

Charlemagne and the Lombard Kingdom That Was: the Lombard Past in Post-Conquest Italian Historiography

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Volume 25, Number 2, 2014

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1032839ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1032839ar>

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Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (print)

1712-6274 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Fabbro, E. (2014). Charlemagne and the Lombard Kingdom That Was: the Lombard Past in Post-Conquest Italian Historiography. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 25(2), 1–26.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1032839ar>

Article abstract

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Abstract

The Carolingian conquest of Lombard Italy (774) was preceded by a massive effort on the part of the Church to convince the Frankish court of the legitimacy of the invasion. Relying on a terminology borrowed from Gregory I, the papal court produced an offensive portrait of the Lombards, depicted as treacherous, vile, and heathen. This article analyzes eighth-century papal epistolary and the Liber Pontificalis in order to establish the strategies behind this campaign. In a second moment, we turn to the Lombard response after the conquest, and the efforts of Paul the Deacon as well as the anonymous author of the Origo Langobardorum codicis Gothanis to question the papal portrait of the Lombards and to reclaim the Christian past of their people. Both Paul and the Gotha Origo focused on the importance of the conversion — and especially the role of Gregory the Great — in the rehabilitation of the Lombards. Their works, this article suggests, represent an attempt of the Lombards to dissociate their Christian faith from the conquest and to reclaim the narrative about their own past.

Résumé

Avant la conquête carolingienne de la Lombardie en Italie (774), l'Église a déployé de grands efforts auprès de la cour franque pour la convaincre de la légitimité de l'invasion. En empruntant les termes de Grégoire I^{er}, la cour pontificale trace un portrait offensant des Lombards, les dépeignant comme étant traîtres, exécrables et sauvages. Le présent article analyse l'épistolair papal du VIII^e siècle et le Liber Pontificalis afin d'établir les stratégies derrière cette campagne. Ensuite, il se penche sur la réaction des Lombards après la conquête et s'attarde aux efforts de Paul Diacre et de l'auteur anonyme de l'Origo Langobardorum codicis Gothanis pour remettre en question le portrait des Lombards dressé par la cour pontificale et pour se réappropriier le passé chrétien de leur peuple.

Tant Paul que l'Origo de Gotha ont mis l'accent sur l'importance de la conversion – et surtout du rôle de Grégoire le Grand – dans la réhabilitation des Lombards. Cet article avance que leurs travaux constituent une tentative des Lombards de dissocier leur foi chrétienne de la conquête et de se réapproprier le récit de leur propre passé.

In 774 the independent Lombard kingdom in Italy came to an end. Charlemagne's campaign against the Lombards was the culmination of the Church's fifty-year-long project to ensure the creation of a political independent state in Italy, using the Franks as manpower to counter the Lombard kings. To this end, the papal court created a narrative that portrayed the Lombards as heathens and the Franks as Christian liberators, resulting in Frankish interventions under Pippin (in 755 and 756) and, finally, the destruction and incorporation of the Lombard kingdom under Charlemagne. In 774, the Lombards had not only lost their independence, but had also gained a reputation as treacherous, heathen, and diabolical, while the Franks were portrayed as defenders of Christianity. This article analyzes the battle the Lombards fought after 774, not with weapons but with books, in order to regain control of their Christian past.

Immediately after the end of the Lombard kingdom,¹ two works attest to a renewed interest in Lombard history. The more famous is certainly Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum*, an artful reconstruction of the Lombard past from its Scandinavian origins to the end of Liutprand's reign (744).² In the first decade of the ninth century, an anonymous author produced another history of the Lombards, modifying and adding to the *Origo gentis Langobardorum* — a pre-existing short history of the Lombard kings from the origins until Grimoald (662–71) — and expanding the narrative up to Charlemagne's heir to the throne of Italy, Pepin (781–810). This continuation, compiled in northern Italy, served as an introduction for a collection of the Lombard laws now preserved in a single manuscript in Gotha (Germany), which explains its title, *Origo gentis Langobardorum 'codicis Gothani'*.³ This relatively large sample of historical narratives contrasts with the rather limited surviving output of similar works in the previous

centuries.⁴ Even though this newfound inclination for history was supported by a context of mounting interest in this literary genre in the Carolingian world and a deep interest in regional, 'ethnic' past,⁵ it was arguably also prompted by the papal abuse of the Lombard past in its propaganda. In order to link these two contexts, I will focus first on the construction of papal propaganda, and how the papal court used its diplomatic exchanges with the Carolingian court, preserved in the *Codex Carolinus*, as well as the historical material assembled in the *Liber Pontificalis*, to cast the Lombards as the enemies. Second, I turn to Lombard historiographical production, namely Paul the Deacon's *Historia* and the ninth-century Gotha *Origo*, for the Lombard reaction to this propaganda. I argue that the increase in historiographical production after the fall of the kingdom in 774 was not a response to the defeat, but the Lombards' attempt to restore their Christian past.

1. Anti-Lombard Propaganda: The *Liber Pontificalis* and the Papal Letters

The renewed attention for the Lombard past has its roots in the clashes between Lombard government and papacy in the eighth century. Even though the context behind the growing conflicts between the popes and the Lombards is far from clear, the objectives of eighth-century papal policy are not hard to grasp. In the early eighth century, internal and external pressures in Constantinople weakened the imperial grasp on Italy. This progressive decomposition of Byzantine authority allowed the Church to spread its influence from territorial ownership to sovereignty, producing a papal state, which Thomas Noble rightly dubbed the Republic of St. Peter.⁶ The construction of a secular authority, however, was hindered by the well-established Lombard state, both to the north and to the south.⁷ Even if he could rely on whatever was left of the Byzantine military, the pope was unable to fight the Lombards in the field. Furthermore, the more that Byzantine authority crumbled, the more the Lombard kings would strengthen their authority in the peninsula. The conflict-

ing interests increased the tension between the Lombards and the popes, leading Aistulf (749–56) and Desiderius (756–774) to engage in military actions against Rome. Given the collapse of the Byzantine army in Italy, the only option available to the Church was to use the Franks against the Lombards.⁸ Thus, when the Lombard king Liutprand (712–44) marched on Rome in 739 (and again in 740, when he besieged Ravenna), pope Gregory III wrote to the Franks pleading for help against the “persecutions of the Lombards.”⁹ Charles Martel, then *maior domus* and supreme commander of the Franks, ignored his pleas. The Lombards had been faithful allies of the Franks for most of their rule in Italy: in 737, Liutprand had even sent troops to help Charles fight the Muslims in Provence. In addition, Charles might even have chosen Liutprand to cut the hair of his son, Pippin, in a traditional ritual of adoption.¹⁰ The failure to attract the Franks was such a blow to the papacy that the event received no mention in the *Liber Pontificalis*, and was included only later in the so-called Frankish recension.¹¹

If the pope were to convince the Franks, he would need a change in tone and a more plausible *casus belli*. The new tactic was to dehumanize and ‘de-Christianize’ the Lombards by portraying them as vile, pagan, and repulsive, so that a campaign against them would better fit Carolingian royal ideology.¹² To this end, the papal court had at its disposal two different media. First, there were letters. More than communication devices, letters created a space of expression and of rhetorical exchange. Second, the papal court controlled the production — and to some extent the distribution — of the *Liber Pontificalis*. This collection of papal biographies was an important source of information. The ascension of each new pope would prompt a new edition, and during the turbulent years of the eighth century, many new versions updated the material of previous *vitae* to better adapt to current needs.¹³

The importance of the Lombards in the *Liber Pontificalis* grew exponentially from the *vita* of Stephen II (752–57) onwards. In previous biographies, the Lombards figured in a few entries up to the *vita* of Sabiano (604–06), only to disappear for the rest of the

seventh century; they made only sporadic appearances throughout the first half of the eighth. By the time the *vita* of Stephen II was composed (probably soon after the election of the new pope), the Lombards had become the most prominent adversary of Rome and this is why the *Liber Pontificalis* had been fully co-opted as an outlet for papal propaganda. The Lombards then play a central role in the *Liber Pontificalis* until the *vita* of Adrian I (872–95). The very contentious *vitae* from Gregory III (731–41) to Adrian I are imbued with political propaganda aimed at the creation of a papal state and the suppression of the Lombard threat.¹⁴

During the pontificate of Stephen II (752–57), the papal court employed a violent rhetoric against the Lombards. The letters of Gregory had already set the initial tone, by labeling Liutprand's actions as "persecution and oppression of the Lombards,"¹⁵ but a clear shift can be seen in the *vita* of Stephen. In it, the Lombard king Aistulf (749–56) is depicted as moving against Rome, and starting a "great persecution" (*magna persecutio*): he is "possessed by the cunningness of the devil" (*antiqui hostis invasus versutia*), and acts with a "devilish persuasion" (*diabolicis suasionibus*).¹⁶ Aistulf is the most atrocious of kings (*atrocissimus*), the most evil (*nequissimus*), the most unholy (*nefandissimus*), spiteful (*malignus*), and unfaithful (*infidelis*).¹⁷ The *vita* is a chain of aggression *ad hominem* against Aistulf and the Lombards. Adrian I's *vita* employs a very similar tone, this time targeting the next Lombard king, Desiderius (756–74).¹⁸

The extreme language of the *Liber Pontificalis* reflects the ideological positions of the diplomatic letters exchanged between the popes and the Frankish court. The *Codex Carolinus* preserves the interactions between the pope and the Franks in three moments of crisis: Aistulf's campaign against Rome, Desiderius's attempt to marry his daughter to Charlemagne (or to his brother Carlomannus), and the Friulian resistance to Charlemagne in 776.¹⁹ The letters, written for a more restricted audience, allowed the papal court to heighten the tone of its discourse against the Lombards. The description of Aistulf's attack on Rome charges the king with every imaginable crime. The most evil Aistulf (*neq-*

uissimus) and the Lombards, writes the pope, set all of *suburbia* on fire, burning buildings, churches, and sacred images. They cast the holy hosts in pots and cooked them with meat for food. They raped cloistered nuns, ripped sacred veils out of the temples, and put the veils to their own use. They dragged into slavery the extensive family of St. Peter and all the Romans.²⁰ Announcing the death of Aistulf, Stephen II adds: “And indeed the tyrant, follower of the Devil, Aistulf, devourer of Christian blood, destroyer of God’s churches, was struck down by a divine blow, and was plunged into the depths of hell.”²¹ In another letter that admonishes Charlemagne and Carlomannus not to marry Desiderius’s daughter, Adrian I provides a papal picture of the Lombards:

What is indeed that foolishness, most famous sons, greatest kings, that one hardly dares to mention, that your famous Franks, who shine over all peoples, and the so splendid and most noble offspring of your royal power, God forbid, would be polluted by the most treacherous and disgraceful people of the Lombards, who should by no means be ranked amongst the peoples, from whose nation the race of the lepers is certainly spawned?²²

The language of the letters — and the language of the *Liber Pontificalis*, clearly dependent upon this epistolary — succeeded in producing a representation of the (quite Christian) Lombards as a nefarious race against whom the Franks should fight to protect the Church. As the Carolingians were fighting the Saxons, so should they fight the Lombards, both vicious nations threatening Christianity.²³

The strategy behind papal diplomacy and propaganda was therefore to portray the Lombards as a non-Christian nation, and thus a natural enemy for the very Christian Carolingian Franks. One of the most effective tools the papal court found for that purpose was the appropriation of the vocabulary used by Gregory the Great (590–604) in his conflicts with the Lombards, more than a century before. Stefano Gasparri has already pointed out to what extent the *Liber Pontificalis* and the papal

letters rely on terms taken from Gregory.²⁴ *Nefandissimus rex*, for instance, comes from a letter to the bishops of Italy, in which Gregory curses Authari for having forbidden Lombard children to be baptized during Easter. In the same letter, the pope boasts that God smote the king for his wickedness — a description that is echoed in Stephen's report on Aistulf's death.²⁵ The description of Aistulf's siege of Rome — both in the *Liber Pontificalis* and in the letters — also draws heavily from Gregory's notes on Agilulf's siege of the city in the 590s.²⁶

Until the eighth century, Gregory's pontificate had not received much attention. His *vita* in the *Liber Pontificalis* takes up a modest 14 lines in the modern edition, mentioning the Lombards *en passant*, and giving a brief list of his works.²⁷ Gregory was remembered especially for Augustine's mission to England, which he initiated, and for his subsequent status as founding father of English Christianity. Around 700, Gregory received a new *vita*, produced by an anonymous monk in Whitby (England) and based mostly on local legends, and also a long commentary in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, which relied heavily on Gregory's epistolary.²⁸ In Italy, there is also evidence that Gregory's works — in particular his letters — were receiving attention again. In 715, a new pope assumed the name Gregory (Gregory II, 715–731) for the first time since the death of Gregory I. He was followed in his choice by his successor, Gregory III (731–741). According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, Pope Zacharias (741–52) made a translation of the *Dialogues* into Greek.²⁹ More significantly, Pope Adrian I (772–95) published the first official collection of Gregory's letters.³⁰

Reassessing the relationship between the Lombards and the Church demands an examination of Gregory the Great, for he was the pope who finally came to terms with the Lombards — more specifically with king Agilulf (590–616) and his queen, Theodelinda (d. 628).³¹ Nonetheless, for the duration of his entire papacy, Gregory had to juggle his relationship with the Lombards and his formal allegiance to Ravenna — which often was openly unsympathetic towards him. Most of his letters reflect this need to reaffirm his commitment to the imperial cause while

still maintaining good relations with the Lombard king.³² While Gregory's letters provided the eighth-century papal court with a frozen picture of barbarous Lombards threatening civilized Christians, they included, nonetheless, elements of a more urbane interchange between the pope and the Lombard court. This side of the story, which the later papal court decided to ignore, Paul the Deacon would later retrieve.³³ Through the misappropriation of Gregory's work, the papal court tried to erase the good relations between the papacy and the Lombards in the previous century. Moreover, the court managed to produce a representation of the Lombard past that reflected the early years of the Lombards' relationship with the Church, reinforcing an image of barbarity, ferocity, and menace to the papacy. Through this rhetorical operation, the papal court was the first, to our knowledge, to try to produce a clear, teleological narrative for Lombard Italy. The end results were not flattering for the Lombards.

2. Reclaiming the Lombard Past (1): Paul the Deacon

The author who produced the most elaborate response to the de-Christianization/dehumanization of the Lombards was certainly Paul the Deacon. Not long after the Carolingian conquest of the Lombard kingdom (774), Paul, a Lombard aristocrat turned monk, produced the most comprehensive surviving history of the Lombards. Much has been said about the intention and the intended audience of Paul's *Historia Langobardorum*, most recently by Walter Goffart and Rosamond McKitterick.³⁴ It is unlikely, however, that Paul had a single intention or even a single audience in mind as he put together his history. Paul worked to produce a picture of the past that would serve to answer questions about the present. He certainly addressed several different topics, from the best form of government to the political geography of Italy.³⁵ The Carolingian conquest, however, which Paul had previously mentioned as something positive was not among his interests in the *Historia*.³⁶ He was, nonetheless, very concerned about the papal representation of the Lombards.³⁷ Paul had access to the *Liber Pontificalis*, which

constituted one of the fundamental sources for his *Historia Langobardorum*.³⁸ It is possible that he had also access to the *Codex Carolinus*, which was being put together in the Carolingian court roughly at the same time when Paul was a guest there.³⁹ As a Lombard himself, Paul must have been appalled by the papal abuse of the Lombard past: not only was it offensive, but it was also clearly incorrect.

As an intelligent and skilled scholar, Paul noticed at once that what was at issue was not the character of the last three kings of the Lombards, whose story, *mutatus mutandi*, was told rather accurately by the *Liber Pontificalis*, but the nature of the Lombard past. In other words, Paul noticed that the manipulation aimed to erase the Christian past of the Lombards and their portrayal depended on an appropriation of the life of Gregory the Great and his dealings with the Lombards. To redress the papal take on the Lombard past, Paul drafted his own version of the story. In the *Historia Langobardorum*, he presents the distant origin of the Lombards as emerging from a pagan past, though he dismisses as *ridicula fabula* the pagan story behind the origins of the name 'Lombard'.⁴⁰ He then characterizes the Lombards' migration to Italy — not by invasion but by invitation.⁴¹ Paul carefully designed his tale of the 'ruin of Italy' in order to exculpate the Lombard kings. Alboin conquered Italy without spilling a drop of blood,⁴² and violence, Paul suggests, only started when the Lombards gave up kingship after the death of Cleph.⁴³ The elevation of Authari, restoring kingship, brought an age of peace, security, and blessing.⁴⁴ The first part of book IV marks one of the highpoints of the work: here he deals with the most pressing issue, the relations between Agilulf and Gregory the Great. Paul represents Agilulf, together with the most pious Theodelinda, as the sacred royal couple who brought the Lombards closer to the Church and made peace with the pope.⁴⁵ The reign of Agilulf, and especially the positive interaction between the king and Gregory, was sketched as a direct response to the nefarious Lombards of the *Liber Pontificalis*.

Paul's narrative of the deeds of Gregory the Great in the *Historia Langobardorum* differs in focus from his previous work,

the *Vita S. Gregorii*.⁴⁶ While in the *Vita* Paul is mainly concerned with the spiritual life of the pontiff, in the *Historia Langobardorum* he is focused on Gregory's conciliation between the Church and the Lombards.⁴⁷ In this task, Gregory had the help of the most pious Theodelinda, the Lombard queen. According to Paul, Through this queen [i.e., Theodelinda] the Church of God acquired many useful things. For the Lombards, while still ensnared by pagan error, captured almost all the possessions of the churches. But the king [Agilulf], moved by her wholesome supplications, not only upheld the Catholic faith, but also gracefully gave many possessions to the Church of Christ, and to the bishops, who were in a reduced and abject position, he restored the honour of their usual dignity.⁴⁸

One of the many great contributions the queen offered the Christian community was a church built in Monza and dedicated to St. John the Baptist.⁴⁹ For Paul, Theodelinda's church was closely connected to the destiny of the Lombards, and he claimed elsewhere that as long as the church was well taken care of, the Lombard kingdom would stand.⁵⁰ The story highlights the importance of Theodelinda to Paul's reconstruction of the Lombard past. Paul underscores her pivotal role by stating that Gregory, aware of the queen's piety, sent her a copy of his *Dialogues*.⁵¹

Paul presents the friendship linking the pope and the queen as fundamental for peace mediation between the Lombards and the Church. When the exarch Romanus moved against the Lombards, Agilulf assembled an army to fight him and marched south towards Rome.⁵² "The blessed pope Gregory," records Paul, "was so terrified by the advance of the king, that he gave up on the exposition of the temple, about which one can read in Ezekiel, as he himself reported in his homilies."⁵³ After Agilulf settled the score to his satisfaction, he returned to Pavia. Then, Gregory reached out to Theodelinda and, with her help, negotiated peace. According to Paul, "not long after that, mainly by the suggestion of queen Theodelinda, his wife — whom Gregory

had often admonished by letters — Agilulf agreed upon a very firm peace (*pax firmissima*) with the most holy pope Gregory and the Romans.”⁵⁴ As proof of his argument, Paul added a copy of two letters from Gregory’s *Registrum*, one to Theodelinda, the other to Agilulf, both celebrating the achieved peace.⁵⁵

Moreover, Paul added two notes about the southern Lombard dukes — Ariulf of Spoleto and Arichis of Benevento — to confirm the good will of the Lombards towards the Church.⁵⁶ In Gregory’s letters, both dukes are rebel Roman commanders who took part in a coordinated attack against Rome in an attempt to receive their *precaria*.⁵⁷ Up to 593, both dukes were a major source of concern to Gregory, as they extended their control over southern Italy.⁵⁸ They remained starkly independent. Even when Agilulf accepted peace, they insisted on drafting an agreement of their own.⁵⁹ None of that conflict exists in Paul’s *Historia Langobardorum*. Even though Paul lacked documentation on which an opposite interpretation could be based, he completely ignored any letters that could have suggested any antagonism between the pope and the Lombards. For Arichis, he preserved a letter sent by Gregory later in his papacy, asking the duke for help transporting some beams to Rome, which Paul quotes verbatim.⁶⁰ For Ariulf, whose activities for the early 590s are well described by several Gregorian letters, Paul relays a single story, probably based on a local legend, of a battle the duke fought against the Romans at Camerino (ca. 70 kilometers north-east of Spoleto). In the story, a mighty warrior protects Ariulf in the battle, but when the duke inquires about the identity of the warrior, none of his soldiers seem to have seen him. Back in Spoleto, the duke comes to the Basilica of St. Savianus where he recognizes his protector in a portrait of the saint. “Thus,” adds Paul, “it was understood that the saint had brought help to the duke in the battle.”⁶¹

Finally, Paul quotes yet another letter from, this one addressed to Sabinianus, a deacon in Constantinople. Gregory had been accused of killing a Dalmatian bishop named Malchus, who had died in Gregory’s custody.⁶² In the letter, Gregory suggested to Sabinianus that “If I, [the emperors’] servant, wanted

to get involved in the death of the Lombards, today the Lombards would have neither king nor duke nor count, and would be divided in utmost confusion, but because I fear God, I dread to be involved in the death of any man.”⁶³ Paul quotes the letter *ipsis litteris*, and wonders at the pope’s humility. “Behold!” he exclaims, “such was the humility of this man, who even being the supreme pontiff, called himself a servant! Behold! Such integrity of this man, who did not want to be involved even in the death of the Lombards, who were then both incredulous and were destroying everything.”⁶⁴ In the passage, Paul highlights how Gregory would not plot against the Lombards, even when they were plundering the land, presumably during the *interregnum*,⁶⁵ but rather forgave them and sought peace. Paul did not have to add how different Gregory’s behaviour was from that of the pontiffs of Paul’s own day.

Comparing Paul’s depiction of Gregory with a later *vita* of the same pope shows the extent to which Paul manipulated Gregory’s historical record. In the late ninth century, the papal court finally came to question Paul’s version of Gregory’s life, and to reclaim the pope for the discourse against the Lombards. John Hymmonides (or John the Deacon) produced a new life of the pope after the death of Louis II (839–75) to kindle once again Frankish piety to fight the Lombards (now the Beneventan Lombards) for the Church.⁶⁶ He dismisses the *vita* produced amongst the Lombards (i.e., Paul’s) claiming they were a people clearly hostile to the pope.⁶⁷ John’s *Vita* is a rather odd contribution to the genre. Instead of a collection of miracles and moral stories, John produced a selection of Gregory’s work, mostly from his *Registrum*, introduced by short explanations and praises. For a medieval hagiography, John’s *Vita s. Gregorii papae* awkwardly resembles a nineteenth-century scholarly work. In his extensive presentation of Gregorian letters, John quotes the many passages in which the Lombards were a hindrance to the pope, but not the letters quoted by Paul.⁶⁸ The contrast between the selections of the two authors underlines the divergent ideology of the two texts.

The moment of reconciliation between Gregory and the Lombards is central to the *Historia Langobardorum*, but Paul returns

to the topic of the good relationship between the Lombards and God in other parts of the work. The examples are numerous. For instance, Paul asserts that St. John the Baptist protects Rothari's grave from robbers, as an eyewitness had reported to him.⁶⁹ King Perctarit (671–88) receives a similar treatment. After the death of Grimoald (671), Paul writes, a divine emissary (*nuntius divinus*) recalled the exiled sovereign to Italy.⁷⁰ "He was a pious man, of Catholic faith," adds Paul, "steadfast to justice and an open handed supporter of the poor."⁷¹ During his reign, Perctarit, together with his wife Rodelinda, built many churches, including the famous Basilica of St. Mary *ad perticas*.⁷² Their son Cunincpert (688–700) fought a pitched battle against Alahis who had promised that, if God should grant him victory, he would "fill a hole with testicles of priests."⁷³ In Paul's retelling of the battle, Cunincpert is helped not only by a valorous deacon who takes the king's place in single combat, but also by St. Michael. Even Alahis is reported to have said, "amongst Cunincpert's spears, I see the image of St. Michel the archangel."⁷⁴ Paul further defends that the eighth-century kings, too, focused on their commitment to the Church as illustrated in Aripert's donation of the Cottian Alps and Liutprand's reverence to the papacy.⁷⁵

By and large, Paul's kings are not exceptional. They are all flawed: they cheat, they kill, and they plot, but they are no worse than the kings in Bede or in Gregory of Tours.⁷⁶ That is the central argument Paul is trying to make: the Lombards were as good Christians as any laymen can be expected to be. They were not exemplary, nor were they the nefarious monsters that papal propaganda had painted. Most importantly, they were not a race of lepers: in fact, Paul is very concerned to point out how handsome all the Lombard kings were.⁷⁷

3. Reclaiming the Lombard past (2): Gotha *Origo*

The anonymous author of the *Origo gentis Langobardorum codicis Gothani* (henceforth Gotha *Origo*) echoes the picture painted by Paul.⁷⁸ Gotha *Origo* is part of a family of texts that accompanied some codices of the Lombard law, usually as an extension of the

prologue to Rothari's *Edict* (643). This prologue included a list of kings up to Rothari and the king's genealogy.⁷⁹ The original *Origo gentis Langobardorum* expanded the list into short stories, adding small events and anecdotes. The most common form (preserved in three manuscripts dating from the tenth to the beginning of the eleventh century) takes the narrative from the Scandinavian origins up to Grimoald (662–71).⁸⁰

Gotha *Origo*, a development of the original *Origo*, was produced in the first decade of the ninth century to accompany a collection of the Lombard laws. It takes the story up to Charlemagne and adds a new prologue to the text. The author of Gotha *Origo* likely knew the work of Paul the Deacon; he was certainly well acquainted with the questions Paul had faced while drafting his version of the Lombard past. The additions the Gotha author made to the original *Origo* text — or to the version of the text he had — show the same intent to dismiss the negative image of the Lombards. The author narrates how, before they came to Italy, the forefathers of the Lombards lived without law. However, once they came to Italy, they also came to Christ:

Coming to the land of Italy, they found milk and honey flowing, and, what is even more important, they found the salvation of baptism, and receiving the path of the Holy Cross, they were brought amongst the ranks of the good. In them, it is fulfilled [what was said]: 'sin is not imputed, when there is no law'. First rapacious wolves, then lambs grazing amongst the flocks of the Lord; hence, so much praise and gratitude is given to God, who placed them from the filth into the ranks of the just, fulfilling the Davidian prophecy: 'and raising the poor from the filth, make him sit with the princes of your people'.⁸¹

The author makes it very clear: once the Lombards were pagans and wild, but that was in the past and they can no longer be blamed for that. Now they have been saved by the grace of God and have been made good Christians. He continues:

They are said to be leaving [their homes], thus, moved not by need or by hardness of heart, or by the oppression of their parents, but so that they would achieve salvation from above. A wonder it is to all, and unheard, to see such salvation shine, when it was not by the merit of their parents; they found amongst the spikes of thorns the perfume of the churches. In such a way, the merciful Son of God had predicted, 'I did not come to call for the just, but for the sinners'; they were those, about whom the Saviour said in proverbs to the Jews: "I have other sheep, that are not from this sheepfold, and I need to lead them to ask for the water of life."⁸²

The Gotha *Origo* author thus turns papal propaganda on its head and praises the Lombards for being converts: they came to the light by their own desire, by their own virtue. He narrates the Lombards' adventures from Scandinavia to Italy, and mentions how, after Narsis left Italy for Spain (!), the citizens of Pavia and Milan, together with all the Italian cities, bowed their heads to Alboin, as was ordained by God.⁸³ He adds that Rothari was the king who brought law and justice to the Lombards: "In the time of Rothari, a light was born in the darkness, through him, the Lombards assumed the fight for the canonic [law], and were made supporters of the priests."⁸⁴ After another brief list of kings up to Desiderius, the author announces the end of the Lombard kingdom, conquered by Charlemagne in defence of the Church. "And he compassionately conceded to the Lombards [to preserve] their national laws, and added his own, as he wanted, which were necessary to the Lombards; and numberless men, who endlessly blamed him, he forgave."⁸⁵ The narrative continues until the elevation of Pepin as king and the defeat of the 'unfaithful' Avars. The author concludes: "To the present day, by his [Pepin's] help, Italy has flourished, as it did in the ancient days. Italy had laws and fertility, and also peace, by the merits of our lord, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁸⁶

As with Paul the Deacon, the intention of the author of the *Origo* is not to dismiss the Carolingian conquest, and even

less to denigrate Charlemagne. His object is clearly to reinstate the Lombards as a Christian people who strove against paganism in the past but had long since turned to Christianity. The *Origo* drives the point home even more emphatically than Paul's *Historia*, since the Gotha text actually evaluates Charles's rule in Italy. The assessment of the Lombard past presented by the author of the Gotha *Origo* is not nostalgic — Charles and Pepin are portrayed as successful rulers.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the author strongly emphasizes the deep Christian traditions of the Lombards.

The eighth century witnessed a debate on the nature of Lombard society that focused on the Christianization of the Lombards. This debate was prompted by well-crafted papal propaganda, designed to dehumanize and de-Christianize the Lombards to validate a Frankish campaign in support of the newly formed papal state. Papal propaganda used Gregory the Great's rhetoric to colour current events, erasing a century of Lombard Christianity and good relations with the Church. The campaign was very effective, and on two different occasions — with Pepin against Aistulf and Charlemagne against Desiderius — the Franks crossed the Alps to defend the Church's interests against the Lombards. Frankish intervention culminated with the conquest of the kingdom of Pavia in 774. The propaganda devised by the Church, however, produced a strong reaction from the Lombard *intelligentsia* — men such as Paul the Deacon and the author of the Gotha *Origo*. They were churchmen — Paul certainly was and, very likely so, the author of the Gotha *Origo* — and the de-Christianization of the Lombard past offended them deeply. At the turn of the ninth century, these men had reclaimed the Christian character of the Lombard past. The legitimacy of the Carolingian conquest continued unquestioned, however, and would remain so until the second quarter of the ninth century. Nonetheless, these earlier works planted the seeds for later reviews of the conquest. Hence, when Aldelchis (854–78) finally questioned the legitimacy of the Carolingian presence in Italy, he relied on the idea that divine providence had brought the Lombards to Italy and that Charlemagne's conquest was an act of greed and jeal-

ousy.⁸⁸ His position finds echoes elsewhere in the historical works of the time.⁸⁹ A close reading of the histories produced shortly after the end of the Lombard kingdom reveals how the tradition of endowing the Lombard past with the answer to contemporary questions has long influenced the understanding of the period. Rereading post-conquest Lombard historiography also serves as a warning to keep in mind the extent to which many of the sources of the period — and especially Paul the Deacon's *Historia* — are part of a long debate on the nature and the meaning of the Lombard period in Italy.

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Endnotes:

- 1 For the narrative, see Eduard Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen, Bayern und Burgunder in Oberitalien, 774–962. Zum Verständnis der fränkischen Königsherrschaft in Italien*, Forschungen zur oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte (Freiburg im Breisgau: E. Albert, 1960); K. Schmid, "Zur Ablösung der Langobardischen Herrschaft durch die Franken," *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 52 (1972): 1–36; Paolo Delogu, "Il regno Longobardo" in *Longobardi e Bizantini*, eds. Paolo Delogu, André Guillou, and Gherardo Ortalli (Turin: UTET, 1980), 3–216, 169–91; Thomas F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St. Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680–825* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 71ff; Paolo Delogu, "Lombard and Carolingian Italy" in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, Vol. II c. 700–c.900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

- 1996), 290–319, 294–303; Paolo Cammarosano, *Nobili e re: l'Italia politica dell'alto Medioevo*, 1a. ed., Quadrante (Roma: Laterza, 1998), 97–110; Stefano Gasparri, “Il passaggio dai Longobardi ai Carolingi” in *Il futuro dei longobardi: l'Italia e la costruzione dell'Europa di Carlo Magno*, eds. Carlo Bertelli and Gian Pietro Brogiolo (Milano: Skira, 2000), 25–43.
- 2 For the *Historia Langobardorum*, see esp. Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (A.D. 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede, and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 329–431; Walter Pohl, “Paulus Diaconus und die ‘Historia Langobardorum’: Text und Tradition” in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, eds. Anton Scharrer and Georg Scheibelreiter (Vienna: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1994), 375–405; Donald A. Bullough, “Ethnic History and the Carolingians: An Alternative Reading of Paul the Deacon’s *Historia Langobardorum*” in *Carolingian Renewal: Sources and Heritage*, ed. Donald A. Bullough (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 97–122; Rosamond McKitterick, “Paolo Diacono e i Franchi: il contesto storico e culturale” in *Paolo Diacono: Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine, ITA: Forum, 2000), 9–28; *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 60–83.
 - 3 For this version of the *Origo*, see Goffart, *Narrators* 382, n. 163; Stefano Maria Cingolani, *Le storie dei Longobardi: dall'origine a Paolo Diacono* (Roma: Viella, 1995); Nicholas Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568–774* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 92–98; Luigi Andrea Berto, “Remembering Old and New Rulers: Lombards and Carolingians in Carolingian Italian Memory,” *The Medieval History Journal* 13, no. 1 (2010): 13–53.
 - 4 The surviving historical works from the late sixth to the first half of the eighth century consist of, first, the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, not a history of the Lombards *per se*, but an annotated list of kings, probably an outgrowth of the prologue of Rothari’s *Edict*. It is likely that, in its present form, it contains more elements from the ninth century than from the original draft. Before the *Origo*, there is evidence for two other chronicles: the still extant *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper* and the lost work of Secundus of Trent. The former, even though preserving valuable information on sixth-century Lombards, was intended as a Christian chronicle, and not a Lombard history; the latter, though it may have been a *Historiola gentis Langobardorum* (as Paul the Deacon calls it), was more likely another chronograph of ecclesiastical history. For the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*, see Everett, *Literacy*, 92–8; 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 rinnovamento carolingio*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine, ITA: Forum, 2000), 413–26; and now "Origo gentis Langobardorum" in *I Longobardi e la storia: un percorso attraverso le fonti*, eds. Francesco Lo Monaco, Francesco Mores, and Paolo Cesaretti (Roma: Viella, 2012), 105–21; Alheydis Plassmann, *Origo gentis: Identitäts- und Legitimitätsstiftung in früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Herkunftserzählungen*, Orbis mediaevalis (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), 204–6; Magali Coumert, *Origines des peuples: les récits du Haut Moyen Âge occidental (550–850)*, Collection des études augustiniennes (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 2007), 153–7; Paolo Delogu, "Kingship and the Shaping of the Lombard Politic Body" in *The Langobards before the Frankish Conquest: An Ethnographic Perspective*, eds. Giorgio Ausenda, Paolo Delogu, and Chris Wickham (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 251–88, 260–1; Francesco Borri, "Romans Growing Beards: Identity and Historiography in Seventh-Century Italy," *Viator* 45, no. 1 (2014): 39–72. On the *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper*, see especially Steven Muhlberger, "Heroic Kings and Unruly Generals: The 'Copenhagen' Continuation of Prosper Reconsidered," *Florilegium* 6 (1984): 50–70; "War, Warlords, and Christian Historians from the Fifth to the Seventh Century" in *After Rome's Fall*, ed. Alexander C. Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Everett, *Literacy*, 86–7; Francesco Lo Monaco, "Dai Fasti a Fredegario" in *I Longobardi e la storia*, eds. Lo Monaco, Mores, and Cesaretti, 75–104; Borri, "Romans," 45–9; the classical works are Oswald Holder-Egger, "Untersuchungen über einige annalistische Quellen zur Geschichte des fünften und sechsten Jahrhunderts," *Neues Archiv* 1 (1876): 215–369; Roberto Cessi, "Studi sulle fonti dell'età gotica e longobarda, II: Properi Continuatio Haveniensis," *Archivio Muratoriano* 22 (1922): 587–641. On Secundus, see Reinhard Friedrich Jacobi, *Die Quellen der Langobardengeschichte des Paulus Diaconus, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte deutscher Historiographie* (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1877), 63–87; more recently, see K. Gardiner, "Paul the Deacon and Secundus of Trent" in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity*, eds. Brian Croke and Alanna M. Emmett (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1983), 147–53; Everett, *Literacy*, 85–6; Giuseppe Zecchini, "Ende und Erbe der lateinisch-heidnischen Geschichtsschreibung" in *Jenseits der Grenzen: Beiträge zur spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibung*, eds. Andreas Goltz, Heinrich Schlange-Schöningen, and Hartmut Leppin (Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter, 2009); Borri, "Romans," 43–5.

5 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, especially 48–50.

6 Noble, *Republic*.

7 On the debate surrounding the causes of the conflict, especially between Aistulf and Stephen II, see O. Bertolini, "Il primo 'periurium' di Astolfo

- verso la chiesa di Roma, 752–3,” in *Miscellanea Giovanni Mercati* (Città del Vaticano: [s.n.], 1946), 161–205; contra Jan T. Hallenbeck, *Pavia and Rome: The Lombard Monarchy and the Papacy in the Eighth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1982), 52–61; more recently, Delogu, “Il regno,” 170–2; Noble, *Republic*, 71–2.
- 8 Stephen II tried in vain to mobilize Byzantine help (*Vita Stephani II*, 94.8–9), though it is hardly likely that the pope desired a Byzantine army in the Italian countryside; see *Republic*, 72.
 - 9 *Codex Carolinus*, 1 and 2.
 - 10 Or so Paul the Deacon would want us to believe, see *HL* 6.53–54. Even though it would not be the first time the Franks used the Lombards as allies (cf. Fredegar, 4.68), one should take the passage with a grain of salt, given Paul’s commitment to show the Lombards in a positive light. For the questions behind Liutprand’s ‘adoption’ of Pepin, see Alain J. Stoclet, *Fils du Martel: la naissance, l’éducation et la jeunesse de Pépin, dit “Le Bref”*, *Histoires de famille. La parenté au Moyen Âge*, 13 (v. 714–v. 741) (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 179–210.
 - 11 Cf. *LP, Vita Gregorii III*. The event was introduced in the *vita* after the Frankish victory. See Walter Pohl, “Das Papsttum und die Langobarden,” in *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751: Vorgeschichte, Legitimationsstrategien und Erinnerung*, eds. Matthias Becher and Jörg Jarnut (Münster: Scriptorium, 2004), 145–62, 149; McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 121–22; Stefano Gasparri, *Italia longobarda: il regno, i Franchi, il papato* (Roma: Editori Laterza, 2012), 160–1.
 - 12 For the building up of Christian royal ideology, see Michael Edward Moore, *A Sacred Kingdom: Bishops and the Rise of Frankish Kingship, 300–850* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011).
 - 13 On the composition of the *Liber Pontificalis*, the introductions to the almost simultaneous editions by Mommsen and Duchesne are still fundamental, see L. Duchesne *Le Liber Pontificalis* (Paris: Ernest Thorin), 1886 and, *Liber Pontificalis pars prior*, ed. Th. Mommsen, *MGH Gesta Pontificum Romanorum* 1.1 (Berlin: Weidmann 1898). More recently, see Pohl, “Papsttum”; Lidia Capo, *Il Liber Pontificalis, i Longobardi e la nascita del dominio territoriale della Chiesa romana*, 1. ed., *Istituzioni e società* (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 2009); François Bougard, “Composition, diffusion et réception des parties tardives du *Liber Pontificalis* (VIIIe–IX siècles)” in *Liber, Gesta, histoire: écrire l’histoire des évêques et des papes de l’Antiquité au XXIe siècle*, eds. François Bougard and Michel Sot (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 126–52; Herman Geertman, “La genesi del *Liber Pontificalis* romano. Un processo di organizzazione della memoria” in *Liber, Gesta, histoire*, eds. Bougard and Sot, 109–26; Gasparri, *Italia Longobarda*, 146ff.
 - 14 The contentious nature of the *vitae* can be noticed by the diversity of versions preserved for the period; for the variants in the manuscripts,

- see Capo, *Liber Pontificalis*, 3–112; Bougard, “Composition”; Geertman, “Genesi”; Gasparri, *Italia Longobarda*, 143–64.
- 15 *Cod. Car.* 1: “persecutionem et oppresionem gentis Langobardorum.”
- 16 *LP, Vita Stephani II*, 94.5; 6, 30.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 94.10; 8;11 and 30; 24; 39.
- 18 *LP, Vita Hadriani*, 97.18; 23; 31.
- 19 The codex Carolinus is edited in MGH. Epp. III, edited by Gundlach, pp. 469–657. See, especially, Capo, *Liber Pontificalis*, 132–3; Stefano Gasparri, “Nefandissimi Langobardi: Le origini di un linguaggio politico” in *Puer Apuliae: mélanges offerts à Jean-Marie Martin*, eds. Annick Peters-Custot et al. (Paris: Amis du Centre d’histoire et de civilisation de Byzance, 2008), 325–32; *Italia Longobarda*, 146–54.
- 20 *Cod. Car.* 8.
- 21 *Cod. Car.* 11: “Etenim tyrannus ille, sequax diaboli, Haistulfus, devorator sanguinum christianorum, ecclesiarum Dei destructor, divino ictu percussus est et in inferni voraginem demersus.”
- 22 *Cod. Car.* 45: “Quae est enim, praecellentissimi filii, magni reges, talis desipientia, ut penitus vel dici liceat, quod vestra praeclara Francorum gens, quae super omnes gentes enitet, et tam splendiflua ac nobilissima regalis vestrae proles perfidiae, quod absit, ac foetentissimae Langobardorum genti polluat, quae in numero gentium nequaquam computatur, de cuius natione et leprosum genus oriri certum est!”
- 23 The association of the Lombards with other ‘Barbarian nations’ that Charles is subduing is another clear point in the letters, both including the Lombards amongst the ‘Barbarian nations’ or promising divine support on exchange of military help against the Lombards. See, for example, *Cod. Car.* 8, 17, 24, 26, 35, 37, 39, 42, 50, 52, 53, 55, 62, 68, 72, 73, 75, 88, 89.
- 24 Gasparri, “Nefandissimi Langobardi: Le origini di un linguaggio politico.”
- 25 *Greg. Reg.* 1. 17; cf. *C.C.* 11. For other instances of *nefandus* in Gregory, see “Nefandissimi Langobardi: Le origini di un linguaggio politico,” 328, n.11.
- 26 Probably 594; Gregory recounts a letter written some years later: *Greg. Reg.* 5.36, cf. *C.C.* 8.
- 27 *LP, Vita Gregorii* 66. In Duschesne edition, p. 312; Gregory of Tours (*Hist.* 10.1) also mentions the pope. See R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (Cambridge, N Y: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1–2; Paolo Chiesa, “La figura di Gregorio Magno nell’opera di Paolo Diacono,” in *Paolo Diacono: uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Cividale del Friuli, Udine, 6–9 maggio 1999*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine, ITA: Forum, 2000), 29–38.

- 28 See Bertram Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1968). Bede, *HE*, 2.1, and also the letters in *HE*, 1.23, 1.24, 1.27–32.
- 29 *LP, Vita Zachariae*, 93.29.
- 30 Markus, *Gregory*, 15. See also Hartmann's still valuable introduction in his edition in the MGH (Ep. 1.1), and Norberg's introduction in his new edition: Dag Ludvig Norberg, ed. *S. Gregorii Magni registrum epistularum libri I-VII*, Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982).
- 31 For the main narrative, see Delogu, "Il regno," 34–44; Jörg Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1982), 43–6. On the memory of Theodelinda, Agilulf and Gregory, cf. Stefano Gasparri, "I Longobardi fra oblio e memoria" in *Studi sul Medioevo per Girolamo Arnaldi*, eds. Giulia Barone, Lidia Capo, and Stefano Gasparri (Roma: Viella, 2000), 237–78, 255–62.
- 32 Especially after his negotiated peace with Agilulf. After Agilulf's trip-cum-attack to Rome, Gregory was accused of unnamed crimes more than once; see, for example, *Greg. Reg.* 5.36, 5.6 and 6.34.
- 33 See below, section 3.
- 34 Goffart, *Narrators*; Rosamond McKitterick, "Paul the Deacon and the Franks," *Early Medieval Europe* 8, no. 3 (1999): 319–39; "Paolo Diacono"; *History and Memory*, 60–83; also Lidia Capo, "Paolo Diacono e il mondo franco: l'incontro di due esperienze storiografiche" in *Paolo Diacono: uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine, ITA: Forum, 2000), 39–74; Florian Hartmann, "Vitam litteris ni emam, nihil est, quod tribuam," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 43 (2009): 71–93.
- 35 For example, on monarchy: *HL* 2.32 and 3.16; on geography, *HL* 2.15–23.
- 36 See Paul the Deacon, *Gesta Episcopum Mettensium*, (n.12 above); cf. Lidia Capo, "La polemica longobarda sulla caduta del regno," *Rivista Storica Italiana* 108, no. 1 (1996): 5–35, especially 5–6.
- 37 On Paul's representation of the Lombards, see L. Alfonsi, "Romani e barbari nella *Historia Langobardorum* di Paolo Diacono," *Romanobarbarica* 1 (1976): 7–23; and more recently, Maya Maskarinec, "Who Were the Romans? Shifting Scripts of Romanness in Early Medieval Italy" in *Post-Roman Transitions: Christian and Barbarian identities in the early medieval West*, eds. Walter Pohl and Gerda Heydemann (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 297–363, especially, 323–35.
- 38 Still relevant for Paul and his sources is Jacobi, *Quellen*; Th. Mommsen, "Die Quellen der Langobardengeschichte des Paulus Diaconus," *Neues Archiv* 5 (1880): 51–103; Georg Waitz, "Zur Frage nach den Quellen der *Historia Langobardorum*," *Neues Archiv* 5 (1880): 415–24; more

- recently, see Gardiner, “Secundus”; Pohl, “Paulus Diaconus.”; and “Paolo Diacono”; McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 74–7.
- 39 Paul was certainly at Charlemagne’s court from 781–5, though McKitterick argues for a possible longer stay: see Goffart, *Narrators* 338; McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 66–70. The *Cod. Car.* was composed in 791.
- 40 *HL* 1.8.
- 41 See N. Christie, “Invitation or Invasion? The Longobard Occupation of Northern Italy, A.D. 568–9,” *Romanobarbarica* 11 (1991): 79–108. Paul presumably found the reference to the invitation in the *Liber Pontificalis* (*Vita Iohannis III*, 63.3).
- 42 Aboin’s capture of Italy is the main topic of *HL* 2; see Goffart, *Narrators* 388–94.
- 43 *HL* 2.32.
- 44 *HL* 3.16; *Greg. Reg.* 1.17, in which the pope clearly states the Arianism of Authari, a topic Paul preferred to leave aside.
- 45 Chiesa, “La figura,” 36–8.
- 46 See now Paul the Deacon, “*Vita sancti Gregorii Magni*,” ed. Sabina Tuzzo (Pisa: Scuola normale superiore, 2002). Paul makes reference of the *Vita*, which he composed “ante aliquot annos,” in *HL* 3.24.
- 47 In Paul’s *Vita S. Gregorii Magni*, the Lombards are mentioned one single time, providing context to a story involving Gregory and some exiles from the Lombard attacks in Rome; see *Vita s. Greg. Mag.* c. 14.
- 48 *HL* 4.6. Per hanc quoque reginam multum utilitatis Dei ecclesia consecuta est. Nam pene omnes ecclesiarum substantias Langobardi, cum adhuc gentilitatis errore tenerentur, invaserunt. Sed huius salubri supplicatione rex permotus, et catholicam fidem tenuit, et multas possessiones ecclesiae Christi largitus est atque episcopus, qui in depressione et abiectioe erant, ad dignitatis solitae honorem reduxit.
- 49 *HL* 4.21.
- 50 *HL* 5.6.
- 51 *HL* 4.5.
- 52 *HL* 4.8. cf. *LP, Vita Gregorii*, 63.2.
- 53 *Ibid.*: “Huius regis adventu, in tantum beatus Gregorius papa extertitus est, ut ab expositione templi, de quo in Ezechiele legitur, desisteret, sicut ipse quoque in suis homeliis refert.” Paul is referring Gregory’s *In Ez.* 2. prol.
- 54 *HL* 4.8.: “Nec multum post, suggerente maxime Theudelinda regina sua coniuge, sicut eam beatus papa Gregorius suis epistulis saepius ammonuit, cum eodem vito sanctissimo papa Gregorio atque Romanis pacem firmissimam pepigit.”
- 55 *HL* 4.9; the letters used are, respectively, *Greg. Reg.* 9.68 and 9.66. It is worth noting that the letters were not written during the peace

- negotiation in 594, and related rather to a much later truce that Gregory brokered in 598 between Agilulf and the exarch in Ravenna: Paul rearranged the evidence to better fit his argument.
- 56 For Ariulf and Arichis, see Stefano Gasparri, *I duchi longobardi* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1978), 74–5 and 86–7, respectively.
- 57 Greg. *Reg.* 2.38.
- 58 For Gregory's interactions with Ariulf: Greg. *Reg.* 2.4, 27, 28, 38; 5.36; 9.44; Arichis: Greg. *Reg.* 2.38; 9.44, 125, 127.
- 59 Greg. *Reg.* 9.44.
- 60 *HL* 4.19, refers to Greg. *Reg.* 9.127 (February–April 599).
- 61 *HL* 4.16. “Tunc intellectum est, beatum martyrem Savinum eidem [i.e. Ariulfo] in proelio adiutorium contulisse.” The passage might also refer to Greg. *Dial.* 3.29, in which the Arian bishop of Spoleto is blinded as he tries to enter the church of St. Paul, another passage that Paul preferred to leave aside, replacing it with the miracle by St. Savianus; I am grateful to Nicholas Everett for pointing this connection out to me.
- 62 *HL* 4.29, referring to Greg. *Reg.* 5.6.
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 *HL* 4.29. “Ecce quantae humilitatis vir iste fuit, qui, cum esset summus pontifex, se servum nominavit! Ecce quantae innocentiae, qui nec moret Langobardorum, qui utique et increduli et omnia devastabant, se noluerit ammiseri!”
- 65 *HL* 2.32.
- 66 On John the Deacon, see Girolamo Arnaldi, “Giovanni Immonide e la cultura a Roma al tempo di Giovanni VIII,” *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano* 68 (1956): 48–87; C. Leonardi, “La ‘Vita Gregorii’ di Giovanni Diacono” in *Roma e l'età carolingia : atti delle Giornate di studio, 3–8 maggio 1976* (Roma: Multigrafica editrice, 1976), 381–93; “L'agiografia romana del secolo IX” in *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés, IVe–XIIe siècles: actes du colloque organisé à Nanterre et à Paris, 2–5 mai 1979* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1981), 606 p., esp. 483ff; Capo, “La polemica,” 11–2. The work of John the Deacon is only available through the *Patrologia Latina* (*PL* 75, col. 60–242), but Lucia Castaldi is preparing a new — and much needed — edition. The first volume, containing the textual tradition, has been published in 2004: Lucia Castaldi, *Vita Gregorii I Papae* (*BHL* 3641–3642), *Archivum Gregorianum* (Firenze: SISMEL edizioni del Galluzzo, 2004).
- 67 John the Deacon, *Vita s. Gregorii Papae*, preaf; see also 1.45.
- 68 The only exception is Greg. *Reg.* 5.6
- 69 *HL* 4.47.
- 70 *HL* 5.33.
- 71 *HL* 5.33.
- 72 *HL* 5.34.

- 73 *HL* 5.40.
- 74 *HL* 5.41.
- 75 See for example, *HL* 6.28, 6.38, 6.43, 6.48, 6.58.
- 76 McKitterick, *History and Memory*, 71–2. McKitterick suggests that Paul’s kings represent imperfect prefigurations of Charlemagne.
- 77 The obsession with physical appearance is a peculiarity of Lombard Italy, and is prominent in Paul the Deacon; see the physical description of the kings in *HL* 2.28 (Alboin), 3.30 (Authari), 3.35 (Agilulf) and 6.27 (Cunincpert). See P. Squatriti, “Personal Appearance and Physiognomics in Early Medieval Italy,” *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988): 191–202; on inscriptions, see Everett, *Literacy*, 256–7.
- 78 For the *Origo*, see Berto, “Remembering Old,” 28–9; 32–5. For the edition of the *Origo gentis Langobardorum codicis Gothani*, eds. Claudio Azzara and Stefano Gasparri, *Le Leggi dei Longobardi : storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo germanico*, Fonti (Milano: Editrice La Storia, 1992), 282–91.
- 79 LLRot, prol.
- 80 For the debate on the composition of the *Origo*, see n. 4 above.
- 81 Gotha *Origo*, c.1.: “In terra Italiae adventantes, fluentem lac et mel, et quod amplius est, salute invenerunt baptismatis, et vestigia sanctae Trinitatis recipients, inter numerum bonorum effecti sunt. In illis impletum est: ‘Non inputatur peccatum, cum lex non esset’ [Rom. 5,13]. Primis lupi rapaces, postea agni inter dominicum gregem pascente; proinde tanta laus et gratia referenda est Deo, qui illos de stercore inter iustorum numerum collocavit, nisi Davitica impleta propheta: ‘Et de stercore erigens pauperem, sedere facit eum cum principibus populi sui’.”
- 82 Gotha *Origo*, c. 1. “Moviti itaque non ex necessitate aut duricia cordis aut parentum oppressione, sed ut ex alto salutem consequeretur, asserit exituros. Mirumque est omnibus et inauditum, videre, ubi non fuit meritum parentum, talis salus refulgere, qui deinter mucrones spinarum odoramaenta aeclesiarum inventi sunt; sicut ipse misericors filius Dei antea praedixerat: ‘Non veni vocare iustos, sed peccatores.’ Isti fuerunt, unde ipse Salvator ad Iudaeos in proverbiiis dicens: ‘Habeo alias oves, quae non sunt ex hoc ovili; et illas me oportet adduci ad aquam vivam poscendam.’ [John 10, 16].”
- 83 Gotha *Origo*, c.2.
- 84 Gotha *Origo*, c.7: “Istius Rothari regis [temporibus] ortum est lumen in tenebris; per quem supradicti Langobardi ad cannonicam tenderunt certamina, et sacerdotum facti sunt adiutores. See the comments in Berto, “Remembering Old,” 33.
- 85 Gotha *Origo*, c.9: “Et paternae patriae leges Langobardis misertus concessit, et suas, ut voluit, quae necessaria erant Langobardis, adiunxit; et innumerabilibus viris, qui eidem culparunt incessanter, culpas dimisit.”

- 86 Gotha *Origo*, c.9: “Praesentem diem per eius adiutorium splenduit Italia, sicut fecit antiquissimis diebus. Leges et ubertas et quietudinem habuit per domni nostri merita prestante domno nostro Ihesu Christo.”
- 87 Berto, “Remembering Old,” 34–35.
- 88 *Capitula Domni Adelchis Principis*, prol.
- 89 Mostly on Andreas of Bergamo and Erchempert; see Capo, “La polemica,” 18; 25–30. Both authors had, nonetheless, different views on the Lombard past. As Capo rightly summarizes, “... la differenza più evidente che c’è al proposito tra le testimonianze dell’Italia settentrionale [i.e., Andreas] e quelle dell’Italia meridionale [i.e., Erchempert], e cioè il fatto che al Nord si sia perduta la continuità storica longobarda, quella che investiva il presente di tutto il passato della nazione e il passato di tutti i valori in evoluzione del presente ...” For Andreas of Bergamo, see Berto, “Remembering Old,” 29–30; 35–48. For Erchempert, the classical work is Giorgio Falco’s “Erchemperto,” in *Albori d’Europa: pagine di storia medievale*, ed. Giorgio Falco (Roma: L’avora, 1947), 264–92; see also P. Meyvaert, “Erchempert, moine de Mont-Cassin,” *Revue Benedictine* 69 (1959): 103–5; Lidia Capo, “Le tradizioni narrative a Spoleto e Benevento” in *I Longobardi dei ducati di Spoleto e Benevento: atti del XVI Congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto Medioevo, Spoleto, 20–23 ottobre 2002, Benevento, 24–27 ottobre 2002* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 2003), 243–87; more recently, see the extensive work on Erchempert in Luigi Andrea Berto, “Erchempert, a Reluctant Fustigator of His People: History and Ethnic Pride in Southern Italy at the End of the Ninth Century,” *Mediterranean Studies* 20, no. 2 (2012): 147–75.