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Power, Legitimacy, and their Rituals and Imagery:

Early Medieval Southern Italy in a cross-cultural Mediterranean Perspective

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- PhD conference on Medieval Art History: "Medioevo europeo e mediterraneo: scambi, circolazione e mobilità artistica" 15- 18 June 2022: *Principi e rappresentazioni del potere tra Tirreno ed Adriatico*
- The Middle Ages in Modern Games June 7- 10 2022: *Exultet: playing liturgy, its context and their changes. A proposal*
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1. Introducing the problem

At the end of the X century, in the city of Benevento appeared a liturgical medium that would soon become a peculiarity of the religious life of Southern Italy for the centuries to come: the illustrated scroll, containing the texts of the so-called Exultet prayer and the blessing of the Paschal candle, a ceremony to be held in the Easter Vigil. The liturgy underlining such a ceremony in Southern Italy changed over time, in particular when the original so-called Beneventan liturgy (the traditional rite originating in the city of Benevento after the arrival of the Lombards, as an evolution of the more ancient Ambrosian liturgy) gave way to the imposition of the Franco-Roman one, a result of the spread of the reformist movement that characterized the life of the Church during the XI century. Notwithstanding these changes, the illuminated scroll kept its role and importance, evolving and adapting itself to the new circumstances until at least the XIII century.

Religious changes, however, did not come alone: during the whole period from the X to the XII century, Southern Italy as a whole underwent some drastic changes in its political setting. From the second half of the IX century, and precisely from 849, the year of the peace treaty that marked the end of a long civil war, the old duchy of Benevento (a principality since 774, when Arichis II started styling himself as *princeps*) was divided into two distinct entities: the principality of Benevento, and that of Salerno. Later on, the latter lost its northernmost part, which

became an independent county centred around the town of Capua, whose rulers subsequently managed to reunite with Benevento and, under Pandulf Ironhead (943-981) even Salerno, in 978. The (temporary) reunification of the three principalities in one single polity would mark the last moment of unity for the Lombard people before the advent of new political actors, who would radically change the landscape of Southern Italy: the Normans.

This is not the place for a detailed narrative of the Norman conquest of Southern Italy, and of the following birth of a unified *Regnum* under Roger II in 1130. What is important to note here is that the anarchic situation that reigned in continental Southern Italy between the second half of the XI century and the beginning of the XII, and then the birth of a strong monarchy immediately after, both influenced developments in the liturgical sphere and in the organization of the Church. Moreover, Roger II's new political construction brought under a single rule the four different, often conflicting, cultural worlds that for centuries had interacted with each other in the southern Italian arena: the Lombard, Frankish, Byzantine, and Arab worlds.

Alongside the three Lombard principalities, indeed, Southern Italy always saw the presence of lands under Byzantine rule: at the beginning limited, after the first Lombard invasion of the VI century, to the southernmost part of modern day Puglia and to Calabria, the Eastern Roman Empire managed to strengthen its presence and recover some of the lost territories between the IX and X

century, and again at the beginning of the XI century, restoring its rule over much Apulia, Lucania, Calabria, and even (briefly) in the very core of the Lombard principalities, Benevento itself.[1] On the Tyrrhenian coast, also, a number of cities thrived as political entities nominally still subject to the emperors in Constantinople, but de facto increasingly independent: Naples, Amalfi, Gaeta, among them. A more in-depth look at the political developments that took place in Southern Italy during the period under consideration here will be given in the course of Chapter 2 (and, for what concerns the Byzantine presence, in the Conclusions as well).

What is to be said now is that this peculiar political and cultural landscape, as it took its shape from the VIII century onwards, also resulted in the birth of a civilization with characteristics and peculiarities of its own; a civilization

[1] The best and most detailed account of the Byzantine presence in Southern Italy can still be considered the seminal work by Jules Gay, *L'Italie Meridionale et l'Empire Byzantin: l'Avènement de Basile ler justu'a la Prise de Bari par les Normands (867-1071),* Fontemoing, Paris, 104 (here Gay, 2014); alongside Gay's work, Vera Von Falkenhausen's *La dominazione bizantina nell'Italia meridionale dal IX all'XI secolo*, Ecumenica Editrice, Bari, 1978, is still fundamental for a reconstruction of the characteristics of the Byzantine presence in Italy, a topic further explored in detail more recently by Salvatore Cosentino (2008), which also provides a newer historical narrative. The list can be further extended including the works of scholars like Jean Marie-Martin, Guillou, Delogu (particularly concerning the relationships between Lombards and Byzantines), and many others.

that found its expression in the development of an artistic language that ranged from the first exemplars of Lombard 'royal' architecture (such as the palatine church of S. Sofia in Benevento, or the reconstruction of Salerno as a new princely capital undertaken by Arichis II), to the most remarkable forms of Romanesque art that developed under the patronage of the first Norman rulers. During all this time, the Exultet rolls stood firmly in their place, were kept in use, and evolved in both iconography and text. As a result, we currently see Exultet rolls spread from Pisa (two at the Museo Diocesano, and one at the archive of the Capitolo metropolitano, dating from the XI to the XIII century), to Velletri, Salerno, Troia, Bari, Gaeta, Paris, London, for a total of twenty-eight scrolls. A rich, though not homogeneous, corpus, with differences in both original composition (some, such as the Exultet from Avezzano, were made without images) and state of preservation.

But to consider the scrolls as purely an expression of religion or liturgy would be a mistake: both the chant and its iconography, once this was introduced, contained clear references to the secular authorities in the form of a commemoration, made at the end of the prayer. As a result, starting with the very first scroll in our possession, the Vat. lat. 9820, most of the surviving exemplars show us representations of the ruler (or rulers), representations that changed over time and that represent, by themselves,

valuable sources of information about the evolution in the iconography of power in medieval Southern Italy.[2]

1. 1 Studies of the Vat. lat. 9820

Predictably, Exultet rolls have been subject to a number of studies from different fields and methodological perspectives, ranging from palaeography to musicology.[3]

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[2] Such representations are not exclusively limited to the final commemorations; indeed, images of rulers can be found in some other sections of the scrolls.

[3] Arguably one of the foremost scholars of the Exultet rolls is, indeed, a musicologist. Thomas Forrest Kelly (whose works will be cited repeatedly in this thesis) devoted his attention to the rolls, first and foremost, due to the musicological elements in them, which made them fundamental pieces of evidence for the history of liturgical music (and musical notation). Paleographers, such as Guglielmo Cavallo, have been equally attracted to the rolls for the same reason: spanning at least three centuries, the rolls offer precious testimonies of the evolution of writing systems, particularly in an area that developed its own peculiar script, the Beneventan, with all its subsequent developments. As will be shown in the rest of this thesis, these are just two of the research fields that profit from an analysis of the Exultet rolls, as art historians who delved into the subject will be mentioned more thoroughly in the next paragraphs.

While these illuminated rolls already attracted the attention of scholars in the XIX century, such as that of Émile Bertaux (with his uncomplete *Iconographie comparée des rouleaux de l'Exsultet* of 1904, preceded by *L'art dans l'Italie méridionale* of 1903), it was Myrtilla Avery who gave the foremost contribution in the field for decades, with her *The Exultet Rolls of South Italy*, published (although devoid of the planned, but never realized, second volume) in 1936. Avery's work spurred a wave of studies over the subsequent decades. The next milestone concerning the Exultet scrolls may be safely argued to be the work by Hans Belting, *Studien zur beneventanischen Malerei* of 1968, and recently translated (partially) also in Italian. Though, as the title suggests, Belting's work is concerned with the whole spectrum of Beneventan painting, precisely for this reason the Exultet rolls could not escape his attention, and the Vat. lat. 9820 among them, as it will be shown later.

A first edition, after Avery's, of the Exultet rolls from Puglia, edited by Guglielmo Cavallo and Carlo Bertelli, came out in 1975, providing scholars not only with an improved version of the iconographical tables, but also with a much needed series of high-level analysis. This work was followed by another, more extensive edition of all extant rolls. The occasion was an exhibition organized at Montecassino in 1994, with Cavallo once again at the forefront of the effort. The catalogue that emerged from the exhibition (which had the merit and privilege of collecting for the very first time all the surviving rolls together) proved to be a fundamental tool for further research,

including this thesis. It was also followed by an important step: the digitalization of the rolls in the form of a Cd-ROM in 1999. Both the 1994 catalogue and the 1999 Cd-ROM were accompanied by a substantial number of essays, covering all issues pertaining to the Exultet, from iconography to paleography and the transcription of the chant itself. The Apulian Exultets (Bari 1, 2, and 3; Troia 1, 2, and 3) have also seen a further edition, this time edited by Mariapina Mascolo and Maria Nardella, with a strong focus on the transcriptions and the musical elements of the rolls (but without overlooking iconographical and paleographical elements either). One of the main merits of this new edition is that it emphasizes the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural environment of Apulia from the XI to the XII centuries (the timeframe covered by the edited rolls), including the Jewish communities that thrived at the time. Also, the work provided all its component essays with an English translation, possibly further contributing to spreading the knowledge of these important historical sources to the wider academic world (and the general public as well).

Another fundamental study whose relevance can be hardly overstated is the one by Thomas Forrest Kelly, who in 1996 published his *The Exultet in Southern Italy*. Kelly's interest in the rolls was spurred by his being a musicologist, but this didn't confine him inside the limits of the history of music. Quite the contrary, Kelly undertook a serious multi-layered effort that led him to explore the Exultet rolls in all its facets: from music, to writing, to manuscript history, to

iconography, mirroring how the rolls themselves were, in his own words, "a complex cultural phenomenon […] the result of the collaboration of artist, musician, liturgist, scribe, patron."[4] Of particular interest is what he proposed concerning the use of the rolls' pictures, an issue directly connected with that of the pictures' audience. The subject will be touched upon also in Chapters 3 and 5, but it is worth mentioning it here as well. Although the hypothesis he produces is complex, and its full appraisal would need a word-by-word quoting, it will be summarized here by looking at its core elements.

He began by considering the central role played by bishops in the liturgies of Easter Vigil, a prominence reflected also in the fact that many rolls were indeed of episcopal provenance. Kelly's argument moves from this consideration to iconography, with a statement of indubitable strength: the pictures on the rolls were not meant to be seen while the Exultet was being sung.[5] This statement is followed by some arguments which, according to Kelly, give substance to it. Mainly, they rely on the fact that the bishop plays a prominent role in the iconographical cycle, particularly in the earlier rolls. What Kelly notices is that the bishop is shown as standing (or sitting on his throne) close not only to the Paschal candle (as it was to be expected) but also to the roll itself. According to Kelly, it could be argued that often the bishop

[4] Kelly 1996, p. 211.

[5] Ivi, p. 204.

is depicted as actually looking at the images on the roll themselves.[6] Kelly's hypothesis is not without merit, but it also poses issues that are hard to be resolved, and that led other scholars to doubt its feasibility.

Looking at the pictures on the Exultet rolls also leads to a question that has always puzzled scholars: why the pictures on the rolls (though not on all of them) were reversed? The answer forwarded by the American scholar is based precisely on the role of the bishop as both a celebrant, a bystander (during the singing of the Exultet hymn, usually sang by a deacon), and the patron of the rolls themselves. Kelly rejects the idea that the pictures were reversed in order to be shown to the audience (lay and clerical alike) standing in the main nave of the church.[7] On the contrary, he proposed seeing in the bishop the main dedicatee of the pictures, the person who was most expected to see them.

Once again, also in this case Kelly's proposal has its merits, and it cannot just be dismissed altogether. It contributed spurring doubt over an assumption sometimes too readily accepted by scholars. In this sense, it is definitely a positive contribution. But while the main hypothesis forwarded in this thesis does not come as substantially altered even in

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[6] Ivi, p. 206.

[7] The idea that the images could have been reversed in order to show them to the lay audience had been proposed already by Avery 1936, p. 8. As already mentioned, Kelly's position on the matter will be addressed again both in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

the case Kelly's proposal is accepted, Chapter 5 will show how it should not be taken at face-value either, despite the compellence of some of his arguments, most of which are worthy of consideration and approval.

In the midst of this interdisciplinary scholarly effort to better understand these peculiar liturgical objects, the figurative representation of the rulers on the Exultet scrolls has not escaped attention either, quite obviously. However, to declare that everything that could be said has been said already would be, at least, ambitious. As written by Carlo Bertelli, "history of medieval art is very much made of silences in need of interpretation, of reefs emerging from submerged lands." [8] One could hardly reserve this statement for art history alone. And as the 'reefs' mentioned by Bertelli are, in our case, clearly art historical objects, it does not necessarily mean that they may be the object of exclusively art historical studies. In fact, the corpus of the Exultet rolls, together with their pictures, represent the surviving traces of an artistic and cultural landscape that, unfortunately, will probably remain mostly submerged to our eyes.

This does not mean that exploratory attempts should not be made. Quite the contrary. The 'reefs' indicate to us that there is something, down below. This something, the submerged landscape mentioned above, is nothing more,

[8] "La storia dell'arte medievale è fatta molto di silenzi da interpretare, di scogli emergenti da terre sommerse", quote in Abbate 1997, vol. I, p. 6.

nor less, than the political, social and cultural context that allowed them to emerge in the first place. They are not an unknown quantity. Lombard southern Italy has always attracted the attention of scholars, though arguably for many different reasons. To trace the whole parable of the scholarly studies about it would be impossible. However, some scholars and their work necessarily deserve to be mentioned, both for their intrinsic value and because they provided the ground and the framework upon and in which this thesis inscribes itself.

First and foremost, Nicola Cilento's work paved the way for a new season of research on the southern Lombards. Of particular interest were his attempts at analyzing the intricacies of the Capuan system of power (also with the help of new editions of sources, such as the so-called chronicles of the Capuan counts), an attempt that, as he himself openly admitted in his work of 1966 tellingly titled *Le Origini della Signoria Capuana nella Longobardia Minore*, had never been properly made before.[9] It could be said that, in a sense, Cilento inaugurated that strand of research aiming at an in-depth analysis of southern Lombard (and, more generally, early medieval southern Italian) systems of power and authority. It is not so much that no scholar before him ever dealt with the issue of early medieval (i.e. pre-Norman) power in the south. But Cilento's work brought to bear all the relevance that the study of southern Italy before the momentous settlement of the Normans and

[9] Cilento 1966, p. 7.

the subsequent birth of the *Regnum* (easily a watershed in the history of southern Italy and the whole Mediterranean) could have for scholars. Even more, he strongly, and successfully, argued that Lombard southern Italy had a value on its own, and that it was, by consequence, a worthy subject of study on its own. In other words, that it could stand at the center of a research program as a subject, and not just as an object for the study of actors who were external to it (one thinks, for example, to the magisterial study of the French scholar Jules Gay, who reconstructed the entire history of Byzantine presence in the Mezzogiorno).

Subsequent researchers took on Cilento's legacy and explored early medieval southern Italy from a variety of angles and points of view. Stefano Gasparri, Errico Cuozzo, Alessandro Di Muro, Federico Marazzi, and Giovanni Vitolo are just some among those whose research focused in particular on reconstructing the political and social environment of the southern Lombards. While Gasparri focused his attention mainly on the northern kingdom (with some relevant exceptions), precisely for this reason his studies provide the much necessary background upon which to look at the transformations that took place in the south, specifically after the fall of the kingdom itself in 774. The studies by Cuozzo, Di Muro, Vitolo, instead, tend to focus on the establishment of Norman domination, and on what happened after it. However, their interest also in the transformations of the political and social structure underpinning the passage from the multitude of southern

Italian pre-Norman polities to the Norman ones necessarily drew their attention on the situation as it was before the arrival of the Normans themselves. From this point of view, their research has much in common with that carried out by Paolo Delogu, in particular on the city of Salerno. Perhaps one could say that Marazzi's attention has been more focused on the Lombards, as proven by his work on the princes of Capua (Pandulf IV in particular) and the monastic establishment of S. Vincenzo al Volturno, just to mention two of his works. Capua, with its intriguing history of urban 'transformism' has been subject to some interesting works by Barbara Visentin. While this thesis does not concern itself specifically with that city, some of her insights have proved nonetheless fruitful in understanding the background of the Landulfids' rise to power also in Benevento. More specific attention to the Lombard times, and to Benevento in particular, is devoted by Giulia Zornetta in her recent, but already fundamental, study on politics, conflict and competition in the ancient southern Lombard capital. The reader should not be led astray by this list of names, though, to think that early medieval southern Italy has been the preserve exclusively of Italian scholars. In 1991 Barbara Kreutz published her synthesis of early medieval southern Italian history, tellingly under the title *Before the Normans*. In her work, Kreutz provided a much-needed contextualization of the political landscape of the south with the rest of the Mediterranean scene, with particular reference to the Byzantine and Islamic political worlds. Another name

foremost among those scholars of southern Italy of non-Italian origin is Graham Loud, who managed to study, once again, the transformations taking place during the first period of the Norman conquest, including the evolution in the relationship between ecclesiastical and secular powers once the Normans 'inherited' the top echelons of power from their Lombard predecessors (such as in Capua). One of the most well-known scholars of the Early Middle Ages, Chris Wickham, did touch Southern Italy in some of his analyses. However, the bulk of his works on Northern and Central Italy can give the scholar help, both in terms of methodology and content, to be applied also on southern cases.

A special mention should be made of the work by Taviani-Carozzi on the principality of Salerno, which could arguably be considered one of the most important studies concerning the southern Lombard political system and its ideological pillars. The need for understanding the developments that took place in Salerno since the city became the seat of its own independent polity in the middle of the IX century, indeed, led Taviani-Carozzi to carefully consider also its precedents in the Beneventan duchy, later principality, until the civil war that ravaged it in the middle of the IX century. It is by this way that she came to look at the mythological referents underpinning the prototypical figure of the perfect Lombard prince, that same Arichis II who proclaimed himself, for the first time, *princeps reliquis gentis Langobardorum*, and who also, contextually to this new path, rebuilt Salerno to make it his

second capital (and his final resting place). Taviani-Carozzi's emphasis on the figure of Arichis and his prototypical, exemplary, aspects in southern Lombard historiographical tradition, was fundamental for orienting some of the analysis undertaken in Chapters 3 and 4.

But to look at politics and society in early medieval polities means, by necessity, also to deal with religion. This has been already clear since the studies by Northern Kamp in the second half of the XX century. And beyond any possible doubt, one of the foremost typologies of sources in this sense is constituted by hagiographies. This fact has hardly escaped researchers. Concerning Southern Italy, all the scholars mentioned above have, at one moment of their work, made use of hagiographic writings. Amalia Galdi was one of those scholars who arguably contributed the most to a novel understanding (and much due contextualization) of hagiographies. Her analysis revealed the interconnections existing between the hagiographical text and its author's intentions, on one side, and the need for reaffirmation of urban identity and self-representation of the community, on the other. This fact emerged strongly, in Galdi's analysis, already during the time of that same Arichis II who will many times be under the lenses in this thesis. To recognize the existential relationship between hagiography, ideology, rulership, authority, is extremely useful when one has to attempt a reconstruction of the relationship between ecclesiastical power, secular power, and urban communities, and the changes in that relationship, as it has been attempted for Benevento in

Chapter 2. In this sense, Antonio Vuolo's analysis, and in particular his essay going by the telling title *Agiografia Beneventana*, can be easily considered to be one of the fundamental pillars for this kind of reconstruction.

1. 2 The present research

Through their efforts, all these scholars mapped, insofar as it was possible, the landscape of southern Lombard civilization. Their explorations paved the way for more in-depth probing. This is precisely what this thesis aims to be, and it gives the reason why their works have been used so extensively, particularly in Chapter 2. After all, the main goal of this thesis is to 'use' the representation of rulers on the Exultet rolls at the same time as the starting and ending point of an analysis of some characteristics of political power in the principality of Capua-Benevento during the second half of the X century.

To be more specific: the starting point will be constituted by the figurative representation of the ruler on the Vat. Lat. 9820, the oldest surviving exemplar of an Exultet roll (Figure 1). Some words should be spent now to properly introduce it, though most of what will be written here will be reprised in Chapter 5. The Vat. lat. 9820 was realized in the second half of the X century for the female monastery of S. Pietro *extra muros* (or *foras muros*), the very first monastical foundation of the city of Benevento, lying just outside the urban walls, on the other bank of the river Sabato. The roll was commissioned by a certain *Iohannes*,

who identified himself as *praesbyter* and *praepositus* of the monastery, at the time a dependence of S. Vincenzo al Volturno, where he chose to be represented on the roll itself in the act of prostrating himself and donating the roll to St. Peter. Myrtilla Avery argued that the roll may have been realized at S. Vincenzo,[10] a hypothesis later discarded by Hans Belting (but nonetheless accepted by Speciale and some other scholars [11]). Indeed, the hypotheses and arguments proposed by Belting in his study of 1968 have been compelling and enormously influential for all subsequent studies of all the Exultet rolls, as he didn't fall shy of revising even Avery's proposals, and for this reason it will be used here as our point of reference. Specifically concerning the Vat. lat. 9820, two of Belting's most important contributions can arguably be identified in the refinement of the dating of the roll he proposed and, directly linked to that, and to the issue of provenance, the hypothesis of the roll being a copy of a previous exemplar. We will start with the latter. The reasons (internal to the roll) which led the German scholar to hypothesize that the Vat. lat. 9820 is a copy of a previous exemplar are two. First, the position of the representation of the patron (the *praepositus* Iohannes), linked with the prayer commemorating the abbess of S. Pietro and the monastic community, is placed at the very end of the commemorations' cycle. According to Belting, their

[10] Avery 1936, p. 34.

[11] Speciale 2014, p. 90, n. 52.

position is odd, as the commemoration should have been placed earlier in the text, as attested by other rolls.[12] Second, Belting identified strong similarities in the iconographical cycles of later rolls (the most striking example being the one realised for the cathedral of Salerno in the XIII century) and explained them by positing that each of those rolls have copied their own cycle from the original one. But, so Belting's argument goes, since the Vat. lat. 9820 plausibly remained inside the library of S. Pietro until 1294 (the date in which the monastery was suppressed), it would be reasonable to assume that the source of the cycle should have been another roll, the same from which the Vat. lat. 9820 itself derived.[13] A third reason, this time external to the roll itself, is identified in the implausibility that S. Vincenzo, at that time still at the beginning of its recovery from the destruction perpetrated by the Arabs in 881, could have been able to realize a manuscript of such a level. This aspect will be addressed more thoroughly in Chapter 5.

Belting subsequently inferred that the original roll, which clearly didn't survive, was the result of an episcopal commission, possibly by the very first archbishop of Benevento, Landulf I (956-982 as head of the Beneventan see, with the rank of archbishop since 969). A commission made possibly in the city of Benevento itself, in a *scriptorium* attached to the cathedral, and not in S.

[12] Belting 1968, p. 178.

[13] Ibid.

Vincenzo, as previously hypothesized by Avery.[14] This last hypothesis came to Belting as a result of the comparison with what survives of two other liturgical rolls, firmly attributed to Landulf I, a Benedictional and a Pontifical (Casanatense 724).[15] But what about the Vat. lat. 9820? Here Belting proposed both a dating and hypothesized about at least one radical change it underwent during its 'life' before being copied. Concerning the dating: once the assumption

[14] Ibid., pp. 178-179.

[15] Bologna 1992, p.206-217 discusses both rolls, also mentioning the Vat. lat. 9820, and puts their iconographical programs in direct relationship with the pictorial school allegedly responsible for the making of the frescoes of the Beneventan church of S. Sofia (which will be more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2). See also Abbate 1997, p. 51 for a possible connection with the frescoes of S. Vincenzo al Volturno. Reprising Abbate's thesis, but opposing the view that the Pontifical, the Benediction, and the Exultet roll itself, should be considered together with respect to their place of realization, De' Maffei (1973, pp. 257-9) instead proposed to localize the Pontifical in the *scriptorium* of S. Vincenzo al Volturno, separating it from the other two liturgical documents, and linking it instead to the frescoes of Epiphanius' crypt. While the Pontifical is not the object under scrutiny here, it should be noted that De' Maffei's hypothesis contrasts what we know of the state of the *scriptorium* of S. Vincenzo in the second half of the X century, as will be remarked in Chapter 5. In a later essay she also hypothesized that the Vat. lat. 9820 may have been realized in S. Vincenzo as well, espousing Avery's theory (De' Maffei 1985, pp. 349-350). Neutral on the issue is instead Duval-Arnould (1985, p. 378) who argues for the plausibility of both options.

that the original roll was commissioned by Landulf I is accepted, it follows naturally that it could not have been done later than 982, when the same Landulf died; however, Belting proposed to recognize in the archbishop being represented at the very beginning of the Vat. lat. 9820 (a scene he interpreted as a *Authorisationbild*, with the archbishop authorizing the creation of the copy) not Landulf, but his successor Alfanus (985-1005). It follows from this that the copy, the Vat. lat. 9820, could not have been made before 985.[16] To narrow the dating further, Belting adduced evidence from the commemoration of the prince. This commemoration, indeed, is a palimpsest, with the names of the rulers to be commemorated erased and re-written as they changed over time. Now, the text of the commemoration contains mentions of a "principe n(ost)ro pandolfo", later changed with "principibus nostris pandolfo et landolfo" (the names are reported on the back of the roll). These changes led Belting to identify the princes mentioned as Pandulf II (981-1014), who reigned alone until 987, the year in which he associated to the throne (following a practice common to the Capuan dynasty, as it will be shown in Chapter 2) his own son Landulf (V, 987-1033). Once the identification is accepted, the final dating proposal for the Vat. lat. 9820 is restricted to the years 985-987.[17] Concerning the roll's life-cycle, instead, Belting proposed to identify three different phases in it: the first, an

[16] Belting 1968, p. 168.

[17] Ibid.

original redaction, which did not yet include the reversal of the images compared to the text so characteristic of later rolls, and which closely followed its episcopal prototype; then, approximately during the XII century, possibly at its beginning, liturgical changes, in the form of the introduction of the Franco-Roman Exultet in place of the Beneventan *Vetus Itala*, prompted the almost total re-writing of the textual component (with the exception of the final commemoration to the abbess of S. Pietro). According to Belting, this change offered the opportunity for reversing the images. It also caused the cutting and re-assembling of various parts of the roll.[18]

This did not end the troubled vicissitudes of the Vat. lat. 9820, though, since the roll was again cut and re-assembled, in order to make it more faithful to its original state, at the beginning of the XX century. By that time, the roll was already in possession of the Vatican Library. It had stayed in S. Pietro until 1294, the year in which the nunnery was suppressed, and its rich library dispersed. This is the last century when we can be sure the roll was still somehow in use, as witnessed by a further change in the commemoration to the ruler, made precisely in the XIII century and mentioning a certain Roffrid *comestabuli*. The roll was kept in Benevento until the XVIII century, when Stefano Borgia, cardinal and governor of the city from 1759 until 1764, acquired it. It was later passed to J. B. Seroux

[18] Ivi, p. 167.

d'Agincourt, who in turn donated it to the Vatican Library, where it is still kept today.[19]

As it has been mentioned above, Belting's hypotheses concerning the Vat. lat. 9820 have exercised an enormous influence on subsequent studies. But this doesn't mean they didn't go unchallenged. In particular, the dating proposed by the German scholar has been partially revised by Lucinia Speciale, who argued that also the first note of the commemorations (the one mentioning a single prince Pandulf) was not the original one, thus hypothesizing whether it could be possible to consider 981 as a *terminus ante quem* instead of the contrary.[20] The reader would note that the year proposed antedates the death of archbishop Landulf. This is made possible because Speciale refused the identification proposed by Belting of the bishop represented on the roll with Alfanus.

The representation of the ruler as presented on the Vat. lat. 9820 is not unknown to scholars, though a reader of the literature devoted to the subject can hardly avoid the feeling that its treatment, linked as it has been to an exclusively art historical perspective, can still be expanded toward wider horizons. It could be objected, again, that what has been said is basically everything that could be said about what is, after all, 'just' a picture, and not even one of the most famous in the field of early medieval art

[19] Ibid.

[20] Speciale 2014, p. 84, n. 36.

history. Such an objection must be discarded without second thoughts.

Lucinia Speciale identified a general trend in scholarly literature tracing its origin since the work of 1942 by Gerhard Ladner, who firmly decreed that those representations were to be considered just "stereotyped commemoration-formulae". [21] Ladner's statement was spurred in particular by the attempts made by other scholars at the time at recognizing specific individuals in those pictures (and thus considering them almost as equals to realistic portraits). However, it could be said that it also had an unfortunate side-effect. Indeed, most scholars subsequently followed Ladner's judgement, and opted for relegating the figurative elements of the commemorations to a secondary role at best. They could be useful for some clues about dating, or concerning purely art historical problems, but nothing more.

Speciale may be considered one of the utmost advocates of a reconsideration of the importance of the Exultet pictures representing rulers, with significant continuity and advancement of previous contributions. One could turn for an example to the elegant treatment reserved to the commemorations by Guglielmo Cavallo at the end of an essay devoted to manuscript production in pre-Norman southern Italy. Despite not being able to address the subject in the most thorough way, for reasons of space inside an essay otherwise devoted to other subjects, Cavallo

[21] Ladner 1942, p. 186.

managed to alert the reader the essential features of the visual commemorations. They deserve to be highlighted here. For Cavallo, a proper understanding of the commemorations is impossible outside the attempt at understanding also "una particolare situazione locale e di tempo" in which the commemorations themselves were produced. [22] The Italian scholar understood how the commemorations could not play an accessory role inside the overall iconographical cycle:

"The passage from an immediate order of vision, even a specular one, like that of the community present during the rite, to the doctrinal and historical one, made the latter concrete and tangible: the representation of power - local and universal - showed itself with all the force of a reality verifiable in every moment through the figurative layer in which the nameless audience found and recognized itself."[23]

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[22] Cavallo 1977, p. 127.

[23] Ibid.: "Il passaggio da un ordine di visione immediato e concreto, speculare anzi, quale quello della comunità presente al rito, all'altro dottrinale e soprattutto storico, rendevano quest'ultimo corposo e tangibile: la rappresentazione del potere – locale e universale – si presentava con tutta la forza di una realtà verificabile in ogni momento attraverso il piano figurativo in cui si ritrovavano e si riconoscevano gli astanti senza nome."

This passage, the process it describes, allowed the iconographical cycle of the Exultet rolls, once again in Cavallo's words, "to be a vehicle of ideological contents that, elevated to collective values, were turned to the subaltern classes in order to call for acceptance and consensus."[24] This reading of the Exultet iconographical cycle is substantially and fundamentally similar to the one adopted in this thesis. To it, we may easily add the perspective adopted by Nino Zchomelidse, who in her *Art, Ritual, and Civic Identity in Medieval Southern Italy* explored the possibilities the Exultet rolls offered for framing (or re-framing) civic identities during the multi-faceted events which characterized southern Italian history, particularly in the aftermath of the Norman conquest. In this thesis, then, the emphasis on the importance of the particular historical context (Chapter 2) is combined with an attempt at understanding the 'message' being transmitted (Chapters 4 and 5). If a shortcoming can be found in Cavallo's view of the commemorations, it is perhaps that it doesn't take into proper account the content of the message, just assuming it had to be equal to pure ideological propaganda, and without connecting it with the true essence of the Exultet roll as a liturgical object, embedded in a specific politico-theological and eschatological framework. Furthermore, it seems to give the audience's consensus as an

[24] Ibid.: "Il ciclo figurativo dell'Exultet, dunque, veniva ad essere tramite di contenuti ideologici che, elevati a valori collettivi, erano rivolti ai ceti subalterni per sollecitarne adesione e consenso."

unproblematic *datum*, both mistakes instead avoided by Zchomelidse. What this thesis aims to show is that the figurative commemorations in the Vat. lat. 9820 were the result of latent political tension and, while it is impossible for us to recover what the audience may have thought and how it may have actually 'received' the message, a look at what happened after the Vat. lat. 9820 was commissioned and made should at least cast a doubt over its effectiveness as a 'simple' propagandistic tool.[25] Giulia Orofino, who substantially agreed with Cavallo's view[26], in a comparison she drew with the pictures accompanying another manuscript of Beneventan provenance, the *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae*, commented that the representation of the ruler on the Exultet roll, combined with that of the archbishop and his ecclesiastical dignitaries (Figure 2), was a way to visualize the alliance between the Church of Benevento and the dynasty, going as far as to posit a

[25] From this point of view, we follow Michele Bacci's understanding of 'royal images' as 'mixed' objects, at once enjoying both a political and religious meaning, where political communication was not necessarily superior to the needs of religious piety and devotion (both from the rulers themselves and the clergy who could perform prayers on their behalf); see Bacci 2022, p. 5. The same view is espoused by Vagnoni, particularly regarding the images of the Norman kings in ecclesiastical environments (S. Maria dell'Ammiraglio; Monreale); see Vagnoni 2017, in particular pp. 96-97. For an opposite view, applied to the image of the Byzantine emperor, see Studer-Karlen 2022, p. 138.

[26] Orofino 2004, p. 361.

superiority of the latter over the former.[27] This 'alliance', as Chapter 2 will show, should be interpreted more as a case of interdependence. And it was subject to the same tension mentioned a few lines above. Both Cavallo's and Orofino's suggestions, then, could pave the way for further investigation. Speciale further pursued this investigation by framing the Exultet pictures inside the wider scope offered by Lombard representations of rulers, from the very beginning of their kingdom onwards. She efficaciously considered the pictures on the Vat. lat. 9820 to be part of a continuum moving from the VI century 'Agilulf's lamina' (Figure 3) to the pictures of rulers on the manuscripts of the *Leges Langobardorum* from Cava de' Tirreni (for an example, depicting King Rothari, see Figure 4), in the ancient principality of Salerno. By making explicit such a framework, she contributed at paving the way for the analysis being undertaken in this thesis.

As David Hackett Fischer wrote, the evidence the historian works from and with "is always incomplete, his perspective is always limited, and the thing itself is a vast expanding universe of particular events, about which an infinite number of facts or true statements can be discovered."[28] In other words, there is always something more to say.

In the specific case under discussion here, Fischer's 'more' could be obtained by looking at the Vat. lat. 9820 from a

[27] Orofino 2000, pp. 148-149. Also in Orofino 2004, p. 364.

[28] Fischer 1970, p. 65.

different perspective, hinted at by the scholars we mentioned above but not thoroughly explored yet. Namely, by looking at the political and cultural context already mentioned above and that, to put it simplistically, 'created' it. This means that this is not, properly speaking, a thesis in art history, at least not in its traditional, more compartmentalized, sense. Here the focus lies instead in political, social, and cultural/intellectual history, the approach used is, fundamentally and substantially, that proposed already many years ago by Erwin Panofsky when he described his ideal-type of iconographical analysis. In particular, the figurative representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820 will be used as a window, opening up new perspectives and new points of view towards the horizon made by the political, social, and cultural landscape of early medieval southern Italy. Already in 1974 Antonio Thiery argued that, in order to enhance our understanding of the Early Middle Ages, scholars should pursue an investigation aimed at recovering (for what is possible) that "symbolic-semantic" chain constituting the pillar, and the most fundamental one, of communication.[29] In Thiery's view, this meant bridging, at least partially, the gap created by the loss of the capacity of early medieval objects to inform, to communicate with, the contemporary interlocutor.[30] As will be seen in Chapter 5, the representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820 has suffered

[29] Thiery 1974, p. 420.

[30] Ibid., p. 421.

from this loss as well, as to our eyes some of its elements may seem devoid of meaning, or at least their meaning may look as irretrievably lost to us. By recovering a part of the politico-philosophical thinking of the times and combining it with what we know of the political, cultural, and social context of late-X century Benevento, this gap may be partially bridged indeed. This aim is reflected in the structure of the thesis itself, and in the goals each chapter aims to achieve.

1. 3 Structure of the research

Chapter 2 will be devoted to analysing the elements that made the political and social system of power of the city of Benevento. These elements have been roughly identified as three: the prince, the bishop (archbishop from 969), and the urban aristocracy. It is the constant intertwining among these three actors, their reciprocal relationships of conflict, negotiation, and cooperation, which created the system under study here. Only by understanding how their relative power vis-à-vis the others shifted, and how their relationship consequently changed, it is possible to properly introduce one of the main hypotheses of this work: namely, that the figurative representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820 represents a fundamental piece of the roll's iconographical cycle, and even, possibly, one of the main reasons for its creation. While the focus is, of course, the X century, and the more specifically the second half of it, nonetheless it has been necessary to begin this path by

looking at the antecedents, particularly from the last decades of the VIII century onwards, in order to better highlight the constant changes and shifts in relative power, and the novelties characterizing Benevento in the X century, with the rise to power of the Landulfids and the union with Capua.

Chapter 3 will take the reader to another field of inquiry: the analysis of the ritual system underpinning the power and authority of rulers of *Langobardia Minor*. This system is broken down in a number of different pieces. Particular attention has been devoted to those elements most directly attached to the figure of the ruler himself. Thus, the presence and role of the crown, the spear, the sword, and the ceremonies related to them, are addressed in this chapter. Due to the scant iconographical evidence related to early medieval southern Italy, and to the need to offer a different, non-art-historical, perspective on the subject, the core of evidence in support of the argument being pursued will be mainly written, namely the historiographical tradition of the Lombard south. The crown, the ritual of crowning and, connected to it, that of anointing (in other words: elements and rituals of accession), have been tackled in depth. This is because they are probably the most significant ones in determining the symbolic outlook of the ruler, and not coincidentally the crown (together with the physical act of crowning) figures prominently on the Vat. lat. 9820. The rituals of crowning and anointing, also, contributed in a fundamental way to describe and communicate the position of the ruler in the hierarchy of

the Christian cosmos, a position that was the result of constant elaboration and development in the intellectual world of Latin Christianity.

Indeed, that is the focus of **Chapter 4**. Building on the findings of the previous chapter, here the lens shifts to the cultural and intellectual world. This is made all the more necessary as a core tenet of this thesis is that the study of representations of power, even pictorial ones, cannot be separated from intellectual history. Soren Kaspersen made arguably one of the most compelling arguments in favour of a stricter relationship between the study of images (and, more generally, art objects) and intellectual history. Without any pretence at covering his whole reasoning, he argued that it is not only possible, but also necessary, to establish a link between specific, even circumscribed, political events, art objects, and "certain modes of thought."[31] This triangle must be analyzed by scholars keeping all three points in consideration. In a sense, this is exactly the aim of this thesis. In Chapter 4, two main subjects are addressed. The first is the conceptualization of the ideal ruler as it took place in the Latin West, more generally. Carolingian conceptualizations will be in the limelight. This is due, roughly speaking, to their extreme relevance for all further developments in the field. Without denying the importance of previous discourses concerning rulers (such as those carried by Pope Gelasius and Isidore of Seville), Carolingian intellectuals found themselves

[31] Kaspersen 2006, pp. 411-2.

facing a political landscape that had greatly changed, with the Frankish monarch clearly and incontestably ascended to the role of hegemon in Latin Europe well before his position as such was formalized with the famous imperial coronation of 800. This combined with increased interest in Church reform and, as a consequence, in the correct relationship between the ruler and the Church (not to mention the relationship between the Frankish sovereign and the other rulers) made Carolingian intellectuals acutely aware of the need for theorizing and conceptualizing about the perfect Christian monarchy. This was a need that became more pressing with the death of Charlemagne and the consequent troubles the imperial authority had to face, first through the fragile and shifting relationship between Louis the Pious and his sons, and then among the brothers and their respective heirs. As in the past centuries this Carolingian theorization was inevitably grounded in a reflection on the relationship between God and ruler, which in turn strongly linked the subject with contemporary debates and developments concerning God, Christ, and their role in the Christian cosmos. In other words, Carolingian political philosophy was almost, if not entirely, equal to political theology. And these elaborations in political theology proved to be foundational for further developments in the course of the history of the Latin West.
One of the main expressions of Carolingian political thought is to be found in that peculiar literary genre labelled *specula principum*, mirrors of princes. It is a vast genre (many different personalities opted for it during the

Carolingian centuries) and for this reason it has been impossible to offer a complete overview of it, which would have easily exceeded the limits of this study. The strategy adopted, then, has been to select a few works, and to look at them for the main elements in conceptualizing the ideal Christian ruler. The final aim is to draw a picture, albeit tentative, of the relationship this ideal ruler had with both the earthly society he was called to govern and the divinity he was required to relate to.

The bottom line of this process is a clarification of scholars' theories concerning the ideal of 'sacral kingship'. There is no need for a full reconstruction of how 'sacral kingship' has been a subject of historiographical analysis over time. However, a few words about it may help contextualizing the debate. That ideal of 'sacral kingship' has indeed exercised extreme fascination in scholars (as much, one could say, as those who experienced it first-hand), perhaps since the beginning of the XX century and the publication of that seminal anthropological-historical work of Frazer, *The Golden Bough*. But to speak of kingship in its relationship with the divine during the Middle Ages, means to speak, first and foremost, of the work of the German scholar Ernst Kantorowicz. Much use will be made in this thesis of his seminal work on the subject, *The King's Two Bodies*. To summarise the whole of Kantorowicz's argument here would definitely exceed the limits of this introduction. Suffice to say that he identified three shifts in the conception of kingship taking place from the Early to the Late Middle Ages. In each case, the concept of kingship

centred around the relationship between the sovereign and another 'entity': God, Christ, and the Law, respectively. Theo-centred and Christ-centred kinds of kingship are the ones of our interest here, the former more than the latter. According to Kantorowicz, theo-centred kingship characterized Carolingian rulers in particular, while a much stronger emphasis on the relationship between the king and Christ began to be established only later, from the late Ottonian/Salian times onwards. Kantorowicz's analysis, as witnessed by *The King's Two Bodies* and some others of his works, sparked decades of studies on the subject. The list of scholars who dealt with 'sacral kingship', and early medieval kingship more generally, would be extremely long. Some of them however deserve to be mentioned here, in particular since their works have seen extensive use in this thesis.

Of particular interest, for the case under analysis here, is to adopt the perspective offered by the studies of the Polish scholar Paweł Figurski. Drawing on previous studies by other scholars (chief among them, Mayke de Jong) he proposed a re-interpretation of medieval kingship in light of the concept of *sacramentum*:[32] the connection between the immanent (material) world and that of the divine, a connection grounded in Christian eschatology, in the need

[32] This conception of kingship is also proposed by Le Goff 1993, in particular p. 4, where he defines the medieval king "un roi ministériel", in a clear reference to the medieval concept of *ministerium*.

to prefigure the Divine Realm to come. This concept becomes central to our interpretation of the Vat. lat. 9820.
But a second step has been needed as well: to connect Carolingian and post-Carolingian political thought to early medieval southern Italy. Once again, it has been necessary to take a close look at historiographical sources. In particular, the *Chronicon Salernitanum* has revealed itself as a precious source to reconstruct the reception and adoption of that political thought among the southern Lombards (*contra* the opinion already expressed by Loew, who considered his work as made with "far less skill and acumen" compared to the histories of Paul the Deacon and Erchempert[33]). The narrative offered by the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, taken together with a closer look at those rare surviving products of more genuinely philosophical nature coming from *Langobardia Minor*, such as the *Ars grammatica* of Ilderic of Montecassino (a disciple of Paul the Deacon), or poetical works such as those of the eclectic poet Eugenius Vulgarius, have allowed to draw a picture both of that abovementioned reception of political thought and of the intellectual and philosophical milieu of Lombard civilization in southern Italy.

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[33] Loew 1980, p. 9. For a view of one of the main sources of the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, that is the history written by Erchempert, see Berto 2013, pp. 6-37, and Berto 2012, in particular pp. 158-165 for the views the author expressed about the 'Beneventan' dynasties that hold power in Benevento opposed to the 'foreigners' Siconids.

Chapter 5 moves the focus back to the Vat. lat. 9820. Here is also where iconography comes back into play. The aim of the chapter is to provide an analysis of the figurative representation of the ruler on the roll in light of the findings of the previous chapters. This means that all aspects of it are taken into account: its iconography; but also its place inside the framework of Beneventan liturgy; and the place it was commissioned for, the monastery of S. Pietro *extra muros*. All these elements are used to contribute to a novel interpretation of the ruler's representation. The grounding concept around which this interpretation is built, is that of sacramental kingship, already mentioned above. The bottom line of the argument could be summarized in two points: that the representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820 can be properly understood solely when integrated inside the framework offered by the concept of sacramental kingship; and, in turn, that this interpretation cannot but rest on considering that picture together with the rest of the Vat. lat. 9820's iconographical cycle. Once both points are taken into account, the ruler's representation on the earliest extant Exultet roll truly assumes the role of a window, as anticipated above. A window which opens on the cultural and intellectual landscape of Lombard southern Italy, together with its political and social context in the moment when this world is almost approaching its twilight. The Vat. lat. 9820, through its peculiar representation of the ruler, truly becomes the 'reef' Bertelli was writing about.

1. 4 *Langobardia Minor* in a wider Mediterranean context

But the whole argument also rests on the idea, perhaps obvious to some but nonetheless important to emphasize, that it is not possible, and in any way not effective from a scholarly point of view, to look at *Langobardia Minor* as an isolated world. This is no novelty, of course, as long as many studies have been devoted to the political, social, even economic, relationships that the southern Lombards entertained with the surrounding world. Nicola Cilento, who, as we mentioned, could be fairly considered a pioneer in the study of early medieval southern Italy, emphasized the role of *Langobardia Minor* as a melting-pot of cultures and civilizations. André Grabar, in his *Essai sur l'art des Lombards en Italie*, once managed to discuss Lombard art in comparison with artistic traditions ranging all over the Mediterranean (Visigothic, Byzantine) and beyond (Armenian).

"A field, particularly privileged and rich in attractiveness for the eyes of the historian of civilizations" ("un campo particolarmente privilegiato e ricco di attrattive agli occhi dello storico delle civiltà") were the words which Cilento used, more than fifty years ago, to characterize this geographical and cultural area.[34] He identified in the "coexistence of contrasting regimes and political influences, contacts and contrasts among populations belonging to different ethnicities and civilizations" ("coesistenza di regimi e d'influenze politiche contrastanti, i contatti e i

[34] Cilento 1971, p. 3.

contrasti fra le popolazioni di stirpi e di civilità diverse") [35] one of the chief and most prominent characteristics of early medieval southern Italy. Cilento's words did not fall on deaf ears, and his statement formed the starting point of many subsequent studies, attempting to re-configure the picture of southern Italy as a crossroad of civilizations, well before the Norman conquest made it 'obvious' both to contemporaries and to future scholars.[36] However, and despite this continuous strand of research, little or nothing has been devoted to a comparative analysis of the southern Lombard system of power, including its representation, and the rest of the Mediterranean world in a way similar to what has been done, for example, with the Carolingian and Abbasid courts.[37] Moreover, no attempt whatsoever has been made at linking the elements

[35] Ivi, p. 4.

[36] Together with the works already mentioned here (and others which the reader may find in the bibliography), a mention should be made of the work of the renowned scholar Giuseppe Galasso, who devoted a whole book to the subject in 2009 (*Medioevo Euro-Mediterraneo e Mezzogiorno d'Italia da Giustiniano a Federico II*, Laterza, Roma-Bari). See also the 2001 volume edited by Pietro Corrao, Mario Gallina and Claudia Villa, *L'Italia mediterranea e gli incontri di civiltà* (Laterza, Roma-Bari), and the volume resulting from the XX Congresso internazionale di studio sull'alto medioevo of Spoleto, by the title *Bizantini, longobardi e arabi in Puglia nell'alto medioevo* (CISAM, Spoleto, 2012).

[37] The reference is to D. G. Tor (ed.), *The 'Abbasid and Carolingian Empires. Comparative Studies in Civilizational Formation*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2018.

constituting the southern Lombard symbolic system of power and authority and its figurative representation with the same systems existing in the Islamic and Byzantine worlds. The reasons for this lack are many, and some are definitely not to be overlooked. There are inherent, and almost unsurmountable, difficulties in comparing two worlds, divided as they were by a religious and linguistic barrier, and the paucity of evidence available further compounds them. However, and at the same time, it would be a mistake to ignore the possible reception, for example, of Islamic motifs of kingship into southern Italy. The conclusions to this thesis aim at establishing some ground for this possible future field of research by integrating the results of the analysis carried out in the preceding chapters with a quick overview of the Islamic presence in southern Italy and to Muslim-Lombard interactions.

1. 5 Focusing the research

It emerges clearly from the structure of this thesis that this is not an art historical study in the most traditional sense of the word. While iconography and art history necessarily play an important role here, the main focus is on the practice and theory of politics among the southern Lombards of the principality of Benevento. Iconography and art history have thus been integrated inside a broader interdisciplinary framework including political and social history, cultural history, history of philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. The factors contributing to

this choice have been many, not least the number of contributions already devoted to the art historical side of the subject under study and the field of specialization of the thesis' author. At the same time, though, it has also been almost necessitated by the nature of the subject itself. The whole point of the analysis proposed here is to show how the representation of the ruler lay at the intersection between certain contents of early medieval political thought and political theology on one side, and the peculiar and unique political and social circumstances of late-X century Benevento on the other. These two elements can be considered being two of the pillars of the analysis being carried out, the third being the consideration of how political thought found its expression in a determined symbolic code. A word of warning is necessary: in no way should the argument proposed here be understood as implying that that symbolic code was univocal and unambiguous. To conceive it as such would be, as repeatedly and convincingly shown by scholarship, absurd. Contradictions, ambiguities, differences always existed.[38] If

[38] The literature on this subject is extremely vast. Here it suffices to mention an intervention by Jean-Claude Schmitt (2003, p. 25; pp. 26-34 for wider methodological suggestions on the possibilities and opportunities to integrate art historical and proper historical perspectives). Looking at the same issue, but using ritual as an interpretive tool, see Theuws (2000, pp. 4-5), who heavily builds on Barth's theories, while keeping in mind the need to adapt contemporary theories to non-modern contexts (such as late antique

those are not properly analyzed here, it is not because of their absence among the southern Lombards, but because of the present attempt at understanding one particular point of view, that of members of the ecclesiastical orders, thanks to the evidence they left us. If we could have the opportunity to look at the same subject from the point of view of the princes of Benevento themselves, it is easily conceivable that it would be possible to detect many differences in conceptions and ideals. Unfortunately, however, the southern Lombard rulers never equaled a character such as King Alfred of Wessex (871-899) in combining both ruling and learning (at least, not in a manifest way). And moving from there to the urban aristocracy of the ancient capital, or to the communities of peasants inhabiting its surroundings, would make the picture far more nuanced and complex as well. All this, however, lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

Specifically, the main assumption underlying this thesis is that one of the keywords for a proper understanding of the representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820 is 'hierarchy'. After the arguments of all chapters will be lined

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and early medieval societies). Of particular interest, in Theuws' view, is how an individual actors could use different cultural sources, at the same time, in order to cope with ambiguities; this way, an actor cultural view could become the result of a complex intertwining of different sources (the example he makes is a V century Gaul aristocrat who could derive his cultural values simultaneously from those of the old Roman aristocracy, from Christianity, etc…; ibid., p. 7).

up, indeed, it would finally look plausible to conceive that that representation of the ruler, far from being an 'accessory' was, in fact, thought as a fundamental, even central, component of the whole iconographical cycle on the Exultet roll. This would have been possible because, in early medieval thought, the ruler stood at the center of a set of hierarchies, at least in the number of two: that existing between Heaven and Earth; and that between the ruler himself and the polity he ruled. Jacques Le Goff put it clearly when he described the medieval king as the product of the intersection of three different qualities: 'singularity' (the ruler must be a monarch, a sole ruler); faith (in our case, the Christian faith); and nobility.[39] According to Le Goff, the medieval ruler as monarch is the head of the political hierarchy, enjoying unique power over his subjects; as a Christian ruler, though, he is also in relationship with Christ, the Heavenly King (and, by consequence, the King of all, ruler included). He becomes the image of *Christus rex* (though not his equal). Still according to the French scholar, during the Early Middle Ages this hierarchy of relations of the ruler took direct inspiration from the theology underpinning the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, a Christian writer allegedly identified with a legendary bishop of Athens from the I century (in reality, most probably a figure living

[39] Le Goff 1993, p. 2.

in the VI century).[40] The concept of hierarchy, at all levels of Creation, is omnipresent in Pseudo-Dionysius, due to his firm acceptance of Neo-Platonism. As efficaciously summarized by two interpreters of his works, according to Pseudo-Dionysius "God relates to his creation through the medium of hierarchy."[41] Le Goff has not been the sole scholar with this important issue. It is a testament to the usefulness of the concept of hierarchy when studying the Early Middle Ages and their political and social structures, that the noun appears in the title of two of the eight books composing the series *Les élites dans le haut Moyen Âge* (being beaten only by the term 'élite' itself). There is no need here to detail the elements constituting early medieval hierarchies, so efficaciously summarized in its diachronic transformation by François Bougard and Régine Le Jan in

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[40] An introduction to the Pseudo-Dionysius and his peculiar strand of Neo-Platonic Christian thought can be found in the work by Christian Schäfer (*Philosophy of Dionysius the Areopagite. An Introduction to the Structure and the Content of the Treatise* On the Divine Names, 2006, Leiden-Boston, Brill), who summarizes the debate surrounding the elusive figure of the author and his work. For another perspective, in particular concerning the reception and use of Dionysius by subsequent thinkers to our times, see Susan Coackley and Charles M. Stang (eds.), *Re-Thinking Dionysius the Areopagite*, 2009, Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell. Dell'Acqua (2014, p. 209) describes neo-platonic thought, as mediated by Pseudo-Dionysius, as a "carsic presence" spreading all over the theological, philosophical, and aesthetical reflection of the Middle Ages.

[41] Klitenic Weat & Dillon 2007, p. 51.

the first chapter of the fifth volume of the abovementioned series, *Hiérarchie et stratification sociale dans l'Occident médiéval (400-1100)*. But it is nonetheless necessary to recall that it was all-pervasive. It structured the *regnum* as it did the *ecclesia*. And in the same book Le Goff's thesis was further explored and expanded upon by Dominique Iogna-Prat, who also managed to establish the link between the early medieval world and 'dionysism' in the thought of Eriugena, not so coincidentally, perhaps, in an age when the Latin West was structuring its own new political hierarchy under the Carolingians.[42]

Le Goff's argument can be easily considered to be the starting point for a different kind of analysis of the representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820. 'Hierarchy', then, becomes the central tenet and the main interpretative key of the iconography of the first extant Exultet roll. It would be possible, even, to state that the whole of Chapter 4 is, in fact, devoted to understanding early medieval conceptualizations of this hierarchy, its ideal dimension. An ideal dimension that was at one and the same time both truly political and truly religious, eschatological even.

Its role was truly political because, as the Italian political scientist Domenico Fisichella rightly wrote, "the problem of politics […] is not the complete, irreversible and definitive erasing of conflict. The authentic problem of politics is how to deal and handle with conflicts, assuming as experiential element that conflict is ineliminable from the political

[42] Iogna-Prat 2008, pp. 57-60.

dimension."[43] This conflict emerges from the essence of political power itself, "who decides who gets what, when and how" in the words of the XX century political scientist Harold Lasswell.[44] For this reason, and in this case, the idea of conflict must be considered as necessary for a full understanding of the political, social, even economic situation experienced by Benevento at the end of the X century.

And it was truly religious, because the early medieval political dimension was inexorably and inevitably tied with sacrality, on all levels. The Exultet roll itself could be used as the most perfect representation of this intertwining, where eschatology, theology, and political order seem to flow flawlessly one from another.[45]

This conceptualization of the ruler's representation in the Vat. lat. 9820 paves the way quite naturally to some sort of comparison. Pictures representing some kind of coronation were of course not a rarity along the shores of the Mediterranean, nor in Western Europe, throughout the

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[43] "Il problema della politica non è […] la cancellazione completa, irreversibile e definitiva del conflitto. Il problema autentico della politica è come affrontare e trattare i conflitti, assumendo quale elemento di esperienza che la conflittualità è ineliminabile dalla dimensione politica." Fisichella 2010, pp. 62-3.

[44] Lasswell's definition comes from one of his most important studies, by the title *Politics: who gets what, when, how*, London and New York, McGraw, 1936.

[45] Reuter 2006, p. 95.

Middle Ages. However, no representation of coronations has survived to us from southern Italy from the time before the X century. Rulers were represented together with their courts and their dignitaries, the most illustrious example (though from outside the Mezzogiorno) being probably that of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora represented on the mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna (Figures 5 and 6).[46] In the mosaics in San Vitale, the illustrious emperor is represented standing, beside the apse (where the scene is instead dominated by Christ), surrounded on one side by the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the former capital of the Western Roman Empire, and now seat of the Byzantine Italian dominion, led by bishop Maximianus (who's identified by name), and on the other side by secular dignitaries, including armed soldiers. Perhaps the viewer may have the feeling of some sort of similarity between the representation of the ruler and his followers on the Ravenna mosaics and on the Vat. lat. 9820, but to postulate a more or less direct connection between the two pictures, moreover separated by a hiatus of four centuries, is impossible. Not to mention that there are, also, strong differences between the two representations, the most striking of which may be, arguably, the absence of angels and the fact the Justianian is presented surrounded

[46] For a recent introduction to the history and iconography of the Ravenna mosaics, see D. M. Deliyannis, *The Mosaics of Ravenna*, in R. M. Jensen, M. D. Ellison (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Early Christian Art*, London and New York, Routledge, 2018, pp. 347-363.

by his court (and not physically separated from it), and as already crowned (the model for this depiction of the emperor and its relationship with the Vat. lat. 9820 will be addressed in the next pages). It could be interesting to note how the Eastern Roman emperor never really set foot in the capital of the Italian dominion he conquered. In this sense, the representation of Justinian, Theodora, and their courts, seemingly become substitutes for their own physical presence.

Moving closer, both geographically and chronologically, to the Vat. lat. 9820, another set of representations may be drawn into consideration, namely those of the Norman kings. These pictures (mainly in mosaics) are well-known and have been thoroughly studied, attracting a number of valiant scholars and, consequently, providing the subject of equally vibrant debates concerning their primary role and nature. For obvious reasons of space, it will not be possible to present a thorough overview of Norman representations of rulers, but some of them nevertheless deserve to be put in relation with the subject of this analysis.

We will start with the picture closest to the Vat. lat. 9820, both in time and space. It is a representation of Roger II (1105-1154, king of Sicily from 1130) found on a plaque from the ciborium of the Basilica of St. Nicholas of Bari. On it, the Norman king is represented holding a golden sphere and a rod (iconographically identical to the Byzantine *labarum*), while being crowned by the titular saint of the

basilica.[47] The same pose, of the king, on the left, being crowned by a saintly figure on the right, is then reprised in what is probably the most famous representation of Roger II, that is found on the mosaics of the church of S. Maria dell'Ammiraglio, in Palermo (Figure 7). In this case, however, the role of St. Nicholas is taken by Christ himself. [48] Very similar to this picture is also the representation of King William II (1166-1189) in the cathedral of Monreale, built by the king himself as the new dynastic mausoleum of the Hauteville dynasty (Figure 8).[49] Here an interesting addition is the presence of two angels, each of them carrying in their hands the two traditional symbols of Byzantine imperial power, the golden sphere and the *labarum*. But instead of giving them to the king (who's also dressed as a Byzantine emperor), the two angels are clearly focused on the seated Christ, who seems

[47] Vagnoni 2013, p. 110.

[48] It is interesting to note that the depiction of Roger II at S. Maria dell'Ammiraglio shares with the ruler of the Vat. lat. 9820 the same double-pointed beard. See Vagnoni 2021, p. 265.; also Kitzinger 2003, pp. 1057-1060.

[49] Calò Mariani 1983, p. 216; Delogu 1983, pp. 302-204. On the cathedral of Monreale, considered one of the foremost examples of Norman art and architecture, see W. Kronig, *Il Duomo di Monreale e l'architettura normanna in Sicilia*, Palermo, Flaccovio, 1965; specifically on the mosaics decorating the cathedral see E. Kitzinger, *I mosaici di Monreale*, Palermo, Flaccovio, 1991, and R. Salvini, *I mosaici del duomo di Monreale*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1942; see also A. Belfiore et al., *Il Duomo di Monreale: architettura di luce e icona*, Palermo, Abadir, 2004.

thus to become the true protagonist of the scene.[50] Do these Norman pictures bear any connection with the ruler's representation on the Vat. lat. 9820? Evidence is scant, but the differences between these representations are evident, and meaningful. The will to adopt and to adapt Byzantine imperial iconography is evident among the Norman kings. The same could not necessarily be said of the Vat. lat. 9820 (despite some parallels that will be duly addressed in Chapter 5). It is telling, also, that the role of the angels differs remarkably, not to mention the different visual relationship established with the figure of Christ.

Such a quick glance at some Byzantine and Norman representations may lead to the false assumption that the ruler of the Vat. lat. 9820 was born as a complete novelty, and remained as such during the subsequent centuries. Already Lucinia Speciale, however, has traced in it the possible reception of a Late Antique model, down through the Early Middle Ages, and ultimately to the age of Frederick II (1198-1250 as king of Sicily).[51] Both Speciale's argument and the model she identified deserve closer scrutiny. Such a model may be described, roughly, as the depiction of a ruler surrounded by two figures, and it was linked by Sabine MacCormack to the rituals of imperial accession (and their reenactment during the so-called imperial *vota*) emerging in particular from the IV century onwards. The Late Antique precedent Speciale is pointing

[50] Ivi, p. 112.

[51] Speciale 2014, pp. 91-92, n. 56.

to, thus, can be found already on coins minted during the reign of emperor Constantine the Great (306-337), in the newly-founded imperial mint at Constantinople. In one of these the emperor is depicted enthroned, the staff in his hand, flanked by two guards, each holding a spear.[52] This model was reprised under different guises and with variations during the Theodosian dynasty as witnessed by the well-known *missorium* of emperor Theodosius, depicting the emperor enthroned surrounded by his court, including two small angels, or victories, hovering at his side[53] (Figure 9), and it survived in the Eastern Roman Empire as well, transforming itself with the injection of a new Christianized meaning, ultimately resulting in Byzantine imperial representations (including, in part, the already mentioned mosaics in Ravenna) such as those found on the Par. gr. 510 and the *Psalter* of Basil II, Marc. gr. 17 (both of them will be addressed in Chapter 5). This model was not lost in the West either, at least not entirely. We find the ruler enthroned and flanked by two characters already in the abovementioned Agilulf's *lamina*. Charles the Bald (843-877) had been depicted in a similar fashion on the dedication page of the *Codex aureus* of St. Emmeram. Here the descendant of Charlemagne is both removed and distinguished from the rest of the court by his Byzantine-style baldaquin, with two angels hovering over him, and

[52] MacCormack 1984, plate 47.

[53] Ibid., plate 55.

being blessed by the Hand of God (Figure 10).[54] Now, there is obviously one manifest and significant difference dividing the Vat. lat. 9820 from these imperial representations (except for the Par. gr. 510 and Marc. gr. 17, as again Chapter 5 will show): the ruler of the Vat. lat. 9820 is standing, not enthroned.

There is one medium which actually kept transmitting in Italy a depiction of a ruling character, standing, and surrounded by two figures, and it is the same medium Speciale and MacCormack used as the starting point for the model we are discussing: coinage. The model is indeed reprised on coins dating from the reign of Heraclius (610-641) and minted in Sicily. In particular, some golden *solidi* contain a depiction of the emperor flanked by his two sons, Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas, as co-emperors.[55] This way of depicting the emperor was strictly linked with the political situation of the moment, when one emperor and two co-emperors were officially ruling in Constantinople, so it is hardly surprising that it should have disappeared thereafter. Nor the emperor is ever represented as surrounded by angels (or Victories), though the angel/Victory had been in fact represented on coins

[54] Schutz 2004, pp. 256-260. Schutz comes as far as to define the *Codex aureus* and its depiction of imperial majesty "the most sumptuous propagandistic claim and portrayal of the legitimacy of Carolingian royalty within the context of the Christian Empire." (p. 258).

[55] D'Andrea, Costantini, Ranalli, 2016, vol. II, pp. 60; 100-102.

minted under the reigns of some of the last Western Roman Emperors (though ostensibly 'alone').

Another potential medium of transmission does deserve some attention too. It is the ivory diptych, also commonly known as 'consular'. Originating possibly from the late IV century, ivory diptychs are succintly described by Alan Cameron as "two often elaborately carved panels joined with a hinge or clasp so that they could be closed like a codex." [56] Their origin and original role are currently disputed, despite their long-standing connection with the celebration of the accession of new consuls (hence their usual label as consular diptychs).[57] What is of interest for our purposes is that ivory diptychs usually depict the consul (who, it should be remembered, often was also the emperor in charge) either enthroned or standing, surrounded by two figures, sometimes identifiable as Victories, or allegorical figures of some sort. Under the feet of the main character, there could be scenes depicting games (the accession of a new consul was often accompanied by the celebration of games offered by him), or allegorical representations of prosperity. The motif inspired many variations, and it was not unusual to depict the consul holding a staff in his hand (the 'consular sceptre') and a *mappa*, a piece of cloth originally used by

[56] Cameron 2013, p. 174.

[57] On the origin of diptychs see ivi, 175-179. The most well known *corpus* is given by R. Delbrueck, *Die Consular-Diptych under Verwandte Denkmaler*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 1929.

Roman magistrates to signal the beginning of races and games which later evolved as an integral component of imperial and consular *regalia* (Figures 11 and 12). Interestingly, there are cases in which the hand holding the *mappa* extends away from the consul's body, while the staff is held near the chest, in a pose not at all dissimilar from that of the ruler of the Vat. lat. 9820.

Obviously, consular diptychs were strictly connected with the existence of the consular institution itself, and ceased to be made when the institution also ceased to exist. However, this does not mean they disappeared also. Quite the opposite. Many diptychs survived to us because they found use during the Middle Ages, an use already suggested by their form, as precious covers for liturgical books, for Bibles, even for reliquaries. [58] This renewed role for diptychs allowed for their conservation and their dissemination around Europe. It is not at all unlikely that some exemplars may have been present in Benevento, and particularly in the cathedral, at the end of the X century.

Last but not least, there are some other 'honourable mentions' that should be made, both due to their chronological proximity and to their connection with the Liudolfings who played such a relevant part in the history of the principality of Capua-Benevento at the time the Vat. lat. 9820 was made. An example in kind is the Apocalypse of Bamberg, labelled by Richard Emmerson as "one of the most magnificent representations of Revelation in medieval

[58] Cameron 2013, p. 192.

art". [59] The precise dating of this work (and, by consequence, the emperor who should be connected to it) have been subject to debate, oscillating between the reigns of Otto III (996-1002) and his immediate successor Henry II (1014-1024). The Apocalypse of Bamberg preserves the depiction of an emperor of youthful semblance, sitting on a throne while holding in his hands the sphere and the staff, and being crowned by saints Peter and Paul with a symmetric gesture that bears a remarkable similarity with the angels of the Vat. lat. 9820. To add further similarity between the two pictures, the emperor's depiction is actually framed in a two-level image, with the emperor himself and the two saints occupying the higher layer, the lower being the stage for the personifications of the imperial lands, crowned and bringing their fruits to the same ruler (Figure 13).

This imperial representation in the Apocalypse of Bamberg stands as one instance of a long series of Ottonian imperial portraits: the homage paid by the imperial provinces to the emperor enthroned (in this case, surrounded by ecclesiastical and military dignitaries under a baldaquin, reminiscent of elements of late Carolingian depictions) can be found on an earlier manuscript containing the *De bello Iudaico* (Bamberg Staatsbibl., Msc. Class. 79, f. IV and f. Iar, possibly made at Reichenau or Trier at the end of the X century); another enthroned emperor in full majesty is shown on the Gospel of Otto III (ca. 998-1001, München,

[59] Emmerson 2016, p. 26.

Bayerische Staatsbibl., Clm 4453, f. 24r; Figure 14); again Otto III is depicted, this time ascending to Heaven while being crowned by the Hand of God, in the *Apotheosis* in the Liuthar Gospel (made in Reichenau ca. 983-1000; Aachen, Domschatzkammer, Inv. Grimme Nr. 25, f. 16r; Figure 15). We can find a standing emperor and the angels in a later depiction of Henry II in the Regensburg Sacramentary (ca. 1002-1003, München, Bayerische Staatsbibl., Clm 4456, f. 11r; Figure 16). In this case, the emperor receives from the angels the spear and the sword while being crowned directly by Christ, both his arms held by saints Emmeram and Ulrich.

These Ottonian portraits have been the subject of intense scrutiny and study by many scholars, often in conjunction with the analysis of sigillographic and textual evidence, in the attempt of reconstructing their context, their purpose and, ultimately, the way they contributed to the construction (and eventually, propagation) of Ottonian imperial kingship.[60]

Thus coins (Byzantine coins in particular), consular diptychs, and earlier (or almost contemporary) depictions of rulers all possibly contributed to the result shown on the Vat. lat. 9820. In other words, what this brief overview of both earlier and later representations of rulers could reveal,

[60] For just one among many examples of this research path see P. Klein, *L'art et l'idéologie impériale des Ottoniens vers l'an mil: l'Evangéliaire d'Henri II et l'Apocalypse de Bamberg*, in *Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa*, 16, 1985, pp. 177-220.

is both the continuity in which the ruler's representation on the first extant Exultet roll stands, particularly when taken side by side with exemplars coming from different cultural contexts, and its originality (although this term must be used with caution and adapted to medieval conceptions of art) when it is compared to what has survived until our days of Southern Italian (or, more generally, Italian) iconography of kingship. This implies that, in order to properly understand the ruler of the Vat. lat. 9820, attention must be focused squarely on its Beneventan context. The novelties (or, simply, the differences) sported by the Vat. lat. 9820 become more significant, and can open new queries of analysis and interpretation. All chapters point to this direction, and Chapter 5 will tentatively show where those new queries may lead, specifically concerning some of the most peculiar elements of Vat. lat. 9820: the coronation by the angels and the presence of the two candles held by the ruler.

The structure and content of this thesis imply, also, that there has been no attempt at providing a complete and thorough examination of either aspect, the politico-theological and socio-political one, which would have required at least two whole distinct monographs. In fact, another approach has been preferred, relying heavily on existing scholarship and literature, and accompanying it with readings from selected sources to help strengthen the overall argument.

The very hope underlying this thesis is to provide further clues which would be evidence of how early medieval

southern Italy (and the Lombard principalities specifically) was a place where external influences and ideas could combine, thrive, and intermingle with existing indigenous layers.

This aim represents a sort of complement to the thesis already proposed, though from the point of view of trade and economy, by Alessandro Di Muro in an essay of 2017 by the telling title of *La connessione beneventana e le economie-mondo altomedievali*; and also an attempt at following the advice laid by Catherine Holmes, Jonathan Shepard, Jo Van Steenbergen, and Björn Weiler, to increase the number of studies devoted to "the geographical zones or areas of cultural production where contact and interaction between spheres was at its most intense."[61] It is also to show that a preeminently figurative object, primarily a subject for art historical inquiry, could at the same time be the focus for other forms of research, moving in fields much afar from traditional art history. Borrowing from Erwin Panofsky, the Vat. lat. 9820, and the figurative commemoration of the ruler on it more specifically, is for the purposes of this thesis both a "document" and a "monument". More so, as Lina Massa wrote, an extraordinary document.[62] That is, it is an instrument of investigation, and not solely the object of the investigation itself.[63] And still using Panofsky's

[61] Holmes et al. 2021, p. 16.

[62] Massa 2014, p. 127.

[63] Panofsky 1955, p. 10 for the distinction between “monument” and “document”.

concepts, as already mentioned above, it could be said that this thesis lies in the field of iconographical analysis (at least insofar as it deals with "the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, specific themes or concepts were expressed by objects and events") while moving closer to the borders with "iconological interpretation", that "history of cultural symptoms or 'symbols' in general", defined by Panofsky as "the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, essential tendencies of the human mind were expressed by specific themes and concepts."[64] Finally another, no less important, goal of this thesis is also to highlight once again the importance those extraordinary liturgical manuscripts we call Exultet rolls may still play for scholars. This last point becomes even more relevant when we consider the rolls in their role as integral components of the tangible cultural heritage of southern Italy.

A proposal regarding how the rolls (and in particular their iconographic components) could be exploited for further research and how their value as cultural heritage (subject to constant transformation already during their life as liturgical objects) could be further disseminated to the wider public is also drafted in the conclusions.

In order to give the reader a glimpse of the current distribution of text and images on the roll, Appendix 1 provides the text as it is today with the titles of the images

[64] Ivi, pp. 40-1.

that accompany it. Also, the full text of the Franco-Roman Exultet is provided.
Vat. lat. 9820; the representation of the ruler on it; the intentions of the roll's patron, Iohannes, and his figure; the political and social landscape of X century Benevento; the symbols of southern Lombard power and authority; the intellectual elaborations on the meaning and hierarchy of rulership together with its theological underpinnings. These are all the pieces of a puzzle that must be put together, if one wants to reach an understanding, however tentative it may be, of why the prince was represented on the roll, and why it was represented the way it was.[65] The next chapter will begin setting the pieces together, by addressing the evolution of the dynamics of power in the ancient southern Lombard capital, Benevento.

[65] Pace 1994, p. 250, for a methodological note.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7


REX
OVI MANVS
LICL ENI MEA
MVS
SCO
IC
XC
EGO D.O
SVM SEC
LVX TVR
MVN ME

Figure 8



Figure 9

ù



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22

2. The historical context of the Vat. lat. 9820: power relations in Benevento

We already mentioned that the most ancient Exultet roll that survived to us is the Vat. lat. 9820. This roll represents the very first introduction of a figurative element alongside the Exultet prayer that came to us, though it doesn't represent the very first illuminated liturgical scroll from southern Italy. Such is a Benedictional, belonging to archbishop Landulf of Benevento and, like its Exultet 'relative', coming from the same city. We will not dwelle on the analysis of this exemplar, though.

What is relevant to our purposes here is that the creation of illuminated liturgical scrolls is attested in Benevento for the first time under Landulf I, as it has been mentioned in Chapter 1. But what was the political and social situation in Benevento at that time? What was the structure of power relations between the different actors involved in the political life of the ancient southern Lombard capital? To advance some tentative answers to these questions will help laying the ground for the rest of the analysis. For this reason, this chapter will provide two important steps in the path towards an interpretation of the figurative representation of the ruler in the Vat. lat. 9820: first, it will identify the three most important actors 'playing the game' in Benevento at the end of the X century, that is the prince, the archbishop, and the urban aristocracy; second it will delineate the developments these three collective actors experienced. In order to achieve this, it will be necessary to

trace their historical paths, both before, during, and after the time of Landulf I.

2. 1 The princes of Benevento

We will begin our analysis of the actors operating in the Beneventan polity with the most 'obvious' choice: the duke (later prince) of Benevento. In order to get a relatively clear picture of the situation existing when the Vat. lat. 9820 came in being we will thus look closely at the path that princely power took in Benevento.

2. 1. 1 Ducal and princely power in the VIII century: judicial power, monastic foundations, and the relationship with the northern kingdom

The Lombards settled in Benevento since the very beginning of their presence in the peninsula, with some scholars arguing even for an earlier date.[66] The status of the

[66] The Lombard settlement in so southern a city, compared to their place of provenance, and their showing an organized presence in it since the very first moment, have somehow baffled scholars, with some arguing in favour of the traditional view that saw the Beneventan Lombards originating from a 'detachment' of the army led by Alboin, while others argued in favour of a settlement of Lombard federates serving in the Byzantine army already under Narses, a few years before Albion's arrival, who had then managed to exploit the weakening of

Beneventan duchy as a political entity vis à vis the northern kingdom of *Langobardia Maior* has been equally the subject of debate: was the duchy an integral part of the kingdom or, at the contrary, a *de facto*, if not *de iure*, independent polity? The issue is a complex one: it involves not only a careful reading of the political and military history of the duchy from its inception until the end of the northern kingdom, but also an equally careful look at how the relationship between the two entities were perceived by the Lombards themselves. We will not delve into this subject in detail, however. Suffice it here to say that it is hardly possible to conceive a situation of total independence of Benevento from Pavia, the seat of the Lombard court in the north. After all, a duke of Benevento, Grimoald I, became king in the north. Vice versa, more than once did the kings intervene to put on the Beneventan throne a candidate of

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imperial authorities to make themselves fully independent. This last theory takes its origin, among other elements, from the account of Procopius of Caesarea, *De Bello Gothico*, who explicitly mentions Lombard *foederati* serving under Narses. Gasparri (1989, pp. 86-93) concurs with the hypothesis of a first nucleus settling in Benevento independently of, and possibly before, Alboin's conquest of the north. For further bibliographical references see V. Von Falkenhausen, *I Longobardi dell'Italia meridionale: conquista e integrazione*, in *Tra i Longobardi del Sud. Arechi II e il Ducato di Benevento*, M. Rotili (a cura di), Il Poligrafo, Padova, 2017.

their own choice, as Arichis II himself came to power by this way.[67]

The duchy shared with the north several similarities, including the names of some court officials, for example the gastalds (*gastaldi*). At the same time, it appears clearly that the role of the dukes in Benevento was somewhat different from that of their eponymous 'colleagues' in the north, once one looks at how they chose to represent their power. One example in kind could be the way the dukes are depicted in the *iudicati*: as demonstrated by Zornetta, already from the VIII century these important documents show the duke of Benevento as the sole and exclusive judicial authority, putting him in a very different position even to that of its neighbour, the duke of Spoleto, the latter

[67] It is particularly interesting to remark how this connection between Benevento and the north mainly passed through the Duchy of Friuli: Grimoald himself was the son of Gisulf II, duke of that important frontier zone that controlled the Alpine passes separating the kingdom from the dangerous Avars; Arichis was of Friulian origins as well; even Paul the Deacon was from Friuli. Needless to say, this fact didn't make it easier for scholars to interpret the relationship between the southern duchy and the northern kingdom, as it would be possible to consider the relationship as a 'mere' dynastic one between Benevento and the Friulian ducal house. It should also be noted how Paul the Deacon, while writing about the campaign of Grimoald to rescue his son during the siege by Constans II, tells how many Lombard aristocrats of the north deserted the king, interpreting his decision as an attempt at leaving the kingdom, and not at defending an integral part of it.

always appearing as exercising its judicial authority surrounded by an assembly of judges that is absent in Beneventan documents.[68] This consideration led Zornetta to define the exercise of judicial authority by the dukes as a "theatre for the practice and the representation of political authority", a way to legitimize and make concrete at the same time his special role in the lands of southern Italy.[69]

The fact that this show of interconnection of judicial and political power was typically an attribute of the king in the north is telling.[70] The way the dukes approached their role as builders is also telling: both them and their consorts did become patrons of monastic foundations, founding them both inside and outside Benevento. After all, it was Duchess Theoderada, spouse of Romuald I, who founded the monastery of St. Peter *extra muros* for which the Vat. lat. 9820 was commissioned.[71] There is the foundation of the monastery of S. Sofia (which will be addressed later; not to

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[68] Zornetta 2020, p. 74.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Of course, that is hardly something unique to the Lombard monarchy, as judicial and political power appeared strictly intertwined in all the successor kingdoms to the Roman Empire; and in the Empire itself, the figure of the emperor had a markedly juridical character as well.

[71] The information is reported by Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, VI, 1, and further confirmed by charters issued by the dukes of Benevento. Also see Rotili 2014, p. 55 and Rotili 2017, p. 260.

be confused with the church to which it was annexed) by Arichis II, who also richly endowed it with lands.[72] To that, we should also add another monastic foundation, surely attributed to Arichis, this time farther from the capital: S. Salvatore in Alife. The latter is important for us mainly for one reason: its being a female monastery and its title were both a clear reference to another monastic foundation, S. Salvatore in Brescia, founded between 753 and 761 by the future king (and Arichis' father-in-law) Desiderius, at the time still duke of Brescia. As S. Salvatore in Brescia became a place for his daughter to be made abbess, S. Salvatore in Alife followed precisely the same pattern, as Arichis made one of his own daughters Adelchisa abbess of the new foundation.[73] That S. Salvatore in Alife played an important role for Arichis was to be further confirmed by the duke's decision to give it to the prestigious abbey of S. Vincenzo al Volturno, one of the most important monastic foundations of southern Italy together with Montecassino: since the latter had similarly received S. Sofia by the duke, Arichis' decision configured a strategy to use his own foundations to link himself and his house to the two highest centres of

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[72] Feller 2005, p. 270.

[73] It should be noted that the institution of S. Salvatore in Alife precedes S. Sofia. Despite this fact, the Lombard historiographer Erchempert explicitly puts the two foundations together in his account of Arichis' building program. (*Erch. Yst. Lang.*, pp. 86, 88). It is interesting to note how the author, a Benedictine monk, highlights the submission of both foundations to Montecassino and S. Vincenzo respectively.

religious and cultural prestige inside the borders of the duchy.[74]

What we have said until now concerning Arichis' policies is evidence enough of the fact that the dukes of Benevento could not be assimilated to the dukes of the north: the former may have not be fully independent from Pavia, but at the same time their position (political and geographical) allowed them a degree of freedom unknown to the latter; and this was reflected also on the political strategies they implemented at the local level, in the building and consolidation of relations with the local élites. The *translationes* gives us another piece of evidence, as they recalled also similar decisions by kings such as Liutprand (712-744) and Aistulf (749-756).[75]

2. 1. 2 Arichis II and the new principality

The events of 774 dramatically altered the political landscape in which Arichis was operating and made clearer the connection between the Lombard model of kingship

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[74] Di Muro 2016, p. 401. However, Zornetta (2020, pp. 96-7) argues for an element of difference between S. Salvatore and the late foundation of S. Sofia, with the former linked to a memorial strategy that had the ducal house as its focus, while the latter was to be more directly linked to the birth of the principality and less connected to dynastic concerns; also Zornetta 2019, pp. 10-1.

[75] Zornetta 2019, p. 7.

and the behavior of the Beneventan rulers. Charlemagne's campaign across the Alps had resulted in a relatively swift victory, culminating in the deposition of Arichis' father-in-law, Desiderius, and Charlemagne's taking over the kingdom and assuming the title of *rex Langobardorum*. This became a turning point in the history of *Langobardia Minor*, as Arichis decided to collect the legacy of the Lombard kingdom by claiming for himself the title of *princeps Langobardorum gentis* and defying Charlemagne's authority, at least at the beginning.

The conflict between the new-born principality and the Frankish juggernaut had a number of consequences: Charlemagne never annexed Benevento to his realm, as he was content with a declaration of submission by Arichis inclusive of sending his son Grimoald as hostage to the Frankish court; also, the future emperor extended his protection over both Montecassino and S. Vincenzo al Volturno (which will build on this relationship with the future Empire for centuries to come), and issued privileges to a number of ecclesiastical institutions, including the Beneventan cathedral, then led by bishop David; finally, the prospect of a Frankish invasion led Arichis to conceive the creation of a new seat of power in the coastal town of Salerno, that he rebuilt and made his residence (and, later on, also his final resting place).[76]

[76] Di Muro 2018, p. 525. According to the author, Salerno had been left as the only settlement resembling the characteristics of a urban centre

The foundation of Salerno leads us to consider the way Arichis conceived his new role as *princeps*. While the new urban project was surely the result also of military considerations, as Salerno, with the mountains surrounding it and its port, made for a better defensive position and one more easy to receive help from the outside (such as, eventually, the Eastern Empire),[77] one cannot ignore the political and symbolic meanings behind Arichis' decision. By itself, the building of a new city was an affirmation of sovereignty and power that traced its roots in Roman imperial conceptions straight through the experience of the successor kingdoms, particularly the Visigothic kingdom of Spain;[78] at the same time, building a new *palatium*, a new

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in the plain between the town and the ancient Greek foundation of Paestum already since the VII century; the Arechian re-foundation drastically changed that reality.

[77] Our sources explicitly confirm this assessment about Salerno's defensive 'qualities' and Arichis' intentions to use it as a stronghold in case of a Frankish attack; after all, and unsurprisingly, the Arechian project also included a new walled circuit, and its usefulness was to be proven in the future, before attacks brought by Saracens and even the Beneventan themselves. See Di Muro 2018, p. 526, who also links Arichis' project to the establishment of what he calls a 'topography of memory' in Salerno, including also the graves of the prince himself and his sons in the cathedral.

[78] Dey 2015, arguably provides one of the best arguments linking Late Antique imperial urban tradition with what we see happening during the Early Middle Ages. He also explicitly addresses the case of Arichis'

seat for the princely court, also meant to a degree the reconfiguration of the original Beneventan aristocracy, favouring the transfer to the new city of those *optimates* who, for some reason or the other, were more strictly related to the court itself and its function.[79] Of course, Arichis' decision to build Salerno did not result in the abandonment of Benevento as a seat of power: there, the project involving the extension of the urban walls towards part of the ancient Roman city and the consequent birth of the so-called *civitas nova* are testimony to the prince's continuing interest.[80]

Arichis' action on the legislative level also underscored a clear sense of continuity between the destroyed Lombard kingdom and his principality, and a defiance of Charlemagne's new role as *rex Langobardorum*. The new prince didn't refrain from issuing his own laws to be added to the original code by King Rothari in 643, already

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re-founding of Salerno, describing the new coastal city as "an armature of power in the late antique mold" (p. 187). See also Wickham 2005, pp. 591-692 for a discussion about the urban changes from Late Antiquity to the beginnings of the XI century.

[79] Azzara 2017, pp. 34-5.

[80] Di Muro 2018, p. 525, pp. 528-9. For the ancient capital as well Di Muro proposes to conceptualize Arichis' interventions as establishing a 'topography of memory'. In the case of Benevento, in the absence of the final resting place of the prince and its epigraphic correlates, this role fell mostly on the shoulders of S. Sofia.

extended by Grimoald, Liutprand, Ratchis and Aistulf.[81]In the second half of the IX century Arichis' role as legislator was still considered by his successors a model to be emulated.[82]

What we have said until now may lead one to think that in the wake of the events of 774 Arichis II pushed towards the full independence of his principality, also exploiting the symbolic power that the ancient Lombard model of kingship could have given him. This consideration strikes directly at the issue concerning the ambiguity of Arichis' position (and, thus, of the principality as a whole) vis à vis the new Frankish power in northern Italy, which would soon turn into a resurgent Western Empire. What concerns us the most, however, is how this ambiguous relation was translated into the symbolic power and authority of the new prince. The focus thus becomes the prince's own self-perception (or, better, self-representation), and how it laid the ground for the developments to be witnessed during the next century and a half.

In her discussion about the meaning of the title *princeps* that Arichis adopted for himself, Zornetta proposes an interesting comparison with what she labels (borrowing from K. F. Werner) "peripherical principalities": political entities on a regional level enjoying a semi-sovereign status and whose rulers based their own power and authority on

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[81] Azzara 2017, p. 37.

[82] Ibid.

the connection with a powerful local aristocracy. She makes explicit reference to the VIII century duchies of Alemannia, Thuringia, Bavaria and Aquitaine as examples of this kind of polities.[83] By contextualizing Arichis' new title, putting it in connection with previous (and partly contemporary) political experiences, it is possible to better understand the nuances of his gesture, and to better appreciate the delicate balance he strove for between domestic and 'international' politics in the framework of Charlemagne's conquest.

But if the *princeps* was not a *rex*, how was this difference reflected on the symbolic level in our case? Our sources hardly allow us to answer such a question. Suffice it here to mention that those histories written in the X and the XI century, such as the chronicle of the Anonymous of Salerno and the work of Leo Marsicanus, describe Arichis' decision implicitly as a declaration of sovereignty, thus involving the use of symbols that recalled the sovereign status of the

[83] Zornetta 2020, pp. 86-7. In this case, Arichis' title should not be confused with the later 'princes' that began to appear at the end of the Carolingian empire in France. These were, as Susan Reynolds said, anyone who could exercise government "at fairly high level", basically great lords enjoying an extraordinary degree of independence (Reynolds 1997, p. 260). Still, these 'princes' carefully respected, at least in words, the hierarchy of power. None of them ever crowned himself, a gesture which would have meant a declaration of kingship. Only kings could be crowned (ivi, p. 259). Looked at from this perspective, then, Arichis' gestures assumes an even higher political meaning, at the same time showing the level of its political ambiguity.

ruler. The former, for example, states that Arichis "capiti suo preciosam deportaret coronam"[84], and that for this very reason Charlemagne became so furious as to swear to kill him. Such an outburst of rage becomes more understandable if we move along the narrative, until the moment the author writes that Charlemagne was called emperor ("imperator") "because he took on his head a precious crown."[85]

Since this will be a subject to be addressed more thoroughly in the next chapter, we will not deal with it here. What we are concerned with, instead, is how those authors constructed the picture (whether historically grounded or not) of the first prince of Benevento. He is shown as stepping up from the role of duke also on a symbolic level, 'moving forward' compared to the traditions of Lombard kingship. In practice, this resulted in a further strengthening of the symbolic power and authority enjoyed by the prince of Benevento.

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[84] *Chron. Salern.*, 9, p. 20.

[85] *Chron. Salern.*, 11, p. 28: "[…] quia preciosam coronam in suo prorsum capite gerebat."

2. 1. 3 From Grimoald III to the Radelchids: new dynasties, new politics, new actors

The fact that Arichis managed not only to establish himself as prince, but also, and perhaps more importantly on the domestic side, to establish a true, though relatively brief, dynasty, is another element of relevance and another difference with the traditions of the kingdom.[86] The death of Grimoald III in 806, and then of Grimoald IV *storesayz* in 817, who some scholars have identified as a possible relative of Arichis as well, paved the road for the establishment of a new dynasty of Spoletan origin, that of the Siconids: first with Sico (817-832) and then with his sons Sicard (832-839) and Siconulf (839-851 as prince of Salerno). We already mentioned how the new princes used the Arichian past to boost their own legitimacy in Benevento. This meant resuming, transmitting, and thus reproducing the Arichian 'traditions' in the representation of symbolic power; but it meant also the continuation of an expansionist agenda, particularly towards the Campanian coastal cities.[87]

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[86] Delogu 2009, p. 263.

[87] Zornetta 2020, pp. 173-181 described in detail the policy undertaken by the Siconids towards the coastal cities on the Tyrrhenian Sea highlighting the continuity with the endeavours of Grimoald III and IV (the latter was particularly active against the Neapolitans), but also the increased activity of Sico and Sicard, with the sieges of 831 and 835 being probably the most significant military actions, also directly

Sicard's domestic policies did not meet with the favour of the aristocracy. In the end, the conflict became so irremediable as to result in a plot and the consequent murder of the prince. The death of Sicard sparked the beginning of what may be easily defined as the true turning point in the history of *Langobardia Minor*. With Siconulf being the only member of the family still alive, the supporters of the Siconids rallied around his figure (whose rescue from Taranto, where he had been previously exiled by his brother Sicard, is the subject of a very entertaining piece by the Anonymous of Salerno, in contrast to the more laconic text by Erchempert), while the conspirators elected Radelchis (839-851) as new prince in Benevento. It was the beginning of a civil war that would last for a decade and that would radically alter the political landscape of southern Italy.[88]

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connected with the *furta sacra* of the Lombard princes against the Neapolitans; this expansionist policy, together with its 'complement' made of relic translations, was also practiced toward other coastal towns, as shown for example by the case of the relics of St. Trophimena (Galdi 2018, p. 346). The *Pactum Sicardi* of 836, following once again Arichian precedents, established the shared Beneventan-Neapolitan control of the fertile plain of Liburia (todays Terra di Lavoro).

[88] The definition of the conflict between Radelchis and Siconulf as a civil war is given to us explicitly by Erchempert, who calls it *civili bello* (*Erch. Yst. Lang.*, 18, p. 116) in a clear attempt at contrasting the division of the Lombards with the occupation of Benevento by the Muslim leader Massar.

Radelchis in Benevento and Siconulf in Salerno became the two columns around which the aristocracy of the principality divided itself and fought for dominance. But the war did only resulted in destructions and devastations: it also contributed decidedly to the affirmation of new actors on the stage; actors that, already 'introduced' in the preceding decades, would now stay for good, in one way or the other: the Muslims and the Western Empire, the latter still represented by the Carolingians.

Muslim penetration in the Mediterranean basin was the direct consequence of the conquest of Syria, culminating in the establishment of the caliphal capital in Damascus during the reign of the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'awiya (661-680). The conquest of Egypt (from 642) and, subsequently, of the Byzantine province of Africa (Carthage was to fall definitively into the hands of the new conquerors in 698) opened the Central and Western Mediterranean to Muslim penetration as well. The new Abbasid dynasty that replaced the Umayyads at the beginning of the VIII century assigned the government of *Ifriqiya* (as the ancient Roman province was known) to the Aghlabids, who will keep ruling of the area up until the Fatimid conquest of the X century.[89] It was from the Aghlabids that the first, serious threat to the Italian

[89] On the characteristics of Aghlabid rule in Ifriqiya, in particular concerning the relationship between the ruling dynasty and the aristocratic social strata, see Chapoutot-Remadi, 2018.

peninsula was to come. It first took the shape of a series of incursions against Sicily and Sardinia from the middle of the VII century, followed by that of an invasion force against the first of the two islands, in 827. This event marked the beginning of a century-long process of almost constant warfare in Sicily (Syracuse, the capital of the Byzantine *thema*, was to fall in Muslim hands in 878; Taormina, the last Byzantine stronghold on the island, fell definitely only in 962).[90] The operations in Sicily almost naturally opened a window also on the rest of the Italian peninsula, and particularly on its southernmost regions. The civil war between Radelchis and Siconulf offered an opportunity for both mercenaries and raiders: the latter were able to conquer Amantea, on the Calabrian coast, in 839, then Taranto (at the time still the seat of a Lombard gastald) in 840, and to mount an attack against Rome in 846. A year later, it would be the turn of another Lombard

[90] Annliese Nef (2021, pp. 206-207) identified five different periods in which the Muslim conquest of Sicily could be divided: 827-840, which saw the establishment of a new capital in Palermo while the western part of the island was stabilized in Muslim hands; 840-860, characterized by an increase in military activities towards Enna and Syracuse; 860-878, that saw the resumation of the offensive after a rebellion and the subsequent conquest and sack of Syracuse itself; 878-901/2, that witnessed the Byzantine counter-offensive in Calabria led by Nikephoros Phokas, and, after it, the reprisal of Muslim offensives, this time against the peninsula, by the Aghlabid emir Ibrahim II, which culminated in the Battle of Stilo of 982.

city, Bari, which would become a long-term Muslim settlement (like Amantea and, a little less, Taranto) and the seat of an emirate.

Let us not delve into the complex series of events that characterised the reign of Louis the Pious (814-840), Charlemagne's son and heir to the imperial crown. Suffice it here to say that at his death the imperial title had been given to Lothair I (840-855). Together with the title, he had received a strip of land running from the shores of the North Sea down along the Rhine valley until the Alps, and the whole of northern Italy; his two surviving brothers, Charles the Bald (843-877 as king of West Francia, 875-877 as king of Italy and emperor) and Louis 'the German' (843-876) received the lands west and east of Lothair's realm, respectively. Thus, Lothair, who was already grounded in Italy since 818, was the one Carolingian most involved in Italian affairs, and the one closest (at least geographically speaking) to Rome. As such, he became the natural recipient of the request for aid sent by Pope Leo IV (847-855) in 846: that was the result of the Saracen raid against Rome occurred that same year and that had resulted in the sack of St. Peter and St. Paul *extra muros*.[91] Lothair and those members of the Frankish élite who supported him

[91] The event predictably roused concern on both sides of the Alps; however, it is also interesting to note how both Arab sources and a Christian chronicler such as Erchempert do not mention it at all (Di Branco 2018, pp. 45-46).

could not afford the luxury of remaining passive: between 846 and 847 the emperor issued the *Capitulare de expeditione contra Sarracenos facienda*, whose title already explains well its content.

The *Capitulare* provided for Lothair's son Louis (844-875), who had been appointed co-emperor by his father already a few years before, to lead the expedition. Here we see coming into play a character who will have a long-lasting (though not at all peaceful and untroubled) relationship with the southern lands. We also see the perception Lothair, his circle and, presumably, the pope as well, had of the situation and of its roots: indeed, the expedition led by Louis was to be accompanied by an imperial legation directed "ad Sigenulfum et Radalgisum", that is the Salernitan prince Siconulf and the Beneventan Radelchis, in order to ensure that "they would make peace between themselves and decide the rules and conditions of a very equitable peace and, if they reach this agreement, they would divide among them the Beneventan kingdom ("regnum")" and then join arms with Louis against the Arabs.[92] The mention in the *Capitulare* made it evident that in the eyes of Lothair and the pope, the Muslim attacks

[92] MGH, Conc. III, p. 137, 19-26: "ad Sigenulfum et Radalgisum vadant et eos inter se pacificent legesque et condiciones pacis aequissimas inter eos decernant et regnum Beneventanum, si pacificati fuerint, inter eos equaliter dividant […]".

were directly linked with the state of disorder and conflict in which the southern Lombard lands had fallen.

Both the Salernitans and the Beneventans, indeed, did not refrain from the recruitment of Muslim mercenaries to bolster their ranks, following a practice already well-established by the Neapolitans in the previous decade. The princes' control over their new allies, however, was all but stable, and the result was the establishment of Muslim strongholds on the peninsula, the most prominent of which was to be Bari, occupied in 847. Louis's foray into southern Italy thus had the strategic goal of negotiating a peace between Benevento and Salerno with the double intent of depriving the Muslim bands of their main source of sustenance and of uniting the Lombard forces to drive them off. This last objective was not to be achieved, however, as the young co-emperor was unable to move against Bari this time. Still, with the collaboration of Duke Guy of Spoleto, who had been sent to Benevento before him with the same goal,[93] he managed to achieve peace between Benevento and Salerno in 851. The text that became known in modern historiography as *Radelgisi et*

[93] Admittedly, this was not Guy's first meddling into southern Lombard affairs. The duke was indeed related to Siconulf, and it was he who had suggested the prince of Salerno move to Rome already in 844 to personally request that Lothair and Louis to accede to his claims (and for that 'favour', the Spoletan duke asked the not-so-modest payment of 50.000 *nummis*); Kreutz 1991, pp. 29-30.

Siginulfi Divisio Ducatus Beneventani[94] was, as shown by the title itself, an instrument accurately dividing the principality into two equal and separate entities to be centred around Salerno and Benevento. Siconulf received southern and western Campania (including Capua), northern Calabria and Lucania, while Radelchis kept Apulia, what is now Molise, and the Beneventan region proper; we could say that each of the two polities were to gravitate on a coast, Siconulf's on the Tyrrhenian, Radelchis' on the Adriatic.

Both princes received full possession of all public lands and assets in their respective territories, including those churches and foundations linked to the palace. The text is also significant for two other elements. First, as Gasparri pointed out, it shows how the partition of the ancient principality did not have the meaning of a complete and

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94 The debate surrounding the title of the text also mirrors the uncertainty of scholars as to its exact nature, with Martin having proposed, against the title chosen for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*'s edition, the label *praeceptum concessionis sive capitulare* (Martin 2005, pp. 201-17); Zornetta (2020, p. 227) opts for *pactum* as she highlights its bilateral nature (in contrast to its form, that of a unilateral concession by Radelchis to Siconulf); Nobile Mattei (2013, p. 5) seems also to lean towards this interpretation when he compares the *Divisio* with the *Pactum Sichardi*. The label of *ducatus* is modern as well, and in direct reference to Carolingian sources; in the text, the principality is correctly identified as *principatus* or *provincia beneventana*.

definitive fracture.[95] Second, it presents the subscriptions of the most important members of Lombard aristocracy, in this way noting their role and at the same time marking a definitive division along the lines of the two new principalities.[96]Finally, as a reminder of what the original purpose of Louis' expedition had been, both princes pledged not to ally themselves anymore with any Muslim force, and to give their aid to the expulsion of the invaders from southern Lombardy.

2. 1. 4 The emperor comes south (again): Louis II in Benevento

This expedition by Louis was only the first of the interventions he would perform in the south. Already in 860, now full emperor after the death of his father Lothair, Louis embarked again for the south, this time for Spoleto, removing Duke Lambert and count Ilderic of Camerino. By that time, the political situation in southern Lombardy had

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[95] Gasparri, 1989, p. 119. Among the elements he lists in favour of his hypothesis are: the retention, by both Radelchis and Siconulf, of the geographically unspecified title of *princeps gentis Langobardorum* (and not, for example, of prince of the Beneventans or the Salernitans); the provisions for the pilgrimage to the sanctuary of St. Michael of Gargano, as such recognized in its relevance as a cultic centre for all southern Lombards; and, of course, the common anti-Muslim effort.

[96] Zornetta 2020, pp. 229-31.

changed: both Siconulf and Radelchis had died, their place taken by their respective heirs. But while Salerno had been plagued by instability, seeing Siconulf's son Sico (II, 851-855) being deposed and then killed and a new dynasty taking power with Guaifer I in 861 (tellingly, a member of the powerful Dauferidi clan that has supported Siconulf's rebellion), Benevento had seen a far smoother transition of power, with Adelchis (854-878), Radelchis' second son, having succeeded his short-lived brother Radelgarius (851-854) on the throne. This gives us a good idea of how Radelchis had managed to establish the foundations of a stable dynasty in his own side of the ancient principality.

Adelchis had to face the challenge posed by the return of the Frankish emperor. Already the expedition of 860 was directed against two of his allies (Lambert and Ilderic had indeed participated to a joint effort organized by Adelchis against Bari), who subsequently had found refuge in Benevento itself. In turn, this had prompted Louis to move further southward, and to force Adelchis to recognise his suzerainty.[97] This intervention marked a shift in imperial policy towards the south: Louis stopped considering the lands of *Langobardia Minor* as a frontier, or at best a peripherical zone, of the empire, and began asserting their full belonging to the imperial entity.[98] Louis came back to southern Lombardy, accompanied by a substantial army

[97] Zornetta 2020, pp. 247-8.

[98] Zornetta 2020, pp. 249-51.

and by his wife, empress Engelberga, again in 866. Welcomed in Benevento, which he made into his main base of operations, the emperor had all the intentions to further enforce his claims to sovereignty in the south by finally putting an end to the Muslim presence in Apulia, and for these purposes he coordinated his efforts with the new Eastern emperor Basil I (867-886). Louis presence in the south was to be more long-lasting, this time: for five years the imperial court would reside in the Lombard capital, a time during which Louis' presence grew ever heavier for the prince and for the Beneventan aristocracy. Admittedly, it seems the emperor didn't make many efforts to hide his claims, and his consequent attempts at furthering them. He issued a number of diplomas, openly exercised judicial and legislative authority inside the principality, and came as far as minting coinage with his own name. All of this struck directly at the core of Adelchis' authority.

That the prince and his followers perceived that clearly is demonstrated by Adelchis' decision to issue a new set of laws already in 866: they were meant as a continuation of Arichis's laws, a reference Adelchis made explicit in the prologue, as he made explicit the contrast between the glorious prince Arichis and the threat of Carolingian invasion. [99] By issuing laws, Adelchis was making a statement, while also attempting to recover one of the constituent elements of Lombard (and early medieval in

[99] Zornetta 2020, p. 273; also Thomas 2016, pp. 205-6.

general) kingship. It would be the last time a Beneventan prince would attempt this.

In 871, Louis II finally managed to take Bari. He came back to Benevento in triumph, bringing with him as prisoner the emir Sawdān. This was to be the apex of the emperor's position in the south, an apex from which he would suddenly and ruinously fall. His triumph was to be short-lived, as he, his wife, and their daughter, would be imprisoned by Adelchis in Benevento. The emperor would be forced to swear to never return in exchange for their freedom. Unsurprisingly, as soon as he was back in the north, he would prepare for retaliation, beginning with requesting (and obtaining) the annulment of his oath by the pope. However, his prestige, and that of the imperial title, would be shattered, particularly in the south, despite his continuous attempts at meddling in southern affairs after that fateful year, attempts that included among other things also the foundation a new powerful monastic institution, that of the Holy Trinity, later S. Clemente, of Casauria, and a last voyage south, this time to Salerno only.[100]

Adelchis' 'victory' over the emperor, however, could not result in a true strengthening of his own position. The territorial losses sanctioned by the *Pactum divisonis* had already greatly reduced the resources available to him and to the Beneventan aristocracy; this negative effect was then compounded by the wars and devastations of the following

[100] Kreutz 1991, p. 47.

decades. In a system of government where the main assets in the hands of the ruler were still his ability to reward his followers and supporters with the most precious resource, land, and to keep at the same time enough for himself, those losses meant a drastic reduction in the prince's own power of attraction. Zornetta's analysis elucidates the elements that signal to us the disintegration of the network of support surrounding the prince, and the consequent increase in the autonomy of local officials who couldn't see anymore the Beneventan *palatium* as a source of power, authority, prestige and revenue equal to the lands they now administered.[101]

This was not a development of Adelchis' reign, as it was already under way during his father's rule.[102] However, nothing shows better the disintegration of the networks sustaining Radelchis' dynasty and its effects on Beneventan power as the military defeats suffered by the Beneventan Lombards before Louis' arrival in 866, and what happened after Adelchis' death in 878.[103] The fact that an attack

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[101] Zornetta 2020, pp. 267-70. For more on this subject see section 3 of this chapter, dedicated to the aristocracy.

[102] Gasparri 1989, p. 129.

[103] Ibid., followed by Zornetta (2020, p. 270), brings to light how the defeats suffered at Muslim hands in the second half of the IX century show the inherent deficiencies of a military system that had been left substantially unchanged since the times of King Aistulf, and that

against Sawdān around 858-860 was conducted by two gastalds, Maielpotus and Guandelpert, with the support of Duke Lambert of Spoleto and against the will of Adelchis, who had just resigned to pay tribute to the emir, tells us a great deal about how the policies enacted by the prince were starting to appear inadequate at best by local lords and officials. Perhaps it is less surprising then to see Adelchis being assassinated in 878 in a plot organized, as Erchempert tells us, "a generibus, nepotibus et amicis" immediately after the capture of a rebel city, Trivento.[104]

The military decline that the principality had suffered was further made clear by the failed campaign led by prince Aio (885-891) against the Byzantines in Apulia; a campaign that soon morphed into a war involving all major political actors in southern Italy, but that ultimately only led to a resurgence Byzantine presence in the peninsula. In 891, indeed, Benevento itself would be occupied by an Eastern imperial army led by Symbatikios and briefly made into the capital of the newly formed theme of *Langobardia*. For the first time since the arrival of the Lombards, the city lost its role as the capital of an independent polity. This situation was not destined to last for long, however: already in 895,

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hadn't received and adopted the new developments in the Frankish empire, namely the vassallatic-beneficiary institutions.

[104] *Erch. Hist.*, 39, p. 154; the failed attack against Sawdān by the forces of Maielpotus and Guandelpert (gastalds of Telese and Bojano, respectively) is also reported by Erchempert (29, pp. 134-6). See also Di Branco 2019, pp. 71-2.

four years after the occupation, the Byzantines transferred the capital of their southern Italian province to Bari, where it would remain until the Norman conquest, and the Beneventans took the chance to rise up against the occupants. In a significant show, once again, of its role, the Beneventan aristocracy chose to offer the principality to the Spoletan dynasty, that at the time was already enjoying both the titles of the kingdom of Italy and of the empire, with Lambert I (892-898 as emperor); significantly, Lambert was the son of Adelchis' daughter, Ageltrude; and it was Ageltrude who decided to welcome the Beneventan request by assigning to her father's throne Guy IV, member of a cadet branch of the Spoletan dynasty.

The arrival of the new prince did not mark the end of troubles in Benevento: already in 897, after only two years at most, the Beneventans had deposed Guy, and elected in his place a member of the old dynasty, who bore the burdensome name of Radelchis (II, 897-900). It was the last spark of light for the Radelchids. In 900 Atenulf I took Benevento and proclaimed himself *princeps*. A new era was beginning, that of the principality of Capua-Benevento.

2. 1. 5 The Landulfids in Benevento and the new principality

The county of Capua had emerged as a polity independent from the principality of Salerno with the ascension to

power of the ambitious bishop Landulf in 863 and his decision to refuse to recognize the new prince of Salerno, Guaifer (861-880), as his overlord (despite the fact that, according to Erchempert, Landulf himself and his brother Pando had helped Guaifer in taking the throne). The history of Capua and its county during the IX century is undoubtedly complex: one may understand such complexity just by looking at the urbanistic developments of Capua, which experienced changes to its topographical location (and even name) in different contexts and due to different circumstances, culminating in what scholars interpreted as a separation (or, better, as a temporary disassociation) between *urbs* (as a urban settlement topographically identified) and *civitas* (as a political and social organization), making it a unique case in southern Italy, and perhaps even outside of it.[105] These relocations and re-foundations were the mirror of an unstable political situation, both externally and internally: the wars against the Neapolitans, the devastations caused by the Muslims

[105] Di Resta 1989, pp. 162-3; Indelli 2019, pp. 24-5. The original site of Roman Capua (nowadays S. Maria Capua Vetere), south of the Volturno river, was retained by the Lombards after their conquest of the city. However, already in the 830s a second site was built, on a nearby hill, and called Sicopoli, to honour the Beneventan prince Sico; this became the 'main' Capua after the Muslim attack in 841. In 856, then, it was decided to move back the city to the plain, but this time on the ancient *Casilinum* and with the original name of Capua. A good source for following these transformations is, once again, Erchempert.

(including the complete destruction of the city in 841) and by the imperial army of Louis II (after the Capuans had refused, for the second time, to aid the emperor in his campaign and had closed the doors to him), constant internecine fighting between the members of the ruling élite.

With the re-birth of the city, with its original name, on the site of the ancient *Casilinum*, in 856 (following a further destruction), for Capua a new age of political and urban development began. [106] This didn't mean the end of troubles, however, as the infighting among Landulf's successors resulted in almost constant civil and intrafamilial strife. It was Atenulf who put an end to it. Tellingly, he was able to do that only after defeating his own brother, Lando III; he then embarked on an ambitious expansionist policy, which brought him first to a conflict with the Neapolitans, and then to the claims on Benevento.

With Atenulf as *princeps* the situation for Benevento changed. Unfortunately, the sources we have do not allow for a full reconstruction of the policies he enacted or inaugurated; as we will see in the next section, they allow us to tentatively sketch some elements of the relationships between Capuans and Beneventans at most. However, scholars have tried to discern some of those policies,

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[106] Di Resta 1989, p. 162, who also defined the whole project as aimed at combining "le capacità difensive di Sicopoli alla centralità territoriale dell'antica Capua."

nonetheless. At the same time, we are far better informed about the system of power that the new Capuan dynasty established in the lands falling under its dominion.

Concerning the first issue, it should be kept in mind that the principality of Benevento wasn't 'annexed' to that of Capua in the modern sense of the term: that is it didn't disappear entirely as a political entity.[107] The main seat of power was now in Capua. Minting activity was also concentrated in the city on the Volturno, as the Beneventan mint was closed; and the rank of *referendarius* at the Beneventan palace was apparently suppressed, but the chancery was kept in place.[108]Benevento often became the seat of the heir apparent, or another lesser member of the

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[107] Taviani-Carozzi 1991, p. 285: "Désormais [i.e. since Atenulf's acquisition of Benevento in 900] Capoue et Bénévent furent la tete de principautés distinctes, dirigées par les memes souverains, ou par des souverains apparentés, issues du meme genus."

[108] Indelli 2019, p. 27 seems to opt for a stricter interpretation when he says that the suppression of the rank of *referendarius* in Benevento meant that from that moment on only the Capuan one was responsible for the issuing of official documents; Taviani-Carozzi, pp. 285-286 prefers to consider the two chanceries as still separated. The lack of sources makes it hard to take a final position on the issue, but while there is no good motive to doubt that Atenulf may have enacted some degree of centralization it seems unreasonable to believe that the Beneventan chancery disappeared altogether, particularly if one considers that a scribal and notarial tradition in Benevento linked to the *Sacrum Palatium* would be as strong as ever in the next two centuries.

ruling family; however, this should not be interpreted as a form of partition, as it was always clear in whose hands the power lay: from Atenulf onward, the Capuan dynasty often adopted the institute of co-regency, in which the *senior* prince associated to power his son or brother in a way that would ensure a swift and safe transition also after his death. As a result, Capuan princes almost always ruled in conjunction with another member of the family, and it is easy to imagine how Benevento could provide a suitable venue as residence for these *junior* princes, though the superior authority of the *senior* was hardly in discussion.[109]

The adoption of such a system only apparently resembles what had happened in the Byzantine Empire with the figure of the co-emperors, and what was happening already, though in a much more marked way in terms of decentralization, in the Carolingian territories since the time of Charlemagne himself and, later on, with Louis the Pious and his sons. A significant difference is identifiable between the Capuan and the Carolingian system: the latter never resulted, at least until the death of Pandulf I, in a partition of the principality in the true sense of the term; the members of the ruling dynasty (those at least who were not directly associated to power) could at times receive lands to rule in almost complete independence (that of

[109] Di Resta 1989, p. 168 notes that, while both Benevento and Capua could be considered in this period to be capitals, the pre-eminence of the latter is evident.

Isernia and its surrounding lands being an example of this phenomenon), but still there was nothing comparable to the events that followed Louis the Pious' death.[110]

This was mainly due to the fact that the 'Capuan system' was organized around the core concept that power, or better the *ius regnandi* as Taviani-Carozzi called it, was equally shared among the heirs, brothers and cousins who were considered part of the same *societas*: before Atenulf, the title of gastald/count of Capua was considered to be indivisible, and thus all heirs 'participated' to it someway. The same became true once the main title became that of *princeps*. This meant that the members of the Capuan *societas* could (or, better, should) have received an equal share of power, through palace ranks and titles or the distribution of lands and *castella*, but never renouncing their own share of central power, that exercised by the gastald/count and, later, by the prince. It implied also that succession to the main title didn't proceed from fathers to sons, but in a more horizontal way, from brother to brother and then, after the end of a generation, to their sons and

[110] It should be noted that the famous Treaty of Verdun (843), together with the internecine conflicts that preceded it, is not considered anymore as the end of the empire as a unified institution. Scholarly debate on the matter is still lively, but what concerns us here is that there could be room for further comparisons between the kind of political partition witnessed in the Frankish empire and the one we see at work in the principality of Capua-Benevento, a comparison that, however, eludes the purpose of this work.

nephews. This peculiar regime of power, that has been termed *consortile* by scholars, so peculiar that it made Capua stand aside from what was happening in Salerno at the same time, allowed for avoiding conflicts until the numbers of the ruling *societas* were few. In a sense, this is what we saw in Benevento under another dynasty, that of the Radelchids, which never reached the level of infighting that was common in contemporary Capua (but also, ostensibly, that didn't leave any trace of a distribution of lands and *castella* among the members of the ruling family). When the numbers increased, as was almost unavoidable, conflict would erupt, as had happened in Capua in the IX century.[111] The establishment of the principality of Capua-Benevento did not simply change the main title behind the exercise of the *ius regnandi*: it also marked a change in substance. The conflicts of the IX century had resulted from the contradictions embedded in the peculiar regime of Capua: the indivisibility of the title of gastald/count; the unity of the *civitas Capuana*, despite its physical fragmentation; the rights and claims of the members of Landulf's dynasty.[112] Atenulf's rise to the rank of prince and the unification of Capua with Benevento created the premises for a new balance, based on a simpler hierarchical

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[111] Taviani-Carozzi 1991, pp. 296-8, provides a detailed and interesting description of this system of power-sharing, in the view of a direct comparison with Salerno. Also see Thomas 2016, pp. 80-87 for a more recent analysis of this peculiar regime.

[112] Loré 2014, pp. 25-26.

principle: the *princeps* at the top, and all other gastalds/counts below him, eventually controlling specific districts. This is the thesis brought forward by Vito Loré.[113]

The reign of Pandulf I (943/4-981) marked the last moment before this partition. It would be the last and, in a sense, definitive one in southern Lombard history.[114] That reign also has been long identified by scholars as the moment in which the political construction that was the principality of Capua-Benevento truly began to unravel, a process only temporarily hidden behind the brilliant façade of Pandulf's rule extending over the whole of *Langobardia Minor* (after taking Salerno in 978) and on Spoleto and the march of Camerino (conceded to him by emperor Otto in 967). What that façade indeed did not show was increasing fragmentation, devolution of power on the local level, and the consequent beginning of *incastellamento*.[115]

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[113] Ibid. Further discussion on the relationship between gastalds/counts and the prince, particularly under the Capuans, will be the subject of the final section of this chapter.

[114] We may briefly reference here that Capua and Benevento will be reunited again under the rule of a single prince under Pandulf II only a few decades later. However, not only did Pandulf II keep a *junior* prince in place in Capua (his nephew, and rightful heir to the Capuan principality) thus refraining from repeating the steps of Atenulf I; the union was also quite short-lived and left hardly any traces on successive developments, in stark contrast with the rule of Pandulf I.

[115] In our context, a good description of this process, as it took place in southern Italy, is given by Martin. In his words, "la vieille économie

If we look at the available sources, we should find a number of instances that seem to highlight this phenomenon, together with evidence of the strategies enacted by the prince to counter the collateral effects of the rise of local autonomies, namely a significant increase in the number of donations and privileges to the largest monastic foundations grounded in the principality (Montecassino and S. Vincenzo).[116]

Neither was this positive attitude towards monastic establishments reserved to the great abbeys, as Benevento itself experienced some of it, through the monasteries of S. Sofia and S. Modesto. As a further example, in 980 the

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domaniale, fondée sur l'exploitation de vastes territoires disperses, à la population (en grande partie servile) faible et éparpillée, cède la place à la seigneurie concentrée dont la population, libre, est autoritairement regroupee à l'ombre de murailles. C'est dans ce paysage transformé que monasterères et comtes implantent un pouvoir territorial en partie arraché à la puissance publique." (Martin 1989, p. 573). The process of privatization and dynastisation of power in the principality of Capua-Benevento, particularly through the rise of independent or otherwise autonomous counties in the Lombard territories, is the subject of careful analysis by Di Muro, who argues that such a process took place only *after* Ironhead's rule, defined by him as characterized by "un'ultima, vigorosa presa di coscienza del pericolo connesso alla creazione delle contee." (2010, p. 48).

[116] Gasparri 1989, pp. 136-7. Pandulf's concessions were also accompanied by an effort to counter the attempts by lay officials to extend their influence and power on lands belonging to the two abbeys. On the same line of thought also Martin 2005, pp. 52-4.

monastery of SS. Lupo and Zosimo (a relatively small institution located inside the boundaries of the Arechian *Civitas Nova*) received from the prince the right to build a fortress on lands in his possession in the locality of Ponte S Anastasia (nowadays known simply as Ponte), not far from the capital.[117] Further examples could show us how the urban fabric of Benevento itself could have been affected, as Pandulf I donated the control of one of the urban gates to the abbess of S. Pietro *intra muros*.[118]

2. 1. 6 Tensions in Benevento under the Landulfids

It is evident that the authority of the prince could not be left unscathed by this process. We can see the evidence of this when looking at what happened at the death of the Ironhead, in 981. Benevento seceded from Capua almost immediately, and not in untroubled way: we already mentioned above the expulsion of Landulf, son of the Ironhead, by the Beneventans and the elevation to the throne of his cousin Pandulf (II).

It is hard not to see behind the wording the *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae* uses to describe the event the explosion of

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[117] Gasparri 1989, p. 137; Di Muro 2010, p. 37.

[118] There is also an interesting case from the time of Adelchis, who conceded a tower of the *Sacrum Palatium* to a *fidelis* named Ursus; the tower had been previously to the notary and judge Audoaldus (Gasparri 1989, pp. 128-9).

tensions long mounting inside the ancient Lombard capital. That the relationship between Benevento and its Capuan overlords had been not necessarily harmonious can be deducted also by other sources narrating episodes taking place under Pandulf's predecessors. For example, the hagiographic text known as *Miracula Sancti Mercurii* reports how a Capuan man "by the name of Agelmund, as a Capuan was appointed by the princes as count of the palace in this city [i. e. Benevento]", then began to abuse his powers against the community of S. Sofia.[119]

To this, we may further add the narrative of the *Chronicon Salernitanum*. There we can find an interesting tale of the ascension of Atenulf I to the Beneventan throne, a tale filled, as usual for the author, with lively details, but that nonetheless can give us a certain idea of what could have been the Beneventan reaction to the installment of the 'new' Capuan dynasty in the ancient capital. Such a narrative becomes the more precious once we consider that we lack a truly Beneventan view on the event. It is worth recalling it here in its entirety:

"The Beneventans at that time were experiencing a conflict among themselves; since, as we said, Prince Radelchis was

[119] *Miracula S. Mercurii,* p. 269: "nomine Adelmundus, dum esset a Capuanis in hac civitate [i.e. Benevento] principibus constitutus comes palatii". See also Vuolo 1996, p. 229.

victim of his own good faith. For this reason not a few people abandoned their own city, and exiled they moved to Capua, and gathered themselves; they gathered in one place, and took council among themselves, and they decided to invade Benevento, and to elect Atenulf as prince. And between one meeting and the other, they very often kept their relatives informed and promised them many rewards as long as they would decided to join them. Why say more? Not few from there [i.e. Benevento] consented, and they accepted their invitations by swearing oaths; so they informed Atenulf with all the details. In truth he was glad, but objected: "I fear this project will not achieve its goal." Once the plans were finished, the said exiles took arms from everywhere, moved secretly to Benevento with audacious spirit, and Atenulf equally followed them with a small group of Capuans with him. In the middle of the night they broke the seals of the doors, and with great courage they entered in the city of Benevento, and gathered their other relatives. They went to the palace and took prince Radelchis, and brought him to that church, which the glorious prince Arichis had built in honour of the Son of God, and which he titled to the Holy Wisdom […]. And then all those who had been exiled returned to the city; they gathered all together, and the people and the nobles unanimously elevated Atenulf to the dignity of prince. […] Atenulf, as we said, ascending to the

princely rule over the Beneventans, distributed many gifts, and behaved humbly towards all the men." [120]

This text provides us some with some interesting insights on how a late X century chronicler would look at the

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[120] *Chron. Salern.*, 154, pp. 236-8: "Beneventani namque intestinum gladium inter se illo in tempore habebant; quia ut diximus, Radelchis princeps simplicitate devictus erat. Quapropter non pauci propriam linquebant urbem, et exiliati qui Capuam degebant, se sociabant; unde in unum sunt congregati, atque inter se consilium inierunt, quatenus Beneventum invaderent, Atenolfumque principem sublimarunt. Et inter dicta verba sepissime monendum suos adfines mictebant donaque plurima promictebant, tantum illorum animo consentirent. Quid multa dicam? Non pauci exinde consenserunt, atque dictis illorum iusiurandum adheserunt; unde omnia seriatim Atenolfo studenter nunciaverunt. Ille vero gavisus est exinde valde, sed agebat: "Vereor ne predictum opus minime perveniat usque ad finem." Hiis ita gestis, dicti exiliati undique se armis muniunt, audaci animo clam Benevenum adiunt, et Atenolfus cum exiguis Capuanis partier secum ferunt. In tempesta noctis vim portarum series confringunt, urbemque Beneventani cum magna virtute ingressi sunt, ceterique alii sui consanguinei sibi sociant. Palatium ascenderunt et Radelchisum principem comprehenderunt, ecclesiamque, que precellentissimus princeps Arichis in honore Dei filii construxit, eamque Agian Sophian vocavit […] deducunt […]. Et undique qui exiliati erant urbem adiunt, omnesque in unum conveniunt, et omnis populus necnon et proceres una omnes Atenolfum principem sublimarunt.[…] Atenolfus, ut diximus, principatum Beneventanum suscipiens, dona plurima condonabat, omnibusque hominibus se humilis ostendebat.[…]".

beginnings of Capuan rule in Benevento, on what he could understand as its powerbase, and on how such a rule could stabilize itself once in place. First of all, it is clear that in the eyes of the Salernitan chronicler Atenulf's coup is the result of internecine conflict among the Beneventan aristocracy, and this is hardly surprising. His intervention is depicted as falling perfectly inside the framework of factional conflict, with Beneventan exiles in Capua promoting his seizure of power mainly through constant persuasion of those who were still residing inside the capital. Clearly, in the Anonymous' eyes, the consent of the Beneventan aristocracy at its largest extent was to be a *conditio sine qua non* for any attempt by Atenulf. In this sense, it is equally significant that the chronicler specifies how Atenulf went to Benevento in the company of the exiles, and only "with a small group of Capuans" ("cum exiguis Capuanis"). There is no trace of effective resistance in the capital, not even from Radelchis, apparently due to his health. Atenulf's entrance may not have been a simple triumphal procession inside Benevento, but for the chronicler it was altogether a successful and bloodless affair.

It is harder to understand what the author may have meant, when showing the exiles bringing a suffering Radelchis into S. Sofia immediately after his removal from power. His final fate is not described, but we have no reason to believe he was murdered by Atenulf. Quite the contrary. The small episode could be seen as showing the willingness of the Beneventan aristocracy, exiles included,

to bring the former prince to safety without harm, and to avoid any kind of blood shedding. After all, Radelchis is overall seen positively by the author, not as a tyrant deserving his own overthrowing (he had been "simplicitate devictus"). To this, we should add that Radelchis and Atenulf were relatives, since the latter had previously married the sister of the prince of Benevento.[121]

The episode is followed by the confirmation of Atenulf's ascension to the throne, with an apparent repetition of what had already happened in Capua: not coincidentally, the chronicler also uses the same verb, "sublimarunt". What happened in Benevento was not seen as a simple ratification: it was truly a foundational moment for Atenulf's new rule, who needed the consent of all Beneventans or, more specifically, of the Beneventan *proceres*.

There are two further elements that should be highlighted here, and that could show us how, behind the appearance of unity, the establishment of a Capuan overlordship as it emerges from the Anonymous' narrative was far from stable. The first is given to us by the author immediately after Atenulf's elevation. Indeed, there we see that the new prince kept himself busy: "dona plurima condonabat, omnibusque hominibus se humilis ostendebat." These words should be considered carefully. Here the Anonymous gives us a vivid sketch of a process of regime

[121] Thomas 2016, p. 226.

stabilisation: gift-giving was a primary tool for the building and strengthening of legitimacy, and for the establishment of power networks.[122] Moreover, self-imposed humility could be considered a form of appeasement, a way to show the prince's intention not to elevate himself above the Beneventan aristocracy, which is beyond his control. It is in stark contrast with the behaviour adopted by Radelchis, who "acriter Beneventani cruciabat" (albeit instigated by a certain Vernaldus, and not of his own volition).[123]

That Atenulf could have adopted the measures described by the Anonymous willingly (or, at least, that the Anonymous could have believed this to be likely) gives an idea of how the relationship established between Capua and Benevento could be seen as relatively precarious, standing as it was on the consent of the Beneventan aristocracy. It is no coincidence that twice Atenulf, when asked by the exiles to take power in Benevento, replies with incredulity.[124] He was well aware of the challenge, made the more arduous by the fact that, while being himself part

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[122] See Innes 200, p. 72 for the role of gift in the form of land. For the role of the Lombard palace as a place for gift-distribution see Bougard 2002, p. 45.

[123] *Chron. Salern.*, 152, p. 236.

[124] The Anonymous gives us a very human picture when he tells us about Atenulf's reaction to the first approach by the exiles. When they propose that he take upon himself the mantle of power in Benevento, "at ille, audito verbo, visus est ei quasi ludens loqui."

of the Beneventan aristocracy, Atenulf was still considered a Capuan, that is, a foreigner. The Anonymous puts it clearly at the end of the text: Benevento was now controlled "ab extero".[125] And the lament of Atenulf's own mother about the decadence of the ancient noble "Beneventanorum genealogia", much as it could have been influenced by the anti-Capuan feelings of the chronicle's author, is a vivid demonstration that there were tensions mounting behind the new façade of Capuan rule. These tensions that rose to the surface almost immediately, as we saw with the case of bishop Peter and the attempt by some Beneventans to put him at the head of the city. Quite unsurprisingly, after foiling the plot in favour of the bishop, Atenulf's first move had been to exile him and to imprison "aliquantos ex Beneventanis". From that moment on, the princes began alternating their presence in Capua and in Benevento, as attested by the diplomas of Atenulf's successors, also helped in this by the custom of associating brothers and nephews to power. Aurélie Thomas even labelled the new political system established in the principality as "bicéphalisme".[126] Due to the lack of sources in our possession, we will probably never manage to grasp the

[125] Aurélie Thomas (2016, p. 231) succintly comments on this when, referring also to this same part of the *Chronicon*, she writes that "S'il appartient part le sang à l'aristocratie bénéventaine, Aténold n'en reste pas moins avant tout un Landulfide, fidèle à la tradition de sa lignée dont toutes les ambitions sont tournées vers l'hégémonie sur Capoue."
[126] Ibidem., pp. 232-3.

essence of this political structure, and thus to confirm or deny the validity of Thomas' label. However, it is hard to postulate a full equality between Capua and Benevento under the Landulfids: ultimately, this will result in the establishment of two separate branches in each of the capitals, as we saw above.

2. 1. 7 The decline of princely power

Eighty years after Atenulf, the death of Pandulf I left tensions finally unbridled. The result was secession. It didn't mean the cutting of ties between Benevento and the Capuan dynasty, though: the princes would always be Landulfids, relatives of the ones sitting in Capua. When Otto III would try to impose his own candidate in Capua, a certain Ademar, in 999, the effort would soon prove a failure, as the Capuans elevated to the throne Landulf, count of S. Agata and son of the prince of Benevento.

However it meant a rapid increase of power delegation and fragmentation in the now reduced territory under Beneventan rule, in the continuation of a process that had characterized the principality since the Landulfids' ascension: in 988 count Poto received the ruined and abandoned locality of Greci, at the border with Apulia, for the purpose of reconstructing it; but he received it as full ownership, and he was to be in full control of the new settlers, who had to give their services (*servitia publica*) to him, and not to the prince in Benevento; a similar situation

is reported in 992, when count Radoisius received Trivento and three *castra*, again in full ownership.[127] According to the traditional historiographical view, these concessions (and others that we will not list here) took place on the background of increased aristocratic power and consequent claims by nobles to determine the fates of Benevento and its remaining territories together with, and often in spite of, the prince. While we should always keep in mind the intertwining of aristocratic and princely power, particularly in a period which saw many *comitati* in the hands of cadet branches of the Landulfids, there is an undeniable ground of truth here.

That the relationship between the princes and the Beneventan aristocracy could be strained, to say the least, also inside the walls of the capital, emerges clearly from the sources. We already mentioned in the previous section how in 982 Prince Landulf, son of Pandulf I, was expelled by the Beneventans in favour of a nephew of the Ironhead. We may add a very similar event taking place in 1003, when the Beneventans installed Adelfier of Avellino on the throne (although briefly).

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[127] Gasparri 1989, p. 137. It should be noted here, however, that Gasparri is also among those who oppose this view of the reign of Pandulf I as a time of weakening of central power. In his opinion, the rule of the Ironhead was still characterised by strong central authority (ibid., p. 136).

This state of latent (and sometimes overt) conflict between prince and aristocracy was then made more serious by exogenous factors, namely the beginning of the Norman conquests in Southern Italy, with the progressive reduction of the political and economic sphere of action of the Beneventans.

That the two elements (internecine conflict and Norman pressure) began to combine may be shown by what happened in 1041, when in Benevento a "coniuratio" of nobles took place against Pandulf III (1014-1059) while Atenulf, son of the same Pandulf, was elected by the Normans as their "dux" to give their conquests in Apulia a new air of legitimacy. That experience however was destined to be short-lived (and Atenulf himself would die in obscurity).[128] The *coniuratio* of 1041 was the second to take place during Pandulf III's reign, a first having taken place while he was still co-regent with his father Pandulf II, in 1015.

As we will see in the section of this chapter devoted to the aristocracy, however, the relationship between prince and Beneventan *proceres* may partially be redefined in a different way. The fact that we do not actually possess any

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[128] The theory of such a link between the two events of 1041 is brought forward by Gasparri (ibid., p. 141), who further argues for the possibility that a sort of small coup had taken place in Benevento in favour of Atenulf, before his final downfall. The exact nature of such a coup, however, remains a mystery.

detailed information on the two *coniurationes* of 1015 and 1041 further adds to the need to partially revise the more traditional view.

This period of Beneventan history is shrouded in relative obscurity, particularly when compared with the sources available to us for Capua or Salerno in the same period. This makes it impossible to draw any definitive conclusions. What is certain is that by the middle of the XI century any vestige of princely power had effectively disappeared, and that power in Benevento was held by members and representatives of local aristocracy.

In 1050 the prince was expelled from Benevento (again) and in 1051 the city (through its "optimates") swore fealty to pope Leo IX.[129] The prince was later reinstated (though Pandulf III abdicated and became a monk in S. Sofia), but the last one of the line, Landulf VI (1059-1077) had to respect the oath sworn by the Beneventans to the pope, renewing it in 1073 with the addition of a further clause with which the prince obliged himself not to undermine the rights of the Beneventan aristocrats. At his death in 1077, in the absence of any heir (but one could legitimately doubt whether an heir would have made any difference by the time) the role that had belonged to the princes devolved to the new figure of the papal rector, selected from the ranks of the urban aristocracy.

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[129] Figliuolo 1992, p. 46.

It was the beginning of a new era for Benevento, apparently marked by the end of the descending parable of princely power, and by the final triumph of the aristocracy. Another figure would however find itself as the focus of Beneventan political and social life at that moment, the apex of a long-term process of consolidation and strengthening: the bishop, later archbishop, of Benevento.

2. 2 The archbishop of Benevento

When elevated to the rank of archdiocese in 969, with the seat established in the cathedral of S. Maria Assunta, Benevento was already the spiritual and cultural heart of *Langobardia Minor*. It had taken on this role since its very first occupation by the Lombards in the second half of the VI century and the foundation of the duchy. Since the very beginning, Beneventan spiritual prominence upon the other Lombard sees was grounded (and, in a certain sense, justified in retrospect) by the equally prominent role of its most important bishop, St. Barbatus.[130]

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[130] Despite his strong role as a founding figure for the power of Beneventan bishops, it should be recalled that the original founder of the Beneventan see is believed to be the protomartyr Januarius; however, scholars are still uncertain on whether the see should be considered as no longer existing before Barbatus (and probably since the Lombard invasion), as originally proposed by Gian Piero Bognetti in 1948 (*S. Maria Foris Portas di Castelseprio e la Storia Religiosa dei*

It was he who, according to the hagiographical tradition that arose in the next two centuries, successfully and definitively converted the Beneventan Lombards, then under the rule of Duke Romuald I (662-687). According to this narrative, his chance came when Benevento found itself under attack by the Eastern Roman emperor Constans II (630-668), at the time involved in a rather unsuccessful attempt at reinvigorating the imperial hold on the peninsula.[131] Outnumbered by the imperial army, and

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Longobardi), in which case the saint would rightly gain at least the role of re-founder of the same see; see Iadanza 2017, p. 400. For a reprisal of Bognetti's thesis (however without subscribing to some of his most 'radical' views on the suppression of the Beneventan see) see also Palmieri 1996, pp. 71-3. The most thorough survey of the situation of southern Italian episcopates during and immediately after the Lombard conquest is still that of L. Duchesne, *Les évechés d'Italie et l'invasion lombarde*, in "Mélanges d'Archeologie et d'Histoire", XXIII (1903), pp. 83-116, also available in a 1987 Italian translation as *I vescovadi italiani durante l'invasione longobarda*, in *I Longobardi in Italia*, Novara, pp. 363-90. In more general terms, current historiography tends to agree on a general decline of episcopal presence in southern Italy, however linking it not directly to the Lombard invasion, but more to a series of intertwined processes of economic recession, demographic decline, and social and political upheaval (Araldi 2017, pp. 432-6).

[131] The Italian campaign of Constans II has deservedly attracted the attention of those scholars most interested in the political and military history of the Eastern Empire, and of the role played in it by the relationship between Italy and the Empire itself. The campaign was the first and sole military endeavour personally led by an eastern emperor

desperately waiting for a relief army coming from the northern kingdom under the command of Romuald's father, King Grimoald I (662-671), the Lombards in Benevento were convinced by Barbatus that their only chance at surviving the siege was to abandon Arianism and the pagan practices still widespread among them.[132] The

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on Italian soil, and Constans' decision to make Syracuse his new permanent residence resulted in a surprising, though admittedly temporary, shift of priorities for the Empire, at the time already involved in a long-lasting struggle with the new-born Islamic Caliphate. Benevento and its duchy quite naturally became a primary target for the emperor, as his army moved from Apulia through Lucania in an attempt at taking as many enemy strongholds as possible, even razing to the ground whole towns, such as Aeclanum (an event which will assume further importance under the lens of Beneventan hagiography more than a century later). The failure of the siege of Benevento, and a further defeat suffered by imperial forces in Campania, marked the end of the emperor's attempt at subjugating the southern Lombards. See Cosentino 2021, pp. 36-40 for an overview of Constans' reign, including his Italian activities; Marazzi 2021 p. 187.

[132] Among these, the most famous one involved riding on horses around a walnut tree trying to hit repeatedly an animal's skin with their spears, before eating it (Gasparri 1989, pp. 97-98); Martin (1974, p. 14) highlighted the impossibility to find a true Germanic correspondent to such a rite, and proposed alternatively a comparison with rites practiced by steppe people, and particularly the Avars. The text of the *Vita Barbati* left us a vivid description of the ritual (in V.B. 1). On the role Arianism played in defining Lombard's identity (with all the due caution such a term invites in its use) much has been written, following a pattern common to most XX century scholarly debates revolving

fact that the main text that transmitted the story to us, the *Vita Barbati episcopi beneventani*, dates somewhere from the IX to the X century,[133] tells us a great deal about the

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around the old concept of a struggle between a Catholic-Roman and an Arian-Germanic 'soul' in the Romano-Barbaric kingdoms. What most recent historiography has been able to bring forward is, instead, the picture of a constant and more nuanced interplay between Arian (and residual pagan) and Orthodox elements in the development of the Lombard monarchy in the peninsula until the end of the VII century, which saw the definitive disappearance of any remnant of Arianism among the Lombards. That doesn't mean Arianism was insignificant, and its role among the Lombards was hardly a unique case among the Germanic *gentes* that took over the territories of the former Western Roman Empire (the Visigothic Kingdom of Spain being probably the best example, and a good point of comparison with Lombard Italy; the Ostrogothic Kingdom of Italy also strongly shows, far more than the Lombard case, the link between Arianism and belonging to a specific *gens*). Without delving too much into such an issue, and focusing more on our topic, it should suffice here to note that Gasparri convincingly argued for the rejection of the historiographical *topos* that represented the Lombards of Benevento as suffering from a sort of archaism, and unremittingly attached to old pagan (and Arian) rituals and traditions, as the *Vita Barbati* may lead us to think; he further stresses that such a narrative from the *Vita* is misleading for a number of reasons, not last because the *Vita* itself dates from much later. For a thorough discussion and corresponding bibliographical references see Gasparri 2005 (particularly pp. 40-2).

[133] Finding a precise date for the *Vita Barbati* has proven difficult to scholars for a number of reasons. J.-M. Martin discusses the subject at length in the article he devoted to the *Vita*, arguing on the base of the

prominent role the Beneventan see began to claim for itself from the IX century onwards. This is even more the case when we consider at how the story continues: Duke Romuald, in order to thank Barbatus for his intercession and after having appointed the saint as bishop of Benevento, also attaches to his see the Diocese of Siponto in Apulia. Such a reference to Siponto in the *Vita Barbati* is relevant mainly for two reasons: first, because it reinforced the prestige of the bishops of Benevento by showing how they enjoyed the privileges of a metropolitan bishop *de facto*, if not *de iure*, since the VII century; second, because the jurisdiction of Siponto's diocese extended also to the sanctuary of Saint Michael on Gargano.[134]

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re-uses made of the text in other hagiographies and chronicles for the IX-X century dating we mentioned above (Martin 1974, pp. 139-141). Moreover, the *Vita* itself shows elements pointing to different times of compositions for different episodes: in particular, Martin identifies four main components of the *Vita*: a first one (episode II) are dated by the French scholar to the beginning of the IX century; episode III and I (the Prologue) were then added by a second hagiographer between the IX and the X centuries; a second *Vita* was then redacted in the IX century, finally followed by a reduced version of the first *Vita*, which Martin is not able to date (Martin 1974, p. 160). Taviani-Carozzi substantially agrees with this reconstruction (1992, pp. 160-4), further expanding it with a direct comparison between the inner structure of the hagiographic narrative and the myth of the origins of the Lombards (Ivi, pp. 165-168).

[134] Palmieri 1996, pp. 74-75; Gasparri 1989, p. 103. The claims of the Beneventan see were furthered also by other hagiographical works, like

This sanctuary already enjoyed the consideration of the Lombards. The defeat that Grimoald I, at the time still duke of Benevento, had inflicted on a Byzantine force attempting at raiding it in 650, had been promptly attributed to the divine intervention of the archangel Michael, whose military attributes were more than welcome by the Lombards. That such a prestigious sanctuary should fall under the jurisdiction of the Beneventan see was, needless to say, a consistent boost for its prestige and its claim to prominence, and thus it is far from surprising to see such a claim furthered in a Beneventan source such as the *Vita Barbati*.

2. 2. 1 *Translationes* and the relationship between prince and bishop (VIII-IX centuries)

As already mentioned, the *Vita* itself dates from the IX-X century, a period that, as we shall see, saw a process of change in the relationship between the episcopal and the princely powers in Benevento. The situation in the VII

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the *Liber de apparitione Sancti Micaelis*, see Everett 2017, p. 331. See also G. Otranto, *Il* Regnum *longobardo e il santuario micaelico del Gargano: note di epigrafia e storia*, in "Vetera Christianorum", 22 (1985), pp. 168-9. For a reconstruction of the role of the sanctuary see G. Otranto, *Genesi, caratteri e diffusione del culto micaelico sul Gargano*, in P. Bouet, G. Otranto, *Culte et pèlerinages ò Saint Michel en Occident. Les trois monts dédiés à l'archange*, Rome, 2010, pp. 43-64.

century, and more so in the VIII and for the first part of the IX century, was quite different, as this relationship took the form of a strong dependency of the bishop on the duke (and later prince) that manifested itself under many guises, the most spectacular one probably being the role reserved to the secular ruler in the *translatio* of saints' relics.

This ritual consisted in the transfer of the mortal remains of one or more saints from their original location to a new one, considered to be more fitting according to the (extremely varied) circumstances of the event. However, to consider a *translatio* as a purely religious or liturgical event would be a gross mistake.[135] The connection between a saint and a place was not believed to be one of pure 'coincidence': developing ideas that had already found their expression during Late Antiquity, the Early Middle Ages saw the definitive establishment of a strong relationship between the saint and the resting place of his or her remains (whether as a whole or not was not important).[136]

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[135] In a recent work, Mario Iadanza, while providing for an edition of the *Translatio SS. Ianuarii, Festi et Desiderii* (a work which will be addressed in the next pages) emphasized once again the role of *translationes,* and the narratives connected to them, should be read in their strict intertwining with the political context (see Iadanza 2021, p. 64).

[136] Brown 1981, p. 9.

In turn, this resulted in a new role for relics. As poignantly argued by Amalia Galdi, among others, relics became tools and symbols for the self-representation and the process of identity formation of urban communities as a whole and, quite obviously, of the urban élites (lay and cleric alike) that represented the part of those communities most able to construct and manipulate the meaning of *translationes* (together with their memory).[137] Needless to say, the rise in importance of *translationes* and the concurrent rise of saint's cults is far from being unique to southern Italy; the same can be said of what we may term their 'political' use. Nonetheless, a look at them and at those texts that preserved their memory may give us a rather good picture of the underlying assumptions of the main actors involved.

We may take as our starting point the reign of Arichis II (duke from 758 to 774, then prince until his death in 787). We will not deal here with the figure of Arichis and his importance in the development of the role of the sovereign

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[137] Galdi 2014, p. 95. Literature on the subject is extremely vast, and a thorough list would be unfeasible here. However, it is necessary to mention here one of the works by H. Fichtenau, *Zum Reliquienwesen im früheren Mittelalter*, in "Mitteilung des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung", 60, 1952; an analysis on the narrative techniques and characters conceptions employed in the hagiographical texts revolving around *translationes* and, in particular, the *furta sacra*, can be found in M. Papasidero, *Il genere dei* furta sacra*: aspetti letterari e funzioni comunicative del testo agiografico*, in *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 71, 2 (July-December 2017), pp. 379-410.

in Benevento, which will be tackled with in a later section. Here, our focus will be solely on the part he played in promoting and carrying out those *translationes* that ultimately became one of the hallmarks of his reign, both for his contemporaries and for the next generations.

Our sources show Arichis as very active in this field well before the fall of the northern kingdom in 774 and his subsequent decision to claim for himself the title of *princeps*: the *Translatio XII fratrum* reports that already in 760 (that is, only two years after his taking power in Benevento) the duke moved the relics of twelve martyrs of African origin to the newly-founded church of S. Sofia. According to the text, the bodies were at the time dispersed in different Apulian localities, and Arichis took them from the local populations instead of the usual tribute he had come to exact. He then decided to move the relics all inside one single place, the abovementioned S. Sofia.[138] The same happened to the relics of St. Mercurius according to the *Translatio S. Mercurii*: they were also taken from a nearby locality.[139]

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[138] Galdi 2014, p. 99; Cicco 2006, p. 353.

[139] The most common hypothesis concerning the place where the relics had been hidden identified it as Quintodecimum, the ancient Aeclanum, a victim of Constans II's campaign in southern Italy; the relics of the saint had indeed reached Italy by the emperor's will, as an attempt to them in order to ensure the saint's protection for the campaign. The story is told in a poem composed by Paul the Deacon, *Martir Mercuri*. However, recent historiography tends to dismiss the

The choice of the relics' final resting place by the duke is telling: without dwelling here on the issue whether the church was founded by Arichis himself or by one of his immediate predecessors (as distinct from the monastery annexed to it, which was indeed founded by Arichis) what really matters is that S. Sofia was a foundation strictly linked to the palace and not directly under the jurisdiction of the bishop, functioning *de facto* as a palatine church. We know for sure that Arichis completed the construction of the church and created the monastery, and consequently he left a strong imprint on both their organization and the purpose they fulfilled in the political and social environment of the capital of the duchy:[140] in particular, scholars such as Giulia Zornetta have challenged the more traditional view that sees Arichis as conceiving S. Sofia as a sort of 'national sanctuary' for the southern Lombards, a spiritual and cultural safe-haven for a *gens* that had lost its

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idea that the relics were found in Quintodecimum, as scholars have also demonstrated that the place was not touched by Constans' campaign (see note n.6 above; also Galdi 2014, p. 101 with bibliographical references at note n. 29, and Galdi 2017, pp. 470-1).

[140] This is made all the more evident by how endowed the church had been by the duke, as shown by Feller, who argues for the lands to have come directly from the fiscal patrimony; interestingly, the monastery was instead endowed mostly with confiscated resources making it, according to the French scholar, "totalement associée au volet répressif du pouvoir général de commandement dont bénéficie le prince." (2005, pp. 270-2).

main reference point in the northern kingdom after 774. Instead she considers it, together with other monastic foundations of the time, as part of a strategy aiming at the creation of new centres of power and prestige, through which it would have been possible for the duke to reorganize local relationships and balance of power. It was a strategy much needed by a duke that, after all, had been 'imposed' on the Beneventans by the northern king.[141]

The strict link between S. Sofia and the duke/prince brings us to what is probably one of the most striking features of the narrative provided by the two abovementioned texts, that is the central role played by Arichis in the events they recount. In both texts the initiative for the *translatio* of the saint's body comes from the duke, and it is the duke who personally oversees the event and takes the centre stage, for example by renouncing his insignia and behaving like a servant toward St Mercurius, offering to him gifts and the keys of the city.[142] Admittedly, the duke is depicted by both texts as always consulting with both the lay and the clerical

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[141] Zornetta 2020, pp. 97-9. She links the foundation of S. Sofia with that of S. Salvatore in Alife (which shared with the former, among other things, also the characteristic of being a female monastery). Belting (1962) also opted for seeing in S. Sofia the reproduction of the model of the palatial church. *Contra* both these other authors still propound for the idea of the 'national sanctuary' for the Lombards, such as Gasparri (1989, p. 109), Di Muro (2016, p. 398; 2018 p. 528) and Azzara (2017, pp. 33-4); see also Thomas 2016, pp. 94-6 for a brief survey.

[142] Vuolo 1996, pp. 211-2.

élite of Benevento, including the bishop (whose name is never given, though); based on this, Galdi has concluded that the two *Translationes* depict a situation of overall balance between the secular and the ecclesiastical powers, however possibly a reflection of the different context the authors were living in, that is the middle of the IX century.[143] Even if we accept this to be the case, and there is plenty of reasons to suspect it to be true, there are elements that may help refine Galdi's argument: the bishop may be consulted, but the initiative is always in the hands of the duke; moreover, it is Arichis to whom the saint manifests his will; it is Arichis who 'serves' the saint; and, as we already mentioned, it is in the palatine church that the relics are finally deposited. The bishops and his ecclesiastical following are always kept on the background. To this, and still following Galdi, we may further add that the relics brought by Arichis into S. Sofia come from geographical areas already subjected to the interests and political ambitions of the duke, and where S. Sofia itself enjoyed the possession of a consistent number of funds.[144]

Zornetta convincingly argued from all these elements that the *translationes* assumed a central role in the definition of the power of the dukes/princes of Benevento in giving them a more direct contact with the sphere of the sacred,

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[143] Galdi 2014, p. 102.

[144] Galdi 2017, pp. 466-467, also reiterated in Galdi 2018, p. 345. see also *Chron. S. Sophiae*, p. 47.

otherwise mostly absent in their ceremonial and in a conception of Lombard rulership still 'borrowed' from and strongly influenced by that of the northern kingdom.[145] We will come back to this in the next section and, even more, in the next chapter. What concerns us here the most is that this direct relationship between the duke and the sacred meant a concurrent diminishing role of the bishop as a mediator between the sacred and the profane.

2. 2. 2 The IX century: a time for changes

We have already mentioned how the situation started to change in the IX century. That time not only passed on the tradition of more ancient events; it also saw a reinvigorated activity by the princes of Benevento in finding and bringing back to the city holy relics and saints' bodies, and transmitting the memory of those events via new ad hoc hagiographical texts. The political context had evolved since the times of Arichis, and the new dynasty of the Siconids who took power after the murder of Grimoald IV (806-817) had a strong need to establish its legitimacy to rule. To resume the practice of *translatio* allowed them to do precisely that, and to link the new dynasty to the glorious times of Arichis.

[145] Zornetta 2020, p. 186.

The most important *translationes* undertaken by the princes Sico (817-832) and his son and successor Sicard (832-839) are those of the relics of Saint Januarius and Saint Bartholomew.[146] The first saw Sico leading a campaign against the Neapolitans that ended by the stealing of the relics of Januarius, considered to be the founder of the Beneventan see, and their return to Benevento with the prince in triumph.[147] The connection with a military campaign against a notorious enemy of the Beneventan Lombards is far from casual, and clearly inscribes the whole event in the framework of a political and military contest against an 'atavic' enemy of the southern

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[146] Vuolo 1996, p. 221. Iadanza 2021, p. 34 emphasizes the possible role of bishop Ursus as promoter of increased jurisdictional powers of bishops (what he calls, following Giovanni Vitolo, "episcopalismo") and its link with the transfer of the relics of Januarius in Benevento.

[147] This war can be framed in a long-lasting series of conflicts that opposed the southern Lombards and the Romano-Byzantine coastal cities, among which Naples had a prominent role at least until the X century. For a thorough examination of the military, diplomatic, social and economic aspects of the conflict, together with the parallel evolution of Lombard and Neapolitan institutions during time, see Martin 2005; for an analysis of the treatises involved in establishing a relationship between the two cities, see also G.V.B. West, *Communities and* pacta *in early medieval Italy: jurisdiction, regulatory authority and dispute avoidance*, in *Early Medieval Europe*, 18, 4 (2010), 367-393.It is interesting to note here how the *Chronicon Salernitanum* gives bishop Ursus a mediator role between the Neapolitans and the Beneventans (57, p. 82).

Lombards, such as the Romano-Byzantine cities of the Campanian coast.

The second *translatio*, that of Saint Bartholomew, took place under a different set of circumstances: in this case, the pretext for Sicard to intervene was the threat of Muslim incursions against Lipari, the island that stored the relics, with the consequent risk of them falling into the hands of the infidels. In 838, then, the prince ordered to bring the saint's body to Benevento.

However important, the *translationes* of Januarius and Bartholomew were not the only ones to take place under the Siconids. To them, we should add those of Saint Felicitas and her sons, of Saint Marcianus, Saint Deodatus, and Saint Trophimena. All of them are connected by the hagiographical sources to the initiative of the prince (except in the case of Marcianus).[148] Despite such an apparent similarity to the previous Arechian tradition (that, it should be reminded, was being committed into writing precisely during this period), the presence of new developments, particularly significant for our discourse on the role and power of the bishops, did not escape scholars: instead of an anonymous occupant of the Beneventan see, hagiographies dealing with the *translationes* of the Siconids now explicitly mention bishop Ursus. Indeed, it is this bishop who organizes the arrival of Saint Bartholomew's relics in Benevento in accordance with prince Sicard; and it is still

[148] Vuolo 1996, pp. 221-2.

he who takes on the responsibility of building a basilica for hosting the relics just besides the cathedral (a basilica that he finished even after the death of the prince himself); finally, it is he, this time without any mention of an intervention by the prince, who organizes the arrival of the relics of Saint Marcianus.[149]

Not only does the bishop now enjoy a more prominent role in the *translationes*; the role of the cathedral as a building changes as well. While Arichis II moved the relics to S. Sofia, the Siconids deposit them inside the cathedral. Belting was probably the first to notice this shift, when he linked the new, more central, role of the cathedral with the acquisition of relics belonging to one of the ancient bishops of Benevento (such as Januarius).[150]This thesis is followed by both Vuolo and Galdi, with the former stating that the cathedral had by now become the "definitive centre of urban patronal cult" for Benevento.[151] Such a shift would only be further signified by the fact that St. Bartholomew was an apostle: by depositing his body inside the cathedral, the Beneventan see was *ipso facto* claiming, if not an apostolic foundation, at least a stronger link with an apostolic tradition, in a way not dissimilar to what would later happen in Salerno with the dedication of the new

[149] Ibid., pp. 222-6; Galdi 2004, 268.

[150] Belting 1968, pp. 160-1.

[151] Vuolo 1996, p. 223, original quote is in italian; Galdi 2014, p. 106, quoting Vuolo almost *verbatim*.

cathedral to St. Matthew. At the same time, the move from an ecclesiastical focus on the palatine church to one on the cathedral, should not be considered as already signifying the side-lining of the prince. The *translatio* takes place thanks, first of all, to the prince's actions. And the prince himself accompanies the relics to the cathedral, paying homage to them. If anything, these representations of princely actions should be considered to point to a new kind of alliance between the palace and the cathedral, the prince and the bishop, a restructuring of their power relations, and one step towards further developments.[152]

An increased role for both bishop and cathedral in *translationes* corresponds, quite naturally, to an increase in the symbolic power and authority held by the Beneventan see. Here we have evidence of a substantial change since the times of Arichis, further reinforced by a renewed cultural activity taking place in the IX century, and culminating with the establishment of an episcopal school by the abovementioned bishop Ursus.[153] However, we

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[152] Goodson (2021, pp. 217-8) reminds the importance of not drawing too clear-cut a line between prince and bishop when understanding who managed to bolster his authority through the *translationes*. Both could, at the same time, claim such an increase in authority. Competition and cooperation, even when only implicit, in this as in other cases, were never mutually exclusive.

[153] The same *Translatio SS. Ianuarii, Festi et Desiderii* can be attributed to a Beneventan *scriptorium*, and dated to a time nearly contemporary to the events, so it can be considered as further evidence for the existence

should also keep in mind that the IX century did not see a break in one, important, aspect of the relationship between the princely court and the episcopacy: as pointedly remarked by Giuseppe Cicco, the relation of dependence of the bishop on the prince was marked since the very beginning of the former's 'ascension' to the Beneventan see, the election.[154] After all, already the *Vita Barbati* said that it was duke Romuald to appoint Barbatus to his see. His successors simply followed the example. As such, and following a paradigm already well established in the rest of Latin Europe since the V century at the latest, the bishops of *Langobardia Minor* were members of the aristocracy, even members of the princely house itself. An example in kind is reported by Stefano Palmieri, and concerns the figure of bishop Peter, who held the Beneventan see between the end of the IX and the beginning of the X century, in a time of significant changes for the principality of Benevento: thus, it is bishop Peter who takes on the reins of government of the city after the unsuccessful attempt by Guy IV of Spoleto to unify Benevento with Salerno; and it is still Peter who

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of Ursus' episcopal school, a convincingly argued by Iadanza 2021, pp. 65-67 (see also notes on the same pages). Also Massa 2014, pp. 129-130, reprising Beat Brenk's hypothesis of a strict link between the existence of episcopal chanceries and *scriptoria*.

[154] Cicco 2006, pp. 353-354.

leads a plot against the newly-installed Capuan prince, Atenulf I, that will cost him the exile.[155]

2. 2. 3 The Capuan dynasty: establishing a stronger link between bishop and prince

The *Chronicon Salernitanum* gives us a narrative of the event in question which is worthy recalling. According to the *Chronicon*'s author the new prince Atenulf, in leaving Benevento for Capua after his ascension to the throne "left Benevento in the hands of the bishop Peter."[156] The link between princely, episcopal and aristocratic power could not have been showed more clearly: Pietro was appointed as a sort of 'regent' of Benevento by the new prince, but he was clearly a member of a noble Beneventan family; and his belonging to the aristocracy (possibly to its highest echelons) also gave him enough prestige and legitimacy in

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[155] Palmieri 1996, pp. 91-92. On the figure of bishop Peter see also A. Zazo, *Un vescovo beneventano del IX sec. "Petrus sagacissimus"*, in "Samnium", 23 (1950), pp. 179-86, and F. Grassi, *I Pastori della cattedra beneventana*, 1969, pp. 31-3. The Museo Diocesano of Benevento also currently displays the sarcophagus of the bishop.

[156] *Chron. Salern.*, 156, p. 240: "Benevento Petro episcopo […], commendavit. Sed ut illam presut ille curam gerendum accepisset, Beneventani, licet non omnes, iusiurandum illius iuraverunt, quatenus illorum preesset; et quamvis non haberent ex genere suo laicam personam, saltem ab episcopo dominarentur."

front of the Beneventans (though, tellingly, "non omnes") for them to try to appoint him *princeps* in the absence of a lay member of his family. Even if we do not want to take this account at face value, still it is a telling testimony of a different conception of the bishop's role.

Following this event and the entrenchment of the Capuan dynasty in Benevento the situation changed: while bishops like the abovementioned Peter were members of prominent families of the Beneventan aristocracy, the Capuans tended to reserve the head of the episcopacy to members of their own house. In this, they simply followed the example set by their immediate predecessors, the Radelchids: the Bishop Aion recorded in 840 was the son of Prince Radelchis I, and the brother of Prince Radelgarius.

It is hardly surprising then to learn that Bishop Landulf, who would later become the first archbishop of Benevento, was explicitly labelled by the author of the *Annales Beneventani* as "frater eiusdem Pandolfi" (the reference is to Pandulf I, who had been mentioned immediately before).[157] The ecclesiastical policies of Pandulf Ironhead, and particularly his successful attempts at ensuring the promotion of both Capua (966)[158] and Benevento (969) to

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[157] *Chron. S. Sophiae* 2000, p. 226: "DCCCCLXI, IIII. A(nno) XXI d(omni) L(andolfi) et XVII d(omni) P(aldolfi). O(biit) p(re) dic(tus) L(andolfus) et elec(tus) e(st) L(andolfus) fr(ater) ei(us)d(em) P(aldolfi)."

[158] Giovanni Spinelli (1996, p. 32) argues that the decision to elevate Capua at the rank of metropolitan see may have generated suspicion in

the rank of archdioceses, shed a further light on the intertwining between ecclesiastical and secular powers that the Capuan dynasty had brought to bear in the southern Lombard territories.

Quite naturally, such a strong connection between the figure of the archbishop and the (Capuan) prince, would be expected to be the first victim of any change in the political context and in the power balance inside Benevento. And perhaps it is not a coincidence that the end of political unity between Capua and Benevento also marked troubles for the latter's episcopal see: already after the death of Pandulf I (981) the unified principality was again divided in two parts, each ruled by a member of the Capuan dynasty; and when Archbishop Landulf also died in 982, his successor Aion, who had been appointed under pressure by Emperor Otto II (973-983), was rejected by the Beneventans in favour of Alfanus, who would instead keep his post for the next years. That this change at the top of the Archdiocese of Benevento was far from consensual is further confirmed to us by the testimony of the *Annales Beneventani*, which clearly states that "Alfanus invasit archiepiscopatum Aionis archiepiscopi".[159]

Benevento. Unfortunately, whether such a reaction really took place, and whether it had any direct bearing on the subsequent decision by Prince Pandulf to look for a similar accommodation for Benevento, is lost to us (however unlikely this second possibility may be).

[159] *Chron. S. Sophiae* 2000, p. 229.

The episode is undoubtedly linked with the interference of a third, external actor, namely emperor Otto, and indeed Palmieri himself does not hesitate to highlight the link between Alfanus' 'usurpation' and the defeat suffered by the same emperor at the hands of the Aghlabid emir at the Battle of Stilo, the 15th July of 982, a defeat duly reported by the *Annales*.[160] However, this should not lead us to overlook another fact, registered by the *Annales* as well: according to this source, 982 had also seen the expulsion of Prince Landulf (IV, son of Pandulf Ironhead, and already associated by him in Benevento in 977), and his substitution with Pandulf (II, 981-1014, son of Landulf III and thus nephew of the Ironhead).[161] Now, it is interesting to note

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[160] Palmieri 1996, p. 95, n. 152. The crushing defeat at Stilo clearly marked a turning point in the history of Ottonian interference in Southern Italy: not only did the emperor only barely escape alive (and many important nobles and dignitaries of the empire did not), but it showed also the impossibility for him to constitute a true new reference point for southern Italian polities against both the threat of a Muslim invasion from now Aglhabid Sicily and from the resurging Byzantine power in the East, much in a similar fashion to what Louis II did one century earlier (and to what Otto I had managed to obtain).

[161] *Chron. S. Sophiae* 2000, p. 229: "MXX, DCCCCLXXXII, X. Beneventani expulerunt Landolfum filium domni Paldolfi et constituerunt sibi principem Paldolfum filium Landolfi fratres Paldolfi." The *Desiderii Dialogi de Miraculis Sancti Benedicti* gives a more detailed narration of the events: "Nam cum impterator Otto […] Beneventum adiit: cui Alax [i.e. Aion] ita familiaris effectus est, ut idem augustus cum eligi in

that the anonymous author of the *Annales* put all these events together under the rubric of 982, despite the fact that the proclamation of Pandulf II as prince of Benevento may have taken place already the year before, immediately after the death of the Ironhead.[162] Indeed, Landulf IV would have been already dead at the time of archbishop Aion's expulsion from Benevento, since he was among the ranks of those nobles who died at Stilo under the banners of Otto II. That the anonymous chronicler decided to keep both events (both Landulf's and Aion's expulsions) under the same year, may be simply due to a mistake. However, it may be fitting to consider that he did find the sequence of events he was describing as overall plausible. At any rate, it may be hardly thought to be coincidental that the fragmentation of Pandulf I's unified principality was also

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pontificem, ecclesia renuente, praeciperet. Postmodum vero imperator Romam rediens Romanum pontificem eum consecrare rogavit et consecratum Beneventum remisit. Imperator deinde febre correptus post aliquot dies divina dispositione defunctus est. Ille vero Beneventum rediens ne moenibus quidem civitatis appropinquare ausus fuit; sed cum dedecore illo repulso alium sibi cives pontificem [i.e. Alfanus] elegerunt.Fecit quidem haec omnipotens Deus ad vindictam malefactorum, laudem vero bonorum, ut qui cupiditate honoris ductus fraudulenter fratrem suum studuit ab ecclesia pellere, ipse pulsus patria exul in alieno solo vitam finiret." MGH, XXX-2, II, pp. 1127-9. Here the link between the events involving the Beneventan see and Ottonian policy in Southern Italy, hidden in the *Annales*, appears clearly.

[162] Indelli 2019, p. 54.

marked by the appointment on the Beneventan see of a man who was not a member of the princely house, nor a supporter of the Capuans and their policies (as Aion may have presumably been), but a member of the local aristocracy.

From Alfanus' time onwards, the archbishops of Benevento will more often than not be representatives of the city's élite, and this fact will be reflected also in the markedly more active role they will take in the wake of the waning princely authority and rising factionalism and infighting among the Beneventan aristocracy, made all the more dangerous by the 'exogenous' shock caused by the Norman conquests beginning from the first half of the next century. The new authority enjoyed by the archbishop inside the walls of Benevento was further strengthened by the devolution of the city to the Roman pope following the death of the last Lombard prince in 1077. With the new *de iure* sovereign of Benevento residing far from it (though popes came, and even resided in Benevento, more often than one could have imagined simply looking at geography), the city saw the arrival of rectors, regents to the *Ducatus* (as the Beneventan district was still dubbed) and representatives of Rome in the city. At the same time it also established its own forms of self-government, so much as to lead some scholars, particularly in the XX century, to

speculate on the existence of a Beneventan 'proto-Commune' already in the XI century.[163]

Whether such a political regime had been established immediately after the final demise of the princes or not, by the middle of the XI and the XII centuries the archbishop was beyond any doubt the key figure in the political life of Benevento. Falco of Benevento, our main source for Beneventan history of the XII century, brings to his readers a vivid picture of the fights that erupted inside and outside the city's walls, and of rampant factionalism that resemble so closely the experiences of the central and northern Italian Communes. To factionalism we may add substantial autonomy, if not de facto independence (at least for a while) in pursuing autonomous goals in both external and internal politics, and a variable degree of control over the surrounding *contado*, hardly fought over with the

[163] The first half of the XX century saw scholars such as Pochettino and Dina supporting the thesis of a Beneventan Commune established in the XI century; *contra* them, Pontieri argued that the political and economic characteristics structuring the Beneventan aristocracy would have imposed themselves as a strong impediment to the birth of such a regime: that aristocracy, so he argued, was extremely powerful inside the city, but still inextricably linked with its huge possessions in the countryside; it was eroding the declining princely power, on one side, while still clinging on the need for its continuous existence, on the other. Thus, according to Pontieri a true Commune could only develop in contrast to this aristocracy, in the first half of the XII century. See Pontieri (1964).

neighbouring countryside lords.[164] But he also mentions the most significant events that shaped the self-awareness and sense of community of the urban population of Benevento, events that he almost always witnessed in person: once again, we find the common pattern of *inventiones* and *translationes*.

Two examples may be useful to illustrate the point: in 1119 the archbishop orders the transfer of some saints' bodies; in 1124 it is the turn of St. Barbatus, patron saint of the city; both events are accompanied by ceremonies, celebrations, and miracles performed by the saints involved.[165] In both occasions, the promoter and main actor is the archbishop; the point of arrival is the cathedral, but the whole city becomes a stage for processions and celebrations. Falco shows clearly how the archbishop could now mobilize the whole city and its resources to give the citizens of Benevento access to the relics "ut crederent".[166] No explicit mention is made to a direct participation of the city's authorities *qua* authorities, nor of the papal rector. By the time of Falco's writing, the archbishop is by far the one

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[164] Those are all elements identified by Cherubini (2008, p. 246) as being characteristic of the communes.

[165] *Chron. Beneventanum* 1998, p. XLVI.

[166] *Chron. Beneventanum* 1998, 1119.3.3. Also Irving 2017, pp. 63-64.

actor who holds the strongest symbolic power and authority in Benevento.[167]

2. 2. 4 The parable of episcopal power in Benevento

At the risk of some repetitiveness, but for the sake of emphasizing an important element of the analysis, we may try to conceptualize and summarize what we have said until this point concerning episcopal power in Benevento. In his analysis of documents issued by the episcopacy from

[167] Irving (2017, p. 64) emphasizes how these initiatives by archbishop Landulf II were in a direct trail with those of his ancient predecessor Ursus. The continuity (and the perception of it) of episcopal power in Benevento becomes here striking. A similar relationship between increased episcopal authority and the association of the bishop with venerated saints in a urban context is shown by Byttebier 2017, pp. 188-189. He argues that the bishop (in this case, Gerard of Cambrai, who lived in the first half of the XI century) "responded to the challenges posed by his context by continuously performing his own centrality, while at the same time trying to convey a well-thought-out societal system in which the office of bishop remained the centre point of the ever-changing religious and societal structures of the diocese. To achieve this, Gerard employed many different 'instruments' to construct his authority, such as texts, rituals, speeches, and uses of space, and he interconnected them through recurring topoi that run through these acts, such as biblical metaphors, phrases, ideas, or symbols." (ivi, p. 176). It is difficult not to see a parallel with what happened in Benevento from the IX century onwards.

the VIII to the X-XI century Herbert Zielinski argued for a development that brought episcopal documents to move from an original model clearly inspired by (if not replicating) the charters issued by the dukes, to a more autonomous one modelled on the more solemn *privilegium*, and adopting elements typical of papal documents, such as the formulaic salutation of *Bene Valete*.[168] Even more tellingly, in the XI century also the latter formula is abandoned in favour of a stronger sign of autonomy in the form of the archbishop's personal subscription.[169]Far from being definitive evidence, Zielinski's argument gives us further proof a long-term process of change undertaken by the Beneventan episcopacy.

As already noted, the bishop of Benevento emerged in the VII century as a figure strongly dependent on the more powerful duke and relatively marginal.[170] This also reflected, quite naturally, the higher degree of symbolic power and authority the duke enjoyed at that time vis à vis the bishop. We will see in the next chapter how this was far from being an element of uniqueness for Benevento,

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[168] Zielinski 1996, p. 159. Interestingly, the author traces this phenomenon since the times of the Capuan dynasty. On the same line of thought Bertolini (2002, p. 6) who labels the episcopal documents from Benevento until the end of the IX century as "semplice strumenti notarili".

[169] Ibid., p. 163.

[170] Ramseyer 2006, pp. 42-3.

stemming as it was from the roots of the Lombard conception of kingship. Things began to change from the IX century, when the Siconids and their quest for stronger legitimacy intersected with an increased activism on the part of the bishops, both in building and ritual activities? (*translationes*): we may define the result as a sort of 'alliance' between the Palace and the Cathedral on relatively more equal terms, born out of continuity from the Arechian past, but enriched by new elements and developments.[171] It is telling that in 866, when prince Adelchis of Benevento issues his own laws in addition to

[171] In his analysis of the IX century *translationes*, D. Harrison traces an even more sharp contrast with the preceding Arichian time: "In the ninth century, the symbolic value of these relics becomes very evident as power shifts from princes to bishops. The habit of collecting relics in Benevento continued (St. Januarius, St. Bartholomew), but this time the saints became associated with the bishop and the cathedral - not with the prince and St. Sophia." Harrison 1998, pp. 251-2. Zornetta, while not using explicitly the term 'alliance', however defines the practical results of this cooperation between princes and bishops on a new level in very clear terms: "Sia la traslazione di San Gennaro sia, soprattutto, quella di San Bartolomeo permettono di rilevare un crescente protagonismo del clero cittadino nella gestione delle reliquie e del loro culto, che sembrava invece del tutto assente durante le cerimonie di traslazione del ducato e del principato di Arechi. Ciò non toglie che le traslazioni effettuate o sostenute da Sicone e Sicardo partecipino comunque a sottolineare il prestigio e l'autorità di questi sovrani e, con l'arrivo di San Bartolomeo, a conferire alla capitale del principato una rilevanza mai avuta prima nella geografia cristiana." Zornetta 2018, pp. 320-1.

the ones of Arichis, the prologue makes explicit mention of the presence of bishop Aion (Adelchis' brother) in the assembly of magnates that, as usual, surrounds the prince in his role as legislator.[172] Di Muro reminds us that Arechis II and his sons are probably the first rulers in the Latin West to choose as their final resting place not a palatine church (and that is even more surprising looking at Arichis' own building program and behaviour towards S. Sofia), but a cathedral (in the case of Arichis, that of Salerno).[173] The Siconids followed that pattern, and so did their successors in Benevento, from Radelchis onwards. Their epigraphs, some of which have survived to us and are currently in display at the Museo Diocesano of Benevento, are configured as *res gestae*, and as such, with their narrative emphasising the power and deeds of the princes, they would have worked as a constant reminder of that 'alliance' to whomever would have walked in the *paradisum* of the cathedral.

The troubles of the end of the IX century, the end of the dynasty inaugurated by Radelchis I and the installation of the Landulfids from Capua, deepened this process. The bishop (soon to be elevated to the more prestigious metropolitan role) continues to be a member of the ruling

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[172] Palmieri 1996, p. 77. The author interprets Aion's presence as signalling the definitive acquisition by the bishop of the status of full member of the circle made of *fideles* of the prince, the *primores*.

[173] Di Muro 2016, p. 406.

dynasty: the novelty in this case is that he was not chosen from the ranks of the Beneventan aristocracy (to whom the Radelchids more clearly belonged) anymore. The bishop showed an increased awareness of his prestige and rank, to find its expression also in an unprecedented (for Benevento at least) interest in commissioning luxury liturgical documents, such as Landulf's Benedictional.

The end of Pandulf Ironhead's rule put a definitive end to the 'anomaly' (if we may call it that, and keeping in mind that this phenomenon was quite common also in central and northern Italy, for example in Lucca) of an archbishop not chosen among the Beneventan élite. We have to be careful, though, not to draw a clear distinction between these two 'pools of recruitment' that were, in fact, closely intertwined one with the other.[174] After all, as Ramseyer remarks, the bishops of Lombard southern Italy, and the clerics more in general, never really constituted themselves

[174] Norbert Kamp clearly shows the importance of this point when he writes that "In the period before the Normans consolidated their authority as rulers the episcopate was a product of the existing political structures and social order, indeed it was very much a part of them. In the principal towns of Langobardia, and in the principalities of Capua, Benevento, and Salerno, the bishops (and in the capital cities from the later tenth century archbishops) were drawn from the princely families themselves, or from the aristocracy of these principalities." Kamp 2002, pp. 188-189. The link existing between princes, aristocracy, and bishops is, in a sense, the thread connecting this whole chapter; still, further analysis can be found in the next three sections.

as a *ordo* completely separate from secular society.[175] During the whole period under consideration here, bishops were considered, one way or the other, as members of the aristocracy. This also meant that their influence over the affairs of society took on a quite different form: the silence of our sources regarding any kind of synod comparable to the ones that took place in the Frankish realm since the VI century onwards is striking, though of course the different relationship with the Roman see also had its influence in this case.

Nor could this sort of 'assimilation' of bishops and clerics with secular society failed to leave its mark on the princes' attitude towards religious affairs: we never see the Lombard princes of the south undertaking the same kind of religiously-inspired policies that we may find not only among the Franks, but among the Lombards themselves under the kingdom.[176] As Ramseyer argues, the Lombard princes "did not use Christianity as a unifying factor in the same way; they did not push their subjects to convert to

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[175] Ramseyer 2006, p. 45.

[176] Aripert I (653-661), Perctarit (661-662), and Cunincpert (688-700) were the three Lombard kings who, for the first and last time in the history of the kingdom, became involved in religious matters, namely intervening in favour of Catholicism against the last Arian, for mending the Tricapitoline schism, and imposing the forced conversion of (Delogu 2009, p. 262).

Christianity or adhere to certain liturgical practices."[177] This difference in the relationship between bishops, the secular élite, and the princes is of extreme relevance for us, as it naturally influenced the developments in the conception and representation of symbolic power and authority: for example, it is the relatively marginal role of bishops in the political and social landscape of the VIII century that makes the hypothesis of Arichis performing the ceremony of unction so unlikely, as we will see later. It also makes the gradual ascendancy of the bishops, then archbishops, of Benevento during the IX and the X century more evident and more important to us.

When the death of Pandulf Ironhead marked the end of unified Capuan rule over the southern Lombards, the archbishop of Benevento found himself in the best position to profit from the weakening of the princes' rule in the city. This fact didn't go unrecognised by the papacy itself, as by 1058 the archdiocese reached its greatest territorial extent (while at the same time the principality was shrinking dramatically).[178] The trajectory we managed to identify is definitely an ascending one, and it will not reach its apex until the XII century: before then, the archbishop had already been left as the sole institution representing continuity with the Lombard past and ethnicity of the ancient capital, facing the new papal rectors mostly drawn,

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[177] *Ibid.*

[178] Galdi 2004, p. 100.

at the beginning at least, from the ranks of the Beneventan aristocracy.[179] At that time, however, there will be no prince in Benevento anymore.

2. 3 The Beneventan aristocracy

During our previous reconstructions of the evolution of both episcopal and princely power in Benevento we have repeatedly met the other relevant actor in the picture: the Beneventan aristocracy. This is only natural, as it may look evident to the reader how the aristocracy of the Lombard capital was so strictly intertwined with both the religious and the secular spheres of power. This is nothing new, nor unheard of, of course. However, it is time to devote our attention to this fundamental component of Beneventan society, as it will play a role in our hypotheses concerning Vat. lat. 9820 and its illustrated commemorations. Since we already touched upon the subject in the previous sections,

[179] Galdi 2004, p. 268; Figliuolo 1992, p. 46. This was valid until the second half of the XI century; after that, the political experiences of Dacomarius and, particularly, his son Anso seemed to have pushed the popes towards a more cautious approach, through the appointment of (external) ecclesiastics as rectors, and for shorter periods of time (Oldfield 2007, p. 603); by then, aristocrats (urban, but also coming from some of the surrounding localities) would base their prestige on the title of judge and on that of constable (like the rector, a new official created by the popes).

here the discourse will be more streamlined, the main goal being that of sketching a picture of the social and economic role of the southern Lombard aristocracy up to the end of the X century. In turn, this will allow us to assess the interplay more correctly between the urban aristocracy of Benevento, the prince, and the archbishop.

2. 3. 1 Defining 'aristocracy'

The first question to be asked quite naturally is a matter of definition. When we talk about the princes, it is quite clear who we are talking about, that is the men that styled themselves with the title of *princeps* and that ruled over the Lombard principalities. But once we move on to talk about Lombard aristocracy (or aristocracy in the Early Middle Ages tout court), our situation becomes trickier. So, what are we talking about, exactly, when we speak of aristocracy in our case?

In his chapter concerning the role and development of aristocracies in the Early Middle Ages, Chris Wickham defined an aristocrat as "a member of a (normally landed) political elite, someone who could yield some form of power simply because of who he (or, rather more rarely, she) was."[180] To this definition, he adds a number of criteria that would help categorizing the membership to

[180] Wickham 2005, p. 153.

'aristocracy' in general, namely "distinction of ancestry; landed wealth; position in an official hierarchy; imperial or royal favour […]; recognition by other political leaders; and lifestyle."[181] These are generic criteria, easily adaptable to different geographic and chronological contexts. Closer to our concerns here, Matthew Innes, in his study of the middle Rhenish societies until the XI century, while not attempting a true taxonomy, highlights the prominent role of landed wealth and social recognition (which we may define as centrality in a network of horizontal and vertical relationships) involved in a constant process of negotiation.[182] Both Wickham's and Innes' definitions (just

[181] Wickham 2005, p. 154. As Wickham himself specifies these criteria should not be taken as 'fixed values', always valid in the same degree independently of other factors; he himself makes examples of how their relative importance may increase or decrease in different times and places.

[182] Innes 2000, p. 10. In particular, Innes speaks of "political leadership" grounded on power, that he defines as depending "on informal channels of moral obligation and social pressure, not constitutional positions. In such a world, power could only be negotiated and shared; only when power is institutionalised can it be delegated and controlled." This definition runs more or less openly against an approach to aristocratic power grounded on legal and institutional norms (though, admittedly and almost obviously, without excluding them altogether from the equation). However, as remarked by Timothy Reuter in an interesting contribution to the debate on nobles and nobility in the high Middle Ages, generalizations should be taken with

to mention two, but the list may be longer) are useful for our purposes here. For both of them, and quite unsurprisingly, underlying the very concepts of *élite* and *aristocracy* stands that of *hierarchy*.[183] A word of caution is needed here, though. 'Aristocracy' is a tricky term, and for one, very simple, reason: as pointed out by Paul Fouracre, it is a term *we* use, but that the people living at the time, least of all the élite itself, never actually used.[184] Another issue arises once we consider that this 'aristocracy' was far from being a monolithic, cohesive, group. It was layered, exactly like the society to which it belonged. This also means that, as Fouracre underlined, the words 'aristocracy' and 'élite' are not precisely interchangeable, as we could see the former as making up for the uppermost layer of the latter. Here, our concern will be precisely with this last group, what Fouracre labelled as the "élite within the élite".[185] It is this group that in the following we will term alternately as 'aristocracy' or 'élite'. While, of course, we should refrain from any clear-cut division between 'lower' and 'higher' echelons of the aristocracy when describing

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caution: aristocratic power, and social relationships it derived from, were extremely varied from place to place (Reuter 2000, p. 86).

[183] Bougard and Le Jan 2008, pp. 6-7.

[184] Fouracre 2000, p. 20. Fouracre's remark was specifically concerned with the Franks, but it easily fits the rest of Western Europe, including the Lombards.

[185] Ibid.

such a kind of fluid group, still this distinction will help us keep our focus.

2. 3. 2 Southern Lombard aristocracy under the lens: landownership and palace offices

Once we got a rough idea of what we are talking about, we should look at the very characteristics of southern Lombard aristocracy. We already said something concerning the origins of the duchy and principality of Benevento. Southern Lombard aristocracy was an aristocracy of conquest: the result of the introduction (whether violent or not need not concern us here) of the Lombard element into the landscape of a southern Italy where the last economic and social vestiges of Late Antiquity were already disappearing due to the crisis created by the Gothic War. Thus, it's easy to hypothesize that its landed wealth originated from this period.

However, when a true Lombard aristocracy in the south emerges from the sources, around the VII century, what we see is a picture that closely resembles what we may find in other places: the northern Lombard kingdom, for sure; but also the Frankish realm. The dukes of Benevento appear ruling on lands dominated by an élite that constituted itself based on three pillars: landownership; public offices; and closeness to the duke himself. This picture remained valid also after the birth of the principality.

While landownership provided obvious and necessary material wealth and social power, it wasn't enough to make somebody into a true member of the élite, as we defined the term above: the other two elements were required, and equally, if not more, relevant. Two public offices are the ones that mostly characterize the Beneventan élite as presented by our sources: those of gastald (*gastaldus*) and count (*comes*). The exact nature of these two titles and the role they bestowed upon their holders is still baffling scholars, more so as they did, of course, change over time. In his analysis of the duchy and principality of Benevento Gasparri notes the ambivalence the sources show in the use of the two terms, sometimes, if not often, used as substitutes. Nonetheless, he distinguishes between them by seeing the gastalds as officials responsible for the administration of fiscal lands in a specific 'district', centred on a town (a *civitas*, usually also the seat of a bishop), while interpreting the title of *comes* as a further honorific addition signalling the role of its holder as member of the duke/prince's *comitatus*, an evolution of the more ancient (and genuinely Lombard) role and title of *gasindius*.[186] This hypothesis fits with the picture we have of an élite that grounded itself both in landowning wealth and service.

[186] Gasparri 1989, p. 115. The title of *gasindius* didn't entirely cease to be used, however: still in 832 Martin can identify a *gasind* as beneficiary of a donation; nonetheless, this seems to be the only reference to the title left from southern Lombardy after the beginning of the VIII century (Martin 1980, p. 561).

The latter also made possible the exploitation of fiscal resources in the form of donations and concessions bestowed by the ruler.[187] This picture can be considered valid at least until the X century.

Gasparri identifies several titles linked to service inside the duke's palace: *thesaurarius*, *referendarius*, *marpahis*, *vestararius, zetarius*.[188] Some of these titles were, quite obviously, references to late antique models, if not identical in their roles. What is really relevant, however, is that both gastalds/counts and palatine officials came from the same background and were part of the same élite: distinguishing between a 'palace aristocracy' of some sort and those aristocrats who based their power on holding a county or gastaldate is, as poignantly argued by Gasparri once again, impossible and misleading.[189] The example he cites of Roffrit, gastald of Avellino but also *thesaurarius* and *referendarius* of princes Sico and Sicard, is telling.[190]

Linked to this, is the fact that the Beneventan (and, later, Salernitan) aristocracy always considered the capital as the only true political arena. The *civitates* around which their

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[187] These fiscal resources were first and foremost made by fiscal land. As Costambeys poignantly remarked "the basis of social and political activity in the Early Middle Ages was, ultimately, and overwhelmingly, land." (2007, p. 184).

[188] Gasparri 1989, p. 106; also Martin 1989, p. 569.

[189] Gasparri 1989, p. 116.

[190] Ibid.

gastaldates and counties were organized are never represented as autonomous sources of social and political power. In this role, and until the rise of Salerno as an independent capital, Benevento was unchallenged.[191] Our sources, and in particular the chronicles, concur in showing us how the southern Lombard élite focused its energy and attention on the capital, and how this behaviour was strictly connected to the presence of the prince there. Recounting in his usual 'novelistic' style the story of Sico, the Anonymous of Salerno presents to us the Beneventan aristocrats in Benevento when Grimoald IV "ordered to all his nobles to gather in one assembly" in order to discuss whether or not to welcome in their lands Sico, now exiled from his Spoletan homeland.[192] Later on, when Sico and count Radelchis prepare a plot to kill Grimoald, the meeting takes place in Benevento, inside the baths, despite Radelchis' being *comes* of Conza and Sico having been assigned the gastaldate of Acerenza, both localities relatively far from Benevento.

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[191] This impression is further reinforced once we note that members of the élite never renounced owning houses in the capitals. For example, Gasparri mentions a certain Alahis, son of an Arichis died in 815, who owned houses in Benevento, and also in other minor settlements (namely, Venafro) together with mills on the nearby river Salto (1989, p. 123).

[192] *Chron. Salern.*, 42, p. 62: "cunctos suos optimates iussit congregare in unum".

This last episode also brings us to another important element: despite the strict links established between the figure and role of the *princeps* and the Lombard aristocracy, or perhaps precisely because of their existence, some scholars, such as Zornetta, seem tempted to see the opposition to the ruler almost as a mark of aristocratic membership. Once again, it is the chronicles that show this to us: despite his Spoletan origins, Sico is shown as being considered fully admitted into the group of the Beneventan élite only after his participation in the plot against the *princeps*.[193] It is hard to tell whether this is a genuine representation of the situation under Grimoald IV, or whether it was a reflection of the environment in which the Anonymous of Salerno was writing his historiographical work, that is the Principality of Salerno at the end of the X century. Whatever the answer, we have seen how the relationship between ruler and aristocracy could be tense, if not altogether strained.

This would be hardly surprising for anyone who looks at what happened during the IX and X centuries in the Frankish realms. The old historiographical model, indeed inspired by the Carolingian and post-Carolingian experiences, that depicted monarchy and aristocracy during the Early Middle Ages as ultimately irreconcilable players of a zero-sum game (where a gain for one would automatically mean a loss for the other) has been

[193] Zornetta 2020, p. 158.

successfully challenged by a number of studies. However, we cannot consider southern Lombard aristocracy and the ruler being fully cooperative players or, even more, as one, single entity aimed at achieving a unitary goal.[194] This has much to do with how power was distributed and exercised in an early medieval polity, a subject that will be partly addressed in the next chapter. Besides this word of caution, though, we should also recognize that we are dealing with entities whose 'borders' are blurred, to say the least, as we will see in a moment.

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[194] As already mentioned above Innes (2000) has done much to challenge the old view. To his work, we may add those of Sean McLean, in particular his monography on the reign of Charles the Fat (2003), where he emphasized the misconception upon which the Monarchy vs. Aristocracy model (what he terms the "self-privatisation model of ninth-century politics") was grounded. In his words, that model "rests on the idea that the most important, or even the only important, historically significant way that aristocrats relate to kings is materially. This assumption tends to ascribe to the aristocracy an anachronistic unity of purpose and over-simplistically suggest that royal power was only as enduring as its capacity to distribute material resources, thus underrating its less quantifiable charismatic or cultural elements." (p. 13). We will deal in more detail with the cultural elements mentioned by McLean in Chapter 3.

2. 3. 3 Kinship groups and aristocratic policies under the Radelchids and the Landulfids

The relationship between aristocracy and ruler in Lombard southern Italy was complex, and nothing could show this complexity at work better than a closer look at the kinship structure that emerges from our sources and how it influenced the contest for power from the IX century onwards. Without delving too much into details, we can rely here on the deep analysis provided by Aurélie Thomas in her outstanding study of southern Lombard aristocracy. Following both the sources (in particular the chronicles) and a consolidated historiography in the field, Thomas shows the role of the two most famous and visible aristocratic lineages of southern Lombard history: those of Daufier *Propheta* ('the Prophet') and Daufier *Mutus* ('the Mute'). Both lineages were linked by way of marriage with the dukes and princes of Benevento and among themselves, while at the same time playing the role of opposite contenders for power, in particular since the reign of Grimoald IV and the disappearance of the Arechian dynasty.[195] During the civil war of 839-849 they became the 'cores' of the factions supporting either Radelchis or Siconulf. The latter was strongly supported by the sons of Dauphier the Mute, who left Benevento immediately after the rise to power of Radelchis, who was himself a representative of the lineage of 'the Prophet'; and Siconulf's

[195] Thomas 2016, pp. 106-110.

successor on the throne of Salerno would be Guaifer, as we saw above a direct descendant of Daufier the Mute.

This quick mention can easily give us the grasp of how looking at the aristocracy and the princes as simply two separate 'powers' is misleading, to say the least.[196] Once we move closer to the period that most directly interests us, that of the reign of the Capuan dynasty over both Capua and Benevento, this picture can initially find further confirmation, while we can also observe some inevitable changes.

We already saw, talking about the relationship between Capuans and Beneventans in the X century, how the *Chronicon Salernitanum* posits that Atenulf's rise to the princely title owed much to the full (at least ideally) consent of the Beneventan aristocracy. To that, we should add that, as mentioned above, he was himself part of the faction plotting the overthrowing of Radelchis II, and not

[196] Still Thomas provides an interesting turning point from which we can start to observe the 'merging' of these two pillars of southern Lombard politics, namely the end of the Arechian dynasty. In her words, "l'aristocratie ducale du royaume, étroitement apparentée à la famille royale lombarde et les aristocraties locales formaient en effet, à l'époque du *regnum*, deux strates bien distinctes d'une hiérarchie nobiliaire parfaitement organisée et hiérachisée. Or, la disparition du lignage princier d'Aréchis, liée à celle du *regnum*, contribute à dé-hiérarchiser l'ensemble formé par l'aristocratie bénéventaine et son prince, en supprimant les distinctions entre *proceres* et *princeps*, instaurant une instabilité chronique du poivoir." (2016, p. 201).

simply an 'external' candidate: the Salernitan Anonymous himself confirms this when he reports, at the end of the same text where he described Atenulf's elevation to the throne, how his mother reacted to the news. She is referred to as "Potelfrit filia", meaning she was a member of that powerful clan headed by Roffrit and Potelfrid (and belonging to the line of Dauphier *Propheta*) that had been exiled from Benevento by Radelchis II before Atenulf's rise to power, and that will play a crucial role in keeping his regime in Benevento as stable as possible afterwards.

Quite obviously, these links between the Landulfids and the major lineages of Beneventan aristocracy were to be strengthened as the new dynasty needed to hold its presence firm in Benevento. At the same time, the new rulers seemed to have had all the intention of avoiding the risk of giving the Beneventan *gentes* any opportunity for claiming the princely title. This had important repercussions on the structure, role and power of the aristocracy of the principality. Still following Thomas' analysis, we may define these consequences as the multiplication of the comital titles (and relative powers connected to them) and what the French scholar poignantly called the "landulfisation de l'aristocratie gastaldale et comtale".[197] In other words, we see a constant increase in the delegation and decentralization of public power, as we mentioned in the previous section: at the same time, this

[197] Thomas 2016, p. 238.

delegation of power happens to be directed more often than not to members of the princely house, or to its closest allies. These changes were further reflected also by the disappearance of all references to palace officials since the second half of the IX century: instead of them, we now find the prince surrounded by *fideles*; later on, that is after the death of Pandulf I, also the *fideles* finally disappear, leaving in their wake only *comites*.[198]

Since our goal now is not to present a complete picture of the relations of power under the rule of the Capuan dynasty, we should stick to the question that most interests us in this context: how did these developments impact on the Beneventan aristocracy, particularly at the end of the X century? Part of the answer lies in what we had already seen: aristocracy and princely house were strictly intertwined. In practical terms, this meant that the aristocratic families could not be excluded from power, particularly when this power was being more and more distributed among the comital branches of the Landulfid.

Then perhaps it is not surprising that behind the events of 982 and 1003 that we mentioned in the previous section (that is, the two times in which Pandulf II was removed from power by the Beneventans) Aurélie Thomas identifies members of the same lineage that brought Atenulf I in the

[198] Martin 1989, pp. 565-566. Canosa 2015, p. 69 reaffirms how the titles of *comes* signified the strict link between the power of aristocratic class with the throne.

city a century before, that of Roffrit. Quite fittingly, she defined them as "faiseurs des princes" (prince-makers).[199] In the absence of any direct reference from our sources, Thomas' hypothesis rests mainly on onomastic analysis and a comparison with charter evidence: however, while a certain degree of uncertainty stands, its value cannot be denied. And once we follow her analysis all along, moving from the death of Pandulf I through the reign of Pandulf II, and then of his direct successors, we can see the continuing extension of the power of the Beneventan aristocracy, until the arrival of the Normans will start an irreversible process of change in its nature and role.

Traditionally, scholars have identified in the reign of Pandulf I the quintessential moment where the control of the *publicum* began to pass in a more substantial way from the hands of the prince into those of the aristocracy. We already saw examples of this process when dealing with the events of that reign. Russo-Maller came as long as to affirm that what happened was a true "patrimonializzazione della giurisdizione" (patrimonialization of jurisdiction) that opened the doors to

[199] Thomas 2016, pp. 302-303; a full analysis of the developments this lineage was subject to can be find until p. 312. Gasparri came as long as to indicate the possibility of the existence of a "legame preferenziale" between the Beneventans (i.e. the Beneventan aristocracy) and the cadet branch of the Capuan dynasty that will rule the principality for the rest of its existence (Gasparri 1989, p. 134).

the subsequent establishment of territorial lordships.[200] This fragmentation of public power he identified as one of the causes (but not the sole one) of the final demise of the southern Lombard polities at the hands of the Normans. According to Gasparri, though, one of the main factors involved in this process is precisely the link between public (princely) and aristocratic power: namely, he traces a line going from palace offices to those revolving around lands and districts (counties, gastaldates). The result would be a paradox (which is far from being unusual in history). In his own words, "La grande tradizione del potere pubblico nel Mezzogiorno longobardo (come in quello bizantino) condiziona in sostanza anche le forze che ne determinano il declino."[201]

Such a statement, with all its limits, still should caution us from viewing the late history of the principality as a relatively simple zero-sum game. It should also help us reconsider and revaluate the role played by southern Lombard aristocracy during the critical juncture represented by the end of the X and the first half of the XI century. Nicola Cilento, at the end of its pioneering study of southern Italy under the Lombards, expressed a strongly negative opinion concerning such a role. He came to label its behaviour as "immobile", fixed in the defence of past privileges and unable to understand that times were

[200] Russo-Maller 1983, p. 388.

[201] Gasparri 1989, p. 135.

changing.[202]Such a view is no more tenable, as we know that Lombard aristocracy quite naturally changed together with its political and social horizons.

While outside the walls of Benevento this change took mainly the form of a substitution of the ancient Lombard lords with Norman ones, sometimes abruptly sometimes gradually, inside the ancient Lombard capital the picture looks different. We have already seen before that the first half of the XI century shows a constant increase in power (and, perhaps, turbulence) of the élite. In the previous section, looking as we were from the perspective of princely power, it could have seemed just a repetition of patterns that are typical of Western Europe in general, though perhaps a delayed one: the weakening of 'central' authority and the concurrent strengthening of local aristocracies that seemingly characterized the X century in the north. [203] Now that we have also looked at the

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[202] Cilento 1971, p. 119.

[203] Le Jan provides an analysis of the fragmentation of public power in Francia during the post-Carolingian times, considering the process to be strictly linked not only with the changing relationship between the (still Carolingian) rulers and their *Reichsaristokratie* during the IX century but also, tellingly, with the peculiar structure of lineages and their relation with the possession of *honores*. It would be interesting to look at this interpretation of what was happening in the Carolingian empire in contrast with the situation of the principality of Capua-Benevento half a century or more later, but it would clearly extend outside the limits of the present work (see Le Jan 2000, pp. 64-66).

development trajectory of southern Lombard aristocracy, however, Once we see urban aristocrats speaking independently in the name of the city by swearing an oath of fidelity to the pope, or later obtaining by the same pope the full respect of their privileges by the new (last) prince, it means that some radical change has occurred. The picture we have delineated until this moment, and which showed prince and aristocracy as fluid political entities intertwining with each other, cannot be considered valid anymore. We can only speculate as to the factors that made such a 'misalignment' possible.

2. 4 The situation in Benevento at the end of the X century: an attempt at conceptualization

It is time to merge all that we have seen until this moment in order to reach our goal, that is to gain a better understanding of the situation in Benevento at the time the Vat. lat. 9820 was commissioned and made.

We have seen in Chapter 1 that scholars, while disagreeing on the exact dating, concur that the exemplar in our possession comes from the '80s of the X century. We have also mentioned Belting's theory concerning the existence of a lost original exemplar belonging to the cathedral, possibly dating from the period of Landulf I as archbishop. One question arises first of all: can our historical reconstruction contribute something to this issue? The underlying

assumption of this chapter is that the answer to this question may be positive.

The historical context of the Vat. lat. 9820 comes into play for many scholars most usually when they address the final commemorations. This is no surprise. The palimpsest provided by the changes in the names of rulers (from "et principe nostro paldolfo" to "et principibus nostris paldolfo et landolfo" in our case, for example, as we already mentioned) provides the ideal ground for this. However, until now scholars have been content with 'exploiting' this as evidence for the dating process. This seems to be reductive. The Vat. lat. 9820 emerged from the mists of a time of crucial importance for the history of Lombard southern Italy, and the principalities of Capua and Benevento in particular, a time that, as we have seen, cannot be simply subsumed under the simplistic label of an Indian summer, a last period of glory (and vast territorial expansion) for the Lombard princes. Reality, as usual, is much more complex.

We have grasped that complexity by looking at the intertwining power of the three main actors on the Beneventan scene of the X century: the archbishop, the prince, the aristocracy. For the sake of analysis, we will consider them here as relatively separate entities. Then, how could we better conceptualize the balance existing between them? First of all, we have confirmed how the model of a declining princely power being slowly eroded by a rising aristocracy is not necessarily misleading. It is

based on a grain of truth, as princely power did indeed decline, until its complete disappearance in the XI century; at the converse, the aristocracy clearly increased the breadth of its action inside the principality, together with its chances of accumulating power at the expense of the *publicum*. It is a process of fragmentation that bears resemblance to what was happening in post-Carolingian polities, particularly in West Frankish lands. Until the IX century, and until the Arechian dynasty was in place, it would have been unconceivable for the aristocracy of the principality to assert itself as the main actor on stage. The end of the dynasty opened up new possibilities, manifested by the rise to power of Sico. After the civil war of 839-849, it was perhaps impossible to revert back to the previous situation: the strategy employed by the Radelchids aimed at grounding princely power in that new context. Not coincidentally, the Landulfids of Capua continued more or less on the same path, though with some differences dictated by the different extension of their power and their different position vis-à-vis Benevento. Aristocratic power did not wane, however. Perhaps we may better say that it kept itself 'subterranean', a river flowing under the ground of Landulfid power, but in a state of rising tension as Benevento found itself in the role of *junior* capital of a larger entity. Even if we consider the alternation of the princes' presence between Capua and Benevento that have been deduced by scholars as a fact, it couldn't have been more than a patch. Tellingly, we do not know of any consistent construction programme commissioned by the

Landulfids in Benevento; and perhaps it is no coincidence that the prince managed to have Capua elevated to the rank of archdiocese some years before Benevento itself.

Some Beneventan aristocrats clearly felt themselves as cut off from the main source of power and prestige, that is the closeness to the ruling prince, or what we may term, appropriating from Carolingian historiography, as *Prinznahe*. This sense of 'uneasiness' may be considered to be the soil that gave rise to the turmoil characterizing Beneventan history under the Landulfids: from the early attempts by bishop Pietro to the expulsion of Pandulf I's son from the city. That the Beneventans chose a member of the same Landulfid dynasty to rule over the principality indicates that we are not looking at a crisis in legitimacy of a foreign dynasty, expelled in the name of an 'indigenous' restoration: what the Beneventan aristocracy truly needed, was to be close to the source of public power.

From that moment on, its take on the *publicum* could hardly be challenged. Its power rose constantly, and the prince became more of a figurehead, until further shocks (such as the Norman conquests) made it evident that a prince was no more needed. Two intersecting lines, one declining, the other ascending, could be used to picture this evolution.

Our other actor, the archbishop, found itself more and more involved in this changing political and social landscape. His is another ascending parable, perhaps one even more pronounced than that of the Beneventan

aristocracy: from a state of quasi-irrelevance in the VIII century to the prominence of the XI and XII centuries. The bishop of Benevento became first a member of the ruling house, with the Radelchids; he began to wield more of the symbolic and political power previously held by the prince; he then rose to the rank of archbishop, exercising jurisdiction over a vast swathe of territory. He became at the same time a potentially powerful collaborator of the prince and a potential focus of aristocratic resistance against the same prince (as once again demonstrated by the figure of Pietro *sagacissimus*). He also became another beneficiary in the distribution of public power, and he was strongly involved in what some scholars have called "balancing acts", the active "dealing with local aristocratic families and managing the interests of other ecclesiastical institutions."[204]

If we want to find a last moment in time when all these 'lines' or 'parables' were in balance among each other, a last moment before this balance began to unravel, that moment would be the end of the reign of Pandulf I. At that precise moment, Benevento was still characterized by what scholars have come to term 'coopetition', that is a mixture of cooperation and competition, exercised on the issues of distribution of power, where actors do compete against each other, but still find a necessarily common interest in

[204] Coss et al. 2017, p. 7.

the keeping of the current social and political order.[205] His death finally opened the doors for a process which would change the structures of power in *Langobardia Minor*, and in Benevento specifically, forever, even without the need of taking the Norman factor into consideration. Conflict ensued in the city, and Benevento was characterized by a relatively high degree of internal strife during the following two centuries, as Falco testified. We should be wary of considering conflict (laten or explicit as it is) as simply a disruptive element for the cohesion of the urban community. Conflict, in all its expressions, should be considered instead as "integral parts of cultural, social, and political interaction" as rightly pointed out by Patrick Lantschner in his study of urban politics in the XIV-XV centuries.[206] Conflict, as we have observed it taking place in Benevento, from the rise of Atenulf and the immediate attempts at overthrowing is rule, to the 'smaller' cases of abuses by Capuan officials and the Beneventan reaction, finally coming to the revolt of 982, should be seen as steps in the constant re-definition of the relations of power inside the city, a city which was increasing its "polycentric" nature even more, particularly if compared to the times of Arichis.[207] It was, in this sense, evolving.

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[205] Le Jan 2018, p. 15.

[206] Lantschner 2015, p. 5.

[207] Reprising Lantschner again (ivi, p. 2): "as conglomerates of multiple political units and bases of organizations […] cities gave rise to a

The last moment of balance between all actors involved was also the moment into which the Vat. lat. 9820 came into being. It is one of the main hypotheses underlying this work that this is no coincidence. But in order to understand further what could have been the role of the first extant *Exultet* roll, we should now delve into an issue that has been touched here repeatedly: the symbolic nature (and representation) of power and authority in the lands of the southern Lombards.

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polycentric order in which political relations were often multi-faceted and shifting." Benevento was clearly no exception.

3. A Southern Lombard ritual system of kingship

In the previous chapter we looked at the evolution of political power in Benevento, with a particular interest at the conditions that led to the establishment of the Capuan dynasty there. This, in turn, allowed us to consider what made the reign of Pandulf I relevant, and to briefly (and roughly) sketch what the situation was at the time the Vat. lat. 9820 came into being. We mainly took into account political and social factors reconstructing a more traditional historical narrative. It is time we devote our attention to an issue we touched upon repeatedly: the role and importance of symbolic power.

The pursuit of this path is important for two reasons: first, because it will allow us to complement the analysis undertaken in the previous chapter, making it more complete, perhaps more understandable. Second, because it will help us situating Vat. lat. 9820, its iconography and ritual usage, into the symbolic world it belonged to. In this way, it will be possible to discern some peculiarities of Vat. lat. 9820 that will, in turn, give us the key for further exploration into its cultural and philosophical background and, ultimately, a possible hypothesis for its creation.

3. 1 Defining symbolic power and authority

If we want to explore, albeit cursorily, Lombard symbolic power and authority what we need, first and foremost, is to

define our subject as clearly as possible. In order to do this, it is necessary to take into consideration historical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives. The study of power, authority, and their symbolic constituents has always been, of its very nature, a cross-disciplinary endeavour, and as such it should be conceived, even when the focus in terms of space and time is relatively narrow, as in our case.

A difference between the concepts of 'power' and 'authority' was already well established in the minds of learned people during the Middle Ages. It was Pope Gelasius I (492-496) who, on the background of Augustinian precedents and with the aim of distinguishing the characteristics of pontifical and imperial powers, proposed a distinction between *auctoritas* and *potestas*, the first being defined as "the faculty of shaping things creatively and in a binding manner, whilst *potestas* is the power to execute what *auctoritas* has laid down."[208]

In the wider field of political science, Domenico Fisichella identified two different (though strictly intertwined) kinds of power: relational power, and institutional power. He defines the first as "a relation between social units (individual subjects or groups) in which the behaviour of

[208] Ullmann 1962, p. 21. This is the substance of the famous Gelasian definition of the two spheres of secular and spiritual power: while *potestas* is the chief characteristic of the former, *auctoritas* characterizes the latter. Gelasius' thought will be addressed also in Chapter 4.

social unit R depends in some circumstances by the behaviour of social unit P."[209] This dependency in turn is translated in coercion or influence (of doing or not doing something). Institutional power can instead be described as what happens once "power becomes a process (that is a vast succession of iterations) and a system (that is a complex of interactions between structures and functions."[210] Examples of this latter could be a political party, a union, and so on. These definitions, borne out of the contexts experienced by our contemporary world, still retain some relevance for the early medieval world as well. Moreover, they are also significant for our specific purposes. The key word here is legitimacy. It is through legitimacy that political power can sustain itself as an authority, that is "the faculty of stimulating and attracting the consensus of others" and "the influence of somebody over somebody else as a result of the conformity to the system of values of the community or synthesis to which both belong."[211] Legitimacy provides for authority (and,

[209] "[…] il potere è una relazione tra unità sociali (soggetti individuali o gruppi) tale che il comportamento dell'unità sociale R dipende in una qualche circostanza dal comportamento dell'unità sociale P." in Fisichella 2010, p. 73, translation mine.

[210] "[…] il potere diviene un processo (cioè una vasta successione di interazioni) e un sistema (cioè un complesso di interazioni tra strutture e funzioni)…" in Fisichella 2010, p. 76.

[211] "[…] la facoltà di stimolare e attrarre l'altrui consenso. […] l'ascendente di qualcuno su qualcun altro come risultato della

consequently, for political power) to be accepted by the group upon which authority and power are exercised. The German sociologist Heinrich Popitz also distinguished four different categories of power: power of action (*Aktionsmacht*), instrumental power, authoritative power, and 'data-setting' (or 'data-constituting') power.[212]

As we said above, these definitions of power (except, perhaps, for Popitz's) are of course in line with the experience of contemporary nation-states and the other subunits inside them (such as political parties or unions), which means that, while being useful nonetheless, they cannot be copy-pasted (as it has been done in the past, particularly by some older German historiography) to medieval political units as well.[213]

In an early medieval polity, such as the principality of Benevento, power eminently took on the first of the dyad of forms identified by Fisichella, the relational one, which

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conformità al sistema di valori della comunità o sintesi alla quale entrambi appartengono." Fisichella 2010, p. 76. The first part of the quote is taken by the author from B. De Jouvenel, *De la souveraineté. À la recherche du bien politique*, Génin, Paris, 1955.

[212] See H. Popitz, *Phenomena of Power. Authority, Domination, and Violence*, 2017, New York, Columbia University Press. Popitz's division is also followed by Althoff 2003, pp. 10-11.

[213] Althoff 2003, pp. 15-16. An interesting remark by Goetz (2006, p. 36) also warns us about the risks of jettisoning the term 'state' too readily from our analysis of medieval polities. For the purposes of this thesis, the terms 'state' and 'polity' will be used interchangeably.

Popitz identified as "authoritative power":[214] in part, we have seen it at work in the previous chapter. Matthew Innes' analysis of power as it was exercised in the middle Rhine valley during the Carolingian era has shown exactly that in a similar context. To quote his words, in the early Middle Ages lordship (that is, probably the most prominent and relevant form of medieval power relationship) was "a personal, social relationship which varied in its form and implications" hardly "confirmed" by any kind of legal mark.[215] While Innes' position may be considered as too radical, particularly if one looks at the Italian (and southern Italian, in particular) evidence, still it deserves credit in emphasising the relational nature of early medieval power and authority and, consequently, their radical difference compared to modern and contemporary concepts.[216] We have seen how in the principality of Benevento both aristocratic and princely power were strictly linked to the palace, to the offices that could be distributed from it, and thus to the kind of

[214] Althoff 2003, p. 11.

[215] Innes 2000, p. 92.

[216] This is a point also emphasised, albeit in a different context, by Beihammer 2013, p. 5. We can consider Althoff's view, as expressed in his *Amicitiae und pacta: Bündnis, Einung, Politik und Gebetsgedenken im beginnenden 10. Jahrhundert*, 1992, as a partial 'correction' to Innes' analysis, showing how Carolingian and post-Carolingian politics could differ precisely in the degree of 'closeness' conceded by the sovereigns to their aristocratic subjects.

relationship that was established among them, both via lineage connections or relationships of fidelity. It was a political and social system built, and sustaining itself, upon political and social relationships among its different components.

However, as for all medieval polities (including not only Latin Europe, but also the Eastern Empire, and even the Islamic polities), this was hardly enough. We have seen above how power (including its relational form) needs authority, and legitimacy. Both were indispensable to build the true key to the medieval exercise of power: consensus.[217] Ildar Garipzanov identifies three elements that characterized authority in early medieval polities, as it emerges from a reading of contemporary sources, which could be summarily comprised in a triad of terms: process, agency, limitations. The first term refers to the nature of royal authority itself and the source of its legitimation: the authority of an early medieval ruler was never conceived as 'static', an attribute that once obtained was to be kept in the hands of the ruler *qua* ruler. It needed to be constantly re-established and reinforced through action, movement, and performance. This leads us directly to the second term, since this process quite obviously needed agents to take place, being them the ruler himself or the nobility, both involved in a constant negotiation of their respective

[217] Althoff 2003, p. 16.

positions and roles vis à vis the others.[218] Agents, and the whole system for that, however, had bounds: they were constrained by a series of limitations that made their behaviour somehow more predictable by inscribing their choices into an established system of political traditions, while their performances and representations were equally bound by the media available to them.[219]

A possibly more streamlined theory comprising all the elements we have just looked at, is that proposed by Isabelle Duyvesteyn, extensively borrowing from the 1963 work by Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis*. Duyvesteyn took Dahl's core concepts, refining them with the help of forty-plus years of further scholarly research. She described politics as constituted by three elements: power, which she defined as "the capability to influence the behavior of others in accordance with one's own goals"; authority, that is the legitimate exercise of power; and legitimacy, being what "turns power into authority".[220] The main role of authority (and so, indirectly, of legitimacy) is to decrease the resources needed for the use of power, that is to decrease the need to use coercion in order to force the subjects to comply. All these elements are part of a process that never stops. The consent of both powerful and

[218] The agents thus make for the audience, whose role is of fundamental importance for the success of rituals. See Warner 2001, p. 256.

[219] Garipzanov 2008, p. 12.

[220] Duyvesteyn 2015, p. 10.

powerless must find constant confirmation in the actions they routinely take in consenting to the exercise of power itself. In this system, rule becomes nothing more nor less than "the persistent exercise of authority" (that is, the persistence exercise of legitimate power).[221]Duyvestein is very explicit in remarking that these traits are not the sole prerogative of contemporary states, but are shared by "all social organizations involved in warfare" (the units she's interested in studying).[222] Early medieval polities fall quite naturally inside this broad category.

Summarising what has been said until now for the sake of clarity, while risking some degree of oversimplification, we can imagine the medieval polity like a machine, or an engine: to keep it running (that is, borrowing Duyvesteyn's terminology, to establish *rule*), fuel is needed, and that fuel in our case is precisely the economic and political relationship established between the ruler (an emperor, a king, or a prince), the aristocracy (at whatever level, local or supralocal) and the religious sphere or authority (*power*). To keep our engine running, however, we also need oil, to

[221] Ibid.

[222] Ibid., p. 11. Warfare could also be an interesting tool for the interpretation of the Vat. lat. 9820, though such a path will not be taken here. For the relationship between warfare and the practices of monastic life, see Smith 2011, in particular pp. 2-3, in which she remarks how a strict link between these two elements was precisely a characteristic of monastic thinking from the middle of the X century till the XIII.

ensure that everything goes as smoothly as possible: that oil is made in our case by legal and juridical procedures, more or less formally established, by capitularies, concessions, privileges (*authority*). Finally, a third element is needed for the engine to work: a cooling fluid, allowing it to avoid overheating, as much as this is possible, and to keep it running smoothly. This last element is made by symbolic power and authority, by *legitimacy* as established, perpetuated and transmitted via objects, representations, liturgies and rituals of diverse nature.[223] These make for the symbols of power and authority.

3. 1. 1 The role of rituals and ritual objects as vehicles of symbolic authority and communication

It is common knowledge that the Middle Ages looked at the symbol with the utmost interest. The role of symbolism

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[223] Garipzanov 2008, pp. 8-10. These elements serve to build, as Hageman puts it, "an ideal picture of the ruler" (1999, p. 153). It must be noted that, by adopting Duyvesteyn's point of view, we also understand that those tools are not, and cannot be considered as simple 'top-down' means of ideological propaganda; since legitimacy, in order to be established and perpetuated, needs the consent of both powerful and powerless, and their sharing "the belief in legitimacy" (Duyvesteyn 2005, p. 10), then it appears obvious that also objects, rituals, liturgies, cannot simply 'imposed' by the powerful (in our case, the ruler) onto the powerless. For a brief history of the term 'ritual' it may be useful to refer to Althoff 2003, pp. 12-13.

and allegory during the Middle Ages has been the subject of thorough study under multiple perspectives, so much that even a small summary here becomes unnecessary. Suffice it to mention the famous statement by Hugh of Saint Victor (1096-1141): "Symbolum, collatio videlicet, id est coaptatio visibilium formarum ad demonstrationem rei invisibilis propositarum."[224] The medieval world was, to quote Umberto Eco, "a world inhabited by meanings"[225] and signs, governed by the words written by St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem." In such a world, symbols could be everywhere and everything: from animals (each one representing virtues, vices, a combination of the twos, or even Christ himself) to events (historical or legendary). It is no coincidence that even the fundamental formula of the Christian faith was called *symbolum* (the *Symbolum Apostolorum*).

As poignantly summarised by Régine Le Jan, the communication of power via symbols (which is labelled as symbolic communication) takes on a well-defined form, independently of time and place: it must be characterized by repetition of execution, in specific moments and circumstances. [226] This makes symbolic communication,

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[224] The reference comes from Hugh of St. Victor, *Commentariorum in Hierarchiam Caelestem S. Dionysii Areopagite libri decem*, PL 175, 923-1154, here 960 D.

[225] Eco 2016, p. 104.

[226] Le Jan 2015, p. 167.

under its many guises, basically indistinguishable from rituals at large, also adding the fact that the two so often mingle with each other as to render any distinction, perhaps, useless for our purposes.

Rituals and symbols of power and authority thus played a fundamental and complementary role, and they performed it well before the time of Scholastic philosophy, when Hugh of St. Victor was writing. In his biography of Otto III Gerd Althoff highlighted this by stating (admittedly, with degree of exaggeration) that "medieval kings apparently exercised power essentially through ritual acts."[227] Althoff's description of the role of those rituals in sustaining medieval kingship is compelling in its simplicity. For the German scholar, rituals (or, as he also defines them, symbolic acts) performed a double role: they publicized the role of the ruler, and at the same time they showed the role of all other actors in the system (being them lay magnates or prelates), thus stabilising society in its hierarchical order.[228] Rituals become the most prominent component of the 'cooling system' we described above thanks to their ability to communicate, as already shown by Garipzanov. They also become inextricably linked with the exercise of power itself.[229] Althoff provides a tentative list of the most

[227] Althoff 2002, p. 25.

[228] Ibid. The same line of thought can be identified in the works of Catherine Bell, in particular see Bell 1997, p. 136.

[229] Althoff 2003, p. 11 states that this 'encounter' between power and ritual becomes possible once the latter are taken into the public sphere.

important rituals from the perspective of kingship: unsurprisingly, he mentions "coronations, royal entries, homage, investitures, submissions, peace agreements […]".[230] Comprised in this list we have the full sphere of action and performance of an early medieval ruler, a sphere whose primary role was that of establishing a communication between the agents involved.[231]

But communication is only possible via a language. Once again Garipzanov's analysis comes to hand: he defines the symbolic language of authority during the early Middle Ages (and, specifically, the Carolingian era) as a series of signs, procedures, and objects that need to be recognized and acknowledged by their intended audience (i.e. the ruler's subjects [232]) in order to become symbols of

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[230] Althoff 2002, p. 133.

[231] Althoff 2003, p. 19 specifies how this form of public communication, however, had to take mainly the form of "demonstrative behavior": this was due to the fact that the main goal of public communication was to keep one's own status in front of the other agents/actors. As such, proper argumentation was to be reserved to more private spheres of communication in order to avoid the public emergence of dissension. Ritual interactions are thus to be considered part of this form of "demonstrative behavior."For another view on medieval political communication and its relationship with ritual and symbols, see Kershaw 2011, p. 13.

[232] Early medieval sources often mention the subjects with the collective term of *populus*, that appears in liturgical texts as well, including the Exultet itself. Le Jan (200, p. 64) highlighted how such a term could be

authority.[233] The procedures mentioned by Garipzanov clearly took the form of rituals of various kinds, while signs and objects were shown and manipulated during the performances of those same rituals. However, as Garipzanov himself is well aware, such a symbolic language does not and cannot exist on its own, in isolation: it is embedded in "more general communicative systems and practices".[234]

To clarify: by combining Althoff's and Garipzanov's conceptions, we can move towards a better understanding of the role of both rituals and ritual objects in early medieval societies by conceiving of them as a subsystem belonging to a wider system of communication. To define such a subsystem, and borrowing from the theories of Yuri Lotman, Garipzanov uses the term 'code'. The definition he provides is of utmost interest for our purposes and it deserves to be quoted verbatim: he defines a 'code' as "the groups of similar semantic elements that - in a compressed metaphoric form, that is, through symbols - refer to, are reminiscent of, and thus legitimize certain types of relationships, rights, and obligations between the ruler and his/her subjects."[235]

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conceived as a 'screen' for the nobility: the members of the *populus* were, in fact, the nobles.

[233] Garipzanov 2008, p. 14.

[234] Ibid.

[235] Garipzanov 2008, p. 25.

He also specifies (and here we have the connection with Althoff) that these symbols do take different forms, being expressed through words, images, or "special procedures", that is, ritual acts. In her analysis of rituals, Catherine Bell has gone so far as to affirm symbols to be at the very core of "ritual mechanism", as "the irreducible unit of ritual activity."[236] Of course, it is by no means true that each historical period produces a single 'code'. In fact, we can find different codes co-existing at the same time and in the same space frameworks. This co-existence can also determine a hierarchy, though, "in certain periods, one code could seemingly come to dominate others."[237] The way a code works, we have seen it from Le Jan, is through repetition: "Repetitive enactment of the royal liturgy, a constant use of specific titles and signs on objects connecting rulers' courts with their aristocratic and free subjects, and the symbolic depiction of kings and emperors in different media made their authority an intrinsic part of the sociopolitical landscape."[238] This becoming part of the "sociopolitical landscape" is what David Warner has defined as one of the most pressing concerns for medieval rulers: the bridging of the gap (he uses the word "threshold") between ruler and subjects that, otherwise, would risk to become a gulf, and that was fundamental for the establishment and keeping of their respective

[236] Bell 1997, p. 41.

[237] Garipzanov 2008, p. 26.

[238] Garipzanov 2008, p. 27.

identities. [239] Liturgy, and everything which stood connected to it, could be a perfect tool for this, since, as acutely and convincingly observed by Paweł Figurski and Pieter Byttebier,

"liturgical phenomena were viewed as venues in which all human experiences could converge, an arena with the power to express and shape core values that also determined civic deliberations and actions. In all its different forms and dimensions, liturgy permeated, impacted, articulated, and even shaped almost all aspects of both individual and communal life in the Middle Ages."[240]

If we quoted Garipzanov's text repeatedly, it is because his analysis gives us much needed definitions and a methodological framework in which to insert our own analysis and interpretation of the final commemorations of secular authorities on Vat. lat. 9820. In particular, we can already grasp some consequences of applying such a framework to our case. First, once we accept that a code works through repetition, that it communicates (it builds) legitimacy through repetition, it follows almost naturally that the more ancient the code, the stronger its role could

[239] Warner 2001, p. 261; Leyser 1994, p. 211.
[240] Figurski and Byttebier 2021, p. 20.

potentially have been. It is what is commonly labelled as a tradition, a legacy, or a heritage. This also means, implicitly, that such a code could be somehow 'faked', or invented altogether, in order to give him a 'pedigree' it didn't actually have. Those are the so-called 'invented traditions', usually the result of an intended manipulation of the historical accounts (and related representations) by members of the intellectual élite (in our case, mostly clerics[241]) in order to legitimize the status quo they were experiencing, often as the consequence of a rupture or change. The Middle Ages shows a remarkable number of these episodes. Of course, one should not conceive of a strict dichotomy between 'invented' traditions and 'true' ones, as more subtle interventions and manipulations could be equally effective: that would be the case, for example, of adaptations of certain codes and languages (more ancient, or even altogether foreign, ones) for specific purposes. This also means that rituals, as part of specific codes, can be vehicles of change as well, being able to mediate its pressure on a certain cultural and social milieu by embedding it in a degree of continuity.[242]

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[241] Concerning the role of clerical *literati* during the Middle Ages, Warner gives an interesting definition of them as "men and women who cultivated the art of memory and understood its capacity to inform both the present and the future." (2001, p. 259). Such a definition is interesting primarily because of the emphasis it puts on memory and its keepers/manipulators.

[242] Bell 1997, p. 251.

Second, Garipzanov's analysis works as a reminder: any attempt at interpreting an element of a code, being it a certain gesture, a whole ceremony, or their literary or figurative representations, is meaningless if we don't take into account the code as a whole, that is if we don't place the object of our analysis inside the system it is part of.[243] This is the main methodological need this chapter hopes to address.

There's then a third element that emerges to our attention, although it is one that Garipzanov himself actually didn't take into account explicitly, despite it being implicit all along in his analysis. To be properly conceived and understood, a code needs to be grounded in something. While this 'something' can be (and often is) made by the same actions that characterize the code (a paradox only at first glance), it is often also made by preconceived political and philosophical thought. [244] It is such a thought, intertwined as it was with theological, metaphysical, ethical

[243] Bell poignantly argued that "a ritual never exists alone". In order to properly understand it, it should be considered as part of a whole, what she called the "thick context" made by practices and customs, even routinely ones, in which every individual's life is embedded (Bell 1997, p. 171). On the role and influence of context upon ritual activity see also ivi, p. 266.

[244] This is the same position expressed by Moore in arguing for a study of liturgy that would consider "in the larger context of contemporary belief and theology", that is as a "preeminent 'cultural text'." (2011, p. 165).

reasoning, that made for the ideological background enabling the code to work, while at the same time being influenced, like all other elements of the specific culture it belongs to, by the code himself.[245] This element will be the subject of the next chapter.

Everything that has been said until now could be synthetically summarized in the words of Alexander Beihammer:

"All in all, we may speak of rituals as culturally standardized and repetitive forms of action of symbolic character, which aim at exerting influence on human affairs and allow a better understanding of man's position in the universe. In this sense they fulfil an essential function in creating or securing emotional and symbolic coherence, harmony, identity, and memory among members of a community, they mark ruptures and thresholds in a community's social structure, they provide mechanisms for overcoming crises, and, not least, they help people communicate with a transcendent sphere of supernatural forces."[246]

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[245] Bell 1997, p. 177.

[246] Beihammer 2013, pp. 1-2. We may add the briefer definition by Althoff 2003, pp. 13-14 as a "Ketten von Handlungen, Gesten und auch Worten handelt, die Mustern verpflichtet sind, sie wiederholen und so einen Wiedererkennungseffekt erzielen." ("chains of actions, gestures

While aware and espousing Althoff's argument against too a clear-cut and almost all-encompassing definition of ritual,[247] Beihammer's description has the merit of showing the vast range of dynamics into which ritual moves itself. It also gives an idea of the multiple roles it can fulfil.[248] As such, it is valuable for our purposes.

As for now, we need to focus our attention on the system to which the representations we find in Vat. lat. 9820 belonged, that is the code of southern Lombard symbolic authority. The focus of this thesis is mainly the representation of what we would today call 'secular power'. However, it goes without saying that a dichotomy between 'secular' or 'lay' and 'religious' is anachronistic when referred to the Middle Ages. This means that while it is to the manifestations of the power of rulers that we will devote most of our attention, such manifestations more

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and also words that are committed to patterns, repeat them, and thus achieve a recognition effect.").

[247] Althoff 2003, p. 12.

[248] See also Laidlaw and Humphrey (2006, pp. 266-272) for a critique to older scholarly approaches to ritual, in particular to the conception of ritual as exclusively a tool for communication. The two authors further argue for looking at how "the attribution of meaning is a response to ritual", that is, by favouring a 'bottom-up' approach (ivi, p. 274). While their position may be termed as too radical in defining meaning in ritual as a "at best a derivative feature" (ibid.) their proposal has nonetheless its own merits, and it would deserve further exploration.

often than not will intertwine with religious and sacral elements and representations.[249] It also means that what we are dealing with is a code, or a language, that mixed itself with the symbolic system of Christianity, that is a system much older than the one at stake and that had developed itself since the times of the Roman Empire.[250]

3. 1. 2 The Exultet at a crossroad

An example of such an intertwining is provided by the Exultet rolls themselves. It is a truism to say that the Exultet scrolls are ritual objects. They were expressly made for use during a liturgy. There is disagreement among scholars on just *how much* we can consider them as ritual objects, though, as doubts have been expressed concerning the main purpose behind their creation or, more specifically, who was the intended audience of the representations they contained has been subject to question. In his detailed monograph on the Exultet, Thomas Forrest Kelly argues in favour of identifying such an audience in the bishop himself, that is the same person who, arguably, commissioned and then owned the rolls.[251]

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[249] Bacci 2002, pp. 632-633.

[250] Ibid., p. 634.

[251] Forrest Kelly 1996, pp. 201-204. It should be kept in mind that this statement is valid for the specific case of Vat. Lat. 9820 and other rolls, but not for all of them. The role of the bishop as commissioner and

This would give the iconographical component of the rolls a role and value not too dissimilar from that played and enjoyed by certain other works of early medieval miniature art, such as, for example, the *Codex Aureus*. While, of course, other people (first of all the other members of the clergy) would have had the chance of looking at the cycle, the bishop would have been its primary intended audience, being its patron, owner, and main onlooker.

With our previous methodological introduction, we have begun to grasp the intrinsic challenges that the analysis of symbolic languages of power and authority, whether under the guise of rituals or of their representations, pose to the scholar. The Exultet rolls, in their nature of liturgical, that is ritual, objects and of illuminated manuscripts, are ideally situated to be subject to such an analysis, and to reveal themselves as tools for symbolic communication lying at a double crossroad: a conceptual one, between ritual and representation; and, through the final commemoration of the ruler, what we may call a systemic one, that between a religious/liturgical and a more 'secular' ritual spheres. We may add a third crossroad, that between different cultural environments that intersected in southern Italy: Lombard, Byzantine, Frankish/Ottonian, or Islamic.

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owner of a roll could be easily taken by great abbots (such as the abbot of Montecassino, for example). This issue, together with Kelly's theory, will be taken again into consideration in Chapter 5 when speaking more specifically of the Vat. lat. 9820.

These characteristics are hardly unique to the Exultet. The role of 'bridging' the religious and the secular (still keeping in mind how cautiously the distinction must be used) was already identified, for example, as one of the distinguishing features of the so-called *laudes regiae* by the great scholar Ernst Kantorowicz. He argued for the *laudes* as tools for filling up a hiatus that otherwise would have distanced the earthly and the heavenly worlds.[252] We cannot posit a perfect identity between the final commemoration for the ruler on the Exultet rolls and the *laudes*, particularly if we consider that the former bears apparently much more resemblance than the latter to the commemorations at the end of litanies that Kantorowicz identified as contributing to that same hiatus the *laudes* were expected to fill.[253] The resemblance between rolls and *laudes*, moreover, is only apparent. What makes the commemorations in the Exultet standing out is precisely the first of the characteristics we mentioned above, their most prominent feature: the presence of images.

Now that we have identified the Exultet rolls as 'objects-at-a-crossroad', however, we must also move on to understand, to borrow Garipzanov's language, the code they were embedded in. In order to do so we must understand the symbolic language of power and authority that characterized the southern Italian polities, and

[252] Kantorowicz 2006, pp. 80-81.

[253] Ibid.

specifically the Lombard ones. Our analysis will start from the very beginning of Lombard kingship. The duchy/principality of Benevento was deeply embedded in the Lombard cultural milieu, thereby it is necessary to trace the trajectory of Lombard kingship in concept and ritual, however sketchily, since its origins; from there, we will move to Langobardia Minor and the developments that took place there until the death of Pandulf I and the reign of his immediate successors.

3. 2 At the origins of Lombard kingship

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the Lombards who settled in Italy in 568 under the leadership of Alboin established a kingdom that would last until 774, the date of Charlemagne's conquest. During its two centuries of existence, the kingdom of the Lombards experienced several periods of turmoil, and a number of coups. For a time, after the death of Cleph (Alboin's immediate successor), it even lacked a king altogether (the so-called 'ducal anarchy', lasting approximately from 574 to 584).[254]

[254] Sergi 2015, p. 3, where he also presents an interesting perspective on this 'ducal anarchy', considered as an institutional experiment extraneous to Roman tradition, and for this reason negated by some historiography as such.

When it arises to our attention with Alboin and his successors, Lombard kingship does not differ significantly from patterns that many historians (mainly under the influence of Tacitus) in the past used to label, quite simplistically, as 'Germanic'. Paul the Deacon and his *Historia Langobardorum* have been the key references in the attempts at reconstructing the concepts and ideals of Lombard kingship, combined with the scanty remains of Lombard figurative arts. It is Paul who, through his narrative of the origin and first migrations of the Lombard people, also establishes the grounds upon which the ideal of kingship developed for the Lombards, together with some of its most relevant and widespread symbols. We will not deal here with the relationship he establishes between the first Lombard kings and the pagan gods of the past.[255] However, we can find in Paul's narrative elements that will keep characterizing Lombard kingship for centuries to come, even after their conversion to Christianity and Catholicism. Some of these elements deserve close scrutiny for our purposes.

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[255] This relationship, and the characteristics of mythological Lombard kings, has already been explored in a number of studies. Stefano Gasparri (2005, pp. 207-212) provides an extensive survey of the subject, complete with bibliographical references, and not refraining from attacking some of the most consolidated theories that could (or rather should) be revised also looking at the Lombard experience. This work is also useful in giving the reader a diachronic picture of the developments of Lombard kingship.

3. 2. 1 Election of kings and the assembly

The first of these elements to characterize Lombard kingship is also the one most strikingly resemblant to the traditions of other successor kingdoms of the Roman Empire: the role of the assembly.

François Bougard states it quite clearly when, summarizing the findings of many other scholars, he goes as far as to declare that "Lombard kingship was […] rooted in the tradition of acclamation by the people-army (*populus-exercitus*)".[256] In the same line of thought Stefano Gasparri highlighted in his works the role of election for the appointment and legitimation of Lombard kings.[257] We find mentions of this role a number of times not only in Paul the Deacon and other historiographical narratives, but also in the law codes issued by Lombard kings, and in poems. The author of the text known as *Origo Gentis Langobardorum* repeatedly makes use of the verb "levare" in the plural "levaverunt" when he has to describe the election of a new Lombard king.[258] We know next to

[256] Bougard 2002, p. 35.

[257] Gasparri 2005, p. 212, 216.

[258] This becomes particularly evident when he narrates what happens after the murder of Alboin and the kidnapping of his daughter Albsuinda at the hands of the Byzantine exarch Longinus: at that time, he writes, "reliqui Langobardi levaverunt sibi regem nomine Cleph…";

nothing about the exact composition of this Lombard assembly, or about its precise role and function, though we may assume that its members were mainly drawn from the ranks of the highest aristocrats and functionaries. We may find an example of a larger assembly, drawn on clearer Roman precedents, in the two episodes that saw King Agilulf first choosing to be elected (for the second time, after his first election at the death of Authari) in the hippodrome of Milan, and then associating his son Adaloald to the throne in the same place.[259] Further

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the same he writes a few lines after describing the elevation to the throne of Authari, in *Origo gentis Lang.*, 6.

[259] Gasparri 2005, p. 216; Azzara 2015, p. 115. The episodes are both taken, once again, from Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum*, III, 35 and IV, 30, but only in the second case there's an explicit mention of the hippodrome. According to Paul's narrative Agilulf had been first chosen by Queen Theodolinda, Authari's widow; only after this first 'appointment' the new king chose to be elected (or rather, confirmed?) by his subjects: it is interesting to note here that Paul's words imply that the assembly represented all Lombards: "[…]congregatis in unum Langobardis, […], ab omnibus in regnum apud Mediolanum elevatus."The presence of the same kind of assembly is only hinted at when Paul writes that "levatus est Adaloaldus rex super Langobardos apud Mediolanum in circo, in praesentia patris sui Agilulfi regis, adstantibus legatis Teudeperti regis Francorum…". The presence of Frankish ambassadors was linked to the stipulation of a peace treaty and the arrangement of a marriage between Adaloald and a daughter of Theudepert and could also be seen as a reference to the Roman and Byzantine tradition.

discussion on the role of the assembly, particularly in southern Lombardy, will be made in comparison with other contemporary Western cases in the next sections.

3. 2. 2 The spear

Another one of those grounding elements of Lombard kingship can be introduced by the tale of the life of Lamissio, the second mythological king of the Lombards, as narrated by Paul the Deacon: the young baby, thrown into a pond by his mother together with his brothers, found by King Agelmund. The baby is saved by Agelmund or, better, he saves himself by grappling the spear that Agelmund was using to inspect the pond. The latter interprets this as a sign of Lamissio's future as king and adopts him.[260]

The role of the spear as a symbol and attribute of kingship appears here clearly. Already Gasparri noted how the name itself of Agelmund's own kin, the Gugingi, seems to be an allusion to *Gugnir*, the spear of Odin:[261] thus the spear comes to our attention as something strictly linked to the Lombards' past, to the mythological northern origins of that people, and perhaps to the contacts with other horse-riding cultures (mainly the Avars). The symbolic relevance

[260] Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, I, 15.

[261] Gasparri 2005, p. 207. The reference to the Gugingi is found in Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, I, 14.

of the spear was not confined to mythology. Paul the Deacon explicitly mentions the "regium contum", the royal spear, that was to be carried by a dedicated lance-bearer; moreover Paul apparently implies that the very same spear could be taken into battle even when the king was not himself present into battle, a sort of symbolic substitute for the absent ruler and commander-in-chief.[262] Still, according to Gasparri, the spear was the one true symbol of Lombard

[262] Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, V, 10. The episode in question refers to Constans II's campaign into southern Italy already mentioned in the previous chapter. After his withdrawal from Benevento to Naples, Constans II accepts the suggestion by one of his commanders, a certain Saburrus, to send a part of the imperial army under Saburrus' own command against the Lombards of Romuald, who had left Benevento with his troops. The subsequent clash resulted in a sound Roman defeat. Paul reports that the turning point of the battle was reached when "unus de regis exercitu nomine Amalongus, qui regium contum ferre erat solitus, quondam Greculum eodem conto utrisque manibus fortiter percutiens", thus spreading fear among the Romans, who decided to withdraw. According to Paul, Romuald's troops were taken directly from the royal army, as the young prince himself had asked his father to refrain from attacking the Romans, giving command of part of the Lombards to himself so that he could carry the attack himself. This fact would give further strength to the argument of the royal spear being used as a symbolic substitute for the king. However, it should be noted that Paul does not make any explicit mention of some special role of the spear during the battle: it seems more plausible it was Amalongus' own strength that decided the battle.

kingship until perhaps the very end of the kingdom.[263] He takes as evidence for this not only the Edict of Rothari, but also, once again, Paul the Deacon: it is he who, describing the acclamation of Hildeprand, nephew of King Liutprand (712-744), explicitly mentions a *contus* given to him "according to custom" ("sicut moris est"). [264] Gasparri promptly translates *contus* with 'spear'. That this object was not symbolically 'indifferent' is further testified by the continuation of Paul's tale: during the ceremony, a cuckoo landed on the top of the *contus*, being interpreted by some of those present at the ceremony as signifying that "his [i.e. Hildeprand] rule would have been meaningless."[265] While this tale in the *Historia Langobardorum* seems to imply that the *contus* was in all probability more similar to the kind of spear-shaped rod we see so often depicted in late antique and early medieval western art (including Lombard art, like the famous codex from Cava de' Tirreni Ms. 4, already mentioned in Chapter 1)[266], this does not detract from its symbolic significance as a spear. This symbolic significance, however, was not exclusive to the king: dukes also had

[263] He also suggestively links the spear not only to ancient Germanic traditions, but to Roman ones as well (Gasparri 2000, p. 101).

[264] Paul the Deacon, *Hist. Lang.*, VI, 55.

[265] Ibid.: "eius [i.e. Hildeprand] principatum inutilem fore."

[266] Paul the Deacon writes that "in eius conti summitate cuculus avis volitando veniens insedit", implying that the bird sat on the top of the spear.

their own lance-bearers.[267] So it would seem plausible to hypothesize, also looking at Roman precedents, that the spear was a symbol linked to military (and, then jurisdictional) command: after all, the Lombard king was, first and foremost, a military leader.

With Liutprand's reign we are already in the last decades of the Lombard kingdom. Thirty years after his death, Charlemagne would depose the last King Desiderius and assume the crown of *rex Langobardorum* upon himself. Apparently, the spear retained its relevance until the very end of the kingdom in the north. Significantly, the Carolingians will dispense of it altogether.[268] However, the Lombards were not the only ones to retain the spear (or lance) as royal insignia, as we will see below.

Looking at the issue from another perspective, it is hard to see whether or not there is any connection between the symbolic role of the spear in the conception of Lombard monarchy and the depiction of the archangel Michael handling what looks like a spear on some coins of kings Cunicpert (688-689; then 689-700) and Liutprand. The association between the spear and the regality of Lombard sovereigns may have been further strengthened by the introduction of the 'third element' constituted by the cult of St. Michael, introduced precisely by Cunicpert, a cult that enjoyed a striking success among the Lombards, both in the

[267] Gasparri 2005, p. 227.

[268] Gasparri 2000, p. 112; Bougard 2002, p. 37.

north and in the south (where the micaelic sanctuary of S. Michele Arcangelo on the Gargano testifies to this). However, this must remain hypothetical. The fact that on the abovementioned coins the archangel seems to wear also a helmet, and the clear military connotations his figure always maintained, particularly in the eyes of the Lombards themselves, may be further evidence in favour of such a hypothesis.

3. 2. 3 The sword

If the spear is to be considered the primary symbol of Lombard kingship, the same could not be said for the sword. Gasparri correctly states that it wasn't the typical weapon of a Lombard king.[269] At least, this is what emerges from the sources. Neither in Paul the Deacon nor in other texts such as the *Origo Gentis Langobardorum* do we find references to swords that enjoy a role comparable to the spear in the mythological and historical narrative, as we see for the spear in the tale of Lamissio.

We do have some scant references to swords, however. To cite two examples also identified by Gasparri: the episode of Alboin's murder at the hands of his wife and her lover; and King Liutprand's ritual gesture at the signing of a peace with the pope.

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[269] Gasparri 2005, p. 211.

While the former case could be easily dismissed, as it is hard to imagine that Alboin could have kept a spear for prompt use just close to his bed inside the palace of Pavia, the second one deserves a bit more of attention.

The tale is provided by the *Liber pontificalis*: after an attempt at subduing Rome, in alliance with the Byzantine exarch, Liutprand meets Pope Gregory II (715-731) at the *Campus Neronis*, where, according to the author, the pope was so able to "soothe the king's spirit" that he "was steered by his pious advice to such remorse that he removed what he had been wearing and laid it before the apostle's body - his cloak, corslet, sword-belt, broad-sword and pointed sword, all gilded, and a gold crown and a silver cross."[270] In mentioning the passage, Gasparri rightly points out that

[270] *Liber Pontif.*, XXII (English: pp. 14-15; Latin: p. 408): "sic ad tantam eum [i.e. king Liutprand] compunctionem piis monitis flexus est ut quae fuerat indutus exueret et ante corpus apostoli poneret, mantum, armilausiam, balteum, spatam atque ensem deauratos, necnon coronam auream et crucem argenteam." François Bougard combines this testimony from the *Liber pontificalis* with the well-known object known as 'plaque of Agilulf', a VII century helmet frontal plaque from Tuscany, to argue that "the crown remained an integral feature of Lombard *regalia*", however recognizing that the *Liber pontificalis* itself doesn't seem to give any special meaning to the crown donated by Liutprand and that we have no evidence of coronation ceremonies being held by Lombard kings, see Bougard 2002, pp. 36-37. The role of the crown in Langobardia Minor will be addressed in one of the next sections of this chapter.

the Liber Pontificalis is a document "culturalmente esterno al mondo longobardo" [271], a fact that invites caution. However, it should be recalled that we are dealing with an author who was contemporary to the events narrated, and who probably was (also given the fact that the meeting took place basically in Rome) a direct witness to them.[272]

Gasparri goes as far as to consider (hypothetically) a new role for the sword, as for the rest of the royal insignia, that would be further emphasized in the subsequent Carolingian era: an ideological change, from what he defines as the "Odinic monarchy" of the Lombards, to the Carolingian ideal of the sovereign as protector of the Church and of the *populus christianus*. A change from an old Germanic ideal to a more Romanized (and Christianised) one, that would also mark the end of any role for the old assembly, the *gairethinx*, in favour of new forms of legitimation.[273]

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[271] Gasparri 2005, p. 228.

[272] Davis 2007, p. XI.

[273] Gasparri 2005, p. 228. On the same line of thought also Bougard 2002, p. 37, who explicitly links the changes introduced by the Carolingians to their own ideal of sacral kingship. Also Bougard mentions a later, post-Carolingian, case of the spear being presented as a sign of royal legitimacy: this happened between 924 and 962, a time in which the title of *rex Italiae* passed into the hands of 'indigenous' dynasties; specifically, a few years before, in 921-2, it is reported that a group of Italian noblemen presented a spear to Raoul of Provence as a sign of submission in the attempt to convince him to descend to Italy

Such a picture is in itself intriguing, and it can be fitted into the history of the *Regnum Italiae* quite easily. It goes beyond the single issue of the role of spear and sword in the symbolic representation of Lombard monarchy, to address the system as a whole. However, we also need to partially reassess it. First of all, it is hard to conceive of the sword as somehow antithetical to the spear as a symbol of kingship, as Gasparri's thesis may imply. In Germanic societies swords always played a significant role as a defining attribute of warriors (both as a class, or as a sub-class of 'sword-owners' among the class of warriors), as affected by a number of pictorial and textual representations, and archaeological findings.[274]

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and take the crown. According to Bougard, however, by that time the spear did not have anymore its original meaning as a specifically Lombard symbol of power and authority (2002, pp. 38).

[274] Brunning 2019, p. 48. Brunning also provides some examples, such as the so-called 'Franks Casket' depicting Titus' conquest of Jerusalem and the Bayeux Tapestry. Her conclusion is that "The manipulation of sword imagery thus articulates the existence of a range of warrior identities in early medieval minds, and that the *grade* of warrior mattered. Swords existed at the heart of those identities, mediating not only between warriors and civilians, but also between different types of warriors - and sword-wielders." (p. 50).

3. 3 Time for changes: *Langobardia Minor* from the VIII to the X century

We already mentioned in the previous chapter how Arichis II, after the fall of the northern kingdom in 774, decided to change his own title, and to adopt that of *princeps*. It is from this moment on that we can trace a development proper to Langobardia Minor in the fields of the representations and rituals of power. This is also possible to assess on the basis of a wider range of sources at our disposal: besides the more numerous historical narratives (Erchempert, the Anonymous of Salerno, the monastic chronicles), we have a number of hagiographies (as once again seen in the previous chapter), and also exemplars of pictorial representations and book illumination.

Of course, this doesn't mean the path to be followed is an easy one. However, efforts made by scholars such as Stefano Gasparri, Paolo Delogu, Huguette Taviani-Carozzi (just to mention a few) have greatly improved our understanding of the ritual and ideological elements underpinning southern Lombard 'kingship'. To them, we should add another aid: the comparison with contemporary Carolingian and Ottonian practices. Despite its geographical distance from the heart of the empire and the fact that it was never fully integrated into it as it had happened with the *Regnum Langobardorum/Regnum*

Italiae, [275] the southern principalities were variously influenced by imperial ideology (and we have seen already that there were moments of direct political influence as well). We should not forget the role of Eastern Roman influences as well, though by necessity these will show up less prominently in our discourse.

3. 3. 1 Coronation and crown-wearing in *Langobardia Minor*: some clues

We saw in the previous chapter how the Anonymous of Salerno in his *Chronicon Salernitanum* identified the mark of Arichis' (and, implicitly, Benevento and its duchy) new rank after the Frankish conquest of the north in the wearing of a crown: "only Duke Arichis of Benevento did not yield to his [i.e. Charlemagne] power, since he too bore on his own head a precious crown."[276] What is interesting here is how the Anonymous places his statement inside the overall narrative of Charlemagne's conquest of the former Lombard kingdom: indeed, his mentioning of Arichis'

[275] Concerning the title of the *Regnum* and its role inside the wider framework of Carolingian (and post-Carolingian) politics and ideology (also regarding the exact role and position of the *Langobardi* as an ethnicity inside the empire) see P. Delogu, *The Name of the Kingdom*, in C. Gantner, W. Pohl (eds.), 2021, pp. 36-53.

[276] *Chron. Salern.*, 9, p. 20: "solus dux Arichis Beneventi iussa eius [i.e. Charlemagne] contempnens, pro eo quod capiti suo preciosam deportaret coronam."

decision is written down in direct and explicit opposition to Charlemagne's own acquisition of the title of *rex Italiae*: "Atque ipse Karolus rex tocius Italie rex est firmatus"[277] is the statement that he uses to introduce it. Here the decision of Arichis to challenge Charlemagne's new role as king of the Lombards is clearly and explicitly signalled by the wearing of the crown, as stressed by that "pro eo". In other words, the crown is conceived by the Anonymous as a sign and symbol of sovereignty.[278] This is perfectly in line with the thought of Isidore of Seville, whom the Anonymous repeatedly quotes throughout his work: for Isidore, the crown was "signum regii honoris" ("sign/symbol of the king's honour/dignity").[279]

Perhaps it is no coincidence that, still according to the Anonymous, Charlemagne's own wrath upon hearing of the news of Arichis' coronation found its expression in a "peculiar oath" ("nimirum insiurandum [sic]"), of thrusting another symbol of royal power, his sceptre, into Arichis' chest. Already Hoffman had noted the possible relation apparently instituted by the Anonymous of Salerno between Arichis' crown-wearing or coronation and Charlemagne conquest.[280] It is also interesting to note that

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[277] Ibid.

[278] Taviani-Carozzi 1992, p. 215.

[279] *Etym.*, XIX, 30, 1-3.

[280] Hoffman 1978, p. 146. The German scholar also establishes a comparison with the actions of Tassilo III, duke of Bavaria (748-788), himself a son-in-law of the last Lombard king, Desiderius, like Arichis.

Charlemagne himself is not 'coronatus' as 'rex Italie', he's 'firmatus', confirmed as such according to the Anonymous.

Possibly connected to the Anonymous' mention of Arichis' coronation is the statement by Leo Marsicanus, who narrates that Charlemagne, upon laying siege at Benevento, took "his [i.e. Arichis'] crown and a great part of his treasure".[281]

In the overall narrative of the Anonymous of Salerno, the crown as a symbol of kingship seems to recede into the background rather quickly, though. The verb he uses more often to indicate the accession of a new prince is probably *sublimare*,[282] while he defines the power of the prince using terms such as *principalis honor* or *dignitas*. Not once does he mention a coronation when telling of the number of accessions of new princes to power, whether in Capua, Benevento, or Salerno. However, here and there the crown emerges from the pages of the *Chronicon Salernitanum*: that

[281] MGH *SS* 7, p. 589, 20: "coronam illius et maximum partem thesauri". According to Hoffman this passage by Leo is actually based on Erchempert, who similarly reports of the Charlemagne's seizing of Arichis' treasure, however without mentioning any crown of sorts. This absence of the crown in the *Ystoriola* has led Hoffman to hypothesize that its mention by Leo may have been the result of the interpolation of material from the *Chronicon* (Hoffman 1978, pp. 146-147).

[282] Taviani-Carozzi 1992, pp. 643-644 poignantly remarks that similar verbs are used by the Anonymous when he has to mentions episcopal elections. According to her, they serve the main purpose of showing unanimity emerging behind the electoral procedures.

is the case of the scene of the secret meeting between Rotfrit and Sico, where the former wants to convince the latter to join the planned plot against Grimoald IV. In order to signify his interlocutor's future as prince, Rottfrit remarked that Sico would soon wear "a precious crown." [283]

Quite tellingly we find mentions of the crown in two further instances, that is the coronations and subsequent acclamations of Louis II and Otto I as emperors. To make the connection between the two events even stronger, in the case of Otto I the author repeats the words used in the first instance almost verbatim: "[…] anointed with the anointing oil, and his head surrounded by a crown, and beyond doubts by all called emperor", [284] against "[…] anointed with the anointing oil by the above mentioned Pope John and his head surrounded by a crown, and beyond doubt by all called emperor *augustus* […]".[285] Such a reprisal of the same words seems to make two things clear: the first, that the Anonymous drew an explicit link between anointing and the coronation; the second, that this combination was considered by him to be the chief

[283] *Chron. Salern.*, 48, p. 72: "In proximo, si prosperum Christum fore, tuo capiti septatam habebit coronam."

[284] *Chron. Salern.*, 103, p. 148: "[…] oleo uncionis est unctus, coronaque suo prorsus capite septus, et ab omnibus imperator augustus est nimirum vocatus."

[285] *Chron. Salern.*, 169, p. 254: "[…] a papa predicto Iohanne oleo uncionis est unctus coronaque suo capite septus, et ab omnibus imperator augustus est nimirum vocatus […]".

characteristic of an imperial accession. It is clear the Anonymous is well aware of the fact he's describing an imperial ceremony, not a Lombard one. This impression is further reinforced when one looks back at the tale of Charlemagne and Arichis earlier in the chronicle: when explaining why Charlemagne was called 'imperator', the Anonymous does not find a better explanation for his title than saying that he was so called because "he wore a precious crown on his head" ("preciosam coronam in suo prorsum capite gerebat.").[286] The wording is exactly the same as it will be when describing the two imperial coronations.

At first sight, these considerations should warn us from considering the crown as an attribute (or, at least, a relevant one) of southern Lombard 'kingship', particularly if we have to take into consideration the fact that the Anonymous is, for all purposes, the historiographical source closest in time to Vat. lat. 9820 available to us.

There are some objections that may counter such a hypothesis, though. The first is linked to our written sources (including the Salernitan Anonymous himself). The second one is of an iconographical nature.

For the sake of clarity, let us begin with the latter. Unfortunately, we do not possess the same wealth of representations of rulers from Langobardia Minor as we do

[286] *Chron. Salern.,* 11, p. 28.

from the Carolingian, Ottonian, or Byzantine worlds. Southern Lombard painting, however, has been preserved to us in much higher numbers if compared to previous centuries, enough to have been the subject of the famous study *Studien zur Beneventanischer Malerei*, by Hans Belting, among others. Quite unsurprisingly, we find paintings in religious contexts, particularly in a number of cave churches and chapels, such as at Olevano sul Tusciano, or at San Biagio, near Castellammare di Stabia.[287] A notable example of surviving early southern Lombard painting is the crypt of abbot Epiphanius, in S. Vincenzo al Volturno.[288] These IX century frescoes represent episodes from the New Testament (including John's Apocalypse) and the lives of martyrs and saints, but no ruler (contemporary or otherwise). We do possess one astounding iconographical source for southern Lombard rulers, however, although coming from miniature: it is the well-known early XI century codex from Cava de' Tirreni already mentioned above, Ms. 4 1005, reproducing the laws of Lombard kings until the very last additions provided by the princes of Benevento (the last one having been Adelchis, as we have seen in the previous chapter).[289] The text of the laws is accompanied by a number of miniatures

[287] Abbate 1997, p. 28. For an overview of the site of Olevano, see Peduto 2010, pp. 271-274.

[288] Ibid.; the crypt and its cycle is also discussed by Belting (1968), from which Abbate takes most of his considerations.

[289] Speciale 2014, p. 120.

representing the kings, dukes, and princes who promulgated them, represented under many different guises: riding, sitting on the throne in their role of judges and administrators of justice, or simply standing. Whatever their position, they always wear the attributes of kingship, and every one of them sports a crown on his head.

We will not dwell here on this precious source. What is relevant for us is that at the beginning of the XI century, in the principality of Salerno (the Abbey of Cava lies not far from the city itself), the crown was considered to be a fundamental attribute of rulers.[290] By itself, a look at this manuscript would seemingly provide enough evidence to dismiss the argument against the use of crowns among the rulers of the southern Lombards. We could add to it the similar testimony of another codex, Ms. 467 of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, made at Montecassino and which similarly contains Lombard and Frankish laws. Again, we see an abundance of crowns.[291]

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[290] Still keeping ourselves inside the borders of the principality of Salerno, we may add to the Cava codex also some seals and coins by princes Gisulf I (dated at 953), Guaimar IV (1027-1052), and Gisulf II (1052-1078), that show the princes crowned. These examples were already identified by Josef Deér (*Papsttum und Normannen: Untersuchungen zu ihren lehnsrechtlichen und kirchenpolitischen Beziehungen*, Studien und Quellen zur Welt Kaiser Friedrichs II, 1, 1972, Cologne-Vienna, Böhlau) and later reprised by Hoffman 1978, pp. 148-149.

[291] Taviani-Carozzi 1980, p. 682.

We would still be faced with the above mentioned problem posed by the apparent absence of coronations in the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, though, the more so if we take a look at some earlier written sources, such as Erchempert's *Historiola*: a search for any reference to a coronation of a Lombard prince in this IX century text would be in vain.

While it is true that the Anonymous of Salerno wrote some decades before the Cava de' Tirreni codex was made, this fact makes the apparent absence of southern Lombard coronations and crown-wearings from the *Chronicon Salernitanum* even more staggering.

We can try to bridge the apparent gap between our iconographical and written sources by to the fore some hagiographical narratives, before looking bringing more closely the Anonymous' own text itself and further developing our argument from there. Hoffman already noticed how one of the hagiographies we mentioned in the previous chapter, namely the *Translatio SS. Ianuarii, Festi et Desiderii*, contains a reference to a crown, allegedly deposed by prince Sico on the altar containing the relics of Saint Ianuarius, with the text making explicit mention of the fact that it was the same crown the prince used to wear (Sico deposes it "from the head with his hands", "de capite suis manibus"). [292] We could add to this a later source: describing the takeover of Benevento by Atenulf I, the

[292] Hoffman 1978, p. 147.

Chronicon Comitum Capuae states that "the same Atenulf was crowned prince […]."[293]

On the other hand, we have, again, the *Chronicon Salernitanum*. Its author did not refrain from dealing with often thorny issues of political legitimacy at the highest level. His work is well known among scholars for preserving an integral copy of the famous letter sent by Louis II to the Eastern emperor Basil I (866-886), and attributed to the figure of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, a member of the papal chancery. This letter was the end result of the attempt at cooperation between the Western and the Eastern emperors in recapturing Bari, in 871. Far from being satisfied by the Byzantine contribution to what had been planned as a joint enterprise, Louis wrote a letter to Basil, apparently also in response to the latter's claims that only the Eastern sovereign could style himself as Roman emperor, an old diatribe that had opposed the two empires since Charlemagne's coronation seventy years earlier. This gives us a unique chance to examine how a Carolingian sovereign conceived of his role and the meaning of his title. Also, since we are dealing with a IX century document inserted into a X century narrative, any

[293] MGH *SS* 3, p. 208: "ipse Athenulph in principem coronatus est […]." It is interesting to note that this text seems to refer to a separation of the Capuan and Beneventan titles when saying that Atenulf "Comitatus est in Capua anni 13, et principavit in Benevento anni 11." This difference in terms however disappears when the chronicle moves to Atenulf's successors.

difference between the letter and the rest of the narration may be of significance. In justifying his legitimation to the title of Roman emperor, Louis (or Anastasius on his behalf) argues that the acts creating such a legitimation had been the unction and the consecration by the hands of the Roman pontiff, "[…] they call us emperor and without doubts they proclaim that we are the emperor [...] due to anointing, and sacring, with which we providentially came to this supreme dignity by the hands of the Supreme Pontiff […]".[294] No mention is ever made to a coronation ceremony, nor to a crown wearing of any sort. Anointing takes here the centre stage, further reinforced by its being explicitly performed by the Roman pontiff. This is well in line with the Carolingian ideal of sacral Christian kingship (and emperorship) as it emerges both from our sources and from scholarship.

It is also in apparent contrast with the situation in Langobardia Minor. Neither Erchempert nor the Anonymous seem to ever mention the ritual of anointing being performed on a Lombard prince, the only possible exception to this being the former reference to prince Guaifer of Salerno (861-880) as "christum domini".[295] In fact, in the previous chapter we mentioned how the first

[294] *Chron. Salern.,* 107, p. 158: "[…] imperatorem nos vocitent et imperatorem esse procul dubio fatentur [...] ad unccionem, et sacracionem, qua per summi pontificis manus imposicione et oracione divinitus ad hoc sumus culmen provecti […]"

[295] *Erch. Yst. Lang.*, 28, p. 134.

source available to us explicitly mentioning such a performance (in this case, on Arichis) is the XI century *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis* written by Leo Marsicanus.[296] He clearly connects anointing and coronation, making them part of the same ritual.[297]

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[296] It is hard to accept Stefano Palmieri's hypothesis that a reference to Arichis' anointing could already be found in the *Chronicon Salernitanum*. It is in this sense that he reads the passage in which Arichis, after gathering all the bishops of his lands, "sicut mos erat ipsius, subnixo vultu ab eis poposcit benedictionem" (*Chron. Salern.*, 10, p. 22; Palmieri 1996, p. 78, n. 103). In fact, a closer look at that same passage reveals how the Anonymous makes clear that we are not looking at a public ritual for the ruler, but instead at one of the many expressions of Arichis' religious piety, the same piety that the Anonymous always bring to the fore in order to glorify Arichis' figure: the Beneventan prince asks for a blessing "sicut mos erat ipsius", that is, as it was typical of him. It is a personal habit, not a specific ritual for the prince. This reading is made even more plausible if one looks at the circumstances of this gathering: Arichis has just learned of Charlemagne's approaching to his territories and wishes to ask for his bishops' advice, with the blessing immediately preceding his opening speech to them. Nothing seems to support the idea of a proper anointing, and the Anonymous does not even mention the presence of other people alongside the prince and the bishops, an absence that would make a ceremony such as anointing, at all effects, useless.

[297] On the possible difference in meaning between anointing and coronation (making them two necessary complements) see Nelson 1986, p. 274.

All the elements we just collected, once linked with the mentions of the two imperial coronations and anointings sported by the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, lead us inevitably to look at this ceremony, that of anointing, apparently so elusive. It is to that that we now move our focus, before turning back to the crown and the relationships between the two.

3. 3. 2 Anointing: between East and West

Already present since the very accession of the Carolingians to royal power, with the anointing of Pepin III at Soissons in 751, the ideal of sacral Christian kingship among the Franks was naturally strengthened by the proclamation of Charlemagne as emperor fifty years later, and even more so during the reign of another Charles, Charles the Bald (843-877 as king of the West Franks, 875-877 as emperor), whose proclamation marked the peak of the development. This does not mean that it had an equal importance for the Lombards. Quite the opposite. Valerie Ramseyer rightly pointed out that the system of government of southern Lombards was grounded mainly (though, of course, not exclusively) on rituals that we may define as 'secular'.[298] We could grasp the apparent truth of such a statement for what concerns the northern kingdom already by looking at the symbols of kingship of Lombard

[298] Ramseyer 2006, pp. 45-46. On the same line Zornetta 2020, p. 186.

monarchy as shown in the previous sections of this chapter: nowhere we find a clear reference to religious rituals of royal legitimation. Lombard bishops in the kingdom are, at best, passive spectators to such rituals. This is in sharp contrast, again, with what we can see happening in the Carolingian world.

Still, it is possible to posit a change in the conception of southern Lombard 'kingship' and its relationship with the sacred from the X century onwards.[299] Scholarship has shifted positions in this regard. Stefano Gasparri has expressed his own reservations to the idea that the ceremony of anointing could belong to the Lombard tradition. Interestingly, he keeps the same stance also regarding coronation and crown-wearing.[300] He follows Hoffman, who expressed similar reservations in 1962 before partially revising his position some sixteen years later. While at the beginning he negated the validity of Leo Marsicanus' narrative about Arichis anointing,[301] Hoffman later admitted that the first Beneventan prince may have opted for the adoption of such a ritual, however doubting that his gesture may have had a *traditionsbildend Gewirkt*, a tradition-building effect.[302]

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[299] Palmieri posits such a change to have happened even before, already from the reign of Arichis himself (1996, pp. 77-78).

[300] Gasparri 1989, p. 109.

[301] Hoffman 1962, pp. 94-95

[302] Hoffman 1978, p. 147.

We cannot pretend to detail here the whole history of the ritual of anointing in the Frankish world. Its origins have also been subject to debate: while anointing appears as the true sign of kingship in the Old Testament (the prophet Samuel anoints Saul as first king of Israel, and his loss of royal legitimation is in turn marked by David's anointment; the name Christ, paradigm of kingship, literally means 'the anointed one', and an anointing of Christ is recorded in the Gospels[303], the way it has been transmitted to the Franks is still open to some uncertainty, the most privileged hypotheses indicating Visigothic Spain as the point of origin, with other scholars, like Michael Enright, pointing to Ireland instead.[304] Whatever the case may have been, anointing rose to true significance for Latin Europe only after the Franks had adopted it in the VIII century, as we mentioned above.[305] By the X century this practice had become a prominent feature among the rituals of Frankish kingship. With the fundamental contribution of Hincmar, bishop of Reims (whose thought on the matter

[303] The episode is recounted by all four Gospels, though with some differences (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-50 and John 12:1-8). Its meaning has also been interpreted variously by the exegetical tradition.

[304] See Enright 1985. In favour of the Visigothic origin of the ritual see Moore 2011, p. 159, who also argues that its introduction is to be connected with the Fourth Council of Toledo of 633, and to the need to stabilize the succession to the throne.

[305] Hoffman 1978, p. 146.

will be analysed more thoroughly in another chapter), anointing became the true mark of recognition and legitimation for a Christian king and emperor: performed by the bishops of the kingdom (not specifically by the pontiff, it should be noted), anointing marks the sovereign as fundamentally different from his lay subjects, and more akin to the ecclesiastical prelates performing the ritual, who themselves have been anointed in order to become bishops. Already in the Visigothic kingdom, anointing "was meant to give the king's person inviolability whilst manifesting the functional character of kingship."[306]

From the second half of the same century, Saxon emperors and kings would adopt it as well to mark their accession to power. Being anointed was by then established as an important step in the sacralization of the person of the ruler not anymore solely in the reborn Empire, but in Western Europe at large, and as such it was to become an integral part of the Norman rituals of kingship in southern Italy as well. It is precisely from the Normans, a few years before the birth of the kingdom at the hands of Roger II, that a first hint about the possible role of anointing among the southern Lombards comes to us. The evidence comes from a XII century Beneventan chronicle, the so-called *Chronicon Beneventanum* (also simply known as *Chronicon*) written by

[306] Delogu 2009, p. 265.

Falco of Benevento.[307] Narrating the ascension to power of the prince of Capua Robert II Drengot (1127-1135), Falco tells us how pope Honorius II (1124-1130) upon reaching Capua

"called the archbishops and the abbots so that they could gather for the anointing of the prince; and they moved, coming at the established day, and with great joy they gathered in the Capuan church. Then the archbishop of Capua, according to the privileges enjoyed by his predecessors, at the presence of the same pontiff Honorius together with a great crowd of ecclesiastical men, anointed and sacred the above mentioned Robert in the dignity of prince."[308]

The ceremony as described by the Beneventan author would have not been out of place in a Carolingian, Ottonian, or (closer to the time when he was writing) Salian

[307] On the figure of Falco and his work, and particularly the context in which he wrote, see G. Loud, *The Genesis and Context of the Chronicle of Falco of Benevento*, in Anglo-Norman Studies, XV, 1993, pp. 177-198.

[308] *Chron. Ben.*, 1127.7.2-3: "archiepiscopos et abates arcessiri mandavit, quatenus ad principis convenirent unctionem […] Archiepiscopus itaque Capuanus iuxta predecessorum suorum privilegium, presente tali et tanto pontifice Honorio cum turba virorum religiosorum, quae convenerat, et episcoporum conventum, predictum Robertum in principatus honorem inunxit et confirmavit."

context. Falco was a contemporary witness to the events he narrated, a prominent member of the Beneventan élite who prided himself in the reliability of his narration. He admits having not been there in person, but to have spoken to direct witnesses, and we have no reason to doubt his statement. The ritual he describes in the abovementioned passage could easily have been borrowed by Western (that is, Frankish) traditions, which the Normans were well accustomed to. This is the only time Falco explicitly describes the anointing ceremony, too: reporting the accessions of the preceding Capuan princes, Richard III (1120) and Jordan II (1120-1127) he uses a different word, "consecratus".[309] The procedure he describes in the case of Robert II involves a striking degree of participation by the ecclesiastical subjects of the prince, though the presence of the pope in person may have contributed to the affluence of clerics to the event. In the cases of Richard III and Jordan II no explicit mention is made to such a congress of prelates, the central role being instead taken by the Capuans (lay and ecclesiastical alike, one may guess).

What is interesting of Falco's text for our purposes is that he also makes a clear and explicit reference to the fact the ceremony was not a novelty for the princes of Capua. First, as we said above, we have the use of the verb "consecrare" for the accessions of Robert's predecessors. The use of this term is telling, as it is exactly the same he uses for the

[309] *Chron. Ben.*, 1120.3.2, 1120.3.4.

ordination of bishops.[310] Thus we can safely infer that we are in front of anointings, as the ordination of a new bishop explicitly required his anointing. It had been precisely this connection between anointing and the role of bishops that had commended the adoption of the same ceremony for lay rulers as well, according to some scholars.[311]

Second, Falco states that the archbishop of Capua anointed Robert II "iuxta predecessorum suorum privilegium".[312] The impression that this was an entrenched tradition for the Capuan archbishops may be further strengthened by Falco's remark that the pope was personally present to the event: still, even the papal presence did not overshadow the simple fact that the main actor remained the Capuan archbishop himself. The episcopal chair of Capua was at that time occupied by Otto (1119-1128), the same prelate who had consecrated Robert's two predecessors. It is thus safe to infer that when Falco writes of "precedecessorum suorum privilegium" he is referring to a tradition established at least two generations before Robert. This would still lead us to a Capua governed by Normans, who had overthrown the Landulfid dynasty in the second half of the XI century. From the same century comes indeed the

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[310] For some examples of the use of the verb "consecrare" for the ordination of bishops see *Chron. Ben.* 1121.5.1 and 1130.5.1 referring to the archbishops of Salerno and Benevento respectively.

[311] As an example, this is the theory espoused by Deshman (1971, pp. 4-5).

[312] *Chron. Ben.,* 1127.7.3.

account of the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis* concerning the rise to power of Richard II (1091, then 1098-1106), son of Richard I's successor, Jordan I (1078-91). According to Leo Marsicanus, indeed, Richard, who had previously been expelled by Capua together with all Normans, once having retaken the city forced the Capuans to finally accept his rule, the deal being marked when the inhabitants of the city "they consecrate him [i.e. Richard] as prince."[313]

The Normans who followed Drengot and his successors had previously established themselves in the town of Aversa, a new settlement built at the borders between the duchy of Naples (it had been the Neapolitan duke Sergius who had given the right of settlement to Rainulf Drengot in 1030), [314] before finally conquering Capua, under the leadership of one of Rainful's successors, Richard (I, 1058-1078) in 1058. The counts of Aversa had thus a reasonable amount of time to get accustomed with southern Italian traditions, particularly if one looks at their dealings with the Lombard principality of Salerno, in the person of the last of the great princes, Guaimar IV (1027-1052).[315]

Like for all other Norman conquests in the south, before and after, that of Capua meant that the Norman leaders,

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[313] MGH *SS* 7, 764: "sibi [i.e. Richard] in principem consecrarent."

[314] Norwich 1971, p. 48.

[315] Interestingly, Guaimar himself had been prince of Capua, from 1038 to 1047. On the figure of this prince, and in particular for a narrative of his political endeavours, see Indelli 2019, pp. 93-174.

namely Richard Drengot, had to find a suitable way to legitimize their succession to the ancient Lombard princes.[316] The Normans did not come to Italy as an established power, nor did they sport any ideological support to their own enterprises, such as was the case for the Western emperors when they descended the peninsula.[317] It is hardly surprising then that they should have looked to well-established Lombard traditions in order to bolster their precarious position. Anointing had to be one of those. Hoffman himself, despite his own scepticism, opened to such a possibility when dealing precisely with the rise of Richard Drengot as first Norman prince of Capua. Leo Marsicanus explicitly says that the Capuans "sacrant in principem" the Norman count after he had managed to submit them via a long siege (having lasted perhaps one year).[318] It looks clear that the Capuans could not have done so by adopting a Norman ritual, even more so a non-existent one, as Hoffman poignantly argues, since at that time anointing was not performed in Normandy.[319] Considering the need Richard undoubtedly had for legitimacy at the eyes of his new Capuan, that is Lombard, subjects,[320] the only option left open is that what

[316] Delogu 1973, pp. 61-62.

[317] Delogu 1973, pp. 51-55.

[318] MGH *SS* 7, p. 707.

[319] Hoffman 1978, p. 151.

[320] On the identity and self-perception of the *cives Capuani* see Visentin 2016, in particular pp. 160-165, and related bibliography.

had been performed in Capua was precisely the same kind of performance Falco was referring to when speaking of Robert II almost a century later, the same performance that should have been the mark of the rise to power of the late Lombard princes.[321]

Our lengthy reconstruction backwards from the XII century finally brought us back to the times of the Landulfids. We have seen how anointing is mentioned in the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, which dates from the second half of the X century. We must now rely once again on it to sustain our argument. Specifically, we must take a look at how some narrative constructions inside this source would allow us to argue that the Anonymous had well in mind the role of anointing as a symbol of (Lombard) kingship, not reserved solely to Frankish kings and emperors as the letter of Louis II to Basil I would let us believe. We can find an example of this by reading one episode we already mentioned above: the secret meeting between Rotfrit and Sico before the murder of Grimoald IV. The encounter between the two men takes place in a bath, where Sico is alone. Let us recall the episode from there:

"But when he [i.e. Rotfrit] entered into the bath, as we said, he found the above mentioned Sico already there, and he sat close to him. So when Sico began soaping up his own

[321] Ivi, p. 152.

head, immediately Rotfrit began to discreetly pour water over his [i.e. Sico's] shoulders. Having Sico asked: "Who is that is washing my shoulders?", he began pouring water over his head, saying to him: "Be quiet, Sico, be quiet now, because I am Rotfrit." When Sico had perfectly recognized his voice, he said, with great astonishment: "Why do you deceit and make irony of me? Who would see these things, and not laugh at me?" And Rotfrit: "Soon, if Christ will be favourable to us, you will have a precious crown on your head." And then Sico: "I am an exile, do not say these things to me." And the same Rotfrit: "Just swear under oath to me that if you will not increase my prestige, you will not diminish it either; because, with God's help, I will do everything to realize these designs." "[322]

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[322] *Chron. Salern.*, 48, pp. 70, 72: "Sed dum ut diximus valneum introysset, Siconem profecto ibidem invenit, atque erga eum nimirum resedit. Dum denique Sico capud saponem inungeret, statim clam Rofrit dorsum eius cepit abluere. Dum Sico scissitaret ac diceret: "Quis ille est qui meum dorsum aqua perfundit?", ipse statim dorsum linquens, aqua capiti eius silicet fundere cepit, adnectens: "Sile Sico, nunc sile, quia Rofrit ego sum." Cum vero Sico vox eius nimirum cognovisset, ilico exiliens, cum magno pavore dixit: "Quid est quod de me illusio [sic] simulque et yronia facis? Quis talia cognoscet, et non irridebit mihi?". Cui Rofrit: "In proximo, si prosperum Christum fore, tuo capiti septatam habebit coronam." Ad hec Sico: "Exulem sum ego, mihi autem talia dicite minime." Idem ipse Rofrit: "Tantum mihi iusiurandum sponde, ut de me honore si non augeas, ne minuas; quia Deo previo studente omnimodis talia adimplemus."

This episode is important in the overall narrative of the *Chronicon* for at least two reasons. It introduces to us the character of Rotfrit, son of Potelfrit, who will later become the chief advisor and *referendarius* of both Sico and his son and successor Sicard, a sort of grey eminence in Benevento whose advices and lust for power will ultimately lead to Sicard's untimely death, and who could be easily labelled as one of the most negative figures of the whole chronicle.[323] It also explains the way through which Sico would ultimately ascend to the Beneventan throne.

Let us now turn on to analyse this passage. It has generally escaped the attention of scholars how it bears a resemblance with the Biblical episode of the Book of Samuel concerning Saul's anointing as first king of Israel (as recounted in 1 Samuel, 9-10), and with the episodes narrating the rise of David (1 Samuel, 16; and also 1 Chronicles, 11). Actually, one could say that the Anonymous managed to craft a caricature of those biblical scenes. It does so by attributing to his characters the roles and, partially, the attitudes of the biblical ones, and by reversing the positive meanings of those episodes. The meeting between Rotfrit and Sico happens in secret, as in secret the prophet anointed Saul as a sign of God's blessing.

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[323] For a deeper discussion of the figure of Rotfrit and his role inside the Anonymous' narrative, see Oldoni 1972, pp. 33, 61, and particularly pp. 148-158.

Here, the role of Samuel is taken by Rotfrit: he sits near Sico and begins by pouring water over the latter's shoulders; tellingly, after Sico's first question, he moves on to pour water on his head as well. The replica of the symbolism of anointing is evident. Significantly perhaps, just a moment before the beginning of the 'ceremony' Sico "capud saponem inungeret." And perhaps it is possible to detect a subtle irony in the fact that Sico himself seems to understand that whole performance as a mockery: "Why do you deceit and mock me?" he asks. The future prince of Benevento (and the Chronicon readers with him) seemingly understood quite well what Rotfrit, with his actions, was representing. Only after this moment, and in front of Sico's continuing questions, Rotfrit finally mentions the crown. Anointing and crown-wearing as symbols of kingship become here signs of mockery, on a background of purposeful ambiguity perhaps made narratively concrete by a place where Sico is not even able to distinguish Rotfrit before he begins speaking to him. Rotfrit becomes a caricature of Samuel, Sico of David, and Grimoald is the new Saul (alternatively, one could say that Sico was ambiguously portrayed as *both* David and Saul at the same time, due to his being 'anointed' in secret; this ambiguity would have not undermined the author's purposes, perhaps even enhancing the efficacy of the text). Perhaps it is no coincidence that immediately after narrating this episode, the Anonymous goes back in time to explain how Grimoald became prince, and showing, despite his moral shortcomings, his valour in battle and in defending the

southern Lombards from the Frankish invaders. The parallel with the first Israelite king would seem here evident. Such a kind of parallelism is not extraneous to the narrative technique and the ideas of the Anonymous, and he would replicate it in other places of the chronicle.[324]

At the end, what can we take from this episode in favour of our thesis concerning anointing? The biblical parallelism could easily have been a powerful one, as it would have referenced a well-known episode. Still, it would have worked for the Anonymous only once linked to the symbols of power of the southern Lombards to whom the *Chronicon* is addressed. Sico's remarks on the irony of Rotfrit's 'performance' cannot reference only a biblical precedent, that would be too far removed in time to make that irony, or mockery, evident. Only the reference to a contemporary ritual of kingship could have achieved that for the Anonymous' readers. Of course, while Sico and Rotfrit lived into the IX century, those readers came from the late X. If we follow our reading of the episode, then, we can argue that both the Anonymous and his readers considered the ceremony of anointing to be a mark of kingship. More so, they conceived of it as connected to coronation and crown-wearing, as shown by Rotfrit's reply to Sico.

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[324] For example, by establishing a clear parallel between the actions of Sicard against Nannigo's wife and the episode of David and Bethsabea. See Oldoni 1972, pp. 159-160.

Taviani-Carozzi identified another instance in which it would be possible to see a reference to anointing. It is the episode of the young Arichis in the church of St. Stephen in Capua. There:

"[…] so still adolescent Arichis began to sing with his lips half-closed: "*Miserere mei, Deus*". When he reached the part that says "*Spiritu principali confirma me*", in that moment his sword moved, as if somebody was shaking it. Then, once he had finished prayer, he told his mates detailingly and with emotion. One of them who was wiser than the others said: "According to what I understand, you will not leave this unstable life before God had brought you to the dignity of prince." What happened later by the will of God and for the sake of the Lombards proved the veracity of the prediction."[325]

[325] *Chron. Salern.*, 19, p. 36: "[…] sic ille adolescens Arichis: dicitur: "Spiritu principalis confirma me", ilico spatham illius contremuit, acsi quislibet illam concuteret. Ille vero, oratione completa, cum pavore seriatim suis collactaneis enodavit. Unus ex his qui erat sapiencior ceteris, talem sermonem erupit: "De hac instabili vita minime es, quantum mihi videtur, processurus, quam ad dignitatem principalem Dominus te perducat." Quod postea annuent Deo a catelam Langobardorum probavit eventus." For the interpretation of the episode see Taviani-Carozzi 1992, p. 207.

The parallel to the symbolism of anointing is evident. Tellingly, the Holy Ghost appears in the moment in which Arichis mentions the confirmation. The young age of the future prince also allows to compare him to the young king *par excellence*, David.

All the clues are here and cannot be simply dismissed. Still there is one implicit question left unanswered concerning the ceremony of anointing: once we acknowledge that it was a part of the Lombard system of symbolic communication of kingship, to whom should we trace its introduction in Langobardia Minor? A word of caution is necessary at this point. While speaking of the introduction of the ritual of anointing in southern Italy, we should not necessarily think about the concrete execution of the ritual itself, but about its acquisition of a new meaning in the eyes of the Lombards. In other words: while we do not know when exactly such a ritual was performed for the first time in southern Italy, we can try to hypothesize when it assumed a significant meaning, a true role inside the overall system of symbolic communication for Lombard rulers. The two moments do not necessarily coincide (though they could, of course), as scholars have well shown for example for the imperial rituals of the IV century.[326]

Keeping in mind this warning, we have already introduced one of the possible answers to the question at hand, i.e. about when anointing may have been introduced in the

[326] MacCormack 1984, p. 110.

south: the ceremony could have been part of Arichis II's attempt at creating a new set of 'royal' customs needed to emphasize his new role as *princeps*. This is the hypothesis supported, among others, by Hoffman, while other scholars, still accepting the setting of a new court ceremonial (including the coronation) by Arichis, have ruled out the possibility that anointing could have been a part of it.[327] Surely, it is not a hypothesis without merit. At the same time, though, it may be subject to a number of objections as well.

The simplest one in the list would concern that same lack of references at anointing in Erchempert and the Anonymous of Salerno that we mentioned at the beginning of this section. As it has been shown above though, this objection may be discarded rather easily. The problem is, in fact, different. Both authors (and the Anonymous, in any case, also relies on Erchempert's account) depicts Arichis as a model, in religious piety as in political abilities and prestige.[328] This makes Arichis the prototype of the perfect Lombard ruler. A potential issue may arise, however, precisely from the status acquired by his figure, which could make it harder to link any potential ceremonial innovation to him: indeed, Arichis' posthumous fame in

[327] Hoffman 1978, p. 145. Palmieri 1996, pp. 79-81, who argues even against the idea that anointing could have been introduced later on among the southern Lombards.

[328] Berto 2012, pp. 160-161.

the collective memory of southern Lombards could have overshadowed what he really did or did not do. Many an historiographer or chronicler in southern Italy may have felt the temptation of attributing an innovation to Arichis in order to shroud it into a cloud of prestige. While this objection does not definitely disprove the hypothesis of Arichis II as the ruler who introduced anointing in southern Italy, then, it could weaken it nonetheless. Without any pretence at proving or disproving it in a definitive way, and understanding that we are moving on the field of the hypothetical, it is all the same necessary to take it into proper account, and to devise alternatives to it.

Indeed, Arichis was a shrewd statesman. He must have understood that, by adopting a ceremony like that of anointing, so pregnant, in Frankish eyes, of sacral and royal meaning, he could have trespassed a point of no return in his challenge to Charlemagne's power, more than with a 'simple', less troublesome (from a political point of view) crown-wearing. Also, with (apparently) no direct precedent in Lombard kingship rituals (and we should remember that Arichis was of Friulian origins, and thus he knew very well the Lombard court of the north), the effect on his subjects could have been doubtful (compared to what will happen two centuries later).

Also, it has been argued that the marginal role of bishops in Benevento at the time of Arichis (as mentioned in the previous chapter) may have made the whole ceremony of anointing, with its strong emphasis on the role of the

bishop himself, basically pointless for the new Beneventan prince.[329] One could say that, at the time of Arichis, the table was not yet ready for this peculiar ritual game to start.

For the IX century, then, we are left solely to Erchempert's mention of Guaifer of Salerno as "christum Domini".[330] This expression would, apparently, leave no doubt concerning the fact that the prince of Salerno had been anointed. The Christological reference becomes even stronger once combining Erchempert's wording with Isidore's *Etymologiae*: "Indeed, like Christ means king, so Jesus means Saviour".[331] However, it is too scanty evidence

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[329] Zornetta 2018, pp. 336-337. While the author extends her critique to the whole period of southern Lombard history, claiming that "non si può in alcun modo collocare nella tradizione longobarda" such a ritual, that is precisely what we are arguing against in here, it is still possible to accept her objection when limited to the principality of Arichis.

[330] Already identified as such also by Hoffman (1978, p. 148). It is interesting to note that it is the same wording employed by the anonymous author of the *De Consecratione Pontificum et Regum* (which will be the subject of a closer inquiry in Chapter 4) when he describes the effects of anointing on the first kings of Israel (Saul and David): "Erat enim [...] christus Domini et unus cum Domino spiritus." in MGH *Ldl* 3, p. 665, 18-19. The passage is also quoted by Kantorowicz 2012, p. 50, n. 13, who also mentions how the same definition of *christus Domini* was applied to Anglo-Saxon kings already in 787.

[331] "Sicut enim Christus significat regem, ita Iesus significat salvatorem." *Etym.*, VII, II-8. Isidore had introduced this interpretation of Christ's name already a few lines earlier, when he wrote that "Christ is not the Saviour's proper name, but it is the common denomination of

to reach any conclusion, and it is possible to find some alternative explanations for it. It is possible that Erchempert could have simply wished to emphasize the contrast with Guaifer's enemies, namely the bishop of Capua Landulf (ca. 863-879) and his relatives, who could easily be characterized as the 'villains' of Erchempert's chronicle.[332] Guaifer, on the other side, had cultivated good relations with the Cassinese monks that were living in exile in Capua (after the destruction of Montecassino in 883), the same establishment which Erchempert was part of.[333]

Once we dismiss Erchempert's statement as actual proof of Guaifer's anointing, we must necessarily move up the chronological setting in order to reach a plausible answer for our question. All the evidence we have collected above comes from Capua, so it is natural to look at this political centre once again. This is not to say that anointing could have not been performed in Salerno as well: in his chronicle, archbishop Romuald (1153-1181) mentions how in 1127, at the death of William II (1114-1127), Roger II was

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who holds power. So indeed when it is said Christ, it is the general name of the dignity; when Jesus Christ, it is the proper name of the Saviour." ("Non est autem Salvatoris proprium nomen Christus, sed communis nuncupatio potestatis. Dum enim dicitur Christus, commune dignitatis nomen est; dum Iesus Christus, proprium est vocabulum Salvatoris."), in ivi, 4.

[332] Ivi, pp. 153-154 and pp. 156-158.

[333] Ivi, p. 159.

anointed by the Salernitan archbishop.[334] This is the first anointing of a Salernitan ruler that Romuald reports, though. Thus, Capua is left as our best option.

Here, our argument must necessarily (and cautiously) move through what scanty evidence we have. Once Arichis and Guaifer (or one of his immediate predecessors) are ruled out as possible introducers of anointing in Langobardia Minor, we are left to look at the beginning of the X century. The figure of Atenulf I of Capua-Benevento stands tall in our sight. We have recalled Atenulf's political career in the previous chapter. Like Arichis, he can be defined as the founder of a new, or a heavily redefined, political entity, and the inclusion of the ancient Lombard capital of Benevento in his domains could not be underestimated in its symbolic value. We have showed above how anointing played an important role in the principality of Capua in the later centuries, so the question arises: did Atenulf introduce this ceremony in his political creation?

Again, similarly to Arichis, he would have had a number of good reasons to introduce a ceremonial aimed at increasing and strengthening his own legitimacy.[335] In Atenulf's case,

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[334] MGH *SS* 19, p. 418.

[335] To quote Enright, both Arichis and Atenulf may have needed to modify southern Lombard rituals to mark the new environments both them and their subjects found themselves in: "In a largely illiterate society ritual becomes a legal language. One must, almost by definition,

it could be possible to argue that the effect could have been better guaranteed, compared to Arichis' case, after a century and plus-long relatively close contact with the anointing tradition and its meaning, thanks to the direct presence of members of the Carolingian dynasty (in the northern kingdom, and also in the south, as we have seen for Louis II). Whether for the first prince of Benevento the challenge was to resist Charlemagne's claims to rule over all the Lombards, for Atenulf it was to keep the power he had managed to obtain inside a frail political system that inherently tended towards fragmentation and internal strife among the members of the ruling dynasty. And in choosing the means through which to reach his goal, moreover, Atenulf had one distinct advantage over Arichis. The geopolitical environment in which the prince of Capua-Benevento was operating had greatly changed during the last fifty years: the Western Empire was not anymore a power to be reckoned with as it had still been under the rule of Louis II half a century before. With the death of Charles the Fat (881-888) Carolingian rule in Italy had ended, as Berengar, marquis of Friuli, had taken both the royal crown of Italy (from 887) and the imperial crown upon himself (from 915 until his death in 924). Berengar's ascension to the throne had only been the last step in a process of constant loss of power: the death of Louis II had already effectively marked the end of imperial interference

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change the ritual in order to change the political and religious context which it sanctions." (Enright 1985, pp. 53-54).

in the south until the rise of the Saxon dynasty forty years later.[336]

Thus, Atenulf did not have to fear the ire of a Carolingian emperor who could have interpreted his anointment as a gesture of defiance, a concrete possibility once the relevance of anointing in Carolingian history is taken into account.. There was still another empire to deal with, though. Here, Atenulf's policy clearly showed his understanding of how the balance of power in the south had shifted from the vanishing Carolingians to Constantinople. After all, he had experienced the concrete reality of a resurgent Byzantine power in the peninsula, with the occupation of Benevento of 891-895. It was in part thanks to the vacuum of power created by the Byzantine withdrawal that he had managed to assert his rule over the ancient capital. Thus, it is not surprising to find the new prince of Capua-Benevento accepting the titles of imperial patrician and *anthypatos* for himself and his two sons, who were also sent to Constantinople.[337]

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[336] Marazzi 2021, p. 191.

[337] Indelli 2019, p. 30. The fact is also reported by Leo Marsicanus, who notes that "[…] praefatus princes [i.e. Atenulf] […] Landulfum filium suum ad Leonem imperatorem Constantinopolim destinavit […]", MGH *SS* 7, p. 616. The Cassinese author links this embassy to the preparation of the joint military expedition to root out the Arab settlement of Garigliano. Interestingly, he also reports that Atenulf died while his son was in Constantinople. The *Annales Beneventani*, instead, reports the titles of *patricius* and *antipater* only for Landulf (MGH *SS* 3,

Now, what was the status of anointing in the East? The evidence is ambiguous. In his compilation of the civil and imperial ceremonies of the Empire, the *De Cerimoniis*, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (911-959) devotes a chapter to imperial coronations without ever mentioning an anointing ceremony. In fact, it will become explicitly attested in Byzantium from the XII century onwards.[338] Still, the Eastern emperor was styled as 'anointed' already before that time, symbolically marking his special role in the Christian political hierarchy. That same hierarchy in

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p. 175). The use of the Byzantine titles by Atenulf and his son Landulf I is further confirmed by a document dated the year 920. This is not the place to trace a history of the titles of *patrikios* and *anthypatos*, so strictly intertwined with the evolution of the Byzantine imperial system and to the decline of senatorial aristocracy, as it is. However, we should mention that by the time of the Macedonian dynasty (867-1056) both titles had acquired a specific role inside the wider, and almost rigidly formalised, system of Byzantine titles and ranks. The practice of conferring titles to foreign princes was a consolidated one, followed by imperial diplomacy since the High Empire. Coincidentally, the title of *anthypatos* (usually translated in latin as *proconsul*) was far from being unknown in southern Italy, being connected with that of *hypatos* (lat. *consul*) used by the rulers of the duchy of Gaeta (still nominally a Byzantine possession in the X century).

[338] Dagron 2003, p. 83; he details Byzantine imperial coronations from p. 54, and there we can see how the Byzantines were still well aware of the role of anointing as the mark of ancient Biblical (Davidic) monarchy, to which the orations and prayers reported in *De Cerimoniis* makes reference repeatedly.

which Atenulf was purposefully inserting himself by entering the political orbit of Constantinople, following the footsteps of some of his predecessors (including, tellingly, Arichis himself) and his contemporaries (like the princes of Salerno).[339] This is connected to the different constitutive role anointing had for the Carolingians and for the Eastern emperors: whether for the former it was a fundamental piece in their quest for legitimacy from Pippin onwards, for the latter it had much less importance compared to other element of the imperial ceremonial.

Atenulf was in the best position, and in the best of geopolitical contexts, then, to introduce the ritual of anointing into the ceremonial of southern Lombard princes. He could have borrowed it from Frankish tradition, while combining it with a Byzantine understanding of its significance (that is, without pretending to elevate himself to the level of a *sacra persona* like the Carolingian emperors). The table, this time, seems to have been set.

We could propose an alternative hypothesis by moving chronologically even closer to the Vat. lat. 9820, from the times of Atenulf to those of Pandulf Ironhead. After all, Pandulf was himself the most powerful Lombard prince in

[339] Gay 2011, pp. 120-121. Also Kislinger 2017, p. 597. This policy was continued also by Atenulf's successors: Loud (2000, p. 23) remarks how from 935 Beneventan charters were dated using the regnal years of Byzantine emperors for a while. Interestingly however, the same apparently did not happen in Capua as well.

the south (and, for a few years, the only remaining one), at the same time being one of the most powerful men in the whole peninsula. His political creation was nothing less that the first (and only) reunification of all southern Lombard lands under a single ruler after the *Divisio* of 849, if only for a few years and without the reconstitution of a truly unified principality. Together, perhaps, with the reigns of Pandulf IV of Capua and Guaimar IV of Salerno in the next century, his reign marks the apogee of southern Lombard power. Moreover, the Ironhead was himself not foreign to Byzantine culture, though in quite a different way than his ancestor Atenulf: he had been prisoner in Constantinople after the disastrous battle of Bovino for about one year, from 969 to 970. While his standing was decidedly pro-Ottonian, and quite the opposite of that adopted by Atenulf, it doesn't necessarily entail that the Lombard prince wasn't keen into adopting elements of Byzantine ceremonial and culture, quite a common practice even among Constantinople's enemies. Things become more complicated if we look at the western side of the problem: differently from Atenulf, Pandulf experienced the rise of the new Ottonian empire, heir of the Carolingian tradition. He was himself one of the main beneficiaries of the resurgent imperial influence in Italy. It is then hard to imagine that he may have decided to introduce or otherwise accept a ritual with the intent of challenging the symbolic pre-eminence of the Saxon emperors, who considered themselves direct heirs and successors to the Carolingians in term of their imperial legacy (including the

ceremonial surrounding it). He could, however, have done so in accordance with them, particularly if the tradition had already been established by one of his predecessors. After all, the princes of Capua and Benevento already wore a crown, and the crown itself was a fundamental part of Ottonian *regalia*.

3. 3. 3 Defining a Lombard ritual system of kingship: the image of Arichis

Once we combine our hypothesis concerning the introduction of anointment with the Anonymous narrative, we can reach the conclusion, already touched upon above in dealing with the episode of Rotfrit and Sico (and we could add to it the two imperial coronations of Louis II and Otto I), that in Langobardia Minor anointing and crown-wearing were conceived as two connected elements of the symbolic communication of kingship. We cannot infer from this that every time a source (particularly those from the X century onwards) mentions a coronation or a crown-wearing, then anointing should have necessarily been performed as well. However, we should not discard such a connection either. Both should be considered parts of the same code and be treated as such.

They also give us a hint as to the direction we should take in our investigation of a southern Lombard ritual system of kingship and help us partially reassess the idea that such a

system was substantially 'secular', as opposed to the more sacral Carolingian (or, for that matter, Ottonian) system. We could even go as far as to argue that this is the real point of contention, if we want to contextualize the figurative elements of the final commemorations on the Vat. lat. 9820. Before delving into such an interpretation (that will be the subject of the next chapter) we should finalize our analysis by situating the southern Lombard system inside a wider discourse about kingship that characterized Latin Europe during the Early Middle Ages.

This is not to say that what we find among the southern Lombards is a simple replication of Western models and concepts. Far from it. We have already shown the possibility of Byzantine influences on the adoption of anointing, though that supposition rests on titulature-related, and not ritual, evidence, as we have seen. We could add to that that such an influence is much clearer (and relatively verified), for example, in the adoption of Byzantine titles, as we have seen for Atenulf (but the princes of Salerno often adopted Eastern titles as well). In this sense it is possible to agree with Huguette Taviani-Carozzi when she writes that "à la fin du Xe siècle, l'imitation de Byzance est intégrée dans une symbolique née et mise au point en Occident."[340] Byzantine influences could be further detected in the well-known episode of

[340] Taviani-Carozzi 1980, p. 681.

Arichis' reception of Charlemagne envoy in his palace in Salerno:

"Then Arichis gathered a huge number of soldiers, so as to receive the same envoy [the one sent by Charlemagne] with honour and with great solemnity, and in order for them [i.e. the soldiers] to look in front of the ambassadors' eyes dressed in their uniforms and fielded in full arms. Along the stairs of the palace he positioned adolescents who were holding on their hands hawks and other birds of the same kind; then he positioned young men of beautiful youth who also held in their hands birds-of-prey; here and there, then, as we said, he positioned old men standing, while occasionally there were other old men holding in their hands some kind of sceptre; among them, at the center, upon a golden throne, stood the prince."[341]

[341] *Chron. Salern.*, 12, pp. 28, 30: "Tunc Arichis exercitus copiam adunare fecit, quatenus ipsum missum [i.e. Charlemagne's envoy] honorifice et cum magna sublimitate reciperet, et diverso abitu variisque instructos armis ante occulos [sic] legatorum apparerent. Nam in scale ipsius palacii adolescentes hinc inde astare fecit, qui gerebant in manibus sparvarios cum ceteri huiusmodi avibus; deinde iuvenes astare fecit floridam etatem habens, et ipsi alii accipites et huiusmodi manibus gerebant; quidam enim ex his ad tabulam ludebant. Idipsum hinc inde, ut diximus, canos spargens astare fecit, deinde senex undique circumstans cum baculis in manibus, inter quos ipse princeps in trono aureo in eorum residens medium."

The rest of the episode shows us the Frank envoy moving through the palace, every time mistakenly believing he's going to meet the prince, his judgement cheated by the splendour he sees around himself, before finally meeting Arichis "in throno aureo […] residentem."Much could be said about the symbolism contained in this, almost oneiric episode, including the subsequent dialogue between Arichis and the envoy, and the final remark of the Anonymous, who reports how some people believed the envoy to be a disguised Charlemagne. What the Anonymous presents to us is a true theatrical display of power, significantly taking place in what he calls a "regia aula", a royal palace. Arichis power is here shown at its apogee. It is hard to escape the Byzantine suggestions emanating from this whole scene. However, Taviani-Carozzi herself warned already of the difficulty of establishing a direct comparison between Arechian and Byzantine ceremonial.[342] Nor we should forget about the fact that the Carolingian (and, later, Ottonian) influence had its equal share:[343] it is no coincidence that the scene described by the Salernitan Anonymous resembles a similar episode by Notker the Stammerer, who writes

[342] Taviani-Carozzi 1991, p. 287.

[343] Ivi, p. 290: "[…] le discours idéologique sur le pouvoir du prince lombard [in the *Chronicon*] repose sur plusieurs réminiscences dont il serait arbitraire de privilégier une composante."

about the reception of Byzantine envoys in Charlemagne palace in Aachen.[344] We will then follow Taviani-Carozzi's suggestion, as we keep our focus on the southern Lombard system.

It is time indeed to turn back to the letter of Anastasius Bibliothecarius, the rest of the *Chronicon*, and the apparent idiosyncrasy they present for our problem: why is anointing so prominent there? And why is it explicitly shown by the Salernitan Anonymous for the figures of Louis II and Otto I, but not for any Lombard prince? Above all, how can these questions contribute to the overall progress of our quest for a better definition of a Lombard ritual system of kingship? The answers lie precisely in the connection between anointing and coronation, as in a certain conception of the relationship between the southern Lombards (and their princes) and the imperial power looming from the north, well represented by the Anonymous.

In a beautiful passage, Taviani-Carozzi highlighted the latter element by defining the *Chronicon Salernitanum* as "le meilleur témoin de la résistance Lombard à ce [i.e. Ottonian] rêve imperial." [345] Massimo Oldoni, in his monograph on the *Chronicon*, devoted a whole chapter to the role of the empire (both empires, actually) in it. From his analysis, it does emerge the picture of a loathed Eastern

[344] MGH *SS* 2, p. 750.

[345] Ibid.

Empire (exemplified by the episode of the death of emperor Alexander)[346], and a Western Empire that is respected, and recognized in its role of protector of Christianity. This is only in apparent contradiction with Taviani-Carozzi's statement (that, anyway, comes twenty years after Oldoni's work). This 'dichotomy' between the Eastern and the Western Empire is made stronger and clearer by the Anonymous precisely through the careful use of (or silence on) the correct rituals of legitimacy: nowhere in the *Chronicon* we can find mention of a Constantinopolitan emperor being anointed, not even crowned. These rituals are reserved for the *augustus* of the West, being him Carolingian or Ottonian, it doesn't matter for our author.[347] The triad of legitimation is clearly shown by the Anonymous: anointing, crowning, acclamation (as *imperator* and *augustus*). Is it really surprising to see such an anti-Eastern attitude coming from an author who was writing during the reign of Pandulf Ironhead? The letter to Basil I serves this purpose: it frames the correct (in the author's eyes) relationship between Rome and Constantinople.

Once the goal has been achieved, the Carolingian and Ottonian empires have practically ceased their positive function in southern Lombard history in the eyes of the Anonymous. Louis II is imprisoned by the Beneventans

[346] *Chron. Salern.*, 131, p. 208.

[347] Oldoni 1972, p. 110.

(we saw it in the previous chapter), and in narrating the episode the author doesn't express the same sort of sorrow and disdain that, instead, we may find in Erchempert. As underlined by Oldoni, the Carolingians are too far away from the Anonymous' horizons (and the same could be said of the Ottonians).[348] While perhaps too extreme in its conclusions, such a statement may be not too far from the truth. This leads us to the second of our questions, namely why the author of the *Chronicon Salernitanum* does not mention the anointing of a Lombard prince in an explicit way. A first possible answer is that the Anonymous did not feel the need to specify that the Lombard princes were anointed precisely because they were not emperors. In other words, his purpose was to keep the 'ritual characteristics' of the imperial institution well distinguished from those of Lombard kingship. The mentioning of the crown would have sufficed, according to this line of reasoning, to make clear the status of the prince. Moreover, one could add that no Lombard prince in the *Chronicon* can be considered an equal to Arichis, the founder of the principality whose figure is clouded in a mist of semi-divine status.[349]

[348] Ivi, p. 127.

[349] Taviani-Carozzi 1980, p. 685 even draws a parallel between the figure of Arichis in the *Chronicon* and that of Odin.

Arichis receives his own anointing not by the hands of a bishop, but from the Holy Ghost itself.[350] He resides in a palace that equals that of kings and emperors, a "regia aula". He is a founder of cities (Salerno), and a pious and devoted ruler. In his figure all the elements that makes the perfect king are reunited. This gives him that prototypical status we briefly mentioned above and that makes him too superior to any subsequent ruler of the southern Lombards. At the same time, precisely because of this, he gives us the best chance at looking at the concepts of kingship in X century Langobardia Minor.

Concerning this last point, we can still follow Taviani-Carozzi's reasoning when she links southern Lombard images of kingship (and Arichis is *the* image, the perfect mirror of southern Lombard princes) with the Western (Carolingian-Ottonian) tradition through the diffusion, in southern Italy, of the coronation *ordines*, texts prescribing the correct procedures to be followed and formula to be pronounced during the ceremonies. The examples Taviani-Carozzi brings forward to show the adoption of the symbolism of the *ordines* (in particular, from the Romano-Germanic Pontifical) comes, again, from the Anonymous of Salerno and his tales concerning the first Beneventan prince. We have already listed many of them. We could add the presence of the sceptre, still mentioned in the episode of the reception of Charlemagne's envoy in

[350] Taviani-Carozzi 1992, p. 211.

Salerno. Or that of homage via *proskynesis*, also in the same episode. Or, again, that of keeping representations of the ruler inside churches, as exemplified by the episode of Charlemagne and the Beneventan bishops, who show him a statue of Arichis on which he could fulfil his oath against the prince by thrusting his sceptre into the statue chest.[351] All of them are duly listed by Taviani-Carozzi.[352]If we take into consideration Janet Nelson's argument that early medieval *ordines* are "patterns of symbols expressing the continuity and integration of society through the kinghip"[353], meaning they are to considered as integral components of a symbolic code, this whole argument gains more substantial weight.[354]

We could add the sword, again present during the episode of the young Arichis: it is by the movement of his weapon that the Holy Ghost manifests itself. Already this mention could hint at an increased symbolic relevance of the sword, compared to the previous tradition of Lombard kingship,

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[351] *Chron. Salern.*, 11, p. 26.

[352] Taviani-Carozzi 1980, p. 681.

[353] Nelson 1975, p. 50.

[354] Still of fundamental importance for the study of coronation *ordines* in a southern Italian (in this case, Norman) context is the 1973 essay by Reinhard Elze, *Tre ordines per l'incoronazione di un re e di una regina del regno normanno di Sicilia*, in *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi sulla Sicilia normanna (Palermo, 4-8 novembre 1972)*, Palermo, 1973, pp. 438-459.

thus confirming Gasparri's theory and 'transplanting' it to Langobardia Minor as well.

3. 3. 4 Spaces and places: the 'hidden' stage

None of our sources really delve into the description of spaces. The princes of Benevento, Capua, or Salerno, or the emperors who come south move through a landscape that is often left more imagined than described. A notable exception is the description of the palace of Salerno by the Salernitan Anonymous. Even in that case, however, the palace itself is left relatively aside: it is a background to the show of Arichis' power, and it is this show that takes the centre stage. The comparison with Notker's account in this regard is telling.

Still, despite the lack of description, the palace stands somewhere on stage, and is often the scene on which many episodes related to the princes take place, particularly in Benevento and Salerno. This tells us something about how the Anonymous, and his readers with him, saw the relationship between the performance of princely power and the palace where the prince himself resided, that *sacrum palatium* that the charters and documents in our possession mention so often as the place where the Lombard rulers exercised their prerogatives. Unfortunately, nothing has come to us of the palace of the princes of Benevento. Most of the Salernitan palace has disappeared as well, except for what remains of the chapel

of S. Massimo, or the palatine church of S. Pietro a Corte, together with the results of some archaeological excavations during the last twenty years.[355] Admittedly, based on the surviving evidence Paolo Peduto has nonetheless attempted a reconstruction of the Salernitan palace, tracing its main references to late antique and Gothic models. He proposes to consider the palace built by Arichis to have been not too dissimilar from the depictions found in the IV century mosaic of Junio's estate in Carthage, or those of the royal (formerly imperial) palace of Ravenna on the mosaics of S. Apollinare Nuovo. A two-storied building, the second floor covered on three sides by a loggia, with a fourth one, the northernmost, occupied by the palatine chapel.[356] Thus Peduto explicitly links the Arechian building with a continuity of late antique imperial and aristocratic architecture.

It is not surprising to see churches among the stages of episodes related to princely power either. Alongside the Anonymous' (and Erchempert's) religious and moral beliefs, which led them almost naturally to emphasize the role of churches and monasteries, it is important to notice how the formers could play a role specifically in the

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[355] Amarotta 2004, pp. 291-300 for the archaeological excavations concerning the palace. On the church of S. Massimo and its role in Salerno as a proprietary church see B. Ruggero, *Principi, nobiltà e Chiesa nel Mezzogiorno longobardo. L'esempio di S. Massimo di Salerno*, Napoli, Università di Napoli, Istituto di Storia Medioevale e Moderna, 1973.

[356] Peduto 2010, p. 259.

performance or representation of princely power. We have seen it already above regarding the episode of the young Arichis and, later, of Charlemagne and the bishops. Again, as for the palaces, our knowledge of Lombard churches is wanting, to say the least, most of them having disappeared one way or the other. Many have been replaced by later constructions, particularly during the Romanesque era: this is the case, for example, of Benevento cathedral. Still, the preservation of some outstanding exemplars (S. Sofia being probably the best known) combined with a general knowledge of early medieval religious buildings throughout Latin Europe gives us more than one hint as to how they looked. Unfortunately, it is a far harder task to get a picture of the relationship between the building and the rituals performed in it during the Lombard times, as we will see in the next chapter.

Palace and church also mean city. Arichis, the prototypical Lombard prince, is a city-builder. He enlarges Benevento by adding the *Civitas Nova* to it.[357] The construction of Salerno is one of the utmost symbols of his power.[358] The

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[357] Rotili 1986, pp. 86-106 and 143-55.

[358] Dey 2015, pp. 187-188, comes as far as to identify in the episode of the Frankish envoy an attempt at showin Salerno as "an armature of power in the late antique mold – a sequential itinerary comprising its walls and gates, the approaches to the palace, the monumental stairway to the main entrance and the sequence of rooms beyond culminating in the royal aula – the experience of which could be structured, animated and guided toward its crowning moment (the epiphany of the ruler) by

Capuan counts and gastalds offer another case of such a role. The Anonymous duly reports the episode of the foundation of Sicopolis, the new town built "in monte qui Terfiliscus dicitur", close to the ancient Capua, under the orders of prince Sico but on the initiative of the Capuans. Sico himself celebrates the event with an entrance that gives the feeling of a true *adventus*: "The same prince accepted their invitation [i.e. by count Landulf of Capua and his *optimates*, to come and inaugurate the new town], and all together, with his nobles and those loyal to him, well-orderly they advanced towards Capua." [359] Significantly, the newly-built city still has no name. The privilege of providing one falls upon the prince. Later, in the second half of the same century, the counts will build another city, the new Capua, "simbolo vivo della nascente Potenza e dell'autonomia".[360]

The written sources often depict the Lombard princes entering cities. Grimoald's return to his father's principality after Arichis' death, as narrated by the Anonymous, takes all the appearance of a carefully staged series of *adventus*

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the servants and retainers of the king in all their ceremonial panoply." It should be remembered that the construction of Salerno was considered as Arichis' crowning achievement by none other than Paul the Deacon.

[359] *Chron. Salern.*, 58, p. 82: "Ipse princeps eorum preces annuit, atque cum suis pariter cumtosque proceres necnon et fidelibus cuneatim Capuam gradierunt."

[360] Visentin 2017, p. 275.

ceremonies, touching each of the three future capitals of Langobardia Minor: Capua, Benevento, and Salerno. The sequence is always the same: when the new prince is approaching the city, and before actually entering in it, he is welcomed by an immense crowd of jubilant subjects: "men and women and people of all sexes and ages went towards him [i.e. prince Grimoald] a mile away with hymns and chants […]".[361] Grimoald is thus shown as taking possession of the keys of his principality, that the author cannot but identify with the three cities that, in his own times, will be the political centres of the Lombards.[362] This episode shows that the Anonymous had well in mind the role of the urban environment for the exercise and performance of power. He is not alone in this, of course, as Erchempert shows the same awareness in more than one instance.[363]

It is no coincidence that the city should play such a role. Perhaps we could even say that here we have the best sign

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[361] *Chron. Salern.*, 26, p. 44: "tam virorum quamque et feminarum omnis sexus omnisque etas ei obvia exierunt fere miliarium unum cum ymnis et canticis […]."

[362] While the age of glory for Capua was still to come, already at the end of the VIII century it could be recognized as an important centre, labelled by Paul the Deacon as "opulentissima". See Visentin 2017, pp. 276-277.

[363] He mentions as well Grimoald's return to Benevento, where he is welcomed "a Beneventi civibus magno cum gaudio", in *Erch. Yst. Lang.*, 4, p. 88.

of how the southern Lombard ritual system of kingship was substantially embedded in a long tradition, tracing back to the Late Antique period and the imperial ceremonials of the Late Empire.[364] The city was, to quote Hendrik Dey, a "urban stage."[365] It was the place where rulers could "[…] impress themselves on the consciousness, the daily reality, of a critical mass of people […]".[366] We have seen it for the *translationes* of relics, that may be considered as another, peculiar, enactment of *adventus*.[367]

3. 4 Concluding remarks: conceptualizing the southern Lombard ritual system of kingship

Michael McCormick, in his book on the transmission of late imperial rituals of victory during the Early Middle Ages, wrote that "competition between king and dukes may have played a significant role in both groups' recourse to

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[364] McCormick 1986, pp. 288-289 identifies some evidence of the possible enactment of *adventus* during the northern monarchy. While he doesn't deal specifically with the south, his statements concerning the motives that led the Lombard kings to adopt (and adapt) some late imperial customs retain their significance also for our case.

[365] Dey 2015, p. 210. While he intends the statement as directed specifically to case of Constantinople, there is no reason not to adopt it also to describe the role of urban environments in the Latin West, particularly in those areas, like Italy, that kept a strong urban character.

[366] *Erch. Yst. Lang.*, 4, p. 88.

[367] Warner 2001, p. 259.

elements of eastern [i.e. Byzantine] *Staatsymbolik*."[368] He is speaking of the Lombard kingdom pre-774, though his statement may be regarded as more encompassing in its validity.

During this whole chapter we have constantly looked at rulers. We have spoken of 'introducers' or 'innovators', we have kept our lens focused on rulers' actions and intentions. However, as already said in the methodological opening to the chapter, this is only one side of the coin. A ritual is nothing without an audience. Without it, it is useless, it is meaningless, in the purest sense of the word. In a certain way, we could say that our perspective is already 'corrected' by our reliance on sources and authors, like Erchempert and the Anonymous of Salerno, who were not court dignitaries or otherwise members of the élite of Lombard lords surrounding the princes. Their works were not sponsored nor commissioned by the rulers. They were not even dedicated to them, as it is the case of much Carolingian and Ottonian historiography. In other words, Erchempert and the Anonymous of Salerno provide two notable examples of qualified audience and in this sense they allow us to collect a glimpse of how southern Lombards did look to, and did conceive of, the symbolic power and authority of their rulers. The gathered documentation is hardly enough, though, as more research is needed to shed a light on this fascinating subject.

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[368] McCormick 1986, p. 296.

We don't even know much about the behaviour and attitude of the Lombard élite towards the rituals, except for what has come to us, again, from the chronicles, or for what transpires from documents and charters.[369] There has been no Lombard Dhuoda (the Frank noblewoman author of the *Liber manualis*, a 'handbook' on noble politics and behaviour among the Carolingians) or, at least, her work didn't survive to reach us.[370]

However, our objective was to reach a, necessarily tentative, understanding of the southern Lombard ritual system of kingship in the X century. In other words, it was to look at that competition McCormick wrote about as it unfolded in practices and actions, through symbols and rituals. We wanted to look at the game while it was taking place or, better, to look at how contemporaries looked at it and conceived it. What picture does emerge from our cursory look?

In X century Langobardia Minor we can detect a strong awareness of the symbolism surrounding princely power. The Anonymous of Salerno is our privileged witness for this, as we have seen. The southern Lombard princes, and

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[369] Also due to the paucity of what has survived to us, as remarked by Bertolini (2022, p. 3).

[370] The *Liber manualis* would fall inside the category of 'Mirrors for Laymen', works written (usually by ecclesiastics, though exceptions can exist, such as Dhuoda herself) for members of the élite. See Pratt 2007, p. 150.

particularly those of Capua-Benevento, adopted a variety of symbols and rituals: they were anointed and crowned, they used cities as stages, they borrowed both from the Latin West and from the Greek East to maximize their options. This was all the more necessary in a context in which the Lombard aristocracy was a powerful actor and poised to become even more powerful during the next century, while princely power was always subject to the risk of fragmentation, devolution, and, in the last instance, impotence. This power manifested itself under many guises, but probably the most powerful one was the role the aristocracy kept as 'prince-maker'. The Anonymous of Salerno does not refrain in constantly mentioning elections of princes. Arichis himself, years after his 'anointing' by the Holy Ghost, is described being elected "by everybody", in a show of unanimity that allows the author of the *Chronicon* to make also of this election a prototype of correct procedure.[371]In the eyes of the Anonymous (as in those of Erchempert) the election was not a fiction. It was part of the reality of power.

Assemblies were a characteristic and fundamental feature of early medieval polities. We have seen it for the Lombard kingdom, and we could say the same of the Carolingian lands and, later, though with due difference, for the Ottonian empire. Chris Wickham defined the assemblies of Lombard-Carolingian Italy, that is the *Regnum Italiae*, as

[371] *Chron. Salern.*, 19, pp. 36, 38.

relatively easy to control for kings, due to a strong discrepancy in the level of wealth of rulers and aristocracy, in favour of the former.[372] We have seen in the previous chapter how this was not the case for the Lombard princes in the south, more so for those of the late X and XI century. The playfield was much more levelled here. The same scholar, in another work, also argued for another phenomenon: that "the ceremonial dignity of the Lombard princes was at its highest in the eleventh century when their real influence had virtually vanished."[373] He presents as evidence of their loss of influence the disappearance of court offices. Indeed, once we remember how those same offices were key in the relationship between prince and aristocracy, in keeping the competition inside the élite and between it and the ruler inside the confines of the political system, then we can see the merit of Wickham's argument.

What we have shown here concerning the high ritual awareness of the Anonymous of Salerno may be used as further evidence in its favour. That "ceremonial dignity" Wickham writes about is embedded in a ritual system of power. And such a ritual system, we can finally say it, shares some considerable similarities with what we see in Carolingian and Ottonian Europe. The presence of anointing, the references to Davidic monarchy, all points toward a system of Christ-centred kingship. It is now

[372] Wickham 2017, p. 406.

[373] Wickham 1981, p. 159.

reasonable to assume that the Lombard prince was anointed, just like the Carolingian and Ottonian rulers; he is ideally compared to David and Solomon (a case which will be argued for more in detail in Chapter 4), at least when he is considered to be deserving of it (such as in the case of Arichis); he is even referenced to as the *christus domini* (as we have seen in the case of Guaifer of Salerno). All of this is not much dissimilar to what Ernst Kantorowicz analysed in his seminal work on *The King Two Bodies*.

This is the path our exploration must now move on to.

4. The cultural landscape of the Vat. lat. 9820: political thought and political theology in X century Lombard southern Italy

What has been provided for in the previous chapter does not aim at being an exhaustive reconstruction of the southern Lombard ritual system of 'kingship' (or, to avoid confusion, rulership). What it did give us, however, was evidence. By situating the rituals of anointing and crown-wearing/coronation inside the framework of that ritual system, we are now better equipped to deal with the more general issue of how to conceptualize southern Lombard 'kingship'. Or, to be more precise, we are in a better position to try to understand how contemporaries conceptualized it, and the relationship such a model had with contemporary ideals of kingship in the rest of Latin Europe in the same period.

The main argument in this chapter is two-fold: that, as said already at the end of the previous chapter, southern Lombard kingship can fit with relative ease inside the model that Ernst Kantorowicz labelled of 'Christ-centred kingship'[374] (once that model is opportunely adjusted to fit with the most recent historiographical discoveries, that is); and that the existence and acceptance of such a model in Langobardia Minor depended in some part on the reception of the philosophical and theological arguments

[374] See also Chapter 1 for a first introduction to the concept.

that trace their origins in the speculation of Isidore of Seville, pope Gelasius, and their refashioning under both the Carolingians and the Ottonians. In other words, that Langobardia Minor, far from being isolated from the philosophical (or, better, politico-philosophical) debates of the time, was receptive to, and influenced by, them.

In turn, this will give us the other key necessary to interpret the figurative commemoration of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820 from which our investigation has started, which will be finally presented precisely as the representation of those models and ideals of kingship in the next chapter.

4.1 'Christo-centred' and 'sacral' kingship: an introduction

Due to their evident interconnectedness, the concepts of 'Christ-centred' (or, alternatively, 'Christo-centric' or 'Christo-mimetic') and 'sacral' kingship will be dealt with here together. It is necessary to reconstruct their role in historiography in order to highlight both their usefulness and the inevitable issues that arise in their use, issues that are the result of decades of studies concerned with the role of liturgy and sacral representation in the formation (and transformation) of royal ideology. What follows will not aim to be a thorough reconstruction of a long and still ongoing historiographical debate. The goal, much more humbly, will be to provide an overview, necessarily

sketchy, of how historians and scholars more generally elaborated and used the two concepts, on the main geographical and chronological frames of their studies, and of what remains that could be of use for our purposes in this study.

As concisely stated by Johanna Dale at the very beginning of her short, yet extremely informative, article summarizing decades of scholarly debate surrounding 'sacral kingship' in High medieval Germany (that is, approximately from the X to the XIII century), the discussion has been strictly linked with the other, no less hotly debated, subject of state formation. [375] Sacralization (and de-sacralization) of the monarchical institution has been at the centre of more than one study concerning the rise of the modern 'nation-state', the 'national monarchies' usually identified by textbooks in England, France and (later on) Spain. It is no coincidence that the same magisterial work by Ernst Kantorowicz (on which we will focus later) begins by dealing with episodes related to the English monarchy.

At the same time, and precisely for this link established between monarchy and state formation, Germany, with its medieval imperial institution, has been seen in the past as a 'failure' or, less dramatically, an 'exception' in the establishment of an ideal of kingship that, instead and according to this historiographical trend, saw its utmost development in the future 'national monarchies'. However,

[375] Dale 2018, p. 1.

and perhaps precisely for this reason, Ottonian and Salian conceptions of kingship (and its representation) have become a focus of historical analysis aiming at showing the developments of an ideal of kingship that could not but be 'sacral' nonetheless, an ideal that, in the framework established by the analysis we are recalling here, would show its weaknesses, and finally break down, with the high-point of the Investiture Controversy, the well-known episode of the humiliation of Henry IV (1056-1106) at the castle of Canossa (and here would lie the critical point of divergence compared to other European experiences).[376] For our purposes, it is not necessary to move so much forward in time. Our focus is to be kept on the Ottonians and, necessarily, their predecessors in the Empire, the Carolingians. It is in the many studies that have been devoted to these two dynasties that the concept of sacral and 'Christo-mimetic' kingship came to be refined and used more thoroughly.

Following Kantorowicz, many scholars have believed this concept to have reached its apex during the Ottonian times.[377]However, the conception of a Christian kingship was much more ancient. It was the result of a mixture of Christian and Roman imperial ideals that transformed the way the *rex* dealt with his subjects (including, in particular, his aristocratic ones) and the representation of his power.

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[376] Ivi, pp. 3-4.

[377] MacLean 2003, p. 153.

The figure of the *rex*, representative of the *gens*, politically identified by an ethnic name (*rex Francorum, rex Langobardorum, rex Burgundiorum*, and so on), was, at the beginning of the establishment of the so-called Romano-Germanic kingdoms, extremely receptive of Roman imperial conceptions and ideals of rulership. [378] The introduction of law-making as a prerogative (and duty) of the ruler is one of the clues concerning that reception. But the Roman imperial ideal had already experienced its own transformation, occasioned by the rise of Christianity and its subsequent establishment as the sole religion of the Roman state. That meant, among other things, establishing a new relationship between the ruler and the Christian church, represented by its bishops. Given the context in which the subsequent rulers of Latin Europe operated, then, it is hardly surprising to see how the transformations which the ideal of kingship experienced during the Early Middle Ages were deeply influenced by bishops.

Michael Edward Moore gave a well-argued example of this process. He reconstructed the evolution of the conception of Christian kingship in the Frankish kingdom until the middle of the IX century, when the Carolingian dynasty's grip on power was beginning to wane and Frankish political thought saw its expression in the works of

[378] MacLean (2013, p. 452) on the rhetorical use of ethnic classification during the Early Middle Ages.

Hincmar of Rheims and others.[379] Following the theories elaborated by the German scholar Steffen Patzold, Moore came to identify the bishops as the key figures in the subsequent development of the ideal of kingship in the Frankish kingdom. Whereas Patzold focused on the grounds upon which episcopal power (material as much as symbolic) rested, Moore took his analysis one step further. According to him, precisely thanks to the symbolic power they held, and to their nature as a relatively cohesive social (and, consequently, political) group, bishops could play a pivotal role in establishing and reforming the ideals of kingship prevalent among the Franks (and in Western Europe in general by consequence).[380] Moore's analysis needs not to be fully resumed in here, and we will refer to it further later on. However, it suffices to recollect what the elements of episcopal symbolic power were according to this scholar. These could be categorized as falling into two spheres: intellectual, and ritual.

The first sphere comprises both the legal norms emerging from the various episcopal councils that were held in Gaul during the centuries Moore takes into account, and those writings that scholars commonly define as *specula*

[379] For a statement on the importance of the written text for the Carolingian élite, see McKitterick 2004, p. 7, and the rest of the same work for an analysis of the intersection of historiography and memory-production operated by that same élite.

[380] Moore 2011, p. 16.

principum, 'mirrors of princes'.[381] Both were, of course, deeply influenced by a politico-theological thought that had its roots in Patristic writings (Augustine being a case in point, even if, according to Moore, he was 'misread' by Merovingian and Carolingian bishops[382]), and that had evolved during the VII and VIII centuries thanks to the contributions of thinkers such as Isidore of Seville, Pseudo-Cyprian (widely quoted by both Alcuin and Hincmar, for example), pope Gelasius, Gregory the Great, and others (though, it should be pointed out they did not follow the same strand of thought, as is evident in the differences, for example, between Isidorian and Gelasian thought on the relationship between politics and the sacred[383]). The field would later be cultivated by Carolingian scholars (Alcuin, Hrabanus Maurus, Hincmar, just to mention a few of

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[381] Black 2016, p. 6, in his PhD thesis on Smaragdus' *Via regia* (on which more will be said later) also provides for a brief recollection of the precedents of this genre that, far from being a medieval invention, can trace its origins well back to classical Antiquity and even before. Of course, the genre will continue far beyond the medieval times themselves.

[382] This thesis by Moore is in stark contrast with what had been said by previous historiography. Since the 1930s, scholars have generally agreed that Augustine's thought had exercised a genuine influence over Carolingian political thought (and practice, also), without it necessarily having been 'misread'. A brief summary of scholarship on the subject can be found in Moesch 2020, pp. 1-2.

[383] Moore 2011, p. 154. Aspects of both thoughts will be analysed more in detail later.

them), and transformed in the political thought that underpinned Ottonian kingship.

The second sphere in which episcopal action and symbolic power were exercised, and that came to influence directly the concept of kingship, is that of ritual. Here Moore traces a line that connects the ritual of anointing on one side, and those of blessing and baptism on the other. At centre stage, stand the figures of bishops as true "ritual experts". In Moore's own words:

"…bishops occupied the center of their [i.e. early medieval people] society, in part by absorbing and dominating pre-Christian cultic practices and ancient holy places. By means of their liturgical expertise, bishops had a hand in all major aspects of life: agricultural and human fertility, the birth, maturity, marriage, and death of individuals. Through the liturgy, bishops established the periodization and the very meaning of time. As the preeminent religious authorities, bishops were able to discern God's judgment in battles or judicial ordeals. Through the ritual of baptism, bishops believed they were engaged in the establishment of Christian society, a society it was their role to govern. They therefore talked about their own power in terms full of royal imagery."[384]

[384] Ivi, p. 6.

One could wonder whether this picture gives too much credit to episcopal symbolic power, even in a time such as the Early Middle Ages. Episcopal power was never uncontested, particularly when it crossed, or seemed to be crossing, into the symbolic premises of other authorities, both religious (the relationships between bishops and pope, or bishops and regular clergy and monastic orders, were never devoid of conflicting elements) and secular.[385] It is hard to deny that this picture comes very close to what our sources describe, though. In the first chapter, we have come to grasp how also in Lombard southern Italy episcopal power was poised to reach new heights of 'ritual control' and, consequently, of symbolic power and authority.

However, it would be a mistake to consider the spheres of intellectual and ritual authority in isolation, since they were not. Moore's main merit perhaps is to show, following the

[385] This was perhaps even truer in Lombard southern Italy, if one accepts Ramseyer's thesis that "bishops in Lombard southern Italy, as other clerics, were legally integrated into secular society, and although they exercised spiritual prestige [...], they received no special legal privileges in the Lombard law codes. They never formed a separate *ordo*, and, as a result, never developed a group identity or acted as a cohesive force, as occurred in Carolingian territories." (2016, p. 45, the reference is to the councils of Frankish bishops which helped structuring the identity and the collective action of Carolingian bishops, not to individual bishops and their dioceses).

studies of Camillus Callewaert, how these elements were intertwined in the framework of liturgy.[386]

In the previous chapter, we have seen how certain objects, gestures and rituals related to the symbolic power and authority of the southern Lombard princes could be reconstructed with the evidence in our possession, with particular emphasis on what may be defined as the utmost political liturgy, that of anointing. The centrality we gave to this ritual is due to it being the necessary focal point of any conception of medieval sacral kingship.

So, in a sense, we have already partially explored the ritual sphere of episcopal authority as presented by Moore. But once we acknowledge that bishops also influenced the developments of Carolingian political thought (and practice), we should directly move on to see what such a political thought entailed.

4.2 Early medieval political thought and Christ-centred kingship

A terminological issue should be addressed first. What are we talking about when we speak of medieval political

[386] Moore's main reference in this sense it is to the essays collected in C. Callewaert (ed.), *Sacris Erudiri: Fragmenta liturgica collecta a monachis Sancti Petri Aldenburge in Steenbrugge ne pereant*, 1940, Steenbrugge, Nijhoff.

thought? In her most recent study Sophia Moesch distinguished between 'political thought' and 'political theory', following in this *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*. She thus defines 'political thought' as "general, unsystematic reflection on things political" in opposition to 'political theory', which is characterised by being a "direct, systematic reflection" on the same topics.[387] We will adopt Moesch's definition, keeping in mind that the distinction between 'systematic' and 'unsystematic' thought can be at times difficult to discern. J. H. Burns, in his *Introduction* to *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought* did not specify the terminology directly. He did however address another important question: what was the content of medieval political thought, or better, what was its field of inquiry? This means venturing on a muddy road, because as Burns promptly acknowledges, medieval political thought has seemed to scholars "much less distinctively 'political'" compared to Greek and Roman thought on the subject.[388]Perhaps the chief characteristic of medieval political thought may be identified then in its extension to "themes which, in other periods or for some thinkers, might seem alien to strictly political discourse", such as morality, ethics and, of course, religion, an extension that, however, is far from being distinctively

[387] Moesch 2020, p. 1, n. 8.

[388] Burns 1988, p. 2.

'medieval' or even just distinctively 'Western'.[389] Despite this fact, acknowledging how medieval political thought may encompass seamlessly a number of different fields is useful for the following of our argument. Medieval political thought (but, it should be stressed repeatedly, this was valid also for the preceding eras) is strictly linked with the sphere of the sacred. Political thought thus also encompasses political theology. The reader should have been already alerted by the preceding chapter and by the overall subject of this work that what is under scrutiny here is indeed political theology. Perhaps at the risk of unintended overlapping, but for the sake of simplicity, in what follows the term will be used interchangeably with political thought, but it should be kept in mind that the focus is and remains on the peculiar relationship between (royal) power and the sacred.[390] This last remark also brings us to another *caveat*: royal power in this chapter will not be treated in its widest role and function as re-distributor and holder of symbolic and material power/capital. This means that issues that were very much felt by intellectuals of the Early Middle Ages writing to and

[389] Ibid. For an example concerning Islamic political thought see A. Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought. From the Prophet to the Present*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2011.

[390] This means also that the label 'political theology' will not be used nor intended here as identical to that christened by the works of Carl Schmitt, Otto Brunner, and the (mainly) German scholarship that followed in their footsteps.

on princes, such as the ruler's virtues, the correct behaviour towards his subjects, and so on, will not be addressed.

It is a long-standing tradition among scholars to consider Augustine of Hippo (354-430), later to be canonized and considered to be one of the foremost Fathers of the Church, as the first representative of a fully developed Christian political thought.[391] Of course, Augustine was not the first Christian writer to deal with issues related with politics. However, it is hardly debatable that he is the one who dealt with it in a more systematic way for the very first time, in what arguably proved to be one of the most influential works in the history of Christian thought, the *De civitate Dei*. We already mentioned above how Moore identified a misinterpretation of Augustinian political thought as one of the main inspirations for those bishops operating in pre-Carolingian and Carolingian times. Perhaps he was misread, but at least it testifies to the importance his work had in the minds of those who came after him.

For our purposes here, Augustinian thought bore one very important fruit: it connected Christology with political philosophy. It did so by giving a central place to the

[391] Dyson 2005, p. 9 also emphasizes how this "political thought was not *sui generis.* It did not develop in a vacuum; it is what one might call a revisionist response to established conceptions of the nature of social and political experience", conceptions that were already well present and developed in different strands of pagan philosophy, chiefly in Neo-Platonism and Stoicism.

concept of 'sin' and, consequently, to that of *gratia*: as Man is unable to get salvation by himself, it is Christ who assumes the central role of Saviour and mediator between Man and God;[392] Christ becomes very similar to God the Father, an almighty king who dispenses justice and retribution.[393] Christ becomes the King.

This link between Christology and political thought is all the more important when dealing with an object such as the Exultet roll. Anticipating in part what will be said later, its role inside a liturgy so central for the medieval Christian calendar and for its intended re-enactment of the history of Salvation, that is the manifestation of Christ as Saviour, cannot but be taken into consideration if one has to understand the role of the final commemorations on it.

Also, we should not forget how the conception of Christ as King led in the Early Middle Ages to the development of another figure, that we may simplistically label as that of 'King as Christ'. In other words, how it led to that medieval sacralization of the king which is our focus here. We mentioned earlier how Ernst Kantorowicz studied this process of sacralization. He did so in particular in his famous study *The King's Two Bodies*. Kantorowicz's analysis (as presented both in *The King's Two Bodies* and in other

[392] This role of Christ as Mediator will be particularly dear also to a personality such as Gregory the Great, who in his writings would use this term in reference to Christ about fifty times. See Green 2013, p. 136.
[393] Leonardi 2003, pp. XXI-XXII.

works) retains its usefulness, though it cannot be still considered as valid as it was in the past, nor it could be used as the master key for solving the issues posed by the ruler's commemoration in the Vat. lat. 9820. In his contribution to a very recent book he edited on the subject, Paweł Figurski both assessed Kantorowicz's contribution to the debate in medieval historiography on sacral kingship and corrected it. This correction is made through the introduction of a different concept, that of *sacramental kingship* (that will be addressed later). For the moment, we will follow Kantorowicz's analysis in order to properly introduce all the pieces of the puzzle.

In *The King's Two Bodies* he identified three different conceptions of kingship that came to shape the representation of the royal office all along the Middle Ages: in chronological order, he called them as Christ-centred (or Christocentric), Law-centred, and Polity-centred kingship (plus a Man-centred kingship that, according to Kantorowicz, found its main expression in Dante).[394] We will exclusively deal with the first member of this triad. In detailing the concept of Christo-centred kingship Kantorowicz used both written documents and art objects, mainly from the X and the XI centuries. The spearhead of his argument, however, would undoubtedly be made by

[394] For a criticism of the secularization paradigm underpinning Kantorowicz's conception of the evolution of medieval kingship, see Figurski and Byttebier, 2009, pp. 17-18.

the works of the so-called Norman Anonymous (also known as Anonymous of York). Much about this author, who was writing probably at the beginning of the XII century, remains a mystery to us, but one thing is clear: he was a staunch supporter of royal power against any pretension of Church superiority.

Let's briefly follow Kantorowicz's reading of the work of this anonymous author, in particular the *De consecratione pontificum et regum*. Here the Anonymous focused on the meaning and role of anointing. In order to achieve his goal, he deploys a wide array of Old and New Testament references. In particular, he drew a distinction between the anointed kings and priests of Israel, who prefigured Christ as the Anointed One *par excellence*, and the Christian kings. The latter, who quite obviously cannot be considered anymore anticipations of a Christ to come, become instead a sort of personification of Christ on earth. The Christian king is conceived then as a *christomimetes*, an imitator of Christ. According to the Anonymous, this happens thanks to anointing: through this ritual, the king becomes Christ *per gratiam*, while Christ is King *per naturam*. The king is subject to a process of *deificatio* that allows him to share in the power of Christ. He becomes, like Christ himself, a *rex et sacerdos* with complete power over all things religious and mundane.[395]

[395] Kantorowicz 2012, pp. 47-49.

The work of the Anonymous of York could be considered as marking the high point in the conception of medieval sacral kingship, though it is relatively late, compared to the object of this study. However, it retains its relevance for our purposes here for one simple fact: Kantorowicz's study posited the fundamental link between Christology and the medieval thought on kingship, and the Anonymous of York expressed this in the clearest and most explicit way during the High Middle Ages. It would be then possible to move backwards from such high point in order to grasp this essential feature of early medieval sacral kingship, that of the *christomimesis*, the imitation or figuration of Christ by or in the person of the king. This is Kantorowicz's path, already in the same chapter in which he analyses the *De consecratione*. But while the writings of the Anonymous of York clearly testify to the attempt of their author to make the king an equal (in human terms) to Christ, we should be careful in considering *christomimesis* as equal to deification. While we come very close to *deificatio* in some representations of Ottonian art, when dealing with Carolingian, and also Ottonian, conceptions of kingship, it is necessary to keep in mind this distinction. The same could be said, keeping in mind all due distinguo, for Byzantine imperial ideology. As a matter of fact, the next paragraphs will show how the relationship between Christ and the ruler, while being theorized as extremely relevant, if not fundamental, to the essence of kingship, did not take quite the form of that same relationship as envisioned in the *De consecratione*.

Despite its relative 'obsolescence', then, Kantorowicz's analysis remains useful in reiterating what had appeared already obvious by mentioning the political thought of Augustine above: namely, that it is impossible to understand early medieval conceptions of kingship without referencing it to Christology. This is all the more true when dealing with a fundamentally 'Christological' object, such as the Exultet scroll.

This means that in order to proceed with our own analysis we need to deal with both aspects of early medieval Christian thought: Christology proper, and political thought. Only after this step it could be possible to understand the gap.

4.2.1 *Christus…*

To recollect here the entire developments of the theological discourse on Christ since the beginnings of Christianity would be both unnecessary and so lengthy as to require a study by itself. Here our focus will be on the developments that took place in Carolingian and post-Carolingian/Ottonian times, their precedents being mentioned only when necessary for a correct understanding of them. This also means that the focus will be on Christological thought in Latin, though Greek tradition will be touched upon when needed, as it should not be forgotten that Benevento laid on the border between the two great traditions of Christianity. The main goal is to

show how the figure of Christ was conceived during the X century, and how this may have influenced the conception (we may say, the design) of the Exultet roll itself.

It is a long-standing assumption among scholars that since the time of the Christian Roman emperors the figure of Christ experienced a significant change. During the early centuries of Christianity, Christ had been conceived under many different guises, chiefly as the Good Shepherd of the community of the faithfuls.

The decision taken by Constantine of legalizing the Christian cult and, after less than a century, that by Theodosius I of making it the sole official religion of the Empire, changed this state of affairs. Christ, the Son of the living God who now was called upon to protect the Roman Empire and its sovereigns, could not anymore be the innocent sacrificial Lamb or the Good Shepherd.[396] Or, to

[396] It is of particular interest the thesis brought forward by Per Beskow concerning the epithet of 'shepherd' (Greek ποιμήν) as applied to Christ. He interprets it as part of Christ's royal titles, the result of early Church theologians being influenced by Hellenistic philosophy, particularly in Alexandria. He mentions Philo of Alexandria as the utmost influence in this sense, though recognizing the contribution of Neo-Pythagorean philosophers such as Diotogenes, Ecphantus and Sthenidas, of Stoicism and, through them, of Plato's and Aristotle's conceptions of kingship. Looked at this way, the Christian conception of Christ as shepherd, while surely influenced also by New Testament references, becomes, somewhat paradoxically, a reference to Hellenistic kingship. (see Beskow 1962, pp. 187-200, in particular pp. 198-200 for a

be more correct, while these characterizations would still keep their validity, they were not sufficient anymore. Another aspect of Christ had to be emphasized, that is his royal role. The Gospels, and their Old Testament referents, were already able to provide sufficient grounding for this change. After all, wasn't Christ a direct descendant of David, as underlined by St. Matthew and St. Luke at the beginning of their Gospels? Wasn't him the Messiah, a figure that, particularly for the Jews, was first and foremost a king? Wasn't he called 'Kings of the Jews' in the inscription that Pilate put on the cross at the crucial moment of his crucifixion? The name 'Christ' itself had its roots in the chief ritual mark of Israelite kingship. Surely, Christ himself had seemingly been adamant about the true nature of his kingship, and this fact never escaped neither the Late Antique Fathers of the Church, nor their early medieval successors.

This change of the figure of Christ, his assumption and absorption of imperial elements, could not but find its reflection and complete representation in iconography (one could think at the *topos* of the *Deesis* in Byzantine art, that is the representation of Christ in throne; or to the Christ in Majesty and the Christ *Pantokrator*, ruler of the Cosmos) and art historians have long since debated about the

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discussion of the term). Carolingian intellectuals also continued to refer to Christ's kingly role as that of a "Optime Pastor", the 'Supreme Shepherd'. (see for ex. Sedulius Scottus, *De rect.*, pp. 164-165).

chronology, the meaning, and the extent of Christ's assumption of imperial figurative prerogatives.[397] Far from being an exclusive subject of art history, though, the figure of Christ the King opens a field of inquiry at the intersection of different disciplines, from political and social history to the history of architecture, from the already mentioned art history to theology and the history of philosophy, not to mention the history of liturgy and ceremonial. Per Beskow's is probably to be considered still the most extensive analysis of the kingship of Christ as conceived during the early Christian centuries, despite its

[397] The theory of the appropriation of imperial iconography by Christians to use for their new representations of Christ ('new' in the sense of coming after Constantine converted) saw one of its strongest proponents in André Grabar who already in his 1936 *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres) proposed to identify the traces of the artistic and iconographical 'vocabulary' previously reserved for emperors now transferred to Christ from the IV century onwards, a thesis he reprised also, for example, in the 1961 publication of his A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts by the title *Christian Iconography. A Study of its Origins*. Grabar has not been the sole art historian to support the theory (another name to add the list would be Ernst Kitzinger), but this did not avoid the transformation of the issue of the reception of imperial iconography into Christian art into a subject full of "thorny problems", to borrow the words of Beat Brenk (1980, p. 39). As a demonstration of such "problems", Thomas F. Matthews in his 1993 *The Clash of Gods. A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1993) launched a strong attack against the theory of the "Emperor Mystique", as he called it.

being sixty years old. One of the merits of the study is precisely that of showing the interrelationship of theology, philosophy and liturgy in the formation of a concept of Christ the King. Another merit is that of showing how this concept had evolved over time already in the early Church. Christ did not automatically become invested with royal attributes: he became first a mediator between the Father in Heavens, God, and earth.[398]Instead, Beskow hypothesized a link between the assumption of full royal attributes by the figure of Christ, on one side, and the evolving perception of the Roman Empire and the issues arisen by the Arian controversy, on the other.[399]

There's also another aspect of Christology that should be kept in mind here: its connection with eschatology. It goes without saying that Christ played a central role, or even *the* central role, in Christian eschatological narrative. In chapter 25 of the Gospel of Matthew and in the *Book of Revelation* is the role of final judge, and of annihilator of the enemies of God, to whom he is the representative.[400] Here Christ appears in all his majesty, truly as a sovereign, the final ruler of the universe. A certain strand of apocalyptic tradition that developed in the East on the wake of the

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[398] Beskow 1962, pp. 157-159 for some liturgical examples of this mediation role.

[399] Ivi, p. 160; also pp. 178-179, when he summarizes, albeit perhaps simplistically, that "when the Emperor claimed to be divine, the Christian instead affirmed that Christ was King."

[400] Ivi, p. 136.

Arab conquest and whose beginning is traditionally identified in the Apocalypse of the so-called Pseudo-Methodius (a Syriac work, later transposed into Greek, of immense influence over all the later apocalyptic narratives), together with so-called Pseudo-Danielic apocalyptic literature, did much to confirm this eschatological role of Christ the King, together with previous, more ancient, apocalyptic literature.[401] To give a look at eschatology is all the more interesting since Southern Italy was the stage for the later life of a singular intellectual figure such as that of Ambrosius Autpertus. A man from southern France, Autpertus was appointed abbot of S. Vincenzo al Volturno in 777, just three years after Charlemagne's takeover of the Lombard kingdom, and one year before another Frank, Theodemar, would be appointed at the head of Montecassino. While his tenure as abbot of S. Vincenzo will ultimately prove to be very brief, lasting just one year and

[401] Apocalyptic literature has been the subject of extensive and well-informed study over time. Treatment of some of its main topics (with relative bibliography) can be found in J. J. Collins (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford-New York, 2014. Arguably the most detailed review and analysis of the vast corpus of Danielic apocalypses, including its incredible tendency at trans-cultural diffusion, is found in L. DiTommaso, *The Book of Daniel and the Apocryphal Daniel Literature*, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2005. A discussion of apocalyptic literature from the early centuries of Christianity, its Jewish referents, and its relationship with the development of the idea of Christ as King can be found in Beskow 1962, pp. 123-156.

resulting in a intricated power struggle among the 'pro-Lombard' and 'pro-Frankish' factions inside the monastery (and, ultimately, in Ambrose's death), Autpertus's work as an intellectual figure lasted longer. He was a staunch moralizer.[402]

Probably his most famous work is the commentary he wrote on the *Book of Revelation*. And in his *Exposition in Apocalypsin*, indeed, it is possible to find the reception of the figure of the *Christus rex* in its eschatological environment. Christ is king together with the faithful, "genus regium, regale sacerdotium", in a reign of a thousand years.

Autpertus highlights the link between Christ the King and the king on Earth in a very clear way, well embedded in the preceding tradition of Christian thought:

"And since Christ is for us both King and Priest, King because he rules what he created, Priest because he sacrificed himself for us on the cross, then correctly his two arms, the Supreme Pontiff and the King, they are said to be priests and to rule."[403]

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[402] Diesenberger 2006, p. 212.

[403] CCCM 27b, lib. 9, cap. 20, v. 6b, 19-22: "Et quia Christus Rex et Sacerdos nobis existit, Rex scilicet quia regit quod condidit, Sacerdos uero quia semetipsum pro nobis in cruce sacrificium fecit, recte membra eiusdem summi Pontificis ac Regis, sacerdotes esse et regnare dicuntur."

4. 2. 2 …*et Rex*

If by the Carolingian and Ottonian times the figure of Christ had been charged with such evident royal attributes, the question arises naturally as to what became of the relationship between Christ as King in Heaven and the sovereign as king on earth. If Christ is *Rex et Sacerdos*, what is the role of the much more human sovereign?

While the topic bore a certain degree of importance for the Carolingians and their clerical élite, as it did for their successors, intertwined as it was with very practical concerns on the position, duties, privileges and limits of kingship vis à vis the pope, the bishops, and the secular élite, like in the case of the thought on Christ's nature we should refrain from seeking for a unitary or exclusive position on the subject. Despite this word of caution, however, it is still possible to identify some common features in Carolingian and post-Carolingian political thought.

In his *Etymologiae* Isidore of Seville established a strict connection between king and kingship/kingdom in a very straightforward way: "Regnum a regibus dictum. Nam sicut reges a regendo vocati, ita regnum a regibus."[404]

[404] *Etym.*, IX, III-1. This etymological derivation is the same we can find in Augustine.

Immediately after, he also described what he thought to be the essence of (Christian) kingship, when he wrote that

"Kings are called so from the act of holding. So indeed like priest comes from the act of sacrifice, the same way king comes from the act of holding. It doesn't hold who doesn't correct. Then only by acting correctly it is possible to keep the name of king, while by sinning it is lost. From this it comes the ancient proverb: "King will you be, if rightly you will act: if you will not, you will not be.""[405]

This statement by Isidore could be considered as the basic proposition of Christian political thought. More than a century later, one of the most prominent intellectuals at the court of Charlemagne, Alcuin of York, fundamentally recalled Isidore's words while writing one of his letters. He wrote that

[405] *Etym.*, IX, III-4: "Reges a regendo vocati. Sicut enim sacerdos a sacrificando, ita et rex a regendo. Non autem regit, qui non corrigit. Recte igitur faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur. Unde et apud veteres tale erat proverbium: "Rex eris, si recte facias: si non facias, non eris."

"A king is called in truth from the act of holding; and who holds well the people subject to him, he is rewarded by God: that is, the kingdom of Heaven."[406]

Tellingly, the letter's intended receiver was Aethelred, king of Northumbria (774-796), and the main goal of Alcuin was to recall that sovereign to the exercise of those virtues mostly connected with his royal authority. It is only one in a number of epistles written by Alcuin and dealing with the issue of kingship and royal authority and power.

Both Isidore's and Alcuin's remarks are hardly original or novel for the times they were written. However, precisely for this reason they may be used to show some of the key elements that grounded the successive developments of Christian political thought. If one reads the whole letter by Alcuin, it could be even possible (though, admittedly, a bit stretched) to consider it a sort of lengthier elaboration of

[406] MGH *Epp.* 4 (II), p. 18, 31-33: "A regendo vere rex dicitur; et qui bene regit subiectum sibi populum, bonam habet a Deo retributionem: regnum scilicet coeleste." Alcuin will not be the last Carolingian intellectual to quote Isidore more or less verbatim. Hincmar of Rheims, together with other West Frankish bishops, will recall the Isidorian definition in their letter to Louis the German, aiming at chastising the king for his invasion of Charles the Bald's kingdom: "Et rex a regendo dicitur, ut se sub deo et bonos cum deo puritate cordis, veritate oris, firmitate stabilitatis regat et pravos a pravitate corrigat et in rectitudinem dirigat." (MGH *Conc.* III, p. 412).

Isidore's definition.[407] Both authors put side by side the role of the *rex* and that of the *sacerdos*: Isidore in order to strengthen his etymological argument; Alcuin in order to sketch the correct order of a virtuous Christian society.

Alcuin was writing at the onset of a renewed interest in political thought and political theology. This interest would soon manifest itself in a flowering of treatises, often falling inside the abovementioned category of the *specula principum*, but also expressing itself in the text of prayers and liturgical rites, not to mention the first political forgeries of the time, including the *Donation of Constantine*, the (in)famous document allegedly attesting the donation, by emperor Constantine the Great to pope Sylverster II, of the *potestas* over Rome and the whole Western Empire, and the works of the so-called Pseudo-Isidore.[408]

Most Carolingian intellectuals who later contributed to the political thought of their times had to deal with the same fundamental issues: the relationship between *regnum* and *sacerdotium*, that is between the king and the bishops (and the pope); the royal virtues and, consequently, the benefits of virtuous kingship for the realm as a whole. Combined, the answers they gave on these topics delineated the image

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[407] Alcuin's letter was heavily influenced by the reading of Pseudo-Cyprian, an Irish monk who had written a work significantly entitled *Twelve abuses of the World*, and which aimed at discussing issues related to royal authority, see Moore 2011, pp. 289-290.

[408] Luscombe 1988, pp. 170-171.

of the Christian ruler, but also of the ruler compared to Christ. In other words, together with the debate concerning the figure of Christ, they gave philosophical grounding to the ideal of sacral, Christo-mimetic kingship by defining both its content and its limits. But what were the answers they gave?

Let's deal with the issue of *regnum* and *sacerdotium* first. Pope Gelasius I (492-496), in a letter to emperor Anastasius I (491-518) of 494 had expressed what was to become one of the central tenets of Christian political thought in later centuries. According to this pope

"Two are then, emperor Augustus, that in the first place hold this world: the authority of the holy pontiffs, and the power of the kings."[409]

Some lines of the letter are then devoted at demarcating the two spheres pertaining to each. In a sense, it is this act of demarcation that Gelasius wishes to emphasize.[410]

Gelasius was not a systematic thinker, and his intent was practical. This is also reflected by his vocabulary, which lacks in consistency, as scholars have long

[409] Gelasius' *Ep.* VIII, PL 59:42ab: "Duo quippe sunt, imperator Auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur: auctoritas sacra pontificum, et regalis potestas."
[410] Ibid.

noted. [411] Interestingly, however, in his first statement Gelasius makes an explicit qualitative distinction between the role of the emperor and that of the Church: he acknowledges the pope as possessing *auctoritas*, and the ruler as possessing *potestas*. [412] This consideration linked Gelasius' name with the theory of the 'two powers', the secular and the religious, each autonomous in their own spheres of action. But as correctly pointed out by R. W. Dyson, Gelasius' 'autonomous powers' are an illusion. As the pope himself acknowledges in the same letter, the priests will answer in front of God also for the king's actions; that is, they have the sacred duty to oversee kings as well.[413]

Gelasian thought as expressed in the letter to Anastasius was not the sole perspective on this issue that had reached the Carolingians, though. It could appear almost insignificant compared to the influence of a thought such as that of Augustine. After all, in a sense Gelasius himself was doing not much more than following in Augustine's footsteps. [414] Sophie Moesch has very recently given a significant contribution at the understanding of the reception of Augustine in Carolingian political thought. She did so by comparing Augustine's *De civitate Dei* with

[411] Markus 1988, p. 102.

[412] Moore 2011, p. 154.

[413] Dyson 2010, p. 30.

[414] Ivi, p. 29.

the works of two among the most prominent intellectuals of the Carolingian times: one we already met, Alcuin of York; the second, we'll meet soon, Hincmar of Rheims. Moesch's analysis is poignant and heavily evidence-based, and it merits to be carefully followed in order to trace some significant early medieval developments on the issue of '*regnum et sacerdotium*'.

Following Moesch, then, we can take another brief look at Alcuin's writings in order to understand some of the ways in which this Carolingian intellectual of Anglo-Saxon origin elaborated on the ideal of sacral kingship. Moesch affirms that Alcuin posited Charlemagne's superiority over any other ruler (including his illustrious Roman predecessors, such as Constantine and Theodosius) by attributing to him two fundamental qualities: *potentia* and *sapientia*.[415] To substantiate her statement, she looks in particular at the Epistle 257, a letter Alcuin wrote to Charlemagne himself after his coronation. The *sapientia* Moesch highlights is described by Alcuin in unequivocable terms, as perfect knowledge of the Catholic faith ("perfectam in catholica fide scientiam"), a piety devoted to the salvation of all of Charlemagne subjects.[416]

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[415] Moesch 2020, p. 85.

[416] MGH *Epp.* 4 (II), p. 415, 26-28; also quoted by Moesch (ivi, p. 117, n. 27): "Multa est omnibus fidelibus in vestra pietate gloriandi facultas, dum clementiae vestrae sollecitudo sacerdotalem, ut decet, habet in praedicatione verbi Dei vigorem, et perfectam in catholica fide scientiam et sanctissimam pro omnium salute devotionem."

Here *sapientia* equals the correct knowledge of the faith, in a Solomonic reference that complements the Davidic ones (more on this later). It allows the ruler to spread it and, at the same time, it is a guarantee of salvation for everybody in the realm. It is significant that Alcuin uses the adjective *sacerdotale* to describe Charlemagne's care in the spreading of the Christian faith. These qualities are remarked at the closing of the letter, in a few verses where Alcuin hails the emperor as "dux, et doctor, et decus imperii".[417]

Isidore of Seville had previously elaborated on the relationship between the sacerdotal and the mundane natures of kingship, in particular in his *De ecclesiasticis officiis*. Moore has dedicated significant pages to the analysis of Isidore's thought on this subject. He identified in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* a fundamental link between a Christological discourse on Christ as king and priest, and a specific conception of Christian society.[418] This link was provided by a ritual the reader of these pages should be quite acquainted with by now: anointing. Bridging Old Testament references with liturgical ones (in particular with the Gelasian and Gregorian sacramentaries), anointing is the ritual that made both *rex* and *sacerdos*. As succinctly, yet effectively, summarized by Moore, anointing, in Isidore's view, made "all Christians as a royal

[417] MGH *Epp.* 4 (II), p. 257, p. 415, 38.
[418] Ibid.

priesthood".[419] In the Iberian bishop's thought the two spheres of secular and religious power would thus become one, according to Moore.

The reverberations of this thought can be easily found among the Carolingians. Smaragdus of St. Mihiel conceived of his *Via regia* as a parallel work, sometimes with passages shared *verbatim*, with the one he devoted to those people practicing what had become, in the meanwhile, the apex of Christian life: monks. In his view, it appears that there would be not much difference between the qualities and virtues of the perfect prince, and those of the perfect monk. But this equalization of monk and king should alert us not to fall into the temptation of viewing Smaragdus' (or, in general Carolingian) ideal ruler as superior in any way to the members of the church. Quite the contrary: after all, it is the virtuous life of the monk that should be followed by the king, not vice versa. The king should become (or at least imitate) a monk, and in this it resides his peculiar *christomimesis* (isn't the monk a man living in imitation of

[419] Ivi, p. 156. The mention of a 'royal priesthood' in Christian Scripture can be found in 1 Peter 2.9: "uos autem genus electum regale sacerdotium gens sancta". The concept had a lasting success during the early Christian centuries, and drew extensively from apocalyptic literature as well, in particular from the Book of Revelation (20, 4, where it is said the martyrs will reign with Christ) and the Book of Daniel. See Beskow 1962, pp. 147-152.

Christ?).[420] We shouldn' be forgetful of the differences between monks and king, and Smaragdus surely does not propose to make the king a "monk with a crown", as convincingly argued by Jasmjin Bovendeert through an almost chapter-by-chapter analysis of the *Via regia* and the *Diadema monachorum*.[421] Still, the relationship between the two figures appears strong, and quite explicit, notwithstanding the merits of Bovendeert's analysis. Despite some apparent connections, we are far from the Anonymous of York's boasts about the inherent superiority of royal power. Churchmen (or, in this case, monks) and rulers are, at least, equals.

This emerges even more clearly in the works of another IX century intellectual. Writing some decades after Smaragdus, Hincmar of Rheims elaborated further on the relationship between king and bishops. This prolific writer and intellectual, who chronologically crossed almost the whole of the IX century, left an incredible number of

[420] Interestingly, Kantorowicz (2012, p. 78) posits a link between the spread of Christ-centered monastic piety and the subsequent shift from a more theo-centered (and typically Carolingian) ideal of sacral kingship, to the Ottonian one, definitely Christ-centered. In this sense, it would almost be possible to consider Smaragdus a pioneer.

[421] Bovendeert 2006, pp. 250-251; Bovendeert's hypothesis admittedly is strongly skeptical of previous scholarship concerning the identification of monk and king allegedly operated by Smaragdus.

written works, spanning genres the most different.[422] A complete survey of Hincmar's writings would definitely surpass the boundaries of this study. Our interest instead is to gain a glimpse of his thought concerning kingship. In order to achieve this, we will look only at a few works, those most directly related with our subject, namely the *De ordine palatii* (originally written under the title *Admonitio Hincmari archiepiscopi ad episcopos et ad regem Karlomannum per capitula*) and the *De regis persona et regio ministerio*, and one that only apparent moved to a completely different field, the *De raptu*.

Beginning with the last one, Sylvie Joye has satisfactorily argued that this work, composed to discuss the issue of abduction, shows a concrete reception of Augustinian political and ethical ideals, in particular concerning the role of the family inside the wider framework of Christian

[422] Stone 2015, p. 1. Together with part of the *Annals of St. Bertin*, the list includes "theology, hagiography, political tracts, letters, moral treatises, regulations for the priests of his archdiocese, legal opinions, Church councils *acta*, liturgical texts, administrative documents, poetry and exegesis." The same chapter by Stone also provides for a comprehensive reconstruction of Hincmar's life, including his involvement in the intricated webs of Carolingian politics. On the same subject, see the extensive work in three volumes by Jean Devisse, *Hincmar, archevêque de Reims 845-882*, Geneva, 1975-6.

society.[423]While discussing this specific issue, Hincmar had the chance of building a whole picture of the well-ordered Christian society, whose order was based on and reflected into that of family and marriage. What emerges is the picture of a hierarchical, structured, society in which the roles of kings and bishops are respectively detailed using a wide array of sources, mainly Scriptural ones. The *De raptu* postulates a need for unity and purity (the two concepts go hand in hand).[424] In this context the role of the king is clear and well aligned with Carolingian tradition: to protect and foster peace, unity, and concord. What is interesting here is that Hincmar strictly links this role of the king, his *ministerium*, with that of the bishops. To quote Joye's words, Hincmar, as bishop, "portrayed himself thereby as the person who reminded the king of his duties to God", since an issue concerning the unity and purity of Christian society (such as abduction) also concerns the relationship of this society with God, its spiritual well-being.[425] This is also the point, however and *contra* Joye, where Hincmar seemingly abandons Augustine. The Christian society is a whole, a single body, and the distinction between the

[423] Already Jacobson (1991, p. 14) affirmed that Hincmar could probably be considered, among the Carolingian authors, the one who adopted and internalized Augustinian views the most.

[424] Joye 2015, p. 191.

[425] Ivi, p. 192.

heavenly *civitas* and the earthly one apparently disappears.[426]

This conceptualizing of the Christian society, and consequently of the relationship between the king's and bishops' *ministeria* is typical of Hincmar. It is not coincidental that he opened the *De ordine palatii* by reiterating how the advises he is going to write down in that text are the fruit of his long experience in both Church and Palace affairs. In this treatise Hincmar operates a strong distinction between *rex* and *sacerdos*. He does so in two ways: first, by claiming for Christ, and for David – the last one identified explicitly as Christ's predecessor and prefiguration – the exclusive right to possess both *ministeria*. It is Christ "qui solus rex simul et sacerdos fieri potuit." (though admittedly here Hincmar seems to contradict himself through that 'solus', since he also explicitly acknowledges the biblical David as equally 'king and priest'). Second, Hincmar seems to postulate the superiority of the clerical order upon all other members of the Christian society. He does so by appealing to authorities such as Augustine and pope Gelasius, in the letter to Anastasius that has been touched upon above. This superiority would be due to the inherent higher status of divine Law, of which the bishops and pontiffs are the guardians. It would also be due, implicitly, to the fact that Hincmar affirms the clerical order to have been founded

[426] Moore 2011, p. 319.

directly by David, in his double role as king and prophet/priest, and by Christ. Tellingly, he doesn't say anything similar related to kings or emperors. However, despite appearances we are far from hierocratic statements such as those of a Gregory VII or his supporters. If anything, Hincmar is a staunch defender of what in later centuries would come to be called the *libertas ecclesiae*, and he showed that repeatedly, in many of the letters he wrote, in particular to Charles the Bald.[427] The bishop of Rheims follows pope Gelasius's *dictum* more strictly than his strong emphasis on the role of divine Law may let the reader surmise. Or, at least, it could be possible to argue that Hincmar followed a certain interpretation of Gelasius' statements that Moore identified as emerging in particular with the Council of Paris of 829: in the *acta* of the council, the Frankish bishops had reprised Gelasius' words by asserting that

"First of all then we declared that the whole body of the Holy Church of God is divided into two distinct persons, that is in the priestly and the kingly one [...]."[428]

[427] Moesch 2020, pp. 165-182.

[428] MGH *Conc.* 2.2, p. 610, 33-35: "Principaliter itaque totius sanctae Dei ecclesiae corpus in duas eximias personas, in sacerdotalem videlicet et regalem [...] divisum esse novimus."

What Hincmar does is to bridge the gap between Augustine's and Isidore's ideas by postulating that secular power comes from God: the secular ruler is thus legitimated by God, but is not, and cannot in any way, be above the Law of God.[429] This does not mean that he is inferior to bishops. These are the guardians of God's Law, but surely are not above it either.

Before quoting Gelasius, Hincmar explicitly mentions the ritual of anointing:

"And in the holy history of Kings we read, that the princes of priests, when they gave the kingdom to kings through holy anointing, putting on their head a crown meaning victory, they gave in their hands the law, so that they would know how to rule themselves, and correct those who are bad, and lead on the right path those who are good."[430]

[429] Moesch 2020, p. 191.

[430] PL 125:995 (1882): "Et in sacra Regum historia legimus, quia principes sacerdotum, quando sacra unctione reges in regnum sacrabant, coronam significantem victoriam ponentes super capita eorum, legem in manum ejus [meaning: eorum] dabant, ut scirent qualiter seipsos regere, et pravos corrigere, et bonos in viam rectam deberent dirigere."

We could hardly find a more succinct statement comprising the core of Carolingian ideals of kingship (and here we find also a direct connection between anointing and crowning that fits the argument that has been put forward in Chapter 3). We can interpret this statement on anointing in two ways. The first, by seeing it as expressing the inherent superiority of clergy over ruler (the bishop anoints the ruler, after all). The second, by acknowledging that what the ceremony imagined by Hincmar really does, is to render the king a colleague of bishops, an active collaborator in the fundamental task of correcting Christian society for the greater good. David did not anoint, but was anointed, and Hincmar was well aware of this Scriptural reference, having made it himself a few lines above. King David is the *rex et sacerdos* of the Old Testament, but he is also one of the most direct references of Carolingian kingship, the sovereigns repeatedly and explicitly compared to him (Alcuin addressed Charlemagne as "David") or to his son and successor Solomon. Consequently, it could be argued that Hincmar was subtly playing with his references, and that his statements were not so straightforwardly pointing towards a superiority of some sort as they would seem to do.

In the other work we mentioned, the *De regis persona et regio ministerio*, Hincmar titled his first chapter "Quod bonos reges Deus facit, malos permittit". Drawing on Scriptural references (Psalms, Daniel, Exodus, Proverbs) and on Gregory the Great, the bishop of Rheims puts forward a

simple argument: if the king is good, he reigns with God's blessing; if he isn't, he does so because God allows him to do so.[431] Of course, Hincmar is not legitimating bad kingship (in Christian terms). The bad ruler reigns solely because this way God may punish the sins of his subjects, and thus lead them to repent, or for any other, more hidden, inscrutable, purpose. It is a classical Christian argumentation, but it also helps refine the view of a well-defined superiority of the clergy over the secular ruler. There is nothing, in these words, to support such a view. The bishops do not have any right at overthrowing an unjust ruler.[432]

Hincmar mostly wrote in the second half of the IX century, a time of great changes in the Carolingian empire, characterized by internal violent, often bloody, struggles for power, succession uncertainties, and mounting external pressures. It is not surprising that on such a background Hincmar would emphasize the image of Christian society as a single, sanctified body, where unity under the king's just rule, overseen by the bishops, is of paramount importance. In this sense, and at risk of some degree of

[431] PL 125:834-835 (1882).

[432] Nelson instead argues in favour of viewing Hincmar as attempting repeatedly to "assert the bishops' jurisdiction over the king's conduct of an office to which they had consecrated him." However, she admits that this ideal was expressed "infrequently and hesitantly", and that Hincmar's ideal of rule by consensus included the lay magnates as well as the bishops (1988, p. 227).

oversimplification, he summarizes the previous Carolingian speculation on kingship.

Taking a little step backwards, this could be further exemplified by what an earlier Carolingian intellectual had written. Paulinus of Aquileia (c. 726-802/804), was a Lombard who after the conquest of the *regnum Langobardorum* had gained such a prominence at Charlemagne's court as to be later appointed to the important bishopric of Aquileia and who entertained correspondence with many other intellectuals of his age, including Alcuin, and who wrote letters to the Frankish sovereign himself too. One of those letters in particular, written to report the results of a council held at Cividale in 796, is of interest to us. There the bishop of Aquileia presented the council as a veritable judicial court. By doing this, Paulinus however was not stating that the bishops were overstepping their boundaries, usurping what was regal jurisdiction. Quite the contrary, the council was convened to assist the ruler: it was him who had jurisdiction over all the matters discussed by the bishops, and to him they were referring any further decision.[433] Paulinus of Aquileia delineated then the picture of the most correct 'division of labour' between the ruler and the bishops. While it is the latter's competence to discuss "de causa ortodoxae fidei"[434], their deliberations do not have

[433] Vocino 2021, pp. 255-256.

[434] MGH *Epp.* 4 (II), p. 517, 21-22.

effect without the ruler's active collaboration, since it is to him whom the power of God on earth has been delegated. A statement by Cathwulf, another Anglo-Saxon intellectual active at the Carolingian court, in a letter he wrote to Charlemagne, exemplifies this point in the clearest way:

"So remember always, my king, of your king God with fear and love, because yours is to protect and rule over all his members, as his vice-regent, and to account for this in the day of judgement, also for yourself. And the bishop is on a secondary level, that is he is vice-regent of Christ."[435]

Kantorowicz, who quoted from Cathwulf precisely to prove this point, argued that the Carolingians had emphasized a representation of their kingship in line with the models of the Old Testament (and we have already seen this), thus giving themselves to what he describes as a more theo-centric ideal of kingship.[436] By doing this, they built the foundation upon which the Ottonians would later add their own peculiar conception of kingship. Because, while undoubtedly indebted to the Carolingian tradition and

[435] MGH *Epp.* 4 (II), p. 503, 3-6: "Memor esto ergo semper, rex mi, Dei regis tui cum timore et amore, quod tu es in vice illius super omnia membra eius custodire et regere, et rationem reddere in die iudicii, etiam per te. Et episcopus est in secundo loco, in vice Christi tantum est."

[436] Kantorowicz 2012, p. 77.

ideally positing itself in the trail of its succession, Ottonian sacral kingship had its own peculiarities. Indeed, Kantorowicz came to label this Ottonian ideal as the genuine Christ-centred kingship. To summarize and explicate this process further: the Carolingians would have adopted an ideal of kingship where the king would be put in relationship with God the Father, the bishop with Christ the Son. Later theological developments that made Christ a more central figure in Christian thought also found their reflection in the evolution of this ideal of kingship, when Christ himself became the central reference point for the king (hence the Christ-centred nature of Ottonian kingship). It was a relatively slow shift in reference. To be sure, these conceptions of kingship were always fraught with ambiguities, both under the Carolingians and the Ottonians, the strongest of which arguably concerned the role of bishop vis-à-vis the ruler, and more than once those paved the way for interpretative conflicts (often with very practical implications).

The shift he identified is from the ruler as vicar of God to the ruler as exemplification of Christ. While the relationship with the figure of Christ, we have seen it, was never absent in pre-Carolingian and Carolingian political thought, what happened under the Ottonians according to Kantorowicz is that such a relationship became truly fundamental and foundational to kingship itself, coming naturally closer to the conceptions elaborated by the

Anonymous of York in his *De consecratione*.[437]Could such a view be considered valid?

Unfortunately, we do not have an Hincmar of Rheims to guide us through the intricacies of Ottonian political thought. Not dissimilarly from Lombard southern Italy, what we do have is a wide array of historiographical writing, flanked by diplomas and ritual prescriptions in the form of *ordines* and other liturgical material.

Liutprand of Cremona (920-972) is a good example of Ottonian culture. He has left us one of the most vivid accounts of the years that led to Otto I's ascension to the imperial titles and of his first years as emperor, mainly through his two works, the *Antapodosis* and the *Historia Ottonis* respectively. His was a keen intellectual mind, and he put his talents to good use in order to foster his patron's imperial program, particularly after Otto had welcomed him in Germany as an exile (he had previously fallen out of favour with his previous patron, Berengar II of Italy).[438] His strong partisan stance led Liutprand to depict Otto as the

[437] Ibid. Wangerin described what happened under the Ottonians as a true reconceptualization of "what it meant to be kings." (2019, p. 3).

[438] Wangerin 2019, pp. 30-31. Much has been written on the figure of Liutprand, of his relationship with the Ottonian court, and his anti-Byzantine stance, particularly evident in the report he left of the embassy to Constantinople he had led to negotiate for a bride for the young Otto II (the future empress Theophanu). For a review of the subject see

perfect sovereign, while at the same time picturing his enemies as the worst of tyrants.[439]

The *Historia Ottonis* shows this contrast most clearly. Here Otto takes the role of the protector of the Church and of the whole of Christian society by his dealings with pope John XII (930/37-964), who had previously crowned Otto emperor but later had sided against him and in favour of the son of the defeated Berengar, and claimant to the Italian crown, Adalbert. Liutprand's narrative shows Otto convening a synod and proceeding with the pope's removal from his see and his substitution with the former *protoscriniarium* (a member of the papal chancery), Leo (Leo VIII, 963-965 as pope). Significantly Liutprand mostly calls Otto "sanctissimus imperator", in stark contrast with John "qui dictus est papa".[440] In Liutprand's eyes, Otto possesses all the characteristics of the glorious and victorious Christian ruler: he leads his small army in battle soundly defeating a much larger army made of Roman citizens loyal to the pope, but he also knows how to be merciful, and he represents the will of God on earth, which he exercises surrounded by the bishops from the entirety of the lands under his crown. The emperor deals with Church affairs as a member of the Church would do. He is not even equal to

[439] Buc (2001, p. 869) highlights how one of the preferred tools in Liutprand's pro-Ottonian polemic is precisely the description of rituals and of the role of their successful performance in order to bolster the legitimacy of the new Saxon imperial dynasty.

[440] MGH SS III, p. 345, 27 and 29.

the bishops, but clearly superior to them, and even to the pope himself.[441] Liutprand was an intellectual intent at writing a sort of apologia of Otto I, and in this sense, he can be considered at coming close to the elaboration of a political thought of some sort. Still, and keeping in mind that he was writing first and foremost a historiographical work, there is hardly anything that would indicate that he conceived of Otto's kingship as something different from the older Carolingian conceptions. In a sense, Liutprand's Otto seems more akin to a Carolingian ruler at the apex of his power than to the idea of a 'liturgical kingship', as Kantorowicz also labelled the developments under the Ottonians and the Salians.[442]

Mayr-Harting, in his analysis of Ottonian manuscript illumination, reached a similar conclusion. He agreed that the chief characteristic of Ottonian sacral kingship was not to dispense with the previous Carolingian emphasis on Old Testament examples, but to supplement it with a new focus on the figure of Christ (a process made easier, one may think, by the parallel between the figures of Christ and King David).[443] He describes Ottonian Christ-centred kingship as

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[441] Wangerin 2019, p. 58 emphasizes this concept of the emperor's superiority over the pope himself as cultivated by the Ottonians.

[442]Kantorowicz 2012, p. 78.

[443] Mayr-Harting 1991, p. 60.

"a much more pervasive feature [i.e. compared to the Carolingian times] of the whole culture. Its fabric was composed of relic collection and church building, of public gestures and of ritual such as the celebrations of Palm Sunday at Magdeburg, and of miraculous visions such as that of Otto I which caused him to appoint Gunther bishop of Regensburg in 940 […] It was a sacral procession from holy day to holy day, from one church dedication to another. The preaching of bishops, the king's own ancestry, ancient Rome, all played a part in it."[444]

Such a description would seem not to leave much space for a philosophical elaboration of political thought. Still, there is room for other forms of expression. Suffice here to mention the works of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (935-973), this extraordinary figure of poetess and playwriter who combined her skills in versification with a strong reflection on the values and virtues of Christian monastic life. Under request of her abbess, Gerberga II (tellingly, a member of the imperial family herself, being a niece of Otto I and daughter of the emperor's rebellious brother, Henry of Bavaria) she wrote a poem in praise of Otto I and Otto II, the *Gesta Ottonis*. In this poem she explicitly postulates a direct relationship between the new Saxon monarchy and Christ kingship. She does so by saying that Christ himself, as King of Kings, transferred the kingship from the Franks

[444] Ivi, p. 61.

to the Saxon people. The motif of the 'transference' of kingship is reprised from the second part of the Book of Daniel and the exegesis to which that part was subject to during the following centuries.[445] At the same time, it is also a clear and explicit statement of the derivation from Christ of Saxon, that is Ottonian, kingship.[446]

The *Gesta Ottonis* were composed probably during the 960s, sometime after the imperial coronation of 962. We are just two decades ahead of the Vat. lat. 9820. The Ottonian conception of kingship will find its utmost expression in the next decades, in the works of art commissioned during the reigns of Otto II (973-983), Otto III (983-1002) and, perhaps even more strongly, Henry II (1002-1024).

All of this leads us back at the beginning of this chapter, that is to the interpretation of the relationship between

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[445] The reference is to the "four kingdoms" mentioned in Daniel 2. Christian exegetical tradition came to interpret the "four kingdoms" as the four empires that would exist in the world before the coming of the Antichrist and the consequent beginning of the End Times. As the Roman Empire came to be identified as the last of the four empires (preceded by the Assyrian/Babylonian, Persian, and Greek/Macedonian empires), it was deemed impossible to have another empire after the Roman one. This consideration, though ambiguous and even at times contrasted, contributed to the idea that imperial power (one could say 'imperial rulership') was to be transferred from the Romans to the Franks and, later to the Saxons, without loosing its Roman 'quality'. Hence the *translatio imperii* (Olster 2000, pp. 53-55).

[446] Lees 2004, p. 17.

regnum and *sacerdotium* proposed by Kantorowicz and other scholars, such as Moore. After this quick review, it looks clear that to posit a clear-cut distinction between those two roles, or spheres, is not only unfeasible, but it would also be, fundamentally, a mistake.

The second issue we need to deal with when looking at early medieval political thought for a philosophical foundation of 'sacral kingship', will further clarify this point. It is that of the relationship between the ruler and the prosperity of the realm and its people. Such a link was already established by the time Alcuin wrote to Aethelred the letter we quoted above. Alcuin made it explicit:

"We also read that the goodness of the king means the prosperity of all the people, the victory of the army, the good weather, the abundance of the earth, the blessing of the sons, the health of the people."[447]

The ruler contributes to the well-being of the realm in a double way: as an example, a paragon of virtue for his subjects to follow (and to enjoy, since a virtuous ruler

[447] MGH *Epp.* 4 (II), p. 51, 29-31: "Legimus quoque, quod regis bonitas totius est gentis prosperitas, victoria exercitus, aeris temperies, terrae habundantia, filiorum benedictio, sanitas plebis." This element in Alcuin's letter was already partially noted by Born (1933, p. 591), and later reprised by Moore 2011, p. 289.

means a well-administered realm); and as a sovereign worthy of the blessings of God (and, consequently, of Nature).

The establishment of such a link traced its origin to the very beginning of kingship itself. Its roots lie in the Mesopotamian and Near Eastern conceptions of the position of the king in the cosmos[448], and it reached Latin Europe via both the Hellenistic monarchical tradition and the one embedded in and transmitted by the Old Testament.[449] However, despite it being not at all a novelty,

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[448] The subject of divine and sacral kingship has been addressed by scholars under many different methodological perspectives. While anthropology has given the first input with works such as those of Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (just to mention one in a long series of studies) history has long followed the path. While it is impossible to give here even a partial survey of the immense bibliography on the subject, the reader who desires to explore some of the acquisitions of comparative analysis of divine kingship may be directed to the collection of essays in N. Brisch (ed.), *Religion and Power. Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Chicago, 2008.

[449] Kershaw 2011, p. 11 also described the peculiar relationship between antiquity and medieval ideals of kingship in a way that perfectly summarizes its essence. Speaking of early medieval political thinkers, he states: "The culture to which they belonged consistently framed themselves in ways that looked backwards to the classical and scriptural past, drawing extensively upon ideas and images developed in earliest societies with which they sometimes sought vigorously to identify. Kingship is, fundamentally, a retrospective institution."

the Christian transformation and adaptation of this ancient ideal brought with it inevitable changes. The Hellenistic (or Near Eastern) monarch wielded his power in a very different context. He did not have to contend with an equally powerful institution that assumed upon itself the role of fundamental and necessary bridge between man and divinity. In other words, he didn't have to contend with the Christian Church. The medieval ruler instead did, and we have seen above how this relationship was shaped in early medieval political thought. Would it be surprising to notice that one of the authors that mostly delved into that subject also repeatedly dealt with the link between the virtues of the ruler and the prosperity of his realm? This is the case, once again, of Hincmar.

Again, in the *De regis persona et regio ministerio* the second chapter is quite tellingly titled "Quod populi felicitas sit rex bonus, infelicitas rex malus". Its content can be easily guessed. The description Hincmar gives of the effects of the peace of the realm instituted by the good ruler is almost poetic:

"The peace of the people is indeed the protection of the country, the freedom of the folks, the bulwark of the nation; the cure of the weak, the joy of men, the proper temperature of the air, the serenity of the sea, the fruitfulness of the land, the recovery of the poors, the

legacy of the sons, and unto itself the beatitude of the future."[450]

But who articulated this point so forcefully as to make it into a beautiful and evocative picture is perhaps Sedulius Scottus (fl. 840-860). An Irish teacher and grammarian whose biography is still mostly shred in uncertainty, he was probably forced to flee his native land due to the mounting Viking onslaught. Sedulius (not to be confused with the homonymous V century poet) then found refuge in the Carolingian Empire, arriving in Liège possibly between 840 and 851. He had contacts with the imperial court of Louis the Pious and his wife, Empress Irmingard, but, more importantly, he wrote a number of intellectual works, from grammatical commentaries, to a *Collectaneum* of the epistles of St. Paul, poems and a *speculum principis*, the *De rectoribus Christianis*, a mixed work of prose and poetry.[451] He began the ninth chapter of this work with a depiction of the beauty of nature, the realm of the Almighty King, seamlessly transporting then the reader into the halls of the earthly ruler. He gives a picture of perfect harmony

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[450] *Hincm. Op. Var.*, II, PL 125:836a: "Pax enim populorum est, tutamen patriae, immunitas plebis, munimentum gentis; cura languorum, gaudium hominum, temperies aeris, serenitas maris, terrae fecundatas, solatium pauperum, haereditas filiorum, et sibimetipsi spes futurae beatitudinis."

[451] Sloan 2012, pp. 3-4.

and order, encompassing the heavens and the earth, with its bountiful fruits. And he explicitly links this picture to the correct order of rule by remarking that:

"the peaceful king is in the glory of his own reign, when in the king's hall he brings to bear many benefices by giving open gifts and donations."[452]

This topic, with its emphasis on the relationship of harmony in heaven and earth as a mirror for just rule, was equally a feature of Ottonian writings in direct prosecution with the Carolingian ideal.
Perhaps the best summary of the ideal of sacral kingship is given us by the Sacramentary of Angoulême (the Paris, Bibl. Nat., MS lat. 816), dating from the Carolingian times. There, we find a blessing formula for the king that captures all the characteristics we have looked at until this point. God is asked to bless the king in order that the land may provide bountiful fruits of every kind for a long time, that the kingdom may live in peace and the health of the people be preserved. And God is also asked to ensure that the power of the king could be witnessed by all like light, "quasi splendidissima fulgora", resplendent all over the

[452] *De rect. Christ.*, pp. 100-103: "rex pacificus in gloria regni sui, quando in aula regia ostensis muneribus donisque traditis multa beneficia praestat."

royal palace. The king blessed by God should be able to protect the kingdom, helping ecclesiastical and monastic institutions through his munificence, and to defeat both internal and external enemies ("ad opprimendos rebelles et paganas nationes").[453]

The many references to light ("splendor", "lux", "fulgor" are all terms used in the blessing to characterize how royal power should be witnessed by the people) are of particular interest for our purposes. They seem to add a further Christological aura to the figure of the ruler.

At the end of day, however, is the ruler conceived as an equal to Christ, as Kantorowicz's reading of the *De consecratione* would lead us to believe for the XII century? A German scholar who long opposed such a hypothesis, in particular for what concerned the Carolingians, is Heinrich Fichtenau. His analysis can be useful here to reach a closure

[453] Fo. 130 of the Sacramentary of Angouleme, in Bouman 1957, p. 91: "Ut tribuas ei de rore caeli et de pinguedine terrae habundantiam frumenti vini et olei et omnium frugum opulentiam ex largitate divini muneris longa per tempora. Ut illo regnante sit sanitas corporum in patria et pax inviolata in regno. Et dignitas gloriosa regalis palatii maximo splendore regiae potestatis oculis omnium luce clarissima coruscate atque splendore quasi splendidissima fulgora maximo perfusa lumina videantur. Tribue ei, omnipotens Deus, ut sit fortissimus protector patriae et consolatur ecclesiarum atque cenobiorum sanctorum maxima cum pietate regalis munificentiae. Atque ut sit fortissimus regum, triumphator hostium ad opprimendos rebelles et paganas nationes."

on our discourse on Carolingian and Ottonian ideals of sacral kingship. Fichtenau strongly argued against any idea of the ruler as equalled to Christ. His argument may be summarized as follows: Earth and Heaven, the earthly ruler and Christ, are parallel to each other, but not equal.[454] This is probably the best definition we can reach of the concept of *Christomimesis*. To directly quote from Fichtenau: "The king was the vice-regent of the earthly sphere which he ruled on behalf of the King of whole creation which included both the upper and the nether regions."[455]

Following this line of argument until a more radical conclusion, Fichtenau negates that the Carolingian ruler was ever conceived as a *rex et sacerdos*. To sustain this hypothesis, he correctly notes that neither David nor Salomon, according to the Old Testament, had the role of priests, the only example of a priestly ruler being Melchizedek. If one has to strictly follow the wording of the Old Testament, Fichtenau's statement could be held as true. However, we have seen how Hincmar, for example, explicitly conceived of David's kingship in the terms of *regnum et sacerdotium*, keeping in line with the idea of David as a predecessor of Christ, precisely the opposite of what Fichtenau argued.

While perhaps the German scholar's judgement on the subject sometimes may be too *tranchant*, it is not without

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[454] Fichtenau 1967, p. 54.

[455] Ivi, p. 56.

issues on its own. Its usefulness is in helping us deal with the ambiguities of early medieval conceptions of sacral kingship by reminding us not to follow into the trap of establishing too precisely a similarity between earthly and heavenly ruler, between the king and Christ. They are parallel figures, each perhaps reflecting itself on the other, but no equals. The essence of early medieval political theology is that the ruler is himself part of a specific order headed by Christ the King.

Paweł Figurski exploited the idiosyncrasies that the concept of sacral kingship applied to the Christian medieval context creates to challenge that concept altogether. The alternative he proposes is that of 'sacramental kingship'. Figurski's argument draws extensively on the most recent historiographical findings. His starting point is the work of Mayke De Jong, who pointed how the role of ruler was conceived by the Carolingians as a *ministerium*, that is as a "divinely ordained royal service to bring salvation to the people."[456] The Dutch scholar grounded her analysis on the ruler's *ministerium* in her pioneering study of the reign of Louis the Pious, making ample use of the narrative and non-narrative sources that spurred from that reign. Among those sources, one work we hadn't dealt with here, the *Admonitio ad omnes regni ordines*, stands out in Figurski's eyes. A capitulary written in 825, it has been described by Mayke de Jong as "a high-minded statement about the

[456] Figurski 2021, p. 33.

sharing of responsibility within the political leadership".[457] In it, Louis the Pious exercised his imperial prerogative as *admonitor*, admonishing the different members of the various *ordines* of the Christian imperial society that he ruled upon. These *ordines* very much included the clerics and the bishops. The emperor is the head of all *ministerial* in the Empire, his own *ministerium* being, to put it metaphorically, the sum of all the others.

Of course, what had been valid for the reign of Louis the Pious (and Charlemagne before him) should not necessarily be considered as equally valid afterwards. This is a basic consideration. Still, it gives a hint as to how to reconsider the whole subject of 'sacral kingship', a hint that fits perfectly with the texts we have looked at above, and this is exactly what Figurski does. Without falling into the details of his interpretation, suffices to say that according to the Polish scholar medieval kingship was considered by contemporaries as a *sacramentum*. It was, to quote directly, "part of a broader vision of the medieval world's sacramentality and could have been understood accordingly within this framework".[458] For Figurski, this sacramentality of the medieval world is nothing else than the result of the continuous experience of the heavenly world on earth, made possible by sacraments, and before the eschatological end of times would really bring the

[457] De Jong 2009, p. 132.

[458] Figurski 2021, p. 39.

community of the faithful, the *populus christianum*, into the Heavenly Realm.[459] The novelty of Figurski's conception of sacramental kingship compared to the older notion of sacral or sacred kingship may be hard to grasp without keeping in mind this relationship with eschatology. It is the eschatological perspective of the not-yet-realized Heavenly Kingdom on earth that makes possible to conceive medieval kingship as part of that same eschatological process that the sacraments represent.[460] The *ministerium* of the medieval ruler is thus not sacred, but sacramental.

Figurski's interpretation of medieval kingship helps us understand the apparent idiosyncrasies we identified in the texts that have been looked upon here. Once medieval rulership is conceived as a *ministerium*, guaranteed by a *sacramentum*, the position of the ruler compared to his bishops, and to his realm more in general, becomes clearer.[461] It is this sacramental vision of kingship/rulership

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[459] Ivi, p. 37.

[460] Though referencing to the old historiographical model of sacral kingship, Dominique Aubert actually seems to espouse a position not too dissimilar to that of Figurski when he writes that the sacrality of the Carolingian sovereign came from him being "médiateur de la trascendance.", Aubert 1989, p. 32.

[461] This should not be intended as meaning that this conception is deprived of all its ambiguities. As an historical, cultural, and social phenomenon the early medieval Christian conception of kingship is inherently liable to suffer from the same ambiguities, uncertainties, and changes of meaning as all other similar phenomena. As argued by

that it is possible to detect as underlining early medieval political thought and theology. In turn, such a vision does contribute towards a re-structuring of the contiguous concept of Christo-mimetic kingship. The many Old Testament references to biblical kings we find in Alcuin, Hincmar, and other Carolingian intellectuals writing about and for Carolingian rulers must be seen as further proof of this tension for a Christo-mimetic ideal of kingship based on the imitation and typological 'replication' of the perfect model offered by Christ. King David, Solomon, and even Saul, were continuously referenced to as models of kingship not so much for their historical role, but because they themselves were conceived as types of Christ the King, as convincingly argued by Miller.[462] Christ is the 'middle point' of reference, the central node in a imaginary network connecting both the kings of the biblical past and

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Geoffrey Koziol, ambiguities and contradictions are inherent to a system of thought, and consequently to the ideology, or 'discourse', this system supports. In the eyes of contemporaries, and particularly during the Early Middle Ages, far from being conceived as weaknesses of the system, those same ambiguities could even contribute to its validation and reproduction (see Koziol 1992, pp. 94-95).

[462] Miller 2005, in particular pp. 197-205 concerning Saul as a type of Christ. This is *contra* the idea expressed by Paolo Cammarosano (2001, p. 104) who firmly refuted the idea that Hincmar, or other Carolingian authors such as Alcuin, did leave any space at all for any kind of ideal of sacral kingship. This position is, however, too radical to be accepted, as it has been shown here.

those of the Christian present, as Hincmar himself implicitly stated.[463]

4. 2. 3 Early medieval political thought in Southern Italy: an absence?

By now we have discussed at length the developments of the philosophical/theological grounds upon which the ideal of kingship rested in Latin Europe. However, one question arises almost naturally after this tracking shot: what about Southern Italy? Was the political thought that had flourished under the Carolingians and the Ottonians received in Southern Italy, and, if so, how?

These are thorny questions. In order to answer them, we can hardly rely on the same kind of documents left to us by Carolingian and Ottonian intellectuals. For what we know, early medieval Southern Italy didn't have an Hincmar, nor did it left something resembling the northern *specula principum* or other forms of political treatises. It did leave to us a number of historiographical and less historiographical documents, most of which we have already met in the previous chapters. It is to them, and to some other few, that we should look in order to find some trace, some evidence, of political thought. We will take a look first at the historiographical works proper, and then to other kinds of

[463] Aubert 1989, p. 32.

written documents, in particular theological commentaries and poetry. In order to do this, we will use the same *fils rouges* we used in delineating the developments of Latin thought on kingship.

One would hardly find any satisfaction in reading the pages of either Erchempert or the Anonymous of Salerno in search of a systematic theory of kingship of some sort. In the previous chapter we looked at the letter, transmitted by the author of the *Chronicon*, written by Anastasius Bibliothecarius on behalf of emperor Louis II to his Eastern counterpart, Basil I, and we saw how that letter was deeply embedded in a specific political discourse. Of course, it was a discourse revolving around the issue of the legitimacy of the Western empire. Still, even after a superficial look it is possible to detect some clues to make the reader alert.

To begin with, when defending his authority over the whole of the imperial lands (an authority that, evidently, Basil had contested with a reference to the divisions that had occurred among the Carolingian house) Louis/Anastasius affirm that

"We rule over all Francia, because away from any doubt we believe, like they [i.e. the people of Francia, including the

other Carolingians] believe as well, that we are with them one body and one blood thanks to the spirit of God."[464]

The statement is made even more forceful since it is followed by a sort of 'genealogy' of Louis' imperial title, tracing back its origin to Charlemagne coronation by the pope. Significantly, here the newly crowned Charlemagne is called *christus Domini*, the anointed of the Lord. Since the topic of anointing has been extensively treated in the previous chapter, we will not resume it here. Our purpose now is to show how elements present in Carolingian and Ottonian political thought may have been received in Southern Italy in order to further substantiate our argument. In a sense, the following discussion will be the direct prosecution of what had been said in the previous chapter.

Already alerted by the presence of a *christus Domini*, we should continue our exploration of the *Chronicon* to see if it is possible to find more substantial evidence, then. The letter to Basil I was written to an emperor on behalf of another emperor and deals with emperorship. What about the Lombard princes, then? It is natural to begin this small investigation once again by looking at whom we have

[464] *Chron. Salern.*, 107, p. 161: "In tota nempe imperamus Francia, quia nos procul dubio retinemus, quod illi retinent, cum quibus una caro et sanguis sumus hac unus per Dominum spiritus."

identified as the prototypical figure of the perfect prince in the *Chronicon*: Arichis II.

The Anonymous established very clearly, and repeatedly, a strong relationship between Arichis and God, a relationship that at times extends to the whole supernatural world (at one point the devil himself comes to Arichis at night to boast himself about what he had accomplished in Constantinople). It is God, through the Holy Ghost, who chooses Arichis as future ruler of Benevento; to God the prince makes constant reference when he has to exercise his prerogatives, in particular during the exercise of justice. Finally, the author of the *Chronicon* summarizes all of Arichis' qualities in a statement incredibly reminiscent of the words of an Alcuin:

"[Arichis] gave new clothes to the poors and the weak, and refreshed them with abundant food; and the very generous Redemptor gladly gave him health and glory, kept his fields intact, and everyone under his rule were joyous and prosperous."[465]

[465] *Chron. Salern.*, 18, p. 37: "[Arichis] idipsum inopes et debiles diverso habitu induebant, cibariaque habundanter nimirum tribuebat; et Redemptor mitissimus vires necnon et gloriam libenter illi largiebat, et sua arva illesa optinebat, et omnes sub sua diccione letabant et exultabant."

The whole array of positive results of virtuous Christian rulership are deployed here, and those words would not appear out of place inside a Carolingian or an Ottonian chronicle either. The scriptural references are obvious, in particular to the Psalms.[466] Another element of the narrative also makes Arichis even more similar to the perfect Christian ruler, in particular more similar to the Carolingian perfect ruler as described by Alcuin in reference to Charlemagne: he is a holder of *sapientia*, and through this he is able repeatedly to interpret God's will. This is shown for example in the episode of the adulterous woman who killed her husband with the complicity of her lover: asked to give judgement on the matter, Arichis leaves it in the hands of God himself, admittedly in quite an imaginative way.[467] The parallel with Charlemagne could be taken even further, if we hypothesize that the above mentioned episode of Arichis' nocturnal visit by the devil finds its term of comparison with a vaguely similar episode reported in a carmen alternatively attributed by

[466] Psalm 9 of the Vulgate may have been one of the most direct references in this case. Matarazzo, in his edition of the *Chronicon* makes the connection explicit and literal between the last two verbs used by the Anonymous, "letabant et exultabant", e Ps. 9,3 "laetabor et exsultabo in te". The similarity is convincing indeed, but it could be further extended to almost the whole Psalm: even if not quoted *verbatim* by the Anonymous, the inspiration of the theme is evident, and hardly surprising.

[467] *Chron. Salern.*, 15, p. 34.

scholars to either Angilbert, another intellectual of the Carolingian court, or Einhard, and titled *Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa*. In this episode, it is reported that Charlemagne had a dream of the pope being tortured and mutilated, after which he sent *missi* to investigate.[468] The parallel may only be hinted at, and of course we do not have evidence that this work was known to the author of the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, but the relationship between the ruler and the supernatural is strikingly similar, confirming itself as a well-established *topos*. The writer of the *Chronicon Salernitanum* admits that he had the opportunity to read the original epitaph written in memory of Arichis by Paul the Deacon, and he reports it in its entirety inside his own text. There Arichis is described in terms that resonate strongly with Solomonic references. Arichis is described as having been "beautiful, strong, gentle, calm", as "light and decor" (of the Lombards, one may surmise). His wisdom is emphasised in no ambiguous terms, as Arichis becomes a veritable receptacle of *scientia*. According to Paul the Deacon, the Lombard prince had assimilated everything in the subjects of "logic, physics, and normative ethics", an interesting list, despite its clear encomiastic purpose, of what kind of knowledge could have been available to a southern Lombard ruler. [469] The Solomonic reference

[468] Godman 1987, p. 89.

[469] Lambert 2010, p. 308.

becomes explicit in the *Historia Langobardorum*. There Arichis is called "alter Salomon".[470]

Erchempert, on the other side, never writes of any ruler in such encomiastic terms. Actually, a reader of his work would almost look in vain for any reference to a virtuous Christian ruler among the Lombard princes bringing a period of prosperity to their tormented lands. This is not surprising, given the purpose of the *Ystoriola*, that its author makes explicit since the very beginning: he is there to narrate the suffering and failings of the Lombard people, not their triumphs.[471] Almost in a twist of what Smaragdus had written just a few decades before, for Erchempert the monk, and the monk alone, can reach the perfection of the Christian life, and the price to pay is to completely leave the mundane behind: "Beati ergo qui, Domino custodiente, immunes ab hac seculi procella existent, ubi omne malum et nullum sine Domino bonum regnat…" he writes at some point.[472] Interestingly, however, this sentence comes in the form of a warning immediately after the narration of one of the very few episodes that seem to shed some positive light in Erchempert's narrative: the reign of Aio, prince of Benevento (884-891) and the rise of Atenulf as hegemon in Capua. In Erchempert's view, *contra* Smaragdus (or even

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[471] "…non regnum eorum, sed excidium, non felicitatem, sed miseriam, non triumphum, sed perniciem…", *Erch. Yst. Lang.*, 1, p. 83.

[472] *Erch. Yst. Lang.*, 75, p. 197.

Hincmar, if one changes monks with bishops), it is inconceivable that a ruler may practice virtues similar to those characterizing monastic life. At least, had they been able to do so, the southern Lombards would have arguably fared better in Erchempert's view. For this Lombard monk, *rex et sacerdos* would have been an expression without meaning, or at least without concrete historical significance.

This doesn't mean that his view was necessarily shared by others among his Cassinese 'colleagues'. The main issue with the other main historiographical work coming from a Cassinese milieu, the *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, is that it belongs to a time quite different from that of Erchempert (or, for that, of the Anonymous of Salerno). The XI and XII centuries, to which the *Chronica* belong, saw a transformation, an evolution, of Latin political thought, mainly under the pressures of a rising Papacy and a movement of Church reform that was to radically alter the specifics of the lay-religious relationship that had been established under the Carolingians. In this sense, the *Chronica* is much closer to the mindset that spurred the Anonymous of York to write his *De consecratione*. This is why the *Chronica* will not be touched upon here, except for a reminder regarding Leo Marsicanus: as it has been already shown in the previous chapter by speaking of the ritual of anointing, there is certainly in Leo a reception of the idealized view of Arichis as the prototypical Lombard Christian ruler which characterized previous Lombard historiography.

All of this allows us to give some more substance to the statement by Edoardo D'Angelo, who defined the timeframe from the VIII to the X century as a period of cultural invigoration for Benevento and its region.[473] It is clear that this happened not in isolation, but in connection with the developments in the rest of Latin Europe, as the small clues we have detected in southern Lombard historiographical and non-historiographical works seem to show. The southern Lombards were aware of the developments of political thought that had happened elsewhere. In which degree they assimilated it, unfortunately, it is hard to say. It is possible however to imagine some of the vectors of this reception. D'Angelo himself connects the cultural prosperity of Benevento with its keeping contacts with the two great centres of Montecassino and S. Vincenzo al Volturno.[474] It should be reminded that Paul the Deacon spent years in Montecassino and was in communication with Arichis' court in Benevento. He wrote the funerary epitaph for the prince. Arichis' wife Adelperga had been his pupil, and to her he dedicated his *Historia Romana*. We have already said of the figure of Ambrosius Autpertus. To these two intellectuals, we could further add the bishop of Benevento Ursus, who has already been mentioned in Chapter 2 for his role in establishing a grammar school for his cathedral. He has left to us an *Adbreviatio Artis Prisciani*, which

[473] D'Angelo 2015, pp. 709-710.

[474] Ibid.

Virginia Brown dated to 833. The same scholar, while admitting her uncertainty over the existence of a true episcopal school in Benevento at the time, also acknowledged that Benevento should be recognised as "une veritable capital culturelle", a role further testified by the continuous development of the Beneventan script over this period.[475] We have almost no information about the episcopal school eventually founded by Ursus, though we can get a glimpse of which studies could have taken place in it by looking at Ursus' own works, and also to the episcopal school established at Naples in the same time period. Indeed, we know that in the latter grammatical studies took the lion's share, together with scribal education and training in liturgical chants and lectures.[476] This is hardly surprising, given the goals that such a school could have had. The practice of grammar teachings in Benevento (and the region as a whole) may also be evidence of a potential venue for the reception of Isidorian thought in the Lombard capital. Giuseppe Cicco, in his article dedicated to the episcopal school of Benevento identified a common ground for a handful of manuscripts: the Codex Casan. 1086, the one containing the sole

[475] Brown 1999, pp. 153-155. The first clear evidence for the existence of an episcopal school in Benevento is dated from 1159, coming from a bull of the Beneventan archbishop Henry who confirmed to a certain priest Romuald the rank of *primicerius,* that consisted, among other things, in the supervision of the school activities (Lepore 1996, p. 27).
[476] Cicco 2006, p. 344.

surviving exemplar of Ursus' *Adbreviatio* (together with a number of other grammatical texts), and two other codices, the Diez 66 and the Par. lat. 7530, the former originating from the court of the king of Italy Pippin (781-810), the latter from Montecassino, presumably prepared under the direction of Paul the Deacon. These codices sport extensive usage of the *Etymologiae*, and the predilection, if not the need, for continuous etymological clarification is highlighted by Cicco to be one of the chief characteristics of Ursus' work as well.[477]

Of course, this is but a faint clue, and we cannot prove out of any reasonable doubt that the reception of Isidore's grammatical work may have been followed by the transmission of his other writings. This, however, should not be considered so unlikely. In analysing the *Ars Grammatica* written by Ilderic, a disciple of Paul the Deacon, in the IX century, Oldoni highlighted how the work had been structured as a philosophical talk, dealing through grammar with a number of typically philosophical questions.[478] According to this interpretation Ilderic used

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[477] Cicco 2006, pp. 351-352. See also Cavallo 1977, pp. 107-108. Heath (2016, p. 160, quoting M. L. W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe 500-900*, Longon, Methuen, 1957, p. 124) reports how the *Etymologiae* was a "*sine-qua-non* in every monastic library of any pretensions", a statement easily adaptable also for non-monastic ecclesiastical libraries.

[478] Oldoni 1992, p. 299. To this we may add that Ilderic makes use also of Augustine, even explicitly mentioning him at some point (see Lentini

grammar as a true philosophical tool. Grammar itself would then transcends its limits to become a rule of life, or at least a representation of it. The order of the speech would be equal to the order of the mind and the soul, a form of clarification for the pursuit of a truly Christian life.[479]

The combination of grammatical studies and a more philosophical outlook is hardly unique to Ilderic. The figure of another Lombard intellectual, this time a northerner, could be presented as a case in point: the already mentioned Paulinus of Aquileia. He can help us shedding some light as to how grammar and the other liberal arts could have been combined to form a thorough equipment for a philosopher.[480] A clear example of such a combination is given us by the *Regula fidei* he composed around 791-792. Giulia Vocino highlighted how Paulinus added an appendix to this work of his to explain the reader how "grammatical, metrical, rhythmic and rhetorical constructs" were "necessary for the writing of correct and elegant verses", in which at least two arts of the trivium (grammar and rhetoric) and possibly some discipline of the quadrivium (music under the idea of rhythm) are mentioned (the *Regula* was itself composed in

1075, pp. 122-124 for a list of the instances in which Ilderic quotes from him).

[479] Ivi, p. 302.

[480] Vocino 2021, pp. 254-255.

hexameters).[481] Paulinus was a well-known figure and it is unlikely that he could have been unknown in the south, particularly considering that he was a Lombard as well.

Another clue as to the role of Benevento as a *capital culturelle*, with a specific focus on philosophical thought, is given us, once again, by the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, and specifically by a character who has aroused contrasting opinions among scholars. It is the figure of Ilderic (not to be confused with the homonymous disciple of Paul the Deacon and expert of grammar we mentioned above[482]). He is presented to the reader of the *Chronicon* in connection with the presence of Louis II in Benevento. In the time the emperor was staying in the capital, indeed

"Benevento was regarded to have thirty-two philosophers; and among them there was one eminent, whose name was Ilderic, he was among them, and he was not solely very

[481] Ibid.

[482] Scholars have debated whether the Ilderic mentioned in the *Chronicon Salernitanum* and Ilderic the grammarian may have actually been the same person. To them, we may add another Ilderic, mentioned by Leo Marsicanus as abbot of Montecassino for seventeen days in 834. Lentini (1975, pp. 177-184) has devoted his own analysis at discerning whether these three figures may have overlapped, in some way or the other, and he convincingly concluded that there is no possibility that the Ilderic of the *Chronicon* and the author of the *Ars grammatica* were the same person.

knowledgeable in the liberal arts, but also full of laudable virtue [...]"[483]

This figure appears on the stage of the *Chronicon* when a secretary of the emperor asks for his help: ordered by the sovereign to write a letter, the next day he had forgotten what he had to write and, desperately in need, asked Ilderic to help him. Significantly in this moment Ilderic is labelled by the Anonymous as "virum Dei", a man of God, and immediately after as "philosophus Christi". Through the intercession of the Virgin and Christ, he obtains to know the content of the letter, and dictates it to Louis' secretary. The episode is reported to Louis, who in turn interrogates the prince of Benevento and then, together with his magnates, honours Ilderic. The Anonymous also reports how Ilderic composed a carmen, allegedly simply writing down the words of the angels in praise of God that he, and he alone, had been able to listen to.

Unsurprisingly, the figure of Ilderic has attracted the attention of scholars. In particular, his role as *philosophus* and his same existence, together with that of the other "thirty-two philosophers", have been subject to debate. Massimo Oldoni has opted for negating the real existence

[483] *Chron. Salern.*, 122, p. 194: "triginta duobus philosofis [sic] […] Beneventum habuisse perhibetur; ex quibus illorum unus insigne, cui nomen fuit Ildericus, inter illos degebat, et non solum liberalibus disciplinis aprime imbutus, sed eciam [sic] proba virtute detritus […]."

of both Ilderic and his alleged 'colleagues'.[484] According to him the character serves a precise and specific purpose inside the narrative offered by the Anonymous of Salerno: Ilderic represents the *summa* of all the aspirations of the author of the *Chronicon*, the true 'man of God' able to overcome all earthly problems, including conflicts and political bickering, as shown by him being a subject of the prince of Benevento but dealing with issues pertaining to the emperor, and able to communicate with the heavenly realm. In Oldoni's interpretation he's the perfect man, as could possibly be conceived by the Anonymous' mind, at the same time being the perfect interpretation of the Anonymous' world and the intention that he could allegedly have had when writing down his chronicle.[485]

Oldoni's argument is indeed compelling and is based on what is arguably the most detailed analysis of the *Chronicon* and of the profile of its author. Still, it is not necessarily convincing in its entirety. That the figure of Ilderic as presented in the *Chronicon* may have played the role assigned to him by Oldoni is by all means possible, and likely as well. However, this does not necessarily entail the non-existence of Ilderic, not even that of the 'thirty-two

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[484] Oldoni 1972, p. 206.

[485] Ivi, pp. 199-200, p. 203. In another paper Oldoni convincingly argued that the Anonymous of Salerno should be seen as an author striving to intertwine local traditions with more intellectual aspirations (1985, pp. 45-46). The figure of Ilderic would fit perfectly inside such an interpretation.

philosophers' of Benevento. The number could have been invented by the author, of course, and it is impossible to determine its exactitude. However, it should also be noted that it is hard to find a symbolic or Biblical reference for the number 32, so the question remains open to what the Anonymous of Salerno was referring to, if he really invented the number altogether. While it is impossible, with the data we currently possess, to give Ilderic an identity or profile that would go beyond and over what the *Chronicon* tells us about him, it is still possible to argue in favour of the plausibility of the presence of a circle of learned men in Benevento nonetheless. In turn this would imply a recognition of a stronger cultural profile for the southern Lombard capital, something to which already Paul the Deacon's epitaph for Arichis would seem to hint at, and that would make it easier for us to postulate the reception, or at least the knowledge, of political thought and of its philosophical grounding among the southern Lombards.

The *Chronicon* describes Ilderic as "liberalibus disciplinis…imbutus". It specifies that this was not his sole quality. Quite the opposite: in the Anonymous' eyes, it would seem as Ilderic's knowledge of the liberal arts has the sole function of making him a member of the 'philosophers' circle' in Benevento, while his most important qualities would reside in his virtues and in his relationship with God. He's among the learned men of Benevento, but at the same time he is apart from them,

even openly superior: he's the only one who doesn't fall into adulation to the prince who, for this reason, at first omits his name when enumerating to the inquiring emperor the wise men living in the city.[486] Reading the *Chronicon* the figure of Ilderic would appear as almost indistinguishable from that of one of those hermit saints that roamed southern Italy, and particularly its Greek-speaking areas, in the same years that the *Chronicon* was being written. However, this first impression may be in part misleading, and perhaps there is room for a re-evaluation of Ilderic as a philosopher. This doesn't mean that he could not be considered also as an ascetic, since he clearly shows, in the Anonymous' narrative, a behaviour that qualifies him as such. The two things are far from being in contradiction or conflict with each other, particularly when one ponders the value of the liberal arts in the early medieval curriculum. Such a value is demonstrated, for example, in the *Vita Alfredi*, the work of the Welsh monk Asser, who wrote a life of the West Saxon King Alfred (871-899). In his *Vita* Asser emphasizes how the quest for more knowledge in the field of the liberal arts was one of the chief characteristics of the learned king's piety. The remark by David Pratt in his analysis of Alfredian political thought seem poignant: "the value of the liberal arts lay specifically in their ability to access divine wisdom".[487] Knowledge of the liberal arts and access to the

[486] *Chron. Salern.*, 122, p. 196.

[487] Pratt 2007, p. 123.

divinity were complementary elements. Once again, it seems far from being coincidental that Paul the Deacon, in describing Arichis' virtues, chose to list the knowledge of logic, physics, and ethics and, immediately after them, showed Arichis as learned also in divine wisdom.[488]

We have the label of *philosophus Christi*. At first glance, it would seem like further proof of his mystic qualities, more than of his philosophical ones. But what did the Anonymous actually mean when he defined Ilderic like that? Perhaps Isidore can come to our aid. In the *Etymologiae* he defines the *philosophi* as "amatores sapientiae", further adding

"He is indeed a philosopher he who has knowledge of divine and human things, and who through it lives well."[489]

This definition perfectly mirrors that of *philosophia* that Isidore gives in Book II. Unfortunately for us he doesn't define a *philosophus Christi* and his summary of philosophy makes mention only of the ancient schools of Greek thought. Still, it is significant that Isidore remarks what was

[488] Lambert 2010, p. 308.

[489] *Etym.*, VIII, 6, 1: "Est enim Philosophus qui divinarum et humanarum [rerum] scientiam habet, et omnem bene vivendi tramite tenet."

one of the cores of philosophical thought, both in ancient and medieval times, namely its being directed both at divine and human things. This simple reiteration should help clear the way from any misconception about a division between asceticism and mundane philosophy. What is sure, is that for the Anonymous of Salerno the true *philosophus* is also a man of faith, possibly a member of the clerical order. He gives further proof of this when writing of the utmost intellectual in the eyes of the southern Lombards, Paul the Deacon. In summarizing his virtues and skills, the Anonymous significantly uses the exact same expression he used for Ilderic, "liberalibus disciplinis imbutus".[490] At a closer reading Paul the Deacon appears as the prototype of a *philosophus*, like the prince he served, Arichis, is the prototypical ruler. The similarities with the later figure of Ilderic are striking: the Anonymous mentions how he wrote verses and praises his religious life in Montecassino. The same works that Paul writes "sermone nimirum loculento"[491] could be referenced with the way Ilderic puts down the letter dictated by Louis to his secretary. The independence of Ilderic from any form of adulation towards the secular ruler is the same we find in Paul, who, in the Anonymous' narrative, does not hesitate at attempting at the life of Charlemagne himself. Perhaps the true difference between these two characters is that, while Ilderic is a static figure, fixed in the perfection of his

[490] *Chron. Salern.*, 37, p. 57.

[491] Ibid.

own life, Paul 'evolves' from a man who is still part of the world to one who renounces it.

If Ilderic can be considered to play, in the Anonymous' intentions, the role of a perfected *philosophus*, penned from the prototypical figure of Paul the Deacon, it is also possible to consider him not as a man who simply, and exclusively, devoted himself to asceticism, and thus to take more seriously the reference to the liberal arts that the Anonymous makes. The expression *philosophus Christi* would then assume a different connotation: that of the perfection of philosophy. This is no different from the use of the expression we find in the *Vita* of St. Ambrose (339-397) by Paulinus of Milan (c. 370-429). He narrates how Ambrose, wishing to avoid being designated as bishop of Milan (a common *topos* of hagiographic literature) at first opted for retiring to private life, instead of becoming "verus philosophus Christi". In a review of Pierre Courcelle's analysis of the figure of Ambrose, Luigi Franco Pizzolato delves at length with this enigmatic expression. He reaches the conclusion, based also on the writings of Ambrose himself, that Paulinus used it in contrast to the figure of the private philosopher, the one who devotes himself to the Neoplatonic practice of isolation from the crowd and from practical activities. The *verus philosophus Christi* would then be the man who accepts a lower philosophical role in favour of a stronger presence among his fellows to testify with his own life the faith in Christ. In no way this practice, however, should be meant as a refusal

of philosophy or the liberal arts. [492] They are complementary to each other (as the figure of Ambrose himself testifies). We don't know with any certainty whether the Anonymous of Salerno ever had the chance of reading the *Vita Ambrosii*. Still, the similarity of expression can be deemed to be significant enough to postulate a similarity of intention between the two authors. It is tantalizing that Paulinus was writing the Life of a saint famous for his independent action towards the rulers of his time, too.

Once again, another Paulinus, the bishop of Aquileia, can give us some further clues to clarify this point. We have mentioned how the Salernitan Anonymous reports the verses allegedly written by Ilderic. The presence of these verses in the *Chronicon* has been used by Oldoni as further evidence about how Ilderic should have been conceived by his 'creator' more as a model of ascetic sainthood than as a *philosophus*. [493] But this, again, would mean to misunderstand the role of poetry in the elaboration and expression of thought, including philosophical and theological thought. Paulinus of Aquileia, we have mentioned it already, wrote his whole *Regula fidei* as a poetic composition in hexameters. His eloquence, and the extensive knowledge he had in the rules of *eloquentia* (poetry included), was an integral part of his figure as a

[492] Pizzolato 1974, p. 503.

[493] Oldoni 1072, p. 200.

prominent intellectual, and this fact was acknowledged by no others than Alcuin himself.[494] A century after the Anonymous, another Salernitan, and a prominent intellectual by himself, the bishop Alfanus (d. 1085), will show his own ability in versification.

These considerations would allow us to defend an image of the *philosophus Christi* as conceived by the Anonymous as, still, a proper *philosophus*. However, they apparently don't tell us anything about the concrete existence of Ilderic or the other thirty-two philosophers. However, this would be misleading. Once we integrate our hypotheses on Ilderic as *philosophus* with an overall consideration of the structure and motives of the *Chronicon*, then at least the existence of a circle of learned men in Benevento becomes a distinct possibility.

When sketching the figure of the *philosophus Christi* and *vir Dei* Ilderic, the author, as we said, was attempting at giving an example of his utmost life ambition. But the Anonymous was not writing for himself: he was writing for an audience. While we do not possess any information about whether he conceived his work as destined to a particular group of people, we can argue that what he was writing had to be at least credible for his readers. That his imagination in conceiving an entirely fictional character who could represent his ideal of man may have been somewhat constrained is showed also by an apparently

[494] Vocino 2021, p. 255.

insignificant omission he makes. The *vir Dei* Ilderic is never mentioned to be in relation to any monastery or any kind of monastic institution. He is not even shown while interacting with monks, or others belonging to the clerical order. Surely, he could conceivably have been a monk himself, as Anselmo Lentini asserts, using the words *vir Dei* and *philosophus Christi* to support his statement.[495] We have seen that the *philosophus Christi* is not always and necessarily a monk (St. Ambrose being an example in kind). On the other side, it has been demonstrated how in the Middle Ages philosophical and monastical life came to be considered by contemporaries as almost coincidental.[496] The issue of whether Ilderic and his 'colleagues' should be

[495] Lentini 1975, p.181.

[496] Fioravanti 2017, p. 77 comes as far as to note that "dopo la morte di Boezio e fino alla metà del XIII secolo, non troveremo più nell'Occidente latino chi definisca se stesso come filosofo." This statement is not meant to say that there was no philosophical activity in the Latin West, which would be obviously absurd, but to notice an interesting cultural phenomenon, which found its reflection in the title of the same essay by Fioravanti: that of the "disappearance of philosophers" in the Latin West during the Early Middle Ages. Fioravanti also notes how the passage (which he identified taking place mainly in the V century) from a conception of 'philosopher' typical of Antiquity and Late Antiquity, to that of the 'Christian philosopher' was remarked by contemporaries in the move from a *philosophia saecularis* to a *philosophia caelestis* (p. 96). It is difficult not to see some similarity with the figure of Ilderic and his relationship with the divine as described by the Anonymous of Salerno.

considered to have been monks or not cannot, then, be decided either way with decisive arguments. Benevento, like all other cities at the time, had its fair share of monasteries, so, if really the Anonymous meant that his 'philosophers' were monks, it wouldn't subtract from the credibility of a person like Ilderic living in the southern Lombard capital.

However, his audience had to find his assertion credible, and the possibility that Benevento could have hosted a circle of learned men, whether monks or lay (an official 'label' as philosophers is not relevant for us here). Without such a plausibility, the Anonymous' argument would have likely lost its efficacy. In other words, it should have been credible, at the eyes of the Anonymous' audience, that at some point in the IX century (and not just, for example, in a time of such explicit glory such as Arichis' reign) Benevento could have hosted an intellectual circle of some sort.

Some decades after the visit of Louis II at Benevento, between the end of the IX and the beginning of the X century, southern Italy also witnessed the presence of another peculiar intellectual figure: that of Eugenius Vulgarius. We do not know much about him. It has been hypothesized that he may have been of Bulgarian origin, a descendant of those Bulgars who moved into southern Italy and were settled into the territories of the duchy of Benevento in the VII century (specifically in nowadays Molise). He was involved in the intrigues which shook the

papal court at the end of the IX century, and in particular the political fight between pope Formosus (891-896) and his supporters on one side, and one of his successors, Sergius (904-911). He was a well-versed poet, and consistently sported a knowledge of ancient authors, in particular Boethius and Martianus Capella. Of particular interest for our purposes here, however, are only some of his works: those dedicated to the Eastern emperor Leo VI (the second of the so-called Macedonian dynasty, known as the Wise, 886-912); and one dedicated to Atenulf I, the first prince of Capua and Benevento. We cannot delve into a detailed analysis of these works. What we can do, however, is to grasp some of the meanings they intended to convey.

Admittedly, Eugenius' poems do not present an air of novelty in content. Not dissimilarly from contemporary eulogistic practices, he reiterated existing and established *topoi* in praise of the people he wrote to. Far from diminishing the importance of his work, however, this is exactly what makes it relevant for our purposes. The carmen dedicated to emperor Leo is an example in kind. In this poem, peculiarly written in the form of a pyramid in the tradition of the *carmina figurata* (a tradition that had reached significant heights among Carolingian intellectuals, it should be noted[497]), Eugenius praises the Eastern emperor in the most classic way.[498]

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[497] An example in kind would be the series of twenty-eight poems composing the *De laude sancte crucis*, written by Hrabanus Maurus

The episcopal school that existed in Benevento has already been mentioned as a possible vector for the spread of Latin political thought in the Lombard capital. The other two, quite obvious, vectors could easily have been Montecassino and S. Vincenzo al Volturno. One should not forget, however, the role of the Ottonian court itself. The Ottonians (and particularly Otto I) employed a model of itinerant kingship that made the court a very mobile institution. In turn, this meant that when the emperor travelled across the realm, he was followed by his most important advisers, including prominent intellectuals who brought with them both their personal knowledge and their libraries (or parts of them, at least), not to mention the craving for profiting of the opportunities this itinerancy offered for keeping contacts with the various cultural centres they crossed by.[499] Otto I visited Benevento more than once during his peregrinations in Italy. It is hardly plausible that the presence of the imperial retinue would have left no mark at all in the ancient Lombard capital, particularly once we keep in mind the close relationship existing between the emperor and Pandulf Ironhead. Otto II would show up in Benevento with a great part of his nobility (admittedly, for a military campaign, but that would hardly change the point).

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between 810 and 840 and dedicated to Louis the Pious (see Schmitt 1996, p. 10).

[498] Ernst 2002, p. 51.

[499] Mayr-Harting 2007, pp. 54-56.

We do not have hard proof of this cultural exchange in some concrete form (epistles, or books with explicit dedicatees), unfortunately, so this should be kept on the level of hypothesis. However, given what we know of the Ottonian court and its cultural habits, it is a likely one. The same could be said of the influence of Greek learning and thought, particularly on characters such as Eugenius Vulgarius. Remnants of Greek learning at the papal court, and in the Tyrrhenian duchies (Gaeta, Naples), not to mention the Greek-speaking groups (monastic or otherwise) in Calabria, all could have played a part.

4. 3 Conclusions

This brief survey of Carolingian and post-Carolingian political thought allowed us to shed some light on how the perfect Christian society was conceptualized, and what was the place of the ruler in it. There may have been elements of divergence between different authors, and one should always keep in mind that the development of such political thought encompassed centuries of great change on all levels of society, but still there was undoubtedly a meeting ground, the result of common roots and similar goals. The ruler as *christomimetes* may have taken quite different shapes over time, but it was still recognizable as such, as were his Christological and Old Testament references. The elaboration of what Figurski called sacramental kingship for the *societas Christiana* took on very ancient concepts and

adapted them for a radically altered cultural and religious environment.

It shouldn't be surprising that Lombard southern Italy was involved in receiving, and adapting, this political thought. Only a certain obsolete (but not necessarily old) historiographical habit could have accepted the picture of this region as lying outside the sphere of Latin cultural developments, at least before the Norman conquest.[500]The presence among the southern Lombards, and in different times, of intellectuals of the calibre of Paul the Deacon, Ambrosius Autpertus, Alfanus of Salerno (and the list could be longer) is evidence enough of the cultural vitality of the area. If we add to this some concrete traces of cultural activity, such as the work of Ilderic, or the poems of Eugenius Vulgarius, just to mention two of them who have received treatment (albeit brief) in these pages, then

[500] The reader of *The New Cambridge History of the Middle Ages*, for example, would find in the third volume of the series, devoted to the years 900-1204 (what Claudio Leonardi, in his chapter on the intellectual life of the period, defines as the "post-Carolingian" era), only very scanty references to intellectual activity in Lombard southern Italy, mainly limited to the a quick reminder of both Erchempert's and the Anomyous of Salerno's works. The lion's share in Leonardi's essay is instead taken by the role of southern Italy in transmitting Greek heritage, first through "the unusual form of literary activity" carried out in Naples, and via the transmission of important literary works of Greek origin (the legends of Alexander the Great, the stories of Barlaam and Jehosaphat, etc…). See Leonardi 2008, pp. 192-193.

the picture of a somewhat backward region becomes simply untenable.

Combining these considerations with a glance over the potential vectors of transmission of Latin political thought into southern Italy, and with the evidence that such transmission did indeed take place, we reach an important step in the overall characterization of the cultural environment of Lombard southern Italy. We should keep in mind that political theology did not come solely from the Frankish/Western world, and local developments took place as well. A figure such as Eugenius Vulgarius constitutes perhaps the most striking example of the interactions that could take place among the southern Lombards: a Lombard of (possibly) ancient Bulgar origins, writing poems grounded on the reception of the ancient models, and dedicating them to both an Eastern emperor and a Lombard prince, while dealing at the same time with the papal court.

When speaking of "Lombard southern Italy", the first adjective may seem too restrictive, as we should never forget the contribution of the coastal duchies, of Calabria, and of Apulia, influenced as they were by Byzantine cultural patterns. Because of this larger setting, Lombard southern Italy allowed for the presence of a character such as Eugenius Vulgarius. Only by taking such an environment into consideration could we really gain some new insights from and about the Exultet rolls that, after all, were a very special product of it as well. This has been the

central tenet of this investigation, and as such it is now this point that our attention must be turned to.

5. The Exultet as a commemorative object: sacramental kingship in words and images

If we reprise Moore's analysis positioning liturgy as the link between political thought and the symbolic power exercised through ritual, then it becomes clear that a powerful liturgy such as that underpinning the Exultet prayer, lying as it is in the true focal point of the Christian re-enactment of Salvation, should be considered of the utmost importance for the representation of Christian conceptions of kingship. At the same time, it also becomes clear that such liturgy is strictly connected, in the case under examination here, with the existence of an object such as the Exultet roll itself. The same combination of words and images that has made this object such a fascinating subject for inquiry, then, must be taken into account together with its liturgical purpose.

5. 1 Early medieval thought on images: *biblia pauperum* or something more?

As in other eras of pre-modern societies, images during the Middle-Ages played a prominent role, and this is a fundamental acquisition of scholarship that doesn't need to be recollected here. Antonio Thiery further stressed the relevance of images in the Middle Ages in his brief, but substantial and refreshing critique of the much-too-common (and abused) *topos* of the contemporary world as

an "image civilization". As he rightly remarked, the Middle Ages (and the Early Middle Ages even more, perhaps) have to the "iconic signs" a fundamental role in the transmission of thought and knowledge, informing and communicating, in a way that could easily rival that of contemporary images.[501]

The French scholar Jérôme Baschet, in his study of Latin medieval iconography, laid down a methodological framework that proves to be fitting for the kind of analysis of the Exultet figurative elements we want to carry on here, and their relationship with the written word and the object itself.

Baschet's starting point is the consideration, all the more interesting for our purposes, that the Early Middle Ages, in particular from the IX century and then more prominently from the XI, experienced what he calls "une période de liberté particulièrement grande pour les images", a freedom of inventiveness (not to be confused with a freedom of the artist, a concept extraneous to the Middle Ages and unavailable until the Renaissance[502]) made

[501] Thiery 1974, p. 419.

[502] It should be reminded that during most of the Middle Ages, the individuals performing artistic works were mostly anonymous figures, in contrast with their patrons, those who commissioned the works and who were deemed to be their true makers. Sticking to the early medieval period, patrons were invariably members of the social and political élite, both secular and ecclesiastic. And the members of the

possible by a new consideration of the essence and the role of images.[503] Without any pretension at being exhaustive on such an immense topic, it would be safe to say that there are a few turning points for the history of images in early medieval Latin Europe and until the XI century that should be kept in mind, and that have been the subject of intense debate among scholars of medieval art.

Ernst Kitzinger in 1954 came as far as to define the acceptance of images by Christianity as one of the most "momentous" facts in the history of European art. To quote his own words: "had Christianity persisted in the categorical rejection of images, and, indeed, of all art, which it proclaimed during the first two centuries of its existence, the main stream of the Graeco-Roman tradition would have been blocked, driven underground, or, at best, diverted into side channels of purely secular or decorative work."[504] In other words, medieval Christian art as we know it today would have been impossible. Such a statement may be deemed nowadays, perhaps, a too

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ecclesiastic *ordo* were, indeed, those who could receive the strongest cultural education. It is for this reason that they were also able to conceive proper meanings for the objects and works they commissioned (e.g. an iconographical cycle). This is a generalisation, of course, since patrons and clients could have different intentions, different skills, a more or less vast knowledge, and proper education. See Brenk 1992.

[503] Baschet 2003, p. 61. Also Baschet 2014 pp. 10-11.

[504] Kitzinger 1954, p. 85.

general undisputed fact, but it retains its relevance. Still, it is not to the first centuries of Christian 'official' art (that is, according to Kitzinger, that one spurred after Constantine's legitimation of the Church) that we should look at.[505]

The first of our turning points, in fact, would take place two centuries later, in the VI century, under the guise of the thought expressed by Gregory the Great (590-604 as pope) in his two letters to bishop Serenus of Marseille. These letters, and the episode that occasioned them, are one of the most famous (and cited) moments of alleged elaboration of a thought about images in Latin Europe.[506] The event in itself was quite simple: the bishop of Marseilles Serenus had decided to destroy the painted images in the churches falling under his jurisdiction. Gregory reproached Serenus for his decision, adding a justification for the presence of images in churches that would exercise a strong influence

[505] The relationship between Christianity and images, as it evolved in particular during Late Antiquity, has been the subject of many studies and analyses. Scholars have focused their attention on topics such as the relationship between images of idols and Christian icons, between the imperial cult of images and subsequent Christian cult, and others. For a magisterial introduction to the subject see Belting 1994, chapters 3-8. See Grabar 2011, who also emphasizes the relationship between the Christian view of images and Neoplatonic thought (Plotinus).

[506] Chazelle 1990, p. 138, in part referring to Kitzinger's paper of 1954; Duggan (2005, p. 64) rightly, though perhaps with a slight irony, defined Gregory's words in his letter to Serenus "the weightiest ever penned by a churchman in the history of Western art."

on the conceptions of the following centuries and, arguably, also on those scholars who had to deal with medieval art in the future. His argumentation was linear: as the "*idiotes*" and those "*gentes*" who did not have the ability of reading relied on images to understand the mysteries of the faith, so destroying those images would be equal of depriving them of such a possibility. Gregory made explicit that, from this point of view, images were to be considered equivalent to writing. They just had a different audience.[507] Many scholars saw in Gregory's letters to Serenus the birth of two concepts: that of the image is a surrogate of a text, equivalent to it in its effects (transmission of knowledge); and, in direct filiation from it, that of images as "*biblia pauperum*", or the sacred book of the illiterate.[508] It was just the beginning, however, of further speculation on images by Latin intellectuals. Lawrence Duggan reconstructed the subsequent reception of Gregory's *dictum* in Latin tradition, and his findings need to be taken into account here, since they shed light on two interesting facts: that, even while

[507] Byzantine iconodule orthodoxy made the point with even more strength, with some of its representatives actually expressly equating images and texts as both valid means for grasping divine history. Patriarch Nikephoros, for example, affirmed that both images and texts, "calligraphic genius" and "excellence of painting" allow their reader, or onlooker, to see "divine history", even going as far as using the same term for both (Brubaker 1999, p. 47).

[508] Diebold 2000, 11.2. Gregory never used these words however, as they began to be used much later. See Chazelle 1990, p. 138.

coming from a revered figure of the Roman Church, Gregory the Great's position on images was not passively received nor necessarily accepted without criticism; and that looking at successive developments under the Carolingians could pave the way for a more nuanced understanding of some of the pictures on the Exultet roll, in a way that would allow us to connect them with the intellectual framework of the time more strongly.

Let's then take a look at the second pivotal moment in the relationship between Latin Christianity and images. This came more than a century after Gregory. The event that sparked new thought on the role of images in the Latin West was much wider than the actions of a single bishop, this time. It was a whole movement that was taking shape in the Eastern Roman Empire, and that falls under the generic label of Iconoclasm.[509] The destruction of images of

[509] We cannot delve here on a reconstruction of the main events of the Iconoclastic controversy. Literature on this subject is extremely vast, as it has attracted the attention of scholars not only from the field of art history. Its ramifications in the cultural world of the Greek East, its connection with previous speculation both on images and Christology, the alleged influence of Islam, the political issues it was enmeshed with, all these elements contributed to the wide interest it has arisen at the eyes of scholars from many different fields. A comprehensive reconstruction of the controversy can be found in E.J. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, 2nd edition New York, 1978, while the essays collected in A. Bryer, J. Herrin (eds.), *Iconoclasm. Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies*, Birmingham, 1975 offer

Christ (such as the one on the Chalke gate of the Imperial Palace) and other holy subjects sparked a controversy that easily broke from the confines of the Eastern Church to reverberate its effects on the West too. The spark which ignited the conflict was the decision by emperor Leo III (717-741) to remove the icon of Christ over the Chalke Gate of the Imperial Palace in Constantinople. The decision resulted in the killing of the imperial official deputed to the removal, and the beginning of a fierce controversy lasting for the next two centuries. Rivers over rivers of ink have been devoted by scholars as to the reasons which led the emperor to that fateful decision. It has been argued that it could have had to do with influence from Islamic thought on pictures, combined with a sense of distress compounded by the continuous wars against the Arabs and natural disasters. From another point of view, scholars have proposed to see the controversy as a political gesture, aimed at strengthening the position of the emperor against some fringes of the Church, in particular monks. Finally, it should not be forgotten how certain strands of Christian thought always felt uneasy towards sacred images, adding a purely religious and theological motivation to the dispute.

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interesting insights into the many facets of such a complex subject. An original interpretation of the phenomenon, grounded more on theological and aesthetic arguments, is offered by Charles Barber in his *Figure and Likeness. On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm*, Princeton, 2002. See also Brubaker 1999, pp. 27-33.

But whatever the reasons lying behind the beginning of the controversy, in both contexts, East and West, Iconoclasm quite naturally provided the reason for a renewed reflection on images and their role. In the East the cult of images found possibly its strongest philosophical ground in the writings of John of Damascus (675-676, d. 749) and the peculiar relationship he established between *sign* and *image*.[510]

In the West, while pope Hadrian I's (772-795) reply to Iconoclasm [?], sent via papal legates participating in the Second Council of Nicaea of 787, was strongly in support of iconodule positions (that is, roughly, of those who favoured the cult of icons), the Carolingian response was quite different in both form and content. It came through the doctrinal elaboration of the results of the council that Frankish bishops held in Frankfurt in 794 under the personal supervision of Charlemagne himself. The council had been convened first of all to deal with a different issue, that of a Christological heresy, Felicianism, and only secondarily to deal with the issue of images. In this latter

[510] Brubaker 1989, p. 26. Sign and image, taken together, are what make possible the relationship between image, reality, and the viewer. According to Brubaker, the Byzantine conception of this relationship was far removed from our own. Indeed to a Byzantine the image would be a sign of something 'beyond' (and here strands of Neo-Platonism are evident). The relationship between sign and image "formed part of a larger structure of signs indicative of an intellectual process quite distinct from our own."(Ibid.)

field, the council clearly aimed at sending a political message to both Constantinople and Rome, and at reasserting in a certain measure the prerogatives of the Frankish sovereign. The results took the form of a *capitulare* (tellingly titled *adversus synodum*). But before the council at Frankfurt took place, a first response had been already redacted, under the form of the *Libri Carolini*. Also known as *Opus Caroli Regis contra synodum*, this work is usually attributed to Theodulf of Orléans (760-821), a Goth of Iberian origins who had moved to the Carolingian court somewhere around the last two decades of the VIII century.[511]

It should be repeated that the Second Council of Nicaea of 787, whose resolutions pope Hadrian had supported and against which the Frankish bishops had issued their *Capitulare*, had resulted in the restoration of the cult of icons (a temporary one, as iconoclasts were to come once again at the attack at the beginning of the following century). The Carolingian court and intellectuals had thus to walk through a narrow path lying between the positions of the iconoclasts (that they wouldn't possibly support, and

[511] Noble 2009, p. 163. He also gives a reconstruction of the work's structure at pp. 180-206. Previously the most detailed discussion about the *Libri*'s composition and authorship was arguably that of Freeman (1957), which could still be considered a good introduction; some of the ideas there expressed were subsequently revised by the author in decades of study and found their expression in particular in Freeman (1985).

that they had openly rejected in the past) and those of the Eastern iconodules (that, despite papal support, they wanted to consider as tantamount to idolatry, a perfect way also to discredit the Eastern Empire as the true Christian *imperium*). The *Libri Carolini* became the expression of such a path. The debate in which they inserted themselves was of extreme subtlety and sophistication, made more complex by the linguistic barrier and the need to translate Greek concepts into Latin.[512]

Built almost on a step-by-step process by attacking the canons from Nicaea, the argumentation presented by Theodulf of Orléans in his *Opus* is relatively straightforward, though its philosophical implications has been long recognized by scholars: the iconodules (so the Carolingians pretended to interpret their position [513]) accorded to artistic objects the same worship (*adoratio*) that should be solely reserved to God; this would represent in turn a fundamental mistake, because artistic objects are exclusively part of the material world, with no relationship to the spiritual one. Celia Chazelle in particular identified in the relationship between the material and the spiritual

[512] It has been an *annosa quaestio* among scholars whether the Carolingian reaction to the resolutions of the Second Council of Nicaea was in part due to mistakes in the Latin translation of the Greek texts. This is the hypothesis supported, among others, by Belting (1994, p. 154).

[513] In fact, and quite obviously, this idea ran contrary to what the Greek iconodules themselves had said at Nicaea (Noble 2009, p. 170).

worlds the core of the *Libri*'s argumentation.[514]According to Chazelle, Theodulf, without falling into a Manichean temptation, recognized that, while the material world is good, it still is sharply separate from the spiritual. Once it is acknowledged that a Christian must leave the material world behind in order to reach unity with God in the spiritual, and once it is understood that images, as artistic objects, are solely material, the iconodule position that recognizes to some images, the icons, a spiritual essence, is shown as untenable and, what was more important at Theodulf's eyes, as unorthodox. [515] Needless to say, Theodulf made ample use of both Scriptural and Patristic sources, including the two letters from Gregory the Great to Serenus of Marseilles.[516]

There is one particular argument, among the ones in Theodulf's arsenal, that should deserve to be mentioned here. According to him, Christian art, far from being negatively tainted, may have a positive impact, insofar as it avoids falling into "superstition" (that is, idolatry). Far from being a compulsory presence in Christian spaces or on Christian objects, figurative art becomes useful as a tool for vitalizing the memory of past events and people. In few words, for Theodulf art is deemed useful as

[514] Chazelle 1993, p. 54.

[515] Ivi, pp. 56, 60-61.

[516] Noble comes as far as to define him "a super biblical scholar, a gifted theologian, and the finest poet of the Carolingian age." (2009, p. 163).

commemoration and ornament; it could be used in a variety of other ways, but the fundamental point is that it was not holy in any possible sense.[517]

Despite its philosophical imprinting, and the relevance of the arguments it presented, Theodulf's work did not become as widespread as it was originally intended to be. An intellectual like Hincmar of Rheims mentioned it almost eighty years after its redaction, *passim*, but just as a work he had had the opportunity to find and read during the period of his youth spent at Aachen.[518] Neither was it the last word coming from the Carolingians concerning the thorny issue of images. The reign of Charlemagne's son and successor, Louis the Pious (813-840) coincided with a renewed struggle over images in the east, prompted by the rise to power in Constantinople of the Amorian dynasty (820-867). The result was a *florilegium* of documents, exchanged between Louis' court, the pope, and Constantinople itself.[519]

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[517] Ivi, p. 226; Belting 1994, p. 298.

[518] Freeman 1957, pp. 664-665; Freeman 1985, p. 67.

[519] A comprehensive list is given once again by Noble (2009, p. 263). It includes the letter written by emperor Michael II (820-829), the founder of the Amorian dynasty, to Louis the Pious, the *Libellus Synodalis* that resulted from a meeting of Frankish bishops held in Paris in 825, the letter by Louis the Pious to the envoys he sent to Rome to discuss with the pope, another letter also by him but this time addressed directly to the people, and finally an *Epitome* aimed at summarizing the content of the abovementioned *Libellus*. It is interesting to note that it is in this

Perhaps more importantly, at the same time when the court of Charlemagne's son and successor began to deal with the Second Iconoclasm, an iconoclastic episode presented itself inside the borders of the Frankish empire itself. The man responsible for it was Claudius, bishop of Turin (818-827). On the subject of images, he wrote an *Apologeticum atque rescriptum Claudii episcopi adversus Theutmirum abbatem* (commonly known simply as *Apology*), a text in which he defended quite a radical position (from a Western point of view) against images.

Things will definitely change in the next two centuries. Meanwhile, the death of emperor Theophilus (929-842), commonly recognized to be the last of the Iconoclastic emperors, followed by the deposition of patriarch John VII, had allowed for the second (and this time definitive) restoration of the cult of images in the East, in 843. The Cluniac monastic reformers will be ardent promoters of religious and sacred images (and this in turn will prompt the equally ardent reply of Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercian movement against the Cluniac positions).[520] This fact contributed to Baschet's hypothesis that the X century actually saw Latin Christianity moving away from a

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period that Byzantine defenders of images, such as patriarch Nicephorus I (806-815), developed the view according to which text and image, *logos* and *icon* were substantially equals in value and enjoyed the same status as potential truth-bearers. See Belting 1994, pp. 149-150; Stella 2021, p. 51.

[520] Panofsky 1955, pp. 132-133.

suspicious attitude towards images. [521] Hans Belting poignantly remarked at the very beginning of one of his most famous studies how the relationship between images and theologians has been framed under a flag of this perennial suspicion. In Belting's words "it was never easy to control images with words because, like saints, they engaged deeper levels of experience and fulfilled desires other than the ones living church authorities were able to address." [522] This relationship produced as a result the continuous alternation between condemnation and acceptance/tolerance that has been sketched here. To look for one central and constant definition for this relationship would be a mistake. But Baschet's theory about a 'revolution about images' beginning in the X century has some merit. It is of particular interest to notice how the French scholar situated this change of attitude exactly in the period where the illuminated Exultet roll emerges to attention. That is, in other words, that the peculiar composition of text and image so characteristic of the Exultet roll comes to life after the debate spurred by the Iconoclast controversy and its Western 'offsprings'. Moreover, it is equally interesting that Baschet posits a direct link between this change, on the one hand, and the increasing power of the ecclesiastical organization as a whole, on the other.[523] While his main reference points are

[521] Baschet 2014, p. 12.

[522] Belting 1994, p. 1.

[523] Baschet 2014, p. 12.

in France, it would be a mistake to gloss over this theory as irrelevant for the southern Italian case. Chapter 2 has already shown how a similar increase in the role and power of ecclesiastical institutions was a feature of Beneventan (and not solely Beneventan) life from the end of the X century onwards. To quote William Diebold in his critique to the *biblia pauperum* paradigm

"early medieval art was a complex process, one that Gregory the Great's dictum was insufficient to explain fully. Early medieval images could be books of the illiterate, but they could be much more as well."[524]

5. 2 Images and their audience in the case of the Vat. Lat. 9820

Such a premise about images and their conception in Latin Europe during the Early Middle Ages should contribute at understanding the wider cultural context in which the images of the Vat. lat. 9820 were made. It should help us addressing one fundamental issue: the role of those same images on the roll and in the liturgy it was involved in. And it should further give us a hint as to how this role would be connected with the political and social context of X century Benevento.

[524] Diebold 2000, p. 11.10.

Scholars who have worked on the Exultet rolls have long recognized how the presence of pictures on them is one of the most striking elements that make the southern Italian rolls such interesting objects for inquiry. However, they also tended to divide themselves on the subject: particularly in the past the addition of images on the rolls were considered to be another instance of the *biblia pauperum* paradigm.[525] Others have moved on to interpret them instead as directed to a different audience, usually the bishop, as the true owner of the scroll and often patron of his realization.[526] More nuanced interpretations, which take into account the complexity of the object and of its functions, have been proposed in the last decades (let's say, from the '80s onwards).[527] Once the complexity of early

[525] The paradigm seems to be implicit in Cavallo's view of the figurative commemorations of the Exultet already addressed in Chapter 1. Giulia Orofino has been particularly strong in her opposition to the idea that the pictures on the Exultet scrolls may have been another instance of the 'bible of the illiterate' (and, actually, to the idea of subsuming medieval attitudes towards images under the Gregorian dictum more generally). Her approach to the Exultet figurative cycle and to the issue of its audience constitutes the ground upon which this analysis is built. See Orofino 2004, pp. 354-355 for a critique of the *biblia pauperum* paradigm; p. 361 for the poignant remarks concerning the audience of the rolls' figurative cycles.

[526] This is in particular Kelly's thesis, see Kelly 2016, pp. 15-19 for one of its most recent re-assessment.

[527] Tsuji 2000, pp. 108-109 espouses the idea that roll's images should have been visible for most of the audience gathering in the church.

medieval relationship with images has been acknowledged, as it has been done in the preceding section of this chapter, then it becomes impossible not to look at the figurative cycle on the rolls from this perspective.

It should be added that what may be true for the Vat. lat. 9820 – the progenitor of later rolls – may not necessarily be true for its descendants. Their difference in performative role (at least until the Vat. lat. 9820 also got its own re-writing and inversion of the text-image relationship) cannot but signify this difference, at least in part. This may have contributed in determining the variety of iconographical solutions that it is possible to admire in the whole corpus of extant Exultet rolls.[528] The problem is that no information survives as to how the first of those rolls, the Vat. lat. 9820, actually 'worked'.

Looking at the better documented usages and customs of another monastic community, that of Montecassino (where Exultet rolls were both produced and used in the XI century), for example, informs us that rolls were unfolded by the deacon while he was singing the *Exultet* prayer from the ambo.[529] But Montecassino hosted an extraordinarily powerful monastic community, and an equally powerful cultural centre (not to mention the fact that the description of the rite comes from the XI century). It paired with S. Pietro's mother house of S. Vincenzo al Volturno in power

[528] Zanichelli 2014, pp. 258-269.

[529] Kelly 1996, p. 152.

and prestige (and probably outshined it in the field of cultural production). So, to establish a hypothetical parallel between the practices of this monastery and those of the Beneventan S. Pietro *extra muros*, eventually linked under the common umbrella of Benedictine customs, should be taken for what it is: an attempt at grasping some clues on an otherwise obscure subject. There is a blatant difference between the Cassinese rolls and the Vat. lat. 9820, though, as already mentioned: the inversion of the images relative to the text was not an original feature of the latter, as it was of the former.

This fact leads us to the issue of the audience: who was destined to look at those pictures? To answer this question precisely is almost impossible, and once again only hypotheses can be formulated with a certain degree of verisimilitude. Of course, the monastic community of S. Pietro may easily have been considered its intended primary audience. But the exact modalities of the way the roll addressed that audience are now lost. In theory, if one accepts Belting's theory of an original episcopal prototype for the scroll, it would be possible to say something at least about this prototype, in comparison with usages of the following centuries. However, even this path may not be easily accessible for us. Indeed, there is enough reason to speculate, for example, that the episcopal prototype itself did already contain the text-image inversion, thought as it was for a performance towards a huge audience inside the large spaces of the Beneventan cathedral; and that, in turn,

the inversion may have been deemed useless to replicate in a roll destined to a much smaller audience and, consequently, a different kind of consumption. There is no way to know. What should be done, in this case, is to stick to the (very few) statements that are the most reasonable. The first such statement is that the Vat. lat. 9820 may not have been conceived for an exclusively 'private' use, as its content and its structure would make no sense otherwise. Whatever the modalities of its use, this was embedded, at least in part, in the liturgy which the Exultet prayer was intended to be part of. The second statement is that its audience (or part of it) might be considered as sufficiently cultured and knowledgeable to understand that liturgical context, its meanings and significance, and the symbolism that surrounded the images on the roll. Lucinia Speciale emphasized how both literates and illiterates would see the roll, gathering as they were for the rites of Easter Vigil.[530] Both categories would receive the message, though likely via different means. [531] These statements are hardly reserved to the Vat. lat. 9820, as they could easily apply also to the other rolls.

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[530] Speciale 2000, p. 8. Also Orofino 2004, p. 361.

[531] Orofino 2004, p. 350. The Italian scholar emphasizes how the reception of images would be differentiated, based on the degree of 'passive' and 'active' reception by the audience, in turn determined by the individuals' ability to decode the messages being transmitted through the images themselves.

The Vat. lat. 9820, then, may be considered as a liminal object. Liminal, in the sense that it stood at the intersection between public and 'less public' (that is, reserved to a restricted audience), that adds to the liminality already present in the relationship between text, image, and material support that characterizes it.

Once the Exultet rolls, and in particular the Vat. lat. 9820, is put in context with early medieval thought on images it is possible to scrap the simplistic view that its images should be assimilated to illustrations for those illiterates who couldn't possibly understand what the deacon was singing. Instead, they can position themselves on a double level of communication: one to those who are already able to decode them; and another for those who can't (and who can eventually be helped in the process of decoding in a number of ways). With such considerations in mind, attention is necessarily drawn towards the liturgy itself.

5. 3 The *Exultet* and its liturgy: a brief sketch

If only one word could be used to describe such a liturgy, that word would beyond doubts be: triumph. Everything in the Exultet speaks of triumph, every word, every verse and allegory enmeshed in it speak the language of triumphalism against death, against darkness. The symbolism of it is unmistakable. Once again, we could resort at quoting the words of Moore, who efficaciously

described the whole ritual of Easter Eve, and in particular the lighting of the candle, as "a ritual recreation", as

"a means of abolishing the past and overcoming the darkness of chaos. The church liturgically commemorated and suffered the barren darkness of the tomb and rejoiced in triumph over it."[532]

In his description Moore had in mind the Frankish tradition of the Exultet, the one transmitted by those Gallican sacramentaries from which, after their implantation in Rome, the so-called Franco-Roman liturgy would sprung.[533] The Exultet prayer could be divided in four distinct parts: an introduction (the one properly introduced by the singing of *Exultet iam angelica turba coelorum*); the *praefatio*; the *benedictio cerei*; and the final commemorations. The southern Lombards followed their own liturgical tradition, commonly known among scholars as

[532] Moore 2011, pp. 183-184.

[533] The process that led to the later birth of the Roman liturgy known as Gregorian is in truth more complex and nuanced. Of particular interest is the fact that the same Franco-Germanic liturgy that would give life to the Romano-German Pontifical and to the subsequent developments of Roman liturgy was actually and in first instance the result itself of the transplant of the ancient Roman liturgy north of the Alps, on the wake in particular of Carolingian attempts at reaching liturgical uniformity. See Pinell 1997, pp. 142-147.

Beneventan, and which managed to survive for centuries, even after the spread of the Gregorian reform, with the active support of the new Norman overlords, had managed to change the religious traditions of the Meridione forever.[534] This Beneventan tradition of the Exultet is mainly preserved in two manuscripts, the *Missale Antiquum* VI. 33 and a Roman Gradual, Vat. lat. 10673.

In the Beneventan liturgy, the prayer of the Exultet differed from the Franco-Roman tradition mainly in the text of the *praefatio*, but also in the way it was integrated into the overall liturgical celebration. Differently from the Frankish and other Western liturgical traditions, indeed, in the Beneventan area the prayer was chanted not at the beginning of Easter Vigil's liturgy, but at their end, immediately before the beginning of the ensuing Mass.[535]

The Beneventan liturgy has been extensively studied in the first half of the XX century by René-Jean Hesbert, who provided for an in-depth analysis of the ceremonies of this liturgy. Thanks to his work, it is possible to appreciate even further the triumphal characteristics which the whole

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[534] Gyug 1999, p. 85.

[535] Cavallo 1973, p. 25. Hesbert 1947, p. 154. It should be noted here that Easter Vigil's liturgy was not, of course, limited to the Mass. It comprised a number of other rites to be performed, both before and after it, among which the blessing of the candle was arguably one of the most important, if not the most relevant at all. The Mass which followed was the 'apex' of the liturgical sequence.

Easter Vigil liturgy was embedded in. A significant way to express Christ's triumph was already found in the choice of Psalm XXIX to accompany the antiphon *Ad vesperum*, which made for the opening of Saturday's Vigil liturgies.[536] The lectures that followed, mostly similar to their Roman counterparts, followed the same trend. What follows is the reconstruction of the liturgy surrounding the *Benedictio cerei* as reconstructed by Hesbert from both the abovementioned manuscripts, and in particular the Vat. lat. 10673, with the parentheses indicating the different wording of the *Missale antiquum* and the italics used for the names of the prayers:

"Post haec accendatur ignis novus ex ignario vel alio (quolibet) livet modo; dicaturque super eum oratio hec: *Deus qui Filium tuum angularem scilicet lapidem* (oratio suprascripta) De quo igne (benedicto igne) accendetur cereus; et, quasi ex occulto, proferatur in puplicum (puplio). Tunc episcopus aut (vel) presbyter cum eodem (ipso) cereo accendat (var.: accendatur) Cereum (var.: Cerei) preparatum ad benedicendum. Et accensum tangat (tangat eum) cum Crisma (Chrisma), faciendo (faciens) in illum signaculum sanctae Crucis (signum Crucis). Deinde diaconus sumens (tangens diaconus) Cereum, ter pronuntiet: *Lumen Christi*. Respondit in choro (R. cuncti): *Deo gratias*. Et incipit benedicere Benedictione quae hic

[536] Hesbert 1947, pp. 154-55.

notata est (Deinde dicit diaconus): *Exultet iam angelica…*Deinde incipit benedictionem cereis […]"[537]

The blessing of the candle was situated between the eleventh and twelfth *lectio* (second-last and last of the list respectively) of the Easter Vigil's liturgy, which in the Beneventan liturgy corresponded, respectively, to a reading from chapter III of the Book of Daniel (the episode of the Hebrew youth being burned alive but saved from the flames) and the reading *Haec est hereditas* (from Joshua 19:16 in the Vulgate). Hesbert already noted that this produced an idiosyncratic position for the *Benedictio cerei*, in the midst of two readings and thus breaking what he defined as "un tout logiquement ordonné".[538]It is not the purpose here to attempt an explanation of this peculiarity (about which Hesbert himself was not able to find an answer). It is instead relevant to note that this position of the *Benedictio cerei* brought it closer to the core liturgy of the Vigil, which opened with a procession to the baptismal fonts immediately after the last *lectio*.

The rites themselves of the *Benedictio* and the *Accensio cerei* have been thoroughly reported by Kelly with particular reference to their figurative representation on the rolls.[539] Suffices to mention that in the Beneventan tradition the

[537] Ivi, p. 188.

[538] Ivi, p. 190.

[539] Kelly 1996, pp. 150-152.

candle was lit by the bishop or, alternatively, it was blessed by him with chrism. Whatever the case, the bishop was undoubtedly one of the main actors (if not the most important one) of the rite.

5. 4 Iohannes *praepositus*, S. Pietro *extra muros* and the patronage behind the Vat. lat. 9820

Once we have recollected the Christo-mimetic, or Christo-centric, conception of kingship prevalent during the Early Middle Ages, and we have reconstructed what kind of political thought, or political philosophy, was prevalent in the same time period to give substance to that same conception (Chapter 4); once we have discussed the role and conception of images in the early medieval West and their relationship with the Exultet liturgy (previous part of the present chapter); and once we link all these elements together with what has been said about the situation in Benevento at the time the Vat. lat. 9820 was made and used (Chapters 2-3), then we have almost all the pieces set ready to build an interpretation of the ruler commemoration on the first surviving Exultet roll that could take into account all the complexities and nuances of such a peculiar product of southern Italian medieval art and, more importantly perhaps, of the cultural and intellectual environment that produced it.

The fundamental premises of our argument have been already stated in Chapter 1 and reiterated in this chapter: pictures on the first surviving Exultet roll have a precise function. This function cannot be constrained into the limits of the *biblia pauperum* model. Moreover, among those pictures the presence of a depiction of the ruler accompanying the formulaic commemorations of his power is of fundamental importance for understanding the very reason for the existence of the Vat. lat. 9820.

The artist who worked on the images, and the patron who commissioned it, had no apparent reason for choosing such a way of representing the ruler. It had no apparent grounding on the text being chanted during the liturgy, which simply evoked the name of the ruler and asked for God to remember him. During the next two centuries, other artists and their patrons will freely reinterpret this passage of the text, and they will opt for much more 'sober' representations. Both them and their predecessors were operating inside what Francesco Abbate labelled (building on previous insights by Guglielmo Cavallo) a 'zone of iconographical probability', that is they enjoyed a certain degree of freedom in choosing their subjects and how to depict them.[540]

[540] Abbate 1997, p. 124; Cavallo 1973, p. 37 defines it as the freedom the artist had to choose potential solutions to the iconographical issues arisen by the theme to be addressed, among a (not unlimited) number of possibilities.

The Vat. lat. 9820 shows us a ruler at the apogee of his power, crowned by angels, and standing 'upon' his army, two candles in his hands, and wearing a blue mantle with golden spheres over white garments. The background (originally blue-coloured) is devoid of any form of spatial determination. The figure itself occupies almost entirely the folio it is on.[541] It shares its remarkably large (relative to the roll) size with only a handful of other figures: the archbishop at the very beginning of the roll; St. Peter at the very end of it; the deacon, when shown during the blessing of the candle; and Christ himself. It is impossible to overlook the ruler's presence in the figurative system of the Vat. lat. 9820. But how to interpret it?

It has been shown in Chapter 2 how Benevento experienced a period of remarkable political change in the decades that followed the time both the Vat. lat. 9820 and its hypothetical episcopal prototype were made. The ancient southern Lombard capital went from being a part of (and a secondary capital to) the largest Lombard polity since 849 (and actually, if one considers also the duchy of Spoleto, even larger than that) to finding renewed autonomy under a new branch of the dynasty. Internally, it went from being subjected to a powerful prince, able to impose himself as

[541] To make the figure of the ruler larger compared to others, in order to emphasize his importance, is a technique already present also in Carolingian miniature. See Schutz (2004, p. 253) for an example related to Charles the Bald.

the focal point of urban networks of power, including ecclesiastical ones, to a situation where the prince's power was waning, and the urban aristocracy was able to increasingly impose its own will and ultimately take full control of urban political and social structures. Depending on which hypothesis we decide to accept for the dating of the Vat. lat. 9820, when the roll was made this process was only looming at the horizon or had just begun: before 981 Pandulf I was still very much alive and at the height of his power; in the interval 985-987, instead, two of his sons had already been killed by the Saracens, and another son had been driven out of the city together with archbishop Aio, Alfanus then taking his place at the head of the Beneventan church. This issue has some bearing to the argument of this chapter, and it will be explored further in the next section.

For the moment it suffices to say that Iohannes, the presbyter and *praepositus* of the monastery of S. Pietro *extra muros* and patron of the Vat. lat. 9820, commissioned his lavish liturgical scroll at this particular juncture in time for Benevento. He commissioned a copy of an episcopal prototype, according to Belting's hypothesis, a copy which was produced, evidently, with the archbishop's authorization. Let's focus for a moment on this episcopal prototype of which we know almost nothing. The only thing we know is that it was made during the reign of Pandulf I and under the bishopric of Landulf I, the latter's brother and newly promoted archbishop of Benevento. It is known how Landulf promoted the composition of a

number of illuminated liturgical manuscripts, of which we have survivors in the forms of a Benedictional and a Pontifical. These, together with a new roll specifically made for the celebration of one of the most important liturgical festivities in the Christian calendar, would have fit perfectly into a policy of glorification of an archdiocese that, after all, claimed jurisdiction over a large swathe of southern Italy, prided itself on apostolic foundation, and had its seat in a city with a glorious political and cultural past in the eyes of southern Lombards. Looked at from this perspective, Thomas Kelly's statement that the roll was eminently a luxurious product made for the bishop and his personal glorification (a double glorification, the result of both him being the bishop and of his role as main celebrant of the rites) can be taken as only partially correct, and hardly sufficient.[542] Indeed, keeping it as the sole motive for the roll's existence is limiting, and only by looking at the larger historical context it is possible to better discern the limits of this view. Once we understand that it is not possible to posit a strict dichotomy between episcopal and princely power in Benevento at the time the prototype of the Vat. lat. 9820 was made, then it is possible to understand that the glorification of the religious authority of the new metropolitan see could only go hand in hand with that of the prince (to whose house, it should be reminded, the archbishop himself usually belonged, in the

[542] Kelly 1996, pp. 205-206.

X century). So, Kelly's statement needs to be modified accordingly.

This refinement of our understanding of the episcopal prototype of the Vat. lat. 9820 naturally gets reflected also on its copy. With two significant differences, though: its patron, and the changed historical circumstances of its realization. While its episcopal prototype supposedly performed its role in the cathedral, the Vat. lat. 9820 was destined instead to a very different place, and a different audience: the inhabitants of a female monastery lying outside the urban walls. Moreover, the very first monastic foundation ever built in Benevento, a ducal foundation, attributed to the very same person who, according to the hagiographic tradition of St. Barbatus, actively contributed to the final conversion to Christianity of the Beneventan Lombards and their duke. But the nuns were not the sole possible audience: the inhabitants of nearby *casali* should be taken into account as well.[543] More importantly, S. Pietro did often play the role of temporary residence for

[543] Bove 1995, p.177 points at how those monastic foundations positioned around the city worked more towards the 'outside' than the 'inside' of Benevento, towards those communities living in the outskirts, or in the countryside. He explicitly mention S. Pietro *extra muros*, remarking once again that it was the most ancient of those communities. La Rocca (2018, p. 507) for how the city walls of a city (and their representations) could set a boundary between outsiders and insiders, constituting different communal identities, an interesting statement for our considerations on the audiences of the Vat. lat. 9820.

important officials, clerics, and notables, and not just from Benevento.

It has been mentioned that S. Pietro *extra muros* was a ducal foundation, built by Theoderada, wife of duke Romuald, in the second half of the VII century, and how it is attested as dependency of S. Vincenzo from the end of the IX century. When Iohannes became its *praepositus*, then, the relationship between S. Vincenzo and S. Pietro was already well-established from at least more than half a century. The *Chronicon Vulturnense* reports four different confirmations of S. Vincenzo's possessions from the first half of the XI century, two from emperors (Henry II and Conrad II) and two from popes (Sergius IV and Nicholas II), and S. Pietro appears in each of them.[544] It appears systematically also before: in a diploma by Otto II, dated 983 (that is just before his death); in a confirmation issued by the Byzantine *strategos* Georgios in 892; in diplomas issued by the kings of Italy Hugh, Lothair, Berengar II (together with his son Adalpert) in the first half of the X century; in at least three other papal confirmations stretching the whole century; and in at least two diplomas issued by Otto I in 962.[545] More ancient diplomas (one, of dubious authenticity, by duke Gisulf, the other twos, among them one false,

[544] *Chron. Vult.*, doc. 185, 187, 6 and 204 respectively.

[545] Ivi, doc. 144 (Otto II), 80 (Georgios *strategos*), 99 (Hugh and Lothar), 103 (Berengar II and Adelpert), 91 (Stephen VII), 127 (John XV), 145 (Benedict VII), 115 and 116 (Otto I).

allegedly by Charlemagne) also mentions it explicitly and, in the case of Gisulf's diploma, also recall its foundation by Theoderada, clear evidence that the memory of the community's history was very well alive much later than the X century.[546]

But this monastery and its annexed church "iusta fluvium Sabbati" do appear in the *Chronicon* also as stage for important activities at least twice: the administration of justice by imperial representatives (in the presence of both the archbishop and the prince of Benevento), and a synod held by the pope himself (again, Nicholas II), this latter held "cum…archiepiscoporum, episcoporum, abbatum, monachorum, et tocius ecclesiastici ordinis, atque laycalis non parva multitudo."[547]

The 'use' of S. Pietro as place for important juridical and ecclesiastical meetings was in direct relation with its strategic location on the outskirts of the ducal capital. As the name itself implies, this monastery fell inside the category of those extra-urban monasteries that played a significant role in the re-structuring of rural spaces outside the walled cities of the Early Middle Ages. While we lack a study specifically devoted to the Beneventan monastic foundations *extra moenia*, a parallel can be established with the other capital of *Langobardia Minor*, Spoleto, a parallel which can give some interesting insights on the Beneventan situation as well. Studying those foundations lying outside

[546] Ivi, doc. 9 (Gisulf I), 10 and 27 (Charlemagne).

[547] Ivi, doc. 205.

the city walls of Spoleto, Elena Rapetti came to the conclusion that their positioning was not determined solely by their religious function, but was the result of the intertwining of different factors, chiefly among them their playing a role also in territory control and defense (in case of those foundations who also presented fortifications of some sort). Their position at the intersection of roads and other ways of communication was the concrete manifestation of a convergence of ducal, aristocratic, and ecclesiastical interests and needs.[548] This convergence also emerged from the straightforward fact that those foundations needed resources, and those resources often came from the pre-existing land properties upon which they were indeed built.[549] In the case of S. Pietro, since we know that its founder was the duchess herself, it is likely that the monastery was indeed built on ducal land, though it is impossible to substantiate such a claim with solid evidence. Rapetti's argument that monastic foundation *extra moenia* were both "spiritual protections of a rural district" and "elements of support to an extensive control structure of natural and man-made communication ways"[550], then, though borne out of the Spoletan case, is easily applicable to Benevento as well, when one considers how S. Pietro was built on the shores of one of the two rivers of Benevento, not far from its confluence in the river

[548] Rapetti 2003, p. 1589.

[549] Ivi, pp. 1590-91.

[550] Ivi, p. 1595.

Calore, and on a main road. The economic (but also political) relevance of its location can be discerned also by two documents concerning S. Pietro, from the X and the XI century respectively. The first is a *praeceptum* by which the prince of Benevento donated one of the wall towers to abbess Offa of S. Pietro, with the permission to build a door in it and to hold its keys. This document had been reported already by the XVIII century governor of Benevento Stefano Borgia (the same person who moved the Vat. lat. 9820 to Rome) in his monumental history of Benevento, *Memorie istoriche della Pontificia Città di Benevento*. Borgia dated it from the XI century, mistakenly confusing abbess Offa with the homonymous abbess of S. Pietro (this time, *intra muros*!) who lived in that century, a mistake highlighted by Carmelo Lepore and Riccardo Valli.[551] In their analysis, Lepore and Valli date the document to the reign of Pandulf I and Landulf IV instead, and more precisely to 969, the same year of the birth of the Beneventan metropolitan see.[552] This dating is relevant for the argument pursued here, since it would prove the continuation of a strong relationship between S. Pietro *extra muros* and the house of the princes of Benevento also in the second half of the X century.

The second document, also analyzed by Lepore and Valli, is dated to the reign of the last prince of Benevento, Landulf VI, and specifically to 1077. In it, the prince

[551] Lepore & Valli 1991, p. 111.

[552] Ibid.

donated lands and mills existing in the very same area to Dacomarius, arguably the same man who would in later years achieve total political control over Benevento after the end of the principality.[553] By way of this donation we may then infer that the princes of Benevento retained a keen interest in the area of S. Pietro until the very end of their existence. Close to an important roman bridge (the Ponte Leproso), to the shores of the two rivers of Benevento, insisting on an economically-relevant area, and in relation with a prominent tower of the urban walls, the *turre de Mascarii*, or *de contena* (nowadays known as 'Torre della Catena), S. Pietro *extra muros* should then be considered as a strategic pillar in the structuring of Beneventan rural space. A sort of posthumous recognition of this strategic role may perhaps even be recognized by the fact that its ruins were chosen in the XVI century by members of the Beneventan citizenry for their nocturnal meetings aimed at plotting a rebellion against the introduction of the bulla *Cum primum apostolatus*, issued by Pius V in 1566.[554]

We know nothing about the architecture or the spatial organization of this extra-urban monastery. Nothing has survived. It is possible to infer, from its location just on the banks of the river Sabato and on the other side (relative to the city) of an important Roman bridge (nowadays Ponte Leproso) that it could have had enough space (either built or open) to host the retinues of these important figures, as

[553] Ivi, pp. 89-96.

[554] Noto 2010, pp. 19-20.

the area itself is plain and relatively large, a feature not so common in the midst of the Beneventan hills (not coincidentally, the banks of the river Sabato will be the core of Beneventan agricultural production for centuries to come). Its architectural history since its original foundation is lost to us, and this means that it is impossible also to ascertain whether the passage under the jurisdiction of S. Vincenzo al Volturno had been marked by changes in its structure, by way of renovations or thorough reconstructions (not differently from those experienced, in different circumstances, by its mother house).[555] Marcello Rotili proposed to obtain glimpses on how S. Pietro *extra muros* could appear, by looking at the only other surviving church built by duchess Theoderada, S. Ilario *foris portam* (as the name itself suggest, an extra-urban church, just outside *Porta Aurea*).[556] However, while recognizing that S. Ilario also hosted a monastic community attached to it, it could not give us any concrete information at how the structure of S. Pietro looked like, particularly at the end of the X century, when its role as S. Vincenzo's main dependency was, by and far, consolidated.

Consequently, it is also impossible to reconstruct the environment in which the Vat. lat. 9820 was used, except

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[555] This loss means we cannot recover the "liturgical stage" of the Vat. lat. 9820, borrowing the definition from Palazzo, who highlighted the role of monumental art (and we may perhaps consider also an Exultet roll as part of it) in its setting. See Palazzo 2006, p. 175.

[556] Rotili 1974, pp. 210-12.

for arguing, in quite a truistical way, that it must have been somewhat smaller than the urban cathedral. This loss of information is all the more despicable as, in the words of Baschet, "les images médiévales n'ont pas été conçues comme s'il s'agissait de tableaux destines à ĝtre accrochés sur les murs d'un musée […] Ce sont des images-objects, ou des images-lieux, adhérant à un object ou à un lieu, dont elles constituent le décor et dont elle accompagnent l'usage." [557] The images on the Vat. lat. 9820 were no exception. Like all the other Exultet rolls, they combined a relationship with a peculiar object (the scroll) and the place where the object was being performed. The loss of that context, then, hampers the possibility for a more in-depth analysis of the Vat. lat. 9820's performative role.[558]

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[557] Baschet 2011, p. 179. To the French scholar's words we may add also Paolo Piva's, who rightly argued about the fundamental importance of the functional and institutional context of each church for a proper understanding of the ends and means of medieval images (see Piva 2014, p. 161).

[558] Knowledge of ecclesiastical spaces in southern Italy and their own performative and ritual roles is advancing, and projects such as *Mapping Sacred Spaces. Forms, Functions, and Aesthetics in Medieval Southern Italy*, (Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max Planck Institute for Art History, in collaboration with La Sapienza Università di Roma), directed by Manuela Gianandrea, Ruggero Longo, Elisabetta Scirocco, are at the forefront of scholarly effort on the subject (link: https://www.biblhertz.it/en/dept-michalsky/sacred-spaces). However, due to surviving evidence, research is substantially oriented towards the Romanesque and subsequent periods. Lombard sacred architecture

One thing stands for certain: the iconographical cycle of the Vat. lat. 9820 does not lend itself to the glorification of the monastic community it was commissioned for, if not indirectly. We do not find anywhere any representation of monks or nuns. Significantly, the abbess of S. Pietro is mentioned, but not represented: Iohannes offers his roll to St. Peter, not to her (Figure 17). He makes the roll speak about him, not the community he oversaw.[559] While this fact fits perfectly in the iconographical tradition of the time, and it would be less surprising if we accept Belting's theory of a copy of an episcopal prototype, still it is telling that some form of representation of the monastic community does not figure among the additions made to the original. It is only Iohannes, the patron, who shows up. His figure stands in obscurity in historical sources, but it is possible to gain some insights by comparing him with one of his

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is, unfortunately, mostly lost. While it would still be possible to trace continuities, and to make inferences based on Romanesque developments, these must necessarily be tentative, and their use require caution.

[559] The dedication in question recites as follows:

"Hoc par(vum) munus (dig)nantur susc(ipe) / sancta
Petre apostole quod devote tibi con(fer)t / iohannes
Presbiter atque sem(per) precibus de(fende?) / (pet)entem
Gaudia cu(m) sanctis illi ut concedat ha(bere).
Amen deo gratias."

Translation from Belting 1962, p. 168.

predecessors as *praepositus* of S. Pietro, Adelpertus. He appears in the *Chronicon Vulturnense* four times, and always in a prominent position. He is shown as addressing directly the prince of Benevento, Radelchis II, to redress some of the consequences of the destruction of S. Vincenzo by the hands of the Saracens. It is clear in the document that he speaks in the name of the whole monastic community of S. Vincenzo, and he does so in front of the prince and his entire court, including archbishop Peter, the abbots (possibly, those of the monastic communities of the capital) and various nobles.[560]

He is found also, this time together with abbot Maio, in the precept issued by the *strategos* Georgios,[561] and in another precept by Radelchis II, this time issued in the presence of empress Angeltrude.[562] It is evident that the *praepositus* of S. Pietro is a very important figure in the overall hierarchy of S. Vincenzo's community. In all three mentions, he appears as a 'second-in-command' of the community, clearly being thought as having sufficient standing to address the prince of Benevento alone, or to support his abbot in dealing with imperial authorities (Georgios) or with the prince in presence of an empress.[563]

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[560] *Chron. Vult.*, doc. 79, pp. 20-21.

[561] Ivi, doc 80, p. 22.

[562] Ivi, doc. 81, p. 24.

[563] On the more general duties of the *praepositus* see Penco 1995, p. 356.

The patron of the Vat. lat. 9820, Iohannes, stepped into this role at least half a century later, arguably with the same prominence observed in Adelpertus' case. While it is possible that the particular standing of the *praepositus* Adelpertus could have received an unwilling enhancement due to the situation of disarray created by the destruction of the mother house,[564] the fact that he showed up twice together with his abbot indicates that this could have been only part of the story. It is evident that S. Pietro, or at least its *praepositus*, enjoyed a position of importance, and it is unlikely that a complete reversal could have taken place in the next century, also considering how prominently the monastery of S. Pietro keeps figuring in the various precepts and diplomas of the *Chronicon*. These are all reasons to believe, then, that Iohannes himself could have been a person of a certain standing in the community of S. Vincenzo, and that he may have enjoyed a relatively close relationship with both the prince and the archbishop, following in his predecessor's footsteps. While two abbots of S. Vincenzo in the next decades will bear the name Iohannes, it is of course impossible to state whether or not 'our' Iohannes may have been one of them, thus holding the role of both *praepositus* of S. Pietro and abbot of S.

[564] Federico Marazzi has correctly contextualized the documents reported in the *Chronicon* for the first half of the X century as testifying to a constant, and much needed, attempt of the exiled community of S. Vincenzo to find its own new place in the framework, both urban and political, of Atenulfid Capua. See Marazzi 2010, pp. 191-192.

Vincenzo. Nor it is possible to ascertain whether the Iohannes *presbiter et praepositus* who appears twice in the *Chronicon Vulturnense*, one time through his signature and the other alongside abbot Roffridus, is the same person as the patron of the Vatican roll, though this may be more likely, particularly since one of the documents in which he appears is dated to the later part of the X century.[565]

Once contextualized in this way, it is not very hard to imagine Iohannes asking to (and obtaining from) the archbishop the authorization for copying the Exultet roll. It is not hard either to hypothesize a will to celebrate his position as *praepositus* of a very important dependency of S. Vincenzo: this would explain how he chose to be represented vis à vis St. Peter, a saint of obvious importance not only for his apostolic role, but also for the presence of an important church dedicated to him inside

[565] This document is the n. 170, dated 988, that is seven years after the death of Pandulf I and during the regency of his widow Alohara, who personally chaired the meeting the document refers to. The other document, containing the signature of a Iohannes *presbiter et prepositus* comes from fifty years earlier (939) and it is the n. 87. Interestingly, this document also testifies to the relationship existing at the time between S. Vincenzo, the princes of Capua-Benevento, and the Eastern Empire, as it is dated from the reigns of both emperor Constantine VII Porfirogenitus and those of princes Landulf (II of Benevento; IV of Capua) and Atenulf III, a characteristic that it is possible to find also in the other documents recorded from the same time period.

the very complex of S. Vincenzo itself.[566] Keeping in mind that S. Pietro *extra muros* appears as a sort of 'interface' between S. Vincenzo and the Lombard capital, it is conceivable that Iohannes decided to commission an object that would have at once communicated his personal relevance and his connections (and those of the community he belonged to) with the Beneventan church and court. Looked at under this lens, the issue itself of where the Vat. lat. 9820 was produced, whether in a *scriptorium* attached to the cathedral or in S. Vincenzo itself, as proposed by Myrtilla Avery and, later on, by Flavia De' Maffei and Speciale, appears to have a possible solution.[567] In this sense, indeed, Belting's hypothesis could gain more substance, as Iohannes could have purportedly chosen to look in Benevento for what was to be, after all, a Beneventan-related commission. The interpretation of the archbishop's representation as *Authorisationbild*, also proposed by Belting, could correspondingly assume a new value from this point of view. Of course, even under these assumptions on Iohannes' patronage, it is not at all impossible that he could have decided to commission the scroll to S. Vincenzo nonetheless. However, the fact that in

[566] This church was destined to host the graves of the monks, among other things, as witnessed by the *Chronicon Vulturnense* itself (III, p. 375).

[567] Avery 1936, p. 34; De' Maffei 1985, pp. 349-350; Speciale reprises and explicitly accepts her hypothesis on the roll's provenance, in Speciale 2014, p. 90, n. 52.

the '80s of the X century the monastery *iuxta flumen Vulturnum* was, at least, in a state of relative abandonment (the first hints at a renovation activity, that Marazzi convincingly located at the ancient mother house, are only traceable from the abbacy of John III, 981-984)[568]and the remark by Edoardo D'Angelo and Flavia de Rubeis that the scriptorium was fully re-established only under abbot John IV (998-1007), all make this hypothesis weaker.[569] With a few buildings still in place, and the main activities still taking place in Capua, the possibility that a full-fledged *scriptorium*, with all the resources it would have required, may have been in place in S. Vincenzo at the time of Iohannes' commission seems unlikely. There is a third alternative though, that apparently eluded the attention of scholars: Iohannes may have commissioned the roll to the community of S. Vincenzo living in Capua. This option would leave the Vat. lat. 9820 inside the monastic framework that Myrtilla Avery and Speciale first hypothesized for it[570], while at the same time overcoming the issue posed by the distressing state of the original monastery. The community had been in Capua long

[568] Marazzi 2010, p. 193.

[569] D'Angelo 2012, p. 52; De Rubeis 1996, p. 31. That the state of S. Vincenzo al Volturno in the second half of the X century would hardly have allowed for the realization of an object such as the Vat. Lat. 9820, was already noted by Belting (1962, p. 179) as further proof of his own hypothesis on the roll's Beneventan provenance.

[570] Avery 1936, p. 34; Speciale 2014, p. 90, n. 52.

enough to build a consistent presence in that city, made even more necessary by the proximity to the core of southern Lombard political power, so it is not at all unreasonable to assume that it also had the capabilities to carry out the realization of an object such as that commissioned by Iohannes. This hypothesis is not devoid of issues as well, though. The first of them would concern dating. The political union between Capua and Benevento can be considered dead by 982-3. While this doesn't mean, of course, that no relationship thereafter existed between the two cities (which would be absurd to claim), still it would require a further explanation about why the *praepositus* of S. Pietro should have commissioned his scroll for Benevento in another capital. Common belonging to the same monastic community hardly provides for an answer. It has been convincingly argued here that Iohannes' commission arose from the will of celebrating his own position in Benevento (and only secondarily, perhaps, inside the framework of the institutional organization of S. Vincenzo). To commission a scroll in Capua for a Beneventan monastery would have been not only a questionable choice, but also perhaps a counterproductive one, if the turmoil of 982-3 with all its consequences is brought to the fore.

To save the hypothesis, then, a further step should be taken, namely, to give further credit to Speciale's own proposal about dating the roll using 981 as a *terminus ante quem* which she advanced based on a combination of

iconographical analysis and reading of the text of the commemorations (the identification of Alfanus as the archbishop represented on the roll, and that of a first *pandulfus* being commemorated with Pandulf I, as seen in Chapter 1). Accepting such a dating would mean to find Iohannes operating in a whole different context. With Pandulf I still alive, and actually at the apogee of his power, the Capuan option would look more plausible, at least. Paradoxically, however, it is precisely the political situation that should prevent accepting this proposal too readily. At that point, why should Iohannes have felt compelled not to commission the roll in the same city it was designed to be used, a city that the Capuan overlord had just elevated to the prestigious rank of metropolitan see, whose bishopric was led by a brother of the same overlord, this latter being currently busy projecting this new prestige via a series of illuminated liturgical rolls? All three characteristics were actually shared not only by Benevento but by both cities. Looked at from this perspective, Capua and Benevento would have been options of equal validity, with Benevento slightly advantaged by the simple fact that we do not have surviving illuminated rolls coming from Capua from the X century. To decide between them, one could apply a sort of Ockham's Razor and opt for the 'simplest' one, that is the one closer geographically. If one adds the rest of Belting's argument in favour of Benevento as the place of production, the Capuan option effectively disappears from the list of plausible alternatives.

This would rule out the possibility that the Vat. lat. 9820 may come, in one way or the other, from S. Vincenzo, and consequently it would further strengthen Belting's original proposal and ground the roll more safely in a Beneventan context. At the end of the day, and at the current state of evidence, this is as far as it is possible to go, and the reflection given here cannot surpass the stage of sensible suggestion, aiming to provide a small contribution to the long path leading to a definite answer. The hypothesis advanced here should be read as complementary to Belting's more specifically art historical argument.

Other questions loom at the horizon: why Iohannes chose the Exultet for its copy; and what is the role of the ruler's commemoration. The two questions are strictly intertwined. To begin with, it is impossible to know whether Iohannes commissioned other manuscripts during his tenure at S. Pietro (in the guise of rolls or otherwise). But that he chose the Exultet, among all possible choices, could hardly have been due to chance. The argument forwarded here is that part of the answer may lie precisely in the commemoration of the ruler. This picture of a sovereign, which has been the starting point of the analysis, must now be brought again on the centre stage.

An investigation should be pursued about the vocabulary that the author (and the patron) of this image used in order to convey a certain representation of rulership. Specifically, the three elements of this visual vocabulary that most

strikingly characterize it will be under scrutiny: the crown, the angels, the candles.

5. 5 The Vat. lat. 9820 and the ruler commemoration: sacramental kingship represented in southern Italy

Lucinia Speciale argued that the act of crowning the prince by the two angels may have been a reference to anointing. Under this hypothesis, the two angels would have taken the place of the bishops performing the ceremony.[571] Chapter 3 has shown already the plausibility that anointing was not only known in southern Italy, but that it was actually performed as part of the elevation to the throne of the southern Lombard princes by the time the Vat. lat. 9820 was made. Building on that, it is easy to find a connection between the presence of the crown and anointing, and to understand how the former could have come to represent the latter as well. However, to make this hypothesis working, it is not necessary to postulate that the angels were conceived as substitutes for the bishops, though Speciale is right in implicitly acknowledging that the fact the prince is not being crowned by a bishop is in itself significant. She also correctly points out that the angels are not at all unusual figures in Lombard depictions of rulers, as a quick glance to the codices of the *Leges Langobardorum* could easily show: on the Matrit. 413 an angel is present

[571] Speciale 2014, p. 91.

above King Ratchis; and two others are shown behind King Aistulf.[572] One could also move back as far in time as to reach the VII century and Agilulf's lamina, with his depiction of two winged victories not too far from the sovereign. Angels are repeatedly shown accompanying rulers, in one way or the other, both in Carolingian and Byzantine iconography, and Hans Belting remarked the similar presence of angels alongside the ruler, as a mark of Byzantine influence, on the Vat. lat. 9820 (among other elements of the same representation) and on the Par. gr. 510, a manuscript containing the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus, where Gabriel is crowning the standing emperor at his side.[573] Speciale has, once again, argued that this similarity may turn out to be only apparent: for example, the emperor on Par. gr. 510 is not flanked by two angels, but just one, the other angel's place being taken in this case by the prophet Elijah (whose figure has almost totally disappeared; the picture itself survives in a very poor state).[574] While it is impossible to accept the 'crowning by the angels' motif on the Vat. lat. 9820 as definitely of Byzantine origin, the possibility that such a connection did in fact exist cannot be discarded altogether either. And while Leslie Brubaker's statement that actually also the crowning of Basil I by Gabriel on the Par. gr. 510 was, in

[572] Speciale 1999, pp. 44-45. The folios of the two pictures are 141r and 148r respectively.

[573] Belting 1962, p. 177.

[574] Speciale 2014, p. 88.

itself, a novelty for Byzantine imperial iconography could result in a further strengthening of Speciale's argument, Belting's original intuition could be reassessed in light of new studies. [575] The Hungarian scholar Péter Váczy analyzed the subject of the *corona angelica* (angels carrying the crown to the rulers, or directly crowning them) in his work on the Holy Crown of St. Stephen, the most important element of the *regalia* of the kings of Hungary. His analysis is particularly compelling for our purposes. While he mostly dealt with later examples, he traced the origins of the *corona angelica* tradition to Byzantium. He started by acknowledging the absence of such a tradition (both textually and iconographically) in the Latin West before the XI century. Then, he moved on to notice that the situation was indeed different in Byzantium: there, Váczy argued, the emperors, shrouded as they were into the veil of the Christian Roman imperial tradition, were in less need, compared to the rulers of the Latin West, to emphasize the direct derivation of their right to rule from God (as condensed in the *Dei Gratia* formula). In Byzantium, then, there was space for mediators, including the mediators *par excellence*, the angels. [576] Váczy's

[575] Brubaker 1999, p. 158.

[576] Váczy 1985, p. 6. Mayr-Harting (1991, pp. 120-121) acknowledges that in the Ottonian lands views of angels alternated between two different versions: one, which could be traced in Thietmar of Merseburg, as eminent messengers of God and enjoying some sort of dominion, or at least overseeing power, over the dominion of men; the

hypothesis may have had its own flaws, but it did rest on some solid evidence, both textual and iconographic. On the textual side, the Hungarian scholar traced the presence of the idea of the *corona angelica* in Byzantium to the *De administrando imperio* of Constantine VII, where in chapter 13 the emperor-writer referred to the imperial *regalia* as God-made and sent to Constantine the Great by angels. Among those *regalia*, Constantine VII explicitly mentions the crown.[577] On the iconographical side, Váczy mentions the crowning of Basil II (976-1025) performed by angels on fol. 3r of the *Psalter* of Basil II, contained on the *Codex* gr. 17 of the Biblioteca Marciana, another one of the pictures already mentioned in Chapter 1 (Figure 20). Differently from the case of Basil I on the Par. gr. 510, used by Belting and refuted by Speciale, the portrait of the emperor on the Marc. gr. 17 bears stronger similarities with the crowning taking place on the Vat. lat. 9820: the emperor is in full military attire, holding both his spear and his sword (tellingly the latter is unsheathed, in contrast, for example, with the depiction of Henry II in the Regensburg Sacramentary), and he is being crowned directly by one of the two angels, while being surrounded by the smaller portraits of military saints, and standing upon subjects (who are possibly performing a *proskynesis*). A remarkable difference with the Vat. lat. 9820 is in the concomitant

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other, derived from Gregory the Great, of angels and men as fundamentally equal after the extraordinary event of the Nativity.

[577] Ibid.

presence of Christ in the upper register, holding a second crown. [578] Still, it is impossible to escape a sense of familiarity between the two pictures, the Byzantine and the Beneventan. Paul Stephenson has successfully refuted André Grabar's hypothesis that aimed at dating the picture of Basil II's crowning later to his reign, after the final victory he had earned against the Bulgarians of Samuel I in the battle of Kleidion (1014) and the following pacification of Bulgaria (ended approximately around 1018). According to Stephenson, instead of representing the triumph of the emperor over the Bulgarians (as argued by Grabar and others), and thus a specific moment in his reign, the portrait of Basil II on the Psalter is instead to be seen as a more generic representation of the emperor has a victorious Christian warrior and general, by consequence making it possible to date the portrait to a much earlier date, and closer to the making of the Vat. lat. 9820 itself.[579] The Marc. gr. 17 alone could already be taken as significant evidence in favour of relatively direct Byzantine influence on the decision to represent the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820 being crowned by angels.

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[578] Studer-Karlen interprets the whole scene as a representation of imperial Byzantine power as God-given, and compared it to the imperial depiction found on the so-called Barberini diptych, a late antique exemplar of imperial representation; see Studer-Karlen 2022, p. 146.

[579] Stephenson 2003, pp. 51-62.

What is mostly unusual on the Vat. lat. 9820, from the perspective of Lombard iconography, that is the presence of angels, and the fact that they are directly interacting with the figure of the prince through their crowning gesture, then, can come shedding some light over cross-Mediterranean influences on this Beneventan work. It should not be overlooked that the angels are giving the ruler one of the most prominent symbols of his power, i.e. the crown. Such prominence may not be due to random choice either, or solely explained as the blind reception of a Byzantine model. Far from it, it may be put in direct relationship with the conception of princely power as sacramental rulership ordained by God. One may recall the tradition transmitted by the *Chronicon Salernitanum* concerning the manifestation of God's choice of Arichis II as future prince of Benevento: this choice was manifested through the invisible presence of the Holy Ghost, who touched his sword while he was praying in a Capuan church. The reference to Arichis may be even more compelling considering that the prince on the Vat. lat. 9820 actually has a sword at his side that, perhaps significantly, comes to 'touch' one of the angels. The symbolism of the sword in the framework of Lombard conceptions of rulership has been already thoroughly analysed in Chapter 3, and it needs no recalling. However, a better assessment of the presence of the sword does help shedding some light on the argument being pursued here. In this sense, the sword on the Vat. lat. 9820 does not come to represent 'simply' an ornament to the prince, or a generic reference to

his military role. It is an integral part of his *regalia*, in direct dialogue with other elements of the picture, such as the angels, and even more so when put in connection with the representation of the army and, at the opposite, with both their absence in the *magnis populorum vocibus* section of the roll. A close look at the picture itself reveals that the sword is connected to a belt. This cannot be a casual choice either. The reference should unmistakably go to the *cingulum militiae*, whose symbolism had been codified already during the Carolingian and late Carolingian times.[580] The *cingulum* and the *gladio* are explicitly mentioned in specifically reserved formulas of more than one *ordo coronationis*, where they put the ruler receiving them in direct connection with the *ecclesia*: by the sword he becomes, among other things, the *defensor ac protector ecclesiae*. The Stavelot *Ordo*, written presumably in the first half of the X century possibly in Lotharingia, could give an idea of this interrelationship. While describing the moment in which the sovereign is given the sword by the hands of the bishops, the Stavelot *Ordo* emphasizes its symbolic meaning by quoting from the Old Testament (namely, from Psalms 44:4 of the Vulgate). In turn, the author of the *Ordo* exploits this quote in order to introduce the full range of duties the ruler is obliged to fulfil by using (metaphorically as much as physically, one may imagine). The list is thorough and sports, in order: the upholding of equity (with the resulting destruction of iniquity); the protection

[580] Leyser 1994, pp. 57-62.

of the Church and those faithful to it and to the ruler; the duty to carry the fight against the enemies of the faith (heretics); to protect widows and orphans; to restore what has been abandoned; to conserve what has been restored; and, in general, to uphold virtue in his kingdom.[581] The full range of duties for the ideal king is sketched in the *Ordo*, and the ruler truly needs, in the picture elaborated by the

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[581] The text is reproduced from the edition by Jackson 2017, vol. I, p. 163:

"Gladii traditio.

Accipe gladium per manus episcoporum licet indignas, vice tamen et auc[?]toritate sanctorum apostolorum consecratas, tibi regaliter impositum nostreque benedictionis officio, in defensionem sancte Dei ecclesie divinitus ordinatum, et esto memor de quo psalmista prophetavit dicens, 'Accingere gladio tuo super femur tuum potentissime', ut in hoc per undem vim equitatis exerceas, molem iniquitatis potenter destruas et sanctam Dei ecclesiam eiusque fideles propugnes ac protegas, nec minus sub fide falsos, quam christiani nominis hostes execres ac destruas, viduas et pupillos clementer adiuves ac defendas, desolata restaures, restaurata conserves, ulciscaris iniusta, confirmes bene disposita, quatinus hec in agendo virtutum triumphus[?] gloriosus iustitieque cultor egregious cum mundi salvatore, cuius typum geris in nomine, sine fine merearis regnare. Qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat."

Needless to say, here it is not a matter of whether the acts prescribed by this text were followed or not in practice; what matters for our argument is that it was felt necessary to put them down into written form, in order to 'memorialize' them, or to highlight them as ideals. See Parkes 2015, p. 12.

Ordo's author, to uphold the highest standard, literally imitating the Saviour of the World and his eternal kingship. That the sword in Carolingian ideals of kingship may be connected with all this is significant.

Another possible line of inquiry concerns the relationship between the figurative cycle of the Exultet and the Apocalypse. The way has been paved already by the poignant remarks made by Lucinia Speciale, in particular in two papers from 2008 and 2009. There she linked the representation of the *Mater Ecclesia* to the description of the pregnant woman in Revelation; another connection she found is with the passage *Regis Victoria*, whose apocalyptic overtones are evident.[582] The 'hidden' link between the Exultet, the Book of Revelation, and S. Vincenzo al Volturno would be, unsurprisingly, Ambrosius Autpertus. Hans Belting too had already identified an apocalyptic reference at the very beginning of the cycle (the figure of the Lamb in Majesty with the Cherubims and the Angels) and in the twelve candles that surround the *Mater Ecclesia* (Figure 17).[583]

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[582] Speciale 2008, pp. 183-185; 2009, pp. 605-606.

[583] Belting 1962, p. 173 and 175. To this we may add the remarks by Buc (2001, p. 858) pointing at Autpertus' 'exploitation' of what he defines as the paradox of medieval assemblies, their capability of representing, at the same time, both equality and hierarchical differentiation among their members, and concluding that "*La vision ecclésiologique d'Ambroise correspon remarquablement à l'une des composantes de l'idéologie politique carolingienne de l'idéologie politique carolingienne [...]. L'empereur, les*

This line of inquiry deserves more attention, as it could be further extended to encompass almost the entirety of the Exultet figurative cycle. Not only the intellectual role of Autpertus' Commentary on the Apocalypse in influencing this cycle should be addressed more thoroughly, but there is no reason to suppose that apocalyptic influences should have been restricted to a few sections of the cycle. Quite the contrary, a component of the following argument is that the ruler's commemoration must be considered as an integral part of the eschatological overtones of the cycle it is part of, and it is precisely such eschatological reference that could help making more sense of the iconographical representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820.[584]

The Book of Revelation is an extremely complex work that offers itself quite naturally – to any reader and to the medieval mind in particular – as a source of a possibly

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grands, et les éveques participent à un seul et meme honor, *ce qui les oblige à travailler ensemble à réformer l'Eglise et le royaume."* Dell'Acqua (2013, p. 37) also advances an hypothetical link between the Vat. lat. 9820 and Autpertus' work, however remarking the issue of whether such influences "siano state puramente testuali" or mediated instead by an illuminated redaction of his commentary that did not survive. On an apparently different note, Pentcheva (2020, p. 463) who prefers to emphasize the relationship with the act of creation.

[584] This eschatological referencing would work in a way not dissimilar to what Danielson and Gatti (2014, p. 5) identified for images of bishops, as responses "to present realities and with consideration of the eschatological future."

infinite number of interpretations and subtle analyses of its meaning. Speciale is undoubtedly right in stating that that related to the Apocalypse is "il più importante repertorio d'immagini dell'iconografia medievale Cristiana."[585] One has only to think at the incredible figurative cycle derived from the commentary of Beatus of Liébana in Spain to get just one of many possible examples scattered during the whole of the Middle Ages.[586] But one could also add further that the Apocalypse also gave the input for an equally vast repertoire of texts, of which the abovementioned *Expositio in Apocalypsin* by Autpertus is only one member, the one most closely related to the cultural landscape of early medieval southern Italy.

According to Speciale, the link between the Exultet and the apocalyptic tradition of the Early Middle Ages was basically due to what we may term a 'liturgical coincidence': the Italian scholar, indeed, pointed to the fact that the liturgical books of the Roman tradition prescribed, for the *Tempus Paschale* readings from the Acts and the Book of Revelation (a choice hardly surprising).[587] However, one may move the argument a bit further. In a

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[585] Speciale 2009, p. 605. On the same note Emmerson 2016, p. 21.

[586] For an overview of this fascinating figurative cycle and a reasoned introduction and contextualization, see T, Martin (ed.), *Visions of the End in Medieval Spain. Catalogue of Illustrated Beatus Commentaries on the Apocalypse and Study of the Geneva Beatus*, Amsterdam University Press, 2017.

[587] Speciale 2009, p. 610.

recent intervention don Alfio Filippi, a scholar of the Exultet theological meaning, defined the prayer as a theological vision made hymn.[588] This consideration would allow us to give Speciale's and Belting's arguments more substance. In particular, it would be a mistake to confined apocalyptic references solely to images such as the Lamb in Majesty or the *Mater Ecclesia*. Secular and ecclesiastical authorities had a fundamental role to play in Christian eschatology. In Chapter 4 it has been shown how the ruler had, among his most important duties, that of *correctio*. This term assumed particular relevance with the Carolingian wave of moral reform, and this reform was, in turn, strictly embedded in the exegesis of Revelation.[589]

The presence of the crowning angels on the Vat. lat. 9820, and perhaps even the clothes of the ruler (which, perhaps incidentally, sports seven golden spheres) assume further value in light of the apocalyptic reference. The ruler in this cycle of the Exultet should be seen integrated inside a precise eschatological framework. A small clue in this direction is given to us by Cathwulf. In the letter he wrote to Charlemagne and that we already mentioned in Chapter 4, the Anglo-Saxon intellectual clearly put his political

[588] The intervention here mentioned was delivered at the IV Congresso Internazionale 'Giuliano d'Eclano e l'Irpinia Cristiana. L'Innologia della Pasqua e gli Exultet del Medioevo', Mirabella Eclano, 22-23 September 2022, whose acts are still in publishing process.

[589] Czock 2019, pp. 105-106 for an example based on Cathwulf's letter to Charlemagne already quoted in Chapter 4.

recommendations for the king's role as *corrector* in direct relation with an eschatological perspective.[590] He went so far as to mention the reward that God would give to the fair and just Christian ruler: to rule with angels ("you will reign with the angels and archangels [...]").[591]

It is precisely this framework that gives further substance to the prominent depiction of the ruler. The Exultet, the chant that celebrates Christ's victory over death and darkness and the resurrection of light in the world, is accompanied by a picture representing the ideal of the perfect Christian ruler, a piece, and a fundamental one for that, of the mosaic of the perfect *societas Christiana*. In other words, if one opts for interpreting the figurative cycle of the Exultet in an eschatological framework, the ruler's presence in it, as depicted on the Vat. lat. 9820, becomes understandable beyond the boundaries set by the written/chanted commemoration, which in itself becomes more of a 'pretext' for the actual representation. With his resurrection and consequent victory over death, Christ inaugurated his cosmic kingship. He also inaugurated the new strand of Christian kingship and marked the beginnings of the *societas Christiana*. The decision to represent the ruler not simply with his *regalia*, but in the moment of his coronation and anointing, performed by the

[590] Ibid.

[591] MGH *Epp.* 4 (II), p. 504, 31: "in futuro regnabitis cum angelis et archangelis [...]".

intermediaries between Heaven and Earth *par excellence*, the angels, transforms the representation itself into a declaration of sacramental kingship. It comes to portray the ruler as the perfect sacramental prince, able to participate, through his *ministerium*, to Christ's victory and to perform his role half-way between immanence and transcendence, as Figurski described it.

This reading could be further refined by correlating the figure of the prince as it appears in the overall cycle, that is both in the final commemoration and among the *populus* (Figure 18). The two figures are evidently representing the same *persona*. Their faces, in particular, point to a common reference. The differences they sport, however, are equally relevant as are the similarities. And the most striking difference perhaps is that the prince among the *populus* does not wear any military symbol, a fact that has already been noted above. The *populus* and the ruler are in peace, and the gaze he is sending towards the *Mater Ecclesia* hovering upon them perhaps even strengthening this image of peace, of *tranquillitas*.[592] One could say that in the passage from this section and the final commemoration, then, both the prince and his subjects 'change clothes', and

[592] Admittedly, since the *Mater Ecclesia* and the *magnis populorum vocibus* figures are on different parchment folios, it is impossible to be completely certain that the prince is looking at the former, particularly if one considers the history of the manuscript itself. However, given that the current reconstruction is the most plausible, there is also no reason not to consider this relationship as valid.

assume upon themselves their respective military roles. They become a 'militant' community. It is not a matter of minor significance, as it becomes clearer when the roles of *populus* and *exercitus* in the structure of medieval polities (and Lombard polities, for that) is taken into due consideration, as it has been done in Chapter 3. A look at the terms themselves does help. Both were ambiguously overlapping. Already in 849, the *Divisio* sanctioning the end of the southern Lombard civil war considered the *populus* to be made of those men to be mobilized in case of war.[593]

The presence of the bishop and of the ecclesiastical orders, the army, and, earlier in the cycle, the presence of the same prince in the middle of his *populus*, thus all combine to form the overall picture of the perfect Christian community, an ideal whose remembrance becomes stronger by being incorporated into the figurative and chanted narrative of Christ's triumph. The concept of sacramental kingship, and its reception in Lombard southern Italy, that has been argued for in the previous two chapters thus becomes a useful key for interpreting and understanding the figurative commemoration of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820. It is possible to argue further that the patron of the Vat. lat. 9820 (and possibly that of its episcopal prototype) opted for strengthening this meaning by signalling a certain parallelism between the figure of the bishop and that of the prince.

[593] Gasparri 1986, p. 721.

The main reference here is to another of the pictures accompanying the commemorations, namely the one representing a figure wearing ecclesiastical robes, being blessed at the same time by the hand of God and by saints Peter and Paul (Figure 19). In a way similar to the ruler's representation, this picture has been equally subject to debate among scholars, with two different interpretations proposed. The first, originally proposed by Belting, sees in the blessed figure none others than a representation of Ianuarius, the saint and martyr reputedly the founder of the Beneventan cathedral. Belting's argument connects the decision to represent Ianuarius to archbishop Alfanus' striving to legitimize his episcopal accession. In this sense, Ianuarius, first bishop of Benevento, would have been conceived as a symbolic substitute for Alfanus himself.[594] This interpretation has been contested by Speciale. She argued that the figure on the Vat. lat. 9820 does not bear any resemblance to the extant representations of Ianuarius; moreover, the picture itself, with the blessing by the hand of God and the nimbus surrounding the head of the prelate, seems to her to be an almost literal translation into visual terms of the commemoration "beatissimo papa".[595] To choose between these two interpretations is beyond the scope of the present work, and it would require a careful re-assessment of the iconographical and textual traditions of papal and episcopal representation in the second half of

[594] Belting 1962, pp. 176-177.

[595] Speciale 2014, pp. 87-89.

the X century. However, what is important for the argument being pursued here is to signal that this picture contributes to a symmetry to the cycle. That the prelate represented in it is the bishop of Rome or the bishop of Benevento becomes less relevant compared to this fact. Not only the prelate and the two saints stand in striking symmetrical position compared to the ruler and the two angels; the next picture too, representing the bishop surrounded by the ecclesiastical *ordines* can be correlated easily with the presence of the prince surrounded by the *populus*, and the representation of the *exercitus*. Looked at from this perspective, this symmetry reinforces the idea that the whole cycle of the Vat. lat. 9820 attempts at visually describing the perfect Christian community embodied (ideally and, one could say, almost programmatically) into the Beneventan *civitas*. This interpretation could still be pushed a bit further by introducing a more eschatological reading, by connecting this symmetry with the very beginning of the roll, the depiction of the Lamb in Majesty and the angels in Heaven singing the glory of Christ (Figure 21). In this reading, the ecclesiastical *ordines* and the *populus/exercitus* would be to the archbishop and the prince respectively, like the angels are to Christ (the Lamb).

There are still some elements that could contribute further to the argument proposed here. In particular, what is arguably the most puzzling of all: the two candles held in his hands by the ruler. Scholars who dealt with the Exultet

rolls did not seem to be particularly interested into them. Belting liquidated the issue by considering the two candles as the result of a later modification: originally, so he argued, the ruler should have held the more classic symbols of his role, a staff and a sceptre.[596] This thesis has been in turn rejected by Speciale, who correctly points to the absence of any trace or sign that may indicate a re-drawing of the two objects. She also acknowledges that the two candles may be connected to a ritual (possibly related to the investiture of the ruler) whose knowledge has not survived to us.[597] This may definitely be a possibility, given the fragmentary evidence about rituals from early medieval, pre-Norman, southern Italy in our possession. It would also fit into the interpretation of the ruler's representation proposed above. So, in a sense, this consideration will be the necessary starting point and premise for what follows.

Beyond the meaning a candle may enjoy in a rite that, after all, is centred around the blessing and lighting of the same object, a link connecting the object itself, the figure of the ruler, a possible ritual involving both and, in turn, a symbolic significance arising from this intertwining, may be suggested instead by an XI century source from southern France, the *Vita Domini Burchardi Venerabilis Comitis*, written by Eudes de Saint-Maur. It recalls the life

[596] Belting 1968, p. 177.

[597] Speciale 2014, p. 92, in particular n. 57.

and deeds of count Burchard of Vendôme, one of the most prominent members of the court of the West Frankish Capetian King Robert II (996-1031), and patron of the abbey of Saint-Maur-les-Fossés. Given the context of its composition, it is unsurprising that the *Vita* paints the figure of its protagonist as that of a perfect Frankish noble, brave, strong, loyal to his king, and faithful to God. Following this pattern, it is equally unsurprising that count Burchard decided to spend the last years of his life as a monk in the same abbey he was patron to. It is on this occasion, and precisely in order to reply to the doubts expressed by some concerning his abandoning the life of the secular magnate that he had so successfully led until that moment, that Eudes makes Burchard say:

"If, he asked, elevated with military honour and, as you say, with a field full of soldiers, resplending in the dignity of count, I was bringing with my hand the candle in front of needy lantern of the mortal king, how much more then I should serve the immortal emperor and reverently bring in front of him ardent candlesticks with my hand and with a show of humility."[598]

[598] *Vita Burchardi*, p. 29: "Si, inquit, cum militari honore sublimatus essem atque, ut dicitis, militum stipatus agmine, comitatus dignitate fulgerem, mortali regi lucerne indigenti cereum manu anteferebam, quanto magis nunc immortali imperatori debeo servire atque ante

With the exception of the angels and the crown, it would almost seem like the author of the *Vita* was attempting to translate into words the ruler's representation on the Vat. lat. 9820. Since this was obviously not the case, the floor lays open to an explanation of this apparent similarity. Burchard is obviously speaking in a highly metaphorical way. However, what his metaphor is grounded on is left unspoken. In particular, it is not specified to what he may be referring to when he mentions that "mortali regi lucerne indigent cereum manu anteferebam". Two options are on the table: either the referent is a ritual, one related to his position at court and thus to his proximity to the king (and here there is a closeness to Speciale's argument); or Burchard was picturing a symbolic representation of those same role and proximity. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive, of course. Candles were used for processions, and royal processions likely were no exception for that. A reference is found in a passage by Thietmar of Merseburg that takes place during the reign of Otto I. Describing the arrival of the Saxon emperor in Magdeburg during Palm Sunday, the chronicler writes that "…sed ad caminatam suimet cum luminaribus multis comitatuque magno sacerdotum, ducum ac comitum remeabat." [599] The

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ipsum candelabra ardentia manibus cum exhibitione humilitatis reverenter ferre."

[599] MGH, *SS rer. Germ. N.S.* 9, p. 76, 16-18.

reception of kings during their *adventus* in a city by a procession of people holding candles is testified by a number of sources.[600] It could be possible then that Eudes of Saint-Maur, through the mouth of count Burchard, was referring to something similar, perhaps not necessarily limited to celebrations such as those on Palm Sunday. The fact that Thietmar mentioned such a procession also brings the focus a little closer to the world of Lombard southern Italy, via the relationship with the Ottonian world.

Interestingly, it is possible to find another reference to the rulers and candles, specifically in the liturgical context of Easter Sunday and of the Exultet prayer, coming from a different geographical context, and later in time than the *Vita Burchardi* itself. The reference in question comes from the so-called Jerusalem Ordinal. Preserved in a manuscript dated from the middle of the XII century, it contains, in the words of Sebastiá́n Salvadó "the first and fullest extant representation of the liturgy of the Holy Sepulchre."[601]It is in this Ordinal that we find a reference to the presence of a ruler (in this case, the king of Jerusalem) during the rites of

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[600] John 2017, p. 489 mentions the report by Fulcher of Chartres of the reception of Baldwin II at his first arrival at Jerusalem to take his new throne (tellingly, also taking place at Palm Sunday, as Otto's arrival in Magdeburg), which included the holding of crosses and candles. In her thorough analysis of the ceremony of *adventus* in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, Sabine MacCormack (1984) refers different times to the role of candles in the welcoming of the ruler.

[601] Salvadó 2011, p. 46. Also Salvadó 2017, pp. 404-5.

the blessing and lighting of the Paschal candle, a rite that in Jerusalem took on a particular significance and a peculiar form through the Miracle of the Holy Fire. The text sports an interesting brief description of the rite following the performance of the Miracle (when the Holy Ghost allegedly ignites the fire in the basilica).[602]

While not very clear nor explicit on this point, it would seem that in this rite of the Jerusalemite liturgy the king did indeed hold a candle, kindled by the fire of the patriarch's own candle, at the pivotal moment of the lighting of the candle.[603] Immediately after this, both the *Te deum* and the *Exultet* were to be sung. It is a small though significant hint.

It is impossible, though perhaps worthy of further research, to trace a direct link connecting the Jerusalemite rite with Benevento, a task made harder by the chronological gap of a century and a half dividing the Vat. lat. 9820 by the time the ceremony as described by the Jerusalem Ordinal allegedly first took place (1118). But to simply dismiss it, it would be a mistake all the same. What the Jerusalem Ordinal in its liturgical context, on one side, and Eudes de Saint-Maur and Thietmar of Merseburg, on the other, point to is a common referent. And this referent is the meaning of the candle and of its light vis-à-vis the figure of the ruler. This meaning could be equally expressed in rituals or in

[602] Salvadó 2011, p. 587.

[603] And this is indeed the way Bartłmiej Dźwigała interprets this passage. See Dźwigała 2021, pp. 207-208.

textual and visual representations (not to mention the textual and visual representations of the rituals themselves). In other words, the candles could be interpreted as symbols specifically related to kingship/rulership or, better, as symbols assuming a definite and specific meaning in connection to rulership. This consideration only apparently brings the analysis back at its starting point. Quite the opposite, it allows it to be more focused. The question remains, however, as to what this meaning is.

Like in the case of the ruler's conception as provider for the well-being of the realm through his mediation with the divine (Chapter 4), going backwards to look for the roots of the symbolic relationship between the ruler and light would bring a scholar to the very beginning of rulership and civilization. Near Eastern societies had established this relationship on a parallelism between the ruler and the Sun-God grounded on the shared attribute of justice (in the case of Mesopotamiam Semitic cultures, the Sun-God Shamash was also the God of Justice). And from the Old Babylonian period (ca. 1894 – ca. 1595 BCE) more than one text has survived mentioning the ruler holding the torch of justice when instituting the so-called 'redress' (Akkadian: *mîšarum*): "When my lord raised high the golden torch for Sippar [i.e. a famous ancient Mesopotamiam city], instituting the redress for Shamash who loves him"; "After the king raised high the golden torch".[604]

[604] Charpin 2013, p. 72.

The transmission of this symbolic relationship from the East to the West (through the figure of the *Oriens*, the rising sun and its light) has been the subject of an investigation by Ernst Kantorowicz in a famous paper titled *Oriens August. Lever du Roi*. The line he traced in his work moved from the Roman Empire to Louis XIV, the 'Roi Soleil'. His argument needs no recalling here. Suffice to mention that according to Kantorowicz the *Oriens' motives* shifted in time from the Roman emperors (who had in turn inherited it from the Near East) to Christ, and from Christ to the ruler. After all, isn't Christ the Final Judge, the *Sol iustitiae*?[605] Kantorowicz also found an expression of the link between light (*claritas*) and the ruler in a Byzantine ritual, the *prokypsis*. William Tronzo, who addressed this ritual in his analysis of Norman liturgies of kingship connected with the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, described the *prokypsis* as taking place on

"a raised platform or stand probably built as an independent and temporary structure for the occasion, around which members of the court assembled in a carefully demarcated order. The emperor then stood behind closed curtains on the raised platform while he was prepared with his crown, cross, and purse, and lights in the form of candelabra were brought and set beside him. At a certain moment, the curtains were then parted to reveal the

[605] Kantorowicz 1963, p. 142.

ruler, brilliantly illuminated in all of his regalia, to the sound of acclamations […] and musical accompaniment."[606]

While Tronzo takes his description from the work of Pseudo-Kodinos, a fourteenth century treatise concerning the ceremonial of the Byzantine court (and thus much later than the time that concerns this inquiry), he also acknowledges, enlarging the scope of Kantorowicz's analysis, existing evidence in favor of a similar ritual in Byzantium already from the tenth century.[607] Panegyric and other forms of encomiastic poetry, iconography, liturgy, all related the sovereign with light, in Byzantium. It should be hardly surprising, then, that a cultured poet such as Eugenius Vulgarius resorted to the same imagery in his own panegyric of emperor Leo VI.

But there is one prominent example of this relationship between ruler and light in Byzantium that may carry a specific value for the purposes of this analysis. It is possible to find it in the *De ceremoniis*, and precisely in relation to the two ceremonies that most interest us here: that of his coronation, and that of the Holy Saturday. During the

[606] Tronzo 1997, p. 116.

[607] Ivi, p. 117. The German scholar (1963, p. 159) limited himself to note that the *Prokypsis* could not have antedated the Comnenian period, though the reasoning behind this statement, except for the absence of the ritual in the *De ceremoniis*, is not developed further.

former, the *De ceremoniis* prescribes that the emperor hold a candle during his procession through the church doors and up to the ambo.[608] Similarly, in the latter case we find that the emperor was expected to lit a candle at least twice during the complex rituals of that day (during two different moments of his entrance into the church following the patriarch).[609] While the author of the *De ceremoniis* doesn't tell whether the emperor was also expected to hold them, and how, it is nonetheless a significant clue, particularly when combined with what has been shown of the Jerusalemite ritual of the Holy Fire. At least to some extent, it could point towards a more or less direct Byzantine influence, if not on the liturgy (since we have no trace in Beneventan liturgical texts of a practice such as the one witnessed by the *De ceremoniis*) at least on the possibility of conceiving a relationship between the ruler, the candles, and the liturgy of the Holy Saturday.

A whole new set of issues and problematics would open up if one were to ask what the light did exactly mean in these contexts. 'Light' is, to quote from the title of an important work on the subject by Jaroslav Pelikan, "a basic image" for early medieval thought. This means that it is impossible to look here at even one fraction of the multitude of meanings it could (and did) assume. Already for Athanasius, the Church Father and bishop of Alexandria (296/8 – 373),

[608] *De ceremoniis* 1.38.

[609] *De ceremoniis* 1.35.

light, meaning the light of [?] God, was a powerful tool for the transformation of those men and women who would accept it.[610] This light was radiated by Christ. As Pelikan put it, from Athanasius' point of view "For their status as the children of light men were dependent upon Christ in his status as light and radiance, for they participated in the light that he radiated."[611] It would be plain to say that this concept remained valid also for Athanasius' successors. Writing as he was at the end of the VIII century, Ambrosius Autpertus repeatedly spoke of light in his numerous works. He recalled one of the most important meanings of light in a sermon he composed in occasion of the Feast of the Purification, during whose rites the people would make the city resplendent with the lights of their candles, and would enter the churches by holding the same candles, which Autpertus identified as "lights of faith", showing to the outside what was shining inside the hearts of the faithful.[612]

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[610] Pelikan 1962, p. 95.

[611] Ivi, p. 96.

[612] CCCM 27B, p. 985: "…cuncta civitatis turba in unum collecta, inmensis cereorum luminibus coruscans, missarum sollemnia deuotissime concelebrant, nullus que adytum publicae stationis intret, qui lumen manu non tenuerit, tamquam scilicet Dominum in templum oblaturi, immo etiam suscepturi, fidei lumen quo interius fulgent, exterius oblationis suae religione demonstrent." Also Delogu 2018, p. 445.

Autpertus made clear the relationship between light and faith. It is this relationship that made Burchard speak of a "mortali regi lucerne indigenti cereum anteferens" as a symbol for his previous role as the West Frankish king's *fidelis*, on one side, and of the "candelabra ardentia" of the immortal Ruler as a symbol for his new monastic life, on the other. It is this relationship, again, that was highlighted in the use of candles in *occursus* and *adventus* ceremonies, and that could give meaning to the idea of a ruler holding a candle during the ceremony of the Holy Fire in Jerusalem, and the singing of the Exultet. And it is this relationship, finally, that may explain the presence of candles in the hands of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820.

The candles as carriers of *lumen fidei* may also be put in direct connection with one of the symbolic meanings of anointing itself, as explicitly communicated in the *ordines*: the transmission of the blessing of the *Spiritus* to the head of the anointed ruler, and from there down to his heart ("super caput [?] tuum infundat benedictionem eandemque usque ad interiora cordis tui penetrare faciat…").[613] At the same time, the fact that the ruler is holding the *lumen fidei* through the very object that is at the center of the whole rite the roll was used for, gives perhaps a further, subtle meaning to the candles: through them, the ruler would be participating directly into the rite, in a way not too

[613] The example is again taken from the Stavelot Ordo, in Jackson 2017, vol. I, p. 161.

dissimilar from the king in the Jerusalem Ordinal.[614] Finally, it is interesting to note, following Francesca Dell'Acqua, that Autpertus' commentary on the Apocalypse shows what she calls "an unusual emphasis" on Christ as light.[615]

Compared to his representation in the *magnis populorum vocibus* section, the ruler is, in the final commemoration, 'taken away', brought, quite literally, on a different level compared to his *exercitus*. He is visually exalted by the size of his figure, compared to the soldiers at his feet, and by his being put into a place where his only companions are angels, to whom, in a sense, he becomes so equated.

Based on the analysis of the style of the figures on the Vat. lat. 9820, Hans Belting had proposed to reconstruct the life of its figurative cycle in three steps. At first, a roll was commissioned by archbishop Landulf I: this roll, already illuminated, contained those pictures that represented the liturgy of the blessing and lighting of the candle. A second redaction of the roll would have taken place at a later date, after the death of Landulf I and the accession of Alfanus, and it would have seen the addition of new pictures, namely the very first one, representing the bishop enthroned; the third one, with Christ piercing the gates of

[614] Reynolds 1983, p. 27 also mentions how candles and candlesticks represented the ecclesiastical order of the acolytes in illuminated ordination manuscripts.

[615] Dell'Acqua 2014, p. 204.

hell; and those of the final commemorations. This second redaction, in turn, would have provided for the model of the Vat. lat. 9820 (third step).[616] While Belting does not explicitly mention the ruler's commemoration in this discussion, it is implicit that it should be considered, in Belting's eyes, as part of the second redaction of the episcopal prototype.

If Belting's analysis is correct, then the figurative representation of the commemoration was added at the time of archbishop Alfanus. Looking at the political situation in Benevento at that time, as done in Chapter 2, it would become apparent that this may have been no coincidence. Alfanus had become archbishop by an uprising of the Beneventans, who had expelled his predecessor (and Landulf's first successor) Aio together with their prince, one the sons of Pandulf I. His 'invasion' (as the sources call it) of the archbishopric, then, did coincide with a major upheaval in the ancient Lombard capital, a moment in which its relationship with Capua would be redefined after more than eighty years of union. This redefinition of Benevento's political position on the southern Italian exchequer, in turn, would have its repercussions also on the relationships with the imperial Western court (after all, the Saxon emperor will lay siege to the city less than two decades after the event), and pave the way for the long-term process of transformation which will

[616] Belting 1962, p. 170.

make Benevento into an almost independent city-state, a papal enclave in a political landscape dominated by Norman newcomers.

That the final commemoration to the ruler on the episcopal prototype would have been added at this critical juncture, again, may hardly have been the result of a random choice. The decision to modify a luxurious liturgical manuscript, one that, moreover, had a role to perform in the most important ceremony of the liturgical calendar, was both expensive and symbolically meaningful. Belting implicitly acknowledges this fact when he ties the additions to Alfanus' willingness to state his legitimacy as archbishop. So, why the ruler? And why the decision to create the Vat. lat. 9820 itself? Part of the answer has been already provided for above: by integrating the ruler's figurative commemoration in the overall cycle of the Exultet, the picture created is that of the perfect *communitas*, or *societas, Christiana*. The implicit symmetry between the ruler and the archbishop, the visual relationship with the *exercitus* (that would add to the one already established with the *populus* in the first redaction of the cycle), the attributes given to the prince (the sword, his clothes, the crowning by the angels, the candles) all contribute to the communication of the correct position of the ruler vis à vis the *communitas*.[617] This position is that of the sacramental

[617] This was, in part, already stated by Orofino (2004, pp. 363-364), though with more emphasis on the 'superior' role of the prince

prince as understood among the southern Lombards: a *christomimetes* who exercises his own office (his *ministerium*) between the immanent world of the *populus* and the *exercitus* on one side, and the transcendent Heaven of a glorious and victorious Christ on the other, not dissimilarly from the archbishop, though clearly in a different way and with different tools. Carolingian (and post-Carolingian) ideals mixed with Byzantine influences and the Lombards' own conceptions of kingship to create a unique representation of Beneventan rulership, an ideal image of the prince of that ancient and prestigious southern Lombard capital. The opportunity of using an object such as the Exultet roll for this kind of representation (a "typological representation of the ruler" as labelled by Garrison[618]) may have further commended itself to Alfanus thanks to its position in the Beneventan liturgy, as highlighted in the previous section. The fact that the roll was used immediately before the procession to the baptismal font should not be overlooked. In the Middle

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compared to the ecclesiastical authority in Benevento. Chapter 2 has shown that this would have been conceivable only before 982-3, however, when the strong rule of Pandulf I, and the fact that the archbishop was his brother (not to mention the prince's relationship with the pope), made such a conception not only plausible, but substantially true. This is similar to what has been seen concerning the actions of bishop Gerard of Cambrai (1012-1051), as argued by Byttebier 2017, pp. 188-189, also mentioned in Chapter 2.

[618] Garrison 2012, pp. 15-16.

Ages the rite of Baptism had a significant and meaningful role in the liturgical calendar. This was all the more emphasized by the fact that Baptism marked the entrance of a new member into the Christian community, with a double meaning, religious and political at the same time.[619] The idea of using a roll for conveying such a message would have been hardly a novelty for the prelate: in the Carolingian world rolls were used for the consecration of bishops, as witnessed by Hincmar, and also for rites such as Baptism itself, exorcisms, reconciliations of penitents, and the famous *laudes regiae* too.[620]

This last consideration also leads to some tentative answers for the other questions, that is why Iohannes chose the Exultet scroll of the cathedral, as eventually modified under the patronage of archbishop Alfanus, to be copied for the dependency under his care. An answer has already been sketched above, when recalling what can emerge by analyzing the figure of Iohannes and the role of S. Pietro *extra muros* in Benevento and as a dependency of S. Vincenzo. The *praepositus* may have felt the need to visually show, through an imposing medium, the relationship that

[619] This connection, between the liturgy into which the use of the Exultet roll was embedded, and the civic community participating to it as its main audience, is further strengthened by the remarks by Zchomelidse (2014, p. 106).

[620] Reynolds 1983, p. 31. The importance of the roll as a medium conveying laws, authority, and rulership is rightly emphasized by Zchomelidse (2014, p. 37).

he (and his dependency) enjoyed with the city. That need may have been felt more strongly after the breakup of direct political dependency between Benevento and Capua, particularly when considering that the monastic community of S. Vincenzo was in that moment engaged in the effort to rebuild the original settlement, and that the latter, together with many of the community's lands, was situated in a territory belonging to the principality of Benevento. The monks of S. Vincenzo, like those of Montecassino, had benefited from the policies of Pandulf I. So had the nuns of S. Pietro, as witnessed by the document of 969 mentioned above. Pandulf's widow Alohara, together with their successors, will follow the same path of donations and benefices to the great monasteries of the South. Should it be surprising, then, that the man responsible for one of the most important dependencies of S. Vincenzo, and the one most directly interfacing with the Beneventan court, aristocracy, and cathedral, decided to signal both his role and his support for the order established in the capital after the upheavals of the recent years?

The original intent behind the realization of the episcopal prototype of the Vat. lat. 9820, and of its subsequent modification, could easily find its echo in the copy.

5. 6 Conclusions

It is now clear how the presence of a visual representation of the ruler's final commemoration on the Vat. lat. 9820 should be considered, far from being a relatively 'casual' or secondary addition to the figurative cycle. Garipzanov poignantly wrote that choices in terms of visual traditions and elements used or discarded by artists (in his case, Carolingian ones) "can tell us in turn about the concurrent political culture in which certain signs were preferred above others."[621] This is exactly what has been attempted here. The ruler's representation on the Vat. lat. 9820 appears as the fruit of a specific choice, as a meditated addition to the roll's figurative cycle that opens a window onto the political culture and theology of those southern Lombards living in the last decades of the X century. If Giulia Orofino rightly claimed that the images of the commemorations in the corpus of the Exultet rolls were created "in order to be shown publicly, also during moments which were autonomous and independents from ritual action, before or after the ceremony", and that they

[621] Garipzanov 2008, p. 160. Humphreys (2021, p. 18) defines political culture as "the body of concepts, institutions, rituals and ingrained patterns of behavior that define the forms of power through which a society controls and allocates its resources and that also identify those members of society who will possess such power and on what terms." Looked at through this perspective, it could almost be said that the Vat. lat. 9820, if analyzed as it has been done in this thesis, becomes a picture of southern Lombard political culture.

had, in sum, an autonomous (and not at all irrelevant) part to play, then our analysis may claim to move a little step further concerning the Vat. lat. 9820: the commemoration of the ruler would become, in this case, one of the very central reasons for the existence of the roll itself.[622]

Through its original vocabulary, the result of multifarious influences and unique local elaboration, combined with the background necessarily provided by Latin thought about images and their role, that representation of the ruler condensed in itself the developments of southern Lombard political thought on rulership, and thus contributed in a significant way to the symbolic meaning of the figurative cycle on the roll. Without that representation, the Vat. lat. 9820 (and more so, its episcopal prototype) would have not been able to perform adequately in its role, as part of a wider field of rituals (and representations of rituals) of power.[623] Looking at it from this point of view, the *praepositus* Iohannes could truly be labelled, following Beat Brenk's definition, a "Concepteur", a man who consciously and purposefully conceived images (in this case, the

[622] Orofino 2004, p. 361: "…per essere mostrate pubblicamente, anche in momenti autonomi e indipendenti dall'azione rituale, prima o dopo la cerimonia."

[623] Following Smith (2005, p. 241) under this interpretation the Vat. lat. 9820 becomes similar (though, of course, not equal) to an inauguration ritual, defined by him as a "dramatic interlude of ritual clarity in the midst of the normal contention of court politics", a means to mix, at least ideally, both ideology and practice.

iconography of the Vat. lat. 9820) as a vehicle for a message, a tool for legitimation.[624] What is interesting about Brenk's analysis, applied to our case, is that he came to define the Concepteur as a patron who is not satisfied at the idea of cementing, via the work he commissions, a specific, existing state of affairs. Instead, his true goal is to evoke a desired one. And this is made possible mainly through the elaboration of unconventional programs.[625] The peculiar characteristics shown by the representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat. 9820, then, can be interpreted precisely as the result of such an attempt. Ernst Kantorowicz, analysing the *laudes regiae*, proposed to see in them an attempt at 'bridging the gap' between Heaven and Earth, and their respective orders, by creating a symmetry between their individual components: thus the ruler would be associated, in his role as *christus Domini*, to the angels; the pope to the apostles; the army to the martyrs; the bishop to the confessors.[626] It is hard not to perceive a sense of similarity between this description provided by the famous German scholar and what we see in the Vat. lat. 9820, in particular when the eyes stop on the prince being crowned by angels, and the pope being flanked by the apostles. Perhaps it is too far-fetched to consider the visual representation of the

[624] Brenk 1992, p. 276.

[625] Ivi, p. 277.

[626] Kantorowicz 2006, pp. 80-81; see also Speciale 2008, p. 179 for further acknowledgement of the possible relationship between the final commemorations on the Exultet rolls and the *laudes regiae*.

final commemorations on the Exultet roll as a sort of *laus* in pictures. Nonetheless, it is possible to postulate a similarity in goal: to testify to the harmony between the heavenly and earthly orders, in an historical moment when all over Western Europe, as Byttebier acutely remarks, "episcopal forms of expression" witnessed "an increasing concern to represent who they were [i.e. the bishops]" through "a coherent representation of their office", made possible by the use of many different tools, including episcopal hagiography (a characteristic we have partially seen also in Benevento in Chapter 2).[627] Byttebier states that "at the hands of the bishops, and those who imitated them, Politics and Liturgy malleably merged more into one another, however slightly, so as one could call them almost *pol-liturgy*."[628] While we do not possess anymore the episcopal exemplar of the Vat. lat. 9820 hypothesized by Belting, we can arguably affirm that it stood precisely in the midst of what Byttebier labels 'pol-liturgy', as one of the tools for its performance, to be used, moreover, in a time of fundamental importance of the Christian calendar, a moment that, perhaps not coincidentally, will play a critical role in the calendar of the later communes in their striving for affirming their own political identity.[629] A 'pol-liturgy'

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[627] Byttebier 2021, pp. 140-1. Among these new forms of expression of episcopal authority there was also, tellingly, the Pontifical, as argued by Gittos (2016, p. 22).

[628] Byttebier 2021, p. 163.

[629] Thompson 2005, p. 9.

where, however, the bishop was not (could not) be the sole actor, or even the sole protagonist. In Benevento, at least, not yet. Coopetition, that mixture of cooperation and competition for the distribution of power that we saw in action in Chapter 2, was still in place, and the Exultet iconographical cycle, in its most 'political' components, became a representation of it. It may perhaps be said that it became an indirect tool for one of its most important principles for conflict management: mediation.[630]

What has been said until now should not, however, lead to the mistake, already mentioned in Chapter 1, of looking at the commemoration of the ruler on the Exultet scroll as just another instance of political propaganda. The integration of the ruler's image inside the framework of Christian salvation, displayed inside a monastic context, could have still played a double role, adding to the depiction of an ideal *societas Christiana* the need and duty, for the congregation, to pray for the ruler's own salvation. After all, the fact that the same ruler was to be mentioned by name, and not just 'impersonally', added a layer of individuality to the prayer itself which fit well with the Christian call for individual salvation. In this sense, and with all due caution, one could say that personal and universal eschatology could be combined almost

[630] Le Jan 2018, p. 20.

seamlessly.[631] In what Chiara Lambert labelled as a remarkable first description of Heaven in Lombard culture, in the epitaph written for Ursus, son of the Beneventan prince Radelchis (839-851), dead before 851 (and thus before ascending to his father's throne), the author expresses his wish that Ursus may be welcomed by "all Heaven's citizens" ("cunctis caeli [...] cives"), and that he may enjoy the embrace of the saints and the angelic chorus.[632] All figures present, in one way or the other, on the Vat. lat. 9820.

Once moved from the cathedral to the extra-urban monastery of S. Pietro, a further, secondary, element may have been added, perhaps implicitly, to the representation of the ruler. The presence of that representation outside the walls of Benevento could strengthen its function as a substitute for the ruler himself. The prince is represented in all his power and glory, in the company of his followers, both military/aristocratic and ecclesiastical. In a political system that, following mostly the pattern of the rest of Latin Europe, emphasized the ruler's *praesentia* as the fundamental element for the cohesion of the polity, as both the Carolingians and, even more strikingly, the Ottonians, have shown, it is impossible to underestimate the role

[631] For a similar point of view applied to the case of the mosaics depicting Norman kings, see Vagnoni 2017, in particular his concluding remarks at pp. 109-110.

[632] Lambert 2010, p. 312. Also Lambert 2009, p. 57.

performed by (and the importance attached to) the image of the ruler.[633] Through the patronage of some members of the élite (the archbishop; the *praepositus* of S. Pietro) the representation of the prince, embedded in the framework of an ideal political community under the eschatological aegis of the Victorious Christ (the desidered state of affairs mentioned above), allowed the ruler to symbolically trespass that 'threatening threshold' that David Warner correctly identified as separating him from the community of his subjects, a threshold whose bridging was one of the ruler's fundamental tasks if he really wanted to rule.[634] In this picture of an iconographical cycle conceived to represent and transmit the ideal of a perfect Christian political community, the Byzantine suggestions previously sketched could find their place as well. The imperial ceremonies of Byzantium were conceived and practiced in order to tangibly give representation to divine harmony "in the rhythm and order of the courtly world." [635] The profound suggestion they exercised on whoever witnessed them could hardly have escaped the southern Lombards, and we know it did not. The reception of Charlemagne's ambassadors by Arichis II as described by the *Chronicon Salernitanum* is just one evidence of it. This may have contributed to the decision to elaborate the peculiar image

[633] Voltmer 2002, pp. 568-570; Leyser 1981, p. 748 (also p. 754 for the importance of communication in such a system of government).

[634] Warner 2001, p. 261.

[635] Angelidi 2013, p. 468.

of the ruler as it is on the Vat. lat. 9820. It becomes further testimony to how that image was considered to be central to the whole iconographical cycle, and not just a more or less necessary visual depiction of the final commemorations to the rulers prescribed by the prayer. This central role was further reinforced by the connection between heavenly and earthly world, a connection always in the mind of the medieval people, and made crystal clear by the Exultet iconographical cycle.[636] It is in this sense that the image of the prince could play too strong a role to be 'limited' to that of a 'side character', thanks to the strong interconnectedness of *imago* and *persona*.

After all, wasn't the image of Arichis II the one smashed by Charlemagne, according to the Anonymous of Salerno, for the fulfilment of the oath he made against the *persona* of the Beneventan prince?

[636] Fuiano 1980, p. 111.

6. Concluding remarks

The research conducted in the present thesis allowed, in Chapter 5, for a novel interpretation of the Vat. lat. 9820's figurative cycle in light of the representation of the ruler accompanying the final commemorations of the Exultet prayer-song.

This interpretation has been made possible by the contextualization operated in the preceding chapters. After the preliminary *status quaestionis* and methodological observations of Chapter 1, Chapter 2 set the political and social landscape of late X century Benevento by looking both backwards, since the origins of the Lombard duchy and then principality, to its relationship with external actors such as the Carolingians, the Ottonians, ad the Byzantines, and by identifying three key actors who found themselves operating in a strictly interlinked network: the prince, the bishop, and the Beneventan aristocracy. Chapter 3 moved on to explore elements constituting the ritual system of power and authority that underpinned southern Lombard rulership, with particular reference to the ritual of anointing, which it could be defined as an 'entry point' into the discussion of sacral and sacramental kingship operated in Chapter 4. To conceptualize southern Lombard rulership as sacramental, following the path tracked by de Jong and Figurski, and to make a tentative reconstruction of how this concept of rulership may have reached southern Italy from Carolingian and late Carolingian Europe has been an

important step in paving the way for the final discussion on the Vat. lat. 9820 carried over in Chapter 5.
While the one followed here is just one of a number of possible approaches that could be taken (and that have been taken) to analyse the Exultet rolls and their figurative cycles, and the Vat. lat. 9820 specifically, nonetheless it is an approach that allows for the full integration of the ruler's final commemoration, in its visual component and with all its peculiarities, in the cycle's framework. Reprising the premise stated in the Introduction, looking at the Vat. lat. 9820 through the prism offered by the representation of the ruler opened a new perspective on the roll itself, including, possibly, the formulation of new hypotheses concerning its dating and provenance, or the strengthening of old ones.

It also did offer the possibility of looking more closely at the conceptualization of rulership in Lombard southern Italy, bringing to the fore two important considerations: the first, that the southern Lombards, far from living in a state of relative intellectual isolation, could and did receive the influx of the developments that were taking place in the rest of Latin Europe, and outside of it, in the fields of political thought and political theology; in direct connection to this, the second consideration is that southern Lombards were able also to re-interpret and adapt those developments for a context that was, after all, both similar and different in its own ways to Carolingian, late Carolingian, and Ottonian Europe. Looked at from this perspective, the representation of the ruler on the Vat. lat.

9820 (but one may extend the focus to the whole Exultet cycle as well), with its idiosyncratic combination of motifs and symbols both familiar and foreign to Latin Europe, possibly assumes a new value.

6. 1 Early medieval southern Italy and the political paths of its urban centres

In his evocative book on historiography John Lewis Gaddis wrote that "understanding implies comparison: to comprehend something is to see it in relation to other entities of the same class." [637] Comparison laid at the background of most of this work, in some chapters more than in others. To look in isolation at southern Lombard rituals and symbols of power and authority or at Lombard political thought and theology, for example, would have been both methodologically unsound and plainly absurd. The first and main referent has been, quite unsurprisingly, Latin Europe in its Carolingian and post-Carolingian facets. This has been due to the simple fact that the cultural landscape of southern Lombard polities had close affinities with the rest of Latin Europe as much as to a deliberate choice of the author in emphasizing these affinities in order to make the core subject of the work, that is southern Lombard conception of sacramental rulership (with its elements and its eventual representation), emerge more

[637] Gaddis 2002, pp. 24-25.

forcefully to the fore. In no way this approach should be interpreted as espousing the idea that southern Lombards should be treated as mere appendices to the wider world of Carolingian and post-Carolingian Europe. The references to Byzantium scattered all around this work should have already alerted the reader about this. Quite the contrary, the analysis that has been undertaken in these pages have been conceived also as a possible starting ground for further explorations of other cultural influences on the elaboration of a southern Lombard ideal of rulership.

The nature of frontier zone,[638] or better of 'bridge-land', inherent to medieval southern Italy finds here its mirror. But the Carolingians and their successors were not the sole visitors to this land, nor was theirs the only cultural influx being received. The Eastern Roman Empire did not make its presence felt solely through military and political action. In the X century the Byzantine cultural tradition had found its way, and settled more or less firmly, both in Calabria and Apulia, though ostensibly in different ways and depth and through different means.[639] Apulia, the political centre

[638] Marazzi 2018, p. 257.

[639] For a recent overview of the Byzantine presence in Apulia see Arthur (2021); for Calabria Noyé (2021). The latter remarks how Calabria was of fundamental importance for Byzantine resource extraction, something that is often forgotten by scholars focusing more on Latin Europe. Calabria's strategic relevance may also help

of Byzantine control on the peninsula, while keeping its thoroughly Lombard culture at the population level (and this was recognized by imperial authorities as well, as they accepted that Lombard law, not Roman, was to be used in cases involving imperial subjects of Lombard origins[640]) produced outstanding examples of Byzantine art and architecture. A brief list of examples could include the small church of S. Pietro in Otranto (one of the few Apulian towns that the Byzantines held uninterruptedly until the Norman conquest), or, more akin to our case here, the Exultet 1 of the cathedral of Bari.

The second oldest surviving exemplar of an illustrated Exultet roll, the Bari 1, follows the Vat. lat. 9820 by a few decades.[641] But while chronologically close, the two iconographical cycles sport sensible differences. The pictures on the Bari 1 are almost perfect representatives of

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explaining why it was the target of the (in)famous campaign by Otto II that ended in the disaster of 982.

[640] One should be careful however to highlight also the common root of both Lombard and Byzantine law in Roman juridical tradition. In this sense, Lombard and Byzantine customs could be overlapping, and even be quite similar between each other, particularly in the field of family and marriage laws. See Rognoni 2021, pp. 785-6.

[641] For a detailed description and a discussion on the Bari 1, see Cavallo 1973, in particular pp. 47-80. The roll is also addressed by Zchomelidse 2014, pp. 57-60, where she rightly comments how, despite their chronological and liturgical affinity, the Vat. lat. 9820 and the Bari 1 shares very little in terms of iconographical elements.

Byzantine iconographical and artistic traditions. This is made particularly evident in those representations accompanying the final commemorations of the rulers. There it is possible to see two emperors, dressed in a way very faithful to Byzantine imperial customs, standing side by side, their heads surrounded by a halo, each holding one symbol of imperial power, the golden sphere and the *labarum* (Figure 22). The hieratic fixity of this image contrasts sharply with the rich and significant changes readable in the textual part of the commemoration. Through it the reader can follow the passage from the last epigons of the Macedonian dynasty, Basil II and his brother Constantine VIII (end of the X-beginning of the XI centuries), then their successors Constantine IX Monomachus and his wife Eudokia (1041-1055), until the Norman conquest, with the mention of Robert Guiscard (1057-1059 as count, and later duke, of Apulia; 1059-1085 as duke of Sicily) and his wife, the daughter of the last Lombard prince of Salerno, Sikelgaita.

This is not the place where to carry out further analysis of the pictures of the Bari 1. They have been subject to a number of studies, which is not necessary to recall here.[642]

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[642]Suffice to mention the contribution led by Guglielmo Cavallo, with the participation of scholars such as Carlo Bertelli, in the work of 1975 already mentioned in Chapter 1, which presented for the first time together the two rolls from Bari and the three coming from the cathedral of another Apulian centre, Troia. To that, we may add the

What is relevant for our purposes here is to point out only a few elements in comparison with the analysis that has been carried here concerning the Vat. lat. 9820.

When the Bari roll was quite certainly made, that is around 1025, [643] Bari was still the capital of the Byzantine dominions in Italy. More so, these dominions had emerged from a century and more of struggles (internal and external) heavily restructured and enjoying renewed stability, mainly thanks to the efforts of the longest-serving and arguably most successful catepan (i.e. governor), Basil Boioannes. Between the end of the X and the beginning of the XI century Bari, together with other Apulian coastal towns, such as Trani, had shown a remarkable tendency at internal dissension and a general anti-Byzantine attitude. These elements combined into two successive and related attempts at overthrowing Byzantine control, led by a prominent member of Bari's patriciate, Melus. While both attempts proved, at the end of the day, to be unsuccessful, the second one proved particularly dangerous for Constantinople, leading to a streak of continuous defeats of imperial armies sent to stop Melus and his supporters (including, in their first appearance on Italian soil, Norman knights), causing the death of a catepan on the field, and

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more recent analysis carried out by a group of scholars, and edited by Mariapina Mascolo and Maria Nardella, on all the Apulian Exultet rolls (Mascolo, Nardella, 2014).

[643] Cordasco 2014, p. 26.

forcing the imperial government to finally send Boioannes with a substantial army to put an end to the revolt.[644] In a striking demonstration of how internal dissent and external politics could easily combine, Melus would find his final refuge at the court of the Salian emperor Henry II, who would make him *dux Apuliae* (a title that will remain without effect as Melus would die soon afterwards). The annals written in Bari during the XI and XII century also testify to tensions between the city's population and imperial authorities. These are almost always and consistently represented as external agents of a far-away government, supported by the presence of foreign troops (Variags, Slavs, etc…), while the citizens of Bari found their champion in the figure of the bishop, in particular (and ironically) bishop Byzantius in the first half of the XI century. While after the failure of Melus' revolts we do not hear anymore of similar crisis in Bari (or in any other Apulian town, for that), it is clear that the capital of the Catepanate of Italy saw a steady rise in awareness and power of its patriciate. At the eve of the Norman conquest, the imperial government will appoint Argyrus (tellingly, Melus' own son, grown up and educated in Constantinople when the father revolted) as duke, in a clear attempt at recognizing the increased importance of Bari's (and, more generally, Apulian) patriciate. And after the Norman

[644] Boioannes' arrival in Bari with a reinforcement army and a substantial treasure is witnessed by many historiographical works, including the chronicles written in Bari itself. See Gay 2011, p. 302.

conquest Bari will strive for self-government, briefly reaching it with the rise to power of one Grimoald Alferanites, who will claim for himself the title of *princeps* before being overthrown. The strong relationship between the city and its bishops will be further confirmed in the second half of the XII century when King William I, in order to punish Bari for an attempt at rebellion, will destroy the cathedral together with the rest of the city.

If Bari's political trajectory has been summarily resumed here, it is because it shares some remarkable similarities with the Beneventan case that has been looked upon in Chapter 2. Paul Oldfield already noted it in an essay from 2007, in which he specifically mentioned the rise of an independent urban patriciate characterizing both cities.[645] We may add also some similarity from their previous political experiences. That is, a similarity in their overall political trajectories. Both cities had been, by the X century, relevant political centres. Both experienced the rise of an urban aristocracy at odds with the leading political power in the city (the Lombard princes in Benevento; the imperial representatives in Bari); both saw a similar rise in importance of the cathedral; both shared attempts at self-government once the previous political system had definitely disappeared. In both cases, the first Exultet rolls to be produced in one city (or the only one, presumably, in the case of Benevento) were made in a moment when the

[645] Oldfield 2007, p. 603.

political forces characterizing the urban landscape enjoyed a state of relative, though precarious, balance. But while the Vat. lat. 9820, as it has been shown, gave to the commemoration of the ruler an original and pretty much unique visual representation, the patron and the artist of the Bari 1 followed the Byzantine iconographical tradition in the strictest way possible, creating an extremely standardized picture.

This difference becomes all the more relevant when looked upon from the perspective of the analysis that has been carried in the previous chapters. The Bari 1 shows the reception and adaptation of the illuminated Exultet scroll to a different cultural and artistic environment, but to a similar political juncture and context of historical development. Did the decision to strictly follow the parameters of Byzantine imperial iconography mean that a different message, compared to the Vat. lat. 9820, was to be communicated by the image? Was it conceived as a 'simple' acknowledgement of the supreme imperial *potestas* over the Apulian city, renouncing to the subtleties that instead characterized its Beneventan predecessor? And if so, why? What could it say to us about the peculiarity of Bari's political trajectory, of the reception of Byzantine political theology in that city? These are just examples of the questions that may rise by looking at the Bari 1 from this methodological perspective. And a similar set of issues would emerge when moving the sight from the Bari rolls to other Apulian exemplars, like the abovementioned ones

from Troia, a town that laid at the very interface between the Lombard and the Byzantine spheres.[646] A further expansion may lead to ask similar questions for the rolls coming from Gaeta, another city whose peculiar political trajectory may be considered as a 'mix' between the Beneventan and Barese experiences.[647]

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[646] Interestingly, the town itself, founded in 1019 by Boioannes together with many other settlements of what is now the Capitanata (deriving its name, quite tellingly, from the title Boioannes had at the time) was settled, according to a charter, by Φράγγοι, that is 'Franks'. Scholars have long debated as to the ethnic nature of these 'Franks', some of them, like Salvatore Cosentino (2008, p. 51), opting for a group of Normans, while others, like Jules Gay (2011, p. 307; also Von Falkenhausen 1978, p. 149), propounding the thesis that they were none others than Lombards, formerly under the rule of the Principality of Benevento (gastaldate of Ariano) who moved inside Byzantine territory. While it is impossible to find a definite answer, whatever those 'Franks' were their presence show the border role of Troia, not only from a political point of view, but also culturally.

[647] The most thorough exploration to date of the Gaetan political situation, in particular from the middle of the IX until the middle of the XII century is the work of Patricia Skinner, *Family Power in Southern Italy. The duchy of Gaeta and its neighbours, 850-1139*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995. Without pretending to offer an exhaustive summary of this work, the political path it describes, once all due differences are set aside, share remarkable similarities with the Beneventan and the Barese cases. Gaeta moves from Neapolitan (admittedly loose) control, to full political autonomy, to the spread of a kind of clan-like distribution of power (perhaps not too dissimilar to

6. 2 Early medieval southern Italy from a cross-cultural perspective

By looking at different, though somewhat similar, urban historical processes taking place in southern Italy, then, we also move between different cultural and political worlds, introducing an element of cross-cultural influence in the development and adaptation of conceptions and ideals of political power and authority. There is a third actor, alongside the Byzantines and the Carolingians (including their epigons and successors) that impacted with the world of the southern Lombards, though. It is the heterogeneous Islamicate world.

The presence of Muslims in southern Italy is witnessed by our sources well before the X century. The conquest of north Africa (the former Byzantine Exarchate of Carthage, the future Islamic Ifriqiya) and the subsequent beginning of the century-long conquest of Sicily (827-902) paved the way for a penetration in southern Italy whose apogee (at least in

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the Landulfid system), and finally passing under the control of an external authority, in the person of the (Norman) princes of Capua (and the 'puppet' dukes they appointed for a while), marking the beginning of the end of any autonomous political system for Gaeta. See also Skinner 2002, in particular p. 85 for how the Gaetans attempted to retain a great degree of internal political autonomy even under the Norman dukes, at the end of the XI century.

terms of direct territorial presence and settlement) could be considered to have been reached with the less then thirty-years long occupation of Bari, as capital of a new emirate (847-871)[648], together with the similar experience in Taranto (about whom our evidences are, however, much scarcer), and other settlements in Calabria, on the Thyrrenian coast (such as Amantea, for example, or the famous Muslim base on the Garigliano, destroyed in 915). The nature of this Muslim penetration in southern Italy, carried out by groups heterogeneous both from an ethnic and a political point of view, has been debated by scholars. Recent developments in historiography have refined, if not sometimes altogether altered, the picture originally painted on the wake of Erchempert and the *Chronicon Salernitanum* (not to mention other chronicles and historiographical sources). It was an extremely bleak picture, well represented by the words

[648] An interesting and relatively novel reading of the travails of this political experience is given by Lorenzo Bondioli, who shows the shifting allegiances of the emirs of Bari (including the one, recorded by Muslim sources and that has attracted the attention of scholars since long, that led the emir Al-Mufarraj to ask for a caliphal recognition of his power and title directly to Baghdad), and argues that they were strongly influenced by equally shifting allegiances and alliances between the Lombard principalities and their imperial overlords (the Carolingians and/or Byzantium). In other words, Bondioli convincingly argues in favour of considering the emirate of Bari an integral part of southern Italian politics, and not an 'alien' body in its political organization. (see Bondioli 2018, pp. 480-481, p. 482, and p. 490 in particular).

written by Jules Gay in 1913 in his outstanding reconstruction of southern Italian history. For Gay, as for many others before and immediately after him, the Muslim presence in southern Italy was summarized by the double destruction of Montecassino and S. Vincenzo al Volturno. A devastating presence, then (though scholars always acknowledged a variety of relationships, witnessed by the same sources, after all), not contributing much, if not indirectly, to the development of the region (if not leading to a regress altogether).

The reconsideration of the Muslim presence in southern Italy came as a natural, direct consequence of a more general re-evaluation of the role of the region as a whole. This could be well summarized by the words of Annliese Nef in a very recent contribution: for this scholar, Southern Italy

"would be better referred to as the central Mediterranean, since it constitutes a largely maritime space which was very important for the control of the Mediterranean, for it allowed traffic to flow from the oriental to the occidental part of the latter (or the reverse), and to the Adriatic. It is

also the space where moving south or northwards through the Mediterranean is the easiest."[649]

These words are paradigmatic of the movement 'from periphery to centre' which, as already stated in the Introduction, lies behind this very thesis. The clearest evidence of this new strand of scholarship may be found in the (admittedly long) title of a volume edited in 2018: *Southern Italy as Contact Area and Border Region during the Early Middle Ages. Religious-Cultural Heterogeneity and Competing Powers in Local, Transregional and Universal Dimensions*. The reader could easily grasp, already after a superficial look at the index of the volume, the variety of contributions that this new perspective is introducing since the last decades. Here it is important to point only to a few elements.

First, that the military and political Muslim presence in southern Italy cannot be characterised anymore by the simplistic labels of 'raids' or 'incursions'. While it is impossible to postulate some sort of planned strategy of penetration into the south, eventually to be carried out under the generic flag of *jihād* (given also the multiplicity of groups and polities involved), the same Annliese Nef shifted the analysis to the term *fatḥ*, that is "the beginning

[649] Nef 2021, p. 200. See also Kreutz 1991, p. xxiii, quoted in the Introduction.

of a process of integration of a region to the Islamic empire, with all the implications this involves."[650] In other words, the moving of a region from the dār al-ḥarb, the 'land of war' (i.e. those lands outside Islam) and the dār al-islam, the 'land of Islam'. This process resulted in failure, from a Muslim perspective, as continental southern Italy did not follow Sicily's path, but this fact should not blind scholars in their appreciation of Muslim presence and the strategy (in the widest sense) underpinning it.

Second, that Muslim presence in southern Italy was multifaceted, to say the least. Admittedly, this has been an acquisition of scholarship since a while now. Moving away from the abovementioned old model of perennial conflict drawn on strict civilizational and religious lines, scholars have revealed the intricated nature of Muslim-Christian interactions in the Meridione. The same sources that in the past were used to draw a clear-cut division between Muslims and Christians in the south of Italy are now usefully and successfully interpreted to help paint a more nuanced picture. Federico Marazzi even proposed that the destruction of Montecassino may have been actually the result of a concerted design of the Gaetans.[651] The figure of Sawdān, the last emir of Bari, offers itself as an example of ambiguity. Lombard authors are unremittingly hostiles

[650] Ivi, p. 203.

[651] Marazzi 2007, p. 184. This thesis is also accepted by Di Branco 2019, p. 124.

towards him, yet from their narration it still transpires the diverse aspects the relationship between Christian rulers and a (defeated) Muslim one could take. Sawdān's life is spared after a specific request by the prince of Benevento, Adelchis (who allegedly had sworn allegiance to him earlier in his reign; certainly, he had been obliged to send hostages to the emir, including one of his daughters). Louis II accepts to give the dispossessed emir to the Beneventan prince as prisoner, but both Erchempert and the *Chronicon Salernitanum* narrates how this decision ultimately proved the emperor's undoing: Sawdān is the one who advises Adelchis to take Louis prisoner.[652] Whatever the truth behind the story, what is relevant to note is the relationship that came to be between Adelchis and Sawdān, the Lombard Christian prince of Benevento and the Arab emir now his prisoner.[653]

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[652] Di Branco 2019, pp. 95-96, pp. 98-99, who also points how this detail of the story is confirmed in the Byzantine sources who treat the subject of Louis' capture, namely the *Vita Basilii* and the *De administrando imperio*.

[653] Contemporary chroniclers did see that relationship in terms consistent with their view of the Saracens as enemies of the faith, and Sawdān in particular attracted the attention of some of them, including Erchempert (Berto 2014, p. 11). Still, it should be noted that neither Franks nor Byzantines did receive a kinder treatment by Lombard writers, nor did the Neapolitans escape their ires as well (ivi, pp. 11-13; p. 15). Whitten (2019, in particular p. 271) rejects the idea that the conflict with the Saracens was really framed in terms of a war of

This is no place to reconstruct (neither fully nor summarily) the history of Muslim penetration in southern Italy, nor the history of the perception of Muslims by its inhabitants. Both have been thoroughly studied, and continue to be, and have resulted in some excellent works. Suffices to use what has been written here in order to point the illogicity of any argument postulating *a priori* a somewhat radical compartmentalization on religious lines between Islamic and southern Italian conceptions and representations of power.[654]

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opposing faiths by the southern Lombard, instead opting for seeing the idea of a 'clash of religions' as the by-product of papal rhetoric aimed at building support from all over Christian Europe for action in the Italian peninsula. In his view, the Saracens were identified by Lombards as more a danger to personal property, and as contenders for power, rulership and political hegemony, than as religious enemies (ivi, pp. 266-9). Whitten's argument has its merits, but it would deserve more in-depth scrutiny. Concerning the Muslim presence in southern Italy it is also necessary to cite the work of Alex Metcalfe, in particular *The Muslims of Medieval Italy* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2009, and Alessandro Vanoli, *La Sicilia Musulmana*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2016.

[654] See n. 17. Production of scholarly literature devoted to the nuancing, if not to a breaking altogether, of the imaginary barriers between the cultural and religious worlds of Christianity and Islam in this field (and in the Mediterranean as a whole) is on the increase. While it would be impossible to cite all contributions to the subject here, the reader may refer to Beihammer (ed., 2013); for a perspective more focused on Muslim polities, and with an approach more oriented towards an understanding of the eschatological and sacral aspects of kingship can

The same could be said, of course, of Byzantium and its influence on southern Italy. Chapter 5 dealt with potential influences of Byzantine imperial iconography in the elaboration of the Vat. lat. 9820. Still, the argument have revolved around the concept of sacramental kingship, as elaborated by de Jong and Figurski in particular, hypothesizing a link between its 'figurative implementation' in Benevento at the end of the X century as justified by the peculiar political and social context of that ancient Lombard capital. The concept of sacramental kingship has been elaborated for the Latin world (and that made possible its application to a southern Lombard context as well), focusing as it is on the idea of *ministerium* and drawing its substance by establishing a peculiar relationship between immanence and transcendence related to political power. This means that it cannot, and should not, be copy-pasted into another cultural context, being it Byzantine or Muslim, though it could (and should) be considered prone to receive influences from a cultural

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be found in Al-Azmeh (1997). In comparisons, differences are as important as similarities. So, it is interesting to note here already how the Aghlabid emirate, the polity which the southern Lombards had the most contacts with (before the Fatimids took over), has been described by Annliese Nef asa 'jihad State', that is a polity grounding its claims to legitimacy on a expansionist policy (Nef 2018, p. 81). Nef's hypothesis has been elaborated mainly in order to understand Aghlabid policies towards the war in Sicily against the Byzantines, but still it opens possibilities for a comparison with the Lombard polities.

context of different mold. As also Byzantine and Muslim political power ultimately rested on a relationship between the ruler and the sphere of the sacred [655], the methodological perspective adopted here, of a possible broader network of influences, thus fundamentally retains its validity. It has already been mentioned how the political experiences of Benevento and Bari followed similar, though in their own way different, trajectories. Focusing on the political and social context in which the figurative representation of rulers on the Exultet rolls did emerge, those similarities and differences already would offer themselves to analysis. Enlarging the view in order to include also Ifriqiya, for example, or even other parts of North Africa, could give interesting hints to deepen the analysis further. As an example in kind, already Giulia Orofino in 2004 mentioned the

"…*khizāna al-bunūd*, le stoffe pubbliche dell'Egitto fatimida, sulle quali venivano ricamati i nomi e i titoli dei califfi."[656]

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[655] For example, the description of supplications and prayers for the Byzantine emperors as described by Gerébi (2021, p. 73) show remarkable similarities, in their way to relate to the divine, with Latin ones. The common Christian heritage undoubtedly played a strong role in this.

[656] Orofino 2004, p. 362.

What Orofino is referring to, is the armory of the palace of the Fatimid caliphs established in al-Fustat by Caliph Al-Ẓāhir (1021-1036), a place also deputed at storing the army's and caliphal standards which, through their elaborate mixture of visual ornamentation and writing, and combined with the extensive use of processions between the many different cores of religious activity in the city, became veritable tools of rulership and symbols of power and authority.[657] Here we are touching objects used not

[657] Goodson 2018, p. 97. He also points at how this characteristic form of urban-staged political ritual was shared also by the Abbasids and, more relevant for our subject, the Aghlabids. This perspective would further broaden the horizons for a comparative analysis, introducing the role of urbanism as a tool with a "critical role in the formation of political legitimacy" (ivi, p. 88). Compare this with another statement by Goodson (2021, pp. 213-4) dealing precisely with early medieval southern Italy: "Fundamentally, in the south, assembly politics and political representations took place in cities, within royal precincts or even in shared urban facilities. Some central and all the southern Italian polities cultivated urban ruling cultures, exclusively located in cities that housed places, courts, and major religious institutions." On the case of the Muslim polities established in Sicily, see also Nef (2013, in particular pp. 43-51), who also mentions how the historian al-Nuwayiri reported that in the second quarter of the XI century, after Palermo had lost its role as capital of a unified Kalbid emirate, the city came under the control of a council (*shuyukh*). Michele Amari had previously interpreted al-Nuwayri's statement as pointing at a sort of communal regime taking place in Palermo; while Nef's arguments countering Amari's thesis are sound, al-Nuwayiri's report nonetheless opens some

only as symbols of rulership, but also to configure (already by the fact itself of where they were stored) a specific relationship between the ruler and his military establishment, a relationship which shaped almost always the structure of Islamic polities, but that was everything but alien, once all differences are duly taken into account, also to Latin ones (and it should be remembered how the *militia* figures prominently on the Vat. lat. 9820).[658] And while nothing survives of those textiles, it would be unnecessarily blunt not to look more deeply into that phenomenon of political representation, particularly when one considers the chronological contiguity with the one that has been analyzed here, and the strong relationship between southern Italy and the Fatimid world. Far from being far-fetched, such a comparative work would arguably help overcoming the gap in the knowledge of how systems of representation of power and authority worked in those "geographical zones or areas of cultural production where

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interesting possibilities for looking at an increased political activity of Palermitan urban élites.

[658] A very good example of the relationship between the military establishment and political power in Islamic polities, grounded on the experiences of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, may be found in Andrew Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy. Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Also Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Miitary and Society in the Early Islamic State Warfare and History*, London and New York, Routledge, 2001.

contact and interaction between spheres was at its most intense."[659] Southern Italy in the X century was precisely one of these zones. Chapter 2 has repeatedly shown how the region was involved, variably and with different outcomes during the centuries, with those surrounding spheres. Means of interaction were different and varying over times.[660] However, these interactions could not be underestimated, as they were not surely underestimated by those who lived them. After all, with regard to the Byzantine sphere, Leo, a son of the prince of Benevento Landulf III, after becoming a Benedictine monk led a mission to found a monastery directly on Byzantine land, near Mount Athos, around 985. This peculiar Benedictine foundation, the Apothikon (later to be known as Amalfion) even obtained the status of imperial monastery and played

[659] Holmes et al. 2021, p. 16.

[660] We may take into consideration, for example, also the role of Jewish communities, which were present at the time all over the Meridione. Large communities could be found in the Byzantine territories of Apulia (in Oria, for example or in Bari itself, where the local Jewish community established a number of renowned Talmudic schools), but also in the Lombard capitals, where they could even play politically-relevant roles in the princes' administration. In 821, for example, a certain Josephus is called by prince Sico as "administrator noster". In Benevento, there is some evidence for the local community to be also involved in artisanal activities. On the Jewish presence in Bari see Mascolo 2014, pp. 36-7; for the Lombard capitals see Palmieri 1989, p. 48. Also Vitolo 1996, p. 114.

an important role as a landholder.[661] The same could apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Arabic- Muslim sphere.

The polities the Lombards built in Southern Italy may easily fall into the categories elaborated by Berger, in his reflection on the role of 'centers' and 'peripheries' in the early medieval Mediterranean. Polities which may be peripheries, and then become centers of their own; which may emerge, and find their own ways of existence, survival, and adaptation in the fringes left open by the centers of the political and cultural spheres intersecting in those areas.[662] It has been a core idea underpinning this thesis that this is exactly what happened among the Lombards of the Meridione. Their elaboration and use of certain means of symbolic power and authority falls inside the tools they had to adapt to their changing political and cultural environment. And as such, they are more than viable as tools for a comparative, trans-Mediterranean, analysis.

6. 3 New ways to look at (and learning from) the Exultet rolls: two proposals

If one thing clearly emerges from the previous sections, if not from the whole premise of this work, is that the corpus

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[661] Merlini 2017, pp. 43-46.

[662] Berger 2018, p.47, p. 49.

of the Exultet rolls has still much to tell scholars. Despite the width of existing literature on the subject, and the number and validity of the scholars still involved in the undertaking, the Exultet rolls are to be considered an extremely valid asset for the quest of enhancing our knowledge of early and high medieval southern Italy. This can be achieved by opting for different disciplinary perspectives and methodologies. However, it could also be done by choosing to improve accessibility and by adopting a whole different approach to the question of what we may do with the rolls.

The latter issue, that of accessibility, is quite self-explanatory. As mentioned in the Introduction, at this moment the corpus of the Exultet rolls is accessible in its entirety in two ways: through the publication resulting from the 1994 exhibition held at Montecassino; and in digitalized version since 1999. Looking at the years alone should make anybody aware of the hiatus that separates these rolls from our days, not so much on a sheer chronological level as on a technological one. A situation made even more critical by the fact that the digitalized catalogue exists in CD-ROM format, and this means it will be soon not be readable anymore by most personal computers, not to mention that it is hardly enough to keep this corpus available for scholars in a world of increased interconnectedness and where accessibility, from anywhere at any time, becomes increasingly key to successful research and studies.

For this reason, it would appear as quite imperative to proceed further down the road to the digitalization of this astounding component of southern Italian cultural heritage. The representation of rulers on the rolls offers, at this point, an interesting possible ground from which to start this effort. This looks clear already from a superficial look at the corpus. Among the twenty-eight surviving Exultet rolls, most of them show some form of representation of rulers. Not of all of them, admittedly, are represented in conjunction with the textual commemoration. A striking example is given by the Exultet 2 and 3 from Gaeta.[663] Particularly in the second case, it is possible to see the ruler and members of the élite watching parts of the liturgy from an unspecified tower-like structure. Rulers, and members of the secular élite, then, can be deemed as an almost omnipresent feature of the corpus. By exploiting this element, also taking into consideration the relevance the figures of rulers may have had in the overall conception of the figurative cycle, as argued for in this thesis, it would be possible to create a starting grid.

This new collection system of data concerning the Exultet rolls should be able to give the consulting scholar the

[663] The Exultets from Gaeta have been extensively treated, most recently, in the 1994 catalogue mentioned in Chapter 1: G. Cavallo, G. Orofino, O. Pecere (eds.), *Exultet: rotoli liturgici del Medioevo meridionale*, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1994.

opportunity of looking for a wide spectrum of relevant metadata on the objects and the images themselves, in line with the most recent digitalisation projects being carried on in the heritage field.

If we want to move from a new way of looking at the Exultet rolls to a new way of understanding their role, and the role of their figurative cycles in their interaction with the political and cultural context, however, we also need a more diverse set of tools. This thesis has been grounded on the basis that a plurality of political and social actors in Benevento (the prince, the archbishop, the urban aristocracy) were interlocked in a set of shifting relations of power and authority. For obvious reasons, this thesis has tended to emphasise more the picture of a specific moment in time and space than a diachronic development (though the argument carried on in Chapter 2 was heavily embedded in a historical analysis of the changes experienced by the relative power of those actors). However, change played its own relevant part in the history of the Exultet corpus. It took the shape of liturgical reform, modification of scripts, re-arrangement of the rolls themselves. Above all, a changing context meant also a change in the representation of political power. Without presuming to recall this extraordinary history of changes, developments, and adaptations, suffices here to mention how these characteristics, together with the role performed by the rolls (and their figurative cycles) as expounded in this thesis, open themselves to a novel kind of analysis

eminently based on dynamic processes: that based on game.

Historical Game Studies and, more to the point, Historical Games, are already experiencing the result of increasing scholarly interest and, consequently, expansion inside many universities, in particular, though not exclusively, in the Anglo-Saxon world and northern Europe.[664] The purpose of what is generally labelled as an 'Historical Game' is usually threefold: teaching (and learning), public history, and research.

The argument of an interaction between a certain set of power relations and the employment of a specific liturgical object, with its own specific set of visual representations, lends itself relatively easy to its structuring into a game mechanism. It is not here the place to delve into the details

[664] Examples of these developments could be found in the establishment of the *History and Games Lab* at the University of Edinburgh, whose mission is, quite explicitly, to explore *"games (both analog and digital) as a medium for historical research, teaching, and public understanding of history."* (website: https://historyandgames.shca.ed.ac.uk/); or the birth of the *Historical Games Network* (HGN) as a platform for sharing scholarly opinion and academic research in the field; or, also, the existence of conferences exclusively devoted to the subject (an example in kind being the *Middle Ages in Modern Games* cycle of online conferences).

of such a hypothetical set of rules [665], whose aims can however be pinpointed.

The goal of such a game would be three-pronged: to make the interaction between the different actors, the object, and the figurative representations understandable to the players; to look at emerging mechanics between players that may help shed some light on the history of the scrolls themselves; and to raise awareness towards such objects. In

[665] The following sketch is the result of a proposal presented at *The Middle Ages in Modern Games* conference in June 2022, and it wouldn't have taken shape without the advice and support of prof. Houghton of the University of Winchester. The possible rules can be sketched as follows: each player would take the role of an 'abstract' actor: the ecclesiastical authorities, the secular rulers, the urban aristocracy. Each of them would receive a starting number of two resources: Legitimacy (L, to be summed as Total Legitimacy or TL), and Power (P). Cards would represent iconographical elements or scenes: 'The Ruler Enthroned'; 'The Bishop with Saints Peter and Paul'; etc… Each iconographical element or scene would be taken from existing cycles. Cards will have L and P values, and a Symbolic Meaning/Ritual Efficacy (SM/RE) value, indicating, when combined, if and how much the cycle being created by the players is still liturgically viable and effective. Another set of cards would provide for the changing historical circumstances: from the Norman conquest to the Gregorian reform, to mention just two examples.

other words, it would fulfil all three purposes mentioned above for Historical Games.[666]

It is in this sense of broadening avenues of investigation, finding new ways of investigations, and enlarging the audience of the historical documents analyzed here, that this proposal of a boardgame for academic research on the Exultet rolls, combined with the previous one concerning

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[666] However, some issues immediately rise to attention, and are in need of being addressed. First, how exactly to represent the iconographical elements or scenes on the cards is an issue that cannot be underestimated. Iconography is a matter of nuances, subtle meanings, where also minor modifications can have correspondingly higher impacts. Second, to represent liturgy and liturgical objects solely as tools for increasing/decreasing legitimacy, and for political statements, would mean opting for a reductionist approach, unable to render the true value of liturgy and ritual in pre-modern societies. This may be necessary for the case under analysis here, where the main focus has been on the visual representation of power and authority, and as the point of the game itself would be to show how a liturgical object was influenced in its history by competing interests and needs, evolving contexts and circumstances for a given community. The introduction of the SM/RE concept into the rules attempts at addressing this issue nonetheless. But what is more important, is that this brief sketch shows how a corpus of images, such as those on the Exultet rolls, until now confined into the premises of traditional art historical studies, could be presented, and then analysed, through a very different methodological perspective and through the use of very different tools from the one more traditionally associated to art historical research.

its digitization and wider dissemination both for the academic and wider public, can take the role as the conclusion for this thesis.

Appendix

This Appendix provides the text of the Vat. lat. 9820 linked with the titles of the images.

The history of the Vat. lat. 9820 naturally poses a series of issues and difficulties to such an attempt at linking text and image. First, there is the fact that the original text of the *Vetus Itala* has been scrapped in favour of the Franco-Roman version of the Exultet. Second, the peculiar inversion between text and images typical of the later Exultet rolls, an inversion from which, as already shown in Chapter 1, the Vat. lat. 9820 didn't escape too at some point during its history, further complicates the situation.

In order to overcome these issues, it has been chosen not to propose a sort of reconstruction of the original roll, which would have been preposterous given its long and troubled history. In fact, in the following pages the reader will find the sequence of text and images as it is nowadays.

However, since the dislocation of pieces of the original prayer (for example, the *Exultet iam angelica turba coelorum* section, or part of the final commemorations) compared to the rest of the text, or the loss of part of the same text, have resulted in lacunae and in the loss of the correct sequence of the prayer, at the end of the Appendix the reader will also find the text of the original Beneventan version of the Exultet in its entire and correct sequence, in order to give

the reader at least an idea of what text the roll was originally intended to preserve.

The text on the Vat. lat. 9820 and of the Beneventan Exultet are all from Kelly (1996), who collated the latter from a number of different manuscripts (Bari Exultets 1 & 2; the Beneventan Missal Ms. 33 of the Biblioteca Capitolare; the fragments of a gradual from Farfa and Trento; the Rylands Library 2, in Manchester; the Exultet 1 from Mirabella Eclano; fragments of the Exultet 1 from Montecassino; a missal from Salerno; the two Exultets from Troia; the Exultet roll Vat. lat. 3784; the missal Vat. lat. 10673; the Exultet from Velletri; and, of course, what survives of the original text of Vat. lat. 9820).

1. Delivery of the roll
2. Agnus Dei with Evangelists' symbols
3. Angelic chorus
4. Christ piercing the doors of Hell
5. Lighting of the candle
6. Ornamented E (initial of Exultet)

Exultet iam angelica turba coelorum! Exultent divina mysteria, et pro tanti regis victoria tuba intonet salutaris [in Beneventan script, part of the original Vetus Itala]

7. Maiestas Domini with Tellus
8. Mater Ecclesia (Fig. 18)
9. The people (populus) with the prince (Fig. 18)

Haec nox est, in qua destructis vinculis mortis, Christus ab inferis victor ascendit. Nihil enim nobis nasci profuit, nisi redimi profuisset. O mira circa nos tuae pietatis dignatio! O inaestimabilis dilectio caritatis: ut servum redimeres, filium tradidisti! O certe nessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte [interrupted]

10. Deacon's prayer

Sui gratia infundente , cerei huius [illegible] nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen. Dominus vobiscum. Et cum spirito tuo. Sursum corda. Habemus ad

Dominum gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro. Dignum et iustum est



11. Ornamented VD (initial of Vere Dignum)

Vere quia dignum et iustum est invisibilem Deum Patrem omnipotentem filiumque eius unigenitum Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, toto cordis ac mentis adfectu et vocis ministerio personare, qui pro nobis aeterno Patri Adae debitum solvit, et veteris piaculi cautionem pio cruore detersit. Haec sunt enim festa paschalium, in quibus verus ille agnus occiditur eiusque sanguis postibus consecrator. Haec nox est in qua primum patres

nostros, filios Israel, educens dominus de Aegypto, Rubrum mare sicco vestigio transire fecisti. Haec igitur nox est, quae peccatorum tenebras columnae inluminatione purgavit. Haec nox est, quae hodie per universum mundum in Christo credentes, a vitiis saeculi segregatos et caligine peccatorum, reddit gratiae, sociat sanctitati.

12. Christ descending to Limbo and saving the Ancestors

[…]batissa nostra il. cum omni congregatione sanctissimi petri presentis vite quiete concessa gaudiis facias perfrui sempiternis

Ignis)]Deus qui per filium tuum, angularem scilicet lapidem, claritatis tuae ignem fidelibus contulisti: productum e silice, nostris profuturum usibus, novum hunc ignem sanctifica. Et concede nobis, ita per haec festa paschalia caelestibus desideriis inflammari, ut ad perpatuae claritatis

[on a separate fol., hardly legible, it can be reconstructed as the Oratio accompanying the Blessing of the Candle (Benedictio Cerei)]Benedictio cerei […] Veniat, quaesumus, omnipotens Deus super hunc incensum cereum larga tuae benediction infusio: et hunc

nocturnum splendorem invisibilis regenerator intende, ut non solum sacrificium, quod hac nocte

13. *Laus apium* (bees collecting nectar from flowers)

per ministrorum tuorum manus, de operibus apum sacrosanctam reddit

14. *Benedictio cerei*

noctis gratia, suscipe, sancte Pater, incensi huius sacrificium vespertinum, quod tibi in hac cerei oblationem sollemni

illuminabitur: et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis. Huius igitur sanctification noctis. Fugat scelera. Culpas lavat.

15. The pope (also interpreted as the bishop) surrounded by Saints Peter and Paul, blessing him together with the Hand of God

Et reddit innocentiam lapsis, maestis laetitiam. Fugat odia, concordiam parat et curvat imperia. In huius igitur

16. The bishop surrounded by members of the ecclesiastical ordo, two angels behind his throne

Quapropter adstantibus vobis, fratres karissimi, ad tam miram sancti huius luminis claritatem, una mecum, quaeso, Dei omnipotentis misericordia invocate. Ut qui me, non meis meritis, intra levitarum numerum

dignatus est aggregare,
luminis

Guadeat se tantis tellus inradiata fulgoribus, et aeterni regis splendore lustrata, totius orbis se sentiat amisisse caliginem. Laetetur et mater Ecclesia, tanti luminis adornata fulgore, et magnis populorum vocibus haec aula resultet.

17. The prince being crowned by the angels
18. The army

[damaged, original Beneventan script, with the same orientation as the pictures]

19. Iohannes presbyter and praepositus offers the roll to St. Peter

[also in the original Beneventan script, with

the same orientation as
the pictures]Hoc parvum
manus dignanter suscipe,
sancte Petre apostole,
quod devote tibi condidit
Iohannes presbyter atque
semper precibus tuis
confidentem. Gaudia cum
sanctis illi ut concedat
ha[…]. Amen. Deo
gratias.

Necnon et famulam tuam
abbatissam nostram cum
universa congregacione
[this part in the new
script: beatissimi petri sibi
commissa ac] temporum
vite quiete concessa
gaudiis facias perfrui
sempiternis. Qui vivis […]

Text of the Exultet (Vetus Itala)

Prologue
Exultet iam angelica turba coelorum!
Exultent divina mysteria,
et pro tanti regis victoria tuba intonet salutaris.
Gaudeat se tantis tellus inradiata fulgoribus,
et aeterni regis splendore lustrata,
totius orbis se sentiat, amisisse caliginem.
Laetetur et mater Ecclesia, tanti luminis adornata
fulgoribus, et magnis populorum vocibus haec aula
resultet.
Quapropter adstantibus vobis, fratres karissimi,
ad tam miram sancti huius, luminis claritatem,
una mecum, quaeso, Dei omnipotentis misericordia
invocate.
Ut qui me, non meis meritis,
intra levitarum numerum, dignatus est adgregare,
luminis sui gratia infundente,
cerei huius laudem implere praecipiat.
Per Dominum Nostrum Iesum Christum filium suum,
viventem secum, atque regnantem
in unitate Spiritus Sancti
per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Praefatio
Dominus vobiscum.
Et cum spirito tuo.

Sursum corda.
Habemus ad dominum.
Gratias agamus domino deo nostro.
Dignum et iustum est.
Vere quia dignum et iustum est
per Christum dominum nostrum.
Qui nos ad noctem istam, non tenebrarum,
sed luminis matrem, perducere dignatus est,
in qua exorta est ab inferis, in eterna die, resurrectio
mortuorum.
Solutis quippe nexibus, et calcato, mortis aculeo,
resurrexit a mortuis, qui fuerat inter mortuos liber.
Unde et nox ipsa sidereo, pro ecclesiarium ornatu,
cereorum splendore, tamquam dies, illuminata collucet,
quia in eius matutino, resurgente Christo,
mors occidit redemptorum, et emersit vita credentium.
Vere tu pretiosus es opifex, formator es omnium,
cui qualitas in agendi, non fuit officio, sed in sermonis
imperio.
Qui ornatum, atque habitum mundo,
nec ad ampliandum quasi inops potentiae,
nec ad ditandum quasi egenus, gloriae condidisti.
Totus ac plenus in te es, qui dum per virginea viscera,
mundo illaberis,
virginitatem etiam, creaturae commendas.
Apes siquidem, dum ore concipiunt, ore parturiunt,
casto corpore, non fedo desiderio copulantur.

Denique virginitatem servantes, posteritatem generant,
sobole gaudent, matres dicuntur, intacte perdurant,
filios generant, et viros non norunt.
Flore utuntur coniuge,
flore funguntur genere,
flore domos instruunt,
flore divitias conuehunt
flore ceram conficiunt.
O admirandus apium fervor,
ad commune opus, pacifica turba concurrunt,
et operantibus plurimis, una augetur substantia.
O invisibile artificium,
primo culmina pro fundamentis edificant,
et tam ponderosam mellis sarcinam,
pendentibus domiciliis, imponere non verentur.
O virginitatis insignia,
quae non possessori damna, sed sibi lucra conuectant,
auferunt quidem predam, et cum preda, minime tollunt
peccatum.
Spoliant quidem florum cutem, et morsuum non annotant
cicatricem.
Sed inter haec quae credimus, huius cerei, gratiam
predicemus.
Cuius odor suavis est, et flamma hilaris,
non tetro odore, aruina desudat, sed iocundissima
suavitate,

qui peregrinis non inficitur pigmentis, illuminatur Spiritu Sancto.
Qui ut accensus, proprias corporis, compages depascit,
ita coagolatas lacrimas, in rivulos fundit guttarum.
Quique semiusta membra, ambroseo sanguine, flavea vena distollit,
habitum bibit ignis humorem.
In huius autem, cerei luminis corpore, te omnipotens postulamus,
ut superne benedictionis munus accomodes.
Ut si quis hunc sumpserit, adversus flabra ventorum,
Adversus spiritus Procellarum, sit ei domine, singulare perfugium,
sit murus ab hoste fidelibus.
Salvum fac populum tuum domine, et benedic hereditatem tuam,
ut redeuntes ad festivitatem paschae,
per haec visibilibus, et invisibilibus, tuis inhiantes,
dum presentium usufruuntur, futurorum desideria accendantur.
Una cum beatissimo, papa nostro il.
et famulo tuo pontifice nostro il.,
sed et omnis praesbiteris, diaconibus, subdiaconibus,
cunctoque clero vel plebe.
Memorare domine, famulum tuum, imperatorem nostrum il.,
et principem nostrum il.,

et eorum exercitum universum.
Qui vivis cum Patre, et Spiritu Sancto,
et regnas Deus, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

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