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283 As Chris Wickham has rightly remarked; see Wickham, Framing, 116; but already critical in Italy, 66; see also, Gasparri, “Basi economiche,” 76–77.
284 For Paul’s argument and rhetoric strategies in 2.32 & 3.16, see 3.2.1. For Paul’s manipulation of the sources behind the passages, see Bognetti, “Processo logico.”; Gasparri, “Basi economiche,” 76.
285 Pontieri, Invasioni, 244; Goffart, Barbarians and Romans, 177. Benedetto Croce adds that the two passages were probably more commented than the most commented passages on the Bible, see Benedetto Croce, Storia della storiografia italiana nel secolo decimonono (Bari: Gius. Laterza, 1921), vol. 1, 132.
duecento anni agli avvenimenti, è un’impresa non solo impossibile, ma sbagliata” (though that certainly did not prevent him from doing exactly so).\textsuperscript{286}

A more skeptical view of the documentation, however, does not necessarily discard the basic premises of the ‘accommodation theory’. Even though Paul had his own agenda in reorganizing his source material, the occurrence of terms such as hospites, tributarii, and populi adgravati can hardly be coincidental, and, as Pohl correctly affirmed, what he says about the process is “too related to the way in which other fifth- and sixth-century authors deal with the problem to be merely the creation of a late eighth-century monk.”\textsuperscript{287} The fact that those terms appeared in his source supports the idea that a system of taxation was used to support the Lombards, even though the details remain elusive. There is good circumstantial evidence to support the continuation of the tax system in Italy after the Gothic Wars (535–54), and the Lombard would have had to be actively inimical to taxation to simply let it disappear completely.\textsuperscript{288} Whether this taxation burdened the “remainder of the nobles” or the “remainder of the Romans,” the resulting system redirected taxes (most likely from agricultural production) towards the Lombards, preserving the previous distribution of property, ownership, and social status.

Additional evidence for such use of taxation comes from a neglected passage in Rothari’s Edict. As we will see in Chapter Four, in the mid-seventh century, Rothari was concerned to protect the patrimony connected to military service, and for that he banned pledging of properties that were, arguably, necessary for the soldiers to perform their military obligations (Rot 249, 250, 252; see 4.3.1). Amongst horses (presumably for battle and transportation) and pigs (for rations), Rothari forbids the confiscation by creditors of casa ordinata tributaria (Rot 252). This cryptic expression appears twice in the Lombard laws (viz. Rot 252 and Lint 59.61) but is nowhere defined. It has been suggested that the casa tributaria was a “casa sottoposta a tributo,” which implied the obligation of the tenant to provide a specific quota of products.\textsuperscript{289} ‘Ordinare’, however, probably has the legal sense of ‘establish’, ‘create as’, and the best reading should be “holdings classed as tributary.” Considering the context of the laws

\begin{footnotes}{286} Delogu, “Altre congettura,” 95.
287 Pohl, “The Empire,” 118; a point accepted in Wickham, Framing, 116.
on *pigneratio* (see 4.3.1), it is possible that these *casae* were units of production whose tax output was destined to specific Lombards. By the mid-seventh century, they were considered part of the patrimony of the household, but still earmarked as constituting an important role in providing for the army.

We have suggested that, in 568, among the demands of the rebelling army, the major issue was the regular payment of the wage, and the access to a more stable source of income, through a specific allotment of taxes (see 1.2.2). Once the rebelling soldiers assumed control of the cities in Northern Italy, they would arguably put in place a system of local collection of taxes, known to them not only from their own experience in the Roman army, but also from the previous organization of the region under the Goths.\(^\text{290}\) In that case, it would be necessary to reorganize the system of collection and distribution of the available surplus, which would dictate the disposition of the troops. It could be suggested that the reorganization of the productive forces to directly supply the army in Italy followed similar lines with the arrangements of the Byzantine government in Anatolia to receive the Eastern army after the defeat to the Arabs in Yarmouk (636). In the Byzantine case, the soldiers were divided according to each individual region’s capacity to support the troops, as Anatolia was reorganized to house a significant part of the army. As to the Lombard settlement in Italy, it is interesting to highlight that the system, which would evolve in Byzantine territories into the later *themata*, returned to well-known practices of the fourth and fifth century, to the *annona* paid in kind, only now collected locally: nonetheless, different from the traditional Roman model, the troops grew local roots, creating an army that was not only supplied

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locally, but whose identity was increasingly connected with their station.\textsuperscript{291} Though the example is relatively distant in time, it is interesting to point that, in a moment of crisis, the army resorted to the traditional logistic system, proven since the fourth century. It is tempting to suggest that, when similar breakdown in organization (and logistics) happened after 568, as the Lombards challenged the centralized, cash-based system of reward, they would resort similarly to traditional modes of provision, and their response would not be unlike the one we observe half a century later in the East. If so, the Lombards were probably divided through the Po Valley according to the capacity of each \textit{civitas} (understood here as the administrative region including the \textit{urbis} and the attached countryside) to support them,\textsuperscript{292} which would explain in part the strong connection of the Lombards with the \textit{ciuitates}.\textsuperscript{293} We could further infer from the fate of post-Yarmouk Byzantine army that the Lombards, in similar conditions, were likely split into smaller units, the equivalent of the Byzantine \textit{bandus} or \textit{θέμα}, which the Western sources and placenames call \textit{fara} (see 5.2.2). The major


\textsuperscript{292} Here, as elsewhere, we maintained the Latin \textit{ciuitas/ciuitates} for the Roman legal and administrative unit around the \textit{urbis}, encompassing not only the urban area, but also the surrounding countryside. For the urban area \textit{per se}, we used ‘city’.

\textsuperscript{293} Contra Schneider, who suggested the Lombards were settled as \textit{limitanei}; see F. Schneider, \textit{Die Reichsverwaltung in Toskana von der Gründung des Langobardenreiches bis zum Ausgang der Stauffer} (Rome1914); cf. Giovanni Tabacco, \textit{I liberi del re nell’Italia carolingia e postcarolingia}, Biblioteca degli “Studi medievali” (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 1966), 3–36; Brown, \textit{Gentlemen and Officers}, 101–04. For the urban nature of the Lombard kingdom, see Ward-Perkins, \textit{From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy}, \textit{AD 300-850}; Christie, \textit{Constantine to Charlemagne}. 
difference, of course, is that in the East, the central power in Constantinople dictated (or at least managed) the adjustments,\(^\text{294}\) while in Italy the central commander—Alboin, and later Cleph—was in control of a comparatively localized system.

Even though the process most likely started under Alboin, the extent to which he was able to negotiate within individual localities is open to question, and it is also possible that the local duke would be the authority behind the distribution of tax shares to the soldiers.\(^\text{295}\) The exact nature of the process depends on the balance of power between Alboin and the dukes at the moment of settlement, of which we can merely speculate, but which was likely different from region to region. In any case, it could be suggested that the Lombards, under their regiments’ leaders, were ascribed to tax payers in specific regions in the Po Valley. The dukes oversaw the process either by their own choice or by royal instruction, with the possible involvement of civilian officers—called gastaldi in seventh-century documentation (see 4.2.1). The soldiers acquired a trustworthy source of income, while the taxpayers, free from the remaining Roman taxation, were probably paying significantly fewer taxes than before.\(^\text{296}\) The arrangement favored both parts and, although the Lombards, unlike the Ostrogoths, had no Liberius to be praised for it (nor a Cassiodorus to praise him), it should

\(^\text{294}\) For the debate on the role of the Byzantine state (and esp. Heraclius) in the establishment of the thematic system, see 2.1.1, n.96.

\(^\text{295}\) See Pohl, “The Empire,” 121. Pohl places the dukes in the centre of the process based on the dating suggested by HL 2.32, a dating that is certainly unreliable.

\(^\text{296}\) The numbers can be hypothetical at best. Contemporary complaints against high taxations are common; see, for example, Proc. *Bella* 7.1.28–33, *L.P.* Vita Iohannis III 63,3; Greg. *Reg.* 2.28; 5.38. Using the tax data from *P. Ital* 2, Jones has suggested that the tax levied from Church property would be around 57\%, and that would exclude *superindicta, extraordinaria* and *munera sordida*; the weight over the simple tenant would be significantly heavier; see Jones, *LRE*, 821; Chris Wickham, “The Other Transition: From the Ancient World to Feudalism,” *Past and Present* 103 (1984): 3–36, 10–12; Pohl, “Per hospites,” 201ff. For a different reading of *P. Ital* 2, see Jan Olof Tjäder, *Die nichtliterarischen lateinischen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445-700*, 3 vols. (Lund: Gleerup, 1954), vol. 1, 181; following Hartmann, *Untersuchungen*, 169. If Paul’s passage can be trusted—and that question should not be taken lightly—the Lombards would levy 1/3 in taxes. Though the numbers are uncertain, the order of magnitude is probably correct, given the gradual simplification of the state and the consequent reduction of its costs; see Wickham, *Framing*, 84ff; Walter Pohl, “I Longobardi e la terra,” in *Expropriations et confiscations dans les royaumes barbares : une approche régionale*, ed. Pierfrancesco Porena and Yann Rivière (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2013), 350 pages, 283–84. Another evidence for the reduced amount of taxes under the Lombards is while Gregory the Great’s reports on how the weight of the taxes kept pushing new regions of Italy towards the Lombards, see, for example, Greg. *Reg.* 5.38. For the role of taxes in Italian economic decline, see Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, 7–8; Wickham, “Other Transition.”; high taxes as central to the end of the empire are one of the main arguments in A. H. M. Jones, “La storia economica,” in *Storia d’Italia* (Torino: G. Einaudi, 1972), 1469–810, esp. 1593–94; see also, “Per la storia agraria italiana nel Medio Evo: lineamenti e problemi,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* 76 (1964): 287–348; and *LRE*, 1038ff; but notice the sensible toning down of the issue in C. R. Whittaker, “Inflation and the Economy in the Fourth Century A.D.,” in *Imperial Revenue, Expenditure, and Monetary Policy in the Fourth Century A.D.*, ed. C. E. King (Oxford: B.A.R., 1980), 1–22.
have kept the soldiers satisfied and well supplied while causing minimal stress to the population.  

2.2.2 Economic woes and the breakdown of taxation

The central issue to the development of this model, which conceives the settlement as based on allocation of taxes, is the absence of taxation in seventh-century sources. If the system of direct tax transference were kept in place into the seventh-century, evidence of taxing would most likely have survived, especially in Rothari’s *Edict*. Such evidence, however, does not exist and, although it is admittedly an argument *ex silentio*, what we know of the Lombard state through the *Edict* makes it rather unlikely that any significant taxation survived at that point.  

Effectively, the society presented in the *Edict* is one of small-scale landholders, and not public funded military officers. It stands to reason that at some point between the settlement and the publication of the *Edict*, taxes were phased out, which raises the question of how the military was henceforth supported.  

Even though there is no hard evidence for the fate of taxation in sixth-century Lombard Italy, there is enough evidence for the state of the economy, and thus the basic building block of taxation. From that perspective, it becomes quite clear what complications the tax-based accommodation would have faced. The fundamental problem was the derelict state of the Italian economy, after several decades of political instability, foreign aggression, weather disasters and disease. The feeble economic output the peninsula could generate would hardly be enough to sustain the shrinking population; it would certainly not be able to afford a fourth-fifth-century style standing army. Even though the Gothic Wars (535–54) certainly provided the final blow to Italian economy, the peninsula had been in a downward spiral since the breakdown of the exchange networks in the Mediterranean during the fifth century.  

The limited prosperity observed during the Ostrogothic period could do little to address

297 For the praise of Liberius, see Cass. *Var.* 2.16.5.  
the structural problems of the economy, such as the shortage of manpower, the excessive taxation, and the low productivity. “Theodoric’s only economic achievement,” adds Thomas Brown, “was to stave off such a crisis by his utilization of Gothic manpower for defense and by the order which his strong rule created.”\(^{300}\) The fragile basis of Ostrogothic prosperity crashed during the long and tragic Byzantine intervention. The picture after the war is one of economic disarray and agricultural decline, worsened by the recurring epidemics and climatic upheavals; the palliative measures issued by imperial authorities after the defeat of the Goths could hardly have had any effect.\(^{301}\) In 553, when the Franks moved down into northern Italy, Procopius says they found the country utterly deserted, which might not have been a complete exaggeration.\(^{302}\) The rebellions that followed, both Sinduald’s (565) and the Lombards’ (568), certainly did not boost a recovery.

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\(^{300}\) Brown, \textit{Gentlemen and Officers}, 6.


The impoverished, debt-ridden countryside was, arguably, unable to keep up with the tax requirements in the accommodation system devised for the Lombards, and the collection of taxes would soon start to lag behind. Once the wealth that could be exacted from the cities was consumed, and once the booty captured during the rebellion was spent, the Lombard soldiers probably found themselves wanting. It can be suggested that this is the context behind the collapse of royal power, as the central authority failed to provide for the army and local leaders had to find new strategies to support their men: the solution was either to raid nearby communities—and the sources attest Lombard raids in Gaul and south of the Po—or to find employment on the Empire (see 3.2).
CHAPTER THREE

THE BATTLE FOR ITALY (574–90)

3.1 Authari and the (re-)creation of the monarchy: 3.1.1 The balance of forces in Italy before Authari (c.574–84); 3.1.2 Authari and the Frankish connection (c.584–590); 3.1.3 The Empire strikes back. 3.2 Evolution of the dukes (c.574–590): 3.2.1 Of dukes and kings; 3.2.2 The fate of the larger units: Friuli and the South.

The end of kingship would do little to dissuade the Italians from seceding from the Empire. On the contrary, more and more regions turned to the Lombards, as the imperial government kept most of its resources in the East. This chapter takes the narrative from the interregnum to the recreation of the monarchy, and includes an overview of the local developments in the period. The interregnum brings into evidence the small role of the monarchy in the process of ‘conquest’, and stresses the role of local military commanders. As we have argued, most of the rebelling Lombards, as in similar rebellions in the period, were soldiers and lower officers: there were no magistri militum involved—unlike Sindual’s rebellion—but the leaders of the Lombards receive the title of dux. The dukes were regional military commanders, responsible for the connection between the central power and the increasingly territorialized troops. In such position, they were a fundamental piece in the balance that could make or break any attempt at centralization. The interregnum represents a ‘Balkanization’ of northern Italy, as actual control slip away from the Empire and the region became home for multiple groups of mercenaries, whose services were available at a price. After a decade, a new attempt was made to create a monarchy to stabilize the region. The evidence, as we will argue in this chapter, points to a Frankish initiative, probably headed by the Burgundian king Gunthram. In any case, the new kingship was strongly resented by most of the rebelling commanders, who saw it as a menace to their own freedom of action. The creation of a centralized state was a long shot: not only the kings encountered strong local resistance, but they also had to deal with the Byzantine offensive to reclaim the land, and the flickering support of the Franks, whose foreign policy was strongly influenced by internal events. In this convoluted context, Authari set the first stones of the Lombard kingdom; it is also this context that will condition most of the later development of Italy.
This chapter illustrates the above summary, detailing the developments of the Lombard rebellion in the struggle to consolidate its position in northern Italy. The roughly fifteen years between the deposition of Cleph (c.574) and the elevation of Agilulf (590) observed a complex play of interests around the Po Valley, both internally and externally. In the first section, we will analyze the creation of the monarchy, and how the two major players around Italy, namely, the Frankish kingdom to the north, and the Empire to the east, influenced the destinies of the Lombards. In the second section, we turn to the internal conflict, to observe the destinies of the dukes, focusing on the space for independent action that marked the years after the death of Cleph (c.574).

3.1. Authari (c.584–90) and the (re-)creation of the monarchy

Scholars have long seen the restoration of the monarchy as the creation of an internal consensus amongst the dukes, resulting from the growing threats of external aggression. According to the traditional reading, the advent of the more belligerent emperor Maurice (582–602) and his alliance with the Franks, led the Lombard dukes to realize that a central power was the only way to safeguard the kingdom against external aggression and internal disaggregation. This focus on internal cohesion is based on Paul’s description of the restoration of the monarchy, which revolves around “common agreement” (communi consilio) and collective action. In such reading, the need for a stronger government led the dukes to give up part of their property (or their rights and income) to establish the monarchy and a central administration.

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304 Especially, HL 3.16. “At vero Langobardi cum per annos decem sub potestate ducum fuisse, tandem communi consilio Authari, Clephonis filium supra memorati principis, regem sibi statuerunt. (…) Huius in diebus ob restauraionem regni ducum qui tunc erant omnem substantiarum suarum medietatem regalibus usibus tribuunt, ut esse possit, unde rex ipse sive qui ei adhaeret eiumque obsequiis per diversa officia dediti alentur.”

305 See, for example, Jarnut, Geschichte, 39; Wickham, Italy, 32; Delogu, “Il regno,” 24. Originally suggested in Jacobi, Quellen, 35; followed by Bognetti, “SMC,” 164-65. The older explanation sees the interregnum as the period of minority of Authari, who would have assumed the kingship when he came to age: see Lodovico Antonio Muratori, Annali d'Italia, dal principio dell'era volgare sino all' anno 1500, 12 vols. (Milano: A spese di G. Pasquati, 1744), vol. IV, 492. Supported by H. Pabst, “Geschichte des langobardischen Herzogthums,” Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte 16 (1862): 405-518, 415-16; Hartmann, Geschichte, II.1, 63-64; Schmidt, Ostgermanen, 596.; revisited more recently by Frohlich, "Studien zur langobardischen thronfolge von den anfangen bis zur," 75ff; Hauptfeld, "Zur Eroberung," 40-1. The problem of the ‘minority theory’ is that the original source for the filiation of Authari and Cleph is the Rothari’s Edict (followed by the Origo c. 6, and eventually by Paul [HL 3.16]), which completely ignores the interregnum and aims to reinforce the continuity of
restoration as a peaceful contract, and combines it with a simplified view of the external forces, undervaluing Frankish independent action in Italy and overstressing imperial influence in the process. In sum, the traditional reading established a straight relation between the cause (the growth of external threat by Byzantium and the Franks) and consequence (ducal consensus leading to the restoration of monarchy), which is not that clear in the contemporary and near contemporary sources.

A closer reading of the sources reveals that what is commonly taken as a Byzantine-Frankish alliance against the Lombards, is actually a complex web of different interests both in Gaul and in the East, influenced as much by their own internal politics as by external commitments. In the first place, Constantinople saw different rulers in the period, and it would be risky to accept that they shared the same plans for the West. Second, it is certainly untenable to speak of a unified Frankish policy, especially before Childebert and Gunthram came to a more stable alliance, sealed in the Treaty of Andelot (587). Finally, the Lombards, without any sort of political unit, could hardly produce a unified policy; on the contrary, the various Lombard commanders certainly disagreed about the next move of their rebellion and whether it would be more profitable to negotiate with the Franks, the Byzantines, or try to produce some kind of unity within Italy. In order to disentangle these political and diplomatic knots, this section begins reviewing the external context before the restoration of the monarchy, in order to better understand Frankish and Byzantine policies towards the Lombards, and analyzes the specific context of the recreation of the monarchy. Then, it turns to the role of the Frankish and Byzantine incursions in the re-organization of the Lombards.

### 3.1.1. The balance of forces in Italy before Authari (c. 574–84)

One of the main limitations of the description of the 580s in the HL is that, given the lack of documentation and the chronological distance, Paul had a very limited understanding of the complex political background of the main players. Modern scholars have rightly pointed out the relationship between the elevation of Authari and the changes in the external politics in the 580s, a point that is not at all clear in the Historia Langobardorum. However, the idea that

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306 Jarnut, Geschichte, 38–39; Goffart, “Byzantine Police,” 111–18; Georg Löhlein, Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik der Merowinger im VI. Jahrhundert, Erlanger Abhandlungen zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte Bd 17 (Erlangen:
external threat mechanically created internal consensus is problematic. The context was much more complicated than the imperial attempts to manipulate the Franks into a conflict they did not want to engage in, and to understand how Franks and Byzantines interacted with each other and affected the Lombards, we must first sketch their interests in the game.

The Empire

The involvement of the empire in Italy is rather straightforward: the Byzantines wanted to maintain control of the peninsula, and restore the Lombards’ position as a reservoir of manpower. To such end, Constantinople relied on a mixed strategy of military stick and monetary carrot, an approach more similar to imperial policy towards rebellions than response to foreign military occupation, not focusing on reclaiming territory but rather on securing allegiance. In 576, Justin II (565–78) sent an army under Baduarius to deal with the rebels, but the Lombards soundly defeated him. Afterwards, the Empire’s approach to the Lombard problem was to bribe them back into imperial service, a policy favored by Justin’s successor, Tiberius II (578–82). This policy has long been attributed to the financial strain caused by the Persian wars, which had resumed in 572. This view seems to be supported by Menander, who recounts that two western embassies made their way to Tiberius, only to receive the same answer: the empire was committed to the eastern theatre and would not engage in the west; Italians should use money to persuade the Lombards to fight for the empire (or, in the worst case, bribe some Franks to keep the Lombards in check). The Empire, however, had good reasons to preserve the Lombards and the lack of imperial resources should be taken with a grain of salt. We have seen that in 576, four years into the Persian War, Justin had sent an army to Italy. And even though Tiberius was unwilling to relocate more troops, he sent the first delegation back home with three thousand pounds of gold (216,000 solidi), money enough to raise a respectable army in the

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307 See Kaegi, Unrest, 50–51.


310 Men. frg 22 & 24.
Balkans—by then relatively calm. What conditioned imperial policy was not the lack of resources, but presumably the expectation that the situation in Italy could be reversed without sacrificing the Lombards as a reservoir of manpower. The Empire betted that the offer of gold and the threat of a Frankish invasion would get the rebelling troops back in line in time to use them against the Persians. As far as we can tell, this policy was partially successful: Both Justin and Tiberius were able to use Lombards as mercenaries both in Syria and in the Balkans (see 3.2.1). They were not, however, able to pacify Italy, and internal conflict raged on, a “tearful war” (lacrimabile bellum), in the words of John of Biclarum, probably involving multiple factions, some supporting the Byzantines, some the independent Lombard dukes, and some pursuing their own agenda.

**The Franks**

For the Franks, the 560s and 570s mark the nadir of their capacity to intervene in Italy. During the Gothic Wars, the Franks cunningly shifted sides according to the events, now supporting the Goths, now supporting the Byzantines, to maximize their gains. This policy allowed them to take control of Ostrogothic Provence at the onset of the war, and to slowly build up control of most of northern Italy, which Theudebert I (534–48) boasted to be part of his kingdom. The Austrasian Franks controlled most of transpadane Italy up to 550, when Theudebert’s son, Theudebald (548–55), attempted to once again intervene in Italy and was soundly beaten by Narses (see 1.2.3). After the defeat, changes in the internal politics in Gaul prevented the Franks from moving back into Italy. With the death of Chlothar I (561), after a brief period of unification, the kingdom was divided among his four sons: Gunthram (561–592) in Burgundy, Charibert (561–567) in Aquitaine, Sigibert (561–75) in Austrasia and Chilperic (561–84) in a small slice right in between Charibert and Sigibert. On those lines, the territorial division became extremely unstable, especially with Chilperic’s

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311 At the rates of the later Empire (i.e. 6 solidi per year to pay and equip), that amount could raise 36,000 soldiers; for the rate, see Hugh Elton, *Warfare in Roman Europe AD 350–425* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 123.

312 For example, see Evagr. 5.14 (209.27–210.2); Theoph. Sim. 2.17.9 (Balkans) 1.9.7–8 (Syria); Joh. Eph. 6.30–31 (failed attempt to conscript Lombards to fight the Avars).


kingdom bottled up in the north. The death of Charibert in 567 made the conditions even worse, as Gunthram, Chilperic and Sigibert struggled to claim as much of their deceased brother’s territory as they could. After the assassination of Sigibert (575), both Chilperic and Gunthram struggled over bringing the infant Austrasian ruler Childebert II to their side. The young king—actually the Austrasian court—craftily played both sides. The situation in Gaul would only reasonably stabilize, and only temporarily, after the death of Chilperic (584), and reconciliation between Childebert II and Gunthram outlined in the Treaty of Andelot (587). In sum, from the late 560s to the first half of 580s, the internal politics in the Merovingian kingdom was much too complicate to allow any of the Frankish kings to fully intervene in Italy without compromising their own position in Gaul.

3.1.2. Authari and the Frankish connection (c.584–588)

The role of the Franks in Italy from c.583–590 is not simple to grasp. Gregory of Tours presents a picture of confrontations between Lombards and Franks, roughly from the Cleph’s reign (c.572–74) to 590. In this period, according to the bishop of Tours, the Lombards would have invaded Gaul on three distinct occasions (c.570-574), while the Franks would have marched into Italy in 584, 585, 588 and finally in 590. Scholars have seen the Frankish involvement in Italy as mostly motivated by imperial influence, at first, by a substantial subsidy paid by Maurice to Childebert II, and later by simple blackmail enabled by the captivity of Childebert’s sister in Byzantium. Other sources present a more nuanced

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319 Greg. Tur. Hist. 4.42; 4.44.

320 Greg. Tur. Hist. 6.42 (s.a. 584); 8.18 (s.a. 585); 9.25 (s.a.588); Ep. Aust. 40–41 with Greg. Tur. Hist. 10.3 (s.a 590). John of Biclarum mentions one incursion of the Franks in Italy, for the year 584 (s.a. 584.4): “Mauricius imperator contra Longobardos Francos per conductelam movet, quo res utique genti non parva intulit damna.” He most likely refers to the 6 years of confrontation, since the Franks would only receive damnum against the Lombards later in 588 (cf. Greg Tur. Hist. 9.25). The Cont. Hav. uses the defeat of the Lombard incursions under the dukes to contrast with the victories of Authari over the Franks (Cont. Hav. 1523 & 1532): the chronicler is probably simplifying the narrative to fit his argument. On the Cont. Hav., see Muhlberger, “Heroic Kings.”

picture: in a letter from 580, pope Pelagius II (579–90) asks Aunarius of Auxerre to admonish the Frankish kings (Gunthram and Childebert II) to stop fighting against one another and abandon their good relations with the Lombards,322 while Fredegar, writing later in the seventh century, retrospectively reading the interaction between Franks and Lombards, stresses the role of the Merovingian kings in negotiating with the Lombards and eventually establishing a tributary monarchy under Authari.323 As Ian Wood has remarked, “Fredegar’s account with its emphasis on tribute and cooperation certainly sits awkwardly with that of Gregory, which emphasizes war.”324

The contrasting reports highlight not only the different approaches of Gregory and Fredegar, but also different perspectives from Austrasia and Burgundy.325 In a period of intense civil strife within Gaul, the Franks were unlikely to produce a unified foreign policy; that much we can learn from a close reading of Gregory of Tours. Italy constituted a strategic position that could be used in a conflict in Gaul, and, arguably, both Burgundy and Austrasia were concerned that the other side could gain a definite advantage using Italian resources. In addition to that, the Lombard raiding expeditions necessarily crossed into Burgundian territory (since they did not share a border with Austrasia), creating an additional problem to Gunthram. The battle of Italy was fought not only between rebel Lombards and Byzantine loyalists, but it was an extension of the battle to dominate Gaul in the late sixth century.

**Burgundy and the Lombards**

After the rebellion in Italy, the Lombards began pressuring the borders with Gaul, probably in search of booty (see 2.2.2).326 The dating is uncertain, but probably between 569 and 575, Lombard dukes crossed the Alps and ravaged southern Gaul. Gregory of Tours mentions three distinct incursions: the first one cost the life of the *patricius* Amatus and caused such a slaughter “that the number of dead could not be counted”;327 the second incursion was repelled by Mummolus—recently named *patricius* to replace the deceased Amatus—with the

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323 Fred. 4.45
324 Wood, Merovingian Kingdom, 168.
325 For the extent of the influence of the Austrasian dynasty on Gregory’s work, see Murray, “Chronology,” esp. 194–96. On Fredegar, see Collins, Fredegar, 8–37.
326 For the context, see Goubert, Byzance, vol? 22–26; Christie, Lombards, 86ff.
327 Hist 4.42: “…ut non possit colligi numerus occisorum.”
uncanonical help of two warrior bishops, Salonius and Sagittarius. The third incursion, organized by three Lombard dukes (Amo, Zaban and Rodan) crossed the Alps in three different places, Embrun, Die and Grenoble. After much plundering in southern Gaul, they were routed by Mummolus and made their way back to Susa, where “the locals received [them] harshly, especially because Sisinnius, the imperial magister militum, lived in that city,” after a trick by one of Mummolus’s pueri, the Lombards fled further into Italy. Interestingly, the local population seems ambiguous about Lombards, Franks, and the residing imperial official, and was eager to get rid of the commotion.

Two near-contemporary chroniclers—Marius of Avenches and the anonymous Copenhagen continuator of Prosper—also mention Lombard incursions into Gaul. Marius describes two Lombard incursions, but according to him, they happened in the Valais, northeast of Burgundy. The first one, in 569, was possibly a spill over of the confusion resulting from the arrival of the new troops in northern Italy (see 2.1). Marius suggests that “[the Lombards] dared to invade many places in Gaul, where a multitude of captives was sold by that people.” The “multitude of captives” (multitudo captivorum) probably refers to the captives acquired in the raid: a sort of slave/ransom market. The second incursion is mentioned under 574, in the same year of Cleph’s murder:

In that year, the Lombards entered the Valais once again, took possession of the Alpine passes, and lived in the monastery of the saints of Agaune for many days. After that, they engaged in battle against the Frankish [most likely Burgundian] army at Bex, where they were killed almost to the last man; a few survived by running away.

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328 Hist. 4.42.
329 Hist. 4.44: “…incolae loci durae suscipere, praesertim cum Sisinnius magister militum a parte imperatoris in hac urbe residerit;” To understand exactly the relationship of Sisinnio and the Lombards, one would have to figure out what Gregory meant by dure suscipere. In any case, according to Gregory, the Lombards were in the city without a fight, and only abandoned the location after a ruse made them believe Mummolus was rushing after them. The episode highlights the ambiguous relationship the remaining loyalist troops in the peninsula—together with the Italian population—had with Lombard and Frankish forces in the region.
330 Mar. Av. s.a. 569.2: “[Langobardi] in finitima loca Galliarum ingredi praeasumpserunt, ubi multitudo captivorum gentis ipsius venundata est.” cf. Mommsen’s edition: “[Langobardi] in finitima loca Galliarum ingredi praeasumpserunt, ubi multitudo captivorum gentis ipsius venundati sunt.” I do not know why Mommsen failed to acknowledge the correction in the manuscript (British Library, ms. Add 16.974, f.113r), which shifts the verb back into the grammatically correct singular.
331 Mar. Av. s.a. 574.2: Eo anno iterum Langobardi in Vallem ingressi sunt et Clusas obtinuerunt et in monasterium sanctorum Acaunensium diebus multis habitaverunt et postea in Baccis pugnam contra exercitum Francorum commiserunt, ubi paene ad integrum interfecti sunt, pauci fuga liberati.
The 574 incursion was probably the one also mentioned by the Copenhagen continuator of Prosper, which he tells us was commanded by Zafan (probably Gregory’s Zaban), the duke of Pavia:

[Zafan, duke of Pavia] attempted to attack Gaul and with great shame lost most of the strength of the Lombards at the river Rhone, not far away from the place of the martyrs of Agaunum (...), and returned to Italy with a few men who survived by running away.\(^{332}\)

Both chroniclers place the second invasion shortly after Cleph’s death. Both Gregory and Marius (with the Copenhagen continuator) suggest that after a first moment, in which the Frankish defences were caught off guard, the Lombards were received with stout resistance. In any case, the dissimilarities between Marius and Gregory might suggest they were reporting from a different source, or even of separate events.

**Gunthram and the (re-)creation of the Lombard monarchy**

The Italian border to the east was a major strategic problem to Gunthram. Given its geographic location, Burgundy was the obvious target for Lombard incursions and the king was soon to take action.\(^{333}\) All our sources agree that, after the first attacks, the Franks put up a stiffer resistance. In the late 570s, Gunthram had organized a solid defense to prevent further incursions: after the first Lombard incursion, Gunthram appointed Mummolus to command the defense, and soon took possession of the two main passages in the western Alps, Susa and Aosta.\(^{334}\) After 581, however, the open border to the southeast became much more of a threat: following the murder of Sigibert in 575, Gunthram had some influence on the minor heir to the Austrasian throne, Childebert II, whom he made his heir by the Treaty of Stone Bridge (577); Childebert, nonetheless, was still firmly in the hands of the Austrasian aristocracy, and the relationship between the two kings was quickly deteriorating.\(^{335}\) By 581, with the Treaty of Nogent, Chilperic had managed to persuade Childebert to join him against Gunthram.\(^{336}\) In the following year (582), Gundovald, who claimed to be a son of Chlothar I (511–61), arrived in Gaul with Byzantine support, demanding his share of his...


\(^{335}\) See, for example, *Ep. Aust.* 9.

\(^{336}\) *Hist.* 6.1; 6.3.
father inheritance.\textsuperscript{337} For Gunthram, then, stabilizing his eastern border became a paramount necessity. Italy posed a serious threat, especially after Childebert’s improved relations with Chilperic and his (possible) support of Gundovald. With Chilperic lying in wait and even invading Burgundian possessions (583)\textsuperscript{338} and Gundovald waiting in the wings by 582 and then seriously taking the field against Gunthram in late 584-585 (after Chilperic’s death in late 584), Gunthram could not risk having to divert part of his force to secure the Alpine passes and prevent further Lombard incursions.\textsuperscript{339}

In 584, the risk of a war in two fronts quickly evolved to a threat of encirclement when Childebert moved into Italy to subdue the Lombards. According to Gregory of Tours,

King Childebert marched into Italy. When the Lombards heard of that, afraid to be cut down by his army, they submitted to his power, giving him much wealth and promising to be faithful and submissive to his side (\textit{parte eius}). Once he accomplished all he wanted, the king returned to Gaul (…). Some years before, Childebert had received from the Emperor Maurice fifty thousand \textit{solidi} to drive the Lombards out of Italy. The emperor, hearing that Childebert was allied to them in peace, asked for his money back; but the king, trusting in his own power, was not inclined to even respond to the matter.\textsuperscript{340}

Scholarship has long trusted Gregory’s justification for the invasion, seeing Byzantine money behind Childerbert’s campaign.\textsuperscript{341} Gregory’s remarks notwithstanding, considering how easily Childebert dismissed the imperial legates after he subdued the Lombards, the money owed to the Empire was arguably no more than a \textit{casus belli} if even that: Childebert wanted to


\textsuperscript{338} Greg. Tur. \textit{Hist.} 6.31 (s.a. 583).

\textsuperscript{339} Gunthram’s growing suspicious over the Italian connection of his enemies led him to arrest and interrogate bishop Epiphanius of Fréjus, who had recently fled from the chaos in Italy and took asile with bishop Theodere in Marseilles: both were under suspicious of being involved with Gundovald; Greg Tur. \textit{Hist.} 6.24 (s.a. 582).

\textsuperscript{340} Greg. Tur. \textit{Hist.} 6.42: “Childebertus vero rex in Italia abit. Quod cum audissent Langobardi, timentes, ne ab eius exercitu caederint, subdediuntur se dicioni eius, multa ei dantes munera ac promittentes se parte eius esse fidelis atque subiectus. Patratischum cum his omnibus quae voluit, rex in Gallis est regressus (…) Ab imperatore autem Mauricio ante hos annos quinquaginta milia soledorum acceperat, ut Langobardus de Italia extrudert. Audito autem imperator, quod cum his in pace coniunctus est, pecuniam repetebat; sed hic fidus a solatis nec responsum quidem pro hac re voluit reddere.”

regain Austrasian control of Italy, as previous Austrasian rulers had. After his victory, the Lombards promised to be faithful “to his side” (parte eius), that is, not to the Burgundians. If Childebert could take control of Italy, or if he managed to muster the Lombard dukes into his command, he could presumably hedge in Gunthram, able to press him from Austrasia in the north and having the Lombards threatening from Italy in the southeast. It was certainly not a risk Gunthram was willing to take. In addition to that, Gunthram had to consider Gundovald—then operating around Toulouse and Marseille: if Gundovald was to actively take the field (as he did late in 584/85) the encirclement would be complete and Gunthram would have nowhere to turn.

If Gunthram was to prevent the encirclement of Burgundy, he had to act quickly to take control of his southern border, or at least prevent the Austrasian ascendancy over the Lombards. After the last Lombard attack, he had already secured the passes, controlling Aosta and Susa (3.1.2). It stands to reason that, once in control of the main accesses to Italy, Gunthram contacted the Lombard dukes. A passage in Fredegar hints at this maneuver: while explaining how under Chlothar II the Lombards owed tribute to the Franks, Fredegar reports on Guthram’s actions after the invasions:

I will recount now how the Lombards came to pay the Franks a yearly tribute of twelve thousand solidi and I shall not conceal how they surrendered to the Franks the two cities of Aosta and Susa, with their territories. After the death of King Cleph, the Lombards lived for twelve years without kings, under the rule of twelve dukes. During this period they made, as can be read above [3.68], a raid into Frankish territory, and as retribution for their audacity they ceded the cities of Aosta and Susa, with all their lands and inhabitants, to King Gunthram. After that, they sent a delegation to the Emperor Maurice: each of the twelve dukes sent a deputy to beg peace and protection (pace et patrocinium) from the emperor. At the same time, the twelve sent another delegate to Gunthram and Childebert to have Frankish help and protection, offering an annual tribute to these two kings of twelve thousand gold solidi, and surrendering the valley of Lanzo (vallem cuiusnam Ametegii) to Gunthram, in order that the mission could secure protection on the best terms possible. They then placed themselves entirely under Frankish power.

\[342\] Cf. Hist. 9.20 (s.a. 588).
\[343\] Hist. 6.42 (s.a. 584).
\[344\] Fred. 4.45.
\[345\] Fred. 4.45: “Langobardorum gens quemadmodum tributa duodece milia soledorum dicie Francorum annis singulis dissolvabant, referam; vel quo ordine duas civitates Agusta et Siusio cum territoriis ad parte Francorum cassaverant non abscondam. Defuncto Clep eorum principe, ducis Langobardorum xii annis sine regibus transegerunt. Ipsoque tempore, sicut super scriptum legitur [3.68], per loca in regno Francorum proruperunt. Ea presumptione in composizione Agusta et Siusio civitates cum integro illorum territorio et populo partibus Gunthramni tradiderunt. Post haec legationem ad Mauricio imperatore dirigunt: hii duodici ducis singulis legataris destinant, pacem et patrocinium imperiae petentes. Itemque alius legatarius duodiciem
According to him, the Lombard dukes also sent embassies to Maurice pleading for *pace et patrocinium*. At the same time, they submitted to the Franks and besought protection in exchange for an annual tribute of twelve thousand solidi. In addition to that, the Lombards offered the Valley of Lanzo (vallem cuinomento Ametegis) as a pledge, which would provide the Franks with a spearhead into Turin. Fredegar claims that the embassies were directed to Gunthram and Childebert, but, even if there were moments when the relation of the two kings improved in the period, it is hard to see both sharing an external policy by that time.\footnote{Even after the Treaty of Andelot, foreign policy remained a major point of contention between the two kings (Greg. Tur. *Hist.* 9.20 [s.a. 588]; on Merovingian policy towards Italy, see Wood, *Merovingian Kingdom*, 168.}

It is not completely clear from the passage how representative of the Lombards in Italy were the twelve dukes now negotiating with Gunthram. Given the future developments, probably not much (see 3.2 and 4.1.1). It is tempting to see in Fredegar’s account the first attempt of the Lombard dukes to have their rule of Italy recognized by the imperial government, and at the same time, acquire Frankish protection against further imperial intervention. It is hard, nonetheless, to know how reliable Fredegar could be on Lombard-imperial diplomacy.

For Gunthram, the next logical step to would be to create a client king, a policy not at all dissimilar from Roman precedents. The centralization of a people under a king is usually considered a tactical advantage by a superior and an organizational advancement: in a typically nineteenth-century view, it is one step closer to the creation of a ‘real’ state.\footnote{Bognetti, “SMC,” 164–65; Wickham, *Italy*, 32; Jarnut, *Geschichte*, 38–39; Christie, *Lombards*, 86; Pohl, “The Empire,” 102.} Unity, law and centralization were the basis of order for most nineteenth-century scholarship: that unification under a king would not be the best course of action in any scenario would be inconceivable. The idea that kingship strengthens a people was, however, hardly part of Roman diplomacy and strategy. For a long time, the Romans had craftily created kings amongst the barbarian peoples across the *limes* and it would not stand to reason that their intent was to make them more formidable enemies. Kings were stabilizing elements, and they stood as guarantors of contracts and agreements. It was much easier to come to terms with a central command, than to negotiate with every single local ruler, while if the kings failed to keep their followers under control, the Romans could punish or replace them,
usually an easier task than a full-fledged assault.\textsuperscript{348} In the same Roman tradition, Gunthram allowed the Lombards to create a king. On Fredegar’s words,

Not long after that, by permission of Gunthram and Childebert, the Lombards elected Duke Authari for their king. Another duke, also named Authari, commended himself and his entire command (\textit{ducatum}) to the emperor, and remained on his side. Every year, king Authari paid the tribute the Lombard promised to the Franks. After his death, his son Ago was elected king after him, and the payment continued to be made.\textsuperscript{349}

We should probably date the event to 584, in connection with Childebert’s first invasion.\textsuperscript{350} Gunthram ratified the election of Authari as king, and guaranteed Lombard submission by an annual tribute.

\textit{The 585 Austrasian campaign}

Fredegar names both Gunthram and Childebert as the Frankish guarantors of the monarchy. However, while Gunthram was negotiating with the Lombards, Childebert was moving again into Italy. Once again, the bishop of Tours links the initiative to Maurice’s gold. This time, however, Gregory also mentions the issue of Childebert’s sister, Ingund, who was held by the Byzantines since the death of her husband, the Visigothic prince Hermenegild:

King Childebert, compelled by delegates from the emperor, who demanded the money that was given to the king in a previous year, moved his army into Italy. There was a rumor that Ingud, his sister, had already been taken to Constantinople. But, as the Frankish commanders quarreled with each other, they returned having achieved nothing of value.\textsuperscript{351}


\textsuperscript{349} Fred, 4.45: “Nec mora post permissum Gunthramni et Childeberti Autharium ducem super se Langobardi sublimant in regnum. Alius Autharius idemque dux cum integro suo ducato se dicione imperiae tradedit, ibique permanit. Et Autharius rex tributa quod Langobardi ad parte Francorum spondederant annis singulis reddedit. Post eius discessum filius eius Ago in regno sublimatur; similiter implisse denusceret.”

\textsuperscript{350} The dating is tricky. I adopted the traditional reading, having first the invasion of 584, then the elevation of Authari, and finally the invasion of 585. It is not impossible, however, that the first Frankish invasion happened after Authari was made king, and was already a response to that: that’s the chronology in Paul the Deacon, \textit{HL} 3.16–17. Chilperic’s 584 invasion: Greg. Tur. \textit{Hist.} 6.42 (s.a. 584).

\textsuperscript{351} \textit{Hist.} 8.18 (s.a 585): “Childeberto vero rex, impellentibus missis imperialibus, qui aurum, quod anno superior datum fuerat, requirebat, exercitum in Italia diregit. Sonus erat, sororem suam Ingudem iam Constantinopolii fuisse translatae. Sed cum duces inter se altercarentur, regressi sunt sine ullius lucri conquistione;” for Ingund, Childebert’s sister, see \textit{HL} 6.40,43.
The captivity of his sister certainly served as part of Childebert’s reasons for the war, but containing Gunthram’s influence is likely to be the main cause.\textsuperscript{352} In order to guarantee access to Italy, Childebert had to secure one of the Alpine passes. The marriage between Euin, duke of Trent and one of the daughters of Garipald, the Merovingian duke of Bavaria, mentioned by Paul, was probably the first part of the Austrasian plan to safeguard a pathway into Italy.\textsuperscript{353} As Gunthram had already guaranteed three western passages into Italy, it is possible that Childebert negotiated with the Lombard duke who controlled the Brenner Pass, marrying the local Lombard commander into the family of one of his dukes. Afterwards, presumably using the newly established position in the Alps, Childebert marched into Italy to bring the Lombards back into the fold. His campaign, however, produced no clear results and Authari—together with the dukes that actually supported him—remained connected to Burgundy and Gunthram. It is probably after the useless campaign in 585 that Childebert reached out to Authari, offering his sister in marriage to the Lombard king.\textsuperscript{354} Authari did not pose an immediate threat to Austrasia, since Bavaria provided a buffer zone between the two of them, but the possibility of Authari sending

\textsuperscript{352} On Maurice’s use of Ingund, see Goffart, “Byzantine Police.” Goffart overemphasizes the importance of Ingund in Austrasia foreign policy in the 580s. Ingund is mentioned on the incursion of 585, but only as a rumor (“Sonus erat…”); it is not mentioned again. Around the same time (ca. 584–85), a series of letters were sent from the Austrasian court to Constantinople on an attempt to recover Childebert’s nephew, Athanagyldum: Eps. 42–45; 47. Letters on the subject stop after this period. In 587, the Treaty of Andelot fails to mention her as part of Childebert’s family that Gunthram was supposed to protect—the Treaty mentions Chlodosind, 2 §; in the same event, Gunthram refers to Ingund as dead in Spain, and not as a captive in Constantinople (Greg. Tur. Hist. 9.20).

\textsuperscript{353} \textit{HL.} 3.9–10. Much has been made of the role of the Bavarian dukes in Lombard affairs, especially due to the importance of Theodelinda (see 4.1). See, especially, Bognetti, “SMC.” The information on the Bavarians is in much worse condition than what we have for the Lombards and we know next to nothing about them until the eighth century. It is likely that the population in Bavaria, similar to the Alamanni, were part of the larger sphere of influence exerted by the Merovingian kingdom, most likely by the directly adjacent Austrasia. There is hardly any more that can be said about the Bavarians without slipping beyond historical imagination into pure speculation. For those so inclined, see the articles collected in Herwig Wolfram, ed. \textit{Die Bayern und ihre Nachbarn: Berichte des Symposions der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung, 25. bis 28. Oktober 1982, Stift Zwettl, Niederösterreich}, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1985); Herwig Wolfram et al., eds., \textit{Typen der Ethnogenese, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern: Berichte des Symposions der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung, 27. bis 30. Oktober 1986, Stift Zwettl, Niederösterreich}, 2 vols., Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Frühmittelalterforschung (Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1990); Carl I. Hammer, \textit{From Ducatus to Regnum: Ruling Bavaria under the Merovings and Early Carolingsians}, Collection Haut Moyen Âge (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007); and more recently, Heiko Steuer, John Hines, and Janine Fries-Knoblach, \textit{The Baiuvarii and Thuringi: An Ethnographic Perspective}, Studies in Historical Archaeoethnology (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014). See, however, the strong criticism in Charles R. Bowls, “Ethnogenesis: the Tyranny of a Concept,” in \textit{On Barbarian Identity}, ed. Andrew Gillett (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 241-56, esp. 249-56.

\textsuperscript{354} Greg. Tur. Hist. 9.25 (s.a. 587).
troops to help Gunthram might have left Childebert uneasy. If he could not subdue the Lombards, he could at least defuse the threat by associating the new king with his family.

**Authari**

Authari was presumably one of the Lombard dukes negotiating with the Franks. It is not unlikely that he was a prominent duke, and that he had a role of leadership amongst his peers before his elevation.\(^{355}\) According to Paul the Deacon, Authari was the son of Cleph, a piece of information that has led scholars to believe that the period without kings was simply an *interregnum*, during Authari’s minority.\(^ {356}\) The connection, however, is not present in contemporary sources. Paul certainly found the reference in the copy of the *Origo* he consulted, but the connection comes ultimately from the preface of *Rothari’s Edict*.\(^ {357}\) As we will see in **CHAPTER FOUR**, the *Edict* stresses royal continuity and simply ignores the *interregnum*. None of the contemporary sources attest to the relationship between Cleph and Authari, and it might be safer to assume that Authari was simply a duke coming from one of the rebelling armies, who acquired prominence amongst the supporters of the monarchy.

After the Frankish incursion of 585, Authari did not remain inactive. The new king confronted the Byzantine loyalists in Italy and pushed the limits of his rule. It is hard to know the extent of his victories, but he certainly received a good press. In his praise of Authari, the Copenhagen continuator of Prosper, produced in northern Italy, focused on the victory over the Franks (possibly combining the draw in 585 and the following victory in 588 and the relative success in 590):

After the rule of the dukes, a king, Authari, was set over the Lombards in Italy, [reigning] for 6 years and 6 months. By his cleverness and his prudence, he restored the Lombard forces, which had been shattered in Gaul, he overthrew the Franks who were spread out in Italy, plundering far and wide, and killed their duke Olo in the fortress of Tiligona.\(^ {358}\)

\(^{355}\) That could explain Joh. Bic. s.a. 581.1, where the author places the election of Authari to 581. It might just be a wrong date. On the issues around John’s dating system, see 2.1, n. 19.

\(^{356}\) Even after the idea of an orderly *interregnum* was dismissed by scholarship, the term is still used to define the period between the end of the monarchy with Cleph and its reestablishment under Authari.

\(^{357}\) *LLRot.*, prol. Paul’s copy of the *Edict* presumably had the *Origo* in the place of the royal list; see *HL* 1.21.

\(^{358}\) Cont. Hav. 1532: “Langobardis intra Italiam post ducum principatum rursum rex praeficitur Autharith ann. VI mens. VI, qui Longobardorum vires in Gallias fractas suo ingenio atque prudentia restauravit, superatis Francis, qui intra Italian diffusi populabantur, interfecit duce eorum Ollone apud Tiligonam castrum.”
The continuator, usually partial in his praises of strong military leaders, would certainly favor Authari. But John of Biclarum also gives the king a similar assessment:

The Lombards in Italy elected a king from their own people, called Authari, in whose time the Romans soldiers were completely slaughtered and the Lombards took possession of the borders of Italy. [Later, in 586], Authari, the king of the Lombards, meeting the Romans in battle, was victorious and, after the slaughter of a multitude of Roman soldiers, occupied the borders of Italy.

Conversely, John’s report focused on Authari’s conflicts with the pro-Byzantine forces in the peninsula. His reference to the “borders of Italy” (fines/termini Italiae), however, is most likely the Po. We can assume Authari was able to muster the Lombards in the upper Po Valley, and impose his authority to the limits of Tuscia. After the defeat of Childebert in 585, Smaragdus, the exarch in Ravenna sued for a three years’ peace. Sometime after that, Authari likely took control of the fortress at the Isola Comacina, where Paul suggests there was still a magister militum loyal to the Empire. Also according to Paul, Authari sent an army under Euin, duke of Trent, to subdue Istria, by then in the hands of Grasulf (see 3.2.2). By 588, he was better prepared to face a renewed Austrasian incursion.

The 588 Austrasian campaign

Across the Alps, the situation between Childebert and Gunthram improved slightly after the suppression of Gundovald (585) and especially with the Treaty of Andelot in 587. The question of Italy, however, remained unresolved, as Gregory of Tours conveys in a conversation between Gunthram and Felix, bishop and envoy of Childebert in 588:

‘Childebert further asks of you’ said Felix to Gunthram, ‘that you send him help against the Lombards, so that he may drive them out of Italy and win back the territory which his father’s claimed during his lifetime; the rest of Italy, with your assistance, could be

359 See Muhlberger, “War, Warlords.”
361 Paul’s report of Authari extending his reach over Benevento and Spoleto should be read in the same way as the king marking the future Lombard territory with his spear (HL 3.32); it is based on a later claim to the entire peninsula.
362 HL 3.16. Paul seems to be correct about this: Theoph. Cron. 6080, mentions that the Lombards resumed their campaign in 588 (or possibly 587); for the truce, see Goubert, Byzance, 2/2, 28.
363 Greg. Tur. Hist. 8.13 (s.a. 585)
restored to imperial rule.’ The king answered: ‘I will never send my troops into Italy, for in doing so, I would send them to certain death. A terrible epidemic is raging in that country at the moment’.  

Felix also unveiled Childebert’s plan to marry his sister Chlodosind to Reccared, instead of Authari. Gunthram was not pleased with Childebert’s new take on foreign policy, especially at his attempt to get closer to the Goths while further destabilizing Italy. Even though the treaty assured the resumption of regular activities, the tension between both kings remained constant up to the death of Gunthram in 592. It is likely that Childebert insisted in expanding his influence into Italy as a safeguard. In addition to that, Italy was the evident next step for military conquest, now that most of the lands in Gaul were formally divided between the two kings. Childebert entered in contact with Maurice again (possibly through Laurentius, the bishop of Milan) and marched into Italy in 588, but, this time, the Lombards were victorious:

Hist. 9.25 s.a 588
HL 3.29


\[366\] For conflicts between the two kings, see Hist. 9.10, 11, 14, 16, 20 (s.a. 587), 9.32 (s.a. 589); 10.28 (s.a. 591), see Wood, Merovingian Kingdom, 90–91.

\[367\] See Ep. Aust. 46 (the 588 campaign seems to be the most likely context for this letter).
Childebert sent an embassy to the emperor saying he would wage war on the Lombards and with the emperor’s agreement remove them from Italy, as he had not earlier done. The generals were mustered and went off to Italy with their forces and engaged [the enemy] at the same time. But our men were severely cut to pieces, many were laid low, a good number taken prisoner, as well as a great many taking to flight to return home only with difficulty. The slaughter of the Frankish army in that place was such, that nothing similar in the past could be remembered.368

Gregory describes the major Frankish defeat in dark colors; the facing version is Paul’s rendering of the passage. Paul himself points out his sole source, and makes it clear that Secundus did not mention the Frankish defeat.370 The contrast is a warning not to underestimate Paul’s capacity to elaborate on the material available to him.

Authari made the next move, offering peace and payment of tribute to the Franks. According to Gregory, in the following year:

Childebert gathered the army and prepared to go with it to Italy [again] to attack the Lombards. But the Lombards, when they heard of this, sent emissaries with gifts, saying: ‘Let there be friendship between us, and may we not suffer destruction, but render a fixed amount of tribute to your power. And, whenever it is necessary, we will not falter to bring help against your enemies.’ Childebert, hearing those things, sent envoys to king Gunthram, to tell him privately those things they were offering. [Gunthram] not averse to

368 “[Childebertus rex] legationem ad imperatorem direxit, ut, quod prius non fecerat, nunc contra Langobardorum gentem debellans, cum eius consilio eos ab Italia removerit. Commotis ducibus cum exercitum illuc abeuntibus, confundunt parit. Sed nostris valde caesis, multi prostrati, nonnulli capti, plurimi etiam per fugam lapsi, vix patriae redierunt. Tantaque ibi fuit stragis de Francorum exercitu, ut olim similis non recolatur.”

369 “Inter haec legationem ad imperatorem Mauricum direxit, mandans e, ut, quod prius non fecerat, nunc contra Langobardos gentem bellum susciperet atque cum eius consilio eos ab Italia removeret. Qui nihil moratus exercitum suum ad Langobardorum debellationem in Italian direxit. Cui Authari rex et Langobardorum acies non segniter obviam pergant proque libertatis statu fortiter confundunt. In ea pugna Langobardi victoriam capiunt; Franci vehementer caesi, nonnulli capti, plurimi etiam per fugam elapsi vix ad patriam revertuntur. Tantaque ibi strages facta est de Francorum exercitu, quanta usquam alibi non memoratur. Mirandum sane est, cur Secundus, qui aliqua de Langobardorum gestis scrispsit, haec tantam eorum victoriam praeterierit, cum haec quae praemissimus de Francorum interim in eorum historia hisdem ipsius pene verbis exarata legantur.”

370 Possibly because Secundus work ended in 582; see 4.1.
this arrangement, advised [Childebert] to accept the truce. Childebert then ordered the army to stay put, and sent envoys to the Lombards saying that if they would confirm what they had promised, the army would return home. Nothing, however, came of this.\textsuperscript{371}

What the Lombards offered was nothing but a re-instatement of the \textit{status quo ante}, and it is tempting to see Gunthram, who would have preferred an alliance between Franks and Lombards to direct Austrasian control of Italy, behind the movement. The Lombards would remain under Frankish control, offering submission also to Childebert (who now was, in any case, slated to inherit Gunthram’s kingdom). For Gunthram, he maintained the influence over the Lombards, but at the same time defused Childebert’s fear that he could use the Lombards against Austrasia.

It is probable in this negotiation that Authari was married to a Frankish noblewoman, Theudelinda, the daughter of the Bavarian duke Garipald, whose first daughter Childebert had already married to the duke of Trent.\textsuperscript{372} According to the Copenhagen continuator,

Authari, after entering friendship with the Franks, married a wife taken from the Bavarians, the most glorious Queen Theudelinda, who nourished the Lombards not so much by royal law as by the love of piety.\textsuperscript{373}

Gundoaldus and Grimoaldus, Theodelinda’s brothers, came with her to Italy, and the former was given the control of Asti, in the Cottian Alps, possibly holding another access to Gaul.\textsuperscript{374} The politics behind that choice—the interaction between the Burgundian and Austrasian courts and the middling noble families at the fringes of the Merovingian world—eludes us, but the links between the Franks and the Lombard kings certainly gained stability with the association of Authari and Theodelinda.

\textsuperscript{371} \textit{Hist.} 9.29 (s.a. 589): “Interea Childeberthus rex exercitum commovit et Italiam ad debellandam Langobardorum gentem cum isdem pergere parat. Sed Langobardi, his auditis, legatus cum muneribus mittunt, dicens: ‘Sit amicitia inter nos, et non pereamus ac dissolvamus certum ditioni tuae tributum. Ac ubicumque necessarium contra inimicos fuerit, ferre auxilium non pegebit. Haec Childebertus rex auditis, ad Gunthchramnum regem legatus dirigit, qui ea quae ab his offerebantur in eius auribus intimaret. Sed ille non obvius de hac conveniend, consilium ad conferendum pacem praebuit. Childebertus vero rex iussit exercitum in loco resedere misitque legatus ad Longobardus, ut, si haec quae promiserant confirmabant, exercitus reverteretur ad propriam. Sed minime est impetum.”

\textsuperscript{372} On the Bavarians, see 3.1.2, n.51.

\textsuperscript{373} \textit{Cont. Hist.} 1533: “[Authari] etiam amicitia post cum Franci inita, cojugem de Baiaraiis abductam gloriosissimam Theudelindam reginam, quae non regali tantum iure quantum pietatis affectu Longobardorum gentem enutrit, sibi matrimonio copulavit.”

\textsuperscript{374} For the two brothers, see Fred. 4.34; \textit{The Origo} c.6, \textit{Cod. Goth.} c.6, and Paul \textit{HL} 3.30 mentions only Gundoaldus; Gundoaldus as duke of Asti: \textit{HL} 4.40; the Frankish duke grew in popularity and ended up murdered (Fred. 4.34; \textit{HL} 4.40)
Authari’s army: from tax support to landowners

In the background of Authari’s successes, the organization of the Lombard army was also evolving. We argued in Chapter Two that the tax-based system that supported the Lombard army in the initial stage quickly collapsed and arguably brought down the monarchy with it, pushing the Lombard to procure employment with Byzantium, or to join local forces raiding nearby targets (see 2.2.2; 3.2.1). By the seventh century, Rothari’s Edict depicts the Lombards clearly as landowners, which suggests that at some point after 568 and before 643 the Lombard soldiers acquired land (see 5.1.2).375 There is no need to associate this process with military service, assuming that land was granted in connection to military obligation, an association absent from Rothari’s Edict.376 If the development in the nearby Byzantine controlled territories can serve as guidance, we can suggest that the soldiers bought land: the process is familiar to scholars of Byzantine Italy, and there is no reason not to extend it to the rest of the peninsula.377 It could be argued that after the end of the late 560s’ turmoil, the military was the only section of society receiving any sort of regular income in northern Italy: besides the taxes recently assigned directly to them (which, as mentioned, were probably far from reliable), they arguably shared the profits of military campaigns against non-aligned cities and regions. In addition to that, already in the 570s, they had access to imperial funds in occasional subsidies and negotiations, which (one could assume) would trickle to the soldiers in one way or another (see 3.2.1). We could argue that indebted landowners were likely forced to transfer their properties to the now (relatively) affluent soldiers, sometimes simply to pay their taxes: given the significant drop in population due to

375 The evidence for landholding in Rothari’s Edict abounds; the main laws are: LLRot 33, 34, 130, 133, 144–45, 151–52, 227, 236–41, 277, 281–306, 322–33, 342, 345–58.
376 Eighth-century Lombard legislation, however, points out that military service became, by then, connected to wealth, usually expressed in landholding: see LL-Abist. 2. Note, nonetheless, that similar requisitions are made to merchants, based on non-landed capital (LL-Abist 3). For the link between land and military service, see Petersen, Siege Warfare, 184; and, for the West, Halsall, Warfare, 81–84; Goiffart, “Frankish Military Duty.” The argument for such a connection has also been dismissed for the Byzantine east, see Haldon, Byzantium, 245; cf. Carrié, “L’Etat,” 48.
377 See Pohl, “I Longobardi e la terra,” 291–92. For reference of Byzantine soldiers in Italy buying and selling land, see Brown, Gentlemen and Officers, 90ff; 101–08. Such evidence is, nonetheless, absent from Lombard Italy, though the fact might be ascribed to the rich papyri evidence preserved for Ravenna. For soldiers buying land in the West, see Halsall, Warfare, 46. That certainly does not preclude land given as rewards by commanders or patrons, especially considering the large amount of land with absent owners in northern Italy; see Goiffart, Barbarians and Romans, passim; Petersen, Siege Warfare, 55. The idea, however, that land was distributed in a large scale collectivization, however, finds no support in the documentation; contra Bognetti, “SMC,” 75ff; Amelio Tagliaferri, I Longobardi nella civiltà e nell’economia italiana del primo Medioevo. Pref. di Carlo Guido Mor (Milano: Dott. A. Giuffrè, 1969), 15–17; Vito Fumagalli, Colonii e signori nell’Italia settecentesca, secoli VI–XI, Mondo medievale. Sezione di storia della società, dell’economia e della politica (Bologna: Pàtron, 1978), 435ff; Tabacco, Egemonie, 120ff; and more recently, Gasparri, “Basi economiche,” 79; Italia Longobarda, 46.
war, famine and disease, land was plentiful (but hard to put into value), and was probably cheap.\textsuperscript{378} In this way, it can be argued, soldiers obtained full ownership of many of the holdings whose tax output was earmarked to support troops (the \textit{casa ordinata tributaria}),\textsuperscript{379} but also obtained, in all likelihood, regular tracts of land. In all likelihood, despite the apparent normality, the process was neither peaceful nor ordered: soldiers probably abused their position to constrain and to impose terms, used their tax-entitlement to turn debt into possession of land, or even confiscated properties outright illegally. This sort of land grabbing can be seen in the following generations of other barbarian settlements, and is also testified, in a different context, in Rothari’s \textit{Edict} (see 6.1.2).\textsuperscript{380} The transformation of the soldiers into landholders and the collapse of much of civilian landed capital arguably produced an unforeseen consequence: since soldiers were traditionally exempt from land tax, the more land property reverted to soldiers, the less the ‘accommodation system’ could work, because fewer taxes were collected.\textsuperscript{381} And since most of the taxation was simplified by the ‘accommodation system’, the transformation of soldiers into a dominant share of the landholders also meant the disappearance of taxes in the long run, with the possible exception of smaller contributions.\textsuperscript{382} The families of veterans, nonetheless, preserved their military obligations (see 6.1.1).

\textsuperscript{378} This process of transference of land was already suggested by Goffart as one of the mechanisms that turned the settled barbarians into landowners; see Goffart, \textit{Barbarians and Romans}, 220–30. A similar process of taxation leading to the loss of property, which ended up in military hands, can be argued for the still Byzantine part of Italy, see Brown, \textit{Gentlemen and Officers}, 105. For the low value of the land, see \textit{Gentlemen and Officers}, 8–9; P. Grierson, “Monete bizantine in Italia dal VII al XI secolo,” \textit{Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo} 8 (1961): 35–55, 48; and Alfred R. Bellinger and Philip Grierson, eds., \textit{Catalogue of the Byzantine coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection}, Dumbarton Oaks catalogues (Washington,: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1966), vol, 2.1, 29. The conclusion is based on the fluctuation of the average price of the \textit{fundus} in charters from 150.4 \textit{solidi} between 535–41 (P. Dip. 114, 116, 117, 118 & 119) to 20 \textit{solidi} between 572–92 (P.Dip. 120, 121, 122); the references are, evidently, for the Byzantine area. I see no reason not to extent the general tendency to the rest of northern Italy, though regional specifics are certainly beyond the scope of our source material. See also Pohl, “The Empire,” 129; following Jarnut, \textit{Geschichte}, 98.

\textsuperscript{379} For the \textit{casa ordinata tributaria} (\textit{Rot} 252), see 1.2.3 (as part of the tax-system), 4.3.1 (as part of the military support for military households). The limited role of the \textit{casa tributaria} in the \textit{Edict} suggests that it was but one of the ways the Lombard held land.

\textsuperscript{380} For similar questions in other barbarian settlements, see Goffart, \textit{Barbarians and Romans}.

\textsuperscript{381} Tax exemption for soldiers: \textit{CTh}. 7.20; see Jones, \textit{LRE}, 635; Walter Goffart, \textit{Caput and Colonate: Towards a History of Late Roman Taxation} (Toronto Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 53–60; Whitby, “Recruitment,” 66; Carrié, “l’État,” 45; A. D. Lee, \textit{War in Late Antiquity: a Social History} (Oxford: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 81ff; more recently, Petersen, \textit{Siege Warfare}, 54. For a suggestion of a similar process in Merovingian Gaul, see Goffart, “Frankish Military Duty,” 184–85. The Gothic kings in Spain were more aware of the risks of transferring taxable land to soldiers, mandating taxable land to be returned to the ‘Roman’ owners: see \textit{Lib. Ind.} 10.1.16.

\textsuperscript{382} On the disappearance of taxation in Lombard Italy, see Gasparri, “Il regno,” 34–42; and more recently, “Basi economiche.”; see also, Wickham, \textit{Framing}, 115–20. More generally, on the destinies of taxation in the
One may try to picture this transformation of the Lombard soldiers from recipients of taxes into landowners in terms of age groups and generations, and sketch the relationship between this transition and the known performance of the Lombard army. There is no information for the time of service of Lombard soldiers, but we can suggest, using the Roman army as a model, an approximate 20 years basic service. The generation of soldiers that rebelled with Alboin, taking into account not only variations on the terms of service, but also that most soldiers were probably enlisted before 568, would probably be looking for retirement in 15–20 years, so that, at some point between c. 583 and c. 588, they acquired land and settled down; consequently, the levies that would serve from 588 on, would, generally speaking, come from families with landed property in Italy. From that, we can trace three different periods: a first period from 568–c.583, in which Alboin’s troops were active; a second, transitional period, from c. 583 on when that generation starts gradually to retire, the older soldiers as early as 583, the younger, as late as 588; and finally a period from c. 588–618, in which the transition from tax-receivers to landowners would have been mostly completed and the majority of the soldiers would have the support of their landed properties. The dates are evidently arbitrary: the periodization here simply underlines tendencies within the social basis of the army.

If this periodization stands, we can better understand the pattern of military capability in northern Italy for the period. In the first period (c.568–583), the soldiers rebelled against imperial authorities and adopted the ‘accommodation system’ in northern Italy. We saw how the troops provided a reliable force for Alboin to stabilize the Lombard position and to guarantee the survival of the rebellion. Once the tax system started to crumble, Alboin (or Cleph) lost the support from the troops, which facilitated the dukes getting rid of the monarchy altogether (c. 574; see 2.1.2), while local commanders had then to fend for the needs of the troops, knowing quite well that arrears and delays could produce dangerous

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384 *CTh*. 7.20.4 (325). The *comitatenses* would receive the *honesta missio* after 20 years, and the *emerita missio*, with full privileges, after 24. In 325, this privilege was also granted to the *riparienses* (instead of the previous 24 years for the *honesta missio*). Officers could, however, continue serving, and they probably had benefits of doing so; see Jones, *LRE*, 635. The armies that rebelled in 568 were, like every army, composed of soldiers of different generations, and enlisted in different periods. It is tempting to see these armies as brand new creations after Sinduald’s rebellion in 565, but nothing prevent many of the soldiers to be older recruits, back from Narses’s army assembled against Totila (Proc. *Bella*, 8.26.5–17) (see 1.2.3).
outbursts of violence (see 2.2.2): the ten years that followed were the highest point of Lombard adventurism and mercenary service. In the early 580s, however, we enter the second phase (c. 583–588), when veterans from the first generation were probably verging on the end of their fighting days, and the investment in land (which had always been an option) became more intense, as veterans looked for a place to settle down. This period is the turning of the tide for the Lombard monarchy: these soldiers, presumably by then respectable landowners and family men, were more likely to support Authari’s monarchic agenda, looking for a more stable political climate. Finally, by 588 this transition was likely over and the Lombard army was solidly supported by private properties in the Po Valley, with recruits owing military service to their local commanders (dukes) or directly to the king (see 6.2). This new generation provided a renewed armed force that could support the ambitions of the rising Lombard kingship: that would account for Authari’s victory in 588 and, as we shall see in the next chapter, provided Agilulf with the military resources to pursue more ambitious political plans (see 4.1).

3.1.3. The Empire strikes back (589–90)

After Baduarius’s failed expedition in 576, the empire refrained from direct military interventions in Italy (see 3.1.1). Constantinople had more pressing business elsewhere. As a matter of fact, the detachments of the army in northern Italy, at that point either independent or aligned with the Lombards, continued to be used by the empire in missions in the East and in the Balkans for more than a decade (see 3.2.1). The elevation of Authari in 584, however, risked polarizing Italy, a situation that not only furthered the withdrawal of the Po Valley from the orbit of Constantinople, but also dried up a useful source of manpower. In addition to that, in the 580s, northern Italy gained further strategic value since it flanked Pannonia, now firmly in hostile Avar hands.

When Authari was made king, however, there was not much Maurice could do to change the status of the peninsula, apart, as we have seen, from trying to buy Frankish help. In that year, the Avars raised the pressure on the Danube frontier, demanding a higher tribute, which led Maurice to a conflict he did not have sufficient troops to carry out. In Italy, without troops and without resources, all Smaragdus, the exarch in Ravenna (c. 584–89),

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385 For Lombards operating on the Byzantine army: Theoph. Sim. 6.11.12; 8.5.6; cf. Greg. Reg. 14.10 (Guduin); Theoph. Sim. 2.17.9 (Droctulf).
386 For the narrative, see Whitby, Maurice, 138–84.
could do was to patch up a peace treaty with Authari (see 3.1.2), and hope for the Avars to keep turning east into Thracia, and not west into Friuli. By 590, however, with the Persian war (572–91) slowly dying out, Maurice could finally turn to the Balkans and to Italy. In 589/90, Maurice sent an experienced military commander to replace Smaragdus, Romanus (589/90–602),\(^{387}\) entrusted with the task to bring northern Italy back into Byzantine control, so that it could be used to encircle the Avars in Pannonia. The Franks, however, quickly intervened to preserve the status quo they had created in Italy.

**Encircling Pannonia**

In 590, the Byzantines were poised to once again contend for the mastery of Italy. The nomination of Romanus to replace Smaragdus as exarch in Ravenna has been rightly portrayed as the beginning of a more aggressive policy for the peninsula.\(^{388}\) The creation of a king over the Lombards had brought a new challenge to Byzantine authorities. In fact, the establishment of Authari had turned the Lombards into a different and more imminent threat: now the monarchy provided a clear-cut opposition to the empire, enlisting much of the formerly available military assets in the region. The evidence for Lombard mercenary troops in Byzantine service drops dramatically after 590.

Up to that point, however Italy had remained low in the Empire’s priorities, and the reason why Maurice (582–602) decided to send a military detachment there in 590 goes beyond a newly found devotion to the Italian cause. Maurice’s concerns actually focused on the Balkans, not on Italy: the Avars (and not the Lombards) were the immediate threat to Constantinople.\(^{389}\) In 586, their Chagan had defeated the unprepared *magister militum* Commentiolus and headed for the Long Wall (or ‘Anastasian Wall’, built in Thracia, from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, c. 65 km from Constantinople) besieging Adrianople in the process. They would have assailed the Long Wall and maybe even Constantinople, had Droctulf—a Lombard duke who turned to the empire after Authari was made king—not saved the day, outmaneuvering the Avars and breaking the siege.\(^{390}\) In 588, Priscus, the *magister militum per Thracias*, faced another disaster at Avar hands: the *magister militum* lost some

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\(^{387}\) A certain Julianus might have served as exarch between Smaragdus and Romanus, in 588/9, but he is poorly attested; on the question, see Goubert, *Byzance*, 2/2, 89–92.

\(^{388}\) See *Byzance*, 2/2, esp. 94.

\(^{389}\) For the general narrative, see Jones, *LRE*, 310ff. For Maurice campaign against the Avars, see Whitby, *Maurice*, 292–97.

\(^{390}\) Theo. Sim. 2.17.9–12.
key cities and, with his retreat to the Long Wall cut by the Chagan, he was besieged in Tzurullon (close to the modern Greek-Turkish border). Priscus’s fiasco, however, opened a new strategic possibility for the Byzantines. While the Chagan was besieging Priscus, the Byzantines came up with an ingenious plan: Maurice sent one of his bodyguards to Tzurullon, with a letter supposedly to Priscus, but intended to be intercepted by the Chagan. In the letter, the emperor claimed that the campaign had not changed the imperial resolve to destroy the Avars, and that a new imperial army was on the move towards Sirmium. The feint forced the Chagan to make peace and rush back home to cover his flanks, after a quick arrangement with Priscus.

Sirmium proved to be, thus, a key point to keep the Avars in check. Most Avar attacks hailed from that city, usually heading east through Moesia into Thracia and towards the Long Wall. Here is where Italy came into play: if the Byzantine could bring the Lombard army in northern Italy back into the fold, they could not only guarantee the Lombards as a source of manpower, but also use their position to open a new front against the Avars. This two-front plan had been previously proposed by Tiberius (578–82), who negotiated with the Lombards to open a western front against the Avars in 581: although nothing came out of it. In 590, the time seemed ripe to put the plan into practice: in the East, the Persians were certainly on their last leg, and would soon sue for peace due to internal problems, while in the Balkans, the Avars appeared to be losing steam.

Maurice prepared to move his troops to retake Anchialus (close to modern Pomorie, Bulgaria) in the fall of 590, insisting on, against the best advice of his councilors, personally leading the attack. The safety of the emperor demanded a large operation to guarantee that the Avars would not attempt an attack, and opening a new front from Italy would provide the necessary diversion. Presumably in preparation for Maurice’s voyage, Romanus was sent to Italy to bring the Lombards to heel earlier in the summer of 590.

393 For Theo. Sim. (6.5.16) for a “minimal sum”, though Mich. Syr. 10.11 suggests 800 lb. of gold.
395 Joh. Eph. 6.30; the commander-in-chief for the expedition, Narses (not the one who invited the Lombards into Italy: *PLRE*, “Narses 4,” 930–31), died on the way and in the end, the Lombards never came.
396 The Persians descended into civil war after Maurice’s campaigns in 588–9 (Theop. Sim. 3.18.12–4.10.7); for the context, see Whitby, *Maurice*, 276–304.
397 There is no evidence for why would that be so. Whitby suggests that the Avars might be dealing with Turkish attacks (arranged by Constantinople?) or that Maurice might have fomented rebellions within the Avar confederacy; see *Maurice*, 156–7.
398 Theop. Sim. 5.16.2–4.
The campaign of 590

Even though the ensuing Italian campaign is not mentioned in Greek sources, it received attention from Gregory of Tours, and was the subject of two letters in the Epistolae Austrasicae. The two sources preserve different points of view on the campaign, from the Byzantine side (the Epistolae) and from the Austrasian side (Gregory), allowing us to reconstruct in some detail the diplomatic and military developments. The picture that emerges from these sources is a carefully played diplomatic game between the two powers (Byzantines and Franks) to avoid a possible confrontation, with Authari’s Lombards caught between them.

The two letters in the Epistolae Austrasicae are the primary source for the campaign: the letters were written in close succession, with the latest one (Ep. 41) being sent possibly by the end of the summer. Ep. 40 is the earliest, and brings a report of the first developments of the campaign. Romanus claims that the Byzantine army stormed three key cities in Italy, two in the eastern Po Valley (the strategically located Mantua and Modena) and Altinum in the Veneto (possibly as a bridgehead to access the province). The Byzantines occupied the two different positions, presumably focusing on securing access to Veneto and control of the lower Po Valley: the attack was supported by warships, possibly both on the Venetian coast and up the Po river. Authari and other Lombard commanders retreated to the fortified cities waiting for the attack. As the Byzantines were securing their position in the eastern Po Valley, a Frankish army entered Italy, commanded by a certain vir magnificus Henus (whom Gregory of Tours calls Chedinus). The Byzantine army encountered the Franks posted c. 30 km (20 miles) from Verona. After seeing the Frankish army, Romanus thought it prudent to contact Henus “without delay” (sine mora), expecting (he explains to the Austrasian king) to coordinate an attack. Three Frankish dukes (Leudefredus,

399 Greg. Tur. Hist. 10.2–3 (s.a. 590).
400 In both letters (Ep. Aust. 40–41), Maurice pressures Childebert to act before the Lombards could harvest their crops, usually by later summer/early Fall. The dating is, nonetheless, controversial since the Ep. Aust. 40 contains only the name of the emperor, and not the Italian exarch, which also allows for a dating to 585. Gundlach, the editor in the MGH, favoured 585, instead of 590; more recently, Elena Malspina has convincingly argued for 590, see Il Liber epistolarum della cancelleria austrasica: sec. V–VI; cf. Wilhelm Gundlach, “Die Sammlung der Epistolae Austrasicae,” Neues Archiv 13 (1888): 365–87, 374–77.
401 “…cum Rōmāno exercitu et dormonibus” were the available resources to continue the campaign with Frankish support (Ep. Aust. 40).
402 Hist. 10.3 (s.a. 590); see PLRE, “Henus,” 581–82.
403 Verona is 45 km northeast of Mantua: depending on the position of the Frankish army, it could be as close as 15 km from Byzantine army in the city, or as far as 75 towards the Austrasian access through Trento.
Olfigandus, and Raudingus) negotiated with Romanus a plan to assail the Lombards. At this point, however, the Franks came to an agreement with Authari in Pavia that produced a ten-month truce with the Lombards. Carrying the spoils—amongst them captives—the Frankish troops withdrew from the Italian theater.

That was Romanus’ report of what had happened: Ep. 40 brings then a snapshot of the diplomatic exchanged that followed. The letter was possibly, at least in part, a response to an embassy from Childebert to Romanus, carried by a certain Andreas, sent to reassure the Byzantines of Childebert’s intentions in Italy: “Andreas has thus explained to us how your glory had sent with a ready heart and unblemished integrity the most famous Frankish army for the liberation of Italy.” Such commitment, Romanus assures Childebert, he had transmitted to the emperor. Romanus communicates to the Frankish king his frustration with the actions of the king’s commanders, and guarantees that he had done nothing without the knowledge and approval of his captains in Italy. Furthermore, he laments that the retreat of the Franks prevented the final extermination of the Lombards, who were still safely inside their walls. For that reason, he pressures Childebert to dispatch a new army into Italy, as fast as possible, so that they can besiege the Lombards before they can harvest their crops. In any case, Romanus is careful not to blame Childebert, who he is certain would be saddened by the news, and whom he advises to send “worthy commanders” with the new troops, “who would obey his [i.e. Childebert’s] orders,” possibly envisioning a new campaign for 591.

The next letter, Ep. 41, provides some context of what happened after the Frankish army withdrew. The new Byzantine position prompted some Lombard commanders from cities along the Po to surrender and return to imperial service: they came to Mantua—presumably now a Byzantine headquarters in the Po Valley—surrendered hostages and swore loyalty to the empire. Romanus names Parma, Reggio and the important port city of Piacenza, all controlling strategic positions in the Po Valley: Piacenza is not farther than 130 km from Pavia. Furthermore, Romanus turned to Histria where Gisulf, the (independent) Lombard commander in Friuli, surrendered with his army, being reincorporated in the empire (see 3.2.2). Once again Romanus pressures Childebert to resume the campaign, not without

404 Possibly the same as the Frankish duke Olo in Cont. Hov. 1532.
407 Ep. Aust. 40. “…dignos duces, qui praecepta vestra impleant, et exercitum dirigere.”
acknowledging that the extemporaneous negotiation of the Franks with the Lombards was none of his doings, but instead that the Frankish commanders in Italy were to blame.\textsuperscript{408}

The second source, Gregory of Tours, reporting with information from the Austrasian court, had details about the Frankish preparation for the war. According to him, Childebert moved into Italy in 590, after receiving messages from Maurice through the Frankish envoy, Gripo. However, the bishop of Tours fails to mention what would have moved Childebert to invade Italy in 590: Gregory narrates how Gripo, who had left for Constantinople the year before (589), related his misfortunes at the hands of the Carthagians as he waited to be transferred to the imperial capital, and reported that the Emperor was made aware of the situation, and would take the necessary measures to amend them.\textsuperscript{409} Following that, Gregory states that, “when Gripo reported those things to Childebert, the king ordered the army to be assembled without delay (\textit{confestim}) and sent twenty dukes to fight the Lombards.”\textsuperscript{410} Once in Italy, the Frankish army split into two fronts, the one, commanded by Audovald (and Olo), turned right towards Milan and, after initial skirmishes, observed the Lombards retreating inside their walls; the other, commanded by Chedinus—the Ep. Aust.’s Henus—, turned left (meaning, toward Verona where Romanus found him), and captured five castella, obtaining oaths from them. Similar to what is reported in Romanus’s letter, Gregory mentions that the imperial forces contacted Audovald’s army, and arranged a rendezvous in three days, which the Byzantines failed to honor. After three months being assailed by disease and unable to force the Lombards out of their fortifications, Gregory of Tours claims that the army, “after receiving oaths, turned back homeward, having submitted to the king’s control that which his father once possessed; from such places they brought captives and booty.”\textsuperscript{411} Shortly afterwards, Authari sent envoys to Gaul to negotiate peace.\textsuperscript{412}

\textit{Byzantines, Franks, and Lombards}

Both Gregory’s narrative and Romanus’s letters seem to suggest a lack of coordination between Frankish and imperial troops. From Romanus’s report, we can suggest that the

\textsuperscript{408} Ep. Aust. 41.
\textsuperscript{409} Hist. 10.2 (s.a. 590); the emperor keeps his word and send Childebert the men responsible for Gripo’s misadventures, Hist. 10.4 (s.a. 590).
\textsuperscript{410} Hist. 10.3 (s.a. 590): Haec a Gripone Childebertho rege relata, confestim exercitum in Italiam commovere iubet, ac viginti duces ad Langobardorum gentem debellandam dirigit.”
\textsuperscript{411} Hist. 10.3 (s.a. 590): “(…)exercitus] redire ad propria desinavit, subdens etiam illud, accepta sacramenta, regis ditionibus, quod pater eius prius habuerat, de quibus locis et captivos et alias abduxere praedas.”
\textsuperscript{412} Hist. 10.3.
imperial troops were surprised to encounter the Franks close to Verona, which produced the intense diplomatic activity we can induce from Ep. 40–41 (which are presumably only part of a longer exchange). Childebert sent Andreas to reassure Romanus the Franks were not there to fight the Byzantines, but to support the emperor’s cause in Italy. That, however, was not what the Frankish troops actually did: after a show of strength, they negotiated a truce with the Lombards, and withdrew (Romanus seems to suggest they went back to Gaul, while Gregory affirms the troops remained in Italy for three months and blames the Byzantines for not honoring their part of the deal). Notwithstanding what Romanus experienced on the ground, he made sure to not antagonize Childebert, carefully placing the blame on local commanders. Furthermore, Romanus made it clear that at no point had he operated without consulting the Frankish commanders (Ep. 40). Both sides, it seems, cautiously handled the situation to avoid an undesirable confrontation.

Conversely, Gregory’s report also suggests that Childebert was not initially included in Romanus’s plan of action: the king’s decision to invade Italy came after the reports from Gripo’s embassy to Constantinople. Gregory, however, only recorded the reports on the incident in Carthage and how Maurice dealt (properly) with it, none of it suggesting a reason for Childebert to assemble the army. Certainly, something that Gripo learnt in Constantinople (but which Gregory did not find out or failed to report) made Childebert move “without delay” (conjestim) into Italy, and scholars have usually read the passage on the terms of previous agreements between the Franks and the Byzantine to eliminate the Lombards. However, given the intense diplomatic negotiation that happened after the Frankish troops entered Italy, and the complete lack of articulation of both armies, it is very unlikely that a new agreement was ever made.

We can only guess Childebert’s intention as he entered Italy. In all likelihood, Childebert had learnt of the Byzantine campaign via Gripo, and took action to prevent the empire from recovering northern Italy and establishing a direct frontier with the Merovingian kingdom. As in Roman times, the Po marked a more defensible border, and it would be unacceptable for the Franks to move that border to the Alps. The mountain range is large enough to

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413 Ep. 40; compare with Hist. 10.3.
414 Jarnut, Geschichte, 38–39; Goffart, “Byzantine Police,” 111–18; Löhlein, Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik der Merowinger im VI. Jahrhundert, 53–74; Büttner, “Alpenpolitik,” 76–80. Note, however, that the embassy Childebert sent to negotiate imperial support for an Italian campaign (Greg. Tur. Hist. 9.25 [s.a. 588]) was not Gripo’s, which left a year later, in 589.
severely constrain movement of troops but is teeming with passages and does not constitute an actual obstacle for an invading army (although it might become one during winter). So Childebert had to move into Italy to reassert his dominion of the Po Valley and keep the Byzantines off. Once in Italy, Frankish and imperial diplomacy did their best to prevent confrontation, and the Franks could once again pretend to support imperial claims in the region, while re-affirming their own position. The Franks conceded imperial control in Veneto (which the Byzantines secured with Gisulf, Ep. 41) and in the lower Po Valley (Parma, Piacenza, Modena), but kept the upper Po (Pavia and Milan) and the northern passes (Verona) in the hands of the Lombards, maintaining a reasonable buffer zone between themselves and Byzantine controlled territories.

At any rate, as soon as the Franks withdrew, Gregory of Tours states that Authari sent envoys to Gunthram, saying:

We, most pious king, desire to be subjects and faithful to you and your people, as we once were to your forefathers; we have not departed from the oath, which our predecessor has sworn to your precursors. Thus now cease from your hostilities against us, and let there be peace and amity, so that, when it is necessary, we shall bring help against your enemies. Once your people but indeed also our people, are secured, let the enemies, who howl all around us, knowing we are at peace, have more reason to be terrified than to revel in our discord.

The words that Gregory puts in Authari’s month are very telling, though we cannot know how close they are to the actual statements of the embassy. The Lombards were certainly disconcerted by the presence of the Franks in Italy. Whatever the plans they might have, late Antique armies tended to wreak havoc wherever they went, to friendly or enemy territory. But it is relevant to note that Gregory mentions the Frankish army paying for food on their way back to Gaul, a situation that sits awkwardly with an invading army, especially with a victorious one. Gunthram received the Lombard envoys well, and sent them to Childebert,

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415 Hist. 10.3 (s.a. 590): “Nos, piissimi rex, subiecti atque fidelis vobis gentique vestrae, sicut patribus vestri fuimus, esse desideramus; nec discedimus a sacramento, quod praecessoris nostri vestris decessoris iuraverunt. Nunc autem desistite a persecutione nostra, et sit nobis pax et concordia, ut, ubi necessarium fuerit, contra inimicos auxilium praebamus, ut, vestra scilicet, nostraque gente salvata se nos pacificos cognuscentes, terreantur magis adversarii, qui in circuitu obstrepunt, quam nostra discordia gratulentur.”

416 Greg. Tur. Hist 10.3 (s.a. 590): “Et sic regredientes [Franci], ita fame conficiebantur, ut prius et arma et vestimenta ad coemendum victum demerent, quam locum genetale contingebant.”
so that they could patch up their relations with Austrasia.\textsuperscript{417} While this diplomatic interchange was taking place, Authari died—by poison, says Paul—leaving behind external support for the monarchy, but internal opposition.\textsuperscript{418}

3.2 EVOLUTION OF THE DUKES (574–590)

Since the first days, the Lombard rebellion had been a movement from the troops—in that point not dissimilar to other military rebellions in sixth-century Mediterranean (see 1.2.2). Alboin gave the rebellion an identity and a rally point, but his reign was brief and his reach was limited: while the Lombard king was active in the Po Valley, and maybe sent raiding expeditions across that river into Tuscia, unrest spread throughout the entire peninsula. After Cleph, there was no longer a king, but the rebellion continued. Since 568, local commanders had enjoyed the political possibilities of Lombard autonomy, and the freedom it brought to negotiate with the empire, especially after the end of the short-lived monarchy (see 2.1.2). As time went by, soldiers (and also civilians?) kept fleeing to the Lombards, whenever they found the conditions they were living in unacceptable: people would join the Lombards on account of high taxes, hunger; even soldiers forced to spend the winter in an unprotected fortress changed sides.\textsuperscript{419} The interregnum was a period of fluid allegiance and political alignment: the Lombards had provided a possible point of opposition to the imperial government, and henceforth the Italian population oscillated between open resistance and cautious cooperation with the established authority. The restoration of the Lombard monarchy pushed local commanders to commit to a position, either joining the new king or to re-affirming their allegiance to the Empire. By and large, most dukes chose the latter, preferring the weak control of Ravenna, supported by the distant Greek emperor, over the active Lombard king supported by the strong Merovingian kings on the other side of the Alps. The local capacity to resist depended on the level of support dukes could muster, and how advanced they were in transforming their military command into a territorial power. The most successful dukes created more extensive zones of influence, such as Friuli in the north and Benevento and Spoleto in the south. In this section, we will see the immediate resistance of the dukes, and the different destinies of the larger armies settled

\textsuperscript{417} Greg. Tur. Hist. 10.3 (s.a. 590); Contra Petersen, Siege Warfare, 205.
\textsuperscript{418} Poison: HL 3.35.
\textsuperscript{419} Taxes: Greg. Reg. 5.38 (see also Greg. Reg. 10.5); Hunger: LP Vita Benedicti I, 64.1. Winter: Vita Floridi, c.20.
around Spoleto, Benevento and Cividale. But first, we must consider the evidence that points to a larger support of the dukes in the creation of the monarchy.

### 3.2.1 Of dukes and kings

Scholars have long defended the idea that the recreation of the monarchy was promoted by a consensus of the dukes, motivated by the growing external threat represented by the Maurice and the Franks, an idea that has its root in Paul the Deacon. We have suggested in the last section that the power behind the elevation of Authari was not the Lombard dukes, but the Frankish king Gunthram, who allowed the Lombards to elect a king and provided diplomatic support for the first years of the monarchy (3.1). Gunthram relied on a consortium of dukes (twelve is the number mentioned by Fredegar), who pooled together behind the new king. Paul goes much further: for him, after ten years of ducal rule, the dukes decided to restore the monarchy, granting half of their resources (substantia) to support the king.\(^{421}\) Paul’s assertion that the royal power was built up by ducal support is hard to reconcile with the independent action of the dukes during the interregnum and the amount of resistance presented by them against Authari (and Agilulf after him, see 4.1):\(^{422}\) the sources are scanty for the reign of Authari, but we know that Agilulf had to impose his rule over all major ducal cities (and a handful of smaller ones), Turin and Milan/Pavia being the sole exceptions.\(^{423}\) This strong resistance to the king goes against Paul’s statement that the monarchy was formed on ducal assent and, especially, that the dukes would be willing to give up half of their substantia to such a project.

We have suggested above (3.2) that Paul was using HL 2.32 and 3.16 to defend his view of monarchy, and that although he was probably using as his base some older source (possibly the ‘consular source’), he rearranged it in order to produce two chapters encompassing the collapse and reconstruction of the monarchy, and contrasting the rule of the dukes to the monarchy. In this sense, HL 2.32 finishes by describing how seven years after Alboin conquered Italy, “churches were despoiled, priests killed, cities overthrown, and

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420 Fred. 4.45.
421 HL 3.16.
422 See Delogu, “Altre congettura,” 106.
423 See 4.1.1
the people, who had grown up like crops, annihilated” by the Lombard dukes: \[424\] while borrowing the passage from Gregory of Tour’s Histories, Paul made sure to shift the blame from the Lombards to the Lombard dukes, and, by slightly doctoring Gregory’s Latin, to place the massacre seven years after Alboin, and not within the seven years Gregory claimed Alboin had ruled. \[425\] In contrast, HL 3.16 depicts the beginning of the monarchy as a golden age, something “mirabile” says the deacon, when the kingdom enjoyed peace, and “there was no violence, no conspiracies, no one burdened anyone else unjustly, no one plundered, there was no robbery, no murder for gain, every one could go wherever they desired without fear,” all of this on account of the king. \[426\]

Paul’s description of the creation of the monarchy should be read in context with his other takes on the monarchy. For him, monarchy would be a natural option, requiring no justification. We find that reasoning when he describes the initial establishment of the monarchy among the Lombards: “Thus, when Ibor and Aio died (…) the Lombards no longer wanted to be under dukes, so they established a king on the modes of other peoples.” \[427\] Having kings was the state of all the gentes, and it was only natural that the Lombards should come to term with it. The importance of a strong unified monarchy was one of the main arguments of the Historia Langobardorum. Paul’s support of a strong ruler was certainly reinforced by his experience in Gaul. \[428\]

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424 HL 2.32: “…Per hos Langobardorum duces, septimo anno ab adventu Alboin et totius gentis, spoliatis ecclesiis, sacerdotibus interfectis, civitatis subratis populisque, qui more segetum excreverant, extinctis, exceptis his regionibus quas Alboin ceperat, Italia ex maxima parte capta et a Langobardis subiugata est.”

425 Compare:
Greg. Hist 4.41
“Alboenus vero Langobardorum rex; qui Chlothosindam, regis Chlothari filiam habebat, relecta regione sua, Italiam cum omni illa Langobardorum gente petit. Nam, commoto exercitu, cum uxoribus et liberis abierunt, illuc commanere deliberantes. Quam regionem ingressi, maxime per annos septem pervagantes, spoliatis ecclesiis, sacerdotibus interfectis, in suam redigunt potestatem.”

426 HL 2.32: “Post cuius [Clephonis] (…) Per hos Langobardorum duces, septimo anno ab adventu Alboin et totius gentis spoliatis ecclesiis, sacerdotibus interfectis, civitatis subratis populisque, qui more segetum excreverunt, extinctis, exceptis his regionibus quas Alboin ceperat (…).”

The question remains whether Paul was more faithful to the ‘consular source’ in this passage, given that Alboin was probably dead seven years after he entered Italy.

427 HL 3.16: “Erat sane hoc mirabile in regno Langobardorum: nulla erat violentia, nullae struebantur insidiae; nemo aliquem inusti angariabat, nemo spoliabat; non erant furta, non latrocinia; unusquisque quo libebat secures sine timore pergabat.” cf. HL 1.14: the Lombards decided to no longer be under dukes, but elect kings ‘ad cetererum instar gentium’. Paul is presumably dialoguing with 1 Sam 8, and Samuel’s reservations about establishing a king over the Jews.

428 For Paul’s Carolingian experience, see Goffart, Narrators 333–47; McKitterick, History and Memory, 66–69.
efficiency of Carolingian government, and with the ease with which the Franks had taken control of Italy. Whether Paul was writing to a Carolingian or a Beneventan heir, it is clear that he is advocating for a strong central government instead of what he saw as inherently anarchical decentralization.\textsuperscript{429}

Finally, in his description of the restoration of the monarchy, Paul had to tackle the question of royal property and the balance of power between dukes and kings. It was clear for Paul that the \textit{interregnum} meant the discontinuation of the royal property built up by Alboin’s conquest. It was, nonetheless, also evident that eighth-century Lombard kings held property far and wide in Italy, and that much of royal administration was based and supported from the numerous \textit{curtes regiae}, distributed not only in the north, but also in the southern duchies.\textsuperscript{430} Paul had to explain how the kings acquired so much property, without overstressing the obvious explanation, i.e. that the kings confiscated and expropriated the properties of the dukes. The initial donation to support the monarchy (\textit{HL 3.16}) solved the question of royal land, legitimized royal property in the duchies and made the dukes active guarantors of the monarchy: the argument was fundamental for Paul’s portrait of a central power that was harmonic and not imposed. Whether it was intended to inform the Carolingian government (suggesting that Charlemagne’s rule should accommodate the local dukes), or to contest its legitimacy (reinforcing the harmony of the previous order), Paul based his ideal kingdom on a cooperation of central and regional governments, and that is the agenda behind his take on monarchy in the \textit{HL}.

\textit{Push and pull}

Paul’s description of the end of the monarchy with Cleph and its recreation under Authari conformed to his political agenda, supporting an idea of a capable king backed by dukes: such a description, we have argued, Paul created by adjusting what was possibly one single passage of the ‘consular sources’ and a few lines from Gregory of Tours (see above and 3.2). This material provided him, as far as we know, with very little information on the dukes during the period: the only information he might have gotten from these sources was the name of one of the independent dukes, Zaban, duke of Pavia (also mentioned in Gregory

\textsuperscript{429} Both audiences have been successfully argued for, and the current state of the debate does not allow for a definite answer: for a Beneventan audience, see Goffart, \textit{Narrators} 333; for a Carolingian one, McKitterick, “Paolo Diacono.”; see also the sensible remarks in Alain J. Stoclet, \textit{Fils du Martel: la naissance, l’éducation et la jeunesse de Pépin, dit “Le Bref”} (v. 714 – v. 741) (2013), 183–85.

\textsuperscript{430} For the \textit{curtes regiae}, see below 5.2.
and in the Copenhagen Continuation), and maybe also the name of the dukes he lists in *HL* 2.32 (Wallari in Bergamo; Alichis in Bressia; Eoin in Trent; and Gisulfus in Cividale). Paul, however, had access to other sources, such as the tombstone of Droctulf, a few references in the *Registrum* of Gregory the Great (which Paul used very selectively), and, presumably, ducal lists of some sort (similar to what we have for Benevento): such material he complemented with legends, especially from his native Friuli.

Sources contemporary to the sixth and early seventh centuries, however, show a period of confusing political allegiances, when dukes had the freedom to negotiate their level of commitment to the Empire, while maintaining an ambiguous state of independence. As we have seen (3.1), Gunthram promoted the monarchy in cooperation with a group of dukes (twelve, according to Fredegar), but it is very hard to know exactly who they were and how representative they were of the mutineers in Italy. In any case, in the same passage, Fredegar remarks that the creation of the king was not uncontested: once Gunthram allowed the creation of a king, “a duke, also named Authari, and his entire division went over to the emperor, and remained on his side.” This Authari would eventually join another rebellion, probably still commanding the same units, this time in the south (see 3.2.2).

Authari was not alone. Droctulf was another Lombard duke to change sides at this time. His tombstone's inscription in Ravenna was preserved by Paul, and was possibly the only source for his take on the duke:

**EPITAPH, ACCORDING TO HL 3.19**

Drocton lies buried within this tomb, but in body only,
For in his merits he lives on before the whole world. He
was one of the *[Lango]Bardi*, but by birth he was Suavian,
And suave he was to all people. Terrifying in countenance, but kind at heart,
His beard was long over a vigorous breast.

**HL 3.18**

Authari moved to assault the city of Brescello on margin of the Po. There, Duke Droctulf had escaped from the Lombards, going to the side of the emperor. Joining the [imperial] ranks, he

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432 *Catalogus regum Langobardorum et ducum Beneventanorum*. Edited by Waitz, in *MGH SRL*, 490ff.

433 The other reference we have for the number of dukes comes from Paul’s *HL* 2.32, where Paul mention 36 dukes (or 35, depending on the MS). The number seems unrealistic.

434 Fred. 4.45: “Alius Autharius idemque dux cum integro suo ducato se dicione imperiae tradedit, ibique permansit. Et Autharius rex tributa quod Langobardi ad parte Francorum spondederant annis singulis reddedit. Post eius discessum filius eius Ago in regno sublimatur; similiter implisse denuscetur.”

435 Greg. Reg. 2.38.


437 Already suggested by Waitz in his edition of *HL*, *MGH SRL*, 102, n.1; see also Julius Weise, *Italien und die Langobardenherrscher von 568 bis 628* (Halle,: Niemeyer, 1887); Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, 602, n.3; Bognetti, “Tradizione,” 461–63.
This man, loving the standards of Rome and the Republic,
Became himself a destroyer of his own people.
He despised his dear relatives, while he loved us,
Deeming Ravenna his own home.
His first glory was the capture of Brescello.
There he remained, dreadful to all of his foes.
When this mighty general brought aid to the Roman standards,
Christ first bestowed on him the banner of command
And then, also, when Faroald withheld Classis by treachery,
He prepares forces by sea to take Classis
Battling in tiny ships on the flowing currents of the Badrins,
He himself conquered numberless bands of \[Lango\]Bardi.
Again he vanquishes in lands of the East the Avar,
Seeking to win victory’s sovereign palm for his lords.
Sustained by the aid of the martyr Vitalis,
He often came to them as a conqueror, rejoicing with triumphs.
He asked to rest on the church of St. Vitalis.
He has this burial place prepared for after his death
Dying, he implored these things of the bishop Iohannes,
By whose pious love he had returned to these lands.

bravely resisted the Lombards army. This man was from Suavian stock, that is Alamannic,
and grew up amongst the Lombards and, because he was an imposing figure, he obtained
the rank of duke. However, when the opportunity to avenge his captivity came up, he immediately rebelled against the Lombards. The Lombards fought terrible battles against him and eventually, overpowering him
and the troops he was leading, and forced them to retreat to Ravenna.\(^{438}\)

Paul dependency on the inscription is evident. All he did was to include Authari and
embellish the narrative.\(^{439}\) Why Paul would consider Droctulf’s time with the Lombards a
that had to be avenged is hard to know, but we can suggest his change of side might be connected to the restoration of the monarchy.\textsuperscript{440} At some point, Droctulf conquered Brescello, which he eventually handled back to the Empire. Paul is possibly wrong about Authari recapturing the city: Brescello would be abandoned and destroyed by the Byzantine only in 602 (unless it changed hands in the meantime, which is nonetheless not impossible).\textsuperscript{441} Fighting for the Byzantines, Droctulf expelled the rebel Faroald from Classis,\textsuperscript{442} fought in the Balkans in 587 against the Avars, and was finally sent to Africa in 598.\textsuperscript{443} He was buried in Ravenna, and his epitaph praised his contributions fighting his own people (although his origin may be Suavian, “his people” are the Lombards) for the Empire.\textsuperscript{444} Although the chronology before 587 is difficult to establish, the Epitaph—if we can trust its concatenation of events—suggests that Droctulf first captured Brescello, controlled it independently for a while, and then turned to the empire and received the command of a Byzantine army.\textsuperscript{445} It is tempting to suggest that Droctulf was one of the many recruits that Narses brought to Italy and rebelled with Alboin, and hence joined the Lombards. Together with other military commanders, Droctulf remained independent after the death of Cleph, only finally changing sides to the empire at some point before 587, possibly after the recreation of the monarchy in 584.

Other local commanders changed side shortly after 584: a few years after Droctulf—some time before 590—the commanders of Reggio, Piacenza and Parma surrendered to Romanus and negotiated their way back into the empire, as the exarch Romanus announced to Childebert during the Roman campaign in 590 (for the context, see 3.1): the exarch reports that when he marched up on the Po, “the Lombard dukes established in those cities rushed

\begin{table}[h]
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\textit{contra Duchi}, 54. Gasparri suggests that Droctulf's change of side should not be related to the siege of Brescello and that he probably went to the Byzantine with the troops that abandoned the Lombards after the death of Alboin (see above, chp. 1). There is no support for such reading. More recently, both Jarnut and Gasparri consider Brescello one of Droctulf's actions already as a Byzantine commander, similar to the one in Classis, also mentioned on the epitaph; see Jörg Jarnut, \textit{Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zum Langobardenreich in Italien (568-774)}, Bonner historische Forschungen (Bonn: L. Röhrscheid, 1972), 349; Stefano Gasparri, \textit{I duchi longobardi} (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1978), 54-55.  
\hline
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\end{table}
with all celerity to meet us in Mantua and to surrender to the holy Republic.”\textsuperscript{446} They were received back into Byzantine service, not without first surrendering hostages.\textsuperscript{447}

In addition to that, we know that the duke of the Friulian army, Gisulf, turned to the Byzantines shortly after the cities along the Po surrendered to Romanus (see 3.2.2). The land across the river was also not consistently on Authari’s side. Based on Agilulf’s wars to subdue the dukes in the 590s, we can suggest that Bergamo, Treviso and eventually Verona and Trento, also turned sides (for the context, see 4.1).\textsuperscript{448} These local commanders were unable to resist the pressure of the newly founded kingship, and eventually were either conquered by the Lombards, or surrendered to Byzantium and were relocated somewhere else. Such was the case of Droctulf, and probably of other commanders in the north. Other dukes managed to gather around them a larger army, and to control a significant part of the territory. These dukes eventually succeeded in turning the military command into a territorial unit, a duchy. The most prominent examples are Friuli in the north, and Spoleto and Benevento in the south.

\textbf{3.2.2 The fate of the larger armies: Friuli and the South}

Throughout the Lombard period, we observe six larger military divisions, which provide most of the prominent political players.\textsuperscript{449} We can assume that these six were the military commands that, in the initial decades, managed to claim a stable territorial base, four of which correspond roughly to the four military divisions Narses possibly established to guard the northern border of Italy.\textsuperscript{450} These six divisions compose the three main regions of the eighth-century Lombard kingdom: Neustria in the Po Valley, Austria east of the Adige, and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{446} Ep. Aust. 41: “Praecedentibus autem scriptis nostris designasse nos meminimus, quia, dum ad obsedandum Parma vel Regio atque Placentia civitates proficicereamus, duces Langobardum ibidem constitute, in Mantuana civitate nobis cum omni festinatione ad subdendum se sancte reipublicae occurrerunt. Quos posteaquam in servitio sancte reipublicae suscepimus, filios eorum in obsedato accipientes.”
\item \textsuperscript{447} Ep. Aust. 41
\item \textsuperscript{448} Bergamo and Treviso: HL 4.3; Verona: HL 4.13; the context and dating for Trento are less clear: HL 4.27.
\item \textsuperscript{449} For examples, see the prosopography in Jarnut, Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zum Langobardenreich in Italien (568-774); and Gasparri, Duchi.
\item \textsuperscript{450} The argument for Narses defense of Italy was put forward by Hartmann, suggesting Narses would have used \textit{limitanei} to man four new \textit{castra} in the north (namely, Cividale, Trento, Susa and Como), see Hartmann, “Iter.”; Geschichte I, I, 348–53; for the reception, see Stein, Histoire, 2, 612–13, n.1; Schmidt, Ostgermanen, 586–88; Jones, LRE, 292; Christie, \textit{Constantine to Charlemagne}, 324–31. Schneider used the model to support his idea of the Lombards settled as \textit{limitanei}, following the same system used by the Romans, see Die Reichsverwaltung, 15–37. The use of \textit{limitanei}, however, has been dismissed, see Guillou, \textit{Régionalisme et indépendance dans l’empire byzantin au VIIe siècle: l’exemple de l’exarchat et de la pentapole d’Italie}, 150; Brown, \textit{Gentlemen and Officers}, 103.
\end{itemize}
the southern duchies, below the corridor that linked Ravenna to Rome.\textsuperscript{451} Hence, to the west, we find three dukes on the upper Po Valley: Turin, Milan/Pavia and Trento. We have seen how Milan/Pavia and Turin were associated with the Burgundian Kingdom on the other side of the Alps, and how Trento was connected to the Austrasian kingdom via Bavaria (see 3.1). These three duchies constitute the so-called Lombard Neustria, as the region came to be called by the eighth century, and constitute the powerbase of the monarchy. The other three duchies remained independent (at different levels), and at least in the beginning were not connected to the Neustrian-based monarchy. The first of these is Friuli, the garrison in Histria et Venetia, to the east, which maintained its headquarter in Cividale, and would eventually be called Austria; the second, Spoleto, to the south, on the road that connects Rome to Ravenna; the third, further south, Benevento, on the road that connect Rome to Taranto in the south (Benevento). Until the eighth century, the southern duchies remained independent from the Pavian kingdom in the north. It is impossible to know the details of the first days of the larger territorial duchies since our sources reveal very little about the period, and most of it is clouded in legend. Nonetheless, the surviving evidence produces a picture of independence and resistance, somewhat different from Paul’s HL.

\textit{The north: Friuli Libar}

The military command in Friuli was based around the late Roman fortifications of Cividale, which protected the eastern access to Italy, closing the Julian Alps against incursions from Pannonia. The region had strong ties with the Mediterranean through the Adriatic, as well as with the militarized region south of the Danube. Probably on account of that, the region has produced a quite different archaeological record: while in most of the Po valley Roman Mediterranean imports (particularly two kinds of imported finewares, the African Red Slip [ARS] and Phocaen Red Slip) disappear after c. 550, they continue strong in Friuli even after the conquest, attesting to the regions more ample connection to the Roman system.\textsuperscript{452}

Paul the Deacon, being a native of Friuli, had access to regional oral stories and legendary material.\textsuperscript{453} Although such sources provided some amusing stories, this material is especially

\textsuperscript{451} The terms ‘Austria’ and ‘Neustria’ gained currency presumably under Liutprand, who used the terms in the prologues for the laws of the first, fifth, eighth and seventeenth years of rule.

\textsuperscript{452} See Wickham, “Italy at the end,” 823; Framing, 731.

\textsuperscript{453} For example, the story of his abavus, HL 4.37.
inconsistent and chronologically difficult. In the HL, the early days of Lombard Friuli are part of a narrative that links the Friulian dukes with the kingdom in Pavia, first through Alboin and Gisulf, and then through Gisulf’s son, Grimoald, who eventually became king. According to Paul, Alboin created the first duchy as he reached castrum Foroiulianum, having met no obstacles so far. Alboin intended to place Gisulf, his nephew and stratôr, in the command of the region, but Gisulf would only accept the position if he was given the best fara— a word Paul probably found in the ‘consular source’, which he understood as ‘families’ (see 2.1; 5.2.2). In addition to accepting his terms and granting Gisulf the best fara, Alboin gave him a large herd of horses. Paul mentions Gisulf again only in 602— note the precise date— when, together with Gaidoald, the duke of Trent, he made peace with Agilulf, with whom they had previously “broke allegiance.” Gisulf, still according to Paul, ruled Friuli until he died defending Cividale from the Avars, at the same time (“circa haec tempora”) as Heraclius dethroned and killed Phocas (i.e. 610), another precise date. His sons (Tato, Caco, Grimoald and Raduald) managed to escape the Avar attack, not without the younger of them (and future king Grimoald) living some thrilling adventures. Tato and Caco, the two older brothers, became dukes as they reclaimed their land— a story somewhat mirrored by what Paul knew about his abavus Leupchis. What Paul reports next is that Gregory, the patricius in Ravenna, deceived and killed both brothers at Oderzo (c. 100 km from Cividale). After their death, Grasulf, their paternal uncle, succeeded as duke, while the two younger brothers, Raduald and Grimoald, moved to Benevento since they

454 Sometimes it is inconsistent even within his narrative: for example, Paul suggests Arichis was the tutor of Gisulf’s son, Grimoald and Raduald (HL 4.39) before becoming duke of Benevento (HL. 4.18) (c.591); Grimoald and Raduald, however, were infants during the Avar attack to Friuli (c. 610), while Arichis was already duke in Benevento under Gregory (HL 4.19).

455 HL 2.9.

456 HL 4.27: “Hoc anno [refers to 4.26, death of Maurice], Gaidoaldus dux de Tridento et Gisulfus de Foroiuli, cum ante a regis Agilulfi societate discordarent, ab eo in pace recepti sunt.”

457 HL 4.37.

458 HL 4.37.

459 The Latin here is less precise than we might want. Lewis and Short offer great-great grandfather/ancestor, while Niemeyer prefers great-grandfather. The fuzziness of the language is, however, less than accidental: it reflects a distance in time in which chronology did become fuzzy. The best translation would be ancestor.

460 HL 4.38; compare with Fred. 4.69: for the Burgundian, Taso was a duke unfriendly towards King Arioald, who plotted with the Patrician Isaac to have him killed. It is likely that Paul found that story in Fredegar, and produced his own version. Paul’s use of Fredegar is contentious, since, even though both share similar stories (e.g. HL. 4.28 & Fred. 4.69; HL. 1.8 & Fred, 3.65; HL 4.51 & Fred. 4.9), there is no clear textual borrowing. Supporting Paul’s use of Fredegar, see Goffart, Narrators 402; McKitterick, History and Memory, 75; cf. Andreas Fischer, “Rewriting History: Fredegar's Perspectives on the Mediterranean,” in Western Perspectives on the Mediterranean: Cultural Transfer in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, 400-800 AD, ed. Andreas Fischer and I. N. Wood (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 55–76, 58; following J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, “Fredegar and the History of France,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 40 (1957/58): 527–50, 545; and Collins, Fredegar, 51–52.
considered it unmanly to remain under their uncle.⁴⁶¹ In Benevento, duke Arichis, who happened to be their former tutor (and also a relative of Gisulf),⁴⁶² received the brothers warmly. The story comes full circle when, after the death of Aripert (653–61), Grimoald (who succeeded Arichis as duke of Benevento)⁴⁶³ was invited to assume the kingdom, divided between the two heirs (Perctarit and Godepert).⁴⁶⁴ Grimoald becomes king, as Paul neatly connects Friuli, Benevento, and the kingship in Pavia.

Paul’s story mixes several anecdotes with the amount of evidence he could gather. In terms of written sources, however, he was probably not much better off than we are today: only two notices of his early Friulian material can be traced back to contemporary written sources, first his report of the truce between Gisulf and Agilulf, and second the Avar invasion. On both cases, the precise dates suggest he possibly found this information in his ‘chronicle source II’ (for this source see 4.1.1). In addition to that, Paul also records an invasion of Histria by the Tridentine duke Eoin, in 587 (dated to the same year as the death of the patriarch of Aquileia, Hela)—Gisulf is not mentioned, but an invasion of Histria would possibly involved military action against him (HL 3.27). Apart from that, Paul was ill equipped to write the Friulian part of his story, a complaint Paul voices from time to time.⁴⁶⁵ Notwithstanding his limited sources, Paul managed to create an origin legend for his native duchy (the very first Lombard duchy, created by Alboin, according to Paul) and for the Friulian aristocracy whence he came (descendants of the best fara in Alboin’s army).

The only contemporary sources we have for the first dukes of Friuli are two letters, preserved in the Epistolae Austrasicae, not available to Paul.⁴⁶⁶ The letters, one dated to before 581 and the other to 590, create problems for Paul’s narrative. The first letter (Eps. Austr. 48) was written by Gogo, an important palace official, in the name of the king, either Sigibert I

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⁴⁶¹ HL 4.39: “…despectui ducentes sub patrui sui Grasulfi potestate degere, cum essent iam prope iuvenilem aetatem, ascensa navicula remigantes ad Beneventi fines perveniunt; et exinde ad Arichis Beneventanorum ducem, suum quondam paedagogum, properantes, ab eo gratissime suscepti et filiorum loco sunt habit.”

⁴⁶² HL 4.18.

⁴⁶³ HL 4.46.

⁴⁶⁴ HL 4.51.

⁴⁶⁵ E.g. HL 4.50.

⁴⁶⁶ Though Paul might have been familiar with an earlier version of the Chronica patriarcharum Gradensium, which has a quick mention of Gisulf nominating John as abbot at Aquileia, with the consent of Agilulf. Chr. patr. Grad. 3, cf. HL 4.33. One certainly influenced the other.
or Childebert II (depending on the dating), and addressed to Grasulf. The letter, as far as its obscure Latin lets out, mentions terms of a negotiation between the Empire, the Franks and Grasulf, to whom no title is given but *celsitudo vestra*, which might imply a ducal position. Through Billulf, a relative of Grasulf (an envoy to the Austrasian court?), Grasulf suggested he would be willing to join forces with the Empire and (or so I read it) the Franks. No information survived about the outcomes of the negotiations.

In the other letter (*Eps. Aust.* 41), which we have already seen in the context of the campaign in 590 (see 3.1.3), the exarch Romanus asserted that when the Byzantine army moved against Grasulf, “duke Gisulf, *vir magnificus*, son of Grasulf, wanting at his young age to show himself better than his father, came to us, to submit himself in complete loyalty to the holy Republic with all his leading officials (*prioribus*) and his entire army, such as it was” Grasulf, it seems, had not aligned with the Empire as a result of his negotiations in *Ep. 48* (that is, considering his position in *Ep. 41*); and his son had now rebelled against him (or simply succeeded him) and was finally willing to integrate his forces in the imperial front, “such as it was” before.

That is not much, but it is enough to point out a few problems in Paul’s account. Reconstructing the narrative from the letters, Grasulf is the first Lombard duke in Friuli registered by the contemporary sources. It is impossible to know if there was a rebel commander in Cividale before him (there is indeed no contemporary reference of Lombard activities in the region until Grasulf’s letter), but Grasulf was certainly operating in the region in the late 570s, maybe as early as 571–72, which makes it likely that he was actually the first rebel commander in the region. In any case, at some point before 581, he negotiated an alliance with the emperor and the Franks against the Lombards (*Ep. 48*). We have no way knowing if he actually carried his project through, but we can suggest that in 587, when

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468 For the *priores*, see indices 5.2.2.

469 *Eps. Austr.* 41: “Gisulfus, vir magnificus, dux, filius Grasoulfi, in iuvenale aetate meliorem se patri cupiens demonstrare, occurrunt nobis, ut cum omni devotione sanctae reipublicae se cum suis prioribus et integro suo exercitu, sicut fuit, subderet.”

Authari moved the duke of Trent to campaign across the Adige (HL 3.27), he did so to beat Grasulf into accepting the monarchy: that would explain Grasulf’s allegiance to the Lombards in 590 (Ep. 41). In any case, in 590 his son Gisulf rebelled against him (or, perhaps, succeeding him, abandoned his policy) and joined Romanus in his campaign in the Po Valley (Ep. 41). At this point, we can add Paul’s entry from his ‘chronicle source II’: in 602, Gisulf finally came to terms with Agilulf (HL 4.27), who, as we shall see in the next chapter, was at the zenith of his power. In 610, Gisulf was killed by an Avar invasion, most likely (as we shall argue in the next chapter), prompted by Agilulf. For the next generation of dukes of Friuli, however, we are once again completely at the hands of the HL.

In comparison with the contemporary sources—that is, the ‘chronicle source II’ (which Paul used) and the letters (which Paul did not have access to)—Paul’s narrative of Gisulf presents a single major issue: it places Gisulf too early in the narrative—instead of 590 (Ep. 41), he appears in 568 (HL 2.9). Not surprisingly, Gisulf disappears from the story until 602, when he made peace with Agilulf. Chronology for the early years of the Lombards was a big issue for Paul, and he bemoaned his lack of sources to carry his Historia Romana beyond the defeat of Totila by Narses. His solution was to be somewhat silent about precise chronology and to stack up the facts he had in a plausible order. Whatever information he had on the first Lombard duke of Friuli, it referred to Gisulf. To attribute the creation of the duchy at Friuli to Alboin (and hence connect the information he had on Gisulf with the information he had on Alboin) was not only a useful way to assert the legitimacy of the dukes within the kingdom, but also to assert the importance of the kingdom to Friuli. As an origin legend, it connects the Friulian dukes to Alboin, the founding father, and established the duchy as the most special one: not only the first one, but also the one composed by the most valiant and notable of the Lombard warriors. However, as we have suggested in 2.1, Alboin never controlled Venetia, nor anything east of...

471 The traditional solution has been to try to adjust both Paul and the Ep. Aust. to a single narrative: to do so, it is necessary to assume that Paul mentions two different people named Gisulf, the first one (Gisulf I), was nominated by Alboin to rule Friuli (HL 2.9), while the second one (Gisulf II) was the son of Grasulf I (mentioned in Ep. 48, but not in Paul), and was the one who came to terms with Agilulf (HL 4.27). Grasulf I was the father of Gisulf II and (to fit the chronology) brother of Gisulf I. Finally, Grasulf II, as mentioned by Paul (HL 4.39), is Gisulf II’s brother. At no point, however, does Paul hint that, when he mentions Gisulf in HL 2.9 and HL 4.27, he is referring to two different people. For the traditional reading, see the biographic entries for Gisulf I and II and Grasulf I and II in PLRE, III, 537–38; Jarnut, Prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zum Langobardereich in Italien (568–774), 354–57; Gasparri, Duchi, 65–67.

472 Although Paul did include his name as one of the 35 Lombard dukes in HL 2.32.

473 Paul the Deacon, Historia Romana, 16.23.
the Adige (apart from, possibly, Treviso). Nevertheless, whether this connection was suggested by oral tradition or created by Paul, it worked very well in the *Historia Langobardorum*. Paul was very invested in reconciling the dukes and kings in the make up of the Lombard kingdom. It is a nice story, but it is probably not true.

The history of late sixth-century Friuli is much more complicated than Paul lets out (or understands). Friuli was an important region for the deployment of troops, and had strong ties with the Mediterranean.474 In addition to that, the region was also the centre of the tricapitoline resistance to Byzantine ecclesiastical policy.475 After the rebellion of 568, the army in Cividale still had to face the Avar threat,476 which escalated in the last quarter of the sixth century, producing a need for unity and organization, but also allowing for the strengthening of a military class—this group, and not Alboin, presumably created an independent government in Friuli. At the same time, the perpetuation of the tricapitoline schism provided the basis for a strong sense of community. Combined, all those factors produced a situation in Friuli in which both seceding and remaining in the Empire would make sense, allowing the local duke to play with both alternatives. If our reading of the sources is right, the two first dukes in the region (Grasulf and Gisulf) were independent, and offered their loyalty to the best bid. If the open-handed policy of Tiberius (578-582) attracted Grasulf to the Byzantine side, Maurice's (582-602) policy might have pushed him back to independent action, or even to the Lombards. In 584, Grasulf did not support the creation of the monarchy: that would account for Paul’s report (presumably from the ‘chronicle source II’) that Authari sent an army to Histria led by Eoin, duke of Trent.477 In 590, Grasulf’s son Gisulf negotiated peace with Romanus, taking his entire army to the Byzantine side. Moving his allegiances to the Byzantines could have been a way to align with

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474 Wickham, “Italy at the end,” 819; 23.


477 HL 3.27. On the Frankish involvement, see 3.1.
the power that, in that moment, would seem less threatening to Friulian independence. Gisulf remained firmly outside of royal control until Phocas seized the power in Constantinople (602), and the resulting crisis in the East forced Gisulf had to come to terms with the new Lombard king, Agilulf.

**Southern armies**

The southern duchies are especially interesting since they present the clearest example of the Lombards as a rebellion and not an invasion. Geographically, Spoleto and Benevento are disconnected from the Po Valley, south of the corridor linking Rome to Ravenna, which remained firmly on Byzantine hands until the eighth century. Even though the evidence for the first southern dukes is scanty, it clearly points to rebels soldiers along late Roman lines. The hypothesis that Benevento and Spoleto originated in rebellions was first suggested by Bognetti, and is probably one of his most enduring contributions.  

The information we have on the first dukes of Spoleto and Benevento come, as usual, from Paul the Deacon. He reports that Faroald was the first duke of Spoleto, who captured Classis, close to Ravenna, and plundered the city. Such notice Paul had from Droctulf’s tombstone, though there he found no mention of Faroald as a duke. As for Benevento, Paul names the duke Zotto, and affirms he ruled for twenty years. In addition to that, Paul claims, rather inconsistently with his depiction of Zotto and Faroald, that Authari took control of the south:

> It is believed that what is related of king Authari occurred about this time [i.e. c. 590]. For the report is that that king then came by way of Spoleto to Benevento and took possession of that region and passed on as far even as Reggio, the last city of Italy next to Sicily, and since it is said that a certain column is placed there among the waves of the sea, that he went up to it on horse-back and touched it with the point of his spear saying: 'The territories of the Lombards will be up to this point.' The column is said to survive to the present time and to be called the Column of Authari.”

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479 *HL* 3.13. Traditionally, Faroald’s reign is dated to 576–590; see Gasparri, *Duchi*, 73.

480 *HL* 3.19; See 3.1.1.

481 *HL* 3.33. Traditionally, Zotto’s reign is dated to 570–90; see Gasparri, *Duchi*, 86.

482 *HL* 3.32: “Circa haec tempora [i.e. c. 590] putatur esse factum, quod de Authari rege refertur. Fama est enim, tunc eundem regem per Spoletium Beneventum pervenisse eandemque regionem cepisse et usque etiam Regiam, extremam Italie civitatem vicinam Siciliae, perambulasse; et quia ibidem intra maris undas columna
Only in the following chapter, does he add that “[t]he first duke of Benevento was called Zotto, who ruled there for a space of twenty years.”\(^{483}\) If Zotto, as Paul suggests, was duke after Authari took control of the south, he would be ruling until 610: we know, however, from the letters of Gregory the Great that Arigis was duke in Benevento much earlier than that.\(^{484}\) Paul presents Authari’s story as a legend—“it is believed” \((\text{putatur esse})\), “it is said” \((\text{refertur})\)—and he feels no need to commit to it. Authari’s story was probably a royal fabrication, attesting the northern kingdom’s prerogative in the south, maybe as late as Liutprand’s reign, if not later.

In all likelihood, Paul had as source ducal lists for Benevento and Spoletto, similar to the one we have preserved on the Beneventan dukes,\(^{485}\) or the list of kings in Rothari’s \textit{Edict}.\(^{486}\) The surviving Beneventan lists, however, are heavily dependent on Paul—rather than the other way around—making it hard to know the specific relation between the two sources. If Zotto ruled actually for twenty years, and was followed by Ariulf, as Paul claims, that would have the first duke of Benevento starting his rule before 572 (and not around 590, as \textit{HL} 3.32 seems to suggest), since Ariulf was already commanding troops in the area in 592.\(^{487}\) Furthermore, Paul does not mention Zotto (nor Faroald) when he listed the dukes that ruled in the \textit{interregnum}.\(^{488}\) The relationship between Paul and his sources would be particularly relevant for Faroald, duke of Spoletto: did Paul find the name on a list of dukes, and contextualized him using Droctulf’s epitaph, or did Paul find the epitaph, notice a Lombard name holding Classis and concluded that must have been the first duke of Spoletto, since in the eighth century it was the Spoletan dukes who usually threatened Classis?\(^{489}\) It is unlikely that we will ever answer these questions. We do know, however, that before 590, when

\(^{483}\) \textit{HL} 3.33: “Fuit autem primus Langobardorum dux in Benevento nomine Zotto, qui in ea principatus est per curricula viginti annorum.”


\(^{485}\) \textit{Catalogus regum Langobardorum et ducum Beneventanorum.} Edited by Waitz, in \textit{MGH SRL}, 490ff.

\(^{486}\) \textit{LLRot. prol.}

\(^{487}\) For Ariulf, see 4.1.1.

\(^{488}\) \textit{HL} 2.32.

\(^{489}\) \textit{HL} 6.44.
Gregory the Great’s letters take us to firmer ground, the Lombards were present in the south, independent of the events in the north.\footnote{LP, Vita Pelagii II, 65.1: Lombards sieging Naples; see now also Nicholas Everett, “The Passion of Cetheus of Pescara and the Lombard Invasion of Italy,” Hagiographica (2015): (forthcoming).}

Paul provides more information on his second generation of dukes, i.e. Ariulf in Spoletto and Arigis in Benevento. According to him, Ariulf replaced Faroald as duke of Spoletto (in 590?):

In the following year, Duke Ariulf, who had succeeded Faroald at Spoletto, died. This Ariulf, when he had waged war against the Romans at Camerino and had gained the victory, began to inquire of his men who that man was whom he had seen fighting so vigorously in the war he had waged. And when his men answered that they had not seen anyone there acting more bravely than the duke himself, he said: ‘Surely I saw another man there much and in every way better than I, and as often as any enemy attempted to strike me, that strong man always protected me with his shield.’ And when the duke himself had come to Spoletto where the church of the bishop Savinus, the blessed martyr, stands and in which his venerable body reposes, Ariulf asked to whom belonged this spacious abode. It was answered him by devout men that the martyr Savinus reposed there whom Christians invoke to their aid as often as they went to war against their enemies. And Ariulf, since he was still a heathen (\textit{adhuc gentilis}), thus answered: ‘And can it be that a dead man can give any aid to one living?’ And saying this, he leaped down from his horse and went into the church to look at it. And then, while the others were praying, he began to admire the pictures of that church. And when he had beheld the painted figure of the blessed martyr Savinus he straightway said and declared with an oath that that man who had protected him in battle had in every way such a look and outfit. Then it was understood that the blessed martyr Savinus had brought him help in battle.\footnote{HL 4.16: “Sequenti anno Ariulfus dux, qui Faroaldus Aput Spoletium successerat, moritur. Hic Ariulfus cum bello contra Romanos in Camerino gessisset victoriamque patrasset, requirere a suis hominibus coeperit, quis vir ille fuerit, quem ipse in illo bello quod gesserat tam strenue pugnantem vidisset. Cui cum sui viri responderent, se ibi nullum aliquem fortius facientes quam ipsum ducem vidisset, ille ait: ‘Certe multum et per omnia me meliorem ibi alium vidi, qui, quotiens me adversae partis aliquis percutere voluit, ille vir strenuus me semper suo clyppeo protexit’. Cumque dux ipse prope Spoletium, ubi basilica beati martyris Savini episcopi sita est, in qua eisdem venerabile corpus quiescit, advenisset, interroga vit, cuii haece tam ampla domus esset. Respondendum est ei a viris fidelibus, Savinum ibi martyrem requiescere, quem Christiani quotiens in bellum contra hostes irent, solitum haberent in suum auxilium invocare. Ariulfus vero, cum adhuc gentilis, ita respondit: ‘Et potest fieri, ut homo mortuus aliquot viventi auxilium praestet?’ Qui cum hoc dixisset, quos dissilientes eandem basilicam conspecturus intravit. Tunc aliiis orabantur, ipsis picturis eiusdem basilicae mirari coeperit. Qui cum figuram beati martyris Savini depictam conspexisset, mox cum iuramento affirmavit dicens, talem omnino eum virum qui se in bello protereat formam habitumque habuisse. Tunc intellectum est, beatum martyrem Savinum eidem in proelio adiutorium contulisse.”}

About Arigis, Paul says he was nominated by Agilulf to replace Zotto (in 590?), and ruled as duke of Benevento for an astonishing fifty years.\footnote{HL 4.44.} The deacon says,
Once Zotto, duke of Benevento, died, Arigis was sent by king Agilulf to succeed him. This man came from Cividale, and had been the preceptor of the sons of the Friulian Duke Gisulf, to whom he was related by blood.\footnote{HL 3.18: “Mortuo igitur Zottone Beneventanorum duce, Arigis in loco ipsius a rege Agilulfo missus successit; qui ortus in Foroiulii fuerat et Gisulfi Foroiulani ducis filios educaret eodemque Gisulfo consanguineus erat.”}

To that, Paul adds a letter from Gregory the Great, which he quotes verbatim, in which the pope asks Arigis for help moving some wooden beams to Rome.\footnote{HL 4.19 = Greg. Reg. 9.127 (feb.–apr. 599)}

It is curious the sort of information Paul decided to include in his work. He had at his disposal our main source for the events in the south, the letters of Gregory the Great. But, with the exception of the letter to Arigis mentioned above, he simply refused to use them. Paul clearly edited the early relationship between Gregory and Ariulf (and to some extent, Arigis), to tone down the conflict between the papacy and the southern dukes. Though Paul does depict Ariulf fighting against the Romans, he is protected by the patron saint of Spoleto, even though he was “still a heathen” (\textit{ad hue gentilii}). Thus, Paul craftily places the duke of Spoleto on the side of the Church, even when fighting against the Byzantines. It prefigures the political alignment that took place in the later eighth century, when the dukes of Spoleto sided with the popes in opposition to the Byzantine government.\footnote{LP, Vita Gregorii II, 91.16.}

Arigis is also implicated in a dubious narrative. As Paul tells us, as the preceptor of Grimoald, he is supposed to establish the connection between Friuli and Benevento, a connection that Paul could claim also for himself. A nomination by Agilulf, however, is out of question: not only did the king have very limited influence in the south, but also—considering Paul’s argument that Arigis was related (\textit{consanguineus}) to Gisulf—Agilulf would have had no reason to entrust a high military command to a relative of a duke that was currently fighting for the Byzantines.\footnote{Bognetti, “Tradizione,” 446.} In addition to that, it is noteworthy that in Gregory’s letters, neither Ariulf nor Arigis are connected to their supposed duchies; they are simply referred to as dukes (i.e. military commanders). It is tempting to suggest that Paul added two characters he found on Gregory’s letters to whatever ducal list he could find, placing them at the chronological position that would seem fit. This possibility is further supported by the unusual length of the rule of Arigis (50 years) and of Ariulf’s successor, Teudelapius (53
years). It is not unlikely that Paul produced a major restructuration of the lists he had in hand, in order to account for dukes since Alboin and for the random dukes he found in different sources.

For the period after 590, Gregory’s Registrum Epistolarum provides much more information. Through the collection of letters, we can observe the movements of Ariulf (amongst others) in the south: the picture that emerges is a repetition of what took place in the north in 568/9. One of the armies settled in southern Italy, hard pressed by arrears and worsening conditions of service, mutinied at the end of the 580s, and flocked under a Lombard commander, Ariulf. In a short period of time, Ariulf attracted other commanders to join his rebellion, namely, Arigis, Authari (Auctarit) and Nordulf. Arigis is not mentioned before he rebelled in the early 590s, but he was, in all likelihood, either a commander of Byzantine troops to the south of Rome, or was elected by the soldiers who kept deserting the Byzantine army. But Authari and Nordulf are known characters: Authari had been a rebel commander: he switched sides back to the Byzantines, dissatisfied with the creation of the monarchy in 584, while Nordulf was the gloriosus patricius who had commanded Romanus’s attack on northern Italy in 590.

In the 590s, the Lombard rebellion moved south, and fortunately, Gregory the Great was there to keep record. Ariulf, operating in central Italy, was much too close to Rome and Ravenna for Gregory’s own peace of mind, and the Registrum bears testimony to the lengths the pope was prepared to go to remove such a threat. Arigis is also an important character, though, because he was mainly operating further south, he was mostly outside Gregory’s radar until later. Using Gregory’s multiple pleas for help together with a few fragments from Greek historians we can sketch the narrative for the 590s. Ariulf appears for the first time on Gregory’s letters in 591. Before being moved to Italy, he was in command of troops in the east, and under the magister militum Iohannis Mistacon, he fought the Persians between the Tigris and the Nymphius (Batman, in modern Turkey) in the early 580s. From there,

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498 To which Gregory testifies for Naples: Greg. Reg. 10.5.
499 Fred. 4.45. See above, 3.1.2 and 3.2.1
500 Ep. Aust. 41, see 3.1.3.
502 Greg. Reg. 2.4 (Sept. 27th 591)
503 Theo. Sim. 1.9.7–9.
he was probably transferred to Italy, as part of the campaign against the Lombards in 590.504
By September 591, he had rebelled against Ravenna, presumably on account of arrears.505
Pope Gregory was very concerned: he called for the Byzantine authorities to pin him down
between Rome and Ravenna.506 In June 593, Ariulf reached Narni, a city with a Lombard
population.507 In a letter, he warned Gregory that Saona, in Etruria, had also turned sides.508
By July, two other commanders, Authari (Auctarit)509 and Nordulf, had mutinied and joined
Ariulf: their armies marched to besiege Rome. Further south, Arachis (as Gregory calls
Arigis) also abandoned the Republic to Ariulf’s cause and was now threatening Naples:
Gregory affirms Arigis had “come against the faith of the Republic” (reipublicae contra fidel
venit) sometime before July 592, probably also demanding their precaria,510 and united forces
with Ariulf.511
Gregory had very little leverage to negotiate with the rebelling troops, especially since
Romanus was locked up in Ravenna, unwilling to act.512 The pope spelled out his position in
his letter to John, the bishop of Ravenna:

Thus I attribute to my sins that the person who is here now [i.e. the exarch Romanus] is
pretending to fight against our enemies, while he forbids us from making peace. And yet
at the present moment, even should he wish to make peace, we cannot do so at all, since
Ariulf has the troops of Authari (Auctarit) and Nordulf, and wants their precaria to be
given to him, so that he deigns to talk with us about peace.513

Romanus would not allow him to make peace, nor would he fight off Ariulf: the exarch
probably did not want to give in to the rebels, nor did he want to move whatever military
resources that were at his disposal to a fight that would only deplete the Byzantine assets in
the peninsula. He had the Balkans and Maurice’s operation against the Avars to consider.

505 See Greg. Reg. 2.38.
506 Greg. Reg. 2.4.
507 Greg. Reg. 2.2. Gregory admonishes Praeiectus, the bishop of Narni, to continue preaching to convert
Romans and Lombards in the city. It does not sound as if he was referring to an army stationed there.
508 Greg. Reg. 2.28.
509 For Duke Authari, see above, 3.1.2 and 3.2.1.
510 On precarium, see 1.2.2, n. 142.
511 Greg. Reg. 2.38.
512 Greg. Reg. 2.38.
513 Greg. Reg. 2.38: “Peccatis ergo hoc meis deputo, quia iste, qui nunc interest [i.e. Romanus, exarchus
Ravennae], et pugnare contra inimicos dissimulat et nos facere pacem vetat, quamvis iam modo, etiamsi velit,
facere omnino non possimus, quia Ariulfus exercitum Auctarit et Nordulfi habens eorum sibi dari precaria
desiderat, ut nobiscum loqui aliquid de pace dignetur.” (emphasis added)
Ariulf, as mentioned before, set as a condition to negotiate the grant of *precaria* for him and his followers: he wanted the guarantee of land, to compensate for the unending arrears. And that was something Gregory, as he says, could not provide: the little evidence there is for the *precarium* suggests that the grant involved a bureaucratic process that had to be run by the administration in Ravenna.\(^{514}\)

With at least four armies revolting in the *Italia Suburbicaria*, the situation of Rome was dire.\(^{515}\) And so far the Byzantine authorities in Ravenna had not engaged them. Gregory was desperate: he wrote to John, bishop of Ravenna, asking him to convince the exarch to take action. Most troops that guarded Rome had been removed and all that was left, the *Theodosiana* had received no payment and were unlikely to man the walls.\(^{516}\) One wonders if Gregory was afraid the troops in Rome could also change sides. Rome was saved by a timely intervention of the exarch, whose incursion registered in the *Liber Pontificalis* towards Campania, should be dated to 593.\(^{517}\) In 595, Nordulf had already negotiated with the Romans, but was sure that Ariulf, even if open to negotiation, would never surrender.\(^{518}\) Anyhow, at some point before 595, Ariulf contacted the pope with the intention of changing sides; the Byzantines were skeptical.\(^{519}\) His move was probably related to Agilulf, who succeeded Authari in 590, and his campaign against Rome in 593/94: the presence of the king threatened more the duke than the prospect of negotiating with the empire.\(^{520}\) Nonetheless, before any negotiation, Ariulf changed his mind, and in 598, when the pope finally negotiated peace with Agilulf, Ariulf was already on the king’s side, though together with Arigis, he insisted on signing their own treaty, with personal guarantees for both.\(^{521}\)

\(^{514}\) See 2.1.1, n.142.
\(^{515}\) We should add to Ariulf’s, Nordulf’s and Arigis’s armies the Lombard force in Tuscia, with whom Gregory managed to negotiate a peace, sometime before June 595, see Greg. Reg. 5.36.
\(^{516}\) Greg. Reg. 2.38.
\(^{517}\) *LP*, Gregory I, 66.2: “Eo tempore venit Romanus patricius et exarchus Romae et dum revertetur Ravenna, retenuit civitates quas a Langobardis tenebantur, Sutrio, Polimartio, Hortas, Tuder, Ameria, Perusia, Luciolis et alia multa.”
\(^{518}\) That is the prognosis Nordulf gave the Emperor Maurice, as Gregory the Great tried to come to terms with Ariulf; see Greg. Reg. 5.36.
\(^{519}\) Greg. Reg. 5.36
\(^{520}\) For Agilulf’s campaigns, see 4.1.
\(^{521}\) Greg. Reg. 9.44. It is tempting to see Paul’s report of Agilulf establishing Arichis as duke (*HL* 4.18) in the lights of this negotiation.
Our data is much too incomplete to draw a precise picture of the political destinies of the dukes during the *interregnum* and after the creation of the monarchy. We can, nonetheless, sketch a pattern. The first moment of shifting allegiances came after the defeat of Baduarius and Tiberius’s decision to use money instead of a military intervention in 578.\textsuperscript{522} It was probably that money that was offered to Grasulf to change sides.\textsuperscript{523} At the same time we have John of Ephesus’s claim of Lombard troops in the East, among them, Ariulf.\textsuperscript{524} That phase is part of the *interregnum* (574-83/5), when we should expect a great level of independence of the dukes, but it is also a time for which the sources are rare. The recreation of the monarchy marks the second period of shifting allegiances: after Authari was made king, Gisulf, Droctulf and a certain duke Authari switched to the Roman side; in addition to that, several dukes refused to join the king, and remained in an ambiguous position until the reign of Agilulf (590–616) (see 4.1). The Lombard dukes did not receive well the prospect of the monarchy, even less the Frankish intervention.\textsuperscript{525} Finally, a third moment when allegiances got reshuffled starts in the early 590’s, and is probably related to the new policy of Maurice, more specifically with the nomination of Romanus as exarch in 589/90: this phase involved the Byzantine troops newly deployed in the south (see 3.1.3). It is likely that payments were held back and that Romanus posture of re-engaging the Lombards might have been unpopular. In that period we see Ariulf, Nordulf, Authari (who had aligned with the Byzantines in 584) and Arigis turning against the Byzantines: the rebellion that first convulsed the north in 568 arrived in the more Romanized south in the 590s. It is interesting to note that the two areas—to the north and to the south of the corridor liking Rome to Ravenna—were disconnected and that the south remained firmly independent of the kings in Pavia. As long as there was a balance of power between Roman and royal forces, dukes were able to play the game, and switch alliances to preserve their freedom. As we will see in the next chapter, the game changed in 602 with the usurpation of Phocas in the East and the growing influence of Agilulf in the West.

\textsuperscript{522} Men. frg. 22. For the context, see Goubert, *Byzance*, vol 2/1, 15–19.
\textsuperscript{523} *Eps. Austr.* 48; see 3.2.2.
\textsuperscript{524} Joh. Eph. 6.13; for Ariulf, Theo. Sim. 1.9.7-9.
\textsuperscript{525} For the Frankish policy for Italy, see 3.1. It is possible that many of the dukes fighting Agilulf had resisted monarchy from the start; for Agilulf’s campaigns against rebel dukes, see 4.1.1.
Chapter Four

The Lombard Kingdom from Agilulf to Rothari (590–652)

4.1 Agilulf (590–616): 4.1.1 Fighting the Lombards and defending Rome; 4.1.2 Agilulf, king of Italy; 4.1.3 Frankish matriarchate (c. 616–635). 4.2. Rothari (636–52): 4.2.1 Rothari’s new deal; 4.2.2 Rex Langobardorum; 4.2.3 Rothari’s wars.

The breakdown of the Roman military apparatus produced an independent zone in northern Italy, and the international context guaranteed its perpetuation: in the decades that followed Authari’s death (590), Lombard monarchy struggled to maintain its independence, while spreading its influence in the Po Valley. In the period covered in this chapter, from the death of Authari (590) to the death of Rothari (652), the Lombards experienced two periods in which the Frankish and the Byzantine influence in Italy was limited, either by civil conflicts or by external threats: those moments provided a window in which the Lombard kings, namely Agilulf (590–616) and Rothari (c. 635–652), were able to pursue their policies in Italy without external intervention. This chapter analyzes the reigns of these kings, highlighting the influence of the external and internal context in their achievements. This political framework intends to produce the context for the debate on society and warfare on the following two chapters.

4.1 Agilulf (590–c. 616)

Agilulf assumed the kingship after Authari died in Pavia on September 5th, 590, while the Lombards were still in negotiation with the Franks.526 The peace of 590 reestablished the

526 *HL* 3.35; *Greg. Reg.* 1.17 (Jan. 591); *Greg. Tur. Hist* 10.3 (s.a. 590) Gregory mentions a certain Paulus, who would have succeeded Authari, and might have been a higher official in the Lombard royal court (if not a simple mistake by the bishop of Tours)—Bognetti suggested that he might have been one of Theodelinda’s councilors, see Bognetti, “SMC,” 180–81; rightly dismissed by Delogu in “Altre congetture,” 109–10. It is interesting, however, that, the *Hav. Cont.* 1554 mentions a certain Sundarius, who also seems to be in a commanding position in the first years of Adaloald (post 616), while in a letter (*Ep. Lang.* 2) to the Exarch Isaac from 628, pope Honorius mentions a certain Petrus, son of Paulus (is it Gregory’s Paulus?), who seems to be
previous arrangement, recognizing the Frankish supremacy over northern Italy (3.1.3), Agilulf was presumably a Frankish-supported candidate, since he was not only the duke of Turin, the western most part of the kingdom (and closest to Frankish control), but he also accessed the throne by marriage to a Frankish noblewoman (namely, a Bavarian), the recent widowed queen Theudelinda (see 3.1.2). Paul dates the elevation (and the wedding) to November 590, but it was only in May 591 that Agilulf was first presented to the Lombards in the circus in Milan, where he was acknowledged king. Capitalizing on the momentum created in the last years of Authari’s reign, and the especially fortunate external developments (both in Francia and in the East), Agilulf would able to put down the ducal resistance, defeat the Byzantine forces, and extend Lombard control to almost the entire peninsula.

The sources for the reign of Agilulf are much less problematic than for Authari’s. From this period, we have the oldest surviving royal charter, the foundation of Bobbio, though preserved in a later copy. Gregory the Great, moreover, was actively engaged with the royal court, and his correspondence preserves valuable information about the king. Other letters also provide insights into royal policy, including the letter from Columbanus to pope Boniface IV and that of bishop Johannes of Aquileia to Agilulf. In addition to that, the Copenhagen continuator of Prosper was almost contemporaneous to Agilulf’s reign and preserved some important information. Furthermore, the documentation available for the period—and especially the works of Gregory the Great—provide a rich source to understand the dynamics of the period, on a scale that would impossible to summarize in the present work.

As for Paul the Deacon, he seems to also have had a better source for the period between the death of Authari and the last decade of Agilulf: we can perceive that by the unusually...
precise dates, ranging from the death of Authari (HL 3.35; September 5th 590) to the death of Secundus (HL 4.40; March, 612), a practice that is unusual for rest of the HL.\textsuperscript{532} It is evident that the dated entries between 590 and c. 612 came from a chronicle source now lost to us. This source has often been identified with Secundus of Non (or of Trent), a religious man connected to Theodelinda and the royal court in Milan, although, given that apparently the last dated entry is actually Secundus’s death, this seems rather unlikely.\textsuperscript{533} In the following discussion, ‘chronicle source II’ will refer to this source, and will be differentiated from the remaining material in Paul’s Books III and IV by the use of precise dates. This source preserved mostly information about Agilulf’s campaigns and political/religious activities, such as his coronation (HL 3.35), the baptism (HL 4.27) and elevation of his son to kingship (HL 4.30); we can suggest it might have been produced in or around the royal court in Milan.

In addition to the literary sources mentioned above, there are two artifacts that pertain to Agilulf: the Val di Nievole plate, found in the nineteenth century, and a crown, that used to be in Monza but is now lost.\textsuperscript{534}

\textsuperscript{532} The exceptions are the date of the Lombard invasion, 568, which Paul copied from the Origo, and the date for the Lombard conquest of Milan, which he presumably found in the ‘consular source’ see 1.1.1.

\textsuperscript{533} The sources on Secundus are limited: Paul mentions him twice, once wondering why he did not mention the Lombard victory of 588 (HL 3.29), and later his death on May, 612, in which Paul notices that Secundus wrote a “succinct little history of the Lombards up to his days” (\textit{usque ad sua tempora succinctum de Langobardorum gestis conspuxit historiolam}) (HL 4.40). Gregory the Great wrote a letter (Greg. Reg. 14.12.) to a certain Secundulus, presumably Paul’s Secundus, who was living in the Lombard court in Milan and advocating tricapitoline ideas to the queen. Finally, a surviving few final lines attributed to a certain ‘Secundus servus Christi’, preserved in a twelfth-century manuscript, might be the excipit of Secundus’s work: “A principio usque ad passionem Domini sunt anni 5229, passo Christo usque in presentem annum sunt 554, et a presente pascha iuxta prophete eloquium, secundum quod humane fragilitati datur capere intellectum, restant de presenti seculo anni 217. Et in hoc supra memorato anno fuit bissextus, residentibus in Italia Langobardis ann. 12, eo quod secunda indictione in ea ingressi sunt mense Maio. Acta sunt supra scripta omnia in civitate Tridentina in loco Anagnis, presedente Agnello episco polo anno 3 expleto. Ego Secundus servus Christi scripsi hec conversionis sacre religiosis mee anno 15, imperii Tiberii anno primo, mense Junio, dict. 13.” (In \textit{MGH SRL}, 25, n.3, for the dating of the MS, see SRL, 25, n.4). If those were actually the final lines from Secundus, that would place the end of his chronicle at some point between 579 and 580 (and thus explaining why Paul the Deacon found no reference to the Lombard victory in 588). On Secundus, see Jacobi, \textit{Quellen}, 63–87; more recently, see Gardiner, “Secundus.”; Pohl, “Paulus Diaconus.”; Everett, \textit{Litteracy}, 85–86; Giuseppe Zecchini, “Ende und Erbe der lateinisch-heidnischen Geschichtsschreibung,” in \textit{Jenseits der Grenzen: Beiträge zur spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung}, ed. Andreas Goltz, Heinrich Schlange-Schönningen, and Hartmut Leppin (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), xvii, 358 p; Mores, \textit{Invasioni d’Italia}, 256–71; Borri, “Romans,” 43–45. The usual solution for the dating of Secundus’s death is to attribute it to a continuator, originally suggested by Jacobi, \textit{Quellen}, 79; maintained by Gardiner, “Secundus,” 152.

This subchapter argues that Agilulf’s success was dependent on the effectiveness of the army and especially on fortunate external events that destabilized competing powers in the peninsula, namely, the Franks and the Byzantines. In the first subsection, we analyze how Agilulf fortified the position of the monarchy against the dukes in the immediate proximity of Milan, and highlight the importance of his relationship with Gregory the Great in Rome (4.1.1); subsequently, we analyze how Agilulf’s position in Italy changed with the renewal of civil war in Francia (596) and the usurpation of Phocas in Constantinople (602) (4.1.2). Finally, we will observe the aftermath of Agilulf’s conquest under the following kings, his son Adaloald (c. 616–26) and Arioald (c. 626–36) (4.1.3).

4.1.1 Fighting the Lombards and defending Rome?

It can be argued that in the first year of his reign Agilulf was primarily concerned with securing his position: his starting point was the still precarious arrangement left by Authari, who was fully recognized as (a satellite) king by the Franks, but whose influence in his own kingdom was somewhat limited (3.1.2). Agilulf’s initial success against local dukes, however, allowed him to secure his position around his seat in Milan, and favored his negotiations with the pope: having secured of his base, Agilulf crossed the Po and marched to Rome, which he probably did not assail, but where he instead met with Pope Gregory, with whom he established relations. Agilulf’s first years still fitted a context of a very active exarch in Ravenna (Romanus), and a strong Merovingian king, Childebert II; that notwithstanding, he managed to secure a springboard to his next conquests.

Fighting the dukes

Once in power, Agilulf’s major concerns were to solidify his position in the kingdom, and that meant imposing his will over the dukes (3.2), to that end he could rely on the effective army assembled in the final years of Authari (3.1.2). Paolo Delogu has rightly suggested that Agilulf was remembered as the king who fought down the rebel dukes:535 the Origo gentis Langobardorum, an annotated list of Lombard kings, preserves traces of this historical memory:536

535 Delogu, “Il regno,” 37; and more recently, “Kingship,” 254.
536 I agree with Mommsen that both the Origo and the Historia Langobardorum codicis Gothanis are different editions of the same text; see Mommsen, “Quellen,” 57–76. It is not unlikely that the Utext was the list of kings compiled in the prologue of Rothari’s Edict, the text with which the Origo usually travels. The text provided Paul with most of his earlier material, and should be read more as an ‘invented tradition’ than as an
And came the ‘Thuringian’ Agilulf, duke of Turin, who married Queen Theodelinda, and was made king of the Lombards. He killed the Lombard dukes who had rebelled, Zangrof of Verona, Mimulf of the island of St. Giuliano, Gaidulf of Bergamo and also other rebels. He had a daughter with Theodelinda, called Gundeperga.

Following the Origo, Paul the Deacon makes a similar evaluation: it is interesting to note, however, that Paul not only presents the rebel dukes he found in the Origo in a more chronological order, but also adds a few other dukes to the list. Either Paul had a longer version of the Origo (which is not impossible), or he produced his report based on some another source, possibly the ‘chronicle source II’. According to Paul, Agilulf confronted the first group of rebel dukes early in his reign:

In those days, king Agilulf killed Duke Mimulf of the island of St. Giuliano, because formerly he had surrendered to the Frankish dukes. Gaidulf of Bergamo, however, rebelled in his city, and fortified himself against the king, but, after exchanging hostages, made peace with him. But again, Gaidulf confined himself in the island of Comacina. But king Agilulf entered that island, expelled Gaidulf’s men and found the treasure the Romans had stored there, which he then moved to Pavia. Gaidulf, however, fled again to Bergamo, where he was snatched by Agilulf, but was once again returned to royal favour. Duke Ulfari, who also rebelled against king Agilulf in Treviso, was besieged and captured by the king.

Paul seems misinformed about Ulfari, duke in Treviso, who appears to be still in control of the city in 598; Agilulf probably only confronted him later in 602. Besides that, we see Agilulf tackling resistance in the accesses to the Alps. Once secure in the north, Agilulf...
probably captured Piacenza (presumably securing a bridge across the Po) and Parma, since later they were both in Lombard hands. In this first round of operations he dealt with dukes that were not much farther than 125 km from Milan (fig. 4.1), and which was probably as far as royal control went in the aftermath of the death of Authari.

Figure 4.1 Agilulf's initial campaigns

Agilulf’s second campaign was towards Rome. The king most likely moved in the footsteps of Romanus, who had recently sent an army to reclaim the cities on the path between Rome and Ravenna (from northeast to southwest: Sutri, Bomarzo, Orte, Todi,

541 Delogu, “Il regno,” 36–37. Of the two cities, Parma is the only one mentioned by Paul (HL 4.20); Piacenza, however, is on the way from Milan towards Parma.
Amelia, Perugia, Cantiano, and “many others” (*alias multas*) adds the *Liber Pontificalis*.

Romanus also fortified Narni (c. 90 km from Rome) and Perugia (c. 180 km from Rome and about half way towards Ravenna).

It is likely that many of those cities accepted Romanus as an option against the new threat in the north: that was certainly the case for Maurisio, the commander in Perugia. Agilulf then marched to Perugia, where he presumably defeated one of the Byzantine forces Romanus had assembled there to safeguard the access to southern Italy, but in all likelihood did not occupy it, since Perugia was still (or back) in Byzantine control in 599. Having defeated Romanus’s army, he then marched towards Rome (see fig 4.1). It is hard to know why Agilulf opted to move south so soon, while so much of the north still lay outside his control, and it has been suggested that he did so to confront dukes Ariulf and Arigis, whose control of military assets in the south was growing progressively. It is also possible that Agilulf went south to confront the pope, or to meet him in person.

**Gregory the Great and Agilulf**

Once in Rome, Agilulf came to terms with the pope, achieving the first major step in unifying the peninsula under his rule. Although Pope Gregory often pleaded with the emperor to get rid of the Lombards, he seems to have become a reluctant supporter of Lombard monarchy, although not a supporter of the Lombards *per se*. Gregory (and the

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542 *LP*, Vita Gregorii, 66.2.
543 Greg. Reg. 5.36.
544 *HL* 4.8. It is possible that Paul’s Maurisius is the same person as Mauricius, a military commander contacted three times by Gregory the Great (Greg. Reg. 2.4; 27; 28): the circumstantial evidence in the letters might connect him with Lombards (as Gregory associates him with a group of men—Aloin, Andobin and Ingildus Grusingus—who had surrendered hostages to the Roman authorities, Greg. Reg. 2.4) and suggest Mauricius was stationed somewhere around Perugia (as a certain *vir gloriosus* Aldio, associated with the diocese of Perugia [in Greg. Reg. 9.103] brought news to Gregory concerning Maurice [Greg. Reg. 2.27]).
545 Greg. Reg. 4.1 (MGH 4.2).
Church) would benefit from a strong leadership over the many military groups spread across the peninsula and, by 592, Gregory was skeptical that the exarch would step up and bring these groups back into central control. Gregory could use military assistance especially in dealing with the dukes in southern Italy, Ariulf and Arigis, who directly menaced Rome. To this end, Gregory strove to establish strong links with Ariulf’s court, and to foment royal authority over all the Lombards.

In September 593, we have the first glimpse of Gregory’s intention to strike a deal with Agilulf. It comes in a letter from the pope to Constantius, bishop of Milan (then in Genoa). Gregory had used Constantius to find out the diplomatic engagements of Agilulf, and to see what kind of relations he had with Romanus, the exarch:

You have told me accurately and briefly what has been done concerning both king Agilulf and the Frankish kings. I beg your Fraternity to notify me in detail all that you know up to now. If, however, you see that Agilulf, king of the Lombards, has no dealings with the patrician [i.e. Romanus], promise him on my behalf that I am ready to devote myself to his case, if he would want to make some profitable arrangement with our Republic.

Presumably, Constantius had made Gregory aware of the good relations between Agilulf and the Franks, which gave Gregory a notion of the support behind the king. The Pope then questioned Constantius whether Agilulf was negotiating with Romanus (who he calls the Patrician) and, if not, he offers help, saying that he was ready to apply himself to the king’s cause.

Shortly after, however, Agilulf marched to Rome. Gregory reports the event in a letter to Maurice, the emperor, complaining of the lack of support from the Byzantine authorities:

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550 Greg. Reg 2.38
551 Greg. Reg 2.4; 27; 28; 38.
552 Greg. Reg 4.2: “Subtiliter autem mihi et breviter indicastis vel de Agone rege vel de Francorum regibus quae gesta sunt. Peto, ut fraternitas vestra quae adhuc cognoverit mihi modis omnibus innotescat. Si autem videtis, quia cum Patricio nihil facit Ago Langobadorum rex, de nobis ei promittite, quia paratus sum in causa eius me impenderi, si ipse aliquid utiliter cum república voluerit ordinare.” (emphasis added)
553 Between 593/94: the dating is problematic since nothing in Gregory’s letters suggests exactly when the siege happened: for the traditional dating see Hartmann, MGH Ep. 1.1, p.319; Geschichte, II.1, 105; Weise, Italien und die Langobardenherrscher von 568 bis 628, 178–80 (for June 593). Hodgkin gives a useful summary of traditional positions in Italy and her Invaders, vol. 6, 368, n.3. The question of the dating of the siege received little attention in recent works: see, for example, Delogu, “Il regno,” 37; Jarnut, Geschichte, 44. The main source for the siege is Gregory’s letter to Maurice, from 595 (Greg. Reg 5.36), but he does not give a date.
First, the peace, which I had made, without any cost for the Republic, with the Lombards stationed in Tuscia, was taken away from me. Then, with the peace broken, the soldiers were removed from the city of Rome, and indeed some were killed by the enemy, while others were placed in Narni and Perugia; and so that Perugia might be held, Rome was abandoned. After that, a heavier blow was the arrival of Agilulf, so much so that with my own eyes I saw Romans bound with ropes round their necks, just like dogs, as they were led to Francia for sale. And because we who were inside the city escaped his hands with God’s protection, it was asked why the corn, which can in no way be preserved in this city for long in large quantity (as I have described more fully in another recommendation), has ran out—for which we are apparently to be blamed.  

Gregory claimed he had negotiated a peace with the forces in Tuscia; had he also negotiated with Agilulf? It is remarkable that the king went all the way to Rome, defeating Romanus’s troops in Perugia on the way (HL 4.8), but possibly never attacked the city. Furthermore, the letter to Maurice suggests that, two years after the events, Gregory’s behavior during the siege were still received with suspicious by the imperial authorities. In the letter, the Pope struggles to justify his actions during 593/4: not only was Gregory accused of poorly handling the resources in the city during the siege, but also both the prefect of Rome (also called Gregory) and the magister militum Castor were reproached for their behavior, accused of negligence during the attack:

But I was distressed to no small degree concerning those men of ‘glorious’ rank, the pretorian prefect Gregory and the magister militum Castus, who in no way neglected to do everything which could possibly be done, and they endured the most exhausting labours of keeping watch and guarding the city in that siege, and after all of this, they were shattered by the heavy indignation of their Lordship. Considering them, I clearly understand that it is not their actions that condemn them, but my person, with whom, because they toiled together in distress, after the toil they have to be similarly distressed.

554 Greg. Reg. 5.36 (Jun. 595, letter to the emperor Maurice): “Primum quod mihi pax sumpta est, quam cum Langobardis in Tuscia positis sine ullo reipublicae dispendio feceram. Deinde corrupta pace de Romana civitate milites ablate sunt; et quidem alii ab hostibus occisi, alli vero Narnis et Perusiae positi; et ut Perusia teneretur, Roma relicta est. Post hoc plaga gravior fuit adventus Agilulfi, ita ut oculis meis cernerem Romanos more canum in collis funibus ligatos, qui ad Franciam ducebantur venales. Et quia nos qui intra citatatem fuimus deo protegente manus eius evasimus, quasitum est, unde culpabilis esse videmur, cur frumenta defuerint, quae in hac urbe diu multa servari nullatenus possunt, sicut in alia suggestione plenius indicavi.”

555 Greg. Reg. 5.36.

556 Greg. Reg. 5.36: “Sed de gloriosis viris Gregorio praefecto praetorio et Casto magistro militum non mediocrerit sum afflictus, qui et omnia quae poterunt fieri nullo modo facere neglexerunt et labores vigiluarum et custodiae civitatis in obsessione cadem vehementissimos pertulerunt et post haece omnia gravi dominorum indignatione percusi sunt. De quibus patenter intellego, quia eos non sua acta, sed mea persona gravat, cum quo, quia pariter in tribulatione laboraverant, post laborem pariter tribulantur.”
None of Gregory’s letters give any detail of the siege, and we are left guessing what were the accusations against Gregory and the military command of the city. The *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper*, however, suggests a potential solution to our problem:

Finally, [Agilulf’s] army proceeded with all strength to besiege Rome. There he found the blessed Gregory, who then splendidly ruled the Church, who rushed down the steps of the basilica of blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, to meet the king. Softened by his prayers and moved by his wisdom and the *gravitas* of the religiosity of such man, the king retreated from the siege of the city. Carrying however what he had captured, journeying back, he withdraw to Milan.\(^{557}\)

Further on the continuator suggests that annual tribute—five *centenaria* of gold (36,000 solidi)—was arranged between the king and the pope.\(^{558}\) The details about the interaction between Agilulf and Gregory remain illusive, although it certainly brings to mind the embassy of Leo I to Attila.\(^{559}\) In addition to that, in a letter to Ravenna written in May 595, Gregory suggests that Agilulf was willing to make a general peace (*generalis pax*), as long as the exarch was willing to respect it. Otherwise, Gregory reports, Agilulf would be willing to negotiate a peace with the apostolic see alone.\(^{560}\) The current state of documentation does not allow for a detailed account of what happened when Agilulf descended on Rome in 593/4, but it is clear that Gregory was troubled when he heard that Agilulf had crossed the Po\(^{561}\) and that after the event, the pope recognized Agilulf’s rule and became a stronger supporter of peaceful negotiations with the Lombard kingdom in the north.\(^{562}\)

It is surprising, however, that Gregory’s *Registrum* did not preserve any communication with the Lombard court immediately after the siege: in contrast to the peace Gregory brokered between the Lombards and the Byzantine forces in 598, after which the Pope

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\(^{557}\) *Cont. Hav.* 1545: “Postremum cum totius robore [Agilulf] exercitus ad obsidionem urbis Romae perrexit ibique cum beatum Gregorium, qui tunc egregie regebat ecclesiam, sibi ad gradus basilicae beati Petri apostolorum principis occurrentem reperisset, eius precibus fractus et sapientia atque religionis gravitate tanti viri permutus ab urbis obsidione abscedit. Ea tamen, quae ceperat, tenuit ac sese regrediens Mediolanium receptit.”

\(^{558}\) *Cont. Hav.* 1554: sometime between 616–19, the then exarch Eleutherius agreed to pay the amount to the Lombards “qua dudum, cum ad obsidendam Roman Agilulfus rex venisset, per singulos annos dare Longobardis stuerant, persolverent Romani.”


\(^{560}\) Greg. Reg. 5.34.


made sure to congratulate the Lombard king and the queen.\footnote{Greg. Reg. 9.66–68.} It is likely that the arrangement between the Gregory and the king was probably received with suspicious in Ravenna and Constantinople,\footnote{See Azzara, “Gregorio Magno,” 29; Mores, Invasioni d’Italia, 231–32.} and that Gregory did not risk preserving evidences of his activities. We have mentioned how in a letter to Maurice in 585, Gregory felt obligated to justify his behavior during the siege, which had indeed brought down criticism upon the commanders involved.\footnote{Greg. Reg. 5.36.} As a sign of the ongoing suspicions in Ravenna about Gregory, in 594, he was accused of murder, and he was accused again in 596, this time together with Castus, of a crime not specified in his correspondence.\footnote{Greg. Reg. 5.6; 6.34.} As the peace negotiations between Agilulf and the exarch proceeded, Gregory made an effort to distance himself from the king in the letters he sent to Ravenna. For example, in a letter to Theodore, curator in Ravenna:

Furthermore, let your Glory know that the king has sent men here to threaten us and force us to subscribe to the pact. But, recalling those offenses that Agilulf is said to have made to the vir clarissimus Basil against us, but indeed against Saint Peter (although Agilulf has completely denied them), we took care to abstain from signing it, lest we, who are petitioners and mediators between him and our most excellent son and lord, the exarch, might seem to be deceived in some way if something perchance would be removed secretly from the pact. And thus our promise to him would come into doubt, and if there were some difficulty in the future (God forbid) he might find an opportunity not to honour our petition.\footnote{Greg. Reg. 9.44: “Cognoscat praeterea gloria vestra homines regis qui hic transmissi sunt inminere, ut in pacto debeamus subscribere. Sed recordantes eorum quae Agilulfus Basilio viro clarissimo per nos in beati Petri dixisse furtur inuria, quamvis hoc penitus isdem Agilulfus negaverit, a subscriptione tamen abstinere praevidimus, ne nos, qui inter eum et excellentissimum filum nostrum domnum exarchum petiores sumus et medi, si quid forte clam sublatum fuerit, falli in aliquid videamur et nostra ei promissio in dubium veniat et, si qua de futuro, quod absit, necessitas fuerit, occasionem inveniat, qualiter nostrae petitioni consentire non debet.”}

After Maurice has raised suspicions about Gregory’s allegiance in 585, the Pope made sure to include regular offensive remarks against the Lombards in many of his letters, complaining to Anastasius of Antioch, for example, about the “torments of the swords of the Lombards” (tribulatione de Langobardorum gladiis) (June 595) and again to Eulogius of Alexandria in the following year (July 596), or complaining to Theoctista, the emperor’s sister, about the “wicked Lombards.” (nefandissimos Langobardos).\footnote{See 5.42 (to Anastasius, bishop of Antioch) 6.61 (to Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria); 7.23 (to Theoctista, Maurice’s sister); see also Greg. Reg. 5.39 (to Empress Constantia). The negative references to the Lombards} The comments, however, are restricted to...
letters that would either go to Constantinople, or which could be intercepted and analyzed by imperial authorities (such as letters travelling to Antioch or Alexandria), peaked after Gregory’s letter to Maurice, only to be abandoned after Ravenna started to negotiate with Agilulf in 598.\textsuperscript{569} Gregory’s double game paid off and, in 598, he was able to broker a peace between the exarch and Agilulf, one the pope often struggled to maintain.\textsuperscript{570}

In sum, both Gregory’s letters and the \textit{Copenhagen Continuation} suggest that the Lombard king and the Pope came to an agreement in 593/94, which entailed the payment of a tribute to the Lombards. The amount of money the \textit{Continuation} suggests was agreed upon is, nonetheless, staggering. What makes the passage still more peculiar is that, later on, the exarch in Ravenna was able to negotiate this payment.\textsuperscript{571} It is tempting to see in that payment not a tribute \textit{sensu stricto}, but (a part of?) the tax collected for the territory dependent on Rome. That would take the arrangement between the pope and Agilulf one step further, to the recognition of the Lombard king’s right to (indirectly) collect taxes from the territories dependent on the city of Rome (see 4.1.3). On the current state of the sources, however, that remains speculative. In any case, it is tempting to see Agilulf’s advance towards Rome as connected with his desire to receive the recognition of the pope and of the city of Rome: such recognition was expressed by the payment of tribute. In addition to that direct tutelage, Paul the Deacon suggests that Agilulf returned the properties to the Church, which might imply that the arrangement between Agilulf and Gregory involved the recognition of ecclesiastical property in the lands now controlled by the Lombards.\textsuperscript{572} Whether Gregory prompted Agilulf to approach Rome in the first place or improvised when the king appeared outside its walls, is open to speculation, but what he agreed with Agilulf certainly change the game in southern Italy. Given the clear change in posture of the pope towards Agilulf and the king’s new approach towards the properties of the Church, we could suggest that Agilulf moved towards Rome not only to intimidate the Byzantine city, but also to come to terms with the Pope. Conversely, Gregory would later hold Agilulf responsible for the misdeeds of

\textsuperscript{569} With the sole exception of Greg. \textit{Reg.} 12.16 (602, to Eulogius of Alexandria), and in his letter to Phoca (603) Greg. \textit{Reg.} 13.39.

\textsuperscript{570} Greg. \textit{Reg.} 6.33; 9.44; 9.66 & 68; 9.112; 10.16; 14.12

\textsuperscript{571} \textit{Cont. Hav.} 1554.

\textsuperscript{572} \textit{HL.} 4.6. The entry, however, is not dated, and finds no confirmation in contemporary sources. Cf. C.G. Mor, “Contributi alla storia dei rapporti fra stato e chiesa al tempo dei longobardi (la politica ecclesiastica di Autari e di agilulfo),” \textit{Rivista di Storia del Diritto Italiano} 3 (1930): 96–160; Delogu, “Il regno,” 40–41; “Kingship,” 255.
the Lombard dukes in the south. The relationship of the Lombards with the Church in Rome would continue to be stable until the eighth century. On his front, Agilulf gained a significant victory over the Byzantine authorities, and, more importantly, took a fundamental step towards normalizing the relationship with the churches in northern Italy. In addition to that, he secured a significant income to support his war efforts, a part of which presumably went to the troops (see 5.1.2).

By 595, Agilulf controlled the western part of the Po Valley (with all the military resource available there), secured at least one route to Rome (through Piacenza and Parma), and was receiving a part of the revenues collected in Rome (either as a tribute or as a recognition of his position); furthermore, he had defeated at least one major imperial army (the troops Romanus quartered in Perugia).

4.1.2 Agilulf, king of Italy

Between 595 and 602, the foreign powers in Italy, both the Franks and the Empire in the East, entered a period of civil war and internal instability, creating an exceptionally advantageous situation for Agilulf in Italy. In Gaul, internal development determined the withdrawal of the Franks from direct intervention in Italy: after the death of Gunthram (592), Burgundy had passed on to Childebert II, and with it the concern to stabilize Italy and support a Lombard buffer state to the south, but his death in 596 brought another long civil war between his sons Theudebert II (596–612) and Theuderic II (596–613) on one side, and Chilperic’s only surviving son, Chlothar II (584–629), on the other. The war would last until the death of Childebert’s sons and the unlikely victory of Chlothar (613). On the imperial front, Maurice (582–602) continued his policy of containment in Italy, carried out by the exarch Romanus. In the late 590s, however, it ran out of steam: money problems and military rebellions started to take its toll on the imperial finances. By 596, Romanus had been replaced by Callinicus, and the military resources were channeled to the campaigns against Slavs and Avars in the Balkans. The concentration of troops in the Balkans, however, only contributed to the growth of military unrest: in 602, the Byzantine army of the Balkans

573 Greg. Reg. 9.66 (598) (although Aiulf and Arigis were not too eager to comply, see 3.2.2).
rebelled, proclaiming emperor a certain Phocas and marched to Constantinople to successfully depose Maurice.\footnote{For the mutiny in 602, see Kaegi, \textit{Unrest}, 101–19.} The fall of Maurice and the usurpation of Phocas caused a serious crisis of legitimacy in the Empire: Phocas was the first usurper to succeed in taking over Constantinople, and his rule went from crisis to crisis until he was deposed following another mutiny, in 610, this time incited by the exarch of Africa, Heraclius (senior) who moved to raise his son (Heraclius, 610–641) to the purple.\footnote{Andreas N. Stratos, \textit{Byzantium in the Seventh Century} (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968), vol. 1, 80–92; Ostrogorsky, \textit{History}, 76–78; Haldon, \textit{Byzantium}, 35–48; Walter Emil Kaegi, \textit{Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Olster has suggested that we should take the chaos of Phocas reign with a grain of salt, since much of our information might be influence by negative propaganda from Heraclius government, see David Michael Olster, \textit{The Politics of Usurpation in the Seventh Century: Rhetoric and Revolution in Byzantium} (Amsterdam: A.M. Hakkert, 1993), esp. 1–22; but see also the reservations in Sarris, \textit{Economy}, 231–32.} The new configuration favored Agilulf in two ways. First, the civil war in Gaul, staggering to its conclusion, allowed him to maintain good relations with the Franks, who were at the time too involved in internal affairs to desire otherwise, guaranteeing much more freedom in Italy than Authari had before him.\footnote{Peace with the Franks: \textit{HL} 4.13, and again \textit{HL} 4.24.} While the presence of Queen Theodelinda maintained the Frankish political connection to the monarchy (which Agilulf certainly renewed by marrying his son to a Merovingian princess, the daughter of Theodebert II),\footnote{Fred. 4.45; \textit{HL} 4.30.} none of our sources preserve notice of interference by the Franks in Italy until, arguably, the deposition of Adaloald (c.626). Secondly, Phocas’s reign was mostly centered on trying to crack internal resistance, while at the same time handling the crisis on the eastern front, which led to the collapse of the Danubian frontier, which was in practice abandoned. Consequently, Italy, already seen as a remote stage, was mostly neglected. As the \textit{Copenhagen Continuation} puts it:

The Romans, while they were enduring battles on all sides, and saw the damage to the Republic multiplied by dire combats, while they were unable to defeat external enemies, were inflamed into fighting amongst themselves. For battalions assembled from all directions and the soldiers made Phocas their leader, and rose up against Maurice, who ruled them by right. After Phocas butchered the emperor together with many nobles in a massacre, he then took the imperial sceptre for himself.\footnote{\textit{Cont. Hav.} 1538: “Romani dum undique bella sustinet et gravibus proeliiis reipublicae damna multiplicari vident, dum foris hostes superare nequeunt, intra sese ad debellandum accenduntur. Nan collecti undique militares manipuli sibimet Focatem precipem faciunt et contra Mauricium, qui eisdem aequo iure imperabat, consurgunt. Quem cum Focas cum multorum nobilium caede trucidasset, ipse mox imperii sceptra suscepit.”}
It is interesting to point out that, for the *Continuation*, Agilulf’s reign only started after Maurice’s fall: he adds how Agilulf defeated the Romans who were “fighting amongst themselves” (*contra se dimicantes*). Although chronologically incorrect, he was not completely misled: after the collapse of the government in the east, Agilulf was given a brand new position in Italy, and a path to supremacy over the entire peninsula he was sure to grasp. Presumably, the new exarch, Smaragdus, came to a similar realization: aware that no help could come from Constantinople, he was eager to negotiate with the Lombards. At some point between 606 and 610, Agilulf was able to negotiate a firm peace directly with Phocas.

One of the immediate consequences of the fall of Maurice benefitting Agilulf was the shift of focus by Constantinople from the Balkans to Persia: as a result, the Danubian frontier was abandoned and the Avars spread their hegemony throughout the area. Presumably, the cessation of hostilities with Constantinople made Avar forces available for hire, for at some point around 602 Agilulf established an alliance with the Avar Kagan to use Avar troops in Italy. It could be argued that establishing good relations with the power in northern Italy was also of interest to the Avars, since, as we have suggested, a hostile force in Friuli could open a new front against them in Pannonia. The terms of the relations between the Lombards and the Avars at this point are not clear, but arguably Agilulf was able to use Avar (and Slav) troops as federates in Italy, possibly in terms similar to previous Roman practice—it is not unlikely that Agilulf made use of the wealth he had recently received from Rome and Ravenna to pay for those troops. Agilulf relied on them for manpower often in the following years (*HL* 4.24; 4.28). Indeed, his contact with the Avars put him in an excellent position to impose his dominion over Friuli: with the Avars coming West from Pannonia, and the royal forces crossing the Adige through Verona (presumably through the still standing Ponte Pietra), there was not much the dukes in Cividale could do to prevent an total encirclement.

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582 *Cont. Hav*. 1544.

583 Smaragdus had already been Exarch in Ravanna, before being replaced by Romanus. On his role in Italy in the period, see Goubert, *Byzance*, vol. 2/2, 78–88; 111–21.

584 See *HL* 4.28 (peace in 604); *HL* 4.32; cf. the first negotiations of peace under Callinicus (*HL* 4.12, also Greg. Reg. 6.33)

585 *HL* 4.35. Phocas was executed in October 5th 610: *Chrn. Pasch.* s.a. 610.


587 Alliances with the Avars: *HL* 4.13; 4.20; 4.24.
Consequently, Agilulf next turned to Friuli, in order to subjugate the still independent duke in Cividale. We have seen that up to 602 Gisulf remained staunchly independent, and that he had flocked to the Byzantines after the elevation of Authari (3.2.2). We should probably place Agilulf’s attack on Zangulf in Verona, as well as the final confrontation with Gaidulf of Bergamo, shortly before the attack on Friuli, as Agilulf safeguarded the crossing of the Adige.\footnote{HL 4.13.} Once across the river, he probably seized Padua and got rid of duke Ulfari, in Treviso, in order to open the access to Venetia et Histria.\footnote{Padua: HL 4.23. Treviso: HL 4.3.} At the same time, Agilulf used the Avars to ravage Histria, which eventually put the Friulian duke Gisulf in a better mood to negotiate. At the beginning of 603, Gisulf came to terms with the king. With the crisis in the East, Agilulf’s Lombard kingdom was the only option left to Gisulf. He had by his side the new duke of Trent, Gaidoald, who had succeeded Euin and, at some point, had also rebelled against the king (see fig. 4.2).\footnote{Assault in Istria HL 4.24; Gisulf and Gaidoald’s agreement with the king: HL 4.27. Gaidoald success Euin: HL 4.10.}

With most of the Po Valley under his control, Agilulf secured the bridges of the river. Relying on the Avars (in this case, Slavs under Avar command) as auxiliaries, Agilulf took control of the key passages on the lower Po:

\begin{quote}
\textit{HL 4.28}

In these days the Lombards still had a quarrel with the Romans on account of the captivity of the king’s daughter. For this reason, king Agilulf departed from Milan in the month of July, besieged the city of Cremona with the Slavs whom the Cagan, the king of the Avars, had sent to his assistance. He captured it on the twelfth day before the Kalends of September (August 21\textsuperscript{st}) and razed it to the ground. Likewise, he assaulted Mantua, and having broken through its walls with battering-rams, he entered on the ides (13\textsuperscript{th}) of September, granting the soldiers who were there the indulgence of returning to Ravenna. Then also the fortress called Vulturina (Valdoria) surrendered to the Lombards; the soldiers, however, fled, setting fire to the town of
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Cont. Hav. 1544}

While the Romans were fighting amongst themselves, [Agilulf] defeated and laid low many cities that were guarded by the Romans, and having captured the \textit{suburbanian} cities of Cremona, Brescia, Mantua, he destroyed them and razed them to the ground.\footnote{While the Romans were fighting amongst themselves, [Agilulf] defeated and laid low many cities that were guarded by the Romans, and having captured the \textit{suburbanian} cities of Cremona, Brescia, Mantua, he destroyed them and razed them to the ground.}
Both entries are quite similar, although Paul, presumably relying on the ‘chronicle source II’, adds information on the participation of the Avars and a more precise dating. Agilulf captured Cremona, presumably keeping the bridge over the Po, while he attacked Brescello, which the Byzantine soldiers abandoned and burnt to the ground (and destroyed the bridge?); in addition to that, he also took control of the strategically located Mantua (see fig. 4.2). The *casus belli*, according to Paul, was Agilulf’s daughter, whom the Byzantines had captured in Parma and kept in Ravenna, an anecdote not confirmed elsewhere. In any case, Smaragdus, the new exarch, sued for peace.

Figure 4.2

Agilulf pushed further, assimilating the rebelling regions into his kingdom. In the following year, he moved into Tuscia (fig. 4.3), a region especially poorly documented for the period. We know that Tuscia had, at least in part, seceded from the Empire, and was already

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592 *Cont. Hav.* 1544: “[Agilulfus] Romanos contra se dimicantes devicit atque prostravit urbesque multas, quae Romano preasidio tenebantur, Cremonam, Brixillam, Mantuam suburbicarias captas diruit ac solo aequavit.” I choose the emendation proposed by Mommsen of *suricarias*, as *suburbicarias*, though Mantua was certainly not considered *Suburbicaria*.

591 *HL* 4.28: “Erat autem his diebus adhuc discordia Langobardis cum Romanis propter captivitatem filiae regis. Qua causa rex Agilulf egressus Mediolanio mense Iulio, obsedit civitatem Cremonensem cum Scavis, quos ei Cacanus rex Avarorum in solacium miserat, et cepit eam duodecimo Kalendas Septembris et ad solum usque destruxit. Pari etiam modo expugnavit etiam Mantuam, et interruptis muros eius cum arietibus, dans veniam militibus qui in ea erant revertendi Ravennam, ingressusque est in ea die Idum Sep. Tunc etiam partibus Langobardorum se tradidit castrum quod Vulturina vocatur; milites vero Brixillum oppidum igni cremantes, fugierunt.”

593 *HL* 4.20.

594 *HL* 4.28.
in rebel hands: at some point before 595, pope Gregory had struck a deal with their commander, a deal that the Byzantine troops failed to honor. In 607, after confirming the peace with the Romans, Agilulf moved to the region and subdued the resistance there:

Thus, in the following month of November, King Agilulf made peace with the Patrician Smaragdus for one year, receiving from the Romans twelve thousand solidi. Bagnarea and Orvieto, cities of Tuscia, were seized by the Lombards. Then, also, in April and in May a star called comet appeared in the sky. Afterwards, king Agilulf made peace with the Romans once again, for three years.

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**Figure 4.3**

*Rex totius Italiae*

Phocas’s rebellion in the East provided Agilulf with the opportunity to spread his domain in Italy, eastward towards Friuli, and southward towards Tuscia. The crisis of legitimacy in

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595 Greg. Reg. 5.36.
Constantinople might also be responsible for Agilulf's construction of a new political ideology for the Lombard kingdom, based on a claim to a legitimate Roman control of the peninsula, neatly manifested according to traditional Roman symbols. The sources are, again, extremely fragmentary, and no surviving document provides a clear statement of what the Lombard kingship stood for—as Rothari’s Edict would do three decades later (see 4.2.2). What survived are a few instances of public performance of kingship (mostly preserved by Paul presumably from the ‘chronicle source II’), some fragmentary evidence of Agilulf’s religious policy, and two artifacts (Agilulf’s crown and the Val di Nievole Plate) bearing some sort of political statement.

After 602, Agilulf focused on portraying his position in traditional Roman language, not as a simple military commander, but as a ruler. The Roman nature of the public performance can, perhaps, be traced back to Authari. Paul claims that the king was the first to be called ‘Flavius’, “such name all the following Lombard kings used auspiciously.” The title was a reference not only to the Roman tradition, but especially to Theodoric and the former unified government of Italy. Although Authari might have been the first one to use ‘Flavius’, it is not too far fetched to suppose that the title was adopted only later, as part of Agilulf’s post-602 policy.

In the year following the deposition of Maurice, Agilulf had his son Adaload baptized in Monza:

Afterward, the child called Adaloald, the son of Agilulf, was baptized in the church of St. John in Monza, and was raised from the pool by Secundus of Trent, servant of Christ, of whom we have often made mention. Easter, at that time, was celebrated on April 7th.

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597 *HL* 3.16: “[q]uo prenomine omnes qui postea fuerunt Langobardorum reges feliciter usi sunt.”


599 Besides Paul, there is no evidence of Authari’s use of the title, though the evidence on Authari is, as we have seen, scanty. The earliest mention of the title is for Agilulf, named ‘Flavius’ in the charter of a donation to Bobbio (*CDL* 3.1), although the surviving document is a later copy. More traditionally, Delogu, “Kingship,” 254–55.

The church in Monza had recently been renovated by Theudelinda, possibly in connection with the baptism. The two votive crowns belonging to the treasure of the church (one ascribed to Theodelinda, the other to Agilulf) were presumably donated at this period. Agilulf's crown did not survive, but was preserved in a drawing made in 1717. Reinhard Elze has examined the drawing and, comparing the depictions of the still existing crown of Theodelinda, was convinced of its accuracy. Here is his description of the crown, according to the drawing (cf. fig. 4.4):

Nella faccia medesima, che è la principale, si vedono 15 figure umane entro una serie di arcate separate da colonne con capitelli e basse; le figure rappresentano da sinistra a destra Cristo, un arcangelo, i dodici apostoli e un secondo arcangelo. Sopra ci sono 61 piccole pietre rotonde e ovali di colore tenue, 25 rosse, 11 violette, 9 celesti e due di colore indefinibile. Sotto le quindici figure si legge la famosa iscrizione: + AGILULF GRAT(la)(D)eIVIRGLOR(ious? iosissemus?) REXTOTIUSITAL(ie) OFFERETS(an)C(t)IOIOHANNBAPTISTEINECCCL(esia)MODICIA. La «giusta misura» del disegno, e cioè della corona perduta, risponde alle seguenti dimensioni: lunghezza 63,5 cm. nella parte esterna e 60,5 cm nella parte interna; larghezza 8,5 cm.

Most remarkable in this object is the title for the king, rex totius Italiae. The title is not otherwise recorded for any Lombard king, and in itself is rather peculiar: Agilulf is not portraying himself as the king of a gens (‘Rex Langobardorum’ as later Lombard kings did), but as king of Italy. If the crown was actually produced for the baptism, and was part of

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601 HL 4.21. McCormick suggests that the link with John the Baptist might be connected to similar practices in Constantinople, see Michael McCormick, Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 288–89.


603 The expression totius Italiae has equivalents in earlier imperial propaganda, both in an inscription placed by Narses in the Pons Salarus (“(...) libertate urbis Romae et totius Italiae restitute (...),” in CIL, VI, 1199, now lost) and in Justinian’s Pragmatica Sanctor (universa Italia)—cf. LP, Vita Iohannis III, 63.2: “Erat enim tota Italia gaudens” (emphasis added); see Mores, Invasioni d’Italia, 170–71. Columbanus possibly used a similar expression, ‘tota Italia’, in a letter to Boniface (Ep. Col. 5), though it is preserved in only one of the manuscripts (other mss. read tota Ecclesia); see below n. 165.

604 Although not consistently: as far as the surviving evidence shows, Rex Langobardorum seems reserved to the laws codes, while in royal charters the kings tend to go by vir excellentissimus rex, cf. CDL 3. See nn. 184–85.

605 The authenticity of the crown was been questioned in the past, and up to this day it is an open question; for a recent take on the crown and the question of authenticity, see La Rocca and Gasparri, “Forging.” The authors conclude, however, that there are elements pointing to a forgery, and elements pointing to its authenticity. Given the extremely unusual title, I am inclined to assume the crown has an element of truth: a later forger would certainly avoid a title that might bring suspicions, and would have avoided a formula that had no parallel elsewhere.
the ceremony, it conveyed a strong ideological statement. The king had his heir baptized—raised from the baptismal pool by Secundus, a tricapitoline cleric—and, at the occasion, he claimed to be the rightful ruler of the peninsula.

In the following year, 604, the king gathered the populus in Milan, and proclaimed Adaloald king. In the words of Paul:

In the following summer, in the month of July, Adaloald was raised king over the Lombards, in the circus of Milan, in the presence of his father, King Agilulf, and in the presence of emissaries from Theudebert, king of the Franks. The daughter of king Theudebert was then betrothed to the royal youth, and eternal peace was established with the Franks.

The elevation of Adaloald follows the practice in Constantinople, where the circus was the space of publication—i.e. of rendering public—of power. The presence of the Frankish ambassadors is also highly significant. The elevation was a clear demonstration of strength—

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608 Apud Elze, “Per la storia,” 403, tav. III.
609 H. 4.30: “Igitur sequenti aestate mense Iulio, levatus est Adaloaldus rex super Langobardo apud Mediolanum in circo, in praesentia patris sui Agilulfi regis, adstantibus legatis Teudeperti regis Francorum, et dispsonsata est eidem regio puero filia regis Teudeperti, et fermata est pax perpetua cum Francis.”
in a very Roman sense—to the Franks: in the circus, the Lombard king was portrayed to the Franks as the Roman ruler of all Italy. At the same time, the Frankish ambassadors were there to show the Frankish support, a message that carried extra strength by the betrothal of Adaloald to the daughter of Theudebert II. Lombard policy of conciliation with the Franks would proceed, and in a few years Agilulf would arrange the suspension of the annual tribute the Lombards paid to the Franks. The elevation of Adaloald marked the ripening of Agilulf’s Italian policy, and represented his newly acquired position in Italy.

A similar representation can be seen from the famous ‘Val di Nievole plate’ (fig 4.5). The plate, found in the nineteenth century in Val di Nievole, is a small gold-coated bronze sheet (18.9 x 6.7 cm), decorated with a central figure surrounded by eight people, four on each side. It has been suggested that it was part of a helmet, although fragments of wood on the back imply that it was probably nailed to a wooden surface, such as a wooden casket or a throne. The scene is centered on a figure sitting on a traditional sella curulis, a consular chair, in the usual adlocutio position (i.e. holding up his right hand showing two fingers). In his lap he holds what has been interpreted as a sword, although it is more likely a scepter, as we often see in consular diptychs. Two armed soldiers, wearing helmets and mail, armed with spear and shields, flank him. The second row has two winged victories, carrying what seems

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611 Fredegar (4.45) places that negotiation in 617 (Anno XXXIII regni Chlothariae), though that would set the negotiations after the death of Agilulf in 616. It is not impossible that the negotiations to suspend the tribute were connected to the marriage, and was arranged in 604, only to take place once Adaloald came to power. Then again, Fredegar’s date might just be wrong.

612 The plate has received its share of scepticism; see La Rocca and Gasparri, “Forging,” 279–86. I retain the plate for the same reasons I retained the crown: a forger would probably aim for something more identifiable and less unique. As with the crown, nonetheless, the legitimacy is an open question. For the traditional idea that the plate was part of a military helmet, see Otto von Hessen, I reperti longobardi (Firenze: Museo nazionale del Bargello, 1981); more recently, Silvia Luissuardi Siena, “Una precisazione sulla lamina di Valdinievole,” in Studi di storia dell’arte in onore di Maria Luisa Gatti Perer, ed. Maria Luisa Gatti Perer, Marco Rossi, and Alessandro Rovetta (Milano: Vita e pensiero, 1999), 15–26. For the hypothesis that it was fixed in some sort of wooden board, see Chiara Frugoni, “Immagini fra tardo antico e alto medioevo: qualche appunto,” Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 2 (1998): 703–44; Wilhelm Kurze, “La lamina di Agilulfo: usurpazione o diritto?,” Atti del 6° Congresso internazionale di studio sull’alto medioevo 2 (1980): 447–56.

613 See McCormick, Eternal Victory, 289–90.

614 See, for example, the Consular diptych (c. 480) in Prague (Bibliothek des Metropolitancapitels, Inv. Cim. 2; Delbrück N40), and the Consular diptych (c. 490) in Paris (Collection Béarn, C54, Delbrück N41) in Richard Delbrück, Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler, Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte, (Berlin;: W. de Gruyter, 1929), 169–74. Similarly, the ‘Lampadiorum diptych’ in Brescia (Civici Musei d’Arte e Storia) and the Ivory diptych leaf in Halberstadt (Domschatz) in Bente Kiilerich, Late Fourth Century Classicism in the Plastic Arts: Studies in the so-called Theodosian Renaissance, Odense University classical studies (Odense: Odense University Press, 1993), fig. 81 and fig. 107, resp. Contra McCormick, who describes it as “…in a most unimperial detail, he clasps his sword in his lap.” In addition to that, McCormick believes his “long hair, moustache and long, pointed beard proclaim his non-Romaness” (McCormick, Eternal Victory, 290). On beards and long-hair as non-Roman, see Amory, People and Identity, 338–47.
to be two cornucopia (but may be drinking horns) in one hand, and a banner on the other: the one on the left says ‘VICTURIA’ while the one in the right say ‘D(om)N(o) AG IL(ulf) U REGI’. The following row has two figures in supplicant position, with their hands extended with the palms up. The final row has two figures bringing objects that resemble the traditional *orbes* in imperial coinage, used either as a symbol of power in the hand of the emperor, or in the hands of *Victoria*. Finally, two poles that, most likely, represent fasces (or maybe towns), frame the scene.

As Gasparri and La Rocca have pointed out, the interpretation of the scene is very complicated, and is bound to be extremely speculative. It has been suggested that the image combines ‘Gemanic’ and Roman elements, producing an extraordinary iconography representation of the ‘post-Roman Germanic kingdoms’. It is hard to see what would be specifically ‘Germanic’ in the picture. The image depicts all kinds of Roman symbols of power and plenty: the victories bringing *cornucopiae* (to resolve the image in one direction), the consular chair, and the fasces; even the clothes on Agilulf point to a traditional Roman

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615 See, for example, Maurice’s coins (number 3, 4, 14 in the Hunter Coin Cabinet), Heraclius’s (9–13 in the Hunter Coin Cabinet) in J. D. Bateson and I. G. Campbell, *Byzantine and Early Medieval Western European Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow* (London: Spink, 1998).
618 See, for example, Tom Brown’s commentaries in Delogu’s paper in Delogu, “Kingship,” 276; see also “Il regno,” 43.
consul, and not a warrior king. The orbis that are carried by the winged victories are harder to contextualize, but they resemble, as mentioned, the orbis carried by the emperors in Byzantine coins. But on the coins, the emperor holds the orbis himself or, when two emperors are represented, each holds one. Was the intention to portray Agilulf’s victories over two emperors (Maurice and Phocas)? Or, alternatively, could the two orbis represent the submission of both Rome and Ravenna—the two Roman capitals that recently acknowledged Agilulf by paying tribute to the king? It is hard to tell. Nonetheless, the language of power used by the image is clearly Roman, in its form and in its syntax.

It has been suggested that, by conforming to Roman symbols, Agilulf intended to emulate imperial procedure, in order to authenticate his power towards his ‘Roman subjects’. This mimicry, carefully designed by Agilulf’s ‘ministri romani’, would represent the king’s interest in preserving the Roman population by adopting Roman culture. Bognetti called this period ‘estate dei morti’, to characterize Agilulf’s reign as a brief postmortem continuation of the decaying Roman culture. Agilulf, however, was arguably using the language that was familiar to him: he was not so much copying the symbols of power from Constantinople, as he was performing them in a different context. The lack of legitimacy in the East had allowed him to appropriate such language and to reproduce it on a micro-scale in Italy. His innovation was to appropriate imperial symbols within a restricted Italian context. In a sense, Agilulf is emulating Theodoric, from whom he might have copied the title of ‘Flavius’.

Some of the evidence points to the nature of Agilulf’s religious policy. What makes Agilulf’s religious policy conspicuous is not its originality, but its firm grounding in the Roman past. Already in 600, Agilulf meddled with the election of the bishop of Milan in order to restore the see (then in Genoa) to the city of Milan, causing a strong reaction from

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619 For examples, see n.90
620 For example, see Delogu, “Kingship,” 252–55.
622 Cf. McCormick, who suggests that the primary objectives of the Roman-inspired ceremonies was “to enhance the monarchy’s prestige and that imitation of the Roman emperor was a viable means of doing it.” See Eternal Victory, 295–96.
623 “Kingship,” 254–55. The evidence, however, does not support Delogu’s idea that Agilulf attempted to “create a Roman-barbarian kingdom” in the modes of the late fifth-century Frankish and Visigothic kingdoms (a “two-people kingdom”); contra “Kingship,” 255.
Gregory I, who denounced the election as uncanonical. Nonetheless, in 607, Agilulf was called to mediate the succession of the patriarchate of Aquileia, then in Grado. With the support of Gisulf, the duke of Friuli, Agilulf appointed Iohannes as patriarch, and restored the see to Aquileia, while the exarch supported another candidate, who remained in Grado. In both elections, we see Agilulf acting in the now traditional role of a late Antique ruler, attempting to facilitate the reconciliation of the Church.

In 612, Agilulf received Columbanus and offered him land to found a monastery, Bobbio. The donation is the first surviving royal diploma: it is dated to 612, and is preserved in a copy in Bobbio. In this charter, the king presents himself as vir excellentissimus rex, addresses Columbanus piously, and dates the document using the traditional Roman indication. The monastery was placed in a strategic location, on the border with Tuscia, on the path to the recent conquests of the king in the region. Columbanus, firmly on the king’s side, wrote to the pope on his behalf, informing him that Agilulf wanted the Pope to solve once and for all the question of the Three Chapters:

Moreover after this opportunity to write, there comes an order of King Agilulf, whose content put me in shock and endless concern, of course, for I think what I see could not be without a miracle. For the kings, who had established this Arian plague in this region, trampling the Catholic faith, now plead our faith to be strengthened (...) So pleads the king, and so pleads the queen, all plead to you to, as fast as you can, let the whole become one, let there be peace in the fatherland, peace of the faith, so that all can henceforth become one flock of Christ. King of kings, you, Peter, let the whole of Italy follow you.

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625 Greg. Reg. 11.6; see Mores, Invasioni d’Italia, 237–39.
628 CDL 3.1; see Carlrichard Brühl, Studien zu den langobardischen Königsurkunden (Tübingen1970), 19–48.
The letter discloses Agilulf’s policy for unification, and his rhetoric of peace over war. To Columbanus—and certainly to Agilulf—the unification passed over the end of the schism, abandoning the ‘old heresies’ that separated Rome from the north. In a traditional Roman fashion, Agilulf prompts the Pope to reestablish ecclesiastical unity.

Paul’s last entry from the ‘chronicle source II’ is for 612 (death of Secundus), and we know very little about the final years of Agilulf’s reign. It is possible that the reestablishment of stable rule in Constantinople with Heraclius (610–41) might have again turned the tides against the Lombards, or, at least, closed the window Agilulf had employed to extend his rule. Around that time, Paul reports an Avar invasion in Friuli, which killed Gisulf and led to the exile of most of his family. The duchy ended up in the hands of his brother Grasulf II. It is very likely, as has already been suggested, that Agilulf, using his Avar allies to punish a new rebellion by Gisulf, instigated this invasion. In this case, the reestablishment of order in Constantinople might have prompted the Friulian duke to resume his former allegiance, trying to restore his previous independence. If so, he miscalculated Agilulf’s newly acquired capacity to intervene in Italy and control his newly extended kingdom.

Agilulf’s reign marks the end of a half-century process of settlement and accommodation of the Lombards in Italy. The favorable external conditions—the Frankish and Byzantine civil wars—allowed him to turn the rebelling military commanders and his subject into a people, and to claim a legitimate authority over Italy. To do so, he had to put down the resistance of the Lombard dukes, more often than not interested in continuing the ambivalent position vis-à-vis Constantinople. Succeeding in what Ravenna had failed to do, he reincorporated them into the army, putting an end to the centrifugal tendencies of the last decades. He also defeated the Byzantine forces in the peninsula, but at the same time he managed to harvest the reluctant support of Gregory the Great, who saw the king as the sole guarantee for the church properties in central Italy. Once he gathered enough momentum, Agilulf strove to fit the traditional forms of power. Agilulf’s legitimacy rested on turning the Lombard army into

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630 And not a theocratic project of a national Church, as envisioned in Bognetti, “SMC,” 214–15. See Everett, Literacy, 83; Mores, Invasioni d’Italia, 267.
631 HL 4.37.
part of Italian society, in the same role the army had played in the past. Agilulf’s successes testify not only to his capacity as a ruler and as a commander, but also to the effectiveness of the Lombard army, which was equally victorious in suppressing rebel dukes and Byzantine regular troops. By his death in 616, Agilulf left Adaloald the direct (or indirect in the case of the now tributary Rome and Ravenna) control of most of the peninsula and the title of king of Italy; above all, he left him a political project of an Italian kingdom encompassing the entire peninsula.

4.1.3 The Frankish ‘matriarchate’ (c. 616–636)

After Agilulf, the Lombards drifted back under Frankish influence, and the following two decades can loosely be described as a period of the ‘Frankish matriarchate’: the influential Theodelinda, wife of two kings, gave way to her daughter Gundeperga, who eventually became queen for another two kings, Arloald and Rothari, after the death of her brother Adaloald. It is impossible to trace the reach of the political influence of the queens (the careers of Fredegund and Brunhild in Francia—also Goiswinth in Spain and Emma in England—might provide some kind of model), but both queens personified the Frankish influence in the Lombard court. This subsection analyzes the destinies of Agilulf’s political project in the decades that separate his death from the accession of Rothari, a period especially poorly documented: without the ‘chronicle source II’ (which presumably ended in 612), Paul had only the Origo and (possibly) Fredegar’s rather partisan account (see below).\textsuperscript{633} In addition to that, the \textit{Copenhagen Continuation} (which ends in 626) offers some information, which can be supplemented by the \textit{LP} for the events in the south; and a letter (\textit{Ep. Lang.} 2) sent by Pope Honorius (625–38) to Isaac, the exarch in Ravenna (c. 615–43) provides some context to the transition between Adaloald and Arioald.

Although limited, the evidence points to the demise of Agilulf’s political project and the re-instatement of the Frankish supremacy in northern Italy. The advantageous conditions Agilulf experienced from 602 on came to an end in the second decade of the seventh century. By 613, Chlothar II (d. 629) was the sole Merovingian ruler, beginning a period of almost three decades of political stability in Francia under his rule, and later under the rule of Dagobert’s (629–39), his son.\textsuperscript{634} In the East, the popular Heraclius (610–43) replaced Phocas

\textsuperscript{633} \textit{Origo}, c. 6; Fred. 4.49; 4.51.

and, although his rule was far from stable, provided a boost to imperial legitimacy. In Italy, in what most likely escalated to a civil war, Arioald (c. 616–626) eventually deposed Adaloald, Agilulf's son. Given the state of the sources, the events in Italy under the two kings that succeeded Agilulf are difficult to follow. Adaloald and Arioald were closely related: Arioald was married to Adaloald's sister Gundeperga before his rebellion and (as Agilulf before him) was duke of Turin. In the background we have the authoritative figure of Theudelinda, the queen mother (589–c.625), and that of her daughter Gundeperga, who, Fredegar suggests, maintained the full support of the Frankish monarchy.

**Eleutherius and Adaloald**

The question behind Adaloald's reign is to what extent the king continued his father's policy of unifying Italy. Some evidence comes from the activities of the Byzantine patrician Eleutherius, sent to Italy around 616 to suppress insurgency both in Naples and Ravenna. According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Eleutheris successfully dealt with the rebels, and, once back in Ravenna, "he paid the arrears to the army and brought peace back to Italy." The *Copenhagen Continuation* complements the *Liber Pontificalis*, mentioning Eleutherius's dealings with Adaloald: Eleutherius was involved in several skirmishes with the Lombard army, but was soundly beaten by a certain Sundrarius, who had been "assigned in Agilulf's [government] to military affairs" (*qui apud Agilulfum bellicis rebus instructus erat*). Adaloald's victories over Eleutherius attest to the continuing efficiency of the Lombard army, at least into the second decade of that century. Eventually, convinced that he could not defeat the Lombards, Eleutherius came to terms with Adaloald:

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636 Fred. 4.50–51; cf. Ionas, *Vita Columbani*, 2.24 ("dux Langobardorum").
637 For the Frankish interventions in support of Gundeperga, see Fred. 4.51 and 4.71.
638 Dating is extremely problematic. The Cont. Hav. has Eleutherius fighting with Adaloald (and no longer Agilulf, see below), while the *Liber Pontificalis* places him during the pontificate of Deusdedit (615–18), which is probably the only timeframe we can establish with some security. It is likely that after Heraclius’ political honeymoon was over, and especially after the debacle against the Persian in the East (616–20), the Italians resumed their political skepticism: around 616, the top command of Ravenna had been slaughtered, most likely by disgruntled soldiers, while a certain Iohannes of Compsa rebelled and assumed power in Naples, see *LP*, *Vita Deusdedit*, 70.1–2. On Eleutharius and the rebellions at this time, see Bognetti, "SMC," 165–67; Guillou, *Régionalisme et indépendance dans l'empire byzantin au VIIe siècle: l'exemple de l'exarchat et de la pentapole d'Italie*, 204–06; 24–25; Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, 151–61.
639 *LP*, *Vita Deusdedit*, 70.2: "Reversus est Ravenna, et data roga militibus facta est pax in tota Italia."
640 *Cont. Hav.*, 1554 It is tempting to see Sundrarius holding the position that was formerly Paulus, mentioned by Gregory of Tours (*LH* 10.3), and would eventually be occupied by Paulus's son, Petrus (*Ep. Lang.* 2); see above n.1.
And Eleutherius, as he often witnessed the ruin of his forces, made peace with the Lombards, on the condition that the Romans would pay the five *centenaria* of gold, which, in the time King Agilulf came to besiege Rome, were agreed to be given to the Lombards every year.\(^{641}\)

According to the *Copenhagen Continuation*, Eleutherius resumed the annual payment for the Lombards, which, as we have suggested above, might have implied recognition of their position in Italy (4.1.2). In an entry similar to the *LP*, the continuator mentions that, Eleutherius, once he was certain of his alliance with the Lombards, rebelled against the government in Constantinople (now in disarray on account of the Persian invasions),\(^{642}\) and claimed the purple:

\[\text{Cont. Hav.}\]

Eleutherius, when he saw the Lombards had come to an agreement with him, attempted to seize the Empire. But when he had already put on the purple and demanded the crown be given to him, he was encouraged by the intervention of the *vir venerabilis* Johannes to go to Rome, and there, where the seat of the empire remained, to take up the crown. Approving this advice, he heeded him. But the audacity of this rash usurpation did not last long: for when he had departed from Ravenna and set out for Rome, he was killed near the fort of Luciolis, by a few of the soldiers who were now accompanying him.\(^{643}\)

\[\text{Liber Pontificalis}\]

In that time, before the ordination of Pope Boniface, the eunuch Eleutherius, the *patrician*, having rebelled, usurped the kingdom. And, coming to the city of Rome, he was killed by soldiers from Ravenna in the fort called Luciolis. His head was sent to the most pious prince in Constantinople.\(^{644}\)

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\(^{641}\) *Cont. Hav.* 1554: “Eleutherius et cum saepe suorum ruinam cerneret pacem cum Longobardis facit, ea conditione ut quinque centenaria que, dudum cum ad obsidendam Romam Agilulf rex uenisset per singulos annos dare Longobardis statuerant, persoluerent Romani.”


\(^{643}\) *Cont. Hav.* 1555: “Eleutherius cum erga se Longobardorum gentem pacatam uideret, imperii conatur suscipe. Sed cum iam purpuram induisset, atque coronam sibi dari poposceret, uenerabilis uiri Iohannis interventu adhortatur, ut ad Romam pereret, atque ibi, ubi imperii solium maneret, coronam sumeret. Quod consilium ratum iudicat obaudivit. Sed temerarum usurpationis audacia non diu potitus est. Nam cum a Ravenna prefectus pergeret Romam, apud castrum Luciolis paucis iam suo itinere comitantibus a militibus interfectur.”

\(^{644}\) *LP*, *Vita Bonifatii*, 71.2: “Eodem tempore, ante dies ordinationis [Bonifactii papa]e, Eleutherius patricius et eunuchus factus intertera adsumptit regnum. Et veniente eum ad civitatem Romam, in castrum qui dicitur Luciolis, ibidem a milites Ravennates interfector est. Cuius caput ductus Constantinopolim ad piissimum principem.”
What kind of agreement Eleutherius established with Adaloald is unclear: was it related to Eleutherius’s rebellion in some way? In the current state of the documentation, we can only ascertain that Eleutherius enjoyed, if not the support, at least the acquiescence of the Lombards. It is tempting to see Adaloald’s connection with Eleutherius as a continuation of Agilulf’s plan, now bringing together the still Byzantine Ravenna into a united kingdom. Whether it was done by Adaloald’s initiative, or by Eleutherius’s, had the coup succeeded, Italy might have been united under the two leaders. The troops in Ravenna, however, stood against Eleutherius and murdered him while in transit, opting to support the imperial power in the East.

The Frankish reaction

Whatever the real arrangement between Eleutherius and the Lombards was, it is possible that Adaloald’s policy was not well regarded in Francia, and that the Franks supported Arioald, a usurper who at some point around 625 deposed Adaloald. For the Franks, a unified kingdom in Italy was presumably bad news, whether in the hands of a Lombard ruler, or back in imperial hands (see 3.1).

The sources for Arioald’s coup are meager (and the dating is specially problematic, see 4.2.3), but they seem to point to Frankish interference. Arioald was the duke of Turin, of the Lombard duchies the one under most Frankish influence (see 4.1), and he was married to Gundeperga, the daughter of Theudelinda. Gundeperga seems to have maintained Theudelinda’s role as a link between the Lombard and Frankish courts.\textsuperscript{645} We can get further details from a letter sent by Pope Honorius I to the new exarch Isaac (c. 625–643):

We have learnt by the messages of certain people, that certain transpadani bishops have expressed some words to Peter, the son of Paul, which were against the episcopal path, and, endowed with impious persuasion, hinted that he, Peter, should obey the tyrant Arioald rather than king Adaloald, opening themselves to the crime of perjury. And, because the [\textit{vir} gl\textit{oriosus} Peter refused to be persuaded by their depraved advice (if it is permitted to say such a thing [of bishops]), but instead chose to preserve firmly the oath which he had given to king Agilulf, Adaloald’s father, by your work, with the will of the heavenly virtue, Adaloald was restated to his kingdom. Care to send those bishops towards Rome, with the help of God, because we will allow for no reason this crime to go unpunished, because it is against God and the pious hearts, since the men, who should have forbid others from committing such offence, have enticed it to be committed.\textsuperscript{646}

\textsuperscript{645} Fred. 4.51; 4.71; see Wood, \textit{Merovingian Kingdom}, 167.

\textsuperscript{646} \textit{Ep. Lang.} 2: “Quorundam scriptis didicimus, quosdam episcopos in Transpadanis partibus quaedam verba episcopali actui inimica Petro Pauli filio edixisse atque monitu impiae suasionis innuere, asserentes in se periuri...
The letter informs us about how support was distributed: the pope sided with Adaloald, and, at least at some point, Isaac had intervened for the king and reinstated him to his kingdom;\textsuperscript{647} the transpadani bishops had sided with Arioald, and were trying to convince Petrus, who presumably held a high position in government, to abandon Adaloald. Petrus, however, stood fast behind the king.

In addition to the letter, we have the report from Fredegar, who suggests Adaloald was bewitched by Eusebius, an ambassador from the Emperor Maurice, who gave him some sort of potion. Once under his influence, the king went mad, threatening to kill all the Lombard nobles (primatis et nobiliores) and surrender himself and the Lombards to the Empire. Twelve of the dukes (a recurring number for Fredegar’s Lombard dukes)\textsuperscript{648} turned against the mad king, killing him; afterwards they elected as king Arioald, duke of Turin married to Adaloald’s sister Gundeperga.\textsuperscript{649} After that, Fredegar adds yet another story: a certain Adalulf, he recounts, tried to seduce Gundeperga, but was rebuked by the chaste queen: fearing for his life, he came to Arioald and accused the queen of plotting against the king’s life with the rebel duke of Tuscany, Taso. The king, believing those words, incarcerated the queen in a tower in a certain Caumello castro. The Frankish king Chlothar II, worried about Gundeperga, a “relative of the Franks” (parentam Francorum), sent a delegation to Italy in

\textsuperscript{647} Although it seems that eventually Isaac did come to terms with Arioald: Fredegar presents an unusual story that has Arioald and Isaac coming to terms in order to kill a rebel Lombard duke: the result might have led to the reduction of the tribute the Lombards claimed from Ravenna.

\textsuperscript{648} Fred. 4.45.

\textsuperscript{649} Fred. 4.49: “…[Adaloaldus] legato Maricio imperatoris nomen Eusebio ingeniose ad se venientem benigni suscept. Inunctus in balneo nescio quibus ungentes, ab ipsi Eusebio persuaderat et post inunctionem nec quicquam aliud, nisi quod ab ipsi Eusebio hortabatur, facere non potebat. Persuasos ab ipso, primatis et nobiliores cunctis in regno Langobardorum interficiere ordinari; eiusdem stinctis, se cum omni gente Langobardorum imperio traderit. Quod cum iam uel duodecim ex eis, nullis culpis extantibus, gradio trucdasset, reliqui cernentes eorum esse uitae periculum Charoaldum ducem Taurinensem, qui germanam Adaloald regi habebat uxorem nomine Gundepergam, omnes seniores et nobilissimi Langobardorum gentes uno conspirante consilio in regnum elegant sublimandum.” Paul the Deacon (HL 4.41), probably using Fredegar as a source, slightly effacing the imperial influence and claiming that Adaloald had simply gone insane, and was hence replaced by Arioald: “Sed dum Adaloald eversa mente insaniret, postquam cum matre decem regnaverat annis, de regno ejectus est, et a Loangobardis in eius loco Arioald substitutus est.” Jarnut, commenting on the passage, has even suggested that the Lombards, too primitive to understand Adaloald policy of conciliation, thought he was entranced or insane, see Jarnut, Geschichte, 56.
order to restore the queen to her position. On the suggestion of one of the envoys, the queen was reinstated after her innocence was proved by judicial combat. Fredegar’s account smacks of Frankish propaganda: in the first story, Adaloald was bewitched by the Eusebius, and was about to kill all the noble Lombards and surrender the kingdom to the Empire, but the valiant Lombards, resisted and elected (conveniently Frankish-supported) Arioald as a new king. In story two, once in power, Gundeperga’s loyalty was questioned, but her virtue, defended by the Franks, was proved by battle. All seems designed to justify the deposition of Adaloald and reveals a Frankish hand in the process.

Considering the evidence, we can suggest a possible explanation for the coup. Adaloald maintained his father’s plan to unify Italy not as rex Langobardorum but as rex totius Italiae, and for such, the next logical step was to bring into his orbit what remained of the Byzantine government in Ravenna: he thus defeated Eleutherius and brought Ravenna back to the position Agilulf had left, tributary to the Lombards (Cont. Hav. 1554); more than that, he came up with an agreement with the patrician, which was solid enough to give the patrician confidence to sue for the purple. Eleutherius marched to Rome to be recognized, but was killed on the way. Had Eleutherius succeeded, Adaloald would presumably have been on his side, since the patrician counted on his support, maybe even sharing the command of an unified peninsula (which would fit Agilulf’s plan, and also account for the rumor in Fredegar that Adaloald intended to surrender to the empire). At this point, it is impossible to know if a successful Eleutherius would have been supported by the Church, but, once he had been defeated, the Liber Pontificalis was certainly not generous towards him (LP, Vita Bonifacii 71.2); that notwithstanding, the pope maintained his support for Adaloald (Ep. Lang. 2). Whatever his involvement was, Adaloald aroused the suspicions of the Franks, who maneuvered to replace him with Arioald, a duke in nearby Turin and husband of Gundeperga: the Franks presumably reached out for the support of transpadani bishops (whose tricapitoline creed likely favored their opposition to Rome) (Ep. Lang. 2) and probably also other dukes, while at the same time justifying the intervention by the bewitching of Adaloald and the

650 Fred. 4.51: “Chlotharius legatus diriens ad Charoaldum regem, inquirens, qua de re Gundebergam reginam, perentem Francorum, humiliasset, ut exilio retrudisset, Charoaldus his verbis mendacis, quasi viretatem, respondebat. Tunc unus ex legatariis nomen Ansoaldus, non quasi inunctum habuisset, sed ex se ad Charoaldo dixit: ‘Liberare potebas de blasphemeo causam hanc. Iube illum hominem, qui huiscemodi verba tibi nunciavit, armare, et procedat alius de parte reginae Gondebergae, quiunque armatus ad singulare certamine. Judicium Dei, his duobus confligentibus, cognuscatur, itrum huici culpae reputationes Gundebergae sit innoxia, an fortasse culpabelis.’”
mistreatment of Gundeperga. It is tempting to suggest that the event that finally prompted the Franks into action was the death of Theudelinda, at some point after 624: without his mother, and married to the daughter of a king that ended up in the losing side of the civil war (Theudebert II), Adaloald had no longer a connection with the Merovingian court that could back his increasingly suspicious policy of conciliation with the Empire, and was probably sacked by his own dukes.

Scholarship has often insisted on the contrast between the Romanized Adaloald and the traditionalist Arioald, mostly based on Arioald’s Arianism and Adaloald’s Catholicism. It is, however, hard to support the opposition between the two governments—Adaloald’s and Arioald’s—on the surviving evidence. The argument is based solely on the help offered by the church in Rome to Adaloald, as testified by Honorius’s letter to Isaac. Nonetheless, Honorius was arguably more concern about the gains the Church obtained under Agilulf, and there is no evidence that he refused to come to terms with Arioald. The brief appearance of Arioald in the *Vita Columbani* suggests that he maintained good relations with the Church, and was wise enough not to get too involved in theological affairs.

Eventually, it is possible that Arioald came to terms with Isaac: according to Fredegar, the king bribed the exarch Isaac to murder Taso, the duke of Tuscany, and in return, Arioald

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651 The documentation on the queen after the death of Agilulf is limited: for a review of the sources, see Ross Balzeretti, “Theodelinda, 'Most Glorious Queen': Gender and Power in Lombard Italy,” *The medieval History Journal* 2, no. 2 (1999): 183–207, 184–94. Cont. Hav. 1556 states that Adaloald received the care of the kingdom with Theodelinda, and ruled with her for ten years. The last mention of the queen is in a royal diploma: the dating in the charter is problematic, but we can establish it was dated from 623 to 625, although most likely 624, 25th July (8 kal. Augustas) (Brühl, the editor of *CDL* 3 made a convincing case for 624, though the other dates are also possible. For the issues with this dating, see *CDL* 3, p.9). After that, Theodelinda disappears from the historical record. The conventional date for her death, January 22nd 627/28, is widely accepted, see, for example, “Theodelinda,” 207, n.129; Martina Hartmann, *Die Königin im frühen Mittelalter* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009), 206; 15. However, that date comes from a second hand report of a tombstone, mentioned by Frisi, that should have come from a no longer extant work by a certain Tristano Calco: “Dedicatio hujus Ecclesiae S. MICHAELIS celebrata fuit decimo quinto Kal. Februarii in CCCCCXXVIII, et hoc ipso anno mortua est THEUDELINDA Regina.” (in Troya, *CDL* 2, 1–3). The supposed tombstone is conflated with an entry to the also much later *Necrologio Monzese* (12th century), that claims that “Obiit Dna Dna [sic] Regina THEODOLENSA Anno Dni CCCCCXXVIII die XXIJ. Ian. et sepulta nunc in capella sci UINCENTIJ…”. Given the posthumous fame of the queen and her close ties with the history of the church in Monza, this later evidence is very likely forged. To the extent of our knowledge, the queen could have been dead at any point after July 25th, 624. An earlier death is also suggested by another royal donation to Bobbio, from 625 or 26 (*CDL* 3.3), in which Adaloald confirmed the previous donations to Bobbio (*CDL* 3.1 & 3.2) and added another donation by a certain Zussone, but the queen is no longer mentioned.

652 Bognetti, “SMC,” 299ff; Delogu, “Il regno,” 52; Wickham, *Italy*, 35–36; Jarnut, *Geschichte*, 56–57. Adaloald’s Catholicism is suggested by a letter from the Visigothic king Sisebutus (*Ep. V. 9*), while Arioald’s Arianism is suggested in the *Vita Columbani* 2.24; the importance of religious affiliation in the Lombard kingdom has, however, recently been put in question; see Fanning, “Lombard Arianism Reconsidered.”; Brown, “Religious Policy.”

have offered a discount on the tribute the Lombards received annually from Ravenna, lowering it from three to two centenaria.\textsuperscript{654} It is hard to know what to make of this story, apart the fact that it provides further evidence that annual collection of tribute arranged by Agilulf and Gregory I and renewed by the time of Eleutharius continued at least until the 630s, though the values do not match (3–2 centenaria contra 5 centenaria).\textsuperscript{655} Essentially, the little we know about Arioald’s policy is hardly antagonistic to Adaloald’s, although the former might have been focused on a more local transpadani (and also transalpine) power base, while the latter had insisted on his father project of an unified Italy.

The Frankish intervention highlights the continuation of the status quo establish with Authari, which submitted Lombard policy to Frankish interests. As we have suggested above, Agilulf was an exception, and his independent position was only possible while the Franks were caught up in internecine conflicts. After Chlothar II triumphed as sole ruler, the Frankish court arguably resumed their influence on Italy, first through Theodelinda, and then through her daughter, Gundeperga. If the end of Adaloald was indeed conditioned by the death of Theodelinda, we might say that power passed from her to her daughter (and not from Adaloald to Arioald): that should not come as a surprise, since before Adaloald, power had passed from Authari to Agilulf through the same Frankish queen. The same pattern was maintained in c. 636 when Arioald died: Gundeperga is said to have chosen Rothari (c. 636–52) as his successor, and Fredegar relates how the Franks were the ones backing her position.\textsuperscript{656} In the period from Adaloald to the first years of Rothari, the Frankish court resumed their influence in Italy, presumably maintaining the same agenda of preserving a solid but limited monarchy in northern Italy, strong enough to serve as buffer state against Byzantium (and to supply troops when necessary),\textsuperscript{657} but not too strong to become in itself a threat.

\textsuperscript{654} Fred. 4.69, cf. H.L. 4.38.
\textsuperscript{655} The tribute was established between Agilulf and Gregory I when the king marched against Rome in 594/95; Eleutherius, after being repeatedly defeated by Adaloald, resumed the payment (Cont. Hav. 1554); see above 4.1.1.
\textsuperscript{656} Fred. 4.70–71.
\textsuperscript{657} As Arioald did against the Wends and the Saxons, see Fred. 4.68, cf. Gesta Dagoberti, 1.27.
4.2 Rothari

Rothari guaranteed his place of fame in Lombard history on account of his *Edict*, which, published in 643, became the base of later Lombard legislation. For that, he enjoyed a good reputation amongst the later writers of Lombard history: for the author of the ninth century *Origo Langobardorum codicis Gothanis*, “in the times of this king Rothari, a light was born in the darkness, through him the Lombards pick up the canonical battle and were made helpers of the clerics.” Similarly, Paul the Deacon narrated the story of a certain man, who dared to violate Rothari’s tomb, but found it guarded by St. John the Baptist, who, Paul reported, declared that “although [Rothari] may not have been of the true faith yet he has commended himself to me.” His later popularity notwithstanding, the sources for his reign are scanty, and the most prominent document, Rothari’s *Edict*, informs us little about its context. This section will analyze the surviving evidence for Rothari’s reign, focusing on his portrayal of kingship and on his military successes. First, we will present the changes in the external context, which frames Rothari’s political career, drawing attention to the events in Francia and in the East; subsequently, we will scrutinize the *Edict* for Rothari’s royal presentation and ideology; finally, we will analyze the surviving evidence for the extent of his military successes.

4.2.1 Rothari’s New Deal

The Frankish ‘matriarchy’ was still influencing events when Arioald died in 635, and was replaced by Rothari. The new king, a former duke of Brescia, came to power by association with the widow, Gundeperga. The role of the queen in the transmission, at least as Fredegar describes it, mirrors the role of Theodelinda with Agilulf:

> Queen Gundeperga, because all the Lombards had swore loyalty to her with oaths, ordered a certain Rothari, one of the dukes from Brescia, to come to her, forcing him to abandoned the wife he had and to receive her in matrimony, and on her account all the Lombards raised him to the throne (...) [W]ith Gundeperga’s support, all the Lombard nobles raised Rothari to the throne.  

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658 *Cod. Goth.* c. 7: “Istius Rothari regis [temporibus] ortum est lumen in tenebris; per quem supradicti Langobardi ad cannonicam tenderunt certamina, et sacerdotum facti sunt adiutores.”

659 *HL* 4.47: “Fuerit licit non recte credens, tamen mihi se commendavit.”

660 Frede. 4.70: Gundeperga regina, eo quod omnes Langobardi eidem fidem cum sacramentis firmauerunt, Chrothacharium quidam unum ex ducibus de terreturio Brissia ad se uenire precepit, eum compellens uxorem quam habebat reliquerit et eam matremuniam acceperit; per ipsam omnes Langobardi eum sublimauant in regno. (...) Gundoperga adtragnente omnes Langobardorum primati Chrotharium sublimant in regno.
With the support of the queen, continues Fredegar, Rothari was able to put down resistance and pacify the kingdom.⁶⁶¹ Fredegar, however, suggests that Rothari did not keep his vows to the queen, but imprisoned her in the court, forcing her to live a private life. She remained secluded for five years, until news of her situation came to Francia. Clovis II (639–655), who by now had succeeded his father Dagobert, sent an embassy to Rothari, saying that,

‘(…) he should not humiliate the relative of the Franks, whom he had as a queen, through whom also he had received the kingdom: the Frankish kings and the Franks were exceedingly displeased by that. So much reverence Rothari held for the Franks, that he ordered the queen to be released.’ ⁶⁶²

The imprisonment of Gundeperga, once again, served Fredegar as a reason for the Frankish intervention in the neighboring kingdom, and we should take the report with a grain of salt. Nonetheless, it is tempting to see Rothari testing the waters with the new Frankish king, at that stage still an infant. Rothari was right to reassess the possibilities for the Lombards, for the tide was about to change.

*Of Arabs & Thuringians*

To understand the transformations in Lombard policy in the 640s, Rothari’s campaigns and to some extent the publication of the *Edict* (643), we must first highlight the deep changes in the foreign relations at that time, namely, the eclipse of power both in Francia and in Byzantium in this period. Similarly to Agilulf’s reign, Rothari witnessed a gap of power in Italy, once the two main forces in the region turned either to internal politics (as is the case of Francia) or towards more pressing external threats (as is the case of Byzantium with the Arabs). Such a situation gave the Lombards more room to operate and allowed them to reevaluate their position in Italy.

The crisis in the East was prompted by the conflict between the Empire and the Arabs: Heraclius, a few years after the tremendous victory over Persians and Avars in 627, which

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⁶⁶¹ Fred. 4.70.
⁶⁶² Fred. 4.71: “(…) ‘illam parentem Francorum quam reginam habuerat, per quem etiam regnum adsumserat non dibuisisset umiliare; Multum exinde regis Francorum et Franci essint ingrati. Quam Chrotharius de presenti, reuerentiam Francorum habens, iubit egredi foris’.”
had stabilized his government, was again cast into a whirlwind of military disasters. In 636, the Byzantine army was utterly defeated by the Arabs at Yarmuk, and evacuated from Syria into Anatolia. By 642, the Arabs had control of Egypt, Palestine and Armenia, and Constantinople was forced to evacuate the troops from Alexandria. In 649, the Arabs experimented with sea power and would soon inflict a disastrous victory at the sea against Constans II (655). The Arab conquests sent shockwaves throughout the empire, and the loss of territories (and revenue) certainly took its toll in the resources available to Constantinople.

The imperial position in Italy was further aggravated by the developments in Heraclius’s religious policy, emphatically rejected by Rome. Further undermining the popularity of the imperial government, in 640 the exarch Isaac (c. 625/6–643/4) broke into the Lateran, confiscated the treasure to the fisc, and exiled the leading clergy that had opposed him. In 642, the chartularius Maurice rebelled in Rome against the exarch Isaac, claiming the exarch was plotting to usurp the empire: using this threat to foment his own rebellion, Maurice gathered support all around Rome, enlisting soldiers and collecting oaths. Isaac moved the army against Rome and Maurice supporters, rather than fighting their colleagues, abandoned Maurice to his fate. His head ended up paraded in Ravenna’s circus. Even though Maurice’s accusations against Isaac might have been pure propaganda, the conditions of the empire allowed claims of a possible coup. Isaac was disliked enough in the papal court that

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666 In 638 Heraclius published the _Ekthesis_, enforcing the view of a single will of God (monothēma) intending to solve the split between Chalcedonian and monophysite communities in the East. The solution of a single _thēma_, a single will, was nonetheless rejected by several Chalcedonian churchmen, and only succeeded in deepening the divide: see Ostrogorsky, History, 96–98; Haldon, “Discontent.”; Friedhelm Winkelmann, “Die Quellen zur Erforschung des monenergetisch-monotheletischen Streites,” Klio 69 (1987): 515–59; Judith Herrin, The formation of Christendom (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 206ff; Haldon, Byzantium, 49.

667 LP, Vita Severini, 73.4.

668 LP, Vita Theodori, 75.1–2. For rebellions in the Byzantine controlled parts of Italy, see Charles Diehl, Études sur l'administration byzantine dans l'exarchat de Ravenne (568-751) (New York; B. Franklin, 1959), 340ff; Guillou, Régionalisme et indépendance dans l'empire byzantin au VIIe siècle: l'exemple de l'exarchat et de la pentapole d'Italie, 204ff; Stratos, Byzantium, Vol. 1, 121–22; vol. 3, 76–79; Kaegi, Unrest, pages; Brown, Gentlemen and Officers, 159–63; Haldon, Byzantium, 61.
his later death was attributed to ‘divino ictu’. The military crisis in the East, and the popularity crisis in the West created a void of power, while Constantinople gasped for air amongst renewed threats.

Although the situation across the Alps was certainly better, the Frankish kingdom was also heading to a new low. Political stress and the lack of credibility gathered momentum under Dagobert, especially after the sound defeat at the hands of the Wends in 630 (the diligent Lombard king Arioald, however, did his part, sending troops to support the campaign and winning his side of the war). Probably as a consequence of the defeat, the Saxons were able to exchange the tribute they paid to the Franks (500 cows, according to Fredegar) for a guarantee to protect the border against the Wends. The Saxons would be the first of the periphery to drift away, but not the last: in 639, just after the death of Dagobert, the Thuringian duke Radulf rebelled against the eleven-year old Austrasian king Sigebert. The duke, with support of Fara, a member of a strong Austrasian aristocratic family, stood against the Austrasian army and obtained a great victory. Fredegar attributes the defeat to Sigebert’s adoliscencia, his immaturity, although the shifting alliance of a part of the Austrasian army is probably to blame. The defeat was a hard blow for the young king, and sent a vigorous message about Merovingian military capability, as Radulf’s extended his power on the right bank of the Rhine. As Fredegar describes the young king watching the defeat of his forces:

Sigebert, together with his followers, was taken by a deep grief and, sitting on his horse, with tears running from his eyes, cried over those he had lost. For both duke Bobo and count Innowales, and other very strong fighters, and many divisions of the army, who had marched to battle with him, had been slaughtered in that battle, in front of his eyes. (...) Radulf, excessively exalted by pride, thought himself to be king in Thuringia, negotiating friendship with the Wends and other neighboring nations, and built a net of friendship. By words, he did not deny the rulership of Sigibert, but in actions strongly resisted their domination.
Fredegar ends his main narrative in 642, and the next two decades are amongst the worst documented in Merovingian history. It is true that the young king crying over his lost army might not be the perfect representation of Merovingian power up to the middle of the century, but, as with the Saxons, Radulf’s victory is a clear sign that the periphery was starting to drift away.

In conclusion, by the early 640s the two foreign powers in the Italian theatre were temporary knocked out of the game. To the East, Byzantium entered a long phase of struggles with Islam, which had already cost a large part of the imperial territories, including the rich lands of the Levant and Egypt. Furthermore, the Arabs were soon to expand their control of the Mediterranean, weakening the communication links between Italy and Constantinople. A larger investment in Italy was arguably neither in the plans, nor within the reach of the imperial government in the next two decades. A similar withdrawal from Italy could be said for the Merovingians. The Franks had their strength absorbed by internecine competitions between aristocracies, in a process that would culminate with the triumph of the Pippinids in the early eighth century: until then, their resources to engage and control their periphery were few and thinly spread. For the Lombards, the new situation brought new possibilities to expand their rule beyond what would be in Frankish interest, digging deeper into Byzantine possessions.

4.2.2 Rex Langobardorum

Rothari’s Edict, published in 643, is the clearest surviving statement of the new position the king carved for Lombard policy. The legal compilation, comprising 388 laws dealing with

amici ac oblegabar; in uerbis tamen Sigiberto regimi non denegans, nam in factis forteter eiusdem resistebat dominacionem.” In any case, Wood rightly questioned to which extent the battle was, as scholarship usually assumed, the beginning of the end of the Merovingian dynasty; see Wood, Merovingian Kingdom, 157–58; cf. Wallace-Hadrill, Long-Haired Kings, 234. The question is teleological.

674 Eickhoff, Seekrieg und Seapolitik zwischen Islam und Abendland. Das Mittelmeer unter byzantinischer und arabischer Hegemonie, 650-1040; Fahmy, Muslim Sea-Power in the Eastern Mediterranean from the Seventh to the Tenth Century A.D; Haldon, Byzantium, 55.


676 On law codes in general, see Patrick Wormald, “Lex Scripta and Verbum Regis: Legislation and Germanic Kingship from Euric to Cnut,” in Early Medieval Kingship, ed. Ian Wood and P. H. Sawyer (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1977), 105–38; and more recently, “The Leges Barbarorum: Law and Ethnicity in the post-Roman World,” in Regna and Gentes, ed. Hans-Werner Goetz, Jörg Jarnut, and Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 21-54; see also the entries on various law codes in Adalbert Erler, Ekkehard Kaufmann, and Wolfgang Stammler,
various aspects of the organization of the kingdom, including civil and criminal matters, and social questions, was arguably produced from an existing code, to which Rothari added his own provisions. We will analyze the *Edict* in its political aspect, first as evidence of Rothari’s new administration, and then as a channel for political discourse and legitimacy of the monarchy. This subsection argues that Rothari was modifying a pre-existing version of the law, possibly of Frankish origin, which he used to consolidate his position and to strengthen the legitimacy of the Lombard monarchy.

**Old and New in Rothari’s Edict**

Scholarship has long debated the origins of Lombard law, and, especially, on the influences it received from other barbarian codes, from Roman legislation, or from both. As to what concerns us here, it is relevant to point that Rothari was working from a previous law code that had hitherto been used. The evidence for this argument comes from the prologue of the *Edict*, which makes explicit that the new law added and corrected a previously existing one:

The contents *added* (tenor adnexa) below reveal how much was, and how much it is still, our concern for the well being of our subjects; especially on account not only of the constant burdens of the poor, but also the undue demands of those with greater power; such poor, we have learnt, suffer from abuse of power. For this reason, and taking into account the grace of God, we have regarded it necessary to correct the present law, which may renew and improve all the former laws; supply what is lacking and expunge what is unnecessary. We have made provision to encompass in one volume how it may be permitted for—to live in peace, and to strive for honour against [their legal] adversaries, and to defend their person and their property.

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677 We will turn to the *Edict* as a source for seventh-century Lombard society later on, in CHAPTERS FIVE and SIX.


679 *LLRot*, prol.: “Quanta pro subiectorum nostrorum commodo nostrae fuit sollicitudinis cura, et est, subter *adnexa* tenor declarant; principue tam propter adsiduas fatigaciones pauperum, quam etiam superflus exactiones ab his qui maiore virtute habentur; quos vim pati cognovimus. Ob hoc considerantes Dei omnipotentis gratiam, necessarium esse prospeeximus presentem corrigere legem, quae prioribus annis renovet et emendet, et quod deest adicat, et quod superfluum est abscidat. In unum previdimus volumine conplectendum, quatusin flicat
Rothari clearly speaks of an existing law (or legal tradition) that he intends the new law code to correct and to amend. It could be suggested that a similar intent is behind Rothari’s concern with the copies of the law that would circulate, as he commanded that the only valid copies were those produced by the royal notary, Ansoald (Rot 388). The king wanted to guarantee that all the available copies were the correct and, arguably, updated version.

The legal procedure stated at the prologue, however, should be contrasted with Rot 386, which works as an (first) epilogue (or a second prologue) of the law. The entry, however, is followed by a couple of seemingly random additions that appear oddly out of place in the Edict, whose structure up to that point is somewhat regular. Rot 386 presents a somewhat different composition of the law:

The present Edict of our dispositions, which, by the favour of God, we composed with great labour and immense attention from the heavenly creator, investigating (inquirentes) and recalling (rememorantes) the ancient laws of our forefathers, which were not written, and which are expedient for common good of all of our people; and which we establish with the counsel and the consent of our leading indices, and with the addition of (augentes) the entirety of our most successful army (felicissimum exercitum), we command to be written in this parchment, deliberating and maintaining, according to this chapter [i.e. Rot 386], that henceforth, we shall add to this Edict whatever we can recall (memorare), with the help of the divine clemency, through fine-grained investigation (inquisitionem) of the old laws of the Lombards, not only by ourselves, but also by older men; indeed we add, confirming by gairethinx according to the due process of our people, that this law be firm and stable, so that it be protected, by all our subjects, firmly and inviolably in the times to come.

unumquemque salva lege et iustitia quiete vivere, et propter opinionem contra inimicos laborare, seque suosque defendere fines.” (emphasis added)

For the structure of the Edict, see Azzara and Gasparri, Le Leggi dei Longobardi: storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo germanico, xxviii–xxix; Everett remarked that such an internal organization attests for the quality of the people involved in putting it together, see “Literacy and Law,” 99. Azzara suggests the following division: 1–13 (crimes against public authority); 14–145 (crimes against private people); 146–152 (crimes against property); 153–177 (succession); 178–223 (marital law); 224–226 (manumission); 227–244 (property); 245–252 (obligations); 253–358 (minor crimes); 359–366 (legal procedures); 367–388 (miscellaneous: “…hanno carattere eterogeneo e danno l’impressione di essere delle aggiunte, a scopo di integrazione, chiarimento, precisazione ulteriore su singoli casi”)

I.L.Rot 386: “Presentem vero dispositionis nostrae edictum— quem Deo propriitio cum summo studio et summis vigiliis a celestem faborem praestitis, inquirentes et rememorantes antiquas legis patrum nostrorum quae scriptae non erant, condedimus, et, quae [pro quod] pro communibus [pro commune] omnium gentis nostrae utilisitatis expedient, pari consilio parique consensum cum primatos indices, cunctoque felicissimum exercitum nostrum augentes constitutimus—in hoc membranum scribere iussimus, pertractantes et sub hoc tamen capitulo reservantes, ut quod adhuc, annuentem divinam elementam, per subtilem inquisitionem de antiquas legis Langobardorum, tam per nosmetipsos quam per antiquos homines memorare potuerimus, in hoc edictum subiungere debeamus; addentes, quin etiam et per gairethinx secundum ritus gentis nostrae confirmantes, ut sit haec lex firma et stabile: quatinus nostris felicissimis et futuris temporibus firmiter et inviolabiliter ab omnibus nostris subjectis costodiatur.”
In contrast to the prologue, which indicates the king role as a legislator, Rot 386 suggests that the laws were collected from the tradition, emphasizing terms related to research (inquirentes, inquisitio) and to memory (rememorantes, memorare).\footnote{Taking the passage at face value, Paolo Delogu recently suggested that “[i]n Rothari’s conception, those laws were nothing but the customs observed by the Lombard people since the days of old; they were the people’s national heritage;” in “Kingship,” 256–57. Further on, however, Delogu grants Rothari some agency in the codification, and denies that the content of the Edict was a sign of “atavistic Lombardisms,” (259) and suggests the law is “at the same time traditional law and royal law,” (258) but concludes that “the kingdom acknowledged one tradition only, that of the Lombards, which the king renewed and fostered as the basis for his subjects’ unity and solidarity,” though qualified (Romani) candidates could enter such “legal bound” (259). Such model should break with the tendency of evaluating “Lombard political history as a sequence of schizophrenic attitudes” (260). The nature of these ‘legal memory’, however, is hardly specified in the text, but it possibly referred to multiple sources, including older Roman legislation, current legal practice, royal edicts, and so on.} Such a process would not have been prompted by the legal concerns of the king (as suggested in the prologue), but by the consensus of the most prominent indices and all the Lombard army (the felicissimus exercitus), which most scholars want to see as a representation of the people.\footnote{For the army as a representation of the people, usually referred to popolo-esercito, see Stefano Gasparri, “Strutture militari e legami di dipendenza in Italia in età longobarda e carolingia,” Rivista storica italiana XCVIII (1986): 664-726, 674; Giovanni Tabacco, “Dai possessori dell’età carolingia agli esercitati dell’età longobardica,” Studi Medievali, ser. 3 10 (1969): 221-68, 227; cf. O. Bertolini, “Ordinamenti militari e strutture sociali dei longobardi in Italia,” Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medievo 15 (1968): 429-608, 446; Delogu, “Kingship,” 260–61.} The same idea of legislating as collecting half-remembered custom is present in the Bavarian law, constituting, however, the prologue.\footnote{Lex Bain. Prol.}

A possible solution, supported by some scholars, is to understand the law Rothari mentioned in the prologue, the one that should be corrected, as the collection of non-written Lombard traditions mentioned in Rot 386. Thus, the Edict would have been produced in one legislative effort, which started with the collection of old traditions, followed by Rothari’s and his legal experts’ redacting of the material, and concluded by a general assembly of the army/people to approve it.\footnote{For example, Stefano Gasparri, “La memoria storica dei Longobardi,” in Le Leggi dei Longobardi: storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo germanico, ed. Claudio Azzara and Stefano Gasparri (Milano: Editrice La Storia, 1992), v–xxii; Dilcher, “Per gairethinx,”; but see the objections in Nicholas Everett, “How Territorial was Lombard Law?” in Die Langobarden: Herrschaft und Identität, ed. Walter Pohl and Peter Erhart (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005), 345–60, 349, n.19.} If such were the case, however, the distribution of this information in the Edict would seem odd: why would the legislator hide such an important part of the legislative process, tucking it away in the end of the code, not even as a proper epilogue, since two more laws were added after this one (viz. Rot 387–88)? And even if that were actually the case, and this information was simply randomly added to the end (even
though the rest of the work seems to follow a rather well conceived structure), why would Rothari not mention his legislative role in Rot 386, as he had in the prologue? Bruno Paradisi offered another solution to the problem, proposing that the prologue and Rot 386 were actually part of different versions of the Edict. While Rothari would have included the prologue and personalized his version of the laws, he would have been working from a previous law code, based on the traditional law, which he modified including more royal based legislation, with a stronger presence of the royal court, a more active role of the gastaldii, and so on. In this attempt to define two redactions behind the final version of the Edict, Paradisi followed closely the work of Enrico Besta, who had suggested that the laws starting with si quis would mark an earlier draft or edition of the law code. Even though Besta’s attempt to use philological indications to identify previous legislation within the Edict is hard to substantiate in the surviving evidence, the idea that Rothari is working from an existing law agrees with the prologue, and also explains why material such as Rot 386 sits awkwardly in the present redaction. In this case, we can suggest that Rothari started with an existing written law code that had previously been used, which he modified with the “contents added” (tenor adnexa) to the previous law. Such questions, however, depend on a much-needed revision the textual history of the Edict, which received little attention since Bluhme’s nineteenth-century edition.

The nature of this pre-existing legal material is hard to define, and scholars have long scrutinized the Edict for textual parallels with other legislation, ranging from Roman legal material pre- and post-Justinian, to Danish and Anglo-Saxon law. Prominent amongst the noticeable textual influences are Justinian’s new Constitutions and Visigothic legal material, borrowed directly or through a Bavarian connection. Nonetheless, besides the Roman borrowings (which, as we will see below, Rothari had good reason to keep visible on the surface), most of the associations with surviving legal material are indirect and hard to pin down, which explains the great amount of dissenting scholarship. With such a vast array of

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682 I.I.Rot, prol.
683 The best account of the debate is still Cavanna, “Nuovi problemi,” esp. 270–81.
684 “Nuovi problemi,” 274.
685 Below, pp. 197–98.
influences, it is impossible to single down the base for the *Edict* in any surviving code, and it is not implausible that the law Rothari to which was referring was actually some compendium of Roman legislation. It is tempting, however, to suggest that the laws Rothari was working from might have originated in the same outburst of legal production from which (possibly) the first versions of the Bavarian and the Alamannic laws originated: the Merovingian court under Chlothar II and Dagobert I. Even though speculative, it is not too far fetched to imagine that Chlothar or Dagobert, in one of the Frankish interventions in Italy (see 4.1.3), foisted laws onto the Lombards, in the same way they might have imposed laws to the Bavarian and Thuringian kingdoms. With the death of Dagobert (639) and the declining power of the Franks, Rothari was able to adjust the laws to the benefit of a stronger kingship and published it under his name (which gained him everlasting fame), hence the stressing of his role correcting and adjusting the law (*Rot*, prol), and his concern with official copies (*Rot* 388). The idea of an inquiry into traditional laws was kept for its role in legitimizing the law, but removed from the prologue and moved to the end (*Rot* 386). The narrative of the creation of the law as a collection of traditions, which would still find currency in the Bavarian and Alamannic law, lost ground to a more king-centred narrative, in which the ruler (and his concern for his people) was the driving force behind the new codification.

*Rothari’s Monarchy*

The extent to which Rothari reworked this proposed older law code, however, remains speculative. Arguably, Rothari changed and included laws, especially in what concerned the specific needs of the monarchy, such as the role of the royal courts, and lèse-majesté, amongst others; the extent Rothari added to those laws, however, depends strongly on how royal-centred the previous law code was, an index we simply cannot establish. In any case, monarchical power is firmly established and defended in the *Edict*: Rothari not only legislated

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693 For the similarities between the Bavarian prologue and *L.L.Rot* 386, see Paradisi, “Il prologo,” esp. 21–31.

694 The philological argument proposed by Besta (and somewhat followed by Bognetti) fall short of accounting for a more sophisticated re-elaboration of the text, which would in all likelihood erase obvious cases of cut and past, such as the *si quis* entries. The solution adopted here was to focus on entries related to the main directives of the prologue—i.e. protect the poor and maintain peace—as those likely to have been innovations, especially if the legal prescriptions stand out in comparison with other contemporary laws; see Besta, “Fonti.”; Bognetti, “Influsso,” 42.
on the role of the king, but also infused the *Edict* with royal ideology neatly packaged in traditional rhetoric. 

The *Edict* legislates on the position of the king in several laws (many of them bearing resemblance to other barbarian codes, especially the Bavarian and Alamanic laws). A few laws reinforce the position of the king, such as Rot 1, for example, which punishes crimes of lèse-majesté, and Rot 2 (and 11) that protects those killing someone at the king’s behest from claims of compensation. Similarly, Rothari maintains the privileged position of suits involving the king or his servant (e.g. Ro. 369-74). Rothari was also concerned with maintaining the royal prerogative on coinage (Rot 242) and, as we already mentioned, controlling the authorized copies of the *Edict* (Rot 388). In addition, the king established higher fines for *scandalum* in his presence (Rot 36–37, specially in an army gathering, Rot 8). The bulk of the legislation concerning kings, however, has to do with fines and the participation of royal courts in different situations.

In addition to legal instructions concerning the royal office, the *Edict* was loaded with royal ideology, most of it, as usual, compressed in the prologue and in the epilogue (Rot 386). The political discourse in the *Edict* can be divided into three major arguments: first, that the Lombard monarchy was legally sound and legitimate in its actions; second, that the monarchy was divinely sanctioned and properly Christian (which provided additional support for the first argument); and third, that the Lombards constituted a people in their own right, whose antiquity provided an extra source of legitimacy.


697 For examples of royal claims to fines, see *LLRot* 4, 8, 9, 13, 15, 18–22; 25–28; 37–39; 158–60; 162; 182; 185; 189; 191; 200; 209; 236; 238; 240; 244; 249; 251; 266–67; 279; 280; 369; 374; 376.

698 The oldest surviving manuscript for the *Edict* (*Cod. Sang.* 730), however, lacks both the prologue and the epilogue (last entry is 371); it has been usually ascribed to the bad condition of the copy: see Dold, *Zur ältesten Handschrift des Edictus Rothari : Urfassung des Langobardengesetzes : Zeit und Ort ihrer Entstehung* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1955); Paradisi, "Il prologo," 3; Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Dáibhi O Cróinín and David Ganz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 191; Everett, "Literacy and Law," 100.

The legality of the Edict is reinforced by an extensive use of traditional legal jargon, whose intention is to contextualize the Edict within a larger framework of Roman legal traditions. Much work has been done to highlight the extensive borrowing from Roman legislation in the Edict, and scholars have traced numerous references and expressions taken from previous Roman legislation in the Edict.\(^700\) The Roman elements in the prologue start with the careful dating of the document, a legal practice Constantine made mandatory in 322.\(^701\)

I, King Rothari, in the name of God, *vir excellentissimus* and seventeenth king of the Lombards, in the eighth year of my reign, by the grace of God, thirty eight years of age, in the second indiction, and in the seventy-sixth year since the advent of the Lombards in the province of Italy, who were conducted by divine power in the time of Alboin, the king at that time. Auspiciously published in Pavia, at the royal palace.\(^702\)

The dating is a curious mix of personal data on Rothari, ‘national’ data on the Lombards, and the firm Roman indiction. After the date, Rothari states that the “constant burdens of the poor” and the “undue demands” of the powerful were the reason for adjustments to the law (see 5.1.2), justifying the adjustments of the law. With that, Rothari makes direct reference to earlier legislation, and most specifically to Justinian. The expression “which may renew and improve all the former laws, supply what is lacking and expunge what is unnecessary” is taken verbatim from Justinian’s *Nov.* 7, while the idea of renewing legislation is borrowed from *Nov.* 78, 82 and also from the opening statement of the Codex Iustinianus (the constitution *Haec quae necessario*).

Even though the Edict usually stays away from religious (and ecclesiastical) matters,\(^703\) the Christian tone is omnipresent in the text. Rothari is represented as ruling according to divine providence (*Deo propitiante*); the Lombards were guided into Italy by the power of God (*divina potentia adducti sunt*). Rot 2 (which maintains the king’s right to summary execution and protects those carrying out his wishes) also uses the Bible to ground the divine legitimacy of the royal rule in “we believe that the hearts of kings are in the hand of God,” echoing

\(^{700}\) See, for example, Besta, “Le fonti.”; Paradisi, “Il prologo.”; Cavanna, “Nuovi problemi.”; Astuti, “Influssi.” For a detailed list of the influences from Roman legislation, see “Influssi,” 672–74. For a similar list relating the Edict with other so-called barbarian legislation, see Besta, “Le fonti,” 52–64.

\(^{701}\) C. Th. 1.1.1. Thanks to that, Rothari’s Edict provides one of the very few precise dates for Lombard history.

\(^{702}\) *LL.Rat*, prl: “Ego in Dei nomine Rothari, vir excellentissimus et septimodecimum rex gentis Langobardorum anno Deo propitiante regni mei octabo, acetasque tricesimo octabo, indicione secunda, et post adventum in provincia Italiae Langobardorum, ex quo, Alboin tunc temporis regem precedentem divina potentia, adducti sunt, anno septuagesimo sexto; feliciter dato Ticino in palatio.”

\(^{703}\) See, for example, Delogu, “Il regno,” 58.
Proverbs, 21.1. The very legislative process, when it is portrayed in the *epilogue* as a collection of traditions, is also described as influenced by divine providence, with the “favour of God” (*Deo propitio*) and the “help of divine clemency” (*annuentem divinam clementiam*). Beyond Rothari’s legislative role and the weight of tradition, God is the driving force behind the codification.

Finally, Rothari relies on the idea of a *gens Langobardorum* as a source for legitimacy. Unlike Agilulf, *rex totius Italiae*, Rothari describes himself as *rex gentis Langobardorum*. The *Edict* is the earliest mention of the title in a Lombard source. The use of the title was limited to the prologues of law codes: the royal charters, in the format that survived, never adopt the qualification. This disparity in the royal titles highlights the artificial nature of the national discourse in the law code. The ‘ethnic’ background plays a much more prominent role in Rothari’s *Edict* (and even greater in later Lombard legislation) than it played in society, or so the charters seem to show. Notwithstanding the prologue and epilogue, even in the *Edict* ethnicity seems to have play no role other than to provide further legitimacy for Rothari’s position: ethnic Lombards receive no special treatment under the law, and ethnicity does not seem to have constituted a legal category. Furthermore, foreigners coming to the kingdom (who the *Edict* calls *waregang*) were incorporated under the Lombard law, unless the king allowed them to maintain another legal tradition (*Rot 367*). Nonetheless, the *Edict*’s prologue proclaims that the founding moment of Lombard history was Alboin’s arrival in Italy: to this historical past, a mythological genealogy is added, projecting the royal power back into a far away—and hence respectable—past. The royal genealogy that closes the prologue is the earliest surviving historical text produced by the Lombards, and bears resemblance to

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706 *L.L.Rot*. Prol.
707 For the use of ethnic titles in legal codes, see Wormald, *Lex Scripta*; 107; Gillett, “Was Ethnicity Politicized?” (for the Lombards, 112–13).
708 See the collected royal charters in CDL 3. The absence of the ethnic title was already remarked by Chroust in Anton Chroust, *Untersuchungen über die langobardischen Königs- und Herzogsurkunden* (Graz: Verlags-Buchhandlung Styria, 1888), 28–31; see also Brühl, *Studien*. The Lombard royal title in the charters is consistent from the first king whose charter was preserved (Agilulf) to the last king (Desiderius), all being called “Flavius…vir excellentissimus rex.” There is, however, no surviving charter from Rothari.
Ostrogothic ethnography; as their Ostrogothic counterparts, the Lombard royal family tree would go back seventeen generations.\(^\text{710}\) Rothari introduced an innovation, however, by acknowledging that the Lombard kings came from different families, which he dutifully added to the list.\(^\text{711}\)

The references to the Lombard past are repeated in the epilogue: here, the text claims the laws were put down from the “ancient laws of our forefathers” (\textit{antiquas legis patrum nostrorum}), recovered of what could be remember by the royal court or by older men (“\textit{tam per nosmetipsos, quam per antiquos homines memorare potuerimus}”).\(^\text{712}\) Rothari capitalized on the ‘ethnic’ past as an additional source of legitimacy, much needed in a context in which a foreign political agent—the Byzantine emperor—still held the monopoly of traditional forms of legitimacy.\(^\text{713}\) The ‘ethnic’ past could provide Rothari with further justification for his additions: in other words, the novelty of the \textit{Edict} was dressed up as tradition. That certainly does not rule out the possibility—very likely in any case—that many legal traditions were incorporated into the \textit{Edict} and became laws: such traditions existed, and were part of the conflict-solving strategies present in the \textit{Edict}. These traditions were probably a kaleidoscope of legal practices, which combined local practices, vulgar Roman laws, extra-official army regulations and customs brought from the most various backgrounds of the armies settled in Italy. To try to pin down this legal tradition, or to ascribe it to a unique ‘Germanic’ background is to ignore the diversity of post-Roman cultural milieux.

Notwithstanding Rothari’s use of ethnic elements, the mention of “our most successful army” in the epilogue, should not be over interpreted. The mention of the army, and the mysterious \textit{gairethinxe} has led scholars to contextualize the \textit{Edict} in a period in which the Lombards were still seen as the ‘popolo-esercito’, some sort of archaic state of civilization in which an entire people is conceived as an army, and to suggest that Rothari was addressing


\(^{712}\) \textit{L.Rot.} 386.

\(^{713}\) On the complex interaction between Roman traditional expressions of power and the post-Roman kingdoms in the west, see McCormick, \textit{Eternal Victory}, 260–384.
his laws to this amalgam of army and people as an opposition to ducal power. The presence of the army working as a corps in political decisions is, nonetheless, a rather standard characteristic of the period, not only referred to in Roman legislation, such as Justinian’s *Novella* 8 and the *Pragmatica Sanctorum* (§18), but also in the *Liber Pontificalis*, where, in many instances the army of Rome, in the very sense of Rothari’s *felicissimus exercitum nostrum*, is mentioned vouching for the papal elections. Both in the papal and in the Byzantine context, it is clear that the mention of the army testifies to the growing presence of the army as a sector of society, suggesting there was nothing specifically Lombard about including the consent of the army as a guarantor of the legislative process.

4.2.3 Rothari’s Wars

As was the case with Agilulf, the waning of Frankish and Byzantine power in Italy allowed Rothari not only to strengthen the royal position, but also produced an opportunity for a military expansion. Scholarship has often associated the beginning of Rothari’s campaigns with the promulgation of his *Edict* in November of 643. The renewed aggression against the Byzantine, goes the argument, would have happened immediately after the promulgation of the *Edict*: after harvest and before the winter, as one commentator suggests. Such dating of the campaign depends on the death of the exarch Isaac, who was supposedly killed in a battle against the Lombards by the river Scultenna, according to the Origo (c. 6) (although no Byzantine commander is not mentioned): Isaac’s sarcophagus still stands in S. Vitale (Ravenna), and its inscription claims that Isaac served the “serene princes for three times six years,” and that he died a “glorious death” (*τούτου θανόντος ευχλεως*). According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Isaac died at some point in the pontificate of Theodorus (642–49). We know that Isaac was already exarch under Pope Honorius I (625–38), who sent the exarch a

715 For example, see *LP*, *Vita Benedicti II*, 83.3; *Vita Cononis*, 85. For the context, see Brown, *Gentlemen and Officers*, esp. 82–108. See also Paradisi, who considers the mention of the army another Roman *topos*, see “Il prologo,” 30.  
717 *Corpus Inscrip. Graec.* IV, 1877.  
718 *LP*, *Vita Theodori*, 75.2.
letter during the rebellion that deposed Adaloald (c. 626).\textsuperscript{719} Ottorino Bertolini suggested that if Isaac became exarch in 625, and ruled for eighteen years, he probably died in 643, the same year of the promulgation of the code. Also, he argues, the mention of a ‘glorious death’ could only mean that he died in battle: the confrontation involving eight thousand Byzantine soldiers, mentioned by the \textit{Origo},\textsuperscript{720} would have been the perfect occasion for such a death.

In a battle of this magnitude, the exarch was likely present, and there he was killed; the Byzantines, however, were able to stall Rothari’s advances towards Ravenna, and hence Isaac’s death was portrayed as ‘glorious’.\textsuperscript{721} Finally, in addition to the date of the Isaac’s supposed death in battle, the final lines of the \textit{Edict}’s prologue have been read as a military harangue and for this reason the \textit{Edict} has been framed as Rothari’s preparations for the war, or even as an actual decoy to mobilize the army without warning the Byzantine forces.\textsuperscript{722}

The connection between Rothari’s legal efforts and his campaigns has been widely accepted by scholarship, although it rests on fragile basis.\textsuperscript{723} We will first tackle the supposedly military harangue in the prologue: the main evidence for a military background to the \textit{Edict} comes first from the final lines of the prologue, which allude to the purpose of the laws. The passage, however, is in a rather cryptic Latin: “In unum previdimus volumine conplectendum, quatinus liceat unumquemque salva lege et iustitia quiete vivere, et propter opinionem contra inimicos laborare, seque suosque defendere fines.”\textsuperscript{724} The coincidence of ‘inimicos’ and ‘defendere fines’ has led scholars to read the passage as an exaltation of martial values. In the most current translation, that passage reads:

\begin{quote}
Vogliamo che sia riunito tutto in un volume, perché sia consentito a ciascuno vivere in pace nelle legge e nella giustizia e con questa consapevolezza impegnarsi contro i nemici e difendere se stesso e il proprio paese.\textsuperscript{725}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{719} \textit{Ep. Lang.} 2, see 4.1.3, pp. 180–81.
\textsuperscript{720} \textit{Origo}, c. 6; cf. \textit{HL} 4.45.
\textsuperscript{722} Bognetti, “L’Editto,” 130–33.
\textsuperscript{723} For example in recent scholarship, see Gasparri, \textit{Italia Longobarda}, 44; Jarnut, “Wer waren,” 96.
\textsuperscript{724} \textit{I.L.Roth.}, propl. (emphasis added)
\textsuperscript{725} Azzara and Gasparri, \textit{Leggi}, 13 (emphasis added). The translation suggested by Beyerle is not much different: “Und in ein Ganzes wollten Wir’s zusammenfassen, auf daß ein jeder nach Gesetz und Recht sein friedlich Leben führe und im Vertrauen darauf sich [desto williger] gegen den Feind einsetze, sich und sein [Heimat-]Land verteidige.” (\textit{Gesetze}, vol. 1, 5 (emphasis added). In the only available English translation: “We desire that these laws be brought together in one volume so that everyone may lead a secure life in accordance with law and justice, and in confidence thereof will willingly set himself against his enemies and defend himself and his homeland.” (Drew, \textit{The Lombard laws}, 39 (emphasis added).
The meaning of such a translation apparently is that “[the traditional customs turned into legislation] were meant to ensure the Lombard people’s welfare and peace. In return for his care, the king expected loyal obedience from his subjects, and their common solidarity in the war against the enemies of the kingdom.”

The Latin, however, hardly supports such a translation. “Brought together in a single tome,” says the text, “the law would allow one to laborare propter opinionem contra inimicos and to se suosque defendere fines.” Scholars have consistently translated ‘suos fines’ as the borders of the country, which goes against the text: it is reasonably clear that the legislator would not use suos to modify the borders of the kingdom, at best, he would have opted for nostros. Taking into account the material in the Edict, it is more likely that with suos fines the legislator intended ‘his [own] limits’, i.e. the limits of one’s property. Thus, we translate se suosque defendere fines as “to defend their person and their property.” In addition to that, the correct translation of propter opinionem, which is commonly thought to convey ‘willfully’, is rather ‘for (or according to) reputation’. The question is, what the legislator meant by “work for reputation against the enemy”? The language of the law code uses inimicus and variations (esp. inimicitia) both in the sense of external enemies and in the sense of domestic opponents at law. In the internal context of the Edict, it could be either (or both); the collection assembles laws about external enemies and internal conflict. However, it is hard to imagine how working for one’s reputation would affect external enemies. Furthermore, the legislator chose ‘laborare’ (instead of ‘pugnare’ or ‘praevalere’, for example), and it is relatively clear that he

\[\text{726 Delogu, “Kingship,” 256.} \]
\[\text{727 Azzara & Gasparri: ‘il proprio paese’; Beyerle: ‘sein Heimatland’; Drew: ‘homeland’.} \]
\[\text{728 In the two instances in which fines is used for the borders of the country, the word is qualified either by ‘provinciae’ (LLRot 264: “Si libet aut servus vellet foris provincia fugire, et iudex aut quicumque, qui in finibus provinciae resedit em praeserit…” or by ‘exteras’ and ‘regni nostri’ in LLRot 367: “Omnes uuaregang, qui de exteras fines in regni nostri finibus adverint…” Cf. Ratchis’s LLRat 13, which uses ‘mura’ for border.} \]
\[\text{729 As the prologue states, Rothari was concern about the ‘superflas exactiones’ from the rich, so he is hence set to protect the property of everyone (see 5.1.2); there is clear legislation protecting actual markers of fines; see LLRot 236, 238–41. In addition to that, the Edict protects private curtes (32–34; 277–78), and limits to private property in general (e.g. 269–76; 281–302).} \]
\[\text{730 The classical usage allows for ‘opinio’ as ‘belief’, ‘rumour or fancy’ or ‘reputation’. For the post-classical usage, ‘opinio’ is used as ‘fame’ (fama) and ‘reputation’ (existimatio), or ‘report’ (nuntius) and ‘rumour’ (rumor). In the Lombard legal vocabulary, it usually is used to mean ‘reputation’. According to Du Cange, ‘opinio’ has two different meaning in post-Classical Latin: it can mean ‘fama, existimatio’ or it can mean ‘rumor, fama, nuntius’ (cf. Niemeyer, opinio: ‘repute, fame’). The word is not common in Lombard law codes: it was used twice, once by Liutprand (8.2: “Testis uero ipsis tales sint, quorum opinio in bonis esse conspexit, quia, qui pro opinionem suam iurare nollebat, dabat pro sacramentum suum aliquid, et habebat damnietatem sine causa” [emphasis added]), and once by Ratchis (8.4: “Quod nobis et nostri iudicibus durum esse consperrupt, quia, qui pro opinionem suam iurare nollebat, dabat pro sacramentum suum aliquid, et habebat damnietatem sine causa” [emphasis added]). Both cases bear the meaning of ‘fame, reputation’.} \]
\[\text{731 External enemies: LLRot 4, 7; internal enemy: LLRot 45 (“faida, hoc est inimicitia”), 143, 326, (cf. LLLiut 119.3).} \]
meant ‘to work’ or to ‘strive for’, and hence we translate it as ‘to strive for [maintaining a good] reputation against the enemies’. What the legislator is advocating is that, to strive to maintain one’s reputation, and to safeguard property, one could now rely on the Edict, now neatly assembled in one single volume, and would no longer have to rely on faida, which is one of the most prominent subjects in the Edict. This alternative reading, which in fact accounts better for the Latin, also preserves the consistency between the prologue and the content of the Edict, in which provisions to maintain peace and prevent faida are by far the prominent motif of the code.

The connection between Isaac’s death and the promulgation of the Edict is also tenuous. The dating of Isaac’s death depends on several uncertain date and is, consequently, less precise than Bertolini lets out. The date depends on Isaac’s tombstone (Corpus Ins. Greac. IV, 1877), which mentions he served for eighteen years—together with the letter Isaac received from Honorius (Ep. Lang. 2), which is dated to 625, it suggests the exarch died in 643, the same year of the promulgation of the Edict. Honorius’s letter, however, contains no date, and is instead placed approximately at the very end of Adaloald’s reign, whose dates are also uncertain: the only stable date is the accession of Rothari, which happened eight years before the publication of his Edict in November 643, and, as a result, Rothari became king in 635 (or 636?). The dates for Adaloald and Arioald depend on the date of accession of Rothari combined with the time each king is supposed to have ruled. The length of their reigns, however, is not a given: Adaloald supposedly ruled for 10 years (Origo codices Gothaniis, c.6, HL 4.41, Cont. Hav. 1556), but maybe only six years (Origo, c.6); after him, Arioald ruled for twelve (Origo, c.6 Paul the Deacon, HL 4.42) or ten years (Origo codices Gothaniis, c.6). Hence, according to Paul, Arioald came to power in 623/4, and Adaloald in 613/14; for the Origo, however, Arioald came to power in 623/4 and Adaloald in 617/18; the Origo cod. Got. suggests 625/6 for Arioald and 619/20 for Adaloald. And that is only considering both date from the same author, although it is not unlikely that one author had one correct date and the other one wrong. To further complicate this dating, the earliest of the two surviving charters emitted by Adaloald (CDL 3.2) is dated to the fifteenth indiction (i.e. 627), said to be the twelfth year of his rule.\footnote{\textit{CDL} 3.2. Brühl contested this date, given that in the indiction the “quinta” was a correction added to the “decima” and he dismissed the corrector in principle, suggesting the correct number should be any indiction but the one suggested by the corrector, dating thus the charter from the eleventh to the fourteenth (i.e. 623 to}
convenient, is misleading. Furthermore, the *Liber Pontificalis* places Isaac’s death after a triumph—he had just defeated the usurpation of Maurice, and had paraded his head on the circus—and in the middle of a process of judging Maurice’s collaborators. To the papal chancellery, Isaac died by a *divino ictu*, which given his age would arguably relate to some acute health condition.733

*The limits of Rothari’s campaign: Liguria, Tuscia & Emilia*

Independent of the publication of the *Edict*, Rothari launched an offensive campaign against the Byzantine forces in Italy, the first on record since the peace established by Agilulf. Rothari’s campaigns are considered to be extremely successful, and to the king is ascribed a considerable increase in the limits of the kingdom.734 Rothari’s success, however, does not withstand a close scrutiny of the sources. Dismissing the connection between the *Edict* and Rothari’s campaigns removes any possibility of a specific chronology, but the sources suggest Rothari seized the opportunity created by the dwindling presence of the Franks and the chaos in the Empire to expand his area of control, grasping territories from Ravenna. The campaign is attested both in Fredegar and in the *Origo*:

Fredegar 4.71

Rothari and his army, capturing from the empire the coastal cities of Genoa, Albingano, Varicotti, Saona, Oderzo and Luni, devastated and demolished them, and setting them on fire; he took away the people, plundered them, and condemned them to captivity. Destroying the walls of those cities we mentioned down to the foundations, he commanded those cities to be henceforth called hamlets.735

*Origo gentis Langobardorum* c.6

And after Arioald Rothari, from the Arodus family ruled. He destroyed the Roman city and fortress that were around the shore of Luni up to the land of the Franks, and also Oderzo to the east. He also fought around the river Scultenna, [where] eight thousand soldiers from the Roman army died.736

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626); there is no reason, in this case, to dismiss the corrector altogether. In any case, the CDL 3.2. does little to clarify the debate; the date in CDL 3.3. is missing.

733 *LP*, *Vita Theodori*, 75.2.

734 See, for example, Wickham, *Italy*, 37; Delogu, “Il regno,” 60–61; Jarnut, *Geschichte*, 57–58.

735 Fred. 4.71: “Chrotharius cum exercito Genava maretema, Albingano, Varicotti, Saona, Ubitergio et Lune civitates litore mares de imperio auferens, vastat, rumpit, incendio concremam; populum derepit, spoliat et captivitate condemnat. Murus civitatebus supscriptis usque ad fundamento distruens, vicus has civitates nomenare praecepit.”

736 *Origo*, c.6. “Et post ipso [Aroal], regnavit Rothari ex genere Arodus, et rupit civitatem vel castra Romanorum quae fuerunt circa litora apriso Lune usque in terra Francorum quam Ubitergium ad partem orienti, et pugnavit circa fluvium Scultenna, et eciderunt a parte Romanorum octo milia numerus.”
Archeology, however, has found so far no confirmation of the levels of destruction (suggested especially by Fredegar) in Liguria. Even though there is some evidences of a shift in settlement in the 640s, the changes seem to have happened within a framework of continuous patterns of distribution of material culture. In addition to that, no signs of destruction have been found on the Byzantine castra on the shoreline, and most of them appeared to have had similar fates to S. Antonino (on of the best excavated sites), which was abandoned in the 640s. It is more likely that the Byzantine troops were evacuated from Liguria, and moved to Ravenna in the aftermath of Arab incursions in the East, in an attempt to concentrate the available military resources. The evacuation of troops seems to be confirmed by the presence of a numerus Laetus or Laetorum in Ravenna, a troop stationed in Genoa back in the 590s. In this scenario, Rothari moved to claim the region, plundering his way up to the sea: it is not unlikely that Rothari also pulled down the city walls, as Fredegar suggests, in order to demilitarize the region. Rothari might have extended his effort into Tuscia, at least as far as Arezzo, and ended up clashing with remaining Byzantine troops on the way to Ravenna. Even though the Origo celebrates the battle as a major victory, in which the Byzantines lost eight thousand soldiers, it does not seem that Rothari gained any advantage from the victory, since no tribute is recorded, nor territorial gains, nor record of an attempt to besiege Ravenna. Conversely, the plundering of Oderzo, also mentioned by the Origo, might be the work of the nearby duke of Cividale, and not of Rothari.

*Agilulf and Rothari are the two best-known and most successful Lombard kings of the early days of Lombard rule in Italy. A close analysis of their rule points out two similarities, and a striking difference. In the background of the success of both kings is a period of crisis and conflict for both major powers interested in Italy, the Franks and the Empire. We have


738 The numerus is referred to in Agnellus, c. 140 (for a muster in 710); it was formerly in Genoa is in an inscription of 591 (CIL V,2 7771 = ILCV 550), see Brown, Gentlemen and Officers, 90; Christie, “Liguria,” 264–65.

739 CDL 1.19.
suggested that the establishment of the Lombard kingdom under Authari was a Frankish strategic decision, which arguably conceived that a client kingdom, contained by the Po and the Alps, would provide a buffer zone between Francia and the Empire, and, as long as the rest of the Peninsula remained in imperial hands, would not in itself become a power that could threaten southern Frankish territories, which had formerly been ruled by the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy (see 3.1). On two different occasions, however, the Franks were too involved in their own crises to be able to actively intervene in Italy, a circumstance that allowed Agilulf in the late 590’s and early 600’s, and Rothari in the late 640’s and early 650’s to pursue a more aggressive policy in the peninsula. Coincidently, both periods also witnessed crises in the Eastern Empire, with the usurpation of Phocas in 602 and the disaster at the hands of the Arabs in 636. In between these two periods, however, the Lombards were subjected to Frankish influence personified by Theudelinda and Gundeperga, which we christened ‘the Frankish matriarchate.’ In their periods of liberty, both kings strove to strengthen the hold of monarchy on Lombard society by adopting and adapting traditional motifs and symbols of power. They also profited from the situation by trying to expand the Lombard kingdom. At this point, their trajectories differ. When Agilulf assumed control of the Lombards, the area under his direct power was smaller than a 125 km radius from Milan, beyond which he already had to confront rebel dukes: notwithstanding, he managed to put down internal resistance, repeatedly defeated the Byzantine forces, and by exacting tribute, claimed mastery over both Ravenna and Rome. In addition, he was able to appease the Franks, while keeping them out of Italy, and extend his influence beyond his borders into Pannonia, in an alliance with the Avars. In turn, Rothari captured Liguria, which in all likelihood had been abandoned, extended his influence slightly into Tuscia, and presumably came to a draw in a battle against the Byzantine forces. At no stage, as far as our sources can tell, did he threaten either Rome or Ravenna, nor did he further the position of the Lombards against the Byzantine in Italy. The root of this discrepancy is to be found in the social and economic evolution during the period, and its impact on the organization and provision of the army. In the next chapter, we will tackle the developments of the economy and the social structure of the Lombards, and then, in CHAPTER SIX, turn to the impact on military service.
Chapter Five

Lombard Society in the Mid-Seventh Century

5.1 Society and Economy (c.600–650): 5.1.1 The Economic Involution; 5.1.2 Lombard Society in the Seventh Century; 5.1.3 A case study: Nocera Umbra & Castel Trosino. 5.2 Structure and Organization of the Army: 5.2.1 The Higher Offices; 5.2.2 Local Geography of Power.

In chapter three, we observed the evolution of the Lombard monarchy from the militarily successful Agilulf (590–616) to the relatively disappointing results of Rothari (636–52). The period also observed changes in the nature of the society of the Lombards, who settled as landowners after the collapse of taxation sometime at the end of the sixth-century (see 2.2.2 and 3.1.2). Rothari’s Edict, published in 643, provides a snapshot of seventh-century society, and is the main source for this chapter. The material in the Edict informs us about Lombard society in three different aspects. Fundamentally, as a law code, it provides a normative view of society—in other words, society as Rothari wanted it to be. In addition to that, the laws depict a series of offices and institutions, shedding light into their functions and social roles: Rothari legislates on dukes, gastaldii, freemen and slaves, royal courts, and faida amongst others, providing a picture of social structures writ large. In that, the Edict portrays society in a continuum, which presumably can be traced back to the settlement in the end of the sixth century. Finally, Rothari’s concerns and interventions inform us of recent changes in this social structure, both when the king recognizes new privileges and when he bemoans situations he condemns and provides legal remedies for them. This chapter focuses on the Edict to analyze the evolution of Lombard society between c. 600 and 650. Before turning to the material on the Edict, we need to first shed light on the development of economy (5.1.1), and then proceed to scrutinize the Edict to see the impact of the economy on social organization (5.1.2). Second, we turn to the organization of society—which, given the military nature of the Lombard state, is in itself the organization of the army—reviewing the higher offices (5.2.1) and the local expressions of this hierarchy (5.2.2).
5.1. Society and Economy (c. 600–650)

Fundamental to understanding the development of the Lombard society from Agilulf to Rothari is establishing the economic situation of Italy in the period. In the previous chapters, we have highlighted the importance of the general economic health to the maintenance of the army, and how by the turn of the seventh century the Lombard military households, then turned landholders, henceforth assumed the support of the army, providing the backbone for the elevation of Authari, and especially the successes of Agilulf. This section will first inspect the evidence for the development of the economy in the years that followed Agilulf up to Rothari, and then it will turn to the resulting changes in society.

5.1.1. Economic involution (c. 600–650)

This subsection deals with the changes in Italian economy in the first half of the seventh century. We argue here that the creation of a class of military landowners in the late sixth–early seventh century (see 3.1.2) prompted a limited economic boon under Agilulf (590–616), and that such prosperity funded Agilulf’s victorious army, whose successes further supported the system with the constant flow of booty and tributes (see 4.1.1–2). After Agilulf, however, the economy once again slowed down, hindered not only by structural reasons such as lack of manpower and lower productivity, but also by the reduction of profits from military victories. The main evidence for an aggravation of the economic situation in Italy come from changing patterns in the distribution of ceramics, especially the discontinuation of the style usually labeled ‘ceramica longobarda’.

Ceramica Longobarda and the Italian Economy

We have seen that the original system of military support, based on the redirection of taxes, quickly collapsed, on account of the weak output of the Italian economy, and that the heavily burdened Italian landowners, having failed to live up to the economic demands, bankrupted and lost their properties (2.2.2). This collapse, we suggested, led to the transformation of the Lombards from soldiers quartered around cities into local landowners, as their favorable position allowed them to profit most from the situation, acquiring low-priced lands (often, possibly, through extortion) (see 3.1.2). The process produced a class of landowning military families that provided the muscle for Agilulf’s successful campaigns against rebel dukes and against the Byzantine forces in the peninsula (see 3.1.3; 4.1.1–2). The
settlement and the transition of the Lombards into landholders prompted a temporary recovery in the later sixth-early seventh century: since production would support the army directly, taxation disappeared allowing the stagnant productive sector a little more breathing space. That small surplus was likely boosted by rewards from Agilulf’s profitable wars and the tributes the king managed to collect from Rome and Ravenna, which would presumably trickle down to the troops as donatives (see 4.1).

This recovery can probably be well represented by the spread of the ceramic style usually called ceramica longobarda (or ‘ceramica comune’), a style consisting of small, decorated vessels, significantly different from older styles found in northern Italy. Chronologically, the ceramica longobarda appeared at the same time as the Lombard rebellion in Italy (c.568) and spread across the Po Valley. The distribution follows the pattern of weapon burials in Northern Italy, comprising ducal seats such as Cividale, the large traditional urban centres (Verona, Bergamo, Brescia, Mantua, Milan), the regions around Lake Como and Varese; it was also common in fortified centres (and present in tombs and settlements such as Sirmione, Castelseprio, Calvisano, Nosate, Sacalosadole, Testona, amongst others), and in rural settlements and graveyards (especially in regions at important crossroads, such as Arsago Septio, Sesto Calende, Varedo, Boffalora d’Adda, Castelanza, Botticino, Milzanello, Manerbio, Erbusco). It is rare south of the Po Valley, in central and southern Italy. The shape, dimensions, and composition all suggest the vessels were use as tableware, to serve beverages.

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scholars to label it *ceramica 'longobarda*', inferring the Lombards had carried it from Pannonia to Italy); the Italian wares, however, were professionally made on a wheel, resulting in a fine-ware with elegant finishing, “located at the top end of the market,” as Chris Wickham describes them.\textsuperscript{743} It is worth noting that the *ceramica longobarda* was produced and consumed locally,\textsuperscript{744} and often sites in which the *ceramica longobarda* is specially abundant can be traced back to older centres of ceramic production,\textsuperscript{745} whose output of traditional ceramic presumably gave way to the new style.

Both the local production and the adaptation of previous structure points to a new consumer market at the regional level. Despite its quality, the style is not found in extremely wealthy graves (which tended to favour imported vessels), suggesting the consuming group was of relatively good social standing, but not an aristocracy.\textsuperscript{746} The *ceramica longobarda* attests to the economic development of the early seventh century: the style, distribution, and quality of the *ceramica longobarda* suggest it catered to the now well-established Lombard soldiers. Throughout the Po Valley, the acquisition of land, together with the profits from Agilulf’s wars, would have endowed the Lombard military families with enough surplus to support a professional industry of fine tableware, which specifically targeted the soldiers using a style that had been popular in their Danubian homeland (for the composition of the Lombard army, see 1.2.3). The *ceramica longobarda* provides a useful indicator of the growth in prosperity of the Lombard soldiers, and the positive outcomes of Agilulf’s campaigns.

The presumable connection between the prosperity of the Lombard military households and the distribution of the *ceramica longobarda* suggested above has a further implication: given that the industry producing this style was intimately connected to the prosperity of the settled Lombard soldiers, the *ceramica longobarda* might serve as a ‘miner’s canary’ for the economic health of this segment of society. For as long as this group had enough surplus, they could support a professional industry of fine-wares, with dedicated workers, ovens, and so on. If the surplus was to shrink below a certain level, this industry would arguably became unsustainable and collapse, giving way to rougher, less professional wares.

\textsuperscript{743} Wickham, *Framing*, 731.
\textsuperscript{744} De Marchi, “Osservazioni,” 18; Wickham, *Framing*, 731; De Marchi, “Ceramica longobarda,” 288.
\textsuperscript{746} De Marchi suggests this group was composed of “tutte le classi sociali di cultura germanica immigrata;” see De Marchi, “Ceramica longobarda,” 281.
The Lombard canary died around 650. At the time, the ceramica longobarda disappears, together with the few imported products that still reached Italy. There was still a demand for ceramics, but what was available, according to the archaeological finds, was now rough pottery, even if some of it was still wheel-made. Such a change in technique, argued Brogiolo and Gelichi, attests to a change in the “apparati produttivi” of the region, which suggests that ceramics, as an independent industry, collapsed in the period. The simplicity of the new products attests to their origin in unspecialized domestic ateliers. Even though the disappearance of the ceramica longobarda agrees with the Mediterranean-wide gradual simplification of ceramics observed in the longue durée (c.300–700), scholars have wondered why it would happen to the ceramica longobarda then and there. Chris Wickham remarked that “nothing was going wrong with the Lombard polity around then” and suggested that “global demand must have decreased; it may well be that c.650 simply marked another catastrophe- flip, when falling demand finally made it impossible to carry on professional ceramic production any longer.” Wickham is probably right when he suggests the disappearance of the ceramica longobarda represents a reduction in demand, but he was misled looking for political reasons. The fate of the ceramica longobarda, we argued above, was strictly connected to the fate of the Lombard military households, whose economic prosperity generated a market for fine-wares in the first place. The distribution of ceramics, hence, suggests that this prosperity came to a halt at some point after Agilulf, impoverishing the military households, and sending the ceramics industry crashing down in its wake.

5.1.2 Lombard Society in the seventh-century

The general impoverishment certainly caused an impact on the organization of Lombard society. To the picture of economic evolution that the disposition of ceramics provides, Rothari’s Edict adds the dimension of social inequality. Rothari stressed the impact of social inequality as he bemoaned in the prologue the suffering of the poor, but also as he ascribed their misery to the abuse of the powerful. Rothari’s prologue paints a picture of inequality and social strife, which presumably reflects the developments of the economy sketched
above. This subsection will first tackle the elements pointing to impoverishment and social inequality in Rothari’s Edict, and it will then analyze the evidence for Lombard society in the first half of the seventh century.

Rothari’s prologue

We have mentioned that Rothari’s social concerns were prominent amongst the reasons for the publication of the laws (4.2.2). In this sense, the prologue of the Edict provides a valuable insight into the king’s perception of the social condition of the Lombards, and of the issues that were connected with the general impoverishment of society. The strongly rhetorical tone of the prologue (and of the ‘epilogue’, Rot 386) has led scholars to ignore the simple fact that the key to the Edict is not in secret agendas or hidden elements in the prologue.\(^{751}\)

Notwithstanding its rhetorical nature, the prologue introduces the reasons for the legal collection, highlighting Rothari’s intentions, and it would be expected that the guidelines presented there would permeate the text that follows. The prologue can be divided in three sections, namely, the problem to be addressed [1]; the legal operation to address it [2]; and the expected results [3]:

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[1] The contents added (tenor adnexa) below reveal how much was, and how much it is still, our concern for the well being of our subjects; especially on account not only of the constant burdens of the poor, but also the undue demands of those with greater power; such poor, we have learnt, suffer from abuse of power. [2] For this reason, and taking into account the grace of God, we have regarded it necessary to correct the present law, which may renew and improve all the former laws, supply what is lacking and expunge what is unnecessary. [3] We have made provision to encompass in one volume how it may be permitted—provided the law and justice is served—to live in peace, and to strive for honour against [their legal] adversaries (propter opinionem contra inimicos laborare), and to defend their person and their property (seque suosque defendere fines).

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Rothari states that he took notice of the constant suffering of the poor and the abuse of the powerful (1), which prompted him to alter the existing law (2) so that all his subjects could lead a peaceful life, solve their conflicts in peace, and protect themselves and properties (3). Rothari suggests that fixing the law would allow peace, while implying that the suffering of the poor at the hands of the powerful was leading to an increase in social conflict and

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violence, and that the king expected that the laws could mitigate the problem. Even though the role of the Edict as a “strumento di pace e di unificazione politica” has long been accepted by scholarship, the concern with the poor has been dismissed as a literary topos; the cause of the growing restlessness in Lombard society has instead been attributed to the breakdown of traditional values and the corrosion of Lombard ‘tribal society’ by acculturation. Yet, neither the prologue, nor any other contemporary documentation, attests such a process. On the contrary, the prologue plainly associates the current condition of strife with the suffering of the poor and the oppression of the powerful. Given the context of economic involution sketched above (5.1.1), it is safe to assume that Rothari’s concern with the poor was linked to the deteriorating economic conditions and the impact of impoverishment in society. The contents of the laws support that claim, given that a good part of the Edict was dedicated to regulate inheritance and protect property, arguably from dilapidation by debt, and to provide mediation to conflict (as we will see in more detail in 6.1.2). One should not, however, be led to believe that Rothari’s poor are the miserable and destitute: the focus of the laws is on a class of landowners whose property is in jeopardy, not on the larger share of the population who owned no property, and often not even their own freedom. When the legislator turns his eyes to the affliction of this segment of the population, it is invariably to suppress any attempt of resistance.

…the daily torments of the poor…the undue demands of those with greater power…

The prologue, however, leaves open the question of who composed the two groups it depicts in opposition, that is, who are Rothari’s ‘poor’ and who are ‘those with greater power’? We have suggested that the breakdown of the rebel army had created a relatively large class of small landowners, organized in households, which provided the conscription base for the army (see 3.1.2; and below 6.1.1). Besides this group, the legal evidence testifies to an elite of office-holders (indices, gastaldii, dukes), whose position in the administration was

752 See, for example, Delogu, “Il regno,” 55; Jarnut, Geschichte, 71; Cammarosano, Nobilì, 58.
753 Paradisi, “Il prologo,” 21–22. For other examples of social concern in Roman legislation, see Haec const. §3, and the epilogues for the JNov. 78 & 82.
756 See, for instance, LARot, 279–80.
established in the early days of the settlement and presumably granted them better access to the public resources, either ducal or royal (we will deal with this group in section 5.2). By the mid-seventh century, this structure had been modified by a general impoverishment, which presumably hit harder this large middling group of military households (and arguably brought down the market for *ceramica longobarda*; see 4.1.1): those families are likely Rothari’s poor. Some families, however, managed to make the best of the situation and, profiting from the indebted households, accumulated enough capital to become socially prominent, not without oppressing the rest of the free Lombards; the situation Rothari bemoaned in his prologue. Rothari gives no definition of this group, so that we are left to speculate on the origin and nature of their position. Given the social context of Lombard society sketched above, we can suggest three possible origins for this group, namely: either (1) the late-sixth-early seventh century office-holding elite; or (2) an old aristocracy, whose influence was now resented by the rest of the freemen; or, finally, (3) a recently establish group of magnates, who had profited from the crisis to increase their power in the local communities.

As mentioned, the legal sources testify to an office-holding aristocracy, either connected to the king or to the duke, and it is safe to assume that, by the mid-seventh century, this small group still maintained its position above the rest of society (see 5.2.1). Of those officials, presumably, ducal families enjoyed a much better position, even those clearly under royal control. It is tempting to see the royal “dynasties” (*genera*) mentioned in the *Edict*’s royal list as representatives of the most influential families in the kingdom, whose fame was projected into an imaginary royal past (*Rot* prol); their prominence notwithstanding, Rothari grants them no especial legal privilege. Furthermore, the lack of legislative ruling to control high officials makes it evident that Rothari is not referring to them when he mentions “those with more power”: apart from two laws creating a dual balance between dukes and *gastaldi* (*Rot* 23–24), the *Edict* is not particularly concerned with restraining nor, as we have seen, clearly defining the roles of the higher offices (see 5.2). Although positions in royal service might have increased with the consolidation of the monarchy, it presumably only

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758 Compare with *Lex Baiu*. 3.1.
759 *Contra* Bognetti, who thought Rothari’s intention was to protect the poor against the *iudices*, see “L’Editto,” 124. Rothari does legislate to ensure officers will performed their duties (*Rot* 25 [mandates dukes and *iudices* to retrieve stolen property in the army]; *Rot* 150 [punishes a *iudex* that did not prevent the destruction of a mill]. The only laws that attempt to prevent officers from abusing power are directed to the *gastaldi*, and relate to protecting runaway slaves in the royal court (*Rot* 210; 271), and to property acquired by the *gastaldin* while in office (*Rot* 375).
compensated for the decrease in (formerly independent) ducal administration. The second possibility, an established blood aristocracy, finds no support in the surviving evidence: the only clear social distinction in the Edict is the one that separates free from unfree (either slaves or aldiones); amongst freemen, no distinction is made based on wealth, family, or ethnic background.\(^{760}\) Only in 724 did Liutprand introduce a clear division of rank (according to the wergild) in the law code, recognizing the lowly ‘\textit{minima persona}’ in opposition to lofty ‘\textit{primus}’.\(^{761}\) The evidence in Rothari points to a society in which, at least in theory, all freemen—and one should emphasize both ‘free’ and ‘men’—enjoy the same rights: it stands to reason that if a well-established hereditary aristocracy had existed, its presence would be recognized in some way in the code.\(^{762}\)

It is more likely that Rothari was referring to a new group of magnates, who were still elbowing their way into social prominence. This group probably built its new position by profits gained during the period of bonanza under Agilulf, and were better poised during the crisis to take advantage of those less prepared. It should not be ruled out that the members of this group held office at various levels (especially locally), and that such offices were indeed part of their path to prominence (and that, conversely, their social prominence allowed them to monopolize those offices). However, since Rothari approaches their influence not as part of the office, we should consider their prominence not as arising from the office, but as a self-standing position. In any case, given the general impoverishment of society, it is safe to assume that this elite was not specially rich, and, as Wickham has correctly pointed out, they were not numerous enough, nor rich enough, to support trade.\(^{763}\) Given their rather small footprint in terms of archaeologically visible luxury goods, we could suggest that most of their capital was presumably invested in acquiring more land and in supporting a private entourage.

The split in Lombard society, which Rothari lamented, was arguably between the impoverished free Lombard families and the magnates who had managed to profit from the

\(^{760}\) For example, Rot 367; see Delogu, “Il regno,” 62 [see n.1]; Jarnut, Geschichte, 75–76 [italian]; Cammarosano, Nobili, 94 [see n.6]; Jarnut, “Wer waren,” 93–94; cf. Christie, Lombards, 110–26.

\(^{761}\) LL.LLt, 62.9.

\(^{762}\) Contra Le Jan, who believes the absence of a nobility in the Lombard (and Frankish) law code was a “royal strategy”; see La société du haut Moyen Âge, VVe-IXe siècle (Paris: Armand Colin, 2003), 136–37.

\(^{763}\) Wickham, Framing, 210–18; 732; see also “Aristocratic power in eighth-century Lombard Italy,” in After Rome’s Fall, ed. A. C. Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); “Social Structures in Lombard Italy,” in The Langobards before the Frankish Conquest: an Ethnographic perspective, ed. Giorgio Ausenda, Paolo Delogu, and Chris Wickham (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 118–48.
situation. Keeping in mind that the general economic picture is one of accelerated decline (5.1.1), we can picture the two groups in a struggle for the dwindling available resources. On one side, the impoverished families arguably struggled to maintain their status as landowners and as soldiers, and to perform the myriad of social niceties demanded of a freeman to safeguard his reputation (Rothari’s ‘opinio’), such as gifts, apparel, and so forth. On the other side, the richer families advanced towards social prominence, presumably competing with one another. The overall result was a growth in social violence, which Rothari attempted to prevent by increasing fines and mandating conciliation (through composition) (Rot 45; 74). Finally, the increasing demand on the productive sector of society (viz. the unfree and semifree population), in all likelihood by both richer and poorer families, led to revolt and rebellion, which Rothari promptly outlawed (Rot 279–80).

5.1.3 Two case studies: Nocera Umbra and Castel Trosino

Theoretically, as the community grew poorer and more socially divided, the availability of capital to be used as grave goods would not only reduce (on account of the more limited overall available capital), but also concentrate on a few family groups. Unfortunately, very few Lombard cemeteries have been analyzed in terms of social distribution (in contrast with ethnical determination). Lars Jørgensen, however, has analyzed both Castel Trosino and

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764 See “Social Structure,” 131–34.
Nocera Umbra in terms of social structure and family organization, allowing for a picture of the distribution of wealth in the communities for a period of around a hundred years (c.580–700). Based on his findings, Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra—two of the best-excavated Lombard cemeteries—can provide some interesting insights into the social structure of the first half of the seventh century.

**The cemeteries**

At a distance of about 140 km from each other, Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra were both small communities to the south of the corridor linking Ravenna to Rome. Castel Trosino is located c.100 km from Spoleto, towards the Adriatic, c.35 km away from the shore; the cemetery lies in a flat plateau about 400 meters from the castle itself. The site, first excavated in 1893–96, produced 239 graves (though the first 20, excavated in the earlier expeditions were poorly recorded). In the same location, there is evidence of an early medieval church, dated to c.650. The cemetery was in use for 140 to 160 years, from c.590 to 740/750, though, given the decrease in grave goods, dating beyond the seventh century becomes rather unreliable. The community hosted four identifiable groups (A–D), most likely families, although several graves (139) could not be assigned to any of the groups, probably composing two extra families. Figure 5.1 shows the distribution of the four groups. The total number of graves suggests an average population of sixty to sixty-five people using the cemetery in each generation.

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768 For the excavation, see Mengarelli, “Castel Trosino.”; for the dating of the church, Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 42.

769 “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 27–38; Paroli, however, thinks Jørgensen pushed the dates a bit to late, cf. Paroli, “Castel Trosino,” 94, n. 16.

770 Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 34–42. For the calculation of the average population, Jørgensen uses the formula proposed by Donat & Ulrich:
The castle of Nocera Umbra was located c.40 km northeast of Spoleto, in a high position (458 meters above the Valle del Topino) hovering above the Via Flaminia, the main communication route between Rome and Ravenna. The cemetery stands about 500 m from the castle. The excavations started on 1897, after the owner found fifteen Lombard graves, and, when fully excavated, produced a total of 165. The cemetery was in use from c.570 to c.650, though some interments might come from a few decades later, up to 670. The community was composed of seven identifiable groups (A–H, excluding group E, whose distribution of graves [total of 9] is limited and abnormal and, hence, hard to account for), most likely families, and an average population of seventy-five people. FIGURE 5.2 shows the cemetery divided in family groups.


771 For the excavation, see Pasqui and Peribeni, “Nocera Umbra.”; for the location, see Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 18; Rupp, “Nocera Umbra,” 167.

Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 41 (fig. 34).
Family groups and social structure

Both cemeteries share some fundamental characteristics: the family structure is rather stable, each generation (c. 40 years) composed by two spouses, four or five other adults and three to four children, and a approximate 10 graves per generation (Castel Trosino: 10–10.3; Nocera Umbra: 10.1–10.9), with an average of 6.5 being adults (Castel Trosino: 6.3–6.5; Nocera Umbra: 6.9–7.4). Wealthier families were usually larger than the poorer ones (it has,

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774 “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 33 (fig.27).
however, been ruled out that the extra number could account for dependents). There is no evidence for burial of slaves or other non-free dependents in the family groups.\textsuperscript{775} Within each generation, the wealthiest graves were usually those of the first of the spouses to die. Weapons are present in both cemeteries exclusively in adult graves (22–40 years old), which points to military identity as a function and not as a birthright: weapons would be deposed with active soldiers, and not necessarily with all members of military families.\textsuperscript{776} In both cemeteries, the general wealth of the graves decreased from the earlier period (pre-610) to the later. Figure 5.3 shows a comparison between the wealth of graves per capita, considering only dated graves.\textsuperscript{777} The added average, which considers also the undated graves, is much lower considering that lack of grave goods usually prevents dating (especially for Castel Trosino): to adjust for the discrepancy, I have added an average counting only the furnished graves. The real number is somewhere in between.\textsuperscript{778}

\textsuperscript{775} "Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra," 50.
\textsuperscript{776} "Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra," 22.
\textsuperscript{777} The valuation of grave goods is based on Jørgensen’s scale, connected to the rarity of the object; see “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 19–23. The method, according to him: “The finds from the graves are first subdivided into artefact-types. Next, a count is made of how many of the 404 definite graves at Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra each individual artefact-type is represented in. At this point it is unimportant how many examples of each type is represented in a grave. It is the number of graves that counts: the fewer the graves an artefact-type is found in, the higher the value it has. Shields, which occur in 45 of the 404 graves, thus are given a calculated type-value of 404/45 = 9.0p.” (“Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 19).
\textsuperscript{778} Given the fragmentary nature of the evidence, the numbers are approximate, and provide more a notion of scale than any precise value. I excluded disturbed graves. 46% of the graves in CT had no grave goods, which might indicate later or poorer interments; the high number of graves without grave goods in Castel Trosino (cf. 3% in NU) is partially dependent on the number of post-700, when graves goods became more rare in most Europe.
In both cemeteries we can perceive a significant reduction of the display of wealth in tombs in the period post 610, being more accentuated in CT. Figure 5.4 shows the distribution of wealth per grave, divided by family groups. In both cemeteries we can identify one of the family groups that largely exceeds the rest in wealth, group B in Castel Trosino (CT-B), and group A in Nocera Umbra (NU-A). This uneven distribution of wealth points in the same direction as the ceramic distribution and the injunctions of Rothari’s Edict (5.1.1–2).

The valuation of the graves follows Jørgensen’s methodology, in which the more rare the items within the general collection of grave goods, the more valuable. The ending ‘pricing’ is certainly very approximate, though hopefully close enough to compare different groups. See Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 19–22. The full data is available in the Appendix, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 51–55. For Nocera Umbra, family group E has been excluded, given the abnormal distribution; for Castel Trosino, ‘family group F’ represents the unclassified graves.
There are, however, striking differences between the two communities (especially considering their geographical proximity). Figure 5.4 shows, in the first place, that funeral rites in Nocera Umbra involved a considerably larger amount of wealth. CT-B, the wealthiest group in CT, would mingle with the poorer families in Nocera Umbra, with grave goods evaluated on Jøgensen’s scale in 72.4 point per capita, contra 133.4 of NU-A (and a general average of 71 for the entire cemetery). Nevertheless, CT-B is outstandingly rich compared to the other families in Castel Trosino, and the grave goods of this family are 242 per cent more valuable than the average (128 per cent if we excluded the unclassified graves). Compare this to Nocera Umbra, where NU-A’s grave goods correspond to 87 per cent more than the average (which is still a very pronounced disparity). In addition to that, the most valuable grave considering both cemeteries is CT-B 119, whose grave good are valued in 1005.8p., while the most valuable grave in NU has grave goods worth 535p. (NU-A 6).

The nature of the grave goods is also different in the two cemeteries. NU has twice more weapons than CT, and the weapons are more evenly distributed. In addition to that, in NU male graves are on average richer that female graves, while in CT female graves are richer. The combination of these two factors has led scholars to suggest that NU was a more militaristic settlement that could have hosted higher ranked officials, while CT was more

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780 Excluding NU-E, for its problematic distribution; for CT, “F” stands for ungrouped graves.
devoted to farming.\textsuperscript{781} CT also had a larger concentration of grave goods described as ‘Byzantine’, although it certainly attests to the more civilian nature of the population.\textsuperscript{782}

\textbf{Figure 1} and 2 also show the distribution of ‘status-marking’ items in CT and NU, respectively. In NU, notice the wide distribution of what Jørgensen has christened ‘cavalry graves’, i.e. graves with spurs, bridles or harness, or combinations of these. With the exception of NU-H (and the abnormal NU-E), all families interred at least two of their members with cavalry items (a total of 24, or 14 per cent), showing that even in the poorer families such as NU-B and NU-F, the status of mounted soldier was preserved. Graves with full armament (i.e. \textit{spatha}, shield and lance) were also found in every family group (except NU-E).\textsuperscript{783} Expensive status items, such as helmet and armor were also present in more than one family. NU-A, nonetheless, posses the most luxurious items, with a rather large concentration of drinking horns, decorated seax and a saddle with golden decoration. The disposition of ring-swords is of particular interest: two graves (NU-H, 1 & NU-D,32) possessed this kind of sword, characterized by a set of rings fused to the pommel. This kind of luxury item is, however, absent from NU-A. Ring-swords were common from Italy to England and Scandinavia, and Heiko Steuer has suggested that they might be linked to military followings.\textsuperscript{784} Though the support for the association is flimsy, their co-relation is not unlikely. In the context of NU, the ring-swords could suggest that NU-D and NU-H might have been connected to the entourage of a more powerful lord, presumably from NU-A. \textbf{Figure 1} produces a very different picture for CT. The rather popular ‘cavalry graves’ from NU are almost absent here. Only four graves (or 1.6 per cent) contained cavalry related items, two graves in the unclassified group, and two graves belonging to the CT-B. With very few exceptions (like the silver seax and gold strap set in grave F), all the luxury status-marking items related to warfare belonged to CT-B, with special mention to the full armor, helmet, silver seax and golden saddle on CT-B 119, the richest grave in both cemeteries.

\textsuperscript{781} Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 45; Paroli, “Castel Trosino,” 93.

\textsuperscript{782} Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 45. The origins of most grave goods in both CT and NU have been recently traced to Roman manufacture, to the centre of production related to Crypta Balbi, in Rome, or similar units of production; see Marco Ricci, “Relazioni culturali e scambi commerciali nell’Italia centrale romano-longobarda alla luce della Crypta Balbi in Roma,” in L’Italia centro-settentrionale in età longobarda: atti del Convegno, Ascoli Piceno, 6-7 ottobre 1995, ed. Lidia Paroli (Firenze: All'insegna del giglio, 1997), 239–73.

\textsuperscript{783} The distribution: A: 5; B:4; C:3; D:2; E::F:2; G:5; H:3. Jørgensen, “Castel Trosino and Nocera Umbra,” 32.

Economic involution and social inequality

The assessment of Castel Trocino and Nocera Umbra confirms the picture of social inequality described above (5.1.2). In the first place, the surviving evidence indicates that, when we compare earlier interments with later ones, both communities were poorer by mid-seventh century than they were in the late sixth century. The drop was slightly more significant in Castel Trocino than in Nocera Umbra, but both communities had fewer resources available for ‘funerary consumption’ in the 650s than they used to have in the 590s. Second, in the overall period, both communities had considerable social differences, with one group towering above the others through most of the period. Finally, it shows the connection between continuous military service and distribution of wealth. Nocera Umbra was in a privileged position for military incursions, flanking one of the major connecting routes between Rome and Ravenna: from that position they could both provide protection or assail and levy blackmail from travelers between the two Byzantine capitals.

The ongoing military activity in Nocera Umbra allowed an extremely important influx of resources, unavailable for the more rural community in Castel Trosino. In the relatively peaceful decades of 620–640s, before Rothari resumed campaigning, much of this military activity was probably extra-official. Indeed, if the ring-swords attest a military following, Nocera Umbra provides an example of gains in obsequium, the profits of which would go straight to the soldier, and not the family (Rot 167, see 6.1.1), which would also account for the non-negligible inequalities within family groups. In any case, those gains would prevent some of the Lombards from losing too much of their property, and maintained their status as soldiers. The community in Castel Trosino was not as fortunate: the lack of extra surplus reduced most of the families to a point where no traces of military service survived in grave goods, while a single family grew to monopolize most of the resources, and could still boast their military tradition in their funeral practices.

Both archaeological and legal sources point to an economic involution and to the end of the prosperity the Lombard households had cherished under Agilulf (590–616). After Agilulf,

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785 Given the limitation of the surviving material, it is impossible to plot the total wealth consumed by each family group in specific timeframes: once we remove the undated graves, the family groups produced a too restricted number of graves for a proper comparison; the overall wealth through the ca. 100 years is more certain, and though it, alas, does not allow for a closer look in the evolution, it states clearly the difference between the family groups in the period.

786 See, for example, Greg, Reg. 11.21.
however, there were no more external campaigns on the scale of the previous decades, and apart from the internal conflict of unknown proportions in the late 620s between Adaloald (c.616–626) and Arioald (c.626–36), the sources are silent on external incursions after the first years of Arioald (see 4.1.3). In the same period, Arioald (c.626–36), Fredegar suggests, renegotiated the tribute received from Ravenna, reducing it to two thirds of what it was under Adaloald (4.1). This de-mobilization of the army arguably reduced the flow of booty and of generosities from the king, leaving the soldiers to be supported by their recently acquired family properties. Even though extra money could be obtained by irregular private expeditions within enemy territory (as we may be seeing in Nocera Umbra), most soldiers had to rely on the outcomes of the severely debilitated Italian economy. The end of taxation certainly allowed producers to retain a larger portion of the surplus than had previously been the case, but it was still not enough to compensate for the structural weaknesses of the system, especially for the lack of manpower. The fact that the new landholding class brought a militaristic mentality and a penchant for symbolic displays of wealth presumably did not improve the already overburdened economic output.

By the 640s, when Rothari was working on his law code, the Lombard households were noticeably impoverished, and the disappearance of the *ceramica longobarda* attests to their diminished purchasing power and the resulting drop in demand. Taking into consideration the evolution of Lombard society, it becomes clear that this reduction of demand is the final development of a long crisis that had been postponed by the elimination of taxes in the late sixth century and by the profits of the successful wars in the 590s and the 600s. By mid-century, Lombard landholders were poorer than their parents. The legal efforts in Rothari’s *Edict* to handle this growing impoverishment confirm the archaeological data. Considering Rothari’s interventions, it becomes clear his intention was to safeguard the property of the military households, both from dilapidation in inheritance, and by confiscation on account of debt.

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787 Fred. 4.69.
788 The organization of private campaigns is hinted by *LLRot* 167.
5.2 Structure and Organization of the Army

While social differentiation was growing within the freemen, hierarchy was evidently common with the army, and hence within Lombard administration. The structure of the Lombard army was a development from the Roman army, from which it originally sprang. From the Roman model, the Lombards inherited the central commanding position, the duke, and arguably, offices such as the indices, the centenarii, amongst others; the Lombard structure might also have inherited private entourages, on the model of the late Roman buccellarii, which the Lombard sources refer to as gasindi (see 6.2). Other offices, such as the gastaldius, were local creations, and their affiliation to Roman models is less certain. This section analyzes the evidence in Rothari’s Edict for the organization of the Lombard military into two different sections, the first tackling the higher offices (viz. dukes and gastaldii, 5.2.1), the second the local structure of the army (viz. indices and fara, 5.2.2).

5.2.1. The organization of the Lombard army

Rothari’s Edict provides most of the evidence for the hierarchy of the Lombard army, about which the legislator, however, dealt only tangentially. The Edict does not attempt to describe or detail institutions that were fully functional, nor to provide a full set of rules for society, but rather introduces changes to a system whose intricacies the contemporaries knew well, but we often do not. That is certainly the case for military hierarchy in Rothari’s Edict, in which the main offices are mentioned, some attributions are listed, but the specific role of each official is lacking. On that account, it is necessary to supply information from comparable models, such as contemporary states, including the Byzantine army and other contemporary military organizations in the West. In this subsection, we will focus our attention on the two most prominent offices in the source material, namely, dukes and gastaldii.

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The Lombard Dukes

The Lombard dukes were most likely a continuation of the Roman office, from which they formerly originated before the rebellion: as a breakaway regime, the Lombards inherited some offices from the Roman army, and dukes were likely amongst them.\(^{792}\) The Roman duke, established in the late third and fourth century was a local commander of troops associated with the defense of the borders, the *limitanei*\(^{793}\) By the late sixth and seventh century, the Byzantine dukes still operational in Italy had expanded their authority from their troops to an entire region, creating territorial duchies.\(^{794}\) We have suggested that the dukes were fundamental in the early days of the Lombard rebellion (3.2), and remained the main commanding office amongst the Lombards. The major difference between the Lombard dukes and their Byzantine counterparts (or, for what matter, their counterparts elsewhere in the barbarian west),\(^{795}\) is that by the rebellion in 568, the Lombard dukes were cut off from

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\(^{793}\) The scholarship on Lombard dukes, however, is substantial. Some scholars prefer to see the dukes as created anew and dependent on the kings (relying especially on *HL 2.9*), see: Gasparri, *Duchi*, (but see n.xxxx below); Barnwell, *Kings*, 109–22; for the origins of the argument, one has to go back to Savigny, *Geschichte des römischen Rechts im Mittelalter*, vol. I, 280ff; and M. A. von Bethmann-Hollweg, *Ursprung der lombardischen Staatsträger: eine geschichtliche Untersuchung* (Bonn: A. Marcus, 1846); 62; the argument was re-instated in Pabst, “Geschichte,” 411–16. In addition to that, some scholars support a ‘Germanic’ origin for the dukes, which can be divided between an older ‘democratic’ and more recent ‘aristocratic’ interpretation, depending on whether the dukes are seen as representatives of smaller blocks of the free Lombard population, or as heads of aristocratic households: for representatives of the ‘democratic’ reading, see Hegel, *Staatsträger*, 453–54; Schmidt, *Ostgermanen*, 59; 591–92; 614–15; Francesco Schupfer, *Delle istituzioni politiche longobardiche* (Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1863), 262–308, esp. 275; Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, vol. 5, 183–84; Brunner, *Rechtsgeschichte*, vol. I, 122ff. [CHECK]; for the ‘aristocratic turn’, see Heinrich Mitteis, *Der Staat der heiden Mittelalters: Grundlinien einer vergleichenden Verfassungsgeschichte des Lehnszeitalters*. (Weimar: H. Böhlau Nachfolger, 1948), 9–11; W. Schlesinger, “Herrschaft und Gefolgschaft in der germanisch-deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 176 (1956): 225–75, esp. 247; this aristocratic reading was mostly preserved in the ‘ethnogenesis’ model, see Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung: Das Wirken der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Cologne Böhlau Verlag, 1961), 486; Jarnut, *Geschichte*, 27–29; but also in Christie, *Lombards*, 113–15.

any superior command until the firm reestablishment of the royal power under Agilulf (see 4.1.1). We have seen the role of the dukes as independent leaders, how they suppressed the monarchy, negotiated treaties with the Byzantines and the Franks, and conducted raids on their own accord and suggested the existence of six large military commands, namely Turin, Milan (or Pavia), Trento, Friuli, Spoleto, and Benevento. Other dukes are present in the sources, some of them connected to cities, such as Piacenza, Parma, Reggio, Modena, to mention only a few, while other dukes were mentioned without any connection to cities, such as the anti-monarchy Authari and the turn-coat Droctulf (see 3.2). It has been suggested that some of these dukes might have been simply in command of local rogue detachments or free military units. Nonetheless, Paul the Deacon’s suggestion that each Italian city had a duke, adding up to thirty-five, was probably either anachronistic (based on the eighth-century political arrangement) or simply wrong.

The chronological gap between the late sixth century and the codification of the Edict is especially noteworthy in relation to the dukes. Given that the political balance between kings and dukes changed dramatically after Agilulf (590–616), we should expect Rothari’s legislation to reflect a different balance of power than that in the late sixth-early seventh century (see 3.2). The laws collected in the Edict represent a royal initiative in its own right, and it would be misleading to assume all the material there preserved refers to a static juridical order of the Lombards; the purpose of the legislator was to deal with current social issues (see 4.2.2). Rothari’s Edict comprises nine laws referring to dukes. Such a limited attempt to regulate the dukes, even in the mid-seventh century, attests to the limits of royal influence. Of the nine laws, seven are connected to the duke’s role as commander of the army. Although much of this material seems to refer to the dukes as fighting for the king, it portrays the power balance in the mid-seventh century and is not a reason to dismiss the duke’s independent military capacity, well attested in the literary material (see 3.2). The Edict stipulates that the duke (together with the king) should receive fines from men who refuses to join the army when called (Rot 21), but they also protect the duke’s right to administer justice in the army (Rot 20 & 22), while at the same time prompting him to make use of this right (Rot 25). Another set of laws reinforces the balance between dukes and gastaldii (Rot 23–

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797 HL 2.32.
24), a passage to which I will return later in this subsection. Finally, Rot 6 defends the duke against rebellions:

If someone should raise a rebellion against his duke while on campaign, or entice any part of the army against the one who was commissioned by the king to command the army, let him pay with his blood.\footnote{\textit{I.L.}Rot 6: “Si quis foris in exercitum seditionem levaverit contra ducem suum, aut contra eum qui ordinatus a rege ad exercitum gubernandi, [[9] om ‘aut’], aliquam partem exercitum seduxerit, sanguinis sui incurrat periculum.” N.B.: I opted for the suppression of the ‘aut’, attested only on ms (9), on account of a better grammatical sense. As is, the sentence cannot support the combination ‘aut…aut…’ (it would if the first ‘aut’ preceded ‘ducem suum’, rendering ‘or against his duke or against the person…”). Accepting the rendering in (9) as correct, nonetheless, changes the meaning of the law to the effect that the person commissioned by the king would be leading the ‘aliquam partem exercitum’.

The fear of military sedition arguably traces back to the early days of the Lombards, and their own previous status as units within the imperial army.

The remaining two laws attest to a different institution under the dukes, a military entourage composed of what the \textit{Edict} calls \textit{gasindi}. The information is minimal: Rot 177 affirms that, if a freeman wants to move together with his \textit{fara}, he should return whatever property he received from his duke, or, for the matter, from any other man. Another law, Rot 225, suggests, however, that while gifts from a duke created a \textit{gasindus}, gifts from other men would entail \textit{obsequium}. I will deal with \textit{obsequium} in the next chapter (6.2), since it involves relationships between two freemen, but for what concerns the duke, the \textit{Edict} suggests he maintained an entourage of some sort, whose functions are unclear in the documentation. Arguably, the \textit{gasindi} were a fighting force the duke maintained around him, similar to the \textit{buccellarii} of the Byzantine army, supported by a mix (or a confusion) of public and private wealth.

Both literary and legal sources converge in suggesting that the dukes were in control of the armed forces, a central position in a structure defined by the military. Arguably, the closer connection between the ducal office and the king, which is clear in the legal material, but which cannot account for the political developments of the late sixth-century, was a result of the successful campaigns of Agilulf (4.1).

\textit{The gastaldius}

If duke is a traditional fourth-century Roman term, \textit{gastaldius} seems to be a Lombard invention. The source material for \textit{gastaldii} is more limited than for the dukes, since the...
literary sources for the sixth and the seventh centuries fail to mention the office altogether. There are more references for the eighth century, both literary sources and charters, but as the *gastaldius* was a position closely connected to the kings, we should expect its role to become more prominent as royal power presumably increased from the second half of the seventh century on.\(^{800}\) The first mention of *gastaldius* is in Rothari's *Edict*, which preserves eight laws concerning its functions. As is the case for the dukes, the legislator is not concerned with defining the office, but in making adjustments or reinforcing their role. Rothari's *Edict* places the *gastaldius* within the royal administration. Three of the laws referring to the *gastaldii* firmly ground them in control of regional royal courts (*curtis regia*). The royal court appears in Lombard documentation as the royal fisc, although in a few occasions it seems to represent an actual property.\(^{801}\) Two laws (*Rot* 210 & 271) legislate on how should the *gastaldii* should proceed in the case of slaves taking refuge in the royal court. For instance, *Rot* 210:

> On the kidnapper who leads [the female slave or *aldia*] to the royal court: if someone kidnaps an *aldia* or a female slave, and brings her to the royal court, and the master or any of his friends or servants come in pursuit and the *gastaldius* or the royal *actor* blocks his way, let him pay composition for the *aldia*, to him who owns her, forty solidi; for a female slave, twenty.\(^{802}\)

If a male slave escapes to the royal court, and the *gastaldius* (or the royal *actor*) refuses to return him, a similar fine of forty solidi should also be paid, adds *Rot* 271. Both laws reveal

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\(^{799}\) A possible etymology for the name is a combination of *gast*, meaning 'guest', and *waldan*, ‘to rule’, which brings the *gastaldini* into the context of the accommodation of the Lombards (see 2.2 and below, p. 221–22); Van der Rhee suggests the root is related to “Erwerbung, Besitz.” For the etymology, see G. P. Bognetti, “Il gastaldato longobardo e i giudicati de Adaloaldo,” in *L’età longobarda*, ed. G. P. Bognetti (Milano: Giuffrè, 1966), 219–74, 264; Ernst Gamillscheg, *Romania germanica; Sprach- und Siedlungsgeschichte der Germanen auf dem Boden des alten Römerreichs*, Grundriss der germanischen Philologie, Bd. 11, 1-3 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1934), vol. 2, 141–42. Florus van der Rhee, *Die germanischen Wörter in den langobardischen Gesetzen* (Rotterdam: Drukkerij Bronder-Offset, 1970), 73–74.

\(^{800}\) In the eighth century, there are two mentions of *gastaldii* performing functions that would be usually ascribed to dukes, see *HL* 5.29, and one in *LP*, Vita Gregorii II 91.7.

\(^{801}\) There are, however, no charters signed *in curte regia*, but instead *in palatio*, which seems to represent an actual building (although some fines also go to the *palatio*; see *Rot* 37–40, 150 and 251). Mentions of the *curtes regiae* in the *Edict* as an abstract fisc receiving property or fines: *LLRot* 15, 153, 158–60, 163, 171, 185–6, 195–96, 199, 200–01, 223, 231, 259, 266–67, 374, 385; mentions as an actual property: *LLRot* 210, 271; mentions which could be either (or both): *LLRot* 182–83; 195, 197, 221. Elsewhere in the *Edict*, *curtis* is used to represent a physical property (i.e. one that someone might ‘invade’, as in *LLRot* 32–34). For royal courts, see Brühl, *Fodrum*, 357–92; Gasparri, “Il regno,” 22–34.

\(^{802}\) *LLRot*, 210: *De rapto qui in curtem regis duxerit. Si quis rapuerit haldiam aut ancilam et in curtis regis duxerit, et sequens dominus aut quicumque ex amicis aut seruis, et gastaldius aut acter regis antesteterit, pro haldia de suis propriis rebus conponat illi, cuis haldia fuerit, solidos quadragenta, pro ancilla, solidos uigenti.*
that the gastaldus was responsible for handling the royal court, and, arguably, that a royal actor would answer in his stead.\textsuperscript{803} The third law, \textit{Rot} 375, legislates on the separation between the gastaldus's property and the royal property, limiting his capacity to receive gifts:

\begin{quote}
If the gastaldus, or any royal actor, after receiving or been entrusted to oversee royal courts and suits pertaining to the king, should collect something made by gairethinx (that is, by donation) from someone, let that be secure to him, provide it is confirmed by an order of royal benevolence. Otherwise, everything that he should acquire by gairethinx, after taking office, as mentioned, let him acquire it for the king, and let him neither claim it in his own name, nor his heirs.\textsuperscript{804}
\end{quote}

The legislator, arguably, intended to make clear the separation of royal (‘public’) and private properties, and at the same time prevent the gastaldus from profiting from the property, movable and immovable, that came with his charges.\textsuperscript{805} In sum, these three laws show the gastaldus administering the royal court, and working with royal actors. It has been suggested that the gastaldus would command the fisc from the nearby civitas, while the control of actual properties would fall to the actors.\textsuperscript{806} The connection between the gastaldus and the actors sheds more light on his function. If the gastaldus is a recent Lombard invention, the role of the actors is relatively well known. The Roman actors were administrators of large landowners, who would administer the properties while the dominus was absent.\textsuperscript{807} The actors of the royal court might be descendants of these private administrators, but it is more likely that they descended from a similar position in the imperial res privata. The actors dominici or actors rei privatae were the final link in a long chain of command that administered the imperial possessions.\textsuperscript{808} It is tempting to suggest that the Lombard actors might link the fourth- and fifth-century Roman public property in northern

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{804} \textit{LL.Rot} 375: “Si gastaldius, aut quicumque actor regis, post susceptas aut commissas ad gobernandum curtes regis et causas regias, aliquid per gairethinx, id est donationem, ab alio quocumque factam conquisierit, sit illi stabilem, si per preceptionem indulgentiae regis in eum fuerit confirmatum. Alioquin quidquid, ut predictum est, post susceptam administrationem per gairethinx adquesierit, hoc totum regi adquirat, et non suo proprio nomine vindicet nec ipse, nec heredis ipsius.”
\bibitem{805} Gasparri, “Il regno,” 25.
\bibitem{807} See Jones, \textit{LRE}, 788.
\bibitem{808} The chain would start with the magister (later rationalis) rei privatae controlling the properties over a diocese (or, sometimes half a diocese), followed by the procuratores rei privatae, administering larger chunks of properties, over one or two provinces (or over a large property formerly from a single owner), and finally the actors, who, arguably, actually administered the properties, dealing directly with the coloni. For the administration of the res privata, see Roland Delmaire, \textit{Largesses sacrées et res privata: l’aerarium impérial et son administration, du IVe au VIe siècle} (Paris: École française de Rome, 1989), esp. 207–34; Jones, \textit{LRE}, 411–27; 788.
\end{thebibliography}
Italy to the seventh-century royal property of the Lombards.\textsuperscript{809} Beside the actores, the royal court and the res privata share many similarities: both received fines, and properties without owners (bona caduca, bona damnatorum, bona vacantia); the res privata received the rents from all the ‘public’ (i.e. imperial) properties, a function the Lombard royal court arguably also shared, even though such a routine function left no trace in the laws.\textsuperscript{810} As likely the head of the actores, the gastaldius was on top of the administration of the public land, a role confirmed by a seventh-century charter: in 674, Perctarit (671–88) issued an indicatum settling the litigation between two of his gastaldi, Daghibertus, ahead of the royal court in Piacenza, and Immo, from Parma (the dispute was over which court should control certain properties, an issue that traced back to time of Ariald). The charter provides a long list of properties in the borders of the two civitates, and establishes to which court each should belong. As the legal evidence, Perctarit’s charter testifies to the role of the gastaldius as head of the administration of public properties.\textsuperscript{811}

In other laws, the gastaldi are mentioned not in connection with the actores, but with the sculdabis. According to Rot 15, the gastaldius (or the sculdabis) is responsible for collecting fines on the violation of graves, a crime that, given the high fine of nine hundred solidi, was considered especially revolting; that is the only fine the gastaldius is mentioned collecting directly. He is also responsible for dealing with a freewoman who voluntary sleeps with a freeman who is not her husband (Rot 189), or one who dares to marry a slave (Rot 221): if the family fails to take the appropriate measures, in the former case, force a marriage or avenge her honor, in the latter, sell the woman out of the province, the gastaldius (or the sculdabis) should intervene and drag the woman to the royal court, where the king will do to her as he sees fit. It could be suggested that the legislator connected the gastaldius with the sculdabis in a context in which the use of force could be necessary. The sculdabis worked with the local index (see 5.2.2) and presumably commanded a small military detail. The presence of the sculdabis in situations that could turn violent highlights the fact that the gastaldius is

\textsuperscript{809} For the evolution of the res privata from the fourth to the sixth century, see Delmaire, Largesses sacrées et res privata: l’aerarium impérial et son administration, du IV\textsuperscript{e} au VI\textsuperscript{e} siècle.

\textsuperscript{810} The basic law for bona caduca or vacantia is LLRot 223; but see also LL.Rot 163; 171;182–83; 199–200; 224; 231; some fines are specifically collected by the royal court: LL.Rot 185; 244; 259; 267 & 374; other fines, collected to the king (in variations of “componat regi”) could also, arguably, be received by the royal court, but the evidence is silent. There are three laws that could be counted as bona damnatorum (1, 3–4), where the property of the perpetrator goes to the fisc (“res eius infiscentur”), arguably destined to the royal court. For the imperial legislation on the res privata, see Largesses sacrées et res privata: l’aerarium impérial et son administration, du IV\textsuperscript{e} au VI\textsuperscript{e} siècle, 413–17 (for fines) and 597–639 (for properties).

\textsuperscript{811} CDL 3.6 (674). A similar conflict between Parma and Piacenza can be seen also in CDL 3.4 (626–36).
never connected to military activities in the law codes, but restricted to administrative functions involving the royal court and royal estates. Although he might have controlled troops in other capacities (by holding a military appointment or by maintaining a private military entourage) the *gastaldis* does not appear to have been entrusted, by virtue of his office, with the command of troops.

Dukes & Gastaldi (Rot 23 & 24)

The question of the *gastaldis’s* (lack of) military capacities is pertinent when considering the origins of the office and its relationship with the dukes. As mentioned above, Rothari’s *Edict* has two laws legislating on the interaction between dukes and *gastaldi* (Rot 23 & 24):

23. If the duke oppresses one of his soldiers (*exercitalis*) unjustly, the *gastaldis* ought to help him until he finds justice and bring him to a hearing before the court of the king or at least before the duke.

24. If some *gastaldis* oppresses his soldier (*exercitalis*) against reason, the duke should give him assistance, until he gets justice.

The legislator creates a set of balances, in order to keep the two officers in check: presumably, each soldier would be under the duke as a military commander, and a *gastaldis* who would be responsible for the logistics. The connection has led scholars to believe the kings created the *gastaldi* in order to counter the power of the dukes. According to this view, after the dukes donated half their properties to the kings, the kings created the *gastaldi* to administer the new properties, and pitched them against the dukes; initially administrators, their sphere of influence would have grown until they were virtually royal-controlled dukes. This reading of the sources, however, poses some problems. In the first place, the

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812 Barnwell, *Kings*, 120.
814 *LJ Rot* 23–24: (23) Si dux exercitalem suum molestaverit iniuste, gastaldis eum solatiet quotusque veritatem suam inveniat et in praesentiam regis aut certe apud docem [sic] suum ad iustitiam perducat. (24) Si quis gastaldis exercitalem suum molestaverit contra rationem, dux eum solaciet, quousque veritatem suam inveniat.
815 Notice the legislator insistence on the possessive in both cases: the dukes and the *gastaldi* could intervene on behalf of their soldiers.
donation of land was probably a myth and most of the land that came to the royal court was probably taken from rebel dukes by force (see 3.2.1 and 4.1.1). Furthermore, once the kings defeated local ducal families, they presumably placed their own men as dukes (or with any local magnate that henceforth owed the king for his position). Second, since, as we have seen above, there is no evidence for the gastaldii controlling troops in our period, it seems unlikely the kings would create the gastaldii to oppose their own men, and, furthermore, would give the office no military capacity.

Based on the evidence, we could suggest a different context for the gastaldius and his relationship to the dukes. The contemporary sources point to a clear division between the duke, acting as a military commander—leading armies and levying soldiers—and the gastaldius, dedicated to administration—running the royal court, collecting fines, and so on. This division of civil and military was a tested mechanism to control military leaders, as long as the civilian counterpart kept control of military logistics: as long as the person controlling the soldiers was not the same person controlling the access to supplies and wages, the central power kept a hold over its military commanders. In this sense, the gastaldii might have been indeed created to control the dukes, but only as long as each gastaldius controlled resources necessary to the logistics of the (duke’s) army. In other words, since the gastaldii did not control troops of their own, they would only be in a position to counter the dukes as long as they were in direct control of the resources necessary to supply the army (granted that the gastaldius would be locally in control of the fisc). In this case, as in the traditional Roman system, the dukes’ capacity to rebel would be curtailed by their incapacity to access public funds and logistics (in the hands of the gastaldini) to support their men (likewise, the gastaldius could not rebel since he commanded no troops). As we have seen, however, the role of the fisc in the support of the army declined quickly after the initial settlement, as the tax-system collapsed and the soldiers became landholders in their own right and, thus, by the mid seventh century, at least as far as Rothari’s Edict shows, the fisc played no part in the support of the troops. The small part played by the fisc in maintaining the soldiers (now

15; Bognetti, “Il gastaldato,” 264; Wickham, Italy, 41–42; Gasparri, “Il ducato di Spoleto,” 90–93; more recently, see Barnwell, Kings, 118–21.

817 For example, Gaidulfus (duke of Bergamo), deposed and killed by Agilulf (HL 4.3, 4.13); Gundoald, nominated duke in Asti (HL 3.30, 4;40; Origo c. 6; Fred. 4.34); Mimulfus, duke in the insula Sancti Iuliani, also deposed and killed by Agilulf (HL 4.3; Origo c. 6). On the dynamics between kings (especially Agilulf and dukes, see 4.1.

818 For the distinction of military and civilian offices in the Roman Empire, and also some reservations on how throughout the separation was, see Jones, LRE, 43–45; 101.
mostly supported by their own farmsteads) would make the *gastaldius* rather inefficient in opposing the dukes.

Considering that the *gastaldius* was a position created anew by the Lombards, thus created after the rebellion in 568, and that it was created before Rothari’s *Edict* (643), in which the position is clearly well established, the most likely point for the kings to create a civil office to balance the power of the dukes was arguably between the rebellion and the collapse of the tax-system. At that point, the newly created *gastaldius* would have been able to control the dukes by withholding access to the resources collected from taxes, and hindering thus the payment of the troops. It is tempting, therefore, to see the creation of the office *during* the process of settlement, where the available resources were being relocated to the soldiers. This situation might have precedents in Roman legislation: to supply for an expeditionary force while moving through a province, the usual procedure in the late Roman army was to appoint *ad hoc* a deputy *praetorian prefect* to oversee to the support of the troops. Originally, it is possible to argue, the *gastaldii* might have been created to oversee the allocation of resources directly from the taxpayers to the soldiers. In this context, it is possible to argue that Alboin would have created the position of *gastaldius* to control the redistribution of taxes (2.2.1): the *gastaldii* would have been given the administration of the public resources, recently commandeered by the rebels. After the collapse of the monarchy, though the documentation is silent, the local dukes presumably kept the *gastaldii*, who maintained their roles as administrators, only now under the direction of the dukes. It stands to reason that as the kings spread their influence over the duchies, they would strive to reset the balance between dukes and *gastaldii*, mostly as part of their reclamation of the public fisc (i.e. the royal court), and such is likely to be the context for Rothari’s legislation.

### 5.2.2. Local geography of power

Dukes and *gastaldii* had important roles in the Lombard constitution, and the few laws in the *Edict* about them seem to demonstrate that they were the most powerful positions after the

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819 *Cod. Inst.* 12.8.2,4; *Iust. Nov.* 134.1. For examples, see Joshua the Stylite, *Chron.* 54, 70, 77 (44, 58, 63 in Wright’s edition); Theoph. s.a. 5997 (146 de Bloor); *Proc. Bella*, 1.8.5; 2.10.2; 3.11.17; 3.15.13. See *LRE*, 673–74; Kaegi, *Unrest*, 43.

820 Both *gastaldii* and ducal courts are present in our documentation, though invariably on later sources, and mostly for Benevento and Spoleto, though there are references for ducal courts in Brescia, Milan, Lucca, Verona and other locations; it is impossible to know whether the ducal courts were modeled after the royal ones, or the other way around; for an analysis of the *curtes ducales* (with full documentation), see Brühl, *Federn*, 365ff. esp. nn. 67–68; Gasparri, “Il regno,” 31; for the idea that the royal structure duplicated the ducal one, see Bertolini, “Ordinamenti,” 439.
king. In his daily life, however, it is likely that the average soldier would have little or no contact with his duke (unless they were stationed directly under him), and very sporadic contacts with his *gastaldius*, especially after the tax-system broke down. At the local level, as far as our sources reveal, two institutions informed military life, in the first place, the local division of the army the soldier was connected to, which our sources call *fara*; in the second place, the local commanding officer, the *iudex*. Similar to the dukes and the *gastaldii*, our sources preserve some of the roles of those institutions, but failed to provide a complete picture. This section will examine the evidence available for the *fara* and for the office of *iudex*, and integrate them into the model of Lombard military hierarchy suggested here.

*The fara*

We have mentioned in *CHAPTER TWO* that the accommodation of the Lombards in northern Italy was done through units called *farae* (2.2.1). Marius of Avanches mentions as much, stating that: “(...) Alboin, king of the Lombards, leaving and burning all Pannonia, his fatherland, with wives and all his people, occupied Italy in *fara*.”

The term, which is not glossed nor mentioned by him elsewhere, seems to have had some currency north of the Alps: although the contemporary source material is rather limited, the term can be found elsewhere in Burgundian and Frankish sources. In Italy, Rothari’s *Edict* preserved the only seventh-century reference, in a law on the right of a freeman to migrate:

> If some of the freemen should have the possibility to migrate with his *fara* where he would like to, within the territory of our kingdom—provided permission was given to him by the king—and if the duke or any other freemen has given him property, and the man who wants to migrate no longer wants to remain with him or his heirs, let the property return to the donor or his heirs.

Rothari’s concern in *Rot 177* was, arguably, to allow for the mobility of soldiers, even when some of them were engaged in a private arrangement with some local powerful man, be he a duke or any other magnate. Were his unit to be deployed elsewhere, the soldier would not...

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822 *Lex Gund.* 54; *LH* 2.42 (a pun between *fara* / *Farro*); Fredegar (who uses *Burgundaefarones* for [part?] of Burgundian aristocracy; several mentions, e.g. 4.41; 4.44; 4.55; 4.56; 4.90); the best account of *fara* is still Murray, *Germanic Kinship Structure*, 89–97.
823 *L.LRot* 177: “Si quis liber homo potestatem habeat intra dominium regni nostri cum fara sua megrare ubi voluerit—sic tamen si ei a rege data fuerit licentia—, et si aliquas res ei dux aut quicumque liber homo donavit, et cum eo noluerit permanere, vel cum heredes ipsius: res ad donatorem vel heredes eius revertantur.”
need to be torn between mixed loyalties, between his attachment to his unit and his duties to his patron, but could rather return the gifts he received and move with his troop (see 6.2). For the kings, it was a mechanism to guarantee their capacity to relocate the troops away from local (presumably ducal) control.

By the eighth century, Paul the Deacon, supposedly using an entry from the ‘consular source’ (see 1.1.1), used the word to describe Gisulf’s demands of troops from Alboin, as he recounted the story of the creation of the duchy in Friuli (see 3.2.2). Paul, apparently imagining his reader would have problems with the word ‘fara’, added a gloss, claiming “faras, hoc est generationes vel lineas.” Paul’s gloss has lead scholars to believe that the fara was a family-based military band, and was appropriated as a central element in a clan reading of ‘Germanic’ society.

Scholars, however, have abandoned the idea, dismissing Paul’s gloss for its later date, and focusing on contemporary material. Taken together with the remaining western sources, the Lombard references to fara point to a military unit, suggesting an etymological correlation with the German verb ‘fahren’ (to go), and originally meaning some sort of detachment or military expedition. Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that, at the same period, the Byzantine army also experienced the appearance of new terms for the basic military unit, bringing to light words from vulgar Latin, Greek, and even some barbarian languages. The Latin sources provide numerus, bandus, while in Greek we have τουρμα, θέμα and δρυγγος.

John Haldon has remarked on this appearance of new terminologies for the army in the

824 Compare with Mar. Av. s.a. 569: “Hoc anno Alboenus rex (…) in fara Italiam occupavit.” (emphasis added). For the passage, see 3.2.2.
825 HL 2.9. Paul’s gloss is repeated in two glossed manuscripts of the Lombard laws, namely in Vat. 5001 [Bluhme number 15], 13th c (Fara: genealogia; generatio) and Cavensi, [Bluhme: 9] a.1005 (Fara: d. parentela); the MS Matriensis [Bluhme: 8], 10th c., seems to be independent from Paul, glossing fara as “id est rebus.”
sixth and seventh centuries, suggesting the multiplication of new terms reflects deep changes in the organization of the army, and might represent “the adoption of everyday soldiers’ terms in official parlance.”

Fara, much like δρυγγος, might have been a term derived of the numberless ‘Germanic’ dialects in the army—possible meaning ‘detachment’. Apart from Rot 167, fara plays no part in the Edict, and no later Lombard legislator uses the term; by the eighth century it required a gloss, attesting to its long gone relevance. It could be argued that, as the troops grew roots on the territories in which they were settled, the basic military unit became the ciuitas, and the fara disappeared in the course of the seventh century.

Iudices

There is no evidence for any commanding official at the head of each fara, although we should probably assume there was one. In the legal material, the local commanding official is usually called index, which, as we will suggest, possibly meant a commanding commission more than a specific rank. Even though the term is relatively common in the Edict, he is invisible in the literary material, which led scholars to doubt its existence as an actual position, preferring to see index as a synonym for duke, gastaldius, or both. Indices, however, are present in literary sources from Byzantine Italy in which they figure from the mid-seventh century: in the Liber Pontificalis, the indices are mentioned frequently as commanders of (detachments of) the army. For example, when the cartularius Mauricius rebelled in Rome, Isaac sent the magister militum Donus and, “when [he] came to the city of Rome, all the indices (or the Roman army), who had previously joined Mauricius by oath, moved by fear, abandoning Mauricius, all joined Donus.” Similarly, after the defeat of the rebel Mezezius, “many of his indices were decapitated and brought to Constantinople, together with the head of the same rebellion.” In the second half of the seventh century, indices are often mentioned in lieu of the army, together with the main commanders of the army, for

828 Haldon, Recruitment, 31–32.
829 See, for example, the mention of the exercitus Senensis in CDL 1.50 (a.730).
830 See, for example, Mor, “Gastaldi con potere ducale.”; Gasparri, Duchi, 28; Christie, Lombards, 115; Wickham, “Aristocratic power in eighth-century Lombard Italy,” 154; Cammarosano, Nobili, 60; but cf. Bertolini, “Ordinamenti,” 439–40; 81; Barnwell, Kings, 121.
831 See, for example, LP Vita Adeodati (672–76), 79.2; Vita Severini (640), 73.2; Vita Theodori (642–49) 75.2.
832 LP Vita Theodori 75.2: “Qui veniens in civitate Romana, omnes iudices seu exercitus Romanus qui prius se cum Mauricio sacramenta constrinxerant, timore duci, demittentes Mauricium cartularium, omnes se cum Dono fecerunt.”
833 LP Vita Adeodati 79.2: “…et multi ex iudicibus eius truncate perducti sunt Constantinopolim, simul et caput eiusdem intartae.”
example, when “all the *iudices* together with the main commanders, coming to salute [the new pope Conor], and, at the same time, shouted approval in his praise.”

In Lombard sources, the *iudices* appears in eight laws in Rothari’s *Edict*, and are also mentioned in the so-called first epilogue (Rot 386). The role of the *iudex*, as it is stated in the *Edict*, is a combination of police work (with the accompanying judicial role) and military command. Rot 25, for example, mentions the *iudex* in the context of the army:

If someone in the army should demand from someone else the return of his property, and this person will not return it to him, let him then go to the duke, and if the duke, *or the iudex committed (ordinatus) in that place by the king*, would not preserve justice or the truth, let him [i.e. the duke or the *iudex*] pay twenty solidi to the king and to the offended part; the claim remains in effect.

The law places the *iudex* in a situation similar to the duke, at the head of an army, suggesting that the *iudex* could be in charge, commissioned (ordinatus) by the king. This conjecture is supported by another law, Rot 6, which suggests that an army could be commanded by a duke, but parts of it would be commanded by another official, commissioned by the king, even though the legislator fails to name this office:

If someone should raise a rebellion against his duke while on campaign, or entice any part of the army against *the one who was commissioned (ordinatus) by the king to command the army*, let him pay with his blood.

The similar position of the *iudex* in Rot 25, “commissioned” in the army by the king, and the unnamed official in Rot 6, “commissioned to command the army,” hints that this official might have been the *iudex*. Even though it is impossible to be certain whether this was indeed the intention of the legislator, the fact that a ninth-century copy of the Lombard laws actually preserved “if someone should raise a rebellion against his *iudex*” (instead of “against his duke”) seems to support the argument.

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834 See *LP* Vita Cononis (686–87), 85.2 “…omnes iudices una cum primatibus exercitum partier ad eius salutationem venientes, in eius laude omnes simul adclamaverunt.” Similarly, Vita Sergii (687–701), 86.3.
835 *LL*Rot 25: “Si quis res suas ab alio in exercitu requisiverit et noluerit illi reddere tunc ambulit ad ducem; et si dux illi aut iudex, qui in loco ordinatus est a rege, veritatem aut iustitiam non servaverit, componat regi et cui causa est, solidos viginti, causa manente.” (emphasis added)
836 *LL*Rot 6: “Si quis foris in exercitum seditionem levaverit contra ducem suum, aut contra eum qui ordinatus a rege ad exercitum gubernandi, […] aut’, aliquam partem exercitum seduxerit, sanguinis sui incurrat periculum.” (emphasis added)
837 In the *Cod. Vaticanus* 5359 (Bluhme’s ms. 5), noted in his edition, p. 13.
Another law that attests to the military role of the *iudex* is the law on the role of the household in military service, *Rot* 167, which presupposed the *iudex* controlled an armed detachment, serving under him *in obsequium* (see 6.2). Similarly, the military role of the *iudex* is attested in *Rot* 244, which mentions the *iudex* guarding the walls of cities and fortresses, and the obligation of anyone coming in and out to report to him:

If someone should exit or enter the walls of a city or a fortification without the authorization of his *iudex*, let him be condemned to pay to the royal court (i.e. the fisc) twenty solidi, if he is a freeman; if, however, he is a *aldius* or a slave, ten solidi, also to the royal court. And if he steals, let him amend for the crime of stealing, as is read in this *Edict*.838

Both laws attest to the *iudex* commanding a military detail, both in the army by royal commission, and in the protection of fortified places. Furthermore, later legislation depicts the *iudex* as responsible for selecting and leading troops to an assembly of the army.839

*Rot* 244 also connects the *iudex* with an additional function: he is expected to observe if a person who is leaving the city has committed a crime. The police role of the *iudex* is also attested in other laws: for instance, the *iudex* is supposed to stop the illegal destruction of a mill, and if he would be found lenient, he should be fined (*Rot* 150). The same law, however, attests that the *iudex* could issue a judicial order to put down an illegal mill. The *iudex* would also receive articles found on the road (*Rot* 260), and was expected to prevent criminals and runaway slaves from leaving the province (*Rot* 264). He would also be the one presiding over duels (*Rot* 368). Finally, *Rot* 176 establishes that the *iudex* was the go-to official to attest if someone was a leper, so that the latter could be expelled from the community. In the *Edict* the *iudex* operates in tandem with another official, the *schuldahis*, who later legislation places under the command of the *iudex*, together with a small hierarchy of other officials, such as *centeni*, *locoporti*, and *saltarii*.840 Prominent in Rothari’s *Edict* is the ‘*sculdabis*’, who we have already mentioned helping the *gastaldius* in a situation when the use of force could be

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838 *LLRot*, 244: “Si quis murum de castro aut civitate sine noticia iudecis sui exierit foras, aut intraverit, si liber est sit culpabiles in curtem reges solidos vigenti; si autem haldius aut servus fuerit, sit culpabiles sold. decim in curtem reges. Et si furtum fecerit, sicut in hoe edictum legitur, poena furti conponat.”

839 Selecting who would join the army: *LLInt* 83.14 (a. 726); *LIAbit* 7 (a. 750); rides with freemen at arms to assembly: *LLRot* 4 (a. 745/46).

840 For the hierarchy behind the *iudex*, see *LLInt* 25.7; 26.8; 44.15; 83.14; *LLRot* 4; for *sculdabis* and police work, see *LLRot*, 35 (handling scandalum with the *iudex*); *LLRot* 251 (handling pledges); & *LLRot*, 15 (fines for grave robbery); *LLRot*, 1 (*centeni & locopositi*); *LLInt*, 83.14 (*saltarii*).
necessary (5.2.1). In the Lombard laws, the sculdabis is part of the entourage of the iudex, and perform police services, as was the case in the three laws quoted above (Rot 15, 189, and 221; see 5.2.2). Together with the iudex, the sculdabis collected some fines and intervened in cases of pledges.

The limited information on indices has led scholars to believe that when the sources refer to them, they are actually referring to dukes or to gastaldi. Such an argument would receive further support from the fact that indices—or more specifically, the primates indices—are portrayed helping Rothari promulgate the laws (Rot 386). This simplifying approach, however, is hard to reconcile with the surviving evidence. We have already seen that, as far as the source material can attest for the seventh century, the gastaldi had no military capacities: their role in the Edict is clearly administrative. The indices, contrastingly, as we have seen above, are portrayed as leading troops, both in campaign and in surveillance: they could hardly be the same office. As for the dukes, even though both dukes and indices controlled armed forces, Rot 25 (the main source for that function) makes clear that in charge of the army is “the duke, or the index commissioned in that place by the king” (‘dux aut index, qui in loco ordinatus est a rege’ [emphasis added]): were the two terms synonyms, why would the legislator repeat them? Moreover, it does not stand to reason that the duke would be the go-to official for such trivial matters as recovering articles found on the road (Rot 260), or that the duke would go about his duchy (sometimes as large as Friuli) checking for lepers (Rot 176) and presiding over duels (Rot 368).

Eighth-century Lombard charters similarly disprove the idea that the indices were a different term to describe the dukes (or the gastaldi). Royal and ducal charters present indices as witnesses, and often mention them by name. The lists of names bear the most eclectic

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841 The sculdabis seems to be another position created by the Lombards, although the title reminds one of the Roman (also not well-documented) centarius, or shield-bearer, who was some sort of a bodyguard. See, for example, Amm. 20.4.3 & 20.8.13; cf. P.Marini 18, in Tjäder, Lat. Papyri, vol. 2, 42–45. Compare with the lower-ranked ἱπασπίσται (shield-bearer) within the Eastern military followings; see Petersen, Siege Warfare, 57. For the etymology, see G. P. Braccini, “Termini germanici per il diritto e la giustizia: sulle tracce dei significati autentici attraverso etimologie vecchie e nuove,” Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo 42 (1995): 1053–207, 1108–10; cf. Rhee, Die germanischen Wörter in den langobardischen Gesetzen, 115–19. Cf. HL 6.24: “…rector, qui loci illius, quem ‘sculdabis’ lingua propria dicunt…”

842 On the sculdabis, see LL.Rot 15, 251, 374.

843 See, for example, Mor, “Gastaldi con potere ducale”; Gasparri, Duchi, 28; Christie, Lombards, 115; Wickham, “Aristocratic power in eighth-century Lombard Italy,” 154; Cammarosano, Nobili, 60; but cf. Bertolini, “Ordinamenti,” 439–40; 81; Barnwell, Kings, 121.

844 Taking the grammatically sound “primitibus indicibus” [(6,8,9,11,12) pro “cum primatos indices”]. See also LL.Grim prol.; and the various prologues of Liutprand’s additions to the law code.
selection of titles, from traditionally military positions, such as *spatharii* and *sculdabii*, to *referendarii*, but also notaries, bishops and even deacons. The charter evidence makes it clear that *iudex* was a position that could be held by different officers, in different positions in the military hierarchy.

As is the case with the *gastaldius*, the source material does not illustrate the exact nature of the *iudex*, but, based on what the sources present, it could be inferred that the *iudex* was not exactly an office (since it was held by different officials), but a military commission. It is possible that the title of *iudex* was given to any commissioned officer, any officer who would have, arguably, some level of commanding (and hence legal) power over his troops—in this sense, even dukes could be referred to as *indices* in their role of commanding troops. Such an interpretation allow for the various officials holding the title, and also for the multiple references to *indices* in different levels within the hierarchy, such as attesting the royal promulgation of the law codes, on the higher end, commanding troops by direct assignment of the king, while, on the lower end, invigilating duels and checking for lepers. The higher commanding officers, which Rothari calls *primates indices* (Rot 386), certainly occupied a leading role in the army (bringing to mind the *primates* of the *Liber Pontificalis*), while, locally, regiment commanders could hold the same title: what bring them together is the position of command with its connected juridical capacity.

The *indices*, together with the *farae*, provide a picture of how the military structure worked on the ground. The Lombard soldier, the base of the entire structure, was thus circumscribed in two military institutions, his unit, and his local commander. The exact relation between the *farae* and the local *indices* is far from direct, and, although it might be tempting to assume that commanding each *fara* there was a commissioned *iudex*, that finds no support in the evidence, and was probably not the case. The *iudex*, as an institution, had a long life in Lombard law, receiving a lot of attention from later legislators, especially Liutprand, who presumably relied more and more on them as a bridge between central and local power.

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845 For *spatharius*, *referendarius* and *notarius*, see CDL 3.6 (673); for *sculdabii* and deacon, CDL 4.1, 12 (750); 4.1,14 (761). For bishops, CDL 4.1, 14.

846 Roman juridical tradition also did not know of a professional judiciary, with the attribution to judge always being seen as part of the attributions of the diverse magistrates (administrative, financial, or military), see Jones, LRE, 499–500.

847 Post-Rothari legislation on *iudex*: *LLInt* 8.2, 18.4, 25.7, 26.8, 28.10, 35.4, 42.13, 44.15, 55.2, 59.6, 74.5, 75.6, 77.8, 78.9, 80.11, 81.12, 83.14, 89.6, 96.1, 129.13; *LLRot* 1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14; *LLAist* 4, 6, 7. The laws
The *fara* on the other hand, probably disappeared at some point after Rothari, most likely being replaced by the *civitates* as the local division of the army: by the eighth century, Paul the Deacon had to gloss the term, which he then thought meant ‘*generationes uel lineas*’.848

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Summing up, the society established by the transformation of the Lombard soldiers into landholders was composed by a relatively homogenous middling class of freemen, and a small elite of office-holding notables, who composed a hierarchy topped by the dukes, followed by the *gastaldii*, and by commissioned officers (*iudices*); below them, less prominent positions such as *sculdabis*, local *actores*, *centenarii*, amongst others completed this group. The army was the central institution, receiving many of the freemen in its ranks (see 6.1): a high position in the hierarchy would guarantee access to the most affluent sector of society. This middling group of military households would profit from the military success under Agilulf, and the wide spread of the fine *ceramica longobarda* presumably attest their affluence during the first decades of the seventh century. This relatively egalitarian society is the legal society of Rothari’s *Edict*, which recognizes no distinction between freemen, and supposes most of them would hold landed property. The boon of the early seventh century eventually succumbed to the long-term decline of Italian economy, and the *ceramica longobarda*, the material index of the Lombard prosperity, gave away to rough, homemade pottery. In support of that, the *Edict*, notwithstanding the absence of legal differentiation, also attests to growing social inequality, in what the prologue portrays as the “daily torments of the poor” and the “undue demands of those with more power.” This social inequality, presented as a concern of the legislator in the prologue but not yet legally recognized (as it will be in the eighth century, cf. *Lint* 62.9), attests to a burgeoning new group of magnates, who likely profited from the period of bonanza under Agilulf, and were thus better poised to profit from the economic duress of their former peers. The bankruptcy of the middling class of Lombard landowners brought together serious problems for the support of the army, which depended on the soldiers’ resources for part of its support. To understand the impact of this social evolution in the Lombard army, we must turn to how the Lombards conscribed and supported their soldiers.

attempting to suppress resistance and rebellion against *indices* (such as *LI* *Lint* 35.4; repeated in *LI* *Rat* 10) arguably show the tensions behind this interaction between central government and local elites.

848 *HL* 2.9.
CHAPTER SIX

SOCIETY AND MILITARY SERVICE

6.1 Military Obligation and Lombard Households: 6.1.1 The Lombard exercitales and military obligation; 6.1.2 Deterioration of Military Service. 6.2 Military Entourage: Obsequium and Gasindium. 6.2.1 Obsequium and Gasindium; 6.2.2 An army of recruitment or an army of retinues?

Identifying how an army obtained recruits and how it supplied and rewarded them is fundamental to understanding the interconnections between warfare and society. The conditions of military service are determined both by social allocation of resources to support warfare (i.e. whether the state is able/willing to levy taxes to pay salaries to the army, or if such support falls on the soldiers’ own resources) and by the role of warfare in social distinction (i.e. to what extent military service is seen as a condition or a privilege of a certain group of individuals). Lombard government, much like other post-Roman states, handed as much as possible of the funding of the armies over to private hands, either by mandating conscripted soldiers to supply for themselves or by relying on private supported military entourages attached to wealthy commanders. Given the economic evolution and social changes sketched in the previous chapter (5.1), it is to be expected that the basis for recruitment and the relationship between recruited soldiers and ‘private’ entourage shifted in the period. This chapter will analyze the evidence for military obligation in the early seventh century, and will tackle the question of who would serve the army and in what conditions (6.1), as well as scrutinizing the evidence to evaluate the importance of military entourages to the Lombard military system (6.2).

6.1 MILITARY OBLIGATION AND THE LOMBARD HOUSEHOLD

Military obligation was a long-standing feature of the Roman Empire and, even if the zeal with which the state imposed it varied, it is safe to say that there had always been a part of the population subjected to mandatory military service.849 The same seems to be the case for the barbarian kingdoms in the west, although the criteria behind conscription might have

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849 See esp. Whitby, “Recruitment.”
varied and are not always clear in our sources. Amongst the Lombards we suggested that military service was initially connected to the allocation of a share of the taxes (2.2.1), but eventually was associated with specific military families (3.1.2). In his section we will analyze the mechanisms that bound the Lombards to the army and the basis of conscription. We will first analyze the basis of military obligation, and then discuss how the economic involution (5.1) affected conscription.

5.1.1 The Lombard exercitales and military obligation

In Lombard legal documents, military service revolves around exercitales: the name, a post-Roman neologism, suggests that exercitales were Lombards connected in some capacity to the army, and it has been proposed that the term meant ‘enlisted soldiers’. The references for exercitales are, nonetheless, extremely meagre: the term is mentioned in five laws, though only four of them come from the seventh century. Of the four references in the Edict, three are found in the section that deals with military discipline (Rot 20–25). This series of six laws comprises the basic legislation related to military affairs. Although we have already mentioned some of this legislation, it is worth quoting them in full:

20. If someone from the exercitales should refuse to render justice to his duke, let him pay twenty solidi to the king and to his duke.

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851 The essential literature is Bertolini, “Ordinamenti.”; Tabacco, “Dai possessori.”; more recently, see Gasparri, “Struttura.”

852 Besides the relatively common use in Lombard legislation and charters, the term is also found in Visigothic legislation, see *Lib. Ind.* 9.2.9 (681). By the Carolingian period, exercitalis is commonly used as an adjective to qualify military activities and services, especially in phrases such as “iter exercitale.” See, for example, in chronicles: *Annales Mettensis priorii*, ad a. 792 (“Eodem anno nullum iter exercitale factum est”); in legal material: Hludowici Pii Capitularia, n. 185 (“…omnes homines per totum regnum nostrum, qui exercitalis itineris debitores sunt …”). Cf. Cass. *Variae*, 11.1 “…exercitualem virum…”.

853 And not part of a ‘Germanic’ Gefolgschaft, *contra* Mor, “Stato,” 278. On exercitales, the classic works are now Bertolini, “Ordinamenti,” 451–81; Tabacco, “Dai possessori,” 228–46. Based on eighth-century evidence, Tabacco suggests that the exercitales were bound to the king by an oath; but there is no evidence of such practice in the earlier sources. The correlation of exercitales and freemen is also more a reality of the eighth-century material than of the seventh, and should not be used anachronistically, *contra* Delogu, “Italy,” 290; Gasparri, “Struttura,” 666–70; *Italia Longobardica*, 42–47.

854 Namely, *LL Rot* 20, 23, 24 & 373; *LL Justi* 62 (724); The title appears in a handful of eighth-century charters and is prominent amongst the witnesses interviewed in a royal *inquisitio* from 715 (CDL 1.19); see Bertolini, “Ordinamenti,” 460–76.
21. If someone should refuse going on campaign with the army, let him give the king and his duke twenty solidi.
22. If someone of the same army should refuse to help to his duke to pursue justice, let this one also pay the king and his duke twenty solidi.
23. If the duke should oppress one of his exercitales unjustly, let the gastaldius provide him with assistance until he gets a trial and in the presence of the king, or at least his duke, let him render justice.
24. If some gastaldius should oppress his exercitales against reason, let the duke provide him assistance, until he receives a verdict.
25. If someone in the army should demand someone else the return of his property, and this person would not return it to him, let him then go to the duke, and if the duke, or the iudex nominated by the duke in that place, would not preserve due process and justice, let him [i.e. the duke or the iudex] pay twenty solidi to the king and to the offended part; the [original] claim [for restitution] remains [unaffected].

These laws establish some basic rules for the assembled army, such as due process involving property (Rot 25) and the judicial rights of the duke (Rot 20). And as we have seen, it reinforces the balance of power between the duke, as military commander, and the gastaldius, (Rot 23–24). In addition to those laws, elsewhere the Edict establishes the penalty for rebellion (Rot 6) and for desertion (Rot 7), both punishable by death.

Even though Rot 21 and 22 does not explicitly use the word exercitales, there is good reason to believe they were the focus of both laws. The fact that Rot 21, instead of mentioning exercitales again, shifts back to the usual ‘if someone’ (si quis) has led historians to believe in some sort of general conscription as the basis for the enlistment: military service (as exercitales) would be the duty and prerogative of the Lombards, often seen as a privilege connected to the gens. The context of the two laws in the Edict, however, points in a different direction: both Rot 21 and 22 address subjects that are contained within the military laws, and refer to situations relating to the army. The latter mentions textually that quis refers to someone de exercito, while the former most likely assumes that the person in case (quis) is liable for military service. Supplying exercitales on both occasions—and thus suggesting Rot

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855 I.I.Rot 20–25: (20) Si quis de exercitales ducem suum contempererit ad iustitiam, vigenti solidos conponat regi et duci suo; (21) Si quis in exercito ambulare contempererit aut in sculca, dit regi et duci suo solidos 20; (22) Si quis de ipso exercito duci suo ad iustitiam persequerit denegaverit solatium, unusquisque conponat regi et duci suo solidos vigenti; (23) Si dux exercitalem suum molestaverit inuiste, gastaldius eum solatiet, quousque veritatem suam inveniat et in praesentiam regis aut certe aput duci suum ad iustitiam perducat; (24) Si quis gastaldius exercitalem suum molestaverit contra rationem, dux eum solaciet, quousque veritatem suam inveniat; (25) Si quis res suas ab alio in exercitu requisiverit et noluerit illi reddere, tunc ambulit ad ducem; et si dux illi aut iudex, qui in loco ordinatus a regem, veritatem aut iustitiam non servaverit, conponat regi et cui causa est, solidos vigenti, causa manente.

856 See, for example, Gasparri, “Strutture,” 667; Tabacco, “Dai possessori,” esp. 224, 53–54.
20–25 applied for the specific part of the population who owed military service (the exercitales)—would certainly not be too far fetched. Hence, an exercitalis who failed to join the army or a patrol would be penalized with 20 solidi, the same penalty for one of the exercitales who failed to support his duke. In any case, the legislator was concerned in establishing a fine for those who, being obligated to serve, would fail to honour their duty (Rot 21). Rothari was not, however, much concerned in establishing who would have such an obligation, a piece of information, arguably, of common knowledge.

Military service and the household: Rot 167

The nature of the military service can be better perceived in a different law, Rot 167. This law deals with the destiny of the properties gained in connection with military service, and attests that at least a part of the Lombards was not expected to take part in campaigns:

If brothers, after the death of their father, remain in a shared household (casa commune), and one of them acquires property in obsequium to the king or of a iudex, let him henceforth keep that for himself, without a share going to his brothers; and if he acquires something on campaign with the army (foras in exercitum), let it be held in common with the brothers whom he left behind in the shared household. And if someone makes a donation by gairethinx to one of the brothers, let him to whom the donation was made have it henceforward. And if one of them would take a wife, and the dowry (meta) is given out of the common property, when the time comes for another to take a wife or it comes to dividing the property, let him be refunded as much as his brother gave as dowry. Regarding the paternal and maternal property that remains let them divide it equally among themselves.\(^{857}\)

This law preserves evidence for three different characteristics of Lombard military service. The first relates to the private military service (obsequium), and sets out how it was supported differently from the public military obligation: we shall return to this point in the next section (6.2.1). The other two characteristics refer to the military obligation, and are connected. The first point is that the law makes it unquestionable that military service while on campaign (foras in exercitum) was not universal, since one of the brothers would stand for

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the household). One of the brothers was mandated to join the army (or be fined according to Rot 21), while the rest of them would stay behind. The brothers that stayed behind were entitled to a share of the gains received by the one who was risking his life on the battlefield. The involvement of the brothers in the profits of war leads logically to the second point: that the burden of the military obligation fell on the household, not on the person.

The legal prerogatives of the brother/s that stays back has led scholars to see in Rot 167 a statement of the traditional ‘Germanic’ privilege—the duty and honor—to take part in the combat. The division of military gains, indeed, goes starkly against the Roman tradition of protecting the immunity of the castrense peculium, the military rewards, a tradition preserved by Justinian in his Institutiones:

It is not allowed to everyone, however, to make a will. For, in the first place, those who are subjected to the control of another do not have the right to leave one; to such an extent, indeed, that even if their parents have given them permission they nevertheless cannot legally produce a will. And, with the exception of those whom we have previously enumerated, and especially soldiers who are under parental control, to whom permission is granted by Imperial Constitutions to make a will disposing of whatever property they may have acquired while in camp. This right was originally granted only to soldiers in active service, by the authority of the Divine Augustus as well as by that of Nerva, and also by that of the distinguished Emperor Trajan, and afterwards, by an endorsement of the Divine Hadrian, it was conceded to soldiers who had been discharged, that is to say, to veterans. Therefore, if any of them have made a will disposing of their military rewards (castrense peculium), it will belong to those whom they may have constituted their heirs, and if they died without leaving a will, without any surviving children or brothers, the property will belong to their parents by the usual rule of succession.

The Lombard legislation seems to break away from the Roman tradition, given that the household was entitled to any reward the soldier would receive while in the army, suggesting compensation for a higher (financial) participation of the household in supporting the

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860 Haldon, Recruitment, 66ff.
861 Just. Inst. 2.12: “Non tamen omnibus licet facere testamentum. Statim enim hi qui alieno iuri subiecti sunt testamenti faciendi ius non habent, adeo quidem ut, quamvis parentes eis permiserint, nihilio magis iure testari possint: exceptis his quos antea enumeravimus, et præcipue milites qui in potestate parentum sunt, quibus de eo quod in castris aquisierint permissionem est ex constitutionibus principum testamentum facere. Quod quidem initio tantum militibus datum est tam ex auctoritate divi Augusti quam Nervae nec non optimi imperatoris Traiani; postea vero subscriptione divi Hadriani etiam dimissis militia, id est veteranis, concessum est. itaque si quidem fecerint de castrensi peculio testamentum, pertinebit hoc ad eum quem heredem reliquerint: si vero intestati decesserint, nullis libris vel fratribus superstitibus, ad parentes eorum iuri communi pertinebatur.” (emphasis added)
army. 862 This shift from public to private support, however, is not exclusive to the Lombards, and similar legislation is found in Visigothic Law, 863 and, in the following century, in Leo's Ecloga (741): 864

Liber Indicium, 4.5.5

A son who, while his father and mother are still alive, acquires any property, that he earned either through the favour of the king, or as gifts (beneficiis) from patrons, and thence wants to sell or give this property to someone, according to that condition, which is stated in our laws, let him be allowed to. (...) If anyone amongst the leudes gets something, not as gifts (beneficiis) from the king, but acquires it from his own labour as a soldier in an expedition, if he is living in a common house with his father, let a third of what he gets go to his father, and let the son, who worked for it, obtain two thirds. 865

If [two] brothers remain after the death of their parents, and one is a soldier, while the other one stays in the house, if there is an arrangement between them, it should be honoured. When there is no agreement, and up to ten years of living together has expired, all they should have acquired, both from wage (ρόγας) and from the efforts in the common house, should be shared in equal parts. But if they lived together this ten years, and live three years more, and they part ways, then the soldier should get his horse with harness, together with his weapons and also the armour, if he had acquired them, all the rest should be divided equally. After thirteen years of co-inhabitancy, he can keep what else he receives. 866

862 The level of participation of the household in the military gains is particularly high, and we argue below that such a high participation was related to Rothari's policy to preserve the property of the households.

863 Lib. lrd. 4.5.5 is an antiqua, preserved by Reccesvintus in the seventh-century.

864 For the Visigothic Laws, the classical work is P. D. King, Law and Society in the Visigothic Kingdom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); for the military laws, see Dioniso Pérez Sánchez, El ejército en la sociedad Visigoda (Salamanca: Calatrava, 1989). For the Ecloga and the developments in the East, see Haldon, Recruitment, 66–81.

865 "Filius, qui patre vel matre vivente aliquid acquisierit, sive de munificentia regis aut patronorum beneficiis promeruerit, et exinde aliquid cui cumque vendere vel donare voluerit, iuxta eam condicionem, que in aliis nostris legibus continetur, in ipsius potestate consistat; (…) Quod si inter leudes quicumque, nec regis beneficiis aliquid fuerit consecutus, sed in expeditionibus constitutus de labore suo aliquid adquisierit, si communis illis victus cum patre est, tertia pars exinde ad patrem perveniat, duas autem filiis, qui laborabit, obtinat."

866 Εἰ δὲ καταλείπθωσιν ἀδέλφοι μετὰ τὴν τελευτὴν τῶν γονέων αὐτῶν καὶ τις ἐξ αὐτῶν στρατευθῆ ὁ δὲ ἑτέρος μείνῃ ἐν τῷ οἶκῳ, εἰ μὲν σύμφωνα ποιήσωσι μετὰ ἀλλήλων, τὰ μεταξὸς αὐτῶν στοιχεῖον κρατεῖσθαι. Εἰ δὲ ἀσθονίης τούτου ποιήσωσι καὶ μέχρι δεκαετίας μετὰ τὸ στρατευθῆ ἐνα ἐξ αὐτῶν συζύγωσι πάντα τὰ ἐπικτηθέντα αὐτοῦ εἴτε ἀπὸ ρόγας εἴτε ἀπὸ καμάτων αὐτῶν καὶ στοικῆν δοῦν τὸν ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ μείναισιν ἀδέλφου ή ἀδέλφου ἐξ ἑστη καὶ ἐφ᾽ ἑστης μοίρας κομίζεσθαι αὐτοῦ. Μετὰ δὲ τήν δεκαετίαν ἐνος ἑτέρων τριών χρόνων συζύγωσιν αὐτῶν μετὰ ἀλλήλων καὶ μετὰ τούτο συμβή αὐτῶν ἀπ᾽ ἀλλήλων διαιρεθήσεται ἑπάριο τὸ στρατευθῆ ἐνα ἐξ αὐτῶν συζύγωσιν τὸν σελλαρίου καὶ τὸ ἄρμα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐὰν ὡς εἰκὸς ἐπικτῆσαι καὶ μόνον λοιπὰ πάντα μερίζεσθαι αὐτοῦ ἀδέλφωικας ἐξ ἑστῆς μοίρας. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἑπάριον τῶν δεχατον χρόνων συζύγωσι μετὰ ἀλλάλων καὶ εὑρеТι τίποτε ἐκ τόν ταύτα ῥόγων αὐτῶν ἐπικτῆσαμενος καὶ σφιζεται, καὶ τοῦτο κομίζεσθαι αὐτῶ.
The similarities between the two laws and *Rot* 167 are striking, especially if one considers the traditional Roman legislation. The three laws deal with somewhat different situations: while both Lombard and Byzantine legislations assume the father is dead, and that the brothers are yet to share the inheritance, the Visigothic law (similar to the Justinian law mentioned above) legislates about the son still under the paternal power. That notwithstanding, the three laws tackle the relationship between the individual reward of the soldier (the *castrense pecunium*) and the household he was connected to, either independently or under the tutelage of his father. Different from the Roman tradition, the three laws guarantee the right of the household (either the father or the collective of the remaining brothers) to claim (a part of) the profits from military service.

The evidence from three distinct parts of the Mediterranean attests to a shift in the support of troops from a direct state wage system to private resources. In all three cases, the common household is entitled to a share of the profits because, arguably, they were involved in supporting the soldier while in campaign. Since the military enterprise now was a collective effort—i.e. one brother fights, the other ones stay behind to provide support—the gains from such enterprise should also be shared. The Byzantine case is of special interest because it also accounts for the military equipment, which is only fully owned by the soldier after thirteen years of service: before that, it is still partially owned by the household, who supposedly had paid for it. Conversely, during the late Roman period, the households made no contribution to supporting the soldiers, so the latter were thus entitled to their own gains.

Summing up this evidence, we can infer some details of the nature of the Lombard military service. Each household was supposed to supply one recruit (or a certain number of recruits). It is impossible to say whether this obligation fell on every single household, or if it was restricted to military families, but later evidence on charters seems to point to the latter. In any case, failing to provide a recruit would cost the member liable to enlistment—arguably, the *exercitalis*—20 solidi, according to *Rot* 21, a sum not much

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867 The later date of the Byzantine evidence is arguably justified by the resilience of the state apparatus in the East.

868 Note that, in the *Lib. Ind.*, the expectation is that the soldier will only share a household while his parents are still alive, while both Rothari and the *Ecloga* envision a scenario after the death of the parents. Relevant as it may be, for the matter at hand, both situations are intrinsically the same: both relate to the participation of the household in the soldiers’ profits, whether as part of their father’s patrimony while still alive, or part of the inheritance he left after death.

869 *CDL* 1.19 (715) mentions, besides *exercitales*, several *homines liberi*, which seems to point to a more restricted military obligation.
dissimilar from the late Roman *aurum tironicum*. The household would then support the *exercitalis*—and in all likelihood also equip him with weapons and horse—and for such, any gain in campaign would be shared with the household. Whether this gain was an extraordinary donative or simply a share of the booty is impossible to say, but Rot 167 makes it clear that some profit was expected to come to the soldier. If one of the heirs remained in the same household, he would be entitled to a share of those gains, as stipulated in Rot 167, since he was possibly entrusted with producing surplus to support his brother in the army. One can further conjecture that, once the common household was divided (as per Rot 154), the same obligation would apply to all the newly established households.

Military service and the household: “causa sub uno scuto”

Another expression that points to the role of the household in providing recruits is *causa sub uno scuto*, or ‘suit under one shield’, used to signify ‘a dispute within the same family’. While legislating to refrain duels, Rothari stipulated that duels between members of the same family were an abomination, and should not happen, mandating oaths to replace the trial by battle. The titles are concerned with, firstly, a claim of illegitimacy for a child by one of the paternal uncles (barba) or close relatives (Rot 164); secondly, a claim that the *mundium* of a man’s wife did not belong to him (but to the wife’s family) (165); and finally, the accusation that a husband has murdered his wife (166). What is interesting here is the explanation why there should be no duels in such cases. In one law, “because it seems serious and impious, that such an dispute under the same shield (*causa sub uno scuto*), should be solved by battle;” the other, “because it seems unjust, for such a large dispute under the same shield (*causa sub uno scuto*), to be solved by battle;” and finally, “because it seems to be absurd and impossible that such an dispute under the same shield (*causa sub uno scuto*), should be solved by battle.”

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870 The *aurum tironicum*, a monetary counterpart to the military recruit, corresponded to 25 (Cod. Tb. VII.13.13) or 30 solidi (Cod. Tb. VII.13.20), see Jones, LRE, 432ff; 615.

871 The expression *sub uno scuto*, to my knowledge, is restricted to Rothari’s Edict, although Liutprand uses it in a later law, he is referring to back to the Edict (LL.LI.Lii, 118.II, refers to LL.Rot 166). The later Glossarium Cavense uses *scutum* as a military unit, into which the Arimani would be enlisted following a *dominium*: “Arimanus: id est qui sequitur scutum dominicum.” Rothar also uses the expression *sub scuto* to describe the protection of the law (LL.Rot 367).

872 LL.Rot, 164–66; cf. however, LL.Rot, 202.

873 LL.Rot 164: “(...*) quia graue et impium uidetur esse, ut talis causa *sub uno scuto* per pugna dimittatur,“

874 LL.Rot 165: “(...*) quia iniustum uidetur esse, ut tam grandi causa *sub uno scuto* per pugna dimittatur,“

875 LL.Rot 166: “(...*) quia absurdum et impossibile uidetur esse, ut talis causa *sub uno scuto* per pugnam dimittatur.”
The meaning of the expression ‘sub uno scuto’ has, however, divided the translators of the Lombard law code. Azzara and Gasparri suggested that the expression should be taken with *per pugnam*, whose meaning *sub uno scuto* would be glossing, in the sense of ‘con un duello’.

It seems, however, unlikely that the legislator would gloss plain Latin (something that is not usual in the code), especially since the usual formula for glossing terms (*id est...*) is not present. Beyerle circumvented the translation by using the rather cryptic and archaic word *einschildig*, whose meaning in this context is hard to fathom. The expression makes more sense if read relating to *causa* rather than *per pugnam*, meaning that it would be wrong that “an dispute under the same shield would be solved by battle.” *Uno scuto* refers, thus, to a problem within the same family group (or, in the case of the wife, two groups interconnected through marriage), the common element between the three laws. The language in Rothari’s *Edict*, then, often portrayed each family a ‘shield’; the military implications are evident. The family units were perceived as building blocks of the army, each providing a recruit based on their military affiliation.

### 6.1.2 Deterioration of Military Service

By the time Rothari was publishing the *Edict*, it seems that the basis of Lombard conscription (viz. the military household) was in jeopardy. Even though it is impossible to ascertain to what extent Rothari is changing (and adding to) existing laws, several laws in the code do seem to be addressing the impoverishment of the military households, and might represent Rothari’s attempt to reverse the development in Lombard society sketched in the previous chapter (5.1). Rothari pursued his efforts to safeguard the property of households by two main avenues: in the first place, by regulating the practice of *pigneratio* and confiscations, he attempted to prevent the immediate expropriation of necessary military assets from the indebted households; secondly, he made provisions to ensure that military rewards would remained connected to the household, and, by regulating inheritance, that the following generation would be provided with enough resources to honor their obligation.

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876 Azzara and Gasparri, *Le Leggi dei Longobardi: storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo germanico*, 47. The authors suggest for 164 (above): “…perché appare grave ed empio che una simile cause venga risolta “sotto uno scudo” [cioè] con un duello.”

877 Beyerle, *Gesetze*, vol. 1, 31–2. For 164 (above): “Sündhaft erscheint es aber und untragbar, daß eine solche Sache einschildig mit Zweikampf ausgetragen wird.” (emphasis added) He probably meant ‘einschildig’ literally as ‘by one shield’; the term, however, was only used in medieval German with a different sense, meaning a knight whose noble ascendance was single sided (and hence, would have a single family shield); it has no equivalent in modern German. In the available English translation, Drew opted for simply ignoring the expression and translation as “by a duel between the two men;” see, Drew, *The Lombard laws*, 80–1.
Legal remedies: pigneratio

The Lombard *pigneratio* was an instrument for the creditor to pressure the debtor to pay his dues. It constituted of a legal but extrajudicial action by which the creditor, once the debtor failed to repay his debt, could confiscate part of the debtor’s property as a surety (*pignus*). It differs from modern pledges or mortgages, for example, because the property is neither agreed upon by contract as a surety, nor is its custody included in the terms of the loan, but instead, it is claimed as a result of a delay, as a gage. As usual, the *Edit* does not provide a full description of the procedure, and we can expect it to rely heavily on previous Roman juridical tradition. Nonetheless, Rothari reserved eight laws addressing and restraining certain practices (Rot. 245–52), and establishing a category of property that could be taken as *pignus* and one that could not. Notwithstanding the legal clarifications in Rothari, the *pigneratio* was essentially “stragiudiziale e «privata», senza cioè l’intervento di organi «publici»,” constituting then a private interaction between the creditor and the debtor. The evidence in the law code suggests that the *pigneratio*, although legal in nature, could constitute a violent seizure of property, involving armed bands (Rot 249, see 6.2.2).

Concerned with the violence involved in the process, and with the ruthless appropriation of property, Rothari attempted to regulate *pigneratio* and prevent this kind of confiscation:

245. If someone has a debtor, let him call him once, and twice, and up to a third time, and if he will not pay back the debt, or will not pay composition, then let him take a *pignus* from his property that can lawfully taken as *pignus*.

246. If someone should dare to take a *pignus* from another on account of a debt or legal suit before he called him a third time, let him restore ninefold to the possession of the owner the *pignus* which he took before the [third] call for repayment.

Compared to other law codes, the seriousness with which Rothari’s legislation took the subject of illegal distraint becomes evident. Most post-Roman codes echo Lombard concern with illegal seizure of pledges. The harshest punishment for distraint is under the *Editus*...

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880 *Per gaudiam*, 61.
881 *L.L. Rot.* 245–46: “(245) Si quis debitorem habens, appellat eum semel et usque tertio, et si debitum non reddederit, aut non composuerit, tunc debeat pignare in his rebus, quibus pignare lecitum est; (246) Si quis alium pro quiolibet debitum aut causam pignare praesumpserit, antequam tertium eum pulsaverit, pignus quod ante contestationem tulerit, sibi nonum reformet in potestatem domini.”
882 For the Roman legislation, see *Cod. Ius*. 8.13–14; pledges must be, nonetheless, voluntary (see, for example, *Cod. Ius*. 8.13.10).
Theodoric, which demands a restitution of the value fourfold; in the Bavarian Law, the creditor has to return the illegally seized property plus another of same value (a twofold penalty), while a fine of 40 solidi is paid to the duke; in the Visigothic Liber Iudicum, Reccesvintus (649–72) suppressed pigneratio, but older legislation preserved in the code had penalized someone taking a pignus against the debtor’s will at twice its value.883 A fine of nine times the original value firmly attests Rothari’s engagement in preventing illegal pigneratio.

Rothari is even stricter when it comes to property that by law could not taken as pignus. He included legal protection against pigneratio to preserve certain properties, even in case of debt. The kind of property Rothari safeguards is illuminating:

249. If someone should take as a pignus (nomine pigneris) a stud of mares or a drove of pigs, without the orders of the king, let the leader either die or pay nine hundred solidi, half to the king and half to him whose pignus he had took away. And those who were with him, if they are freemen, let each one compose eighty solidi, as above, half to the king and half to him whose pledge had been taken. And if slaves have followed their lord; let them be numbered in the compensation of their master, not to the slave that followed him.884

250. If someone takes a tamed horse, or a bull or cows trained to the plough without a royal order, let him return them ninefold to the debtor.

252. It is allowed to no one on account of any kind of debt to take a holding classed as tributary (casa ordinata tributaria) in place of a pignus, but rather, slaves, cows, or cattle.885

The laws exclude from distraint as pignus properties that might be connected directly to obligations to the state, and whose confiscation would impede such service to be performed. Rothari’s especial concern with mares and pigs is better explained by the use of mares presumably as mounts (but also for breeding)886 and pigs as rations for the soldier in the

883 Theod. Edict 124; Lex Bauuar. 13.3; Lib. Ind. 5.6.1.
884 LLRot, 249. “Si quis greges aequarum seu porcorum sine iussionem regis pigneris nomine abstulerit, ille prior aut moriatur aut conponat solidos nongentos, medietatem regi et medietatem cui pignus abstulerit. Et qui cum eum fuerint, si tamen liberi sunt, unusquisque conponat solidos octugenta, medietatem regi et medietatem quem pigneraverat, ut supra. Et si servi dominum suum secuti fuerint, in compositionem domini compotentur; culpa enim dominus fecit, nam non servus, qui dominum suum secutus est.” (emphasis added)
885 LLRot, 249–50, 52: “Si quis greges aequarum seu porcorum sine iussionem regis pigneris nomine abstulerit, ille prior aut moriatur aut conponat solidos nongentos, medietatem regi et medietatem cui pignus abstulerit. Et qui cum eum fuerint, si tamen liberi sunt, unusquisque conponat solidos octugenta, medietatem regi et medietatem quem pigneraverat, ut supra. Et si servi dominum suum secuti fuerint, in compositionem domini compotentur; culpa enim dominus fecit, nam non servus, qui dominum suum secutus est.” (250) Si quis caballus domitos, aut boves seu vaccas iugo domitas pignaverit sine iussionem regis, sibi nonum reddat; (252) Nulli licet pro quolibet debitum casa ordinata tributaria loco pigneris tollere, nisi servus, ancillas, vaccas, pecoras.”
886 See HL 2.9, which seems to suggest that, at least by Paul’s time, the Lombards rode mares instead of horses. Alboin would have gifted Gisulf, in order to constitute the duchy in Friuli, a stud of mares: “Poposcit quoque a rege generosarum equarum gre ges, et in hoc quoque liberalitate principis exauditus est.” HL 1.24 has the Gepids offending the Lombards by comparing them to mares (which the offended Alboin compares positively to donkeys), although that seems to have no bearing on whether they rode them to battle or not.
army. But he extends severe punishment for the distraint of plow horses and cows, presumably also considered essential to maintain the household, whose material support made possible the soldier’s presence in the army. Amongst the property that could not be taken as pledge, we also find the *casa ordinata tributaria*, which we suggested above was the last vestige of the tax-system of accommodation (see 2.2.2): now presumably in the possession of the household, it was also considered part of the means of supporting troops. Those guilty of seizing mares and pigs, and hence preventing the freeman from joining the army, would receive capital punishment, unless they could redeem it by 900 solidi, of which the royal court would claim half, in order, certainly, to maintain the royal engagement on the case (besides producing revenue to the fisc). In addition to that, the *dominus* would have to compensate for slaves he used in the attack, while other freemen involved were also fined. In contrast with other legislation, the *Bavarian Law* fines someone 40 solidi for holding a freeman prisoner as a *pignus*, while the Alamonic *Pactus* charges 40 solidi for pledging illegal property. The clear concern with what could and what could not be confiscated, it can be suggested, is connected with the obligations the military families had to the state (viz. the army), and the assets they had to maintain in order to meet those obligation. In this concern, Rothari is firmly grounded in Roman legal tradition: safeguarding property connected to fulfilling tax obligations or providing for agricultural production can be traced back to Constantine.

*Legal remedies: inheritance*

Another legal measure in the *Edict* that attests Rothari’s concern with the depreciation of household properties is his intervention in inheritance. The basic rule was to ensure that legitimate sons (presumably the ones to carry the military obligation) would receive a large enough share of the inheritance to be able to carry on their duties. That meant, in the first place, guaranteeing equal shares for all legitimate sons, and, in the second place, preventing natural sons from getting a significant cut. *Rot* 154 proposes a strict regulation of how the inheritance should be divided:

887 Bacon (*laridum*) was a common food in the Roman military *annona*, a tradition which was presumably kept by the Lombards, see *CTb* VII, 4.4 and *Nov. Val.* XXXVI, 2 (a. 452); for the constitution of the *annona*, see Jones, *LRE*, 628–29.


889 *Cod. Ist.* 8.16.7 (Constantine, a. 315) & 8.16.8 (Honourius, a. 414).
If someone should leave a legitimate son, that is *fulborn*, and one or more natural sons, let the legitimate son take two parts of the property (*substantia*) of his father, and the natural son, the third part. If there are two legitimate sons, let the natural sons get a fifth part, as many as there are. If there should be three legitimate sons, let the natural sons have a seventh part; if there should be four legitimate sons, let the natural sons have a ninth part (...)[and so on]; if there should be more [legitimate sons], divide the father's property by this ratio.\(^{890}\)

The problem with endowing natural sons was that the larger the share they inherited, the less was available for the legitimate children. Presumably, the military obligation connected to the household would be passed to legitimate sons, and any property given to natural sons might be lost to the support of the army. It is interesting to notice that the law guarantees each legitimate son a share of the father's property, while the each new natural son would dig into the decreasing share of his brothers. In other words, each newborn legitimate son would increase the share directed to legitimate sons, in order to accommodate his inheritance (and hence guarantee the minimum necessary resource to honor his obligations), while the remaining portion destined to the natural sons would only be further divided in case of newborn natural sons. In addition to that, *Rot* 155 prevents the father from making natural sons “equals or similar” (*aequales aut consimilis*) to the legitimate ones without consent of their legitimate brothers (and only once they are of legal age, viz. twelve).\(^{891}\) If someone dies without a legitimate son, a third of the property would still go to natural sons, while another third would go to a daughter, and the final third go back to the family, thus maintaining the two original thirds within military households. *Bona caduca* would go to the fisc.\(^{892}\)

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890 *LLRot*, 154: “Si quis dereliquerit filium legitimum unum, quod est fulborn, et filius naturalis unum aut plures, filius legitimus tollat duas portiones de partris substantia, naturalis tertia. Si duo fuerint legitimi, habeant naturales quintam partem, quanticumque fuerint; si tres fuerint legitimi, habeant naturales septimam partem; si quattuor fuerint legitimi, habeant naturales nonam partem (...) si autem plures fuerint, per hoc numero dividant patris substantia.”

891 *LLRot*, 155.

892 *LLRot*, 158.
the three laws, we can compare the involvement of the household in the three cases. In the Visigothic law, the household (in that case under paternal control) is entitled to a third of the soldier gains, which, evidently, would become part of his own inheritance when his father died. Hence, in the case of two brothers, the soldier would ultimately keep 2/3 of his profits as a soldier, plus half of what went to the household (the other 1/3), assuming the father died intestate, adding up to 5/6 of what he received as a soldier. The Byzantine case, like the Lombard example we cited, considers a situation in which both brothers were already in possession of the inheritance, but had not undertaken a division of it. According to the law, again assuming there are only two brothers, the soldier would give up all his gains to the household, and would receive back half on division. After 13 years he would receive in addition his equipment if he paid for it himself. If the property remained undivided for over thirteen years, he would keep as his own any earnings he received. After that, he would keep his gains in tuto. The condition Rot 167 established for the Lombard household was much more generous. In the Lombard case, all the gains from military service would return to the household, and once one of the brothers would marry (and establish his own household), all the soldier would keep of what he earned was that which would compose his share of the inheritance (which included, of course, the gains from agricultural production supervised by his brothers), independent of how long was his term of service: if he had a single brother, that would add up to half of his gains, but it would be further divided in a larger family (Rot 154). As we have mentioned for the laws on pigneration, comparing with other law codes, the Edict is much more strict in the defense of the patrimony of the military households. There is no way of knowing on which previous legal context Rothari was working, but it is very likely that he had changed the law to further protect the property of the household. The title should be read in connection with the remaining laws regulating inheritance: taken together, these laws aimed to keep households liable to military service up to strength and to provide rules that would ensure that the organic reproduction of these families would not spread the property of the household too thin and undermine the availability of resources to support the army.

Summing up, we could suggest that the properties of the military households were threatened on two fronts. First, the poorer landholders would incur debt with the magnates,

893 *Lib. Iud. 4.2.1*
possibly seeking capital for sowing, or to acquire slaves and livestock. If the results failed to meet expectations, the level of indebtedness would grow and so would the dependency on the magnate, and a good share of property was probably sold to them to meet their demands. Eventually, the magnate would seize property from those in their debt, either by a legal *pignoratio* or simply by illegal confiscation. The process was probably not unlike the landing of this military aristocracy in the late sixth-century (see 3.1.2), only this time the predatory process was operating within the military class. The second threat to the property of the military households was the dispersal of the few resources still available to them. Whatever property or income was detracted from the household and moved away from military obligation—be it to the personal assets of a soldier or to the inheritance portion given to a natural son, presumably without military obligations—would reduce the overall military viability of the household. The general impoverishment of Lombard society, and especially the bankruptcy of part of the middling class of landholders, damaged the base for conscription, debilitating the army. By the mid-seventh century, Lombard society was composed of an increasing number of indebted and impoverished families, and a small group of magnates (see 5.1.2). These upcoming elite profited from the situation, acquiring properties of the impoverished freemen by confiscation, or sometimes by sheer expropriation: as muscle, this new elite would use privately supported military entourages. Such entourages were, presumably, a standard feature of the Lombard army, and were likely on the rise with this new elite. The question we must turn to next is the nature of these entourages, and whether by Rothari’s time they had replaced recruitment as the basis of the army.

6.2 MILITARY ENTOURAGE

So far we have been analyzing military service as a public obligation. The Lombard army, we suggested, was composed of soldiers gathered from the freemen who had military obligations. The king and the dukes had the privilege to assemble the army (*Rot* 21), probably only when there was specific need for doing so; we have, nonetheless, seen that locally the *indices* were responsible for controlling the walls of cities and fortresses (*Rot* 244), which might imply that at least some forces were regularly available, even if only for the occasional shift manning the walls. This public obligation of military service was not, however, the sole military engagement of the Lombards, and some of the freemen were also
engaged in military service within retinues of powerful men. The Lombard sources deal with this kind of private arrangement using two terms, *obsequium* and *gasindium*, the former meaning the kind of relation between a ‘lord’ and a soldier, the latter the special status of a man in such relation with the king or a duke.⁸⁹⁴

### 6.2.1 The military entourage: *obsequium* and *gasindium*

Rothari’s *Edict* provides very little information on military retinues, which might mean they were of small importance in Lombard society, or that they operated within a sphere in which Rothari did not feel the need to intervene. The evidence we have is preserved in three laws, namely *Rot* 167, 177 and 225. First, *Rot* 177 provides some information about the nature of the bond. According to the law, the soldier in a relationship of *obsequium* could break the bond by returning the property he had received:

> If some of the freemen should have the capacity to migrate with his *fara* where he would like to, within the territory of our kingdom, provided permission was given to him by the king, and if the duke or any other freemen has given him property, and the man who wants to migrate no longer wants to remain with him or his heirs, let the property be restored to the donor or his heirs.⁸⁹⁵

The soldier would, thus, receive property from a duke or from any other freeman in order to be in his service. Secondly, *Rot* 225 legislates on the right to property of a freedman, and mentions the nature of property received in private service:

> And if it so happens that [the freedman] should die without an heir, and previously while alive disposes of his own personal property (that is *andegawere* and *arigawere*), according to the Lombard law, let him to whom it was donated keep it. But as regards the property he held as a gift from his benefactor (i.e. his manumittor), let them be returned to that patron or to his heir. And if he acquired something as a reward for his work in *gasindium* of a duke or *obsequium* of freemen, let those things be returned to the donor. Other property, however, assuming, as said, that he did not leave heirs, and that he did not dispose of them while alive, let his patron succeed him as would a kinsman.⁸⁹⁶

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⁸⁹⁵ *LLRot* 177: “Si quis liber homo protestatem habeat intra dominium regni nostri cum fara sua megrare ubi voluerit—sic tamen si ei a rege data fuerit licentia—, et si aliquid res ei dux aut quicumque liber homin donavit, et cum eo noluerit permanere, vel cum heredes ipsius: res ad donatorem vel heredes eius revertantur.” (emphasis added)
⁸⁹⁶ *LLRot* 225: “Et si casu faciente sine heredes mortuus fuerit, et antea iudicaverit se vivo res suas proprias, id est *andegawere* et *arigawere* secundum legem Langobardorum, habeat cui donaverit. Nam quantum de res benefactori suo per donum habuit, si eas non oblegavit in libertatem, ad ipsum patronum aut ad heredes eius revertantur. Et si aliquid in *gasindium* duex, aut privatorum bonorum *obsequium*, donum munus conquisitit, res ad donatore revertantur. Alias vero res, si ut dictum est, heredes non derelinquerit, aut se vivo non iudicaverit, patronus succedat sicut parenti suo.” (emphasis added)
This law reinforces the idea that property donated to as a consequence of obsequium was conditional on the service being provided, and was to be returned if the service was no longer being rendered. The service could be passed to the next generation, since both laws at least assume that the property could be returned not only to the person with whom the service was contracted, but also to his heirs. Rot 225 also hints that the service to a duke (but probably also to the king, see below) would be called gasindium, while the term for the service in general would be obsequium, which could also be rendered to a private person (homo privatus). The different terminology suggests that the nature of the service might have varied if the donor was a duke (and, presumably, the king), when the term ‘gasindium’ would be used, or ‘obsequium’ if he was a simple (but nonetheless powerful) freeman. Later legislation attests that the term gasindius was, at least in the eighth century, also applied to similar service to the king.897

Finally, Rot 167 informs us about the difference between the public military service and the obsequium. We have seen that this law recognizes the involvement of the household to support the public military service, but it also spells out that such was not the case for obsequium:

If brothers, after the death of their father, remain in the same household, and one of them acquires property in obsequium to the king or of a iudex, let him henceforth keep that to himself, without any part to his brother; if he acquires something in campaign with the army, let it be held in common with his brothers who stayed in the household (…).898

Based on Rot 167, we could postulate that, unlike regular military service, part of what the soldier would receive in obsequium was to support himself during service (such as rations), what would justify his claim to the entirety of his rewards.

Summing up the evidence for obsequium, it is safe to say that it consisted of an obligation of service towards a private man (Rot 177) or a higher official (such as a dukes [Rot 177 & 225], kings or local indices [Rot 167]), although it is impossible to tell whether this service was a continuation of public military obligations or an expression of private power (see 6.2.2). The soldier would receive some property related to his service: such property, the soldier

897 L.L. iut 62.
898 L.L.Rot 167: “Si frates post mortem patris in casa commune remanserit, et unus ex ipsis in obsequium regis aut indices aliquas res adquisiverit, habeat sibi in antea abisse portionem fratrum, et qui foras in exercitum aliquot adquisiverit, commune sit fratribus quos in casa commune dimiserit (…).” (emphasis added)
would be obligated to return if he would no longer want to stay with his lord, or, arguably, if he left no heir that could step up in his place once he was dead (Rot 167 & 225). The fact that the law demanded the soldier who was moving away to return the property might indicate that this property would be usually movable, although Rot 167 might be equally referring to renouncing his rights to some landed property. In addition to that, the lord would also support the soldier, at least while rendering service (Rot 167). Extrapolating from this evidence, we could suggest that powerful men in Lombard society (kings, dukes, iudices, but also other local potentes, in sum, anyone who could spare the surplus) supported small-scale private forces, composed of free (but also freed, Rot 225) Lombards, many of them probably also exercitales in the army. The lords would provide support for these men in terms of rations (maybe also land) and they would supply their men with military equipment.

_Military entourages and private power_

Whatever was the level of public involvement in military entourages, it is undeniable that the soldiers in obsequium to powerful men were available to do their biddings. In the seventh century, this military asset was presumably used to expand the potentes’ influence over the rest of the population. An entourage could expand a magnate’s influence in two ways: first, military entourages provided the muscle for possible confrontations (e.g. the confiscations of pignus, 5.3.1); second, the service under a powerful man was an alternative for families at risk of bankrupting.

Rothari attests to the private use of these military entourages, usually in situations of internal conflict, and harshly prohibits their use:

> If someone, to avenge an offence, should rush upon someone with an armed band (mano armata), or invade a hamlet with an army of up to four men, let the leader die for the illicit presumption, or at least pay nine hundred solidi, half to the king and half to whom the offence was inflicted. And if those who were with him are free, let each one compensate with eigthy solidi, half to the king and half to him who suffered the offence; this does not include instances of the setting fires to houses in the hamlet, or committing manslaughter for which let compensation be paid to him whose houses are burned, or kinfolk, or slave killed, according to how their worth is evaluated.

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899 The _antiqua_ legislation preserved in the _Lib. Ind._ states that if the soldier moved to different patronus, he was supposed to return what he gained from the older patronus, while the new one should give him land, see. _Lib. Ind._ 5.3.4; 5.3.1 makes it clear that amongst the gifts were weapons, which should remain with the soldier.

900 _L.L._ Rot. 19: “Si quis pro iniuria sua vindecanda super quemcumque cum mano armata cocurrerit, aut in vicum intraverit cum exercitu usque ad quattuor homines [[6] pro exercitum usque ad quattuor homines in vico intraverit], ille prior pro inlecta praesumptionem moriatur, aut certe conponat solidos noningentos, medietatem
It could be argued that the legislator’s use of the term “illicit presumption” (*inlecita praesumptionem*) points to the illegal use of private supported soldiers in private errands, although he might be simply referring to the case at hand. Anyhow, the law attests how magnates (presumably those whom the law calls *prior*, ‘leader’) could put together military bands, here called *manus armata* and even *exercitum* (though that could just be three or four men), in order to pursue their own interests. A very similar example comes from the legislation on *pigneratio*, mentioned above (Rot 249). The law reveals a snapshot of the “daily torments of the poor,” to use Rothari’s expression (see 5.3.1). *Rot* 249 paints a picture of how the confiscation would happen and the involvement of private military bands in the process.

The poorer Lombards, nonetheless, did not have to be on the losing side of this bullying. Service in these private entourages was probably one of the ways they could guarantee a better life: in the company of one of those “with more power,” they could not only be on their good side, but also be handsomely rewarded (see 5.1.2). We have suggested that some of the richer graves in Nocera Umbra might represent members of military entourages (5.1.3). Even thought there is little evidence in the *Edict* of loss of liberty on account of service in *obsequium* (unlike, for example, the Visigothic evidence), it stands to reason that once under the service of another freeman, one would often guide one’s decisions based on their interests.

### 6.2.2 An army of recruitment or an army of military retinues?

We have seen that the Lombard army recruited from military households, who equipped and supported the soldier while on campaign (6.1). In addition to the *exercitales*, the Lombard army counted on extra-numerary troops composed of soldiers supported directly from private properties, either by a private owner or by a government official (such as a *iudex*, a duke, or the king); these troops served *in obsequium* or *in gasindium*, and were, we suggested, officially privately supported public agents, although they could illegally be used as private...

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901 *LLRot* 177 defends the right of the freeman to break the agreement of *obsequium*, by returning whatever gift he had received; For the Visigoths, see Sánchez, *El ejército*, 58–72; see also, Sarris, *Economy*, 173; Petersen, *Siege Warfare*, 170.
troops (6.2.1). It stands to reason that both forms of recruitment relied on different social organizations: while the recruitment of exercitales depended on the general health of a middling group of landowners, privately supported entourages required extensive surpluses and hence larger properties. That is especially true in a context of economic involution, in which the available resources are dwindling, not expanding, which rules out the possibility of a growth of the numbers of small landholders and of magnates. In the mid-seventh century, the Edict makes it clear that the growth of the latter came, at least in part, at the expenses of the former (see 5.1.2). For the Lombards under Rothari, the question is whether the growing private entourages could replace regular conscription as a main source of soldiers, as seems to be the tendency in late Merovingian Francia and, to a certain extent, in Visigothic Spain.\textsuperscript{902}

Retinues, usually called bucellarii, were an important part of the fifth- and sixth-century Roman army. Generals such as Belisarius and Nares supported significant retinues, which composed a significant share of the army.\textsuperscript{903} The exact nature of these units is contentious. Most of the debate is centered in the East, especially on account of the rich papyrographic material available for Egypt.\textsuperscript{904} Some scholars argue that these retinues were a private enterprise, motivated either by a growth of aristocratic power or by a foreign ‘Germanic’ tradition that outshadowed the public monopoly over the armed forces; for others, these bucellarii constituted a public force supported directly by private funds, in some sort of munera. In any case, by the mid-seventh century, the bucellarii had been fully incorporated into the regular army, which points to a breakdown of their supply system, whether it was solely private or a joint public-private endeavor.\textsuperscript{905} In the West, scholars have highlighted the

\textsuperscript{902} Halsall, Warfare, 56.
\textsuperscript{903} Belisarius (7,000 men): Proc. 7.1.2–15; 18–20; Nares (400): Agath. Hist. 1.9.
\textsuperscript{905} The status of the bucellarii within the late Roman military organization is still a contentious topic. The traditional view understood the bucellarii as private soldiers fighting under powerful landlords, usually seen as a Germanic institution and a prequel to feudalism; see, for example, Jones, LRE, 664–67; O. Schmitt, “Die Buccellarii: Eine Studie zum militärischen Gefolgschaftwesen in der Spätantike,” Tyche 9 (1994): 147–74. In the 1970s, a new interpretation was put forward by Rémondon (and later developed by Gascou and Carrié) suggesting that the bucellarii were in fact public troops settled and supported by private capital, and that the private use of those troops was, indeed, strictly forbidden (though widely used); see Rémondon, “Contradictions.”; Gascou, “Buccellaires.”; Carrié, “l'État.”; followed by J. H. Liebeschuetz, “Generals, Federates and Buccellarii in Roman Armies around AD 400,” in The Defence of the Roman and Byzantine East: proceedings of a colloquium held at the University of Sheffield in April 1986, ed. Philip Freeman and D. L. Kennedy (Oxford, England: B.A.R, 1986), 463–74; Barbarians and Bishops (Oxford1990), 43–47; C. R. Whittaker, “Landlords and Warlords in the Later Roman Empire,” in War and society in the Roman world, ed. John Rich and
role of retinues, usually seen as ‘bodyguards’, in the composition of the army. The Frankish antrustio and the Visigothic gardingus seem to occupy a similar position to the Lombard gasindius, while the Liber Iudicum legislates on obsequium in terms not too dissimilar to Rothari’s Edict. Military entourages had a more prosperous destiny in the West, both in Francia and in Spain, where large private landholdings could still support significant number of follower. It has been suggested that in the seventh century the balance between recruited troops and military entourages, either supported directly by the court or indirectly by magnates, started shifting towards the latter (roughly at the same time as in the East it shifted towards the former), and by the eighth century the core of the Frankish army was based on military retinues.

Amongst the Lombards, retinues seem to have initially been of small importance in the composition of the army, though it is evidently hard to establish the ratio between exercitales and privately supporter retinues. Recently, Inge Petersen has argued for a large role for these retinues in Lombard society, suggesting that the farae were actually “large obsequia (...) led by individual dukes,” and that, even after the expansion of royal control, the dukes maintained “military forces in the form of the gasindius.” The sources, however, should not be stretched that far. The relationship between the dukes and the fara is nowhere to be found in the contemporary evidence, and it would be risky to assume that each of the arguably small farae would be controlled by its own individual duke. As to the relationship

Graham Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993), 277–302. Recently, this new interpretation has been questioned by a restatement of the growing power of private magnates, see Sarris, Economy, 162–75; (but see also“Origins,”); followed by Petersen, Siege Warfare, 57–62.

906 See, for example, Halsall, Warfare, 48–49; Petersen, Siege Warfare, esp. 63–74.


908 Lib. Iud. 5.3.1–5, the best discussion is still Sánchez, El ejército, 113–15.

909 For the role of entourages in other western armies, see Halsall, Warfare, 40–70; Petersen, Siege Warfare, 63–73.


911 Contra Halsall, Warfare, 64; Petersen, Siege Warfare, 183.

912 Siege Warfare, resp. 183; 85.

913 The only reference linking dukes to farae comes from HL 2.9, in which Gisulf asks Alboin to pick the farae to constitute the Friulian duchy: Paul, however, does not suggest each fara was commanded by a duke, but that Gisulf asked for several farae to accept the command of Friuli. Furthermore, Paul is clearly at a loss when he tries to define what a fara was. We have dismissed the story as a later fabrication (see 3.2.2).
between the *fara* and *obsequium*, the sole source, *Rot* 177, refers to a soldier breaking his bond of *obsequium* to move with his *fara*. were the *fara* based on the *obsequium*, the entire law would make no sense. Considering, as suggested above, that most of Lombard society was composed at this point of free small landholders, it seems more likely that private retinues were more the exception than the rule, which would correspond to the small presence of such relations in the law code. Presumably, both dukes and kings maintained larger retinues, called *gasindii* to differentiate from freemen in *obsequium* of (private) freemen, continuing a tradition that was known from similar practices of commanders in the Roman army.\footnote{914 See above nn. 58–59.} To consider these retinues around dukes and kings effectively as ‘private’ might be misleading: in all likelihood, they were troops supported by ‘public’ resources, be it royal or ducal, and taking part in the ‘public’ army. Those soldiers would have served in the army in a quasi-official position, and their support from royal and ducal property could be seen as an alternative form of military support. The same could have been true of men *in obsequium* to other private freemen, although retinues supported by private landholders were arguably of much smaller scale—given, as we argued above (6.1.1) that each household would contribute with a recruit, it would not be too far fetched to suggest larger properties were also supposed to support on their own coin small units for the army, maybe as a form of *munera*.

In sum, in the early seventh century, on account of the large middling class of free Lombards owing military service (see 5.1.2; 6.1), and the rather restricted number of magnates who could afford to support large entourages, the Lombard army still relied arguably more on recruitment based on a general military obligation than on privately supported retinues. Given the military success from the final years of Authari (see 3.1.3), and especially under Agilulf (see 4.1.1–2), this arrangement presumably was able to put in the field a worthy fighting force. This picture probably began to change in the following decades, with the concentration of wealth and the bankruptcy of the free landholder. By the mid-seventh century, the impact of the economic decline and social differentiation had dramatically curtailed the social bases for the army (5.3). The growing social inequality determined that the number of households that were able to supply armed *exercitales* diminished, while a few families could march to battle with additional troops they could support. The replacement of freeholders by dependents did not necessary decreases the
effectiveness of an army, as the Frankish experience clearly shows. The limited result of Rothari’s army (4.2.1), as well as the king’s concern with the health of the small-scale owners (6.1.2), however, point in a different direction. It could be suggested that the limited wealth of this new elite prevented their entourages from becoming numerous enough to make up for the loss of recruits. Not surprisingly, Rothari does not legislate on the use of retinues in the armed forces: even though one of the laws published by Liutprand (712–44) might have dealt with the use of private forces (Liut 83.14), it is not until Aistulf (749–56) that a law clearly suggests that those with more property should bring extra equipment (although it is impossible to know if that actually means extra soldiers) (Abis 2–3). In any case, it is likely that, after Rothari, and especially after the collapse of the northern kingdom and the Beneventan conquest under Grimoald, the Lombard army depended more and more on military entourages supported by magnates and, especially, by the growing royal possessions.

* The structure of the Lombard army was conditioned by the tradition of the Roman army, from which it originated, but also by the social and economical possibilities of the late sixth and early seventh centuries. We saw that the period from the establishment of the Lombards with Alboin to the creation of the monarchy with Authari observed the settlement of an expeditionary force gone rogue in a former Roman territory, followed by adjustments of the mechanisms used to support the army. The ‘accommodation model’, however, could not outlive the collapse of the tax-system, dictated by the decaying state of the Italian (and Mediterranean) economy. In the process, the Lombards were able to acquire land, which eventually became the new base for the support of the army. In a shift that would be mirrored by the eastern army in half a century, the Lombards transferred the support of the army from the state to the household, preserving the military obligation of military families (2.2; 3.1.2). The resulting structure of the army had, then, the military household as the building block, supplying recruits our sources call exercitales. The exercitales arguably maintained their former units, which were likely called farae, a ‘popular’ term for the smallest

915 See the references mentioned in n. 62.
917 See, for example, the growing concern of Liutprand to protect his gasindi: LL.Liut, 62.IX, and the dramatic change in value (and nature) of the fines for absence of military service: LL.Liut 83.XIV (cf. LL.Rot 21); cf. Bertolini, “Ordinamenti,” 435–40.
unit of the army, similar to terms such as *númerus*, *bandus* or *θεμα* in the eastern army of the same time. Side by side with the *exercitales*, there were groups of ‘private’ soldiers, supported directly by the kings and the dukes, called *gasindi*; other units, in *obsequium* of private men, might also have been involved in warfare in some capacity. Commissioned officers would receive the title of *iudex*, also clearly within the Roman tradition, which came with judicial capacities, together with certain policing responsibilities, some of them present in Rothari’s *Edict*. At the top of the hierarchy, we find dukes commanding the military, flanked by *gastaldii*, who commanded the administration: this division of power was probably put in place by the kings, and reflected an attempt to maintain a double check on both officers, along similar lines to the late Roman *magister militum* and *pretorian prefects*.

The military households were central not only to the recruitment systems, but also to the support of the army: each household would provide, arm, and support an *exercitalis*. As compensation, the household would keep a share of the military gains. If the households lost their capacity to arm and support the soldier they provided, the backbone of the army’s logistics would collapse. For that reason, it was fundamental to Rothari that the military class would own enough property not only to support the recruits but also to provide them with weaponry and mounts. What Rothari probably encountered when he assembled the Lombard army in the 640s, however, was a group in which a significant part of the soldiers (though it is not possible to know how significant) was neither able to provide their equipment nor support themselves while on campaign. At the other end of the social spectrum, there was a group that profited from the situation, and was in a position to exploit the impoverished soldiers. This aristocracy ‘on the make’ concentrated the few remaining resources and increased their capital, bringing into their orbit some freemen under bound of *obsequium*. The small military entourages could, presumably, be very effective for raiding near by territories, but they were likely still below the radar of official conscription, and even if they could actually be used in campaign, the limited wealth of this new elite could hardly support a force to be reckoned with.

In sum, the developments in Italian society from the death of Agilulf (c.616) to the publication of the *Edict* (643) dismantled the basis of the very effective Lombard army used by Agilulf, without providing a new support system to Rothari. The ambitions of “those with more power” had undermined the military household, now too poor to afford to support their *exercitales*, while failing so far to produce an aristocracy with enough resources to
privately support military entourages for the army. The result was Rothari’s feeble attempt to profit from the opportunity to increase Lombard control in Italy in the 640s, and in the next generation, the conquest of the northern kingdom by a southern duke, the Beneventan Grimoald.
CONCLUSION

This dissertation sought to revise the military history of Italy during the first years of Lombard rule employing a new methodology, namely, focusing strictly on contemporary and near contemporary sources, while approaching later material in a decidedly critical vein. Preference was given to sources produced on the late sixth and early seventh century, which were used to inform our narrative rather than to supplement later sources. Throughout this thesis, we have often stressed the importance of using reliable sources to construct our present narratives, which demanded a revaluation of texts whose validity had so far been taken for granted. As a result, this methodology involved a thorough reassessment of Paul the Deacon’s Historia Langobardorum, questioning its source material, and maintaining only what could be securely traced back to a primary source contemporary to the period under study (560s to 650s).

The resulting picture challenges the assumptions we have about the establishment of the Lombards and the role the military played in the process in three fundamental ways. First, it re-evaluated the nature of the group that was established in northern Italy in 568/9 and that eventually became the Lombard kingdom under Autari in 584: while Paul presents the Lombards as a people with a glorious past, the contemporary evidence suggests that the Lombards were intimately connected to the Byzantine army in northern Italy, which at some point escaped imperial control. As a part of the Byzantine army, this group rebelled in a context of military dissatisfaction well known to the sixth century, and shifted its allegiance to an ersatz new government, produced in loco and within the army, that could secure the continuing opposition against the empire. This new political unit, we suggested, formed the base of Alboin’s Lombards. As a corollary, the social context of the Lombard kingdom was similar to the Byzantine army in the East, facing equivalent demands to solve the endemic problem of logistic and lack of resources. In the seven decades that followed the rebellion, the Lombards experimented with different forms of military support, first relying on the tax-system, and later, with the collapse of the tax-base, shifting the support of the troops to military households. By the mid-seventh century, this system based on the households had been eroded by increasing social inequality and the impoverishment of many of these
families, resulting, we argued, in the rather disappointing performance of the army under Rothari (and eventually creating the military context for conquest of the northern kingdom by the Beneventan Duke Grimoald in c. 662).

The second challenge to the traditional picture of Lombard Italy refers to the role of the Franks in the establishment of the Lombard kingdom and the preservation of Lombard independence. This topic was of special interest to Paul. Given that he had just observed the Frankish conquest of the Lombard kingdom (774), it is not surprising that he emphasized in his work the independence of the Lombards and their love of liberty. Whenever Paul turned his attention to the Franks, he was eager to stress the Lombard victories in the sixth century and the good relations between the Franks and Liutprand in the eighth (HL 6.58). Contemporary sources, however, bring into focus the constant Frankish interventions in Italy, and how the creation of the Lombard kingdom was intrinsically connected to Frankish policy of establishing and maintaining satellite states around its borders. In that role, the Lombards were in a position very similar to the Alamanni, the Thuringians, and the Bavarians: what makes the Lombards stand out is the fact that, given the strongly Romanized and literate milieu in which the Lombard kingdom was created, the Lombards produced and preserved enough sources to leave a lasting legacy to historiography, while Thuringians, Bavarians, or Alamanni, left almost no trace. From that perspective, the Carolingian conquest in 774 can be portrayed not as a drastic rupture, but as a continuation of Frankish policy in Italy, exerted henceforth through direct government.

Finally, the focus on contemporary material reminds us that, on the basis of the surviving source material, the Lombard kingdom in Italy should be studied as two separate periods. The first period, which was the subject of the present work, starts with the establishment of the Lombards in 569–74, and goes up to Rothari (c. 635–52), not without a major gap in the narrative from the final days of Agilulf (590–616) on. After Rothari, with the exception of a few laws published by Grimoald, there is a large gap in the source material, and we are mostly dependent on unverifiable notices from HL. The second period, comprising roughly the eighth century, left a much richer collection of sources, including additions to the legislations by several kings (namely, Liutprand, Ratchis, and Aistulf) and an increasing number of private charters surviving from Liutprand’s reign onwards. Furthermore, Paul’s greatest value as a primary source is, arguably, for the events closest to his lifetime.
The changes that took place in Italian society between the 650s and the 710s, however, should not be underestimated: we have argued here that Rothari represented a crisis in the social system set in place in the time of Authari and Agilulf, and we suggested that the measures undertaken in the Edict were probably not enough to stop the tendency for the concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer magnates and the impoverishment of significant sectors of society. In what concerns the military organization, the model Rothari was trying to preserve in the 640s—a mixed forced formed essentially by recruits, but reinforced by privately supported soldiers, similar in many ways to the late sixth-century Byzantine system from which it originated—most likely gave way to a different system, now favoring troops supported by large private properties, similar to the developments in the Frankish military under the last Merovingians. The fact that the eighth-century Lombard kings saw themselves as continuators of Rothari in their legislative role should not make us forget that the laws from the seventh and the laws from the eighth century legislate for significantly different societies. Only Paul’s binding narrative of Lombard history allows for a smooth transition between the two periods.\footnote{Although even Paul suggests the Lombard \textit{mores} changed, or at least the way they dressed: \textit{HL} 4.22.}

The present work puts forward further possibilities for research. Firstly, the analysis of the development of the military suggested here, which takes into account similar developments both in other Mediterranean regions and in Frankish Gaul, could be expanded to a comparative history of post-Roman military organization (and its social bases), focusing on differences and similarities of the development of the army in the Byzantine Empire and the western post-Roman kingdoms. In this sense, Italy (and also Spain) provides an interesting case study that can link the vast scholarship produced on the Byzantine military, with the equally impressive production on the Frankish army. Much could also be gained from a detailed comparison between how different societies were organized for and by warfare, and how the late Roman military system evolved in different parts of the Mediterranean. As this dissertation tried to show, military logistic and recruitment highlight important question of organization, allocation of resources, and hierarchy, especially in increasingly militarized societies such as the post-Roman kingdoms and the Byzantine Empire.

Secondly, the analysis of the social elements of the Lombard military organization can be taken further into the second period of the Lombard rule in Italy. As it has been suggested,
Rothari marked the beginning of a larger crisis in military logistic that led to the defeat and conquest of the kingdom by Grimoald (662–71), in a specially poorly documented period. Once the sources became again available, in the early eighth century, the military organization of the northern kingdom is clearly changed. The new organization, more dependent on large properties and direct royal control, allowed the Lombards to expand their control to almost the entire peninsula, under militarily successful kings such as Liutprand (712–44) and Aistulf (749–56). At the same period, the rise of the Carolingians in Francia finally led to a change in relations with Italy, replacing the indirect rule favored by the Merovingian kings with direct Frankish government, stating with military interventions under Pipin (743–68) and culminating with the actual military conquest by Charlemagne (768–814) in 774.

The source material for Paul’s *HL* requires further investigation than offered here. It would also be rewarding to employ the methodology used here for the Books 2–4 of the *HL* and apply it to the rest of the work. More broadly, further investigation of Paul’s sources can provide a picture not only of the extent of the material that was available to him, but also a glimpse of the historiographic traditions developed in the sixth and seventh centuries, which were not preserved by the Carolingians, but can be inferred from the surviving works.
PRIMARY SOURCES & ABBREVIATIONS

NB: all the translations from Latin are mine, unless otherwise noted. Available translations consulted are referenced below. Greek translations come from the standard editions referenced below, unless otherwise noted.


Frag. Secundi Fragmentum Secundi, in MGH SRL, pp. 25, n.3.


Iord. Rom. Jordanes, Romana, ed. Th. Mommsen, MGH, AA, 5.1 (Berlin:


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SECONDARY SOURCES


Weise, Julius. *Italien und die Langobardenerrscher von 568 bis 628*. Halle; Niemeyer, 1887.


## Appendix I: List of Lombard Kings 569–652

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>Reign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alboin</td>
<td>569–72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleph</td>
<td>572–74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Interregnum</strong> c.574–84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authari</td>
<td>584–590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agilulf</td>
<td>590–c.616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaloald</td>
<td>c.616–26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arioald</td>
<td>c.626-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rothari</td>
<td>635–c.652</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX II: MAIN POLITICAL EVENTS (c.568–652).

Pre. 568 Alboin becomes king of the Lombards, makes an alliance with the Avars, but is defeated by the Gepids with Roman help; He is likely removed from power. (2.1)

568–69 After defeating Sindual, Narses enrolls a new troop in the Danubian area, including Lombards, Gepids, Sarmates and provincial Romans [=invitation]. Alboin is presumably amongst them. They are moved into northern Italy, where their settlement strains the logistical capacities of the region. (1.1.2).

569–72 Narses is removed from office and the army in the north rebels. Without a central command, the rebels are successful and organized themselves behind Alboin’s Lombards. They assume control of the western part of the Po Valley, from Milan to Verona, including, possibly, Treviso (2.1). First raids in Gaul, according to Marius of Avenches (s.a. 569). Alboin supports the troops using the ‘accommodation system’ (2.2). The Roman administration in Ravenna possibly portrays Narses as the culprit: that’s the context for the ‘chronicle source’. At some point around this time, Alboin marries a Frankish princess, which consolidates his position in relation to the Franks.

c.572 The ‘accommodation system’ breaks down as the Italian economy cannot produce enough surpluses (2.2.2). Alboin, probably blamed for the crisis, is killed by a group that included his wife. This group opts to resume allegiance with Ravenna, moving back with the queen, the treasure, and part of the army.

c.572–74 Cleph replaces Alboin but is soon put down by internal resistance.

574–84 The Lombards break down in smaller groups for hire (a situation similar to the contemporaneous Balkans). The Byzantine attempt to bring the region back to control in 576, but fail. They continue to use the Lombards as a source for manpower and seemed to be satisfied with the arrangement (3.1.1). Lombard
incursions attested in Burgundy: Gunthram’s general Mummolus drives them back. Around this period, the military families acquire land (3.1.2)

584 Childebert II invades Italy and secures the allegiance of the Lombards Gunthram, worried that Childebert could use the Lombards to threaten Burgundy, negotiates with them and raises one of the dukes, Authari, king (3.1.2). The king remains restricted to the western Po Valley: Friuli, Benevento and Spoleto are entirely independent (3.2)

585 While Gunthram is negotiating, Childebert attacks Italy again, to prevent the Lombards from slipping into Burgundian control: he failed to obtain a clear victory. Instead, Childebert offers his sister in marriage to Authari, to try to obtain the same results (3.1.2).

587 Treaty of Andelot: Burgundy becomes a lesser problem to Austrasia, but still concerns Childebert II. Childebert pressures Gunthram to help him take control of Italy, but is rebuffed. He tries to get imperial help, but this effort also fails (3.1.2).

588 Childebert campaigns to submit Authari turns into a disaster. Authari proposes a continuation of the status quo and Childebert offers him a Frankish noblewoman, Theudelinda, in marriage. At this point, the Lombard army is probably already fully supported by their properties in Italy (3.1.2).

590 Preparing an expedition against the Avars, Maurice decides to regain control of Italy (possibly to encircle the Avars in Pannonia): he sends a new exarch, Romanus, who moves against key positions in the Po Valley. Having heard of the Byzantine intentions, Childebert mobilizes the army into Italy, to prevent the Byzantine from controlling the Po Valley. The armies meet in Italy and negotiate an agreement to prevent an unwanted confrontation. As soon as the imperial troops retreat, Authari reestablishes the status quo with the Franks. Authari died in this year (3.1.3).

590–602 The Lombard throne remains in Frankish influence through Theudelinda, who selects her successor from the Frankish controlled Turin: Agilulf inherits from Authari the relation with the Franks and a quite effective army. He uses both to
stabilize the north and bring other dukes under his control (but still not Friuli nor the southern armies). Then he defeats Romanus and marches into Rome: there, he meets Gregory the Great, negotiates a truce with the church that stabilized relations between the monarchy and the papacy until the 8th century. The truce involved a tribute, and possibly a more official submission of the city: Gregory spent the rest of his life making excuses to the authorities in Ravenna to be exculpated of treason (4.1.1).

602–616 The return of the civil war in Francia (from ca.595) and the usurpation of Phocas (602) create a vacuum of power in Italy that allowed Agilulf to almost unify the peninsula. By 610, he had subdued Friuli, and received annual tributes from Rome and Ravenna. He styles himself King of all Italy and holds circus celebrations in Milan. Agilulf dies in 616 (4.1.2).

616– Adaloald continues his father’s policy: this is a poorly documented period. Adaloald might have had some dealings with patrician turned usurper Eleutherius. In any case, once his mother dies, the Franks shift their support to her daughter, Gundeperga, and to her husband Arioald. In a civil war, Arioald replaces Adaloald and reinstate the Frankish control of Lombard monarchy (4.1.3).

636– After Arioald’s death, Rothari replaces him in the same manner, being selected by the Frankish Gundeperga. The tides change with the Thuringian rebellion and the crisis in the Frankish kingdom, which happened at a similar time as the major defeat of Heraclius at the hands of the Arabs. Once again, the Lombards have a vacuum of power in which they could operate (4.2.1).

c.640–52 Rothari, however, was unable to profit from the situation the crisis in both the empire and Francia as much as Agilulf: he occupied Liguria (which archaeological remains suggest was abandoned by the Byzantine, not besieged and occupied) and parts of Emilia, in addition to coming to a stalemate with the Byzantine somewhere in eastern Emilia (4.2.3).