

COLLÈGE DE FRANCE – CNRS
CENTRE DE RECHERCHE D'HISTOIRE
ET CIVILISATION DE BYZANCE

TRAVAUX
ET MÉMOIRES
29

ORIENT ET MÉDITERRANÉE (UMR 8167) / MONDE BYZANTIN
COLLÈGE DE FRANCE / INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES BYZANTINES

TRAVAUX ET MÉMOIRES

– publication annuelle paraissant en un ou deux fascicules –

Fondés par Paul LEMERLE

Continués par Gilbert DAGRON

Dirigés par Constantin ZUCKERMAN

Comité de rédaction :

Jean-Claude CHEYNET, Vincent DÉROCHE,

Denis FEISSEL, Bernard FLUSIN

Comité scientifique :

Wolfram BRANDES (Francfort)

Brigitte MONDRAIN (Paris)

Olivier DELOUIS (Paris)

Vivien PRIGENT (Paris)

Jean-Luc FOURNET (Paris)

Peter SCHREINER (Cologne – Munich)

Sophie MÉTIVIER (Paris)

Werner SEIBT (Vienne)

Secrétariat de rédaction, relecture et composition :

Emmanuelle CAPET

© Association des Amis du Centre d'histoire et civilisation de Byzance – 2025

DOI 10.71950/tm.29.2025

ISBN 978-2-487737-07-5

ISSN 0577-1471

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Abréviations	v
--------------------	---

Εὐταξία : AUTOUR DU *LIVRE DES CÉRÉMONIES* édité par Bernard FLUSIN

Bernard FLUSIN, Εὐταξία	3
Theodora ANTONOPOULOU, “Fake news” and <i>eutaxia</i> under the early Macedonian emperors ..	7
Albrecht BERGER, Processions in the Great Palace and in Constantinople: the topography of <i>De cerimoniis</i>	25
Floris BERNARD, Poetry in the <i>Book of ceremonies</i> : terminology, metre and embedment	39
René-Claude BONDOUX, La flotte byzantine au x ^e siècle : <i>Livre des cérémonies</i> II, 44-45 et fouilles du port théodosien (Yenikapi)	61
Jean-Claude CHEYNET, Des <i>taktika</i> et des <i>atriklinai</i>	77
Olivier DELOUIS, Des absents de marque : les moines de Constantinople dans le cérémonial byzantin selon le <i>Livre des cérémonies</i>	95
Vincent DÉROCHE, Acclamer l’empereur hors du Palais : les « acclamations habituelles » et l’empereur face aux moines et à leur protocole	111
Denis FEISSEL, Le Dékimon et son poste de garde au Palais de Constantinople : étude de topographie et d’épigraphie	117
Martin HINTERBERGER, <i>De cerimoniis</i> and the history of the Greek language	145
Marek JANKOWIAK, The three redactions of <i>De cerimoniis</i>	165
Smilja MARJANOVIĆ-DUŠANIĆ, Autour des cérémonies : le couronnement de l’empereur hors de Constantinople	251
Sophie MÉTIVIER, Cérémonies religieuses et dévotions impériales à la cour de Constantinople à la lumière du <i>Livre des cérémonies</i>	269
Olivier ROBERT, Les transformations du sénat byzantin à l’époque iconoclaste d’après le témoignage du <i>Livre des cérémonies</i>	291
Antonio ROLLO, Κοθωμιλημένη καὶ ἀπλουστέρα φράσει κεχρήμεθα: il registro basso della lingua del <i>De cerimoniis</i>	335
Ioannis THEODORAKOPOULOS, Les habits dans les cérémonies : qu’est-ce que la <i>thalassa</i> ? ...	353

CONSTRUCTING THE EIGHTH CENTURY

edited by Federico MONTINARO & Vivien PRIGENT

Federico MONTINARO & Vivien PRIGENT, Introduction	371
Jeffrey P. A. BERLAND, Iconoclasm under Leo III and the papal Iconophile response: a reappraisal of Roman sources	375
Giulia ZORNETTA, Lombard models in Byzantine splendour: building a regional identity in eighth-century Lombard southern Italy	443
Marco STOFFELLA, Lombard border legislation, the fall of Ravenna and Pippin's coronation: new perspectives on a transition (750–7)	467
Lucia ARCIFA, Ricostruire la Sicilia di VIII secolo: nuovi approcci per un paesaggio in trasformazione	491
Irina SHINGIRAY, A steppe too far: relations between the nomadic Khazar and the Byzantine Empires in the eighth century	517
Adrian C. PIRTEA, Syro-Chalcedonian historiography in the eighth century: the newly discovered <i>Maronite chronicle of 713</i> and its Monothelete context	551
Oksana GONCHARKO & Hayk HAKOBYAN, The philosophy of icon veneration in the sermon <i>Against the Paulicians</i> by Yovhannes Ojnek'i	575
Mauro MORMINO, A “tale for all seasons”? The <i>Passio</i> (BHG 1249) of Meletios Stratēlatēs at the crossroads between Iconoclasm and Iconophilia	617
Federico MONTINARO, Constantine V, icons and the Arabs: the <i>Νουθεσία γέροντος</i>	655
Christophe ERISMANN, Germain de Constantinople et le débat sur l'heure de la mort	675
Clément ADOIR, Des ennemis si intimes? Sur l'origine du <i>chôrion</i> et la fiscalité byzantine du VIII ^e siècle	693
Vivien PRIGENT, Rouages invisibles : l'épineuse question de l'administration provinciale ...	715

VARIA

Olivier ROBERT, Histoire de la « cure du Palais » : de l'office romain à la dignité byzantine de curopalate (IV ^e -X ^e s.)	751
Denis FEISSEL, avec deux contributions de Charlotte ROUECHÉ et de Jean-Pierre GRÉLOIS, Cinq épigrammes honorifiques du Bas-Empire à Éphèse	773
Alessio SOPRACASA, Une branche impériale des Comnènes, du <i>sebastokratôr</i> Andronic au protosébaste et régent Alexis	831
Abstracts/Résumés en anglais	937
Table des matières	947

ABRÉVIATIONS

AASS	<i>Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur quae ex latinis et graecis, aliarumque gentium antiquis monumentis, collegit, digessit, notis illustravit J. Bollandus, operam et studium contulit G. Henschenius, Antuerpiae – Bruxellis 1643-1940.</i>
ACO	<i>Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum</i> , ed. instituit E. Schwartz, continuauit J. Straub, Berlin 1914-1940.
ACO, ser. sec.	<i>Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum. Series secunda</i> , ed. R. Riedinger, Berlin 1984.
AE	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i> , publiée dans la <i>Revue archéologique</i> , 1888-1961, puis sous la forme de volumes indépendants.
AnBoll	<i>Analecta bollandiana</i> . Bruxelles.
AnTard	<i>Antiquité tardive</i> . Turnhout.
AOC	Archives de l'Orient chrétien. Paris.
B.	<i>Basilicorum libri LX. Series A, Textus, vol. 1-8; Series B, Scholia, vol. 1-9</i> , ed. H. J. Scheltema & N. Van der Wal, Groningen 1953-1988.
BCH	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i> . Athènes – Paris.
BHG	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica graeca</i> , 3 ^e éd. mise à jour et considérablement augmentée par F. Halkin (Subs. hag. 8a), Bruxelles 1957. <i>BHG Auctarium : Auctarium bibliothecae hagiographicae graecae</i> , par F. Halkin (Subs. hag. 47), Bruxelles 1969. <i>BHG Novum auctarium : Novum auctarium bibliothecae hagiographicae graecae</i> , par F. Halkin (Subs. hag. 65), Bruxelles 1984.
BHL	<i>Bibliotheca hagiographica latina</i> , Bruxellis 1901.
BMGS	<i>Byzantine and modern Greek studies</i> . Leeds.
BSl.	<i>Byzantinoslavica : revue internationale des études byzantines</i> . Praha.
Byz.	<i>Byzantion : revue internationale des études byzantines</i> . Wetteren – Leuven.
Byz. Forsch.	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen : internationale Zeitschrift für Byzantinistik</i> . Amsterdam.
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i> . Berlin.
CCCM	Corpus christianorum. Continuatio mediævalis. Turnhout.
CCSG	Corpus christianorum. Series graeca. Turnhout.
CCSL	Corpus christianorum. Series latina. Turnhout.
CEFR	Collection de l'École française de Rome. Rome.
CFHB	Corpus fontium historiae byzantinae.

- Chron. pasch.* *Chronicon paschale*, ed. L. Dindorf (CSHB), Bonnae 1832.
- CJ* *Corpus iuris civilis*. 2, *Codex justinianus*, rec. et retractavit P. Krueger, ed. 11^a, Berolini 1954.
- Const. Porph., *Three treatises* : Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Three treatises on imperial military expeditions*, intro., ed., transl. and commentary by J. F. Haldon (CFHB 28), Wien 1990.
- CPG* *Clavis patrum graecorum*, cura et studio M. Geerard *et al.*, Turnhout 1974-2003.
- CRAI* *Comptes rendus. Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*. Paris.
- CSCO* *Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium*. Louvain.
- CSHB* *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*.
- CTh* *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus sirmondianis et leges novellae ad theodosianum pertinentes*, ed. Th. Mommsen & P. M. Meyer, Berolini 1905.
- CUF* Collection des universités de France. Paris.
- DAI* Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Greek text ed. by Gy. Moravcsik; English transl. by R. J. H. Jenkins (CFHB 1), Washington DC 1967²; 2, *Commentary*, ed. by R. J. H. Jenkins, London 1962.
- DChAE* Δελτίον τῆς Χριστιανικῆς ἀρχαιολογικῆς ἐταιρείας. Ἀθήνα.
- De cer.* Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, *Le livre des cérémonies*, sous la dir. de G. Dagron & B. Flusin (CFHB 52, 1-5), Paris 2020.
- De cer.* Leich & Reiske *Constantini Porphyrogeneti imperatoris Constantinopolitani libri duo De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, cur. I. H. Leichius & I. I. Reiskius, Lipsiae 1751-1754.
- De cer.* Moffat & Tall *Constantine Porphyrogenetos, The book of ceremonies, with the Greek edition of the Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae (Bonn, 1829)*, transl. by A. Moffatt & M. Tall (Byzantina australiensia 18), Canberra 2012.
- De cer.* Reiske *Constantini Porphyrogeniti imperatoris De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae libri duo*, e rec. I. I. Reiskii (CSHB), Bonnae 1829-1830.
- De cer.* Vogt *Constantin VII Porphyrogénète, Le livre des cérémonies. 1, Texte. 1, Livre I, chapitres 1-46 (37); 2, Livre I, chapitres 47 (38)-92 (83)*, établi et trad. par A. Vogt, Paris 1935-1939 (2^e tirage, Paris 1967).
- Dig.* *Corpus iuris civilis. 1, Institutiones*, rec. P. Krueger; *Digesta*, rec. Th. Mommsen, retractavit P. Krueger, Berolini 1872.
- Du Cange, *Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae Graecitatis*, Lugduni 1688.
- DOP* *Dumbarton Oaks papers*. Washington DC.
- DOS* *Dumbarton Oaks studies*. Washington DC.
- EEBS* Ἐπετηρίς Ἐταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν σπουδῶν. Ἀθήνα.
- FM 1-12* *Fontes minores*, hrsg. von D. Simon (Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte), Frankfurt am Main 1976-.
- Genesios : *Iosephi Genesii regum libri quattuor*, rec. A. Lesmüller-Werner & I. Thurn (CFHB 14), Berolini – Novi Eboraci 1978.
- GRBS* *Greek, Roman and Byzantine studies*. Durham.
- JHS* *The journal of Hellenic studies*. London.
- JÖB* *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*. Wien.
- JOeB/JÖB* : *Journal of Byzantine studies (JOeB) / Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*. Wien 2021-.

- LAMPE *A patristic Greek lexicon*, ed. by G. W. H. Lampe, Oxford 1961.
- LBG E. TRAPP, *Lexikon zur byzantinischen Gräzität besonders des 9.-12. Jahrhunderts*, Wien 1994-2017.
- Le Liber pontificalis*. 1, [-795], texte, introd. et commentaire par L. Duchesne, Paris 1886.
- LSJ (& Rev. suppl.) : *A Greek-English lexicon with a revised supplement*, comp. by H. G. Liddell & R. Scott, rev. and augm. throughout by H. S. Jones, Oxford 1996.
- MAIET (МАИЭТ) : *Материалы по археологии, истории и этнографии Таврии*, Симферополь = *Materials in archaeology, history and ethnography of Tauria*. Simferopol.
- MEFRA / MEFRM : *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité / Moyen Âge*. Rome.
- MGH *Monumenta Germaniae historica*. Berlin. Conc. : *Concilia*. AA : *Auctores antiquissimi*. Epp. : *Epistolae*. SS : *Scriptores*.
- MTM *Monographies de Travaux & mémoires*. Paris.
- Nicéphore le Patriarche, *Bréviaire* : Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short history*, text, transl., and commentary by C. Mango (CFHB 13), Washington DC 1990.
- Notitia dignitatum : accedunt notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et laterculi prouinciarum*, ed. O. Seeck, Berolini 1876.
- Nov./Novels/Novelles/Nouellae* : *Corpus iuris civilis*. 3, *Novellae*, rec. R. Schoell, absoluit W. Kroll, Berolini 1895; ed. 6^a, Berolini 1954.
- OCP *Orientalia christiana periodica : commentarii de re orientali aetatis christianae sacra et profana*. Roma.
- ODB *Oxford dictionary of Byzantium*, A. P. Kazhdan ed. in chief, New York 1991.
- OIKONOMIDÈS, *Listes : Les listes de préséance byzantines des IX^e et X^e siècles*, introd., texte, trad. et commentaire par N. Oikonomidès (Le monde byzantin), Paris 1972.
- OLA *Orientalia lovaniensia analecta*. Louvain.
- PBW M. JEFFREYS et al., *Prosopography of the Byzantine world*. 2016 (King's College London, 2017); <http://pbw2016.kdl.kcl.ac.uk>.
- PG *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series graeca*, accur. J.-P. Migne, Lutetiae Parisiorum 1856-1866.
- PLRE *The prosopography of the later Roman Empire*, by A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale & J. Morris, Cambridge 1971-1992.
- PmbZ *Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit*, nach Vorarbeiten F. Winkelmanns erstellt von R.-J. Lilie et al., Berlin 1998-2000.
PmbZ Online : Prosopographie der mittelbyzantinischen Zeit Online, published by De Gruyter 2013.
- PO *Patrologia orientalis*. Paris.
- Psellos, *Chronographie : Michaelis Pselli Chronographia*, hrsg. von D. R. Reinsch (Millenium studies 51), Berlin 2014.
- Pseudo-Kodinos, *Traité des offices*, introd., texte et trad. par J. Verpeaux (Le monde byzantin 1), Paris 1966.
- REB *Revue des études byzantines*. Paris.
- REG *Revue des études grecques*. Paris.
- RSBN *Rivista di studi bizantini e neoellenici*. Roma.
- SBS *Studies in Byzantine sigillography*.
- SC *Sources chrétiennes*. Paris.

- Skylitzes *Ioannis Scylitzae Synopsis historiarum*, rec. I. Thurn (CFHB. Series berolinensis 5), Berolini – Novi Eboraci 1973;
 Jean Skylitzès, *Empereurs de Constantinople*, texte trad. par B. Flusin et annoté par J.-C. Cheynet (Réalités byzantines 8), Paris 2003.
 John Skylitzes, *A synopsis of Byzantine history, 811–1057*, introd., text and notes transl. by J. Wortley, Cambridge 2010.
- Subs. hag. Subsidia hagiographica. Bruxelles.
- Syméon Logothète/Symeon the Logothete : *Symeonis Magistri et Logothetae Chronicon*, rec. S. Wahlgren (CFHB 44, 1. Series berolinensis), Berolini – Novi Eboraci 2006.
- Syn. CP *Synaxarium Ecclesiae constantinopolitanae e codice sirmondiano nunc berolinensi, adiectis synaxariis selectis, Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum Novembris*, éd. H. Delehaye, Bruxelles 1902 [réimpr. Louvain 1954].
- Taktika : *The Taktika of Leo VI*, text, transl., and commentary by G. Dennis (CFHB 49), Washington DC 2010; revised ed. 2014.
- Teubner Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum teubneriana.
- Théophane, *Chronographiel/Chronicle* :
 ed. de Boor : *Theophanis Chronographia*, rec. C. de Boor (Teubner), Lipsiae 1883–1885 [réimpr. Hildesheim – New York 1980] ;
 trad. Mango & Scott : *The chronicle of Theophanes Confessor : Byzantine and Near Eastern history AD 284–813*, transl. with introd. and commentary by C. Mango & R. Scott, with assistance of G. Greatrex, Oxford 2006.
- Theoph. cont., ed. Bekker *Theophanes continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus*, ex rec. I. Bekkeri (CSHB 33), Bonnae 1838.
 ed. Featherstone & Signes Codoñer *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I–IV; Liber VI*, rec., anglige verterunt, indicibus instruxerunt M. Featherstone et J. Signes Codoñer, nuper repertis schedis C. de Boor adiuvantibus (CFHB 53, 58), Boston – Berlin 2015, 2025.
- TIB *Tabula imperii byzantini*. Wien.
 TIB 4 : K. BELKE, 4, *Galatien und Lykaonien*, Wien 1984 ;
 TIB 5 : F. HILD & H. HELLENKEMPER, 5, *Kilikien und Isaurien*, Wien 1990 ;
 TIB 6 : P. SOUSTAL, 6, *Thrakien (Thrakē, Rodopē und Haimimontos)*, Wien 1991.
- TLG *Thesaurus linguae graecae*. Version électronique : *Thesaurus linguae graecae*® : a digital library of Greek literature. stephanus.tlg.uci.edu
- ThLL *Thesaurus linguae latinae*. Lipsiae 1900–.
- TM *Travaux & mémoires*. Paris.
- Variorum CS Variorum collected studies series. London – Aldershot.
- Vita Basilii *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii imperatoris amplectitur*, rec. Anglice vertit indicibus instruxit I. Ševčenko nuper repertus schedis C. de Boor adiuvantibus (CFHB 42), Berlin 2011.
- Vita Euthymii *patriarchae Cp.*, text, transl., introd. and commentary by P. Karlin-Hayter (Bibliothèque de Byzantion 3), Bruxelles 1970.
- VV *Византийский временник*. Москва.
- WBS Wiener byzantinistische Studien. Wien.
- ZPE *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*. Bonn.
- ZRVI *Зборник радова Византолошког института*. Београд.

CONSTRUCTING THE EIGHTH CENTURY

edited by
Federico MONTINARO & Vivien PRIGENT

LOMBARD BORDER LEGISLATION, THE FALL OF RAVENNA AND PIPPIN'S CORONATION: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON A TRANSITION (750–7)

by Marco STOFFELLA

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies on mobility in Roman and late antique Europe have clearly shown that freedom of movement in Mediterranean societies was not a natural condition, but the result of rules laid down by negotiation and interaction between different actors, administered through laws, written permits and local bureaucracy (MOATTI 2000). Especially in the cities, residential stability was encouraged and legally prescribed, and mobility was also regulated (GAGLIARDI 2006). Moreover, mobility changed and underwent several transformations over time, given the many changes and the different settings of movement control systems over larger or minor territories and the areas bordering them (MOATTI 2019). Recent research has shown that even in the Lombard Kingdom, in continuity with Ostrogothic and Byzantine Italy, freedom of movement was not a natural condition (STOFFELLA 2026a).¹ From this specific point of view, therefore, previous historiography has outlined a distance between Lombard and Byzantine Italy that no longer has any reason to exist. A more precise definition of internal mobility and border regimes of the Lombard Kingdom helps us to better understand the Byzantine context of the mid-8th century. Since we must base our information on limited evidence, we must make the most of the information available to formulate more carefully calibrated hypotheses on the policy of annexation of Byzantine territories in northern Italy and the extinction of the exarchate by the Lombard kings during the 8th century, since they are ignored by the *Liber pontificalis*, and by the author of the *Life of Zacharias* in particular.²

Internal mobility was strictly regulated by kings from the mid-7th century onwards through clauses issued first in Rothari's *Edictum*, and in others added to it at different

1. POHL 2004, pp. 229–30, he noted that in 643 internal mobility control was more important than at borders: “Sembra dunque ovvio che a Rotari il controllo dei movimenti delle persone appariva molto più importante all'interno del regno, nelle vie pubbliche, attraverso i fiumi o le mura delle città che non alle frontiere.”

2. *The Lives of the eighth-century popes*, ed. Davis p. 29. MCKITTERICK 2020, pp. 206–16.

stages until the central decades of the 8th century.³ Locally, mobility was controlled by major and minor officers; residence within districts was the norm, and when a change of residence was needed, it had to be approved by the king and his officers.⁴

*Rothari 177: Concerning freemen who are allowed to move. Any freeman, together with his family, has the right to go wherever he wishes within our kingdom provided that this privilege has been given to him by the king. If a duke or any other freeman gives him some property and the recipient does not wish to remain with him [the duke or other freeman] or his heirs, the property shall revert to the donor or his heirs.*⁵ transl. Drew pp. 83–4

The long-lasting reign of King Liutprand (712–44) was characterised in its final phase by the gradual dismantling of Byzantine rule, with the empire losing most of Emilia and Pentapolis. The Lombard king had been persuaded by Pope Zacharias to spare Ravenna from a second attack, thus leaving intact the heart of Byzantine Italy, whose independence rested on the diplomatic skills of the popes. On two occasions, Gregory II and Zacharias were thus able to stop King Liutprand from launching a decisive attack on Ravenna or Rome (GASPARRI 2012, pp. 100–1). Despite the brief reign of Ildeprand, who succeeded his uncle in January 744, remained in office for eight months and was then deposed, the definitive disappearance of both Kings Liutprand and Ildeprand led to some significant political changes (DELOGU 1980, pp. 162–6; GASPARRI 2004, pp. 19–20).

In Lombard Italy the throne went to two brothers, Ratchis and Aistulf, both characterised by their Friulian perspective and their idea of reigning not only over the Lombards but also over the Romans. In the same years, the Pippinids rose to power, expanding their authority over southern Francia. These dynamics made it necessary to issue specific rules to control movement at the northern Alpine borders of the Lombard Kingdom.⁶ Although King Ratchis initially signed a twenty-year peace treaty with Zacharias, no longer on behalf of the city of Rome alone, but on behalf of all Byzantine Italy, the king resumed hostilities and laid siege to Perugia. Convinced by the pope to lift the siege, Ratchis was probably forced to step aside and replaced by his more aggressive brother Aistulf, who moved more decisively against the Byzantine territories and was induced to pursue a more careful policy of controlling the borders of the Lombard Kingdom.⁷ New rules were therefore introduced to trace movements of travellers and dignitaries accompanied by their armed escorts who moved between the Frankish Kingdom and Rome in both directions.⁸ I have argued elsewhere, against previous scholarship, that these changes in the policy of managing the northern Alpine

3. *Leges Langobardorum*, ed. Bluhme; ed. Beyerle; transl. Drew, pp. 1–37; AZZARA 2005. On Rothari's Edict see DELOGU 2001; MEYER 2017; LOSCHIAVO 2019. For criticism on a too close association between military campaigns and purposes of it issuing see MEYER 2017, pp. 161–5.

4. *Rothari 177: De homine libero, ut liceat eum migrare. 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.*

5. For a discussion of recent different interpretation of meaningful Latin words see STOFFELLA 2026b.

6. JARNUT 1990; DELOGU 1980, pp. 167–8; POHL 2001; GASPARRI 1995.

7. *Life of Zachary*, c. 23, ed. Duchesne pp. 433–4. See GASPARRI 2012, pp. 100–1; 2019, p. 55.

8. *Ratchis 13; Aistulf 5*. The Lombard policy at borders has been discussed in two fundamental papers by POHL 2001; 2004. See also GASPARRI 2019, pp. 144–7.

borders of the Lombard Kingdom should be attributed to King Aistulf, instead of King Ratchis; the reason for a different dating and its consequences are explained in the second part of this paper.⁹

2. THE POLITICAL SETTING

There had been a power struggle between the two brothers who succeeded each other to the throne; Ratchis, king of the Lombards from late 744, was forced in 749 to abdicate, to embrace monastic life and to leave room for his younger and more belligerent brother.¹⁰ Aistulf was elected king in Milan in July 749 and in 750 planned to definitively conquer Ravenna and its territories, and to remove the exarch from power; he also threatened Rome and its autonomy by attempting to impose a tax of one gold *solidus* per person.¹¹ As I will discuss in the second half of this essay, I am convinced that as a direct consequence of his political action within the Italian Peninsula, Aistulf already feared the strengthening of an alliance between the new leading Frankish aristocratic family and Pope Zacharias. Therefore, he tried to prevent the exchange of reciprocal embassies and spies through new provisions.¹² A different system of control on mobility at borders, which prescribed the restoration of pre-existing structures described by a detailed clause which arranged a meticulous control system, was therefore re-introduced in the Lombard Kingdom in 750.¹³ However, his attempts were ineffective. The siege and fall of Ravenna and its territories in the summer of 751, and the subsequent disappearance of the exarch Eutychios, together with the internal political situation in Francia and the alliance of the mayor of the palace with the pope, in my opinion accelerated Pippin's coup d'État and his coronation as king of the Franks which chronologically followed the fall of Ravenna in early July 751, thereby deeply changing the international political scene and Pippin's relationship with the popes and the *Ducatus romanus*.

As a matter of fact, soon after the death of Pope Zacharias in 752 and the visit of Pope Stephen II in Francia between the autumn of 753 and the summer 754, Pippin was even more profoundly involved in Italian politics (GASPARRI 2012, pp. 103–5). Possibly in substitution of the deposed exarch who normally had the *patricius* dignity, Pippin was defined by Stephen II as the *patricius Romanorum*, a title that balanced the old Byzantine tradition with a certain degree of innovation expressed by the adjective *Romanorum*. Or, rather, it may have been intended to match the innovation by Stephen II through a papal state called *sanctae Dei ecclesiae respublica Romanorum*.¹⁴ This last reference was possibly

9. M. Stoffella, "Clusae/clusurae, Law and Mobility in Lombard and early Carolingian Italy," KFG Migration and Mobility/Seminar für mittelalterlichen Geschichte, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, January 23rd 2025. To be published in STOFFELLA 2026c.

10. DELOGU 1980, pp. 168–9; STOFFELLA 2016; GASPARRI 2019, p. 55.

11. DELOGU 1980, pp. 165–8; GASPARRI 2012, pp. 101–3.

12. STOFFELLA 2026c. There has been much debate about the truthfulness of a report of Pope Zacharias' support for Pippin, handed down by Frankish sources: MCKITTERICK 2004, pp. 121–2, 146–8; GASPARRI 2012, pp. 104–6. King Aistulf's fear of the exchange of men and information between France and Rome in 750 signals the emergence at this juncture of a very strong mutual political interest between Pope Zacharias and the future new king Pippin.

13. Cf. Aistulf 5, quoted n. 39.

14. CORTESE 2001; TOUBERT & DALARUN 2008; MCKITTERICK & ESPELO 2021, pp. 24–5.

intended to contrast the prologue to the laws of Aistulf of 750; while his predecessor Ratchis had previously assumed the Roman imperial title of *princeps* and married Tassia who probably belonged to the Roman nobility, Aistulf defined himself as *rex gentis langobardorum* to whom it had been *traditum nobis a domino populum romanorum*.¹⁵

After the sudden and violent disappearance of King Aistulf during a hunt, possibly as an indirect consequence of Pippin's second successful military expedition to Italy in 756, the king of the Franks was challenged by Ratchis who, upon his younger brother's sudden death, left his monastery and attempted to regain control of Pavia and of the northern part of the kingdom, opposing Desiderius' rise to power (DELOGU 1991; GASPARRI 2019, pp. 38–43). The latter was backed by pope Stephen II and by very influential Frankish aristocrats such as Fulrad, abbot of St Denis and a figure very close to the Frankish court, who in those years was actively involved in the strengthening of the alliance between the *maior domus* and king of the Franks Pippin and the popes.¹⁶ In contrast with previous scholarship, I consider that it was on this occasion, and not before, that Ratchis reinforced the provisions already enacted by Aistulf in 750, when the latter planned to conquer Ravenna. Ratchis' attempts aimed to control more effectively the Alps, their passes and those Frankish delegations, and their armed escort, who strove to strengthen the position of Desiderius and to coordinate policy for the coming months with the pope, preventing them from reaching Rome. Given the complex political situation, Ratchis was also interested in controlling movements not only on the Alpine front, but also between southern *Tuscia*, where Desiderius was based, and the *Ducatus romanus*.¹⁷

Within this political framework, in the following pages I will first offer some preliminary reflections on mobility in the Lombard Kingdom and at its borders. I will then focus on the mid-8th century legislative framework providing a redefinition of Ratchis and Aistulf's clauses and their chronological order. Attention will be given to institutions that were supposed to govern mobility, allowing or preventing exchanges over border zones. At the same time emphasis will be put on the international political situation during the crucial years between 750 and 757. The new chronological order stemming from Aistulf and Ratchis' rules, and consequently the importance given to some international political decisions taken between 750 and the summer of 751, render the fall of Byzantine Ravenna and the disappearance of the exarchate an even more significant turning point for the history of the Italian Peninsula in the 8th century.

15. Aistulf Incipit: *Incipit leges quas Aistulf rex adiuncxit. [de anno primo] ... in generatione et tempora antiquorum langobardorum promiserunt, et antiquorum dispositiones usque nunc servaverunt. Sed modo auxiliante domino nostro iesu christo aistolfus, in ipsius nomine rex gentis langobardorum, traditum nobis a domino populum romanorum, anno regiminis primo, indictione tertia, residente intra ticinum in palatio nostro una cum cunctis iudicibus et langobardis universarum provinciarum nostrarum [...].* For the policy of extending the laws of Ratchis and Aistulf to the subjugated Byzantine territories, cf. DELOGU 1980, pp. 166–9; JARNUT 2002, p. 109.

16. FLECKENSTEIN 1957; 1989; STOCLET 1993; SEMMLER 2004.

17. Ratchis 13: [...] *Et dum ad ingrediendum venerint peregrini ad clusas nostras, qui ad Romam ambulare disponunt, diligenter debeat eos interrogare unde sint: et si cognoscat quod simpliciter veniant, faciat index aut clusarius syngraphus et mittat in cera et ponat sibi sigillum suum, ut ipsi postea ostendant ipsum signum missis nostris, quos nos ordaenaverimus [...].*

3. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON MOBILITY IN THE LOMBARD KINGDOM

Research about borders in early medieval Europe is thriving; important results have been published in the last decades, and even in very recent years conferences and publications have dealt with this topic.¹⁸ Therefore, it could seem superfluous to return to this argument, beyond offering a brief overview summarizing important studies on the Lombard border areas.¹⁹ However, recent investigations have shed new light on this topic, leading to a reassessment of some significant features that needs to be highlighted and discussed briefly (STOFFELLA 2026a).

Information about the functioning of the northern border area during the Lombard period is sporadic and scarce. Nevertheless, starting from the last decades of the Lombard independent rule we can outline some salient features. For the previous period we must rely mainly on the political situation as a whole and therefore evaluate the strategies implemented by the Lombards to keep the northern border stable in the medium term. From this point of view, it is particularly useful to clarify certain aspects of the marriage policies pursued by the Lombard kings that have received too little attention until now. From the end of the 6th century to the central decades of the 8th century, they repeatedly formed alliances with the Frankish aristocracy, and more specifically with the members of the Agilolfing aristocratic/royal family.²⁰ Well attested in the Frankish Kingdoms, members of the influential Agilolfings monopolised control over the southernmost areas such as Alemannia and Bavaria, once organised by and subjected to the Merovingians.²¹ This long-lasting control led to the creation of two autonomous duchies, which pursued a policy of independence.²² Through these alliances, their leading figures implemented, over a long period, a strategy of stabilising the Alpine area through recurring alliances with the Lombard aristocracies and, above all, with those candidates who were to assume the royal office, whose seat was the capital city of Pavia in the Po Valley (STOFFELLA 2025).

This system of checks and balances in the Merovingian Kingdoms and in the peripheral duchies gradually fell into crisis during the 7th and the first half of the 8th century with the rise of the Pippinids-Arnulfings and their systematic control of the mayoral office. In the deadly struggle for power, they also faced the ramified Agilolfing dynasty, which controlled not only the southern areas of Francia closest to the Alps but also large areas within the Frankish Kingdom, being politically close to some Merovingian kings (DEUTINGER 2014). This situation, which from a more strictly Lombard and Italian perspective recalls the strategy adopted by King Theodoric, who directly controlled the areas north and east of the Alps for security reasons, aimed at ensuring the stability of the northern border through shrewd marriage policies, entered a definitive crisis with the military successes of

18. *Città, castelli, campagne nei territori di frontiera; Migration, integration and connectivity on the southeastern frontier; Carolingian frontiers; Nodes and networks of power at the frontiers.*

19. DUPARC 1951; TANGI 1958; MOLLO 1996; SETTIA 1989 = 2011b; 1993; GASPARRI 1995; POHL 2001; 2004; MOLLO 2005; DE ANGELIS 2020; BORRI 2023.

20. JARNUT 1986, p. 38; HAMMER 2007, pp. 25–51; HEITMEIER 2023. New results are in STOFFELLA 2025.

21. ZÖLLNER 1951, pp. 257–263; WOLFRAM 1995, pp. 76–85; DEUTINGER 2014.

22. WOOD 1994, pp. 115–19; BORGOLTE 1984, pp. 20–2; GEUENICH & ZOTZ 2014; ESDERS 2014; *Die Dukate des Merowingerreiches*; HEITMEIER 2023.

Charles Martel.²³ The latter brought about a new phase of expansion of the Frankish world towards the Mediterranean, clashing with the Agilolfings and ultimately undermining the previous order. Above all, he laid the foundations for the subsequent development entrusted to his two sons, Carloman I and Pippin III, the outcomes of which are well known (JARNUT 1990, pp. 60–6).

The aggressive policy of Carloman and of his younger brother Pippin towards Alemannia first, and immediately after towards Bavaria, brought about a decisive change in the strategies of the Lombard kings for managing the northern border area, forcing them to reassess the traditional policy pursued until the end of Liutprand's long-lasting reign.²⁴ Not only had Liutprand, in the first part of his career, found refuge in Bavaria and lived there in exile, marrying a member of the Agilolfing dynasty, but he had also gained control of the Lombard Kingdom thanks to the support of the Bavarians (JARNUT 2002a, pp. 140–5; 2002b, p. 38). The situation was quite different in the 740s, when the mayors of the palace Carloman and Pippin repeatedly clashed first with the Alemannic aristocracy, ultimately annihilating it, and then with its Bavarian counterpart on several occasions (JARNUT 1990, pp. 60–6).

With the emergence of the aggressive policy of the two brothers and the almost simultaneous disappearance of King Liutprand, a significant change in political orientation took place in Lombard Italy, which materialised with the accession to the throne and the takeover of the palace in Pavia by the two Friulian dukes: Ratchis first, immediately followed by his younger brother Aistulf, who pursued a different and more aggressive policy towards Byzantine Italy.²⁵ Given the growing influence of the *maior domus* Pippin in Alemannia and Bavaria, Ratchis, and, in quick succession, his brother Aistulf even more decisively, changed their political orientation. Since their power was no longer buttressed by the strong Alemannic-Bavarian-Lombard alliance, Ratchis and Aistulf were forced to establish control over the Alps and their passes in a different way. On the other hand, they sought more decisively to establish a more compact internal territorial unity encroaching upon the areas administered by the Byzantines until the conquest of Ravenna and the Pentapolis, nominally still under the exarch's control, could be achieved and aiming at the annexation of Rome which was increasingly controlled by its bishop and its local aristocracy.²⁶ This policy change, necessitated by the new international situation, had a direct impact on their strategies for controlling the movement of individuals across the northern and internal borders of their kingdom. While Ratchis adopted a more gradual policy and sought greater integration and compromise, even marrying a Roman noblewoman, his brother Aistulf adopted a harsher and more uncompromising political line; his expansionist policy against the northern Byzantine territories and Rome ultimately provoked the Pippinids' intervention.

23. CRISTINI 2022, pp. 18–19; WOOD 1994, pp. 42 ff.; JARNUT 1990, pp. 57–60.

24. GEARY 2007; HARTMANN 2020, pp. 97–101; *Liutprando re dei Longobardi*.

25. DELOGU 1980, pp. 166–70; STOFFELLA 2016, pp. 549–50; GASPARRI 2019, pp. 55–7.

26. The exarch had lost real control of the exarchate early on and was residing in Sicily. BORRI 2010, pp. 7–10, even suggested that the weakness and contestation of imperial authority within the exarchate may have led the Ravennates to acknowledge King Aistulf's sovereignty, without an actual military occupation.

What solution did the Lombard monarchy adopt to manage the Alpine area in the central decades of the 8th century? The answer can be found by drawing on elements already known in the scholarly literature which date back to the Roman period and to Gothic rule. A system of *claustra* and *clusurae* existed, controlling movement around the Alpine valleys with garrisons stationed in the towns located in the neighbouring plains. Travellers had to carry a written permit to pass through the mandatory checkpoints manned by garrisons along the main mountain passes (ZEISS 1928; SETTIA 1993). We should not imagine, however, large contingents of troops capable of stopping armies marching across the Alps. Political stability was ensured primarily by a system of alliances that guaranteed control, within a world that tended to impose stable residence as a basic rule and that allowed mobility only to specific categories of people, whose right to move was checked at specific crossing points (MOATTI 2007).

Contrary to the conception of mobility in early medieval Lombard Italy that was still prevalent until recently, even in the Lombard Kingdom control over movement was strict. Entrusted to *iudices*, it was organised within districts described with the polysemic term of *provincia/provinciae*, a concept repeatedly used in Rothari's legislation, first in its *Prologus*, and then in many clauses of the *Edictum* (STOFFELLA 2026a; 2026c). Although some

clear definition of *provincia* emerges only in Aistulf clauses by the mid-8th century, recent analysis has suggested that the polysemic word *provincia* recurrently used in Rothari's Edict should not be rendered by "kingdom," as proposed by Katherine Fischer Drew in

her English translation of the Lombard laws (pp. 39, 53, 89, 95, 103, 105, 107), a choice followed in many studies on mobility in the Lombard period thereafter.²⁷ Unlike Rothari's *Prologus*—where *provincia Italiae langobardorum* refers to Byzantine *Italia* of 568 or 569

according to the date of settlement of King Alboin in Italy (BERTOLINI 1920), as used in § 27 of Emperor Justinian's *Pragmatica sanctio* where *Italiae provinciam* is mentioned²⁸—, the polysemic meaning of the word *provincia* was used in the clauses of his Edict to refer to a part of a whole.²⁹

As a matter of fact, internal areas of indeterminate size within the Lombard Kingdom were defined as *provinciae* in the Edict: the royal notary Ansoald and other legal experts working for King Rothari referred to Justinian's legislation, citing it, and perhaps drew

27. POHL 2004, pp. 229–30; GASPARRI 2004, p. 48: "La definizione di *provincia* usata nell'editto indica probabilmente l'intero regno: e lo *iudex* che controlla i *finis provinciae*, incassando una cifra per ogni fuggitivo (libero o schiavo), è una sorta di comandante di un presidio di confine più che un vero funzionario provinciale"; DELOGU 2015, pp. 26–7: "Nella terminologia ufficiale il regno veniva definito *provincia*, indicando con questo termine un territorio delimitato da confini, entro i quali vivevano i rapporti di diritto, ma privo di una qualsiasi identità. Altrimenti i testi regi, legislativi e altri, impiegavano il riferimento, anch'esso territoriale, alle tre grandi *partes* di Austria, Neustria e Tuscia."

28. *Pragmatica sanctio* § 27, p. 802: *Ut qui voluerint ad praesentiam imperatoris navigare, non impediuntur. Viros etiam gloriosissimos ac magnificos senatores ad nostrum accedere comitatum volentes sine quocumque impedimento venire concedimus, nemine prohibendi eos habituro licentiam, ne senatoribus nostris vel collatoribus debitus introitus quodammodo videatur excludi. Sed etiam ad Italiae provinciam eundi eis et ibi quantum voluerint tempus commorandi pro reparandis possessionibus aperimus licentiam, cum dominis absentibus recreari possessiones aut competentem mereri cultura difficile sit. [...]*. On the *Pragmatica* cf. ARCHI 1981; CRACCO RUGGINI 1985; BROWN 1984, pp. 8–14; BONINI 1988; ROGNONI 2021, pp. 770–2; COSENTINO 2021, pp. 30–3.

29. In this respect, BENSON 1983 is misleading. Cf. STOFFELLA 2026b.

on the *Pragmatica sanctio* of 554 where the term *provincia* is mainly used in the singular form and with the same polysemic value found repeatedly in the *Edictum*.³⁰ However, when the legislator had to describe the entire kingdom, he used in the Edict the expression of *dominium regni nostri* with a territorial meaning.³¹

Therefore, lexical analyses and new findings have changed the previous framework which, due to the inaccurate interpretation of the term *provincia* in Fisher Drew's translation, had come to assert that in the Lombard Kingdom there was a weak system of control over internal mobility and that attention was instead focused on border areas. On the contrary, control of people's movement was practised at the local level between one district and another by a plethora of minor officials entrusted with specific tasks who checked written permits, while at the same time an organised and structured system ensured relatively easy travel (STOFFELLA 2026a). Moreover, considering the high degree of control over mobility practised in the Lombard Kingdom, the system of *clusae* and border controls needed to be bolstered only at certain specific times and with very specific purposes.

4. *CLUSAE* AND THE RENEWED CONTROL OF FRONTIERS IN THE CENTRAL DECADES OF THE 8TH CENTURY

Given the importance of permits entrusted to *iudices* responsible for the administration of major and minor districts revealed by the analysis of King Rothari's Edict, an importance even clearer in Liutprand's legislation and in contemporary evidence of legal practices (STOFFELLA 2026c), it is not surprising that both restrictions concerning mobility and the use of documents increased in the central decades of the 8th century under the two brothers Ratchis and Aistulf (POHL 2001, pp. 117–20, 125). As already stated, this happened when international politics became more problematic given the conflicts with Byzantine Ravenna, Rome and the popes, who involved the Franks as an alternative resource to the declining Byzantine power after the defeat of the exarch in the summer of 751. At the same time, prescriptions of written permits and their necessity to cross borders demonstrate continuity with the previous decades as a means of movement control, and were not a complete novelty.³²

King Ratchis was responsible for issuing provisions which reveal the political tensions with his neighbours because he condemned *iudices* who, without a royal permission, sent their *missi* beyond the borders. Rome and Ravenna are listed first, while the regions north of the Alps are detailed:

Ratchis 9: If a judge or any other man, without the king's permission, presumes to send his representative to Rome, Ravenna, Spoleto, Benevento, Francia, Bavaria, Alamannia,

30. DEL GIUDICE 1889; GIARDINA 1963; TAMASSIA 1967, p. 150; LOSCHIAVO 2024, pp. 233–5.

31. Rothari 177: *De homine libero, ut liceat eum migrare. Si quis liber homo, potestatem habeat intra dominium regni nostri cum fara sua megrare ubi voluerit [...]; Rothari 367: Omnes waregang, qui de exteris fines in regni nostri finibus advenerint, seque sub scuto potestatis nostrae subdederint, legibus nostris langobardorum vivere debeat, nisi si aliam legem ad pietatem nostrum meruerint [...].* Further examples are Rothari 204, 279, 364. A discussion is in STOFFELLA 2026b.

32. DUPARC 1951, pp. 24–9; TANGI 1958, pp. 5–15; MOLLO 1995, pp. 46–51; SETTIA 2011b, pp. 35–40; POHL 2004, pp. 225–9; GASPARRI 1995; 2019, pp. 144–7.

*Raetia, or to the land of the Avars, he shall lose his life, and his property shall be confiscated.*³³
transl. Drew p. 221

Once again, we are dealing with authorized and unauthorized mobility which in this specific case had to be approved by the king and his counsellors. This order was made in 746, the same year in which at Canstatt—now part of the city of Stuttgart in Baden Württemberg, but in the 8th century a very central place in Alemannia—, all the higher Alemannian aristocracy was eliminated as a result of the slaughter ordered by the *maior domus* Carloman I, the older brother of Pippin, possibly with the complicity of the latter, who may even have orchestrated some provocation (JARNUT 1990, p. 63). However, military interventions by both Carloman and his brother had already begun some years before, first in Alamannia and then immediately after in Bavaria, while no actions against the Lombard Kingdom are recorded in this early phase (JARNUT 1990).

From a Lombard perspective, the political situation during the last years of King Liutprand and immediately after his death had dramatically changed. The long-lasting alliance involving Agilulfing Bavaria, Alamannia, Francia, and the Lombard Kingdom progressively moved in favour of the rising and expanding influence of the Pippinid-Arnulfing family even in those peripheries of the Merovingian Kingdom that had been traditionally allied with the Lombards, and which had long protected their northern borders (WOOD 1994, pp. 164–9; ALBERTONI 2007, pp. 50–9). In this unstable political situation, King Ratchis lamented, legislating in clause number 12 against *pravi homines*, that they were invading his palace to get information to be sent to an *extranea provincia*. In this case too, the reasons for disorder are to be understood as internal to the kingdom, and the term *provincia* should be understood as a different part of the Lombard Kingdom from the one where the royal palace was located, namely Neustria. At this stage the word *provincia* has to be probably referred to *Neustria*, *Austria* and *Tuscia*, according to King Ratchis' Prologue of 746, but a more precise definition is difficult:

*Ratchis 12: It has been made known to us that there are some evil men who have penetrated our court to learn our secrets, seeking either through the celler or the chancellor or some other deceitful hidden mail to find out something about what we are doing. What they have learned by questioning such men they release or announce as our secrets and thus they make known our orders even outside the country. It seems to us that he who presumes to do such a thing is not rightly in our faith, but should be held under suspicion of having done evil. Wherefore we decree that he who in the future is tempted in such a cause, both the man who subverts as well as the man who has been subverted, shall suffer the loss of his life and his property shall be confiscated. Because thus the scriptures say: although it is honorable to reveal the works of God, it is good to conceal the secrets of the king.*³⁴

transl. Drew p. 223

33. *Ratchis 9: Si quis iudex aut quicumque homo missum suum dirigere presumpserit roma, ravenna, spoleti, benevento, francia, baioaria, alamannia, ritias aut in avaria sine iussione regis, animae suae incurrat periculum, et res eius infiscentur.*

34. *Ratchis 12: Relatum est nobis, quod sint aliqui pravi hominis, qui submittant in palatio nostro secretum nostrum discendum, ut aut per delicioso aut per hostiario, aut per alios hominis captiosae aut absconsa aliquid investigare possint, quidquid nos agamus; et ipsi, qui rogantur, quidquid cognoscere possunt eorum, mandant aut annuntiant nostra secreta et adhuc in extranea provincia mandatum faciunt.*

Given the unstable situation, scholarly tradition has therefore affirmed that in the same year 746 Ratchis also issued the famous and detailed order in which the border areas north of the kingdom, ruled by *iudices*, were for the first time designated *marcas*:

*Ratchis 13: It is our command that, with the help of Christ, our boundaries will be maintained and guarded in order that neither our enemies nor our people can send spies through them or allow fugitives to go out and in order that no man can enter them without a letter sealed by the king.*³⁵

transl. Drew pp. 223–4

In the same decree he also described how a complex system controlling mobility should work through the regular use of sealed written permits, or possibly wax tablets, and *litterae regis* which had to be checked at *clusae* by minor officers called *locopositi* and *clusarii* responsible for those gateways:

*Ratchis 13: Every judge should use such care and vigilance with regard to the frontier committed to him both in his own actions as well as in those of his local officials and gate wardens that no men can go out without a letter sealed by the king. When strangers who plan to go to Rome come to our borders, the judge shall inquire diligently whence they come. If he recognizes that they come without evil intent, the judge or the gate warden shall issue a passport placing it on a wax tablet and setting his seal to it in order that afterward the travelers may show this notice to our appointed agents. After this notice has been sent to us, our agents shall give the travelers a letter to enable them to go to Rome; and when they return from Rome, the judges shall collect these letters that bear the seal of the king's ring. But if the judges recognize that the travelers have come fraudulently, they shall send them to us and make this cause known to us through our agents. The judge who delays to do this and, though God forbid, allows someone to go out without his notice shall suffer the loss of his life and his property shall be confiscated. If he dares swear that it was done without his permission, he shall be absolved from blame: he may clear himself of guilt, but nevertheless he shall pay his wergild as composition to the palace for his neglect.*³⁶

transl. Drew p. 224

Sed adparit nobis, ut, qui tale causa penetrare presumit, non est in fide sua rectus, sed in mali suspectione manere videtur. Unde decrevimus, ut, qui in tale causa amodo temtus fuerit, tam qui submittit quamque qui submittitur, animae suae incurrat periculum, et res eius infescentur; quia sicut dicit scripturae: secretum regis abscondere bonum est, opera autem dei revelare honorificum est.

35. Ratchis 13: Hoc autem statuere previdimus: ut marcas nostras christo custodiente sic debeat fieri ordinatas et vigilatas, ut inimici nostri et gentes nostre non possint per eas sculcas mittere aut fugacis exientes suscipere, sed nullus homo per eas introire possit sine signo aut epistola regis. See comments in STOFFELLA 2026c.

36. Ratchis 13: Propterea unusquisque iudex per marcas sibi commissas tale studium et vigilantiam ponere debeat et per se et per locopositos et clusarios suos, ut nullus homo sine signo aut epistola regis exire possit. Et dum ad ingrediendum venerint peregrini ad clusas nostras, qui ad romam ambulare disponunt, diligenter debeat eos interrogare unde sint: et si cognoscat quod simpliciter veniant, faciat iudex aut clusarius syngraphus et mittat in cera et ponat sibi sigillum suum, ut ipsi postea ostendant ipsum signum missis nostris, quos nos ordaenaverimus. Signum post hoc missus nostri faciant eis epistola ad romam ambulandi; et con venerent da romo, accipiant signo de anolo regis. Si vero cognoverent, qui fraudelenter veniant, per suos missos eos ad nos dirigant, et innotescat nobis causa ipsa. Nam qui ille iudex hoc facere distullerit et, quod absit, forte per ipsius noticia aliquis exierit, sanguinis suo incurrat periculum, et res eius infescentur. Et si presumpserit iurare, quod sine eius premisso factum fuisset, sit solutus a culpa: pro nilectum tamen, si se iduniaverit, componat in palacio widricild suum.

Moreover, explicit rules to directly control mobility in each *iudiciaria* in Tuscany—in *partibus Tusciae*—from the palace were added; in fact, mobility control in the southern part of the kingdom was directly subjected to the king's written will and to the use of his seal, no longer delegated to *iudices*:

*Ratchis 13: Each judge (iudex) in the bounds of Tuscany (partibus Tusciae) shall take such care throughout his judicial district (iudiciaria) that no man may go out without the king's consent or without his seal. If it is found that anyone has gone out without an order, or without the seal, and if he cannot clear himself, the judge (iudex) shall pay his wergild as composition.*³⁷ transl. Drew p. 224³⁸

It was therefore in the interest of King Ratchis to extend a capillary control of mobility at both northern and southern frontiers through the regular use of a highly sophisticated system of *epistulae* to be checked by dedicated minor and major officials and *missi*.

This was therefore an effort to introduce control of mobility through instruments already in use within the Lombard Kingdom (STOFFELLA 2026b). Possibly for the first time mobility control was explicitly expanded to politically unstable borders to keep a record of who precisely was travelling both southward and northward, especially to Rome and to the pope, or to the Frankish court. However, the precise dating of this important clause by King Ratchis must be reconsidered, since King Aistulf in 750 issued a law in which for the very first time it was prescribed to restore the broken *clusae*, and then provided for more specific control of them:

*Aistulf 5: Let broken boundaries be restored and a guard placed there so that our men will not be able to cross without the king's consent, nor will strangers be able to enter our country without the king's wish or command. If anyone is found within the walls, the gate warden who neglected to guard them shall be subjected to such a punishment by his judge as his judge has been notified of earlier by the king, unless the judge has sent away his man to serve the king or had received a stranger on the king's business.*³⁹ transl. Drew p. 229

Given the traditional chronology that places *Ratchis* clause number 13 in the year 746, and *Aistulf* 5 in 750, it is initially hard to explain how and when *clusae* would be broken between 746 and 750, since no military activity is recorded at the borders and there are no known conflicts between the Franks and the Lombards during this limited span of time. On the contrary, it seems that during Ratchis' regency, relations were, if not cordial, at least partly cooperative. This last element is confirmed by the presence in Lombard Italy of Carloman himself, who after 747 was hosted in Montecassino until his son was excluded from his succession due to Pippin's decisions, causing Carloman to leave the monastery and return to Francia. It was therefore the policy pursued by Pippin in Francia on the one

37. *Ratchis 13: Et hoc addimus, ut unusquisque iudex ponat sollicitudinem per iudiciaria sua in partibus tusscie, ut nullus homo possit sine voluntate regis vel sigillum aliquid transire; et si inventum fuerit, quod sine iussione transisset, vel sigillum, nec edoniaverit, componat widricild suum.*

38. The Latin words in brackets are not in Drew's translation.

39. *Aistulf 5: De clusas quae disruptae sunt: restaurentur et ponant ibi custodiam, ut nec nostri homines possint transire sine voluntate regis nec extranei possint introire in provincia nostra similiter sine voluntate regis vel iussione. Et in quale clusa inventus fuerit, tali pena subiaceat clusarius, qui custodire neglexit, a iudice suo, qualis ipse iudex a rege anteposito. Nisi iudex pro utilitate regis miserit missum suum, aut recipit tantummodo pro causa regis.*

hand, and that enacted by Aistulf in the Lombard Kingdom on the other—with attacks on Byzantine territories in northern Italy and Rome—that led to a deterioration in relations.

Moreover, these clauses of Ratchis and Aistulf offer the very first mentions of *clusae* in Lombard legislation. There is no trace of them in Rothari's Edict or in laws added to this corpus until the middle of the 8th century. Even Paul the Deacon in his *Historia Langobardorum* never mentions *clusae*, while he revisits the older concept of *claustra Italiae* attested under Theodoric in the Ostrogothic period.⁴⁰ A mention of *clusae* contemporary to Aistulf's clause number 5, however, can be traced in the narrative of Stephen II's journey to Francia and the first campaign of Pippin in Italy in 753–4. The *Liber pontificalis* clearly mentions similar structures named *clusae* at the Frankish border, showing that this was a bilateral system that managed mobility at both boundaries.⁴¹ Secondly, comparing the two clauses, the more detailed order released by King Ratchis seems to be an expansion and a more articulate definition of what was already established before. Third, the mentioning of *Tuscia* and the precise provisions about this region and its southern border occur only in Ratchis's clause; therefore, they must fit to a specific political situation.

The chronology and succession between the two regulations must be taken into consideration here, since a more detailed clause—the one made by Ratchis—, followed shortly afterwards by a more general one on the same subject—that of Aistulf—creates interpretations that are not always straightforward. While Aistulf's provisions are understandable in terms of reactivating a system that had fallen into disuse for a long time and therefore needed maintenance work, Ratchis' provisions are more precise in defining how a controlling system that already existed should work, and therefore are more suited to a time of deep crisis and conflict, when even transit control had to be carefully monitored. Finally, information about the transmission of the Ratchis' clause about *clusae* suggests that these should not be included among his normative activity referring to 746.

5. PUTTING CLAUSES ON *CLUSAE* IN THE RIGHT CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

As Walter Pohl pointed out, Ratchis' clause number 13, usually included in modern editions of the Lombard laws together with number 14, should probably not be counted among laws to be formally included within the *Leges* of the kingdom. The manuscript transmission of these two decrees is particularly weak, since it occurs only very rarely in manuscripts of Lombard law; as a matter of fact, its full text is preserved in only one of about

40. Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* V 33, ed. Bethmann & Waitz p. 155, r. 22: *Exinde ad patriam tendens, cum ad claustra Italiae venisset, iam ibi omnia obsequia palatina omnemque regiam dignitatem cum magna Langobardorum multitudine praeparatam, se repperit expectari*. This passage, written shortly before 799, is referred to King Pertarit and to his return from his exile in northern Europe after the death of King Grimoald in 671.

41. *Life of Stephen II*, c. 24, p. 447: *Et post eius absolutionem adhuc nitebatur supracriptus malignus Langobardorum rex a praedicto itinere eum deviare; quod minime ipsum sanctissimum virum latuit. Unde et cum nimia celeritate, Deo praevio, ad Francorum coniunxit clusas*; c. 34, p. 450: *Tunc fisus in omnipotentis Dei misericordia antefatus Pippinus Francorum rex iter suum profectus est, praemittens ante suum occursum aliquos ex suis proceribus et cum eis exercitales viros ad custodiendum proprias Francorum clusas; ibique coniungentes remoti residebant, proprii regis praestolantes adventum. Audiens itaque protervus ille Aistulfus parvos fuisse Francos illos qui ad custodiam propiarum advenerant clausarum, fidens sua ferocitate, subito aperiens clusas, super eos diliculo cum plurimus irruit exercitibus*.

a dozen of manuscripts (POHL 2001, p. 120). Moreover, the copyist who transcribed the Lombard laws in *Vat. Lat.* 5359, f. 137^r did not understand that those provisions were not meant to be added to the corpus of the Edict, but only had a temporary validity since they were transmitted under the form *in breve*.⁴² This expression is a technical term, as attested elsewhere in the law code and in other Lombard documents (cf. POHL 2001, p. 120):

Ista quae superius scriptum tenetur, in edictum scribantur [i.e. Ratchis 1–12], et ista capitula dua [i.e. Ratchis 13 and 14] de subus in breve previdimus statuere.

ed. Azzara & Gasparri p. 270

Therefore, given that Ratchis' clauses from number 1 to 12 had to be included in the Edict, while clauses numbers 13 and 14 had to be transmitted only *in breve* form, and not to be added to the Edict, the full validity of the *clusae* provision and its dating of 746 as it has been until now accepted by scholars, will be reconsidered and partially rejected here.

Transmission evidence clearly shows that both *Ratchis* 13 and 14 were not supposed to be added to the Edict, since they are not transmitted in other manuscripts; as a matter of fact, they had a temporary validity which is expressed by the technical term *in breve*. According to Attilio Bartoli Langeli, a *breve*, especially in the Lombard period, was primarily a list, a summary, an index that had its roots in lists written by the public administration for internal use. *Brevia* were also documents that attested some juridical actions taken in a certain day; in several cases, *notitia* was used as a synonym for *breve* (BARTOLI LANGELI 2003, pp. 2–4). Therefore, as scholars have recently stressed, they should not be counted among the official provisions that King Ratchis made in 746 (POHL 2001, pp. 120–1, 126–7; DE ANGELIS 2020, pp. 302–4). It therefore follows that they could be dated differently from his first clauses that, instead, were issued at the beginning of his reign.

When should both *Ratchis* 13 and 14 clauses, or rather orders to be transmitted *in breve*, be dated? The answer in my opinion is to be found in King Ratchis' biography, in the contents of *Ratchis* 13 and in the political situation of late 756 and early 757 that has been outlined in broad terms above, and that needs to be described here in more detail. The reasons for a later dating of *Ratchis* 13 and 14 to the beginning of 757, after Aistulf provision of 750, will be clear.

King Ratchis' policy had been disputed; he had been in conflict with his younger brother and was forced to leave and to give room to Aistulf. Ratchis withdrew in 749 when he retired with his wife Tassia and his daughter Rottruda from the political scene, becoming a cleric in Rome first, and entering in Montecassino as monk just as Carloman I had done a couple of years before, possibly after coming into conflict with his brother Pippin.⁴³ When Ratchis' brother and successor Aistulf suddenly died at the end of 756

42. https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.5359. This palimpsest manuscript, that once belonged to the monastery of St Zeno in Verona, is dated to the second half of the 9th century. Cf. LOWE 1934, no. 23 for the palimpsest; for the rewritten texts, cf. MOSCHETTI 1954; MORDEK 1995, pp. 881–3. On the book production in early medieval Verona see now *Città, cattedrali, biblioteche*.

43. *Life of Zachary*, c. 23, p. 434: *Et post aliquantos dies isdem Ratchis rex, relinquens regalem dignitatem, devote cum uxore et filiis ad beati Petri principis apostolorum coniunxit limina, acceptaque a prealto sanctissimo papa oratione clericusque effectus, monachico indutus est habitu cum uxore et filiis*. Cf. STOFFELLA 2016. On Carloman in Rome first, and in Montecassino then, see *Life of Zachary*, c. 21, p. 433: *Huius temporibus Carlomannus, filius Caroli Francorum regis, presentis vite relinquens gloriam*

after two military defeats against king Pippin in 755 and 756, Ratchis left Montecassino for Pavia where he regained control of the Lombard Kingdom against the Frankish and papal candidate Desiderius, who in late 756 was still based in Tuscany where he had been previously appointed *comes stabuli* by Aistulf.⁴⁴ At the beginning of 757 Desiderius was still planning to get control of Austria and Neustria, the northern macro-regions of the Lombard Kingdom, with the help of a band of Franks commanded by Fulrad and supported by Roman aristocracy, which had to reach him in Tuscia and move north.⁴⁵ The effort of Ratchis in Pavia to gain control of the Lombard Kingdom must have initially been successful, as it stated in an original document issued by Bishop Andrea in Pisa, in western Tuscany, in February 757 and dated by the first regnal year of Ratchis. Here, Ratchis was designated as a Roman *princeps*, not as a Lombard king: *gubernante domno nostro Ratchis famulu Christi Iesu principem gentis Languvardorum anno primo, mense februario, per indictione decima* (*Chartae latinae antiquiores*. 26, no. 806, pp. 41–5, Pisa, February 757). Since King Ratchis was still ruling between January and March 757, given that he was impeding Frankish envoys to reach the pope in Rome, and must have at the same time attempted to restrain papal and Frankish *missi* in Rome to reach Desiderius in Tuscany, the provision 13, which established a special control of that region and of its southern borders, needs in my opinion to be dated to the beginning of 757, when at least in Tuscany, Ratchis was recognized as the ruling *dominus*, a Roman *princeps* and *famulus Christi*, a formula recalling his monastic status and his Roman imperial title at the same time. Stress needs here to be placed not only on his efforts in controlling mobility at the northern *clusae*, but also in keeping direct control of mobility over Tuscia and its southern borders with the *Ducatus romanus*, since he feared a possible intervention of an army from Rome, led by Fulrad.⁴⁶ Ratchis' efforts were directed towards a tightening of mobility at the checkpoints already restored by his brother in 750, not towards building them from scratch in 746. As I mentioned above, there is no record of such a system until the reign of Aistulf and, above all, there is no mention in Ratchis' provisions of

atque potestatem terrenam, ad beatum Petrum apostolorum principem devotus cum aliquantis suis advenit fidelibus, seseque eidem Dei contulit apostolo atque spiritali habitu fore spondens permansurum, clericatus iugum ab eodem anno sanctissimo suscepit pontifice. Et post aliquantum temporis ad beati Benedicti quod Aquinensium finibus situm est profectus est monasterium, in quo et suam finire vitam iure professus est iurando.

44. *Life of Stephen II*, c. 48, pp. 454–5: *Dum ergo haec agerentur, ipse infelix Aistulfus quodam loco in venatione pergens, divino ictu percussus defunctus est. Tunc Desiderius quidam dux Langobardorum, qui ab eodem nequissimo Aistulfo Tusciae in partes erat directus, audiens praefatum obisse Aistulfum, ilico adgregans ipsius Tusciae universum exercitum multitudini, regni Langobardorum arripere nisus est fastigium. Huius personam dispectui habens Ratchisus, dudum rex et postmodum monachus, germanus praefati Aistulfi, sed et alii plures Langobardorum optimates cum eo, eundem Desiderium spernentes, plura Transalpinum vel cetera Langobardorum exercituum multitudinem adgregantes, ad dimicandum contra eum profecti sunt.* DELOGU 1991; GASPARRI 2019, pp. 38–43.

45. *Life of Stephen II*, c. 49, p. 455: *Tunc isdem praecipuus pater et bonus pastor, inito consilio cum sepefato Fulrado venerabile presbitero et abbate atque consiliario christianissimi Pippini Francorum regis, misit suum germanum, Paulum scilicet diaconum, atque Christoforum consiliarium una cum praelato Fulrado in partes Tusciae, ad predictum Desiderium.*

46. *Life of Stephen II*, c. 49, p. 455: *Haec vero peracta statim suum missum, id est Stefanum venerabilem presbiterum, cum apostolicis exortatoriis litteris praefato Ratchiso vel cuncti genti Langobardorum direxit; properans et praefatus Fulradus venerabilis abbas cum aliquantis Francis in auxilium ipsius Desiderii, sed et plures exercitus Romanorum, si necessitas exigerat, in eius disposuit occurri adiutorium.*

any restoration of the old structures for controlling mobility and communication, apart from explicit attention to relations with all neighboring territories, including Ravenna, Spoleto and Benevento.

Now that both Ratchis' clause number 13 on *clusae* and clause 14 as well have been postdated to the first months of 757, there is no need to continue to describe King Aistulf's law of 750 as chronologically the second Lombard provision concerning *clusae*. It is therefore possible to restore the logical order of clauses made on the same subject issued by Aistulf first, and by Ratchis then. Consequently, the chronology of the conflicts between the Franks and the Lombards after 750 until the end of 756 must also be revised. Within this chronology, the fall of Ravenna in 751 and its fate after the Frankish victory in 756 play a significant role, together with the protagonists of this new phase.

6. RAVENNA AND THE FRANKISH *MISSI*

Alpine *clusae* were not an innovation of the mid-8th century since they had already been openly mentioned before the end of the 6th century by George of Cyprus in his *Descriptio orbis Romani* (CONTI 1975; COSENTINO 2023). They recall the concept and the structure of late Roman *clausurae* or *clusurae* and their *portas* mentioned even under Ostrogothic rule. Those *clausurae/clusurae*, of which we do not have evidence in any Lombard law, reappear for the first time in the mid-8th century in King Aistulf's famous clause of 750 when he ordered that ruined *clusae* should be restored and reactivated through the regular use of *epistolae* and dedicated *iudices*, which are explicitly mentioned and described. A few years later they are even mentioned for the first time in the *Liber pontificalis*, when in 753 Stephen II had to reach Francia passing the *clusae Francorum*.⁴⁷ Aistulf's provision of 750 means therefore that an interest in *clusae* maintenance had become lost in the previous decades, if not for an even longer period.

The Frankish political involvement in the Italian Peninsula had been strengthened by the presence of Carloman and his dignitaries on the outskirts of Rome at Monte Soratte in 747 first, and then in Montecassino where the former major of the palace was joined by Ratchis. The new aggressive policy planned by Aistulf who was campaigning against Ravenna and the Pentapolis, makes the renovation of *clusae* a response to the fear of Frankish *missi* and intruders from the north and the effort of managing their presence in the Italian Peninsula. Ravenna was taken by Aistulf together with Ferrara, Comacchio and Istria in Summer 751; the last exarch Eutychios surrendered and was imprisoned, while in November in Francia Pippin was crowned king of the Franks (DELOGU 1980, p. 169). The correct interpretation of the chronology relating to the management of the borders of the Lombard Kingdom therefore not only allows us to better understand the mechanism of managing internal mobility and its borders, but also consents us to better connect events linked by international politics to one another.

47. Transl. Drew p. 209: "Let broken boundaries be restored and a guard placed there so that our men will not be able to cross without the king's consent, nor will strangers be able to enter our country without the king's wish or command. If anyone is found within the walls, the gate warden who neglected to guard them shall be subjected to such a punishment by his judge as his judge has been notified of earlier by the king, unless the judge has sent away his man to serve the king or had received a stranger on the king's business."

Aistulf's decisive political action against Ravenna and the Pentapolis, and the threat against Rome, might have accelerated interactions between the papacy and the Frankish *maior domus* Pippin. Carloman's presence in Italy and his experience alongside Ratchis at Montecassino clearly show a complex interaction with the not uniform political Frankish world that involved also Pavia and Rome, although those collaborations are not mentioned by contemporary sources. The fall of Ravenna, the deposition of Eutychios, the disappearance of the Byzantine *patricius* exarch and the expansion of the Lombard Kingdom eastward, southward and even in Istria, might have contributed to accelerating the need to elevate Pippin to the role of king in order to strengthen his role in Francia and allow him to act more effectively on the international stage.

Although Pope Zacharias' central and successful role in stopping Liutprand's campaign against Ravenna and even Ratchis' military action against Perugia are described in detail in the account of Zacharias's life in the *Liber pontificalis*, in the same life none of Aistulf's significant achievements are revealed nor the relationship between the pope and the Lombard king; moreover, there is no mention of any interaction or role of the Franks in Italy during this period, nor the strengthening of Aistulf's royal power in Spoleto and Benevento after Ratchis stepped down and entered Montecassino, or of Aistulf's capture of Ravenna. As a matter of fact, the threat of Lombard control over the northern Adriatic coast as far as Istria had become a reality and the probable political action of Zacharias against Aistulf must have been ineffective to a certain degree, forcing the pope, once the exarch had definitively left the scene, to seek a new political representative capable of acting in Italy.

The highly suspicious silence of contemporary papal storytelling is reinforced by other important sources of the period, as for instance the correspondences between Rome and the Frankish court in which these issues are not addressed. However, even though none of Charlemagne's selected letters conserved in today's *Codex epistolaris carolinus* date after 747 and before 753–7, contacts between Rome and the Frankish court could have intensified with Aistulf's ascension to the throne of the Lombard Kingdom, as his clause number 5 of 750 and his decisive action against the Byzantine northern territories and Rome, also emphasized by the formula he used, clearly suggests.⁴⁸ Even if it is not explicitly mentioned, the desire of involvement and the importance of control over Ravenna by the Franks is underlined by the actions taken by Fulrad, abbot of St Denis, who was repeatedly entrusted with managing relations with Stephen II from 753 onwards, although his central role in the Frankish Kingdom dates back to at least 751 when he was charged with the task of governing the royal abbey immediately north of Paris, where the pope was hosted. He must have had the opportunity to meet the pope and to establish relations with Rome since the beginning of his brilliant career, given that he was sent in person to welcome Stephen II once he had crossed the Alps on his journey to the Frankish court in Autumn 753, and because of his ongoing assignments in Italy. As a matter of fact, in 756 he was commissioned by King Pippin to oversee, together with the *missi* of King Aistulf, the "restitution" to the holy Roman church of the districts of

48. *Codex epistolaris carolinus*, ed. Gundlach nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; ed. McKitterick & Espelo nos. 5, 10, 11, 7, 9. According to this study, the dating of letters 10 and 11 to 753 is uncertain and varies between 753 and 757.

Ravenna, Pentapolis and Emilia; according to the *Life* of Stephen II, it was always Fulrad who handed over the keys of the former Byzantine cities of Ravenna and of the exarchate at the *confessio* in St Peter. It was again Fulrad who oversaw Desiderius' rise to power in opposition to Ratchis, offering to him the Frankish forces he had at his disposal and the support of the armies of the Romans that he could control.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The restored *clusae* could not prevent, if they ever did, the passage of armies, but at this stage were needed to control mobility and to trace the presence of Frankish *missi*, delegates, pilgrims and spies who, in order to make plans for the next international political developments, had many interests and purposes in traveling down to Rome across the Lombard Kingdom. The transitional rules arranged by Ratchis at the beginning of 757 therefore describe, in a completely unexpected but valuable way, the mechanism for controlling mobility at the borders of the Lombard Kingdom reactivated by Aistulf in 750 through his clause number 5. Since those of Ratchis are practical prescriptions to be delivered to *iudices* and *clusarii* involved, they do in very concrete terms show how mobility control was put into practice. They also define the purposes assigned to the *clusae* at a specific moment in history, when their function was mainly aimed at controlling the numerous Frankish dignitaries who were defining the new international political order in Western Europe, together with the popes and their delegates, following the disappearance of the last exarch, the *patricius* Eutychios.

As a matter of fact, the rephrased and newly invented title of *patricius Romanorum* was possibly assigned at the earliest in 754 by Pope Stephen II to the new king of the Franks, Pippin, combining the title that had belonged to the exarch with the concept expressed in the formula used for Aistulf, the enemy against whom Pope Zacharias first, and Pope Stephen II immediately after, had fought so hard with the help of Fulrad, abbot of St Denis. However, the new dating of the clauses of Aistulf and Ratchis, together with the uncertain dating of the two letters contained in the *Codex epistolaris carolinus* once attributed with certainty to 753 open possible new scenarios, even though these letters do not have the *patricius* title in the protocol, a strong hint that they date from before 754. Considering also the attention paid by both Ratchis and Aistulf to attributing themselves a role of government over the Byzantine territories through the use of meaningful titles, they force us to reconsider the plausibility of the interplay between the papacy and Pippin's entourage between 750 and 751 that is mentioned later in the *Annales regni Francorum*, where the legitimacy of the deposition of the last Merovingian king and the promotion of Pippin to the new Frankish king in November 751 is justified by the consent of Pope Zacharias (McKITTERICK 2004, pp. 121–2, 146–8). While this retrospective claim may sound somewhat out of place, the chronology of the strengthening of relations between the papal curia and Pippin's court between 750 and 751 seems instead highly plausible; moreover, the spiritual intervention of the pope was necessary to legitimize the dissolution of the oath of allegiance sworn by the Frankish aristocracy to the last Merovingian king (SEMMLER 2003, pp. 22–3, 25). On the other hand, given that the information available to us is fragmentary and the chronology of events uncertain, it is improbable that the title of *patricius Romanorum* may have been conferred on Pippin between July 751

(*t.p.q.*) and 754 (*t.a.q.*) as a way of contrasting Aistulf's claim to sovereignty over the Romans, first attested in his clauses of 750 (*rex gentis langobardorum, traditum nobis a domino populum romanorum*). An attempt to link the new emerging dynasty to both the Byzantine exarch and the Ostrogoth king Theodoric, so significant in the last decades of the 8th century under Charlemagne,⁴⁹ would have probably been too premature and could not have justified Pippin's aspiration and need to assume the royal title.

*Università degli Studi di Verona, Dipartimento di Culture e Civiltà
marco.stoffella@univr.it*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources

Aistulf: *Leges Aistulfi regis*, in *Leges Langobardorum*, ed. Bluhme, pp. 194–205; transl. Drew, pp. 227–38.

Chartae latinae antiquiores: *facsimile-edition of the Latin charters prior to the ninth century*, ed. by A. Bruckner & R. Marichal, Dietikon-Zürich 1954–98.

Codex epistolaris carolinus:

- ed. Gundlach: *MGH. Epp.* 3, ed. W. Gundlach, Berolini 1892, pp. 469–653;
- ed. McKitterick *et al.*: *Codex epistolaris carolinus: letters from the popes to the Frankish rulers, 739–791*, transl. with an introd. and notes by R. McKitterick *et al.*, Liverpool 2021.

Leges Langobardorum:

- ed. Bluhme: *MGH. Leges.* 4, ed. F. Bluhme, Hannoverae 1868, pp. 1–206;
- ed. Beyerle: *Leges Langobardorum 643–866*, bearb. von F. Beyerle (Germanenrechte. NF, Westgermanisches Recht 5), Witzzenhausen 1962;
- ed. Azzara & Gasparri: *Le leggi dei Longobardi: storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo germanico*, a cura di C. Azzara & S. Gasparri (Altomedioevo 4), Roma 2005;
- transl. Drew: *The Lombard laws*, transl. with an introd. by K. F. Drew (Sources of medieval history), Philadelphia 1973.

Le Liber pontificalis. 1, [–795], texte, introd. et commentaire par L. Duchesne, Paris 1886.

Life of Stephen II: Life of Stephen II: Liber pontificalis. 1, pp. 440–62.

Life of Zachary: Liber pontificalis. 1, pp. 426–39;

The Lives of the eighth-century popes (Liber pontificalis): the ancient biographies of nine popes from AD 715 to AD 817, transl. with an introd. and comment. by R. Davis (Translated texts for the historians 13), Liverpool, rev. ed. (1st ed. 1997).

Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. L. Bethmann & G. Waitz, in *MGH. SS rerum langobardicarum et italicarum saec. VI–IX*, Hannoverae 1878, pp. 7–242.

Pragmatica sanctio: Novellae, App. VII, pp. 799–802.

Ratchis: *Leges Ratchis regis*, in *Leges Langobardorum*, ed. Bluhme, pp. 183–93; transl. Drew, pp. 215–25.

Rothari: *Edictus Rothari*, in *Leges Langobardorum*, ed. Bluhme, pp. 3–90; transl. Drew, pp. 39–130.

49. CORTESE 2001. On the fortune of Theoderic north of the Alps in the early Carolingian period, and the interest for the Anonymus Valesianus in Verona see TISCHLER 2022, pp. 17–64, at pp. 42–3; *Between Ostrogothic and Carolingian Italy*.

Studies

- ALBERTONI 2007: G. ALBERTONI, La politica alpina dei Carolingi, in *Carlo Magno e le Alpi : atti del XVIII congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Susa, 19–20 ottobre 2006, Novalesa, 21 ottobre 2006*, Spoleto, pp. 49–74.
- ARCHI 1981: G. G. ARCHI, *Pragmatica sanctio pro petitione Virgilii*, in Id., *Scritti di diritto romano. 3, Studi di diritto penale; studi di diritto postclassico e giustiniano*, Milano, pp. 1971–2010.
- AZZARA 2005: C. AZZARA, Introduzione al testo, in *Le leggi dei Longobardi : storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo germanico*, a cura di C. Azzara & S. Gasparri (Altomedioevo 4), Roma, pp. xlii–lxv.
- BARTOLI LANGELI 2003: A. BARTOLI LANGELI, Sui “brevi” italiani altomedievali, *Bollettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo* 105, pp. 1–23.
- BENSON 1983: R. L. BENSON, Provincia = Regnum, in *Prédication et propagande au Moyen Âge : Islam, Byzance, Occident : Penn–Paris–Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia 3. Session des 20–25 octobre 1980*, organisée par G. Makdisi et al., Paris, pp. 41–69.
- BERTOLINI 1920: O. BERTOLINI, La data dell'ingresso dei Longobardi in Italia, *Bollettino della Società Pavese di storia patria* 20, pp. 19–61 (repr. O. BERTOLINI, *Scritti scelti di storia medioevale. 1*, Livorno 1968, pp. 16–62).
- Between Ostrogothic and Carolingian Italy : survivals, revivals, ruptures*, ed. by F. Oppedisano, Firenze 2022.
- BONINI 1988: R. BONINI, Giustiniano e il problema italico, in *Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'alto medioevo : 3–9 aprile 1986. 1* (Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 34), Spoleto, pp. 72–98.
- BORGOLTE 1984: M. BORGOLTE, *Geschichte der Grafschaften Alemanniens in fränkischer Zeit* (Vorträge und Forschungen 31), Sigmaringen.
- BORRI 2010: F. BORRI, L'Adriatico tra Bizantini, Longobardi e Franchi. Dalla conquista di Ravenna alla pace di Aquisgrana (751–812), *Bollettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo* 112, pp. 1–56.
- 2023: La frontiera orientale dell'Italia longobarda (secoli VI–VIII), *Storicamente* 19, pp. 1–26.
- BROWN 1984: T. S. BROWN, *Gentlemen and officers : imperial administration and aristocratic power in Byzantine Italy AD 554–800*, Rome.
- Carolingian frontiers : Italy and beyond*, ed. by S. Gasparri et al., Firenze 2024.
- Città, castelli, campagne nei territori di frontiera (secoli VI–VII)*, a cura di G. P. Brogiolo, Mantova 1995.
- Città, cattedrali, biblioteche al passaggio tra tardo antico e alto medioevo : a partire dal caso di Verona : atti dell'VIII convegno internazionale di studio dell'Associazione italiana dei paleografi e diplomatisti (Verona, 16–18 settembre 2021)*, a cura di M. Bassetti & P. Degni, Spoleto 2025.
- CONTI 1975: P. M. CONTI, *L'Italia bizantina nella Descriptio orbis Romani di Giorgio Ciprio*, La Spezia.
- CORTESE 2001: E. CORTESE, Une carrière byzantine de Charlemagne : échos de droit vulgaire romano-gotique au Moyen Âge, *MEFRM* 113 (2), pp. 857–68.
- COSENTINO 2021: S. COSENTINO, Politics and society, in *A companion to Byzantine Italy*, ed. by S. Cosentino (Brill's companions to the Byzantine world 8), Leiden – Boston, pp. 29–67.
- 2023: La *Descriptio orbis Romani* come fonte per la storia dell'Italia post-giustiniana, in *La difesa militare bizantina in Italia (secoli VI–XI) : atti del convegno internazionale, Squillace*

- (CZ), 15/18 aprile 2021, a cura di F. Marazzi *et al.* (Studi vulturnensi 30), Cerro al Volturno, pp. 15–20.
- CRACCO RUGGINI 1985: L. CRACCO RUGGINI, Giustiniano e la società italica, in *Il mondo del diritto nell'epoca giustiniana: caratteri e problematiche*, a cura di G. G. Archi, Ravenna, pp. 173–207.
- CRISTINI 2022: M. CRISTINI, *Teoderico e i regni romano-germanici (489–526): rapporti politico-diplomatici e conflitti*, Spoleto.
- DE ANGELIS 2020: G. DE ANGELIS, Mobilità e controllo politico nell'Italia longobarda e carolingia: appunti su fonti normative a riflessi documentari, *MEFRM* 132 (2), pp. 299–314.
- DEL GIUDICE 1889: P. DEL GIUDICE, Le tracce del diritto romano nelle leggi longobarde: note, in ID., *Studi di storia e diritto*, Milano, pp. 362–470.
- DELOGU 1980: P. DELOGU, Il regno longobardo, in P. DELOGU, A. GUILLOU & G. ORTALLI, *Longobardi e Bizantini* (Storia d'Italia 1), Torino, pp. 3–216.
- 1991: Desiderio, re dei Longobardi, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*. 39, Roma, pp. 373–81.
- 2001: L'editto di Rotari e la società del VII secolo, in *Visigoti e Longobardi: atti del seminario, Roma, 28–29 aprile 1997*, a cura di J. Arce & P. Delogu, Firenze, pp. 329–55.
- 2015: Ritorno ai Longobardi, in *Desiderio: il progetto politico dell'ultimo re longobardo: atti del primo convegno internazionale di studio (Brescia, 21–24 marzo 2013)*, a cura di G. Archetti (Centro studi longobardi. Convegni 1), Spoleto, pp. 19–50.
- DEUTINGER 2014: R. DEUTINGER, Wer waren die Agilolfinger?, in *Verwandtschaft, Name und soziale Ordnung (300–1000)*, hrsg. von S. Patzold & K. Ubl (Ergänzungsbände zum *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde* 90), Berlin – Boston, pp. 177–94.
- Die Dukate des Merowingerreiches: Archäologie und Geschichte in vergleichender Perspektive*, hrsg. von S. Brather, Berlin 2023.
- DUPARC 1951: P. DUPARC, Les cluses et la frontière des Alpes, *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 109 (1), pp. 5–31.
- ESDERS 2014: S. ESDERS, Spätantike und frühmittelalterliche Dukate: Überlegungen zum Problem historischer Kontinuität und Diskontinuität, in *Die Anfänge Bayerns: von Raetien und Noricum zur frühmittelalterlichen Baiuvaria*, hrsg. von H. Fehr & I. Heitmeier (Bayerische Landesgeschichte und europäische Regionalgeschichte 1), St. Ottilien, pp. 425–62.
- FLECKENSTEIN 1957: J. FLECKENSTEIN, Fulrad von Saint-Denis und die fränkische Ausgriff in den süddeutschen Raum, in *Studien und Vorarbeiten zur Geschichte des großfränkischen und frühdeutschen Adels*, hrsg. von G. Tellenbach (Forschungen zur oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 4), Freiburg in Breisgau, pp. 9–39.
- 1989: Fulrad, Abt von St-Denis († 784), in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. 4, München, cols. 1024–105.
- GAGLIARDI 2006: L. GAGLIARDI, *Mobilità e integrazione delle persone nei centri cittadini romani: aspetti giuridici. 1, La definizione degli incolae* (Pubblicazioni dell'Istituto di diritto romano 40), Milano.
- GASPARRI 1995: S. GASPARRI, La frontiera in Italia (sec. VI–VIII): osservazioni su un tema controverso, in *Città, castelli, campagne*, pp. 9–19.
- 2004: Il regno longobardo in Italia: struttura e funzionamento di uno stato altomedievale, in *Il regno dei Longobardi in Italia: archeologia, società, istituzioni*, a cura di S. Gasparri (Istituzioni e società 4), Spoleto, pp. 1–92 (1st ed. in *Langobardia*, a cura di S. Gasparri & P. Cammarosano, Udine 1990, pp. 237–305).

- 2012: *Italia longobarda : il regno, i Franchi, il papato*, Roma – Bari.
- 2019: *Desiderio* (Profili 84), Roma.
- GEARY 2007: P. J. GEARY, I Franchi sull'arco alpino, in *Carlo Magno e le Alpi : atti del XVIII congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Susa, 19–20 ottobre 2006, Novalesa, 21 ottobre 2006*, Spoleto, pp. 1–16.
- GEUENICH & ZOTZ 2014: D. GEUENICH & T. ZOTZ, Von den merowingischen duces Alamannorum zum ducatus Alamanniae der Karolingerzeit, in *Verwandtschaft, Name und soziale Ordnung (300–1000)*, hrsg. von S. Patzold & K. Ubl (Ergänzungsbände zum *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde* 90), Berlin – Boston, pp. 221–36.
- GIARDINA 1963: C. GIARDINA, L'Editto di Rotari e la codificazione di Giustiniano, in Id., *Storia del diritto*. 1, Palermo, pp. 7–61.
- HAMMER 2007: C. I. HAMMER, *From “Ducatus” to “Regnum” : ruling Bavaria under the Merovingians and early Carolingians* (Haut Moyen Âge 2), Turnhout.
- HARTMANN 2020: F. HARTMANN, Die Adoption von Karl Martells Sohn durch den Langobardenkönig Liutprand im Kontext ihrer Zeit, *Frühmittelalterlichen Studien* 54, pp. 87–103.
- HEITMEIER 2023: I. HEITMEIER, “Dux” und “rex”? Der hybride Charakter des agilolfingischen Herzogtums, in *Die Dukate des Merowingerreiches : Archäologie und Geschichte in vergleichender Perspektive*, hrsg. von S. Brather (Ergänzungsbände zum *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde* 139), Berlin – Boston, pp. 297–360.
- JARNUT 1986: J. JARNUT, *Agilolfingerstudien : Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer adligen Familie im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert* (Monographien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters 22), Stuttgart.
- 1990: Alemannien zur Zeit der Doppelherrschaft des Hausmeier Karlmann und Pippin, in *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Regnum Francorum : Referate beim wissenschaftlichen Colloquium zum 75. Geburtstag von Eugen Ewig am 28. Mai 1988*, hrsg. von R. Schiffer, Sigmaringen, pp. 57–66.
- 2002a: Genealogie und politische Bedeutung der agilolfingischen Herzöge, in Id., *Herrschaft und Ethnogenese im Frühmittelalter : gesammelte Aufsätze von Jörg Jarnut : Festgabe zum 60. Geburtstag*, hrsg. von M. Becher et al., Münster 2002, pp. 139–60 (repr. of *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 99, 1991, pp. 1–22).
- 2002b: *Storia dei Longobardi* (Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi 147), Torino.
- Liutprando re dei Longobardi : in onore di Roberto Greci : atti del terzo convegno internazionale di studio, Pavia, Gazzada Schianno, 3–8 maggio 2018*, a cura di G. Archetti (Centro studi longobardi. Convegni 3), Spoleto 2025.
- LOSCHIAVO 2019: L. LOSCHIAVO, Looking at the Edict of Rothari : between German ancestral customs and Roman legal traditions, in *Roma Tre law review* 2, pp. 65–91.
- 2024: Le leggi di Giustiniano prima e dopo la “guerra gotica”, in *Justinian's legacy : the last war of Roman Italy = L'eredità di Giustiniano : l'ultima guerra dell'Italia romana*, ed. by H. Dey & F. Oppedisano (Saggi di storia antica 45), Roma, pp. 227–57.
- LOWE 1934: E. A. LOWE, *Codices latini antiquiores. 1, The Vatican City*, Oxford.
- McKITTERICK 2004: R. McKITTERICK, *History and memory in the Carolingian world*, Cambridge.
- 2020: *Rome and the invention of the papacy : the Liber pontificalis*, Cambridge.
- McKITTERICK & ESPELO 2021: R. McKITTERICK, D. van ESPELO, Introduction, in *Codex epistolaris carolinus : letters from the popes to the Frankish rulers, 739–791*, transl. with an introd. and notes by R. McKitterick et al., Liverpool, pp. 1–91.

- MEYER 2017: C. H. F. Meyer, König Rothari begründet seine Gesetze : zum Verhältnis von Konsens und Argumentation in den Leges Langobardorum, in *Recht und Konsens im frühen Mittelalter*, hrsg. von V. Epp & C. H. F. Meyer, Ostfildern, 2017 (Vorträge und Forschungen, 92), pp. 151-234.
- Migration, integration and connectivity on the southeastern frontier of the Carolingian Empire, ed. by D. Dzino *et al.* (East central and eastern Europe in the Middle Ages 50), Leiden – Boston 2018.
- MOATTI 2000: C. MOATTI, Le contrôle de la mobilité des personnes dans l'Empire romain, in *MEFRA* 112 (2), pp. 925–58.
- 2007: Reconnaissance et identification des personnes dans la Rome antique, in *L'identification : genèse d'un travail d'État*, sous la dir. de G. Noiriel, Paris, pp. 27–55.
- 2019: Mobility in the Roman world. New concepts, new perspectives, in *Migration and migrant identities in the Near East from antiquity to the Middle Ages*, ed. by J. Yoo *et al.*, London – New York, pp. 17–22.
- MOLLO 1996: E. MOLLO, Le chiuse : realtà e rappresentazioni mentali del confine alpino nel medioevo, in *Luoghi di strada nel Medioevo : fra il Po, il mare e le Alpi Occidentali*, a cura di G. Sergi, Torino, pp. 41–91.
- 2005: Le chiuse alpine fra realtà e mito, in *I Longobardi e le Alpi : atti della giornata di studio "Clausae Langobardorum", i Longobardi e le Alpi, Chiusa di San Michele, 6 marzo 2004*, Susa, pp. 47–66.
- MORDEK 1995: H. MORDEK, *Bibliotheca capitularium regum Francorum manuscripta : Überlieferung und Traditionszusammenhang der fränkischen Herrschererlasse*, München.
- MOSCHETTI 1954: G. MOSCHETTI, *Primordi esegetici sulla legislazione longobarda nel sec. IX a Verona secondo il cod. Vat. lat. 5359*, Spoleto.
- Nodes and networks of power at the frontiers of the Carolingian Empire : a political, cultural, military and religious overview*, ed. by M. Franzoni & S. Patzold (Ergänzungsbände zum *Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde*), Berlin – Boston 2026.
- POHL 2001: W. POHL, Frontiers in Lombard Italy : the laws of Ratchis and Aistulf, in *The transformation of frontiers from late antiquity to the Carolingians*, ed. by W. Pohl *et al.* (The transformation of the Roman world 10), Leiden – Boston – Köln, pp. 117–42.
- 2004: Le frontiere longobarde : controllo e percezioni, in *La mobilità des personnes en Méditerranée de l'Antiquité à l'époque moderne : procédures de contrôle et documents d'identification*, sous la dir. de C. Moatti (CEFR 341), Rome, pp. 225–38.
- ROGNONI 2021: C. ROGNONI, Legal texts and juridical practice in Byzantine Italy, in *A companion to Byzantine Italy*, ed. by S. Cosentino (Brill's companions to the Byzantine world 8), Leiden – Boston, pp. 760–96.
- SEMMLER 2003: J. SEMMLER, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751 und die fränkische Königssalbung*, Düsseldorf.
- 2004: Verdient um das karolingische Königtum und den werdenden Kirchenstaat : Fulrad von Saint-Denis, in *Scientia veritatis : Festschrift für Hubert Mordek zum 65. Geburtstag*, hrsg. von O. Münch & T. Zotz, Ostfildern, pp. 91–115.
- SETTIA 1989: A. A. SETTIA, Le frontiere del regno italico nei secoli VI-XI : l'organizzazione della difesa, *Studi storici* 1, pp. 155–69.

- 1993: Le fortificazioni dei Goti in Italia, in *Teoderico il Grande e i Goti d'Italia : atti del XIII congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Milano 2–6 novembre 1991*, Spoleto, pp. 101–31 (repr. in Id. 2011a, pp. 3–31).
- 2011a: *Barbari e infedeli nell'alto medioevo italiano : storia e miti storiografici* (Collectanea 26), Spoleto.
- 2011b: Le frontiere del regno italico nei secoli VI–XI : l'organizzazione della difesa, in Id. 2011, pp. 33–51 (repr. of *Castrum. 4, Frontière et peuplement dans le monde méditerranéen au Moyen Âge*, Rome – Madrid, pp. 201–9, 1992).
- STOCLET 1993: A. STOCLET, *Autour de Fulrad de Saint-Denis, v. 710-784* (Centre de recherches d'histoire et de philologie de la IV^e section de l'École pratique des hautes études. 5, Hautes études médiévales et modernes 72), Genève.
- STOFFELLA 2016: M. STOFFELLA, Ratchis, re dei Longobardi, in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*. 86, Roma, pp. 549–52.
- 2025: La conquista del regno da parte di Grimoaldo, il rapporto con i duchi e i silenzi di Paolo Diacono, in *Grimoaldo : dal ducato friulano al regno : atti del quarto convegno internazionale del centro di studi longobardi, Cividale del Friuli, Bottenicco di Moimacco (UD), 24–28 aprile 2024*, a cura di G. Archetti, Spoleto, pp. 351–91.
- 2026a: Mobilità, porti e mercati in Italia settentrionale (secc. VI–XI) : quadri generali e linee evolutive a partire dal caso di Verona, in *Food and STONES : ships, trade, objects, networks, economy, society : convegno finale del progetto, Venezia 9–11 maggio 2024*, a cura di S. Gelichi & M. Ferri, Venezia, pp. 417–47 DOI 10.30687/979-12-5742-002-4/019.
- 2026b: *Provincia, provinciae* e mobilità : un nuovo paradigma interpretativo per il regno longobardo (VI–VIII sec.), in *Europa mediterranea : l'eredità e le opere, l'esperienza e il giudizio in ricordo di Gabriella Rossetti*, a cura di E. Salvatori & A. Fara, Pisa, pp. 487–508.
- 2026c: From *marcas* to *marcae* : the control of mobility in Italy and at its frontiers from late antiquity to the end of the 8th century, in *Nodes and networks of power, in press*.
- TAMASSIA 1967: N. TAMASSIA, Per la storia dell'*Authenticum*, in Id., *Scritti di storia giuridica pubblicati a cura della Facoltà di giurisprudenza dell'Università di Padova*. 2, Padova, pp. 107–58.
- TANGL 1958: G. TANGL, Die Paßvorschrift des Königs Ratchis und ihre Beziehung zu dem Verhältnis zwischen Franken und Langobarden vom 6.–8. Jahrhundert, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 38, pp. 1–67.
- TISCHLER 2022: M. M. TISCHLER, *Carlemany a Europa : història i memòria*, Barcelona.
- TOUBERT & DALARUN 2008: P. TOUBERT, Hadrien I^{er} et Charlemagne : la question du *patricius Romanorum* : note sur une inscription transcrite dans le manuscrit pal. Lat. 833 de la bibliothèque Vaticane ; annexe par J. DALARUN, in *Puer Apuliae : mélanges offerts à Jean-Marie Martin*. 2, sous la dir. de E. Cuozzo et al., Paris, pp. 691–710.
- WOLFRAM 1995: H. WOLFRAM, *Österreichische Geschichte. 1, 378-907, Grenzen und Räume : Geschichte Österreichs vor seiner Entstehung*, Wien.
- WOOD 1994: I. WOOD, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751*, London – New York.
- ZEISS 1928: H. ZEISS, Die Nordgrenze des Ostgotenreichs, *Germania* 12, pp. 25–34.
- ZÖLLNER 1951: E. ZÖLLNER, Die Herkunft der Agilulfinger, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 59, pp. 245–64 (repr. in *Zur Geschichte der Bayern*, hrsg. von K. Bosl [Wege der Forschung 60], Darmstadt 1965, pp. 107–34).

ABSTRACTS/RÉSUMÉS

Clément ADOIR, *Des ennemis si intimes? Sur l'origine du chôrion et la fiscalité byzantine du VIII^e siècle* pp. 693–714

Among the few well-documented elements of eighth-century Byzantine taxation, the *chôrion*, the primary fiscal unit, is probably the best known. Its origin, however, remains far from clear. This article takes as its point of departure a close examination of a papyrus, previously noted, that refers to a fiscal district of the same name in the immediate aftermath of the Arab conquest of Egypt. A cautious analysis of certain characteristic features of caliphal taxation—features made possible precisely by the establishment of this fiscal unit—may help clarify aspects of middle Byzantine fiscal system and of the *chôrion* itself that have hitherto remained problematic. Following this “Islamic hypothesis” ultimately invites a reassessment of relations between the caliphate and Byzantium from an unconventional perspective, one in which the former may have exerted a significant influence on the latter.

Theodora ANTONOPOULOU, *“Fake news” and eutaxia under the early Macedonian emperors* pp. 7–24

The concept expressed by the term “fake news” is less modern than it may initially appear. Drawing on parallel inquiries into ancient literature, this study employs “fake news” as an interpretative tool for selected cases in Byzantine history and literature. The analysis focuses on the period from 843 to the mid-tenth century, with particular attention to the reigns of the early Macedonian emperors. It reveals, first, that several strategies serving military and, above all, political objectives can be regarded as the dissemination of fake news—understood as intentionally altered or fabricated reports and narratives. Secondly, recognising that a constructed “fake” reality exists between truth and fiction allows for a fresh reading of events such as the imperial bride-shows. Finally, the association between *eutaxia*—a key concept promoted in the writings of Emperors Leo VI and Constantine VII—and the deliberate use of fake news and disinformation highlights the role of such political means for maintaining order within the empire.

Lucia ARCIFA, *Ricostruire la Sicilia di VIII secolo: nuovi approcci per un paesaggio in trasformazione* pp. 491–516

The study examines eighth-century archaeological data to reassess a period that remains poorly understood in terms of settlement dynamics and the island’s role within the broader imperial context. The analysis reveals a distinctive phase of fortification on the island, primarily affecting its major coastal cities as part of a wider defensive strategy. However, it was not until the early ninth century—coinciding with the landing at Mazara in 827—that defensive installations were established near the Platani River. This development confirms a shift in territorial organisation and marks a new phase in the island’s history, characterised by the formation of the Arab-Byzantine internal frontier.

Albrecht BERGER, *Processions in the Great Palace and in Constantinople: the topography of De cerimoniis*

pp. 25–37

De cerimoniis describes many imperial processions and other ceremonies in the Great Palace of Constantinople. Since very little remains of this site today, the text is our main source for its topography, but does not allow for a detailed reconstruction. The processions through the city of Constantinople, also described in *De cerimoniis*, led to the Holy Apostles and a number of other churches, and the stations at which the emperor was received by the circus factions on his return are listed. The article concludes with a case study showing that the “new Bonos Palace” and the palace at the Holy Apostles, both of which appear in the record of the day of Saint Constantine, May 21, are two different places.

Jeffrey P. A. BERLAND, *Iconoclasm under Leo III and the papal Iconophile response: a reappraisal of Roman sources*

pp. 375–442

This article reassesses the scope and historicity of Iconoclasm under Leo III (717–41) and the Iconophile response it elicited in Rome. It confronts a persistent “crisis of over-suspicion” in modern scholarship toward the evidence for the beginnings of the image controversy. After an overview of selected Byzantine and eastern sources, the study systematically reappraises papal evidence, primarily the *Lives* of Gregory II and Gregory III in the *Liber pontificalis*. It argues that the passages dealing with the image controversy in these *Vitae* were composed in the 730s with material drawn from the Lateran *scrinium*. Far from being later interpolations, these sections frame the image controversy as the papacy’s principal issue in 726–33. The analysis is extended through a reassessment of other contemporary evidence, most notably Gregory III’s convocation to the Roman Synod of 731. Read alongside Byzantine and eastern sources, these testimonies allow a reassessment of both the scope of Leo’s Iconophobic measures and the extent of the papal reaction. On this basis, the article argues that Leo III issued orders around 726 for the removal of images of saints and angels, later extending them to images of Christ and the Virgin Mary. It proposes that this policy was motivated primarily by liturgical-pastoral concerns, aimed at regulating practices tending toward idolatry. The Roman response likewise reflects a devotional rather than dogmatic perspective, grounded in an appeal to church tradition and the defense of the long-established veneratio of images—a configuration distinct from the later dogmatization of the controversy under Constantine V.

Floris BERNARD, *Poetry in the Book of ceremonies: terminology, metre and embedment*

pp. 39–60

The *Book of ceremonies* contains various poems and/or songs, which one can group under the heading “ceremonial poetry.” Two quite distinct genres can be discerned. First, acclamations are ritualized and formulaic shouts in praise of the emperors. Second, deme songs are more structured poems that blend liturgical motifs with political content. Their complex nomenclature often refers to a context of processions. Both genres can be rhythmically analyzed as consisting of clauses (*kola*) which mostly end with a stress on the penultimate syllable (paroxytonic), although other metrical principles are also present. We can hypothesize a gradual standardization in syllable count over time, culminating in the *politikos stichos*. While this poetry was partly the work of professional poets and composers, it is also highly flexible and adaptable to new circumstances, which precludes a precise dating.

René-Claude BONDOUX, *La flotte byzantine au x^e siècle : Livre des cérémonies II, 44-45 et fouilles du port théodosien (Yenikapı)* pp. 61-75

In Istanbul, during the construction of a metro line at the place called Yeni Kapı, on the site of the Constantinopolitan port known as the Theodosian port, 37 boat carcasses, relatively well preserved in the alluvial bottom, were discovered from 2004 to 2013. Chapters 44 and 45 of *Book II of ceremonies*, which serve as the basis for our study, list the numbers of naval and land equipment planned for three imperial campaigns: two against the Arabs of Crete: in 910 and 949, as well as another against the Lombards of Italy in 935.

Jean-Claude CHEYNET, *Des taktika et des atriklinai* pp. 77-93

The *atriklinai*, responsible for organising imperial banquets, are rarely mentioned in narrative or documentary sources, with the exception of Philotheus, author of the *Cletorologion*, the most complete of the surviving *Taktika*. Seals partially fill this gap. They reveal the existence of *atriklinai* from at least the 8th century until the 11th century, when the new Comnenian hierarchical system was established. From the 11th century onwards, the *atriklinai* often combined their duties with other responsibilities. They also attest to the existence of empresses' *atriklinai*. This position was generally associated with honourable dignities, but not the highest in the hierarchy of their time.

Olivier DELOUIS, *Des absents de marque : les moines de Constantinople dans le cérémonial byzantin selon le Livre des cérémonies* pp. 95-110

With the exception of two major feasts, the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, the *Book of ceremonies* makes virtually no mention of the monks of Constantinople. Although monks are, by definition, removed from the world, their absence from Constantine VII's compilation calls for explanation. In fact, they enter the imperial ceremonial only when processions are tied to specific historical events or, in a more impersonal register, when their monasteries serve as repositories for imperial remains. To study the monks as a social group within Constantinople and to assess their place in the imperial τάξις, one must turn to the *Kletorologion* of Philotheos. Finally, it is hagiography, only briefly considered here, that provides a privileged setting in which the personal relations between the βασιλεὺς and the holy monk come into view.

Vincent DÉROCHE, *Acclamer l'empereur hors du Palais : les « acclamations habituelles » et l'empereur face aux moines et à leur protocole* pp. 111-16

Some sources, too few, attest that the emperor was acclaimed not only by officials but also by simple bystanders, without a prescribed ceremonial and with a very simple text; the occurrences are especially frequent in the Middle Byzantine period.

Christophe ERISMANN, *Germanos de Constantinople et le débat sur l'heure de la mort* pp. 675-92

Germanos († 733), who was Patriarch of Constantinople from 715 to 730 before being deposed by Emperor Leo III in 730 for not adhering to his iconoclastic policy, was the first scholar in several decades to write treatises on theological and philosophical questions in the capital of the Byzantine Empire and not in the southern (lost) provinces. His treatise on the terms or limits of life (*Περὶ ὅρων ζωῆς*) contributes to the long Byzantine debate on the thesis attributed to Basil of Caesarea,

which states that God has fixed the hour of death for every human being. Germanos' treatise contains a defence of this thesis, based on the concept of divine foreknowledge (distinguished from the predetermination of human acts). Germanos advocates a theological approach based on following the authority of the church fathers and not on rational argumentation. The treatise provides an opportunity to assess the state of Byzantine scholarship at the time, and to conclude that nothing in this text points toward a radical decline in scholarship at the beginning of the eighth century, a period often referred to as a Dark Age.

Denis FEISSEL, *Le Dékimon et son poste de garde au Palais de Constantinople : étude de toponymie et d'épigraphie*

pp. 117–44

Peter the Patrician's treatise on Ceremonial locates a passage called the Dekimon between the Hippodrome and the Palace of Constantinople. This study aims firstly to clarify the location of the Dekimon, as described by Malalas; secondly, to explain, drawing on an inscription of Constantinople, the origin of this toponym; and finally, to identify as the Dekimon a guardroom mentioned by Procopius. Chapter I: Malalas' chronicle places the Dekimon behind the imperial box in the Hippodrome and recounts three murders committed or attempted there: two actually occurred during Zeno's reign (in 477 and 481), while the assassination of Emperor Gratian (in 383) "at the gate of the Dekimon" is an anachronistic invention. Chapter II: A 6th-century epitaph discovered in Constantinople concerns an *excubitor* from Salabria (Selymbria), who belonged to the *exkoubiton dekimon*, namely the "tenth guard post" of the Palace. This section of the *excubitores* must have given its name to the hall of the Dekimon, which controlled access from the Palace to the imperial box. Chapter III: Procopius, in his account of the Nika riot in 532 (*Bell. pers.* I, 24), shows Belisarius being prevented from reaching the imperial box by soldiers from the nearby guard post. These must again be the *excubitores* stationed at the Dekimon. The same episode is distorted in the parallel account by Malalas, who presents Justinian in place of Belisarius. Finally, in an epigraphic appendix, we reinterpret three inscriptions from Corinth and the Isthmus wrongly attributed to *excubitores*.

Denis FEISSEL, avec deux contributions de Charlotte ROUECHÉ & de Jean-Pierre GRÉLOIS, *Cinq épigrammes honorifiques du Bas-Empire à Éphèse*

pp. 773–830

More than twenty inscribed epigrams of the Theodosian period have been found in Ephesus, most of them dedicated by the city to proconsuls of Asia. The five inscriptions of this kind to which this study is devoted are partly unpublished, while others require a new interpretation. Chapter I presents an unpublished dedication by the *boule* to proconsul Asklepios, who is already known from other inscriptions in Ephesus and Smyrna. Drawing on this case, Ch. Roueché considers the value attached by the recipients to the various statues in their honour and the corresponding epigrams. Chapter II: An unpublished fragment reveals the name of a new proconsul, Kosmas, restorer of Trajan's Nymphaeum. Chapter III: A revised reading of *I.Ephesos* IV 1309 proves that the statue of Probos is that of a proconsul. Chapter IV: A new analysis of *I.Ephesos* IV 1319 shows that the statue of Aidesios stood near a construction for which he had been responsible. Chapter V: A revised edition of *I.Ephesos* II 286 is based on a newly identified copy by John Covell (1669) and a rediscovered fragment. Chapter VI: A first edition by J.-P. Grélot of an extract from Covell's manuscript describes the Gate of Persecution and some inscriptions reused there.

Oksana GONCHARKO & Hayk HAKOBYAN, *The philosophy of icon veneration in the sermon Against the Paulicians by Yovhannes Ojnek'i* pp. 575–616

The aim of this paper is to describe the philosophy of icon veneration articulated by Yovhannes Ojnek'i in his sermon *Against the Paulicians* within the context of the religious controversies that took place in early 8th-century Armenia. Based on our proposed English translation of the full text of the sermon, we explore how Yovhannes Ojnek'i constructs his polemic not only against Paulicians but also against a wide range of teachings mentioned in the sermon—specifically, against the Iconoclasts, as well as those whom he identifies as the predecessors or allies of the Paulicians in Armenia, including Iranian, Manichean, Messalian, and other cults with which the Paulicians, in his view, were ideologically or practically aligned.

Martin HINTERBERGER, *De cerimoniis and the history of the Greek language* pp. 145–63

In this chapter the language of *De cerimoniis* is investigated. Particular emphasis is placed on modern, i.e. clearly not ancient, Greek features as well as on variation, the semantic interchangeability of morphologically differing forms. Moreover, an attempt is made to define the overall linguistic character of *De cerimoniis* and to interpret Constantine's initial declaration regarding the kind of language he deploys in *De cerimoniis*.

Marek JANKOWIAK, *The three redactions of De cerimoniis* pp. 165–249

The new edition of *De cerimoniis* proposes a new chronological framework for the compilation of the treatise: while it follows Dmitrii Beliaev (1893) and John Bury (1907) in situating the original core of the work in the reigns of Michael III and Leo VI, it places its completion at the beginning, not the end, of the sole reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (945–59). This article evaluates this proposal, and argues that both the original core and its expansion are due to Constantine VII, who embarked on the project of codifying the imperial ceremonial immediately after his return to power and resumed it in the last years of his life. However, *De cerimoniis* took its final shape only after his death, in the reign of Nikephoros Phokas (963–9) when the text that we read in the *Lipsiensis* and the palimpsest was expanded, recomposed, and retouched in response to political events. There are good reasons to attribute this final redaction of *De cerimoniis* to the half-brother and closest collaborator of the Porphyrogenitus, Basil Parakoimomenos. Overall, *De cerimoniis* emerges not so much as a repository of fossilised ceremonies but as a work of circumstance reacting to the specific circumstances of the reigns of Constantine VII and Nikephoros Phokas.

Smilja MARJANOVIĆ-DUŠANIĆ, *Autour des cérémonies : le couronnement de l'empereur hors de Constantinople* pp. 251–67

This text explores the Byzantine imperial coronation ceremonies outside Constantinople, focusing on their political and ritualistic implications. It compares two key texts dealing with Byzantine ceremonial practices: the *Book of ceremonies* (*De cerimoniis*) and the *Treatise of offices* by Pseudo-Kodinos, emphasizing the differences in purpose, structure, and historical context.

Coronations outside Constantinople often had to face questions of legitimacy but still adhered to Byzantine ceremonial traditions in order to assert authority. The evolution of rituals reflects the dynamic interplay between tradition and political necessity, as seen in the cases of John VI Kantakouzenos and the Serbian ruler Stefan Dušan. The study underscores the importance of ceremonial texts in shaping imperial ideology and legitimizing power.

Sophie MÉTIVIER, *Cérémonies religieuses et dévotions impériales à la cour de Constantinople à la lumière du Livre des cérémonies* pp. 269–90

The *Book of ceremonies* describes at length the religious ceremonies in which emperors and their court took part in the churches of the Great Palace and of Constantinople on various occasions celebrating the Lord and his saints. These ceremonies made the court an organ of devotion. Nevertheless, they constitute an undefined whole, whose origins and evolution remain partly unknown to us. This study will focus not on their protocol and spatial organization, but on the cults they promote, contextualizing them as far as possible—an analysis of Manuel I's 1166 novella on holidays will help to define the issues at stake. Although necessarily dependent on the liturgy of the church, the religious ceremonies celebrated by the palace testify to the freedom that emperors possessed and retained in the choice of these devotions, the manner of their implementation, and their hierarchy.

Federico MONTINARO, *Constantine V, icons and the Arabs: the Νουθεσία γέροντος* pp. 655–74

Νουθεσία γέροντος περὶ τῶν ἁγίων εἰκόνων (*Admonition of an Elder concerning the Holy icons*) is the title of a tract transmitted by a single manuscript and once regarded as one of the earliest iconophile responses to Byzantine Iconoclasm. Recent scholarship by P. Speck, A. Alexakis, J. Haldon, and R. Price has unduly relegated it to a much later period, indeed almost to the realm of fiction. The present contribution sets out to rehabilitate the work by providing definitive evidence for its priority over the *Adversus Constantinum Caballinum* and the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea (787), thus re-establishing the position held by the text's first editor, B. Melioranskij. Once Melioranskij's reconstruction is vindicated, one may once again approach the contents of the *Νουθεσία* with a fresh and unprejudiced eye, restoring them to their proper context in the later years of the reign of Constantine V.

Mauro MORMINO, *A "tale for all seasons"? The Passio (BHG 1249) of Meletios Stratēlatēs at the crossroads between Iconoclasm and Iconophilia* pp. 617–54

This paper offers a re-examination of the *Passio* of Meletios Stratēlatēs (BHG 1249), a complex hagiographical narrative associated with the city of Tabia in Galatia. After briefly reconstructing the historical, urban, and religious background of Tabia, the study analyses the literary composition of the *Passio*, its manuscript tradition, and its dependence on earlier martyrial texts, particularly those of Egyptian derivation. Particular attention is devoted to the representation of Tabia's sacred landscape as conveyed by the *Passio*, including temples, cult statues, churches, and rural settings, as well as to episodes describing the destruction, transformation, and reuse of pagan cult images. Equally complex, however, is the question of the text's chronology. Although framed within a conventional Antonine persecution, the *Passio* displays internal features—rhetorical, theological, and narrative—that preclude a secure late antique dating. A closer reading of the *Passio* and of its religious vocabulary instead suggests situating the text within the broader context of early Byzantine hagiography between the 7th and 8th centuries, highlighting its layered character and the flexibility of its reception.

Adrian C. PIRTEA, *Syro-Chalcedonian historiography in the eighth century: the newly discovered Maronite chronicle of 713 and its Monothelete context* pp. 551–73

This article situates the *Maronite chronicle of 713* (*Chron713*)—recently identified by the author in Sinai, St Catherine's Monastery, ar. 597—within its historical and intellectual context.

Originally composed in Syriac in 712–13 CE but preserved only in a later Arabic translation, *Chron713* emerges as a remarkable new source for the late antique and early Islamic periods. The study concentrates on its connections with contemporary Syro-Chalcedonian, pro-Monothelite literature, including the *Life of Maximus* and two additional Syriac treatises in London, British Library, Add. 7192; the Syriac Monothelite florilegium in BL Add. 14535; fragment 88 from Dayr al-Suryān; and the miscellaneous collection in Sinai syr. 10, shown by the author to be of likely Monothelite provenance. The article also underscores the significance of the monastery of Mar Maron in *Chron713* and identifies George of Mar Maron, mentioned in the chronicle, with the elusive “George the Monk” cited in the Syriac Monothelite florilegium from the British Library. It then examines the chronicler’s stance toward the Byzantine emperors: positive assessments of Heraclius and Constans II, coupled with negative views of Constantine IV and the Third Council of Constantinople, firmly position the chronicler within the milieu from which the other Syro-Monothelite writings emerged. Finally, the article highlights *Chron713*’s importance for the history of Syriac historiography and suggests directions for future research. A short appendix offers a tentative reconstruction of a damaged passage that sheds new light on the reign of Constans II.

Vivien PRIGENT, *Rouages invisibles : l'épineuse question de l'administration provinciale*

pp. 715–47

The article examines the practical workings of the Byzantine provincial administration, and the reality of the lower ranks of this administration, in the regions under the control of a *strategos*. The *Taktikon Uspensky* describes a highly structured system, but the extreme scarcity of seals of the officials mentioned in this treatise is striking. In an attempt to provide some answers, a systematic examination is carried out of several small groups of seals attributable to *strategoï* of Sicily whose terms of office can be determined with sufficient precision, in order to identify the various matrices involved in the production of these *bullae*. The study reveals that these officials used a very large number of matrices, almost certainly more than one per year, even though each one could produce tens of thousands of seals before breaking. This suggests that the numerous matrices identified were not in use successively, but simultaneously at various points within the territory under the *strategos*’s control. In this context, the great rarity of seals belonging to second-rank officials could be explained by their use of the *strategos*’ seal. As the system appears to have been in place as early as the very beginning of the 8th century, this also calls into question the idea of a gradual extension of the *strategos*’ powers to civil administration.

Olivier ROBERT, *Histoire de la « cure du Palais » : de l'office romain à la dignité byzantine de curopalate (IV^e-X^e s.)*

pp. 751–71

The dignity of *curopalatus*, which was at the top of the court hierarchy in the 9th century, originated from the late antique function of *cura palatii*. First attested during the reign of Constantine the Great, this office likely consist of managing the palace (which was the responsibility of the *castrensis*) but rather to control those who entered the palatine complex. The function was still *clarissimus* when the second version of the Justinian code was promulgated. Subsequently, Justinian considerably extended its powers to make his nephew Justin one of the key figures at his court and to facilitate his accession to the empire. Under Maurice, the title of *curopalatus* became a dignity superior to the patriciate; it was conferred only on a close relative of the emperor, to make him heir apparent in the absence of a *porphyrogenitus*. However, the birth of an agnatic heir rendered the appointment of a *curopalatus* both obsolete and dangerous. Thus, after Heraclius, dignity was only granted sporadically, under very specific conditions, when a new dynasty came

to power and its foundation was not yet firmly established. Left in reserve for the empire, the *europalatus* thus found himself in the 9th century in an intermediate position between imperial majesty and senatorial dignity, borrowing characteristics from both. This ambiguity was perfectly illustrated by the power of Bardas, who was the last holder of this dignity before the *Book of ceremonies* was written a century later.

Olivier ROBERT, *Les transformations du sénat byzantin à l'époque iconoclaste d'après le témoignage du Livre des cérémonies* pp. 291–334

The first ten chapters of the civil section of Book I of the *Book of Ceremonies* (I, 47–56) have attracted far less attention from modern historians and philologists than the preceding section devoted to religious ceremonies, as regards the question of their dating. Yet several corroborating clues suggest that they were composed towards the end of Theophilus's reign and are linked to the accession of Alexios Mousale to the dignity of *caesar*. Consequently, the senatorial records found in these chapters would provide insight into the composition of the Byzantine Senate at the end of the Iconoclastic period. By comparing these lists with *Uspenkiĭ's Taktikon*, which is almost contemporary, we can see that the Senate of the Amorian period had rigidly preserved the curial hierarchy of the previous century: the ὑπατοί (consuls), who were very subordinate in the *Taktikon*, were nevertheless still in contact with the patricians within the senatorial structure of the first third of the 9th century; the *protospatharii*, on the other hand, despite their now elevated rank at court, were still not regarded as senators. These latter examples show that the mid-Byzantine Senate no longer served to bring together “the best of mankind” (Symmachus), nor even that of the empire, but merely to perpetuate, in the form of dignities, the ancient institutions of the Roman world which still allowed the *basileus* to claim the title of *Caesar*.

Antonio ROLLO, *Καθωμιλημένη καὶ ἀπλουστέρα φράσει κεχρήμεθα: il registro basso della lingua del De cerimoniis* pp. 335–52

This contribution aims to shed light on certain aspects of the language used in the *De cerimoniis*, in order to better illustrate the author's definition of the linguistic level of the work. As a preliminary step, the expression καθωμιλημένη καὶ ἀπλουστέρα φράσει κεχρήμεθα is subjected to close exegetical analysis. The words καθωμιλημένη καὶ ἀπλουστέρα are explained in light of other sources; these allow the phrase to be interpreted as a reference to the lower register, which, although elements of learned language are also present, is characterized primarily by syntactic simplification and vulgarisms, despite not being in any way comparable to the vernacular level.

Irina SHINGIRAY, *A steppe too far: relations between the nomadic Khazar and the Byzantine Empires in the eighth century* pp. 517–50

In the eighth century, the Khazar Empire achieved peace in the Steppe and projected its power from the Lower Volga-Lower Don region (the nomadic Khazar heartland) to the frontier communities of the Byzantine Empire in the Crimea and Taman peninsulas. The Khazars established a flexible protectorate over the autonomous Byzantine frontier cities, such as Cherson and Bospor, in order to control trade routes, especially the strategic Kerch Strait waterway, where they collected a tax from long-distance merchants. The Khazars did not conquer or tax those local inhabitants; they governed them from the faraway Steppe by providing protection and military assistance at their request. In the context of these frontier relations, the Khazars and the Byzantines conducted diplomatic exchange during the first half of the eighth century. It resulted in two dynastic marriages,

gift exchanges, and mutual influences in dress and other decorative styles articulated in their material cultures. As a result of these political transactions many luxury items and Byzantine coins minted by the emperors who were involved in diplomacy with the Khazars made their way into Khazar elite graves in the Steppe. These gold coins most likely serve as material evidence of those exchanges during the first half of the eighth century. These coins gradually disappeared from the Khazar graves during the second half of the eighth century, when they were replaced by dirhams and dinars minted in the Islamic Caliphate. As the Khazars reoriented their economic attention toward the caliphate, Byzantine-Khazar diplomacy cooled, but their trade continued.

Alessio SOPRACASA, *Une branche impériale des Commènes, du sébastokrator Andronic au protosébaste et régent Alexis*

pp. 831–935

The broader Komnenos family offers an abundant body of information, particularly of a prosopographical nature, drawn from literary sources that are well known but not yet fully exploited, as well as from sigillographic sources that are often difficult to attribute. The present article seeks to base itself on this type of material, for which one branch of the Komnenos family is particularly well represented: the family of the *sebastokrator* Andronikos, second son of Emperor John II, and of his wife, the renowned *sebastokratorissa* Eirene, patroness of letters, together with their five children. The synthesis proposed here does not aim to (re)write the history of this family, but rather to trace its members in their relations with imperial power, highlighting the role they played between the end of John II's reign and the regency established during the minority of Alexios II, passing through the reign of Manuel I—a crucial period for the rise of Andronikos' heirs, after he himself came very close to attaining supreme power.

Marco STOFFELLA, *Lombard border legislation, the fall of Ravenna and Pippin's coronation: new perspectives on a transition (750–7)*

pp. 467–89

The accession to the throne of the two brothers Ratchis and Aistulf forced a different policy of control at the northern Alpine borders of the Lombard Kingdom through the issuing of specific clauses. The new chronological order of Aistulf and Ratchis' clauses discussed in this paper, and consequently the importance given to some international political decisions taken between 750 and Summer 751, makes the fall of Byzantine Ravenna and the disappearance of the exarch an even more significant turning point for the history of the Italian Peninsula in the 8th century.

Ioannis THEODORAKOPOULOS, *Les habits dans les cérémonies : qu'est-ce que la thalassa ?*

pp. 353–68

In this study, we examine an official Byzantine garment known as the *thalassa*, which mainly appears in texts associated with Constantine VII Porphyrogennitus and his circle. First attested in sources from the late ninth century, the *thalassa* continued to be mentioned until the twelfth century, when it was explicitly described for the first time as a unisex garment. We analyze the various interpretations of its name proposed by scholars to date, including its rippling appearance, marine-themed decorative motifs, purple dye, construction from “marine silk” derived from the *Pinna nobilis* shellfish, or a wave-like textile technique. Drawing on all available sources, which are not always easily reconcilable, we attempt to provide a definition of the *thalassa* that synthesizes the evidence. Our conclusion is that the *thalassa* was identical to the garment referred to as the *aetos*. Specifically, it was a purple-red *aetos* belonging to the category of *scaramangia*, a type of

military tunic traditionally worn by the emperor and his courtiers, especially during their exits from the Palace on ceremonial occasions.

Giulia ZORNETTA, *Lombard models in Byzantine splendour: building a regional identity in eighth-century Lombard southern Italy* pp. 443–65

During the eighth century, the Italian Peninsula was characterized by the coexistence of Byzantine and Lombard polities, which developed distinct identities due to the regionalization of elites and the fragmented political geography. This article examines Lombard southern Italy as a case study, investigating the contribution of Byzantine models to the shaping of a distinctive regional identity in the Duchy and later Principality of Benevento. While maintaining formal ties to the Lombard Kingdom, the Beneventans cultivated closer relations with the Byzantine world compared to other Lombard polities. This included diplomatic exchanges with the imperial court, especially after Charlemagne's conquest of the Lombard Kingdom in 774, when Prince Arechis proclaimed himself *princeps gentis Langobardorum*. In representing their public authority, however, the Beneventan rulers primarily referred to Lombard models from the royal tradition and their regional context. Only limited traces of fascination with imperial authority can be detected, aimed at lending the capital Benevento a touch of "Byzantine splendor."