

So far, so close.
Lothar I and the interweaving of relationships
between the aristocracies of Veneto and Alemannia

by Leonardo Sernagiotto

The first half of the ninth century saw profound changes in the Veneto-Friuli area, as well as in the Alemannic-Rhaetian area, regions closely connected to each other after the Carolingian conquest of Italy. The Friulian aristocracy was experiencing a phase of decline, while the Veronese aristocracy became stronger, in a framework of apparently little relationship with the Frankish rulers. On the other hand, although often holding prestigious positions in Italy, the Rhaetian-Alemannic aristocracy found itself living on a razor's edge, especially after the convulsion of Carolingian political events and the various hypotheses concerning the imperial division. The article aims to examine the activities of the aristocracies of the Veneto-Friuli area in the broader context of their relations with the Rhaetian-Alemannic world and the Carolingian family, marked by repeated dynastic clashes and reconciliations.

Middle Ages; ninth century; Veneto; Friuli; Verona; Alemannia; Rhaetia; Carolingians; geographic mobility; ethnicity.

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Abbreviations

- Carte del monastero* = *Le carte del monastero di San Salvatore e Santa Giulia di Brescia*, vol. 1, 759-1170, ed. G. Cossandi, Spoleto 2020 (Fonti storico-giuridiche. Documenti 4).
- CDL = *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*, ed. G. Porro Lambertenghi, Augustae Taurinorum 1873 (Historiae patriae monumenta, 13).
- CDP = *Codice diplomatico padovano dal secolo sesto a tutto l'undecimo*, ed. A. Gloria, Venezia 1877.
- ChLA², LV = *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, 2nd series, ed. G. Cavallo, G. Nicolaj, part LV, Italy XXVII, Ravenna 2, publ. R. Cosma, Dietikon-Zürich 1999.
- ChLA², LIX = *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, 2nd series, ed. G. Cavallo, G. Nicolaj, part LIX, Italy XXXI, Verona 1, publ. F. Santoni, Dietikon-Zürich 2009.
- ChLA², LX = *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, 2nd series, ed. G. Cavallo, G. Nicolaj, part LX, Italy XXXII, Verona 2, publ. F. Santoni, Dietikon-Zürich 2010.
- ChLA², LXXVIII = *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, 2nd series, ed. G. Cavallo, G. Nicolaj, part LXXVIII, Italy L, Lucca 7, publ. M. Palma, Dietikon-Zürich 2009.
- ChLA², CIII = *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, 2nd series, ed. G. Cavallo, G. Nicolaj, part CIII, Schweiz VI, St. Gallen 4, publ. P. Erhart, K. Heidecker, B. Zeller, Dietikon-Zürich 2010.
- ChLA², CIV = *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, 2nd series, ed. G. Cavallo, G. Nicolaj, part CIV, Schweiz VII, St. Gallen 5, publ. P. Erhart, K. Heidecker, B. Zeller, Dietikon-Zürich 2011.
- DD B I = *I diplomati di Berengario I*, ed. L. Schiaparelli, Roma 1903 (Fonti per la Storia d'Italia, 35).
- Iohannes diaconus, *Istoria* = Iohannes diaconus, *Istoria Veneticorum*, in *Cronache*, ed. G. Fedalto, L.A. Berto, Aquileia 2003 (Scrittori della Chiesa di Aquileia, XII/2).
- LP = *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 2 vol., ed. L. Duchesne, Paris 1892.
- MGH, AB = *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. G. Waitz, Hannover 1883 (MGH, SS rer. Germ., 5).
- MGH, Adrevaldus Floriacensis, *Miracula S. Benedicti* = Adrevaldus Floriacensis, *Miracula S. Benedicti*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, Hannoverae 1887, pp. 474-497 (MGH, SS, 15, 1).
- MGH, AF = *Annales Fuldenses*, ed. F. Kurze, Hannover 1891 (MGH, SS rer. Germ., 7).
- MGH, *Andreae Bergomatis* = *Andreae Bergomatis Historia*, ed. G. Waitz, Hannover 1878, pp. 220-231 (MGH, SS rer. Lang., 1).
- MGH, ARF = *Annales regni Francorum inde ab a. 741 usque ad a. 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, ed. F. Kurze, Hannoverae 1895 (MGH, SS rer. Germ., 6).
- MGH, Astronomus, *Vita* = Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. E. Tremp, Hannover 1995, pp. 280-555 (MGH, SS rer. Germ., 64).
- MGH, Capit. I = *Capitularia regum Francorum*, vol 1, ed. A. Boretius, Hannover 1883 (MGH, Legum sectio, II/1).
- MGH, Capit. II = *Capitularia regum Francorum*, vol. 2, ed. A. Boretius, V. Krause, Hannover 1897 (MGH, Legum sectio, II/2).
- MGH, Conc. II = *Concilia aevi Karolini*, ed. A. Werminghoff, Hannover-Leipzig 1906-1908 (MGH, Conc., 2).
- MGH, DD Karol. I = *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. E. Mühlbacher, Hannover 1906 (MGH, Diplomata Karolinorum, 1).
- MGH, DD LdD / Km / LdJ = *Die Urkunden Ludwigs des Deutschen, Karlmanns und Ludwigs des Jüngeren*, ed. P. Kehr, Berlin 1934 (MGH, Diplomata regum Germ. ex stirpe Kar., 1).
- MGH, DD LdF = *Die Urkunden Ludwigs des Frommen*, ed. T. Kölzer, Wiesbaden 2016 (MGH, Diplomata Karolinorum, 2).
- MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II = *Die Urkunden Lothars I. und Lothars II.*, ed. T. Schieffer, München 1979 (MGH, Diplomata Karolinorum, 3).
- MGH, DD Lu II = *Die Urkunden Ludwigs II.*, ed. K. Wanner, München 1994 (MGH, Diplomata Karolinorum, 4).
- MGH, Epp. V = *Epistolarum Tomus V*, ed. E. Dümmler et al., Berlin 1899 (MGH, Epistolae Karolini aevi, 3).
- MGH, *Ex miraculis S. Genesii* = *Ex miraculis S. Genesii*, ed. G. Waitz, Hannoverae 1887, pp. 169-172 (MGH, SS, 15, 1).
- MGH, Necr. Suppl. = *Libri confraternitatum Sancti Galli Augiensis Fabariensis*, ed. P. Piper, Berlin 1884 (MGH, Necr., Suppl.).
- MGH, Poetae II = *Poetae Latini aevi Carolini*, II, ed. E. Dümmler, Berlin 1884 (MGH, Poetae, 2).
- MGH, Libri mem. N.S. I = *Das Verbrüderungsbuch der Abtei Reichenau*, ed. J. Autenrieth D. Geuenich, K. Schmid, Hannover 1979 (MGH, Libri mem. N. S., 1).

- MGH, Libri mem. N.S. IV = *Der Memorial- und Liturgiecodex von San Salvatore / Santa Giulia in Brescia*, ed. D. Geuenich, U. Ludwig, Hannover 2000 (MGH, Libri mem. N. S., 4).
- MGH, Sedulius Scottus, *Carmina* = Sedulius Scottus, *Carmina*, ed. L. Traube, Berlin 1896 (MGH, Poetae, 3), pp. 166-240.
- MGH, Thegan, *Gesta* = Thegan, *Gesta Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. E. Tremp, Hannover 1995 (MGH, SS rer. Germ., 64), pp. 168-277.
- MGH, *Translatio sancti Callisti* = *Translatio S. Calixti Cisionium*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, Hannoverae 1887 (MGH, SS, 15, 1), pp. 418-422.
- Miracula S. Marci* = W. Berschin, T. Klüppel, *Der Evangelist Markus auf der Reichenau*, Sigmaringen 1994 (Reichenauer Texte und Bilder, 4).
- Visio cuiusdam pauperulae mulieris* = *Visio cuiusdam pauperulae mulieris. Überlieferung und Herkunft eines frühmittelalterlichen Visionstextes*, ed. H. Houben, in «Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins», 124 (1976), pp. 31-42.

1. *A problematic transition*

The Frankish expansion in the second half of the eighth century had radically changed the European geo-political scenario, putting different realities into close contact and creating what Adrevald of Fleury renamed around 870 a *solidum corpus ex diversis nationibus*¹. From being a peripheral area of the Frankish dominion, Alemannia became an important transit area and crossroads towards Italy and Bavaria², while the Lombard kingdom conquered by Charlemagne saw the inclusion of numerous persons of transalpine origin in several Italian cities, many of whom held important positions at the top of the city hierarchies³.

The aim of this essay is to investigate the relations between the Rhaeto-Alemannic region and the north-eastern part of the *regnum Italiae*, corresponding to the present-day regions of Veneto, Friuli, and Trentino⁴, and to outline the development of this geographical area during Lothar I's (817-855) rule. Alemannia and the Veneto-Friuli area shared a traumatic and violent transition to Frankish rule, with the decimation of part of the local aristocracy. While the Alemannic nobles were slaughtered in the so-called *Blutgericht* of Cannstatt in 746⁵, in 775 the duke of Friuli Hrodgaud rebelled against Charlemagne, involving in the revolt also Stabilinius, his father-in-law and probable duke of Treviso, and Gaidus, duke of Vicenza⁶. Charlemagne defeated the rebels on the battlefield in 776 and confiscated their possessions: before his return beyond the Alps, he also placed Frankish and Alemannic figures in the rebellious territories. Although not all the aristocrats from Veneto and Friuli supported Hrodgaud, the rebellion convinced the Frankish king of

¹ MGH, Adrevaldus Floriacensis, *Miracula S. Benedicti*, 33, p. 493.

² Zettler, *Die karolingischen Grafen*, p. 89; Zotz, *Alemannien in der Karolingerzeit*.

³ Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*; Castagnetti, *Minoranze etniche*.

⁴ Choice based on the capitulary of Lothar of 825 and the council of Mantua of 827; see *infra*.

⁵ For an examination of the episode and the various accounts in Frankish sources, Wolf, *Das sogenannte "Blutgericht"*.

⁶ About Hrodgaud, Krahwinkler, *Friaul*, pp. 119-142; Stoffella, *Rodgaudo*.

the need for a more organic integration of the region into Frankish political mechanisms⁷.

Charlemagne, who no longer visited North-Eastern Italy after 776, entrusted the Lombard kingdom to his son Pippin, who, according to the *Divisio Regnorum* (806), at his father's death would obtain a kingdom comprising Italy, Bavaria, Rhaetia and part of Alemannia⁸. Pippin died prematurely in 810, and the Italian crown passed to his son Bernard, whose rebellion against his uncle Louis the Pious, who became emperor in 814, profoundly marked not only the history of the *regnum Italiae*, but also the entire Carolingian political context⁹.

The reasons for the attempted insurrection on the part of the young king of Italy are not entirely clear. Traditionally the historians linked them to Bernard's opposition to the content of the *Ordinatio imperii* of 817, which would weaken Bernard's position in the *regnum Italiae* after Lothar's appointment as co-emperor¹⁰. The *Annales regni Francorum*, which report the young king's desire to establish a tyranny, specify that Bernard received the oath from all the Italian cities, news that was however considered «half true, half false» («ex parte verum, ex parte falsum»)¹¹. Louis's immediate military response, however, provoked numerous desertions on Bernard's side. The young king was imprisoned and subsequently blinded, a punishment that caused him to die after a few days¹².

How to interpret Bernard's revolt in the light of the relations between Alemannia, *Venetia*, and the Carolingian royal power? In the first place, it is possible to grasp how the rebellion was not limited only to the *regnum Italiae* but also involved personalities placed outside the Peninsula who could have sympathised with, if not supported, Bernard's insurrection. The most famous case is that of Theodulf Bishop of Orléans, an important intellectual of Visigothic origin and prominent personality of the cultural circle of Charlemagne, who was listed among the supporters of the uprising, an accusation that he vigorously rejected¹³. On the other hand, the position of the Rhaetian-Alemannic monasteries is different. According to Regine Le Jan, the *libri memoriales* of St. Gallen, Pfäfers, and Reichenau made a precise selection of the names of the Carolingian imperial family to remember and to whom to address their prayers: these lists show how these monasteries supported Bernard's claims

⁷ Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice*, pp. 136-137. See Gasparri, *L'identità dell'Italia nordorientale*.

⁸ MGH, Capit. I, n. 45, 2, p. 127. On Pippin's reign, *Spes Italiae* (in particular, on the relationship with the Veneto area, Zettler, *Über die Verbindungen*).

⁹ Noble, *The revolt of King Bernard*; de Jong, *The Penitential State*, pp. 24-30; Patzold, *Zwischen Gerichtsurteil*.

¹⁰ MGH, Capit. I, n. 136, 17, p. 273: «Regnum vero Italiae eo modo praedicto figlio nostro [Lothar], si Deus voluerit ut successor noster existat, per omnia subiectum sit, sicut et patri nostro fuit et nobis Deo volente prasenti tempore subiectum manet». See Patzold, *Zwischen Gerichtsurteil*, pp. 42-45.

¹¹ MGH, ARF, p. 147, *ad annum* 817.

¹² MGH, ARF, p. 148, *ad annum* 818.

¹³ About Theodulf, Nelson, *The libera vox of Theodulf*.

to Rhaetia, a region administered by his father Pippin until his death¹⁴. The *libri memoriales* of St. Gallen, Reichenau, and Pfäfers not only reflect the criticism of these *cenobia* against the succession plan of the *Ordinatio imperii*, but also testify to the strong opposition to Empress Irmingard. The wife of Louis the Pious and mother of Lothar is subject to *damnatio memoriae* in St. Gallen and Pfäfers, and condemned to otherworldly tortures in the *Visio cuiusdam pauperulae*, most likely written in the monastery of Reichenau¹⁵.

In addition to the involvement of Theodulf of Orleans and the spiritual support of the Rhaetian-Alemannic monasteries, there was also the intercession of the monks of Fulda in favour of Bernard¹⁶. This demonstrates how the revolt also extended north of the Alps, agreeing with the affirmation of Thegan, one of the biographers of Louis the Pious, who reports how Bernard could count on impious advisers «hinc et inde», which I would interpret as «here and beyond (of the Alps)»¹⁷.

Regarding the *regnum Italiae*, although the Frankish sources affirm that all the cities joined the revolt, the effective extent of the rebellion is unclear. The narrative sources report only the names of Eggideo, the *camerarius* Reginhard, Reginhar, and the bishops Anselm of Milan and Wolfodus of Cremona¹⁸. The area of North-Eastern Italy seems therefore excluded; however, in a diploma of 17th February 819, Louis the Pious, at the request of the Patriarch of Aquileia Maxentius, assigns to the monastery of Santa Maria (in San Canziano d'Isonzo) the goods confiscated from the late Ardulf, son of Eric, because of his infidelity¹⁹. The temporary proximity may suggest an involvement of Ardulf in the uprising of Bernard; although this can only remain a hypothesis, as hypothetical as is the identification of his father Eric with the famous Duke of Friuli, who died in 799²⁰.

The Italian front was nevertheless not compact, if we trust the account of the Astronomer. The anonymous biographer of Louis the Pious is the only author to state that the emperor was warned of the revolt by two prominent figures, Suppo, future Count of Brescia, and Ratold, bishop of Verona, the latter at the time of the writing of the work (late thirties - early forties of the

¹⁴ Le Jan, *Mémoire et politique*. The manuscripts are: St. Gallen, Stiftsarchiv, Cod. Sang. A1. *Confraternitates Sangallenses*; St Gallen, Stiftsarchiv (Abtei Pfäfers), Cod. Fab. 1. *Liber viventium*; Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, Ms. Rh. hist. 27.

¹⁵ Le Jan, *Mémoire et politique*, pp. 151-153. On the *Visio cuiusdam pauperulae*, Dutton, *Politics of dreaming*, pp. 67-80 and La Rocca, *Pauperula*, pp. 36-38.

¹⁶ MGH, Epp. V, *Epistolarum Fuldensium fragmenta*, p. 517. Zettler, *Die karolingischen Grafen*, p. 101.

¹⁷ MGH, Thegan, *Gesta*, 22, p. 210: «Bernhardus, filius Pippini ex concubina natus, per exortationem malorum hominum extollens se adversus patruelem suum, voluit eum a regno expellere – habebat enim impios consiliarios hinc et inde».

¹⁸ Noble, *The revolt of King Bernard*. Wolfodus, of probable Alemannic origin, is most likely to be identified with the *Uuoluoltus eps* included in the St. Gallen *liber memorialis* (Zettler, *Probleme der frühmittelalterlichen*, p. 266).

¹⁹ MGH, DD LdF, n. 149, pp. 373-374 (819 II 17, Aachen): «Ardulfus filius Herici (...) postquam nobis infidelis extitit».

²⁰ Krahwinkler, *Friaul*, p. 185.

ninth century) returned to his native Alemannia, if not already deceased²¹. Reginhar, Wolfodus, Suppo, and Ratold belonged to the transalpine aristocracy transplanted to Italy – an aristocracy divided internally, with one side aligned in favour of the young king Bernard and the other loyal to the Emperor Louis the Pious.

2. Concordia Imperii

In the rare narrative sources from *regnum Italiae*, Ratold's human and political story provides the key for analysing the aristocratic networks of northeastern Italy, their relationship with Carolingian power and the personal, cultural and religious ties with the Rhaetian-Alemannic world. This is thanks, above all, to the relatively abundant documentation preserved in the Veronese archives, which make Verona the best-documented city in Veneto for the entire ninth century²². From the end of the eighth century, Verona saw the comital and episcopal offices controlled by transalpine figures, especially from Alemannia²³. During the reign of King Pippin, the city was also a lively and active centre in the cultural network of the kingdom and of the empire, in an attempt to ensure hegemony over the other cities of the *regnum*. This intellectual ferment was fostered by the Alemannic bishops – Eginno and especially his successor Ratold –, who made Verona a hub for the spread of Carolingian ecclesiastical reforms, inserting the city into the cultural and textual network linked to the monastery of Reichenau²⁴.

However, the death of Charlemagne and Bernard's revolt seem to have greatly slowed down this intellectual dimension: after 817, no more literary works produced in the Veronese framework are mentioned. The substantial hagiographic production concentrated in a few years observed until 814 dropped drastically, to disappear, while on the other hand, until 829, private documentation remained very scarce²⁵. The scarcity of the private documentation could be connected to Bernard's revolt: part of the Veronese elite may, in fact, have supported the claims of the young king of Italy, if we believe the Frankish sources that speak of oaths taken by the *potentes* of the Italian cities. The local elites could therefore not share Ratold's choice to warn the Emperor Louis of Bernard's revolt. Archdeacon Pacificus, a fine Lombard in-

²¹ MGH, Astronomus, *Vita*, 29, p. 382. For the writing period, *ibidem*, pp. 66-68. For the biographical profile of Suppo: Bougard, *Les Supponides*, pp. 382-384 and Vignodelli, *Supponidi*; for Ratold: Depreux, *Prosopographie*, pp. 358-360 and Hlawitschka, *Ratold*.

²² Santoni, *Scrivere documenti*; Veronese, *The struggle*.

²³ From the Carolingian conquest until the middle of the ninth century we find attested the counts Wolvene, Hadumar, Huopald, Warald, Walpert, Bernard and the bishops Eginno, Ratold, Notting, Billung, all transalpine. Castagnetti, *Il Veneto nell'alto medioevo*, pp. 52-56; Zettler, *Die karolingischen Grafen*. See *infra*.

²⁴ Veronese, *The struggle*, pp. 75-77.

²⁵ Tondini, *Un modello per il regno*, pp. 392-397.

tellectual and a «significant representative of Frankish politics»²⁶, represented the most striking case of this disconnect between the bishop and Veronese society. Pacificus's attestations disappear from Verona after 814 and it has been proposed to identify him with a monk of the same name from the not so distant monastery of Nonantola, who appears in the *liber confraternitatis* of Reichenau²⁷.

The political career of Ratold did not change after Lothar's arrival in Italy in 822, as no reasons for tension emerged between the bishop and the co-emperor. Ratold proved to be closely linked to the Emperors Louis the Pious and Lothar, for whom the Veronese church also composed *laudes*, and he was engaged in frequent travels in the *regnum* as an imperial agent. This, however, forced him to prolonged absences from Verona, another indication of an environment not entirely favourable to the Alemannic bishop²⁸. The symptom of a probable divergence between Ratold's ambitions and the needs of Veronese society can be seen in the bishop's efforts to build his own cell near Lake Constance, the future Radolfzell, in the late 820s²⁹.

Lothar stayed briefly in Italy in the 820s but carried out an intense legislative activity concerning the *regnum Italiae*³⁰. The sovereign mentioned Verona in the *capitulare* of Olona in 825, listing it among the seats of the *regnum italicum* charged with the role of improving doctrinal education in the various episcopal centres³¹. As part of this reforming plan, and also thanks to its prestigious library, Verona was chosen as the educational hub for the episcopal chapters of Mantua and Trento, cities belonging to the ecclesiastical province of the *Venetiae*, according to the Council of Mantua in 827³². In fact, Lothar decided to combine the remaining cathedral chapters of Veneto (Padua, Treviso, Feltre, Ceneda, Asolo), and to place them under the intellectual dominion of the episcopal see of Vicenza, whose scarce documentation does not allow us to draw an exhaustive picture of the socio-political reality of the city³³.

Although geographically close, contacts between Verona and Vicenza in the first half of the ninth century appear very limited³⁴, not excluding proba-

²⁶ Butz, Zettler, *Two early necrologies*, p. 219.

²⁷ MGH, Libri mem. N.S. I, p. 21, column D, 3. On Pacificus, see La Rocca, *Pacifico* (p. 180 for the hypothesis of an identification with the monk of Nonantola).

²⁸ Hlawitschka, *Ratold*, p. 18; Tondini, *Un modello per il regno*, pp. 151-152. For the *laudes*, contained in the manuscript Verona, Biblioteca capitolare, Cod. XCII (87), ff. 68r-71v, see Veronese, *Struggle*, pp. 74-75.

²⁹ Hlawitschka, *Ratold*, pp. 19-21.

³⁰ Sernagiotto, *Spes optima regni*, pp. 224-238.

³¹ MGH, Capit. I, n. 163, p. 327.

³² MGH Conc. II/2, n. 47, pp. 583-589 (827 VI 6, Mantua).

³³ Castagnetti, *Il Veneto nell'alto medioevo*, pp. 56-57. Belluno and Concordia, bishop's seats not mentioned in the capitulary, were presumably meant to be under the jurisdiction of Cividale del Friuli (MGH, Conc. II/2, n. 47, p. 327: «reliquae civitates Forum Iulii ad scolam convenient»).

³⁴ Generic *homines Vicentini* appeared as neighbours in an exchange in Valpantena (ChLA², LIX, n. 13, pp. 65-69 [838-839 III 7, Verona]), while Ursibertus and Audibertus *de Vicencia* witnessed in a charter issued in Verona (ChLA², LIX, n. 19, pp. 99-101 [854 V, Verona]).

ble border disputes between the two cities³⁵. In contrast to Verona, the upper echelons of religious and civil power in Vicenza were occupied by Bavarian exponents, such as Bishops Andreas and Francus, and Count Cundhart, attested from 818 to 827. They continued to maintain direct relations beyond the Alps: i.e. Andreas met Hitto, bishop of Freising, where he stopped in 819 on his return journey from Aachen to Vicenza³⁶. The interests of other wealthy transalpine personalities were also concentrated in the Vicenza area. In the mid-ninth century, the widow Peresinda, professing Alemannic law, donated to the monastery of San Salvatore in Brescia estates in the Vicenza area and in *Alemania finibus*³⁷, while the Frankish Rorius, bishop of Padua attested since 855, owned several properties in the territory of Padua and in the *comitatus* of Vicenza. In 874, Rorius donated these goods to the monastery of Santa Giustina, as attested in a document of dubious authenticity, signed by a large group of witnesses, including two Franks and four Alemans³⁸.

The presence of transalpine aristocrats in the territories of Verona and Vicenza went along with the disappearance of the wealthy and powerful Friulian aristocracy, which throughout the eighth century had owned vast properties outside the borders of Friuli, from Veneto to Tuscany³⁹. This disappearance can be attributed to Charlemagne's repressions after the revolt of Hrodgaud, followed by the occupation of the Friulan ducal charge by transalpine personages, who continued to maintain supra-regional relations with Alemannia and *Francia*. The aforementioned Duke Eric, whose birth in Strasbourg Paulinus of Aquileia remembered⁴⁰, was transalpine, as was his successor, the Alemannic Cadolah, probable nephew of Wolvene, count of Verona. Cadolah was responsible for the border in Dalmatia and died on his return from his unsuccessful military campaign against the rebel Duke Ljudevit⁴¹. He also maintained solid roots in Alemannia: in 817, on his return from a mission to Aachen, he entrusted his son Perahtold to the monastery of St. Gallen, who therefore remained in the transalpine region while Cadolah returned to Italy⁴².

Cadolah's successors were also transalpine: firstly, Baldric, whose failure to combat the Bulgarian incursion in 828 led to his dismissal, and to the subdivision of the Friulian march into four parts⁴³. Then Eberhard of Friuli, a leading figure of the highest Frankish aristocracy, whose possessions were scattered throughout the Carolingian empire, including Alemannia and the

³⁵ Settia, *Vicenza di fronte ai Longobardi*, p. 23.

³⁶ Hammer, *From ducatus*, pp. 233-236. For Andreas' document, Bitterauf, *Traditionen*, I, n. 400c, p. 344 (819 VIII 12).

³⁷ *Carte del monastero*, n. 45, pp. 185-187 («Peresinda, relicta quondam Adilberto, legem Alemanorum descendens, de finibus Vicentine»). This charter can be dated around 851.

³⁸ CDP, n. 15, pp. 29-31 (874 V 2, Padova); Castagnetti, *Minoranze etniche*, pp. 20-23.

³⁹ Gasparri, *Istituzioni e poteri*.

⁴⁰ Peršič, Piussi, *Paolino patriarca*, p. 220.

⁴¹ Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 163-165.

⁴² ChLA², CI, n. 25, pp. 89-93 (817 XI 17, Daugendorf).

⁴³ MGH, ARF, p. 174, *ad annum* 828. Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 146-147; Krah-winkler, *Friaul*, pp. 192-196.

regnum Italiae. Very loyal to Louis the Pious, whose daughter Gisla he married, Eberhard was a staunch ally of Lothar, always at his side even in the most difficult moments, for example after the latter's defeat at the Battle of Fontenoy in 841⁴⁴. Eberhard's arrival represented a turning point in the regional defence against Slavic incursions, according to the testimony of Andreas of Bergamo and the praise of Sedulius Scottus⁴⁵. Although Eberhard's military training is undeniable, as demonstrated by his appointment as commander of the first *scara* in the expedition against the Saracens in 847, it is presumably easy to believe that the Margrave of Friuli could count on a local aristocracy highly trained in combat, given the endemic conflict in the region, and manage to organise and coordinate it best⁴⁶.

While Friulian marquis power was in the hands of transalpine exponents, there is no information on the origin of the Patriarchs of Aquileia from the age of Lothar, among whom the vigorous action of Patriarch Maxentius, attested from around 811 to 836, is noteworthy. Not only did he transfer the patriarchal seat again from Cividale to Aquileia, where he undertook the reconstruction of the basilica of St. Mary, but he also forged close ties with the various Carolingian rulers (Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, Lothar), who granted numerous privileges and donations of territories to the Church of Aquileia⁴⁷. In order to settle the dispute with the Patriarchate of Grado concerning the metropolitan rights over the region of Istria, in 827 Maxentius convened a synod in Mantua in the presence of imperial and papal *missi* and numerous bishops from northern Italy⁴⁸. The council, in addition to validating Maxentius' claims, can be interpreted as the patriarch's warning to the other bishops, in particular Ratold of Verona, emphasising the preeminence of the patriarchal office of Aquileia against any autonomist wishes⁴⁹.

The reshaping of the great Friulian aristocracy in the Veneto area did not only benefit the transalpine element, but also the religious institutions of Verona, which saw a lively expansion of their interests in *Venetia* during the ninth century. Both the monastery of Santa Maria in Organo and the monastery of San Zeno expanded their sphere of influence along important trade routes: the Adige valley, the course of the river Po, the Venetian lagoon. The

⁴⁴ On Eberhard, La Rocca, Provero, *The Dead and Their Gifts*; Kershaw, *Eberhard of Friuli*.

⁴⁵ MGH, *Andreae Bergomatis Historia*, p. 226, c. 8; MGH, Sedulius Scottus, *Carmina*, n. 53, p. 212.

⁴⁶ On the 847 expedition, MGH, Capit. II, n. 203, pp. 65-68; on the military training of the Friulian aristocracy, Gasparri, *Istituzioni e poteri*, pp. 122-126. However, it is not right to interpret relations between Slavs and Friulians solely in terms of hostility, Curta, *The making of the Slavs*, pp. 70s.

⁴⁷ Krahwinkler, *Friaul*, pp. 168-179.

⁴⁸ MGH, Conc. II/2, n. 47, pp. 583-589 (827 VI 6, Mantua). This synod provides the first (and often the only) attestation of the bishops of the province of Aquileia for this period: Ratold of Verona, Francus of Vicenza, Laiulfus of Mantua, Dominicus of Padua, Adeodatus of Treviso, Emmo of Ceneda, Othelbertus of Belluno, Anselmus of Concordia, Auratus of Feltre, Arthemius of Asolo, Heimbert of Trento.

⁴⁹ Azzara, *Il concilio di Mantova*; Veronese, *Entangled Competitions*.

monastery of San Zeno, directly connected to the Veronese bishopric⁵⁰, could count on the interest of the Emperor Lothar. The ruler presumably saw in the coenobium an important element in terms of the power structure and decided to support it also in opposition to the city's comital office. This could be a key to understanding the *placitum* of 15th January 833, requested by Bishop Ratold, and exceptionally presided over by Lothar himself, which recognised the rights of the monastery of San Zeno over the Ostiglia forest, along the river Po, against the claims of Warald, count of Verona⁵¹.

Emperor Lothar, who granted the Veronese monastery tax exemption for sailing two ships along the rivers Po, Adige and other watercourses⁵², also favoured the monastery of San Zeno in its expansion into the Treviso area. The sovereign, again at the request of Bishop Ratold, in fact granted the Veronese monastery the coenobium of Saints Peter, Paul and Theonistus located in Casier, a few kilometres south of Treviso along the river Sile⁵³. The Treviso monastery's possessions extended from the foothills of the Veneto region, along the valley of the river Piave, to the edge of the Venetian lagoon, near the border with the Venetian duchy, a border strongly highlighted by the lagoon aristocracy itself, as witnessed by the affair of Duke Obelerio. In the internal struggles within the Venetian duchy, in fact, Obelerio, together with other aristocrats, took refuge in Treviso, where he was elected duke around 804, ending up exiled to Constantinople after a few years⁵⁴. On his return to the lagoon, Obelerio took up arms against Duke John, but was defeated, captured and finally beheaded. His head was hung *iuxta sancti Martini marginem* (near Mestre), on the border with the *regnum Italiae*, a macabre warning against possible interference in the lagoon by people from outside the duchy⁵⁵.

Regarding Treviso, although its administrative structure is uncertain⁵⁶, it covered an important commercial function in the Carolingian age, corroborated also by the presence of a mint. This was the only one in the Veneto area, operating until the middle of the ninth century, with Lothar the last Carolingian sovereign to issue coins in his own name from the mint of Treviso⁵⁷. The

⁵⁰ Stoffella, *La basilica e il monastero*.

⁵¹ MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 11, pp. 74-76 (833 I 15, Mantua). About the *placitum*, Castagnetti, *Le falsificazioni*, pp. 35-38. On Warald, Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 282-283.

⁵² This exemption is quoted in a later diploma of King Berengar: DD B I, n. 11, pp. 39-41 (893 XI 9, Verona).

⁵³ The grant is mentioned in the diploma of Lothar's son Louis II: MGH, DD Lu II, n. 13, pp. 88-91 (853 VIII 24, "curte Auriola").

⁵⁴ Iohannes diaconus, *Istoria*, II, 24, pp. 71-73; 29, pp. 75-77.

⁵⁵ Iohannes diaconus, *Istoria*, II, 41, p. 80. Ortalli, *Il ducato*, pp. 732-736; West-Harling, *Rome, Ravenna and Venice*, pp. 250-252.

⁵⁶ Not only after Gebhard (†801/802) are there no other counts attested in Treviso, but the figure of Gebhard himself is problematic, being attested only in hagiographical sources produced outside the Veneto (Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 184-185; Veronese, In *Venetiarum partibus*, pp. 218-224). Stefano Gasparri suggests that Eberhard of Friuli may also have held the position of count of Treviso, based also on the fact that Eberhard owned property in Musestre, on the river Sile, in *comitatu Tarvisiano*: Gasparri, *Dall'età longobarda*, pp. 26-28.

⁵⁷ About mint of Treviso, see Coupland, *The coinage*, pp. 176-178; Rovelli, *Coins and trade*, p. 70.

commercial importance of Treviso is also supported by the presence of Jewish merchants, whose presence, although they are mentioned for the first time in a *diploma* of King Berengar in 905, can be assumed as early as the ninth century⁵⁸. The Jewish presence only confirms the value of Treviso as a gateway to the East and important port for the Italic kingdom of the upper Adriatic in the Carolingian age, as testified by annalistic and hagiographic sources. These contain scant but significant mentions of the *Tarvisiani portus*, from where emissaries, merchants and relic thieves landed and sailed to Byzantium and the Near East. In 806 Frankish ambassadors returning from Persia disembarked at the port of Treviso, while the *Miracula sancti Genesii*, composed in Reichenau between 822 and 838, narrate that at the beginning of the ninth century, Charlemagne's envoys, on their way to the Caliph of Baghdad Harun al-Rashid, and the messengers of Gebhard, Count of Treviso, about to set sail for Jerusalem, met in the port of Treviso⁵⁹. Bishop Ratold himself would have reached Treviso in order personally to recover the relics of the saints Genesius/Senesius and Theopontius/Teopompus⁶⁰. Although the port of Treviso has often been identified with the Riva di Mestre, located at the edge of the lagoon, recent archaeological surveys found a river landing near the historical centre of Treviso, which could have been the port. Excavations have demonstrated the reclamation of a suburban area between the eighth and ninth centuries and the simultaneous construction of a river landing along the Botteniga river, a tributary of the Sile river, which allowed a connection with the Venetian lagoon. These works show an expanding city during the early middle ages⁶¹.

The information concerning the other cities of Veneto for the first half of the ninth century is meagre and fragmented, and the very scarce documentation does not allow us to draw profiles of a local aristocracy, much less any relations with the transalpine world. The rare documentation also concerns the diplomas of Louis the Pious and Lothar, rulers who seem to have had very sporadic relations with the Veneto-Friuli aristocracies. Of the hundreds of *diplomas* issued by two emperors (even jointly), very few have been preserved regarding recipients in this geographical area, mostly referring to the monastery of San Zeno in Verona⁶² and the Church of Aquileia governed by Patriarch Maxentius⁶³. Moreover, with the exception of Charlemagne's presence during

⁵⁸ DD B I, n. 52, pp. 149-151 (905 I 9, Verona). Bertazzo, *Ebrei nell'Alto Adriatico*, pp. 118-120.

⁵⁹ Respectively MGH, ARF, p. 122, *ad annum* 806 and MGH, *Ex miraculis S. Genesii*, p. 170. For the problems concerning the use of *Miracula* for an early medieval Treviso reconstruction, Veronese, In *Venetiarum partibus*.

⁶⁰ *Miracula S. Marci*, p. 42. On the plausibility of this information Hlawitschka, *Ratold*, pp. 22-23. Francesco Veronese is more cautious (Veronese, In *Venetiarum partibus*, pp. 247-258).

⁶¹ Pizzinato, Vianello, *Nuovi elementi*; Pellegrini, Colucciello, *Lo scavo di piazza Santa Maria*. For locationing of the *portus Tarvisiani* in Mestre, Gasparri, *Dall'età longobarda*, p. 25.

⁶² Louis the Pious: MGH, DD LdF, nn. depp. 213-216, pp. 1168-1170. Lothar: MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 11, pp. 74-76 (833 I 15, Mantua); n. dep. 151, p. 334; n. dep. 163, p. 339.

⁶³ Louis the Pious: MGH, DD LdF, n. 233, pp. 580-581 (824 I 21, Ver-sur-Launette); n. 288, pp. 718-720 (830 XI 11, Nijmegen); n. dep. 16, pp. 1045-1046 (before 832 XI 30). Lothar: MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 9, pp. 70-73 (832 XI 30, Pavia); n. 76, pp. 192-193 (843 VIII 22, Gondreville).

the repression of Hrodgaud's revolt, Veneto and Friuli remained systematically outside the direct range of action of the Frankish sovereigns, including Lothar himself, for whom there is no evidence of any stays in this area⁶⁴.

Noteworthy is the case of Ceneda, today Vittorio Veneto, a *castrum* of non-Roman foundation whose diocese, which only came to life in the eighth century⁶⁵, appears to be closely linked to the transalpine world, without the presence of any confirmed Alemannic or Frankish bishops. The cathedral chapter of Ceneda is in fact the only religious institution in *Venetia* to stipulate a brotherhood bond with a Rhaetian-Alemannic monastery, specifically with the coenobium of Reichenau. Datable to the 830s, the *confraternitas* saw the drafting in a Reichenau manuscript of two lists of the religious members of the Ceneda chapter, subdivided into living and deceased, lists headed respectively by Bishop Emmo, who participated in the Council of Mantua in 827, and the deceased Bishops Iulianus and Dulcissimus⁶⁶.

Contacts with the transalpine world would also seem to be attested in nearby Belluno, a city located along the valley of the river Piave, an axis connecting with Bavaria through the Puster Valley⁶⁷. The only document from Belluno referring to the first half of the ninth century has survived in a nineteenth century transcription: Teodaldus, bishop of Belluno, may have made a donation in 853 in favour of the capitular clergy of Belluno⁶⁸. The same bishop acquired the donated properties from the late Enspertus of Baldeniga and they were located across a wide territory, in Ceneda, in the Friulian territory and *in Teotonicus*. However, at the time of the donation, part of these properties were managed *in precaria* by Onelda, Enspertus' widow, who could dispose of them for life. Although there are objective doubts as to its genuineness⁶⁹, the document offers an example of a local aristocrat, who possessed properties spread over a wide geographical horizon and was in close contact with the city's ecclesiastical leadership, ties that ensured his widow's protection after Enspertus' death.

⁶⁴ Louis the Pious also gave grants to the *comes* Aio, MGH, DD LdF, n. 101, pp. 244-245 (816 VII 31, Aachen) and the monastery of Santa Maria di San Canzian d'Isonzo, at the request of Patriarch Maxentius, MGH, DD LdF, n. 149, pp. 373-374 (819 II 17, Aachen). Lothar gave benefits to Ortinus, vassal of Notting, bishop of Verona, MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 75, pp. 190-191 (843 VIII 22, Gondreville), and to the episcopal Church of Padua, MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. dep. 179, p. 345.

⁶⁵ For a debate on the controversial origins of the see of Ceneda, Dalle Carbonare, *Nuove considerazioni*.

⁶⁶ MGH, Nocr. Suppl., p. 290. Dulcissimus is the recipient of a diploma of Charlemagne, which came down to us in a heavily interpolated copy: MGH, DD Karol. I, n. 177, pp. 238-239 (794 III 31, Frankfurt); no other attestation of Iulianus is available. Ludwig, *Transalpine Beziehungen*, pp. 138-140.

⁶⁷ Bosio, *Le strade romane*, pp. 149-155.

⁶⁸ Biblioteca civica bellunese, ms. 493, folio 13 (853 III 1, Belluno). The diocese of Belluno is better documented from the second half of the ninth century, with Bishop Aimò, attested between from 877 to 923 and loyal to Carloman, King of Bavaria (Rosenwein, *The Family Politics*, pp. 264-265).

⁶⁹ E.g., a discrepancy is the absence of the name of Emperor Louis II in the dating formula. However, the document is considered substantially authentic (Grendele, *I vescovi veneti*, p. 226).

To return to Verona and the monastery of San Zeno, despite the interest of the Frankish emperors, the Veronese monastery does not seem to have been able to attract testamentary bequests from Veronese society. Even considering the losses of private documentation, it emerges that not even the bishops of Verona Billung (Alemannic) and Audo (Lombard), whose wills are preserved, benefited the monastery of San Zeno⁷⁰. The exception is Engelbert from Erb , a wealthy Lombard landowner from the countryside south of Verona, who drew up his will in 846 and made a donation in favour of the monastery, a decision probably motivated by his kinship with Ebbo, abbot of San Zeno⁷¹.

3. *Bad times, good times*

Relations between Veronese society and the city's ecclesiastical bodies changed profoundly with the evolution of the political-dynastic situation of the Carolingian empire, especially when, in 829, Louis the Pious's plan to assign a kingdom to his son Charles the Bald, born from his second marriage to Judith, became clear⁷². The emperor wanted to guarantee his youngest son a political base of his own, and for this reason, he drew the borders of a new kingdom, aggregating the territories of Alemannia, Rhaetia, Alsace and part of Burgundy. The political centre and seat of the royal palace of this new kingdom was Bodman, on Lake Constance, not far from the monastery of Reichenau⁷³. This intervention was the first in a series of decisions by Louis the Pious that brought great uncertainty to the entire Rhaetian-Alemann area. In little more than a decade, this region experienced various plans of dynastic succession, with its attribution to the various sons of Louis the Pious (Charles the Bald, Lothar, Louis the German)⁷⁴. This instability undoubtedly had repercussions on the Alemannic aristocracy in Italy since, according to the provisions of the *Ordinatio imperii*, an aristocrat was required to dispose of *beneficia* only in the *regnum* of a single sovereign⁷⁵. Entrusting Charles the Bald with territories that until then had been managed directly by Louis the Pious and, later, by Lothar, was certainly a destabilising choice. Moreover, Louis the German craved the lands in question, and he seemed to enjoy support within the monastery of Reichenau⁷⁶. The territorial decisions of 829, combined with the change at the top of the empire with the appointment of Bernard of

⁷⁰ Billung's will: ChLA², LX, n. 26, pp. 118-121 (846 XII 12, Verona); Audo's will: ChLA², LIX, n. 23, pp. 113-115 (860 VIII 5, Verona).

⁷¹ ChLA², LX, n. 25, pp. 109-117 (846 V 28, Erb ). See *infra*.

⁷² Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, esp. pp. 86-89.

⁷³ Zotz, *Ludwig der Fromme*.

⁷⁴ Kaschke, *Die Teilungsprojekte*.

⁷⁵ MGH, Capit. I, n. 136, 9, p. 272.

⁷⁶ Goldberg, *Struggle for empire*, pp. 56-61. In 829, Louis the German interceded in favour of the monks of the monastery of Reichenau in a diploma issued by his father Louis the Pious: MGH, DD LdF, n. 280, pp. 696-698 (829 IX 6, Worms).

Septimania as *camerarius*, led to the so-called “loyale Palastrebellion” and to the first confinement of Lothar in Italy⁷⁷.

This first political turbulence does not seem to have had immediate repercussions on Veronese society, as witnessed notably by the *placitum* of January 833 regarding the forest of Ostiglia. The situation changed radically with the events of June of the same year, when the rebellion of Lothar, Pippin and Louis the German against their father saw the deposition of Louis the Pious and the simultaneous imprisonment of the young Charles the Bald in the monastery of Prüm and the Empress Judith in the city of Tortona⁷⁸. The wife of Louis the Pious was freed by the action of some aristocrats present in Italy, of whom the sources mention Ratold, bishop of Verona, Boniface, margrave of Tuscany and Pippin, son of Bernard king of Italy, the ruler whom Ratold himself – at least according to the testimony of the Astronomer – contributed to imprison⁷⁹.

In the meantime, Pippin of Aquitaine and Louis the German reconciled with their father and opposed Lothar who, in 834, acknowledged his defeat and retreated to Italy, remaining there until the death of Louis the Pious in 840. With the constant presence of the co-emperor in Italy, Ratold abandoned Verona to reside beyond the Alps, alternating between the imperial court and Radolfzell, the monastic cell he founded on Lake Constance⁸⁰. Ratold in fact lost Lothar’s support, an indispensable instrument for legitimising and strengthening his power in the Veronese context, as we have seen from the various concessions offered by Lothar to the monastery of San Zeno. However, the bishop must not have lost hope of returning to Italy, since in 836 Louis the Pious sent *missi* to Lothar, ordering his son to reinstate the counts and bishops who had accompanied Judith from Italy with «faithful devotion» – and thus also Ratold –, a provision that was evidently not respected by Lothar⁸¹. Meanwhile, at the imperial court, Ratold interceded in favour of Verendarius, bishop of Chur who, like him, had remained faithful to Louis the Pious and for that reason was removed from his diocese⁸². Although there is no indication about who was responsible for Verendarius’ exile, I consider it plausible to identify Louis the German who, in the first phase of the 833 revolt, extended his control over the entire area east of the Rhine River. The young Louis assumed the title of *rex in oriental Francia*, attested in the diploma issued on 19th October 833 in favour of the monastery of St. Gallen⁸³. The

⁷⁷ Sernagiotto, *Spes optima regni*, pp. 301-355. Louis the Pious had deposed important Frankish aristocrats, including Hugh of Tours (father-in-law of Lothar), Matfrid of Orleans and the aforementioned Baldric of Friuli.

⁷⁸ Schäpers, *Lothar I.*, pp. 236-270.

⁷⁹ MGH, AB, pp. 8-9, *ad annum* 834; MGH, Astronomus, *Vita*, 52, p. 492. Sernagiotto, *Spes optima regni*, pp. 407-420.

⁸⁰ For the last years of Ratold, Hlawitschka, *Ratold*, pp. 24-29.

⁸¹ MGH, AB, p. 12, *ad annum* 836: «de episcopis atque comitibus, qui dudum cum augusta fideli devotione de Italia venerant, ut eis et sedes propriae redderentur».

⁸² MGH, DD LdF, n. 360, pp. 895-900 (836 I 8, Aachen).

⁸³ MGH, DD LdD / Km / LdJ, n. 13, pp. 15-16 (833 X 19, Frankfurt). This was the first deed for a Rhaetian-Alemannic institution issued by Louis the German.

complicated situation in Alemannia, shown by the scarcity of the preserved documentation⁸⁴, may have convinced Ratold to act in favour of Louis the Pious during the rebellion of the sons of the emperor, reaffirming his loyalty to protect his interests in the area around Lake Constance.

Following the revolt of 833, while Lothar strengthened the role of Pavia as the political-administrative centre of the *regnum Italiae*⁸⁵, in Verona, after the departure of Ratold, the bishop's see remained vacant until 840. In March of that year, a few months before the death of Louis the Pious, Notting, in close contact with influential figures such as Hrabanus Maurus, was attested as *vocatus episcopus* of Verona⁸⁶. The reason for this "institutional void" is unclear: rather than Lothar's punitive attitude towards Verona, the impossibility of the sovereign to appoint a new bishop, due to the absence of a synod convened to depose Ratold, seems more plausible⁸⁷.

While a new bishop appeared in Verona, the imperial political situation saw a rapprochement between Lothar and Louis the Pious, due to the latter's clash with his son Louis the German, fomented by the highest Frankish aristocracy. Prominent figures in eastern *Francia* – Otgar of Mainz, Adalbert of Metz, Atto of Fulda – held numerous rich estates on both sides of the Rhine and saw Louis the German's westward expansion as a threat. They therefore decided to put pressure on the emperor, also involving the Empress Judith, for his reconciliation with Lothar⁸⁸. Louis the German's ambition and the rapprochement between Lothar and his father, led in 838 to the confinement of Louis the German to Bavaria alone and, in 839, to a further imperial division plan, which saw – in this case – the assignment of Alemannia to Lothar⁸⁹. The co-emperor claimed possession of the region with the transfer of the relics of Saint Januarius from Rome to Reichenau, a transfer recounted in poetic form by Walafrid Strabo. Walafrid, at that time probably abbot of the monastery of Reichenau, describes the highly symbolic ritual of the deposition of the relics, performed by Lothar himself as a penitent⁹⁰.

Verona, in the period of episcopal absence, saw the expansion of the monastery of Santa Maria in Organo thanks to the energetic action of its abbot

⁸⁴ In spite of the wealth of documents in St. Gallen, no private *chartae* of certain date written during the months when Lothar was sole emperor (June 833-February 834) have been preserved. The only documents attributable to this period are ChLA², CIII, n. 43, pp. 112-113 (833 X 27 / 834 X 26, Urlau) and n. 44, pp. 114-115 (833/834).

⁸⁵ Majocchi, *Pavia*, pp. 44-47.

⁸⁶ ChLA², LX, n. 24, pp. 105-107 (840 III 17, Verona). In a letter dated 840, Hrabanus Maurus addresses Notting, calling him *electus episcopus*; MGH, Epp. V, *Hrabani Mauri abbatis Fuldensis et archiepiscopi Moguntiacensis epistolae*, n. 22, p. 428. About Notting, Schmid, *Kloster Hirsau*, pp. 32-37. The identification of Notting bishop of Verona with the eponymous bishop of Vercelli (e.g., supported in Andenna, *Notingo*) is no longer considered reliable; see Bougard's article in this volume.

⁸⁷ Hlawitschka, *Ratold*, pp. 28-29.

⁸⁸ Goldberg, *Struggle for empire*, pp. 87-92.

⁸⁹ MGH, AB, pp. 20-21, *ad annum* 839; Kaschke, *Die Teilungsprojekte*, pp. 113-120.

⁹⁰ MGH Poetae, II, n. 77 [*De sancto Ianuario martyre*], pp. 415-416. Schäpers, *Lothar I.*, pp. 338-339.

Audibert, attested from 831 to 846. There is no doubt that Audibert was able to exploit the institutional void left by Bishop Ratold after 834. It is nevertheless undeniable that it was the abbot's personal ability which allowed him to direct the interests of the population of Verona and its territory towards his monastery, especially ecclesiastics – including from the cathedral chapter – and lay people from the small and medium aristocracy, in search of an institutional interlocutor⁹¹. However, an important fact emerges from the Veronese private charters in this period: from 814 to 840 no persons who expressly define themselves as Alemans or Franks appear in these charters. On the one hand, this disappearance can be explained by the preponderance of the documentation concerning Santa Maria in Organo, a monastery closely linked to the local population, whereas the transalpine people tended to be concentrated in the comital and bishop's entourage. The second reason could be that transalpine persons accompanied bishop Ratold when he took refuge beyond the Alps, proving the rapid turnover of transalpine agents in this period. The first reappearance of transalpine persons in Verona dates back to 17th March 840, when Lupo, Veronese citizen, exchanged some lands with the Alemannic Walpert, count of Verona, who was accompanied by one of his vassals, the Alemannic Sigismundus⁹². The transalpine presence is much more substantial six years later in the will of the Alemannic Billung, bishop of Verona, in which two Franks and six Alemans put their *signum manus*, including Ulfus, vassal of Billung, and Arpert, vassal of Bernard, count of Verona⁹³. However, it is necessary to consider how in the private Italian documentation, the appellations “Frankish” or “Alemannic” emerge mostly for non-autograph witnesses, a specification that often did not appear necessary for those who signed in their own hand, as in the case of Bishop Billung himself or the Frank Ratgaudus, active in Lucca⁹⁴. Transalpine agents may have signed or participated in legal transactions without explicitly stating their ethnicity or legal affiliation. Unfortunately, neither anthroponomy nor the possible type of writing used can be sufficient elements to associate a person with a specific geographical area⁹⁵. Finally, there can be problems baffling those who physically drafted the document regarding the ethnicity of the witnesses. It is the case of Hermengarius, a non-autograph subscriber who, in a deed from

⁹¹ Tondini, *Un modello per il regno*, pp. 411-429.

⁹² ChLA², LX, n. 24, pp. 105-107 (840 III 17, Verona). Lupo was the son of the deceased Agiprandus and he came from *porta sancti Zenonis*, an urban area in Verona (nowadays Porta Borsari). Walpert, son of the deceased Cunibert de Sancto Iusto, may have belonged to the founding family of Hirsau, in the Black Forest, a parental group to which Bishop Notting might also have belonged. Zettler, *Die karolingischen Grafen*, pp. 109-111.

⁹³ ChLA², LX, n. 26, pp. 118-121 (846 XII 12, Verona). On Bernard, Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 148-152.

⁹⁴ Ratgaudus, active between 840 and 854, in a charter dated 843, calls himself *homo Francisco*, a specification not reported in his various autograph signatures (in caroline minuscule): ChLA², LXXVIII, n. 10, pp. 36-37 (843 VI 12, Lucca).

⁹⁵ On the limits of the use of anthroponomy Castagnetti, *Minoranze etniche*, pp. 26-27, note 59; on those of writing Bassetti, Ciaralli, *Sui rapporti tra nazionalità*.

Verona in 809, drafted by the *cancellarius* Stadibertus, appears listed as *curator alamannus*⁹⁶. Five years later, again in Verona, the cleric and notary Audibert listed Hermengarius as *francus*, without any other specification⁹⁷. They could be two different persons, but the presence in the same documents of two other homonyms (Grasulfus and Ingo) suggests that they are the same person. The different ethnicity could be explained, according to Andrea Castagnetti, «per la scarsa sensibilità del notaio di fronte ad immigrati la cui nazionalità gli appariva affine»⁹⁸.

In his efforts to consolidate and expand the monastery he governed, Abbot Audibert availed himself of a number of key figures, both ecclesiastical and lay, through whom he came into contact with the city's top echelons, such as the count or the bishop. Thanks to them, Audibert succeeded in further expanding the interests of the monastery, geographically extending its range of action over a vast area, from the Alpine valleys to the river Po. The abbot combined these initiatives with building works, which make Audibert «una figura di spicco dell'evergetismo ecclesiastico carolingio»⁹⁹.

Two commemorative inscriptions on two stone discs come from Valpanтена¹⁰⁰, an area that saw a lively real estate activity on the part of Audibert, thanks also to the collaboration with the (aforementioned) trusted layman Lupo and with the deacon Audo, the future bishop of Verona. Lupo, although lacking an officially recognised position, proved to be a wealthy, influential agent with a good writing culture, capable of dealing with the upper echelons of Veronese power, as two private charters show. In 841, the year following the exchange with Count Walpert¹⁰¹, Lupo exchanged a servant with Ebbo, abbot of San Zeno¹⁰². The legal action of Lupo and the abbot Audibert was then intertwined with that of Audo, whose ecclesiastical career is recorded in the Veronese documentation, culminating with his election as bishop of Verona after 856, the first Lombard to hold that office in the ninth century¹⁰³. In 829, the deacon Audo purchased, for the considerable sum of 180 denarii, a *sors* in the Lessini Mountains, that had belonged to the deacon Gisulf, of whom Audo had been one of the testamentary trustees, as was Lupo, who signed the document¹⁰⁴. Ten years later, as rector of the church of San Martino di Grezzana,

⁹⁶ ChLA², LV, n. 2, pp. 37-41 (809 V 13, Verona).

⁹⁷ ChLA², LIX, n. 5, pp. 33-36 (814 V 7, Verona).

⁹⁸ Castagnetti, *Minoranze etniche*, pp. 24-25. The scholar notes that the title *curator* no longer appears in the Veronese documentation.

⁹⁹ Lusuardi Siena, *Le tracce materiali*, p. 183.

¹⁰⁰ The first disc, datable to 838, was found in the oratory of San Donato di Maruni; the second, without date, decorated the church of Santa Sofia in Sezano. On both discs, the inscription, containing Audibert's name, is arranged in the form of a cross. Lusuardi Siena, *Le tracce materiali*, pp. 183-184.

¹⁰¹ ChLA², LX, n. 24, pp. 105-107 (840 III 17, Verona).

¹⁰² ChLA², LIX, n. 16, pp. 81-85 (841 VI-XII 22, Verona). For the economic and patrimonial wealth of Lupo, Stoffella, *In vico Gussilingus*, pp. 178-180.

¹⁰³ Castagnetti, *Minoranze etniche*, pp. 50-53. Audo was son of the Lombard Grauselbert.

¹⁰⁴ ChLA², LIX, n. 7, pp. 41-43 (829 IX 7, Verona).

Audo made an exchange of lands in Valpantena with the abbot Audibert¹⁰⁵. In 846, Audo became archdeacon and rector of the *schola sacerdotum*, was designated commissioner in the will of Bishop Billung¹⁰⁶, and in 855 he granted the subdeacon and imperial chaplain Upertus some lands in the Veronese hills and a house in the centre of the city, in a deed signed by Lupo among others¹⁰⁷. The last records of Audo date back to 860, when he appears in documentation as bishop of Verona¹⁰⁸.

Abbot Audibert's interests also extended southwards, into the Veronese countryside, following the ancient Roman road Claudia Augusta in the direction of the rivers Tartaro and Po, and from there potentially towards the Adriatic Sea¹⁰⁹. In this area, the object of agricultural colonisation during the Carolingian age¹¹⁰, and of the interest of the monastery of San Zeno, stood the monastery of Santa Maria di Gazzo, founded in the Lombard age and dependent on Santa Maria in Organo. The building initiative of Abbot Audibert reinforced the connections with the monastery of Gazzo, with the installation of a reliquary cross (now lost), containing the relics of numerous saints, listed in a contemporary epigraph. Another dedicatory epigraph by Audibert, datable to 846, recalls the relic endowment initiative, while the mosaic floor of the same building, datable to the first half of the ninth century, may be connected to Audibert's building restoration and improvement work¹¹¹.

In the same year as the epigraph (846), Audibert also appears among the beneficiaries of the will of Engelbert, a resident of Erb , a locality a few kilometres north of Gazzo¹¹². Drawn up to ensure the division of his patrimony in the event that his only son and heir Grimoald died without legitimate heirs, the document provides important information on this aristocrat, who professed to be of Lombard law and signed in his own hand¹¹³, allowing us to trace his social profile. Engelbert's sphere of action goes beyond the narrow local horizon: his properties are distributed between the Veneto and Lombardy, both on the plains and in the hills; he also owns houses within the walls of the city of Verona¹¹⁴. His family and social network are also wide: alongside his sister and nephews, vassals, tenant farmers and *massari* are mentioned, as well as

¹⁰⁵ ChLA², LIX, n. 13, pp. 65-69 (838/839 III 7, Verona).

¹⁰⁶ ChLA², LX, n. 26, pp. 118-121 (846 XII 12, Verona): «scole sacerdotum sanctae Veronensis Ecclesiae ubi nunc presenti tempore Audo archidiaconus et Stephanus archipresbiter rectores esse videntur».

¹⁰⁷ ChLA², LIX, n. 20, pp. 103-106 (855 VIII 17, Verona).

¹⁰⁸ The last attestation of Audo is the aforementioned will of 860: ChLA², LIX, n. 23, pp. 113-115 (860 VIII 5, Verona).

¹⁰⁹ Bosio, *Le strade romane*, pp. 82-93.

¹¹⁰ Castagnetti, *Le falsificazioni*, pp. 112-113.

¹¹¹ Lusuardi Siena, *Le tracce materiali*, pp. 178-187, where the texts of the two epigraphs are also reported.

¹¹² ChLA², LX, n. 25, pp. 109-117 (846 V 28, Erb ).

¹¹³ The will, transmitted in a ninth century copy, does not provide information on Engelbert's writing.

¹¹⁴ For the location of the places mentioned in the will, Castagnetti, *La distribuzione geografica*.

contacts with important religious institutions, such as the *scola sacerdotum* of Verona, the Veronese monasteries of San Zeno and Santa Maria in Organo and the Brescian monastery of San Benedetto di Leno. In addition to real estate, Engelbert also lists movable goods (servants, animals, household and kitchen items), as well as the sword, spurs and parts of an armour, symbols of his *status* as a free man¹¹⁵. Although he did not hold public office, Engelbert was described by Stefano Gasparri as a «proprietario di buona condizione sociale, tipico esponente di un'aristocrazia di livello provinciale»¹¹⁶. Andrea Castagnetti furthermore notes how Engelbert, although owning houses in the city, where he had close ties with the city's religious institutions, preferred to place his centre of action in the countryside, according to the general desire of ninth century aristocracies for seigniorial control over men through the organisation of *curtes*¹¹⁷.

As well as southwards, the monastery of Santa Maria in Organo projected its interests also northwards, along the Adige valley, as witnessed by the *placitum* of 845, which saw the Veronese monastery opposed to some inhabitants of the Rovereto area, regarding the method of conducting various *operae*¹¹⁸. This *placitum* is very important in several ways. First, although unlike the monastery of San Zeno, no imperial diplomas in favour of Santa Maria in Organo survived, the *placitum* testifies how Abbot Audibert had personally addressed Louis II, son of Lothar and king of Italy since 839/840, to obtain justice¹¹⁹. The *placitum*, which saw the presence of *Langobardi* and *Teutisci* in the justice court, also provides the name of the only Carolingian official in Trento, Dux Liutfrid. He was the son of Hugh of Tours and brother-in-law of Lothar, with close contacts with his homeland Alsace, and his office in Trento confirms the importance of controlling the Adige valley as a connection axis with the reign of Louis the German¹²⁰. Concluding substantially with an agreement between the parties, the *placitum* of Trento testifies on the one hand to the monastery's desire to extend its rights from the lands it owned to the men who worked them, and on the other hand, it demonstrates the firmness of the latter in defending their legal status as free men.

¹¹⁵ On weapons in the Carolingian period, Coupland, *Carolingian arms*. On weapons as part of the laity's assets, Bougard, *Tesori e mobilia*, pp. 87-88.

¹¹⁶ Gasparri, *I testamenti nell'Italia*, p. 106.

¹¹⁷ Castagnetti, *Le aristocrazie della 'Langobardia'*, p. 618.

¹¹⁸ ChLA², LIX, n. 17, pp. 87-93 (845 II 26, Trento). Giuseppe Albertoni provides an accurate examination of the *placitum* (Albertoni, *Law and the peasant*).

¹¹⁹ ChLA², LIX, n. 17, p. 87: «Dum ad excellentissimam potestatem domni Hludovichi gloriosissimi regis domni Hlotharii imperatoris filius proclamandum et dicendum venisset Audibert abba monasterie Sancte Marie, quod est situm non longe a civitatem Veronam ad portam Organi». On Louis II's reign, Bougard, *Ludovico II*.

¹²⁰ Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 221-223. Along the Adige valley Louis the German met Lothar (MGH, AF, p. 28, *ad annum* 838: «Hlotharius et Hludowicus in valle Tredentina colloquium habuerunt»), Louis II (MGH, DD LdD / Km / LdJ, n. 85, pp. 122-123 (857?): «Ludowici quippe Baiowariorum regis et equivoci sui Ludowici Longobardorum regis, contigit conventum illorum alloqui fore ad Trientam Odalscalci episcopi civitate») and the Empress Engelberga (MGH, AB, p. 119, *ad annum* 872: «Engelbergam apud Trientum cum Hludowico rege Germaniae in mense Maio locuturam»).

4. *Arrivederci, Italia!*

The death of Louis the Pious in 840 and the outbreak of the *Bruderkrieg* do not seem to have affected the political situation in the *regnum Italiae*, with a quiet handover between Lothar, now unique emperor, and his son Louis II. The situation was much more complicated in the Rhaeto-Alemannic area, a region fiercely contested between Lothar and Louis the German. The local aristocracy was divided, between those who recognised Louis the German's aspirations to rule in Alemannia and Rhaetia, made explicit by the designation as *rex Alamannorum* in some private documents in St. Gallen¹²¹, and those who supported Lothar. A document issued at St. Gallen records the first year of Lothar's empire: this is the only *charta* that presents such dating, although the documentation from 840-841 is very scarce, indicative of the climate of uncertainty in the region¹²². Furthermore, Ratbert monk of St. Gallen, towards the end of the ninth century, states that, following the death of Louis the Pious, most of the *populus* of Alemannia, including the abbot of St. Gallen Bernwig, had sided with Lothar who, in turn, had every interest in securing control of the Alpine passes¹²³. For this reason, in 840 the emperor issued a diploma in favour of Silvanus, abbot of Pfäfers¹²⁴, and the following year two more for Verendarius, the bishop of Chur, who had paid for his loyalty to Louis the Pious with exile in 833¹²⁵. Verendarius's support for Lothar against the expansionism of Louis the German is also evident from the bishop's participation in the synod of Milan in 842, the last attestation of the belonging of the diocese of Chur to the metropolitan province of Milan, before its passage to the archdiocese of Mainz, in the *regnum* of Louis the German¹²⁶. Walafrid Strabo offered a further example of the internal division within the Alemannic aristocracy. After 840, Walafrid had to leave the monastery of Reichenau because of his support for Lothar, taking refuge in Speyer. From the city along the Rhine, Walafrid composed a poem in honour of the Emperor Lothar, urging him to claim the succession of his father Louis the Pious¹²⁷. Despite his proclamation of loyalty to Lothar and his bitterness for the exile from Alemannia, the emperor's defeat at battle of Fontenoy in June 841 saw Walafrid's approach to Louis the German. Walafrid later returned in Reichenau, thanks to the intercession of his master Grimald, who had become

¹²¹ E.g., ChLA², CIII, n. 36, pp. 98-99 (834 V 6, Bernhardsriet): «anno .I. Hludouuici regis Alamannorum».

¹²² ChLA², CIV, n. 26, pp. 76-77 (840-841, St. Gallen): «anno primo Hlotharii imperatoris».

¹²³ Ratpert, *St. Galler Klostersgeschichte*, 7, p. 186: «Cum igitur, ut diximus, maxima pars populorum Hlotharium sequeretur, contigit et Bernwicum nostrum abbatem illius partis fuisse adminiculatorem».

¹²⁴ MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 44, pp. 157-159 (840 VII 24, Strasbourg – forged).

¹²⁵ MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 55, pp. 157-159 (841 I 21, Gondreville – forged) and n. 63, pp. 172-173 (841 X 17, Thionville).

¹²⁶ *Concilium Angelberti archiepiscopi Mediolanensis a. 842*, in MGH, Conc. II/2, n. 62, pp. 814-815.

¹²⁷ MGH, Poetae II, n. LXXXVI, pp. 413-415.

Louis's arch-chancellor and abbot of St. Gallen¹²⁸. Regarding this monastery, during the Bruderkrieg Louis the German had at first deposed Abbot Bernwig and replaced him with Engilbert. However, the latter also supported Lothar and was in turn deposed after the defeat of Alemannic troops loyal to the emperor by Louis's army at the battle of Ries in May 841¹²⁹.

After the end of the civil war, Lothar never returned to Italy, entrusted to his son Louis II, but he continued to maintain active contacts with the Italian aristocracy, mostly with the *potentes* of the western and central parts of the *regnum*¹³⁰. As to Louis II, a large retinue of Italian bishops and counts accompanied the king on his expedition to Rome in 844, an expedition without *potentes* from North-Eastern Italy, with the exception of Bernard Count of Verona and Toringarius, Bishop of Concordia¹³¹. Louis II's rule in Italy also brought about a change in the Verona area, through the strengthening of the ties between Verona and Brescia. In 844, Notting, *vocatus episcopus* of Verona, became titular of the see of Brescia, while Billung, who took his place in Verona, is perhaps to be identified with the eponymous deacon attested in the act of foundation of the monastery of Saints Faustino and Giovita in Brescia, an institution benefited by the same bishop in his will¹³². The transfer of Notting to the city of Brescia is part of the progressive strengthening of the link between the Emperor Lothar's kinship group and the Brescian monastery of San Salvatore: in 848 Lothar granted to his wife, the Empress Ermengard, and their daughter Gisla, the lifetime usufruct of the monastery's possessions¹³³.

Notting was thus one of the main agents of Lothar's power in Italy, closely linked to Eberhard of Friuli, as emerges from the latest diplomas issued by the Emperor in favour of Veneto-Friuli recipients¹³⁴. These were two confirmations issued on the same day, the 23rd August 843, in Gondreville, the day after the famous meeting at Verdun that sanctioned the division of the empire between the three sons of Louis the Pious¹³⁵. In the first deed, Lothar acted in favour of Ortinus, vassal of the bishop of Verona Notting¹³⁶, although it is probable that the geographic horizon of this vassal was in Lombardy, concerning a contract of *precaria* stipulated with the church of Lodi. The second

¹²⁸ Goldberg, *Struggle for empire*, pp. 170-171.

¹²⁹ Ratpert, *St. Galler Klostergeschichte*, 7, p. 188; MGH, AF, p. 32, *ad annum* 841.

¹³⁰ Screen, *Lothar I: the man*.

¹³¹ For the list of Louis II's entourage, LP, vol. 2, pp. 89-90. This is presumably the only attestation of the bishop Toringarius.

¹³² CDL, n. 140, coll. 245-248 (841 V 31 – of uncertain authenticity. See Andenna, *Ramperto*). However, this identification is not shared by all: the Alemannic origin of Billung, never made explicit but widely accepted, would not fit with his belonging to the Brescian bishopric (Baronio, *Il monastero di San Faustino*, p. 60). In any case, there are several Billung in the *Liber vitae* of the monastery of S. Salvatore/S. Giulia (MGH, Libri mem. N.S. IV, p. 78).

¹³³ MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 101, pp. 240-242 (846 III 16, Aachen).

¹³⁴ For the relationship between Notting and Eberhard, Schmid, *Kloster Hirsau*, pp. 32-33; Kershaw, *Eberhard of Friuli*, pp. 97-98. The close cooperation between the two *potentes* and the imperial power continued also under Louis II, as witnessed in MGH, *Translatio sancti Callisti*.

¹³⁵ Screen, *Lothar I: the man*, pp. 260-261.

¹³⁶ MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 75, pp. 190-191 (843 VIII 22, Gondreville).

diploma was promulgated for the Church of Aquileia through the intercession of Notting himself and of Eberhard of Friuli, and saw the confirmation to the Church of Aquileia of the donation received from Count Alboin¹³⁷. Alboin's father was Aio, a nobleman from Friuli who took part in the Hrodgaud's revolt in 776, managing to escape and find refuge among the Avars. Captured during the Avar campaigns of Pippin King of Italy, in 796, Aio was brought to Charlemagne who reintegrated him into the Frankish administrative machine, allowing him a few years later to divide his territorial patrimony, scattered across the Friuli, Vicenza and Verona territories, between his three sons Alboin, Ingobert and Agisclaf¹³⁸. In Lothar's diploma, it emerges that Alboin, having become count, had opposed the emperor, although no further details are given¹³⁹. However, it is clear that the Patriarch of Aquileia had an interest in seeing the donations in his favour made by Alboin in his will confirmed, and the direct intervention of two important Frankish magnates such as Notting and Eberhard is a witness as to the importance of the matter¹⁴⁰.

5. Conclusions

The affair of Alboin allows us to draw some conclusions about the aristocracy of the North-Eastern area of the *regnum*. Although the diploma does not specify his territorial sphere of pertinence, Alboin is one of the very few Lombard counts attested during the age of Lothar, in a region where the highest echelons of political and religious power appeared to be severely limited, if not excluded, for the Lombard aristocracy. This is evident in Verona: the archdeacon Pacificus, despite his social prestige, was never elected bishop, and the deacon Audo only under Louis II. Episcopal and comital offices were firmly in the hands of men from beyond the Alps, not only along the Adige, but also in Vicenza and in Friuli.

The conflicts with the Carolingian rulers, as witnessed by Ardulf, Ratold, Alboin and other nobles also demonstrate that, regardless of their geographical origin, the high aristocracy in power in Veneto and Friuli, as well as in Rhaetia and Alemannia, was not cohesive in its relations with the upper echelons of Carolingian power. The different oppositions of the individual aristocrats seem to be based on personal rather than ethnic motivations, and do not respond to demands from local power groups: even if "factions" or "parties" had existed, they showed neither coherence nor consistency. Aristocrats and

¹³⁷ MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 76, pp. 192-193 (843 VIII 22, Gondreville).

¹³⁸ MGH, DD Karol. I, n. 209, pp. 279-280 (809 VII 07, Aachen). On Aio, *fidelis* also of Louis the Pious, Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 113-114 and Krahwinkler, *Friaul*, pp. 137-142; 223-226.

¹³⁹ MGH, DD Lo I / Lo II, n. 76, p. 192: «quod Alboinus quondam comes, priusquam in nostram deveniret offensionem».

¹⁴⁰ Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen*, pp. 116-117 and Krahwinkler, *Friaul*, pp. 251-252.

regional *potentes* adopted short-term advantageous positions and abandoned them when they were no longer useful, as can be observed in the episode of Walafrid Strabo. The example of Bishop Ratold is eloquent: his support for Louis the Pious, expressed on two occasions, does not seem to be the result of opposition to the local Lombard dimension, represented by groups supporting Bernard or Lothar. Ratold's deeds appear as an example of *fidele servitium* towards Louis the Pious, most likely aimed at safeguarding his business in Alemannia or elevating his own ecclesiastical rank. In contrast, Lothar, who had supported Ratold's demands on several occasions, only re-established relations with the city of Verona with the death of the latter, with the appointing as bishop of Notting, Lothar's loyal ally.

Alboin also represents one of the last representatives of the wealthy Friulian aristocracy, whose downsizing after 776 left room for the lively Lombard aristocracy of Verona, closely linked to the city's religious institutions, which in turn had expanded the horizon of their interests to a supra-local radius, along important trade routes. An example is the case of Engelbert, who, despite his base of action rooted in Erbé, maintained property and contacts within the walls of Verona. Even the deacon Audo, who came from Valpantena where he continued to hold important property interests throughout his life, based his social rise on close collaboration with the Verona episcopate and the monastery of Santa Maria in Organo. It is also worth noting how various members of Veronese society interacted with both Engelbert and Audo, who had further points in common: a discrete monetary endowment; kinship within the ecclesiastical hierarchies (Engelbert was a relative of Ebbo, abbot of the monastery of San Zeno; Audo's cousin Percarda was abbess¹⁴¹); the presence of *vassi* in their network of clients. In contrast to Audo, however, Engelbert, as well as Lupo – also a relatively wealthy, educated layman with interests in town and countryside – did not hold any officially recognised office.

A transalpine aristocracy that continued to maintain active contacts with the regions beyond the Alps counterbalanced these Lombard aristocrats, often with considerable economic and patrimonial resources, waiting to occupy the top ranks on the social ladder. These “foreign” aristocrats probably hoped one day to return to their countries of origin, as evidenced by the numerous journeys between the two sides of the Alps of people such as bishops Ratold of Verona and Andreas of Vicenza or Count Cadolah of Friuli. A transalpine element that for the first half of the ninth century still appears to have little connection with the local population: with a few exceptions, Alemans, Bavarians and Franks appear almost exclusively in a city environment, in relationships (even vassalage) with figures holding public office (counts, bishops, gastalds), often also of transalpine origin¹⁴².

¹⁴¹ ChLA², LIX, n. 21, pp. 107-109 (856 IV 29, Sezano). The monastery of which Percarda was abbess is unknown.

¹⁴² Castagnetti, *Minoranze etniche*, pp. 28-35.

The image of a dynamic aristocratic environment emerges under the surface of an imperial power only superficially interested in the Veneto-Friuli area. Both Lombard and transalpine aristocracies saw high geographical mobility, which was not accompanied by equally pronounced social mobility. We can interpret Lothar's absence in the Veneto-Friuli area as linked to the sovereign's desire to take up the model of government of his father Louis the Pious, hinging on the concept of *stabilitas*¹⁴³: limiting his sphere of action to the western Po valley, he delegated territorial control to aristocrats in whom he placed his trust. The Veneto-Friulian and the Rhaeto-Alemannic areas formed a closely connected and interdependent triangle of political action with the apex of Carolingian power. Every modification or change which occurred at each apex of this triangle, e.g. dynastic clashes, depositions of counts or bishops, territorial divisions, and so on, had repercussions on the other players. «No man is an island», wrote John Donne in the seventeenth century, and this is all the more true in Carolingian Europe, where rulers, counts, bishops, officials, and local societies, albeit apparently distant from each other, were closer than ever before.

¹⁴³ Gravel, *Distances, rencontres, communications*.

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