



Hugh, Lothar and Berengar: The Balance of Power in Italy 945-50

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Hugh, Lothar and Berengar: the balance of power in Italy 945–50

Robert Houghton

Department of History, University of Winchester, Winchester, United Kingdom

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The return of Berengar of Ivrea to Italy in 945 was a point of great change for the political networks of the kingdom of Italy. Berengar is typically presented assuming control, first ruling in practice with the Bosonids Hugh and Lothar as puppets, then openly taking the crown following Lothar's death in 950. Berengar, we are told, installed those who supported his insurrection in key positions, and marginalised or suborned those who had supported the Bosonids. This account is based almost exclusively on the narrative of the *Antapodosis* of Liutprand of Cremona.

Liutprand's work had complex personal and political motivations which led him to construct carefully an image of Hugh, Lothar, Berengar and of Italy as a whole. Moreover, Liutprand's narrative conflicts with contemporary accounts of the period, as well as the charter record. This article demonstrates these inconsistencies and describes more nuanced changes in political structures in 945–50.

Keywords: Italy; northern Italy; narrative sources; diplomatic; authority; power; relationship networks

The history of the final years of Bosonid rule in Italy (945–950) has been written almost universally as one of failing royal power. In 945 Berengar of the Anscarid family, margrave of Ivrea and the grandson of Berengar I, returned from exile and, we are told, gained control of the kingdom with the support of a number of Italian magnates.¹ Hugh, the king, retreated to Provence while his son Lothar was raised in his place.² In the following year Hugh was welcomed back to the palace, but this was a scheme by Berengar to keep the Bosonid kings within reach.³ Hugh and Lothar are portrayed as remaining as kings in name only until Hugh's final departure from Italy in late April or early May 947 and Lothar's death on 22 November 950. Berengar as *summus consiliarius* was the real power behind the throne.⁴ Lothar in particular is portrayed as a weak and sickly king, little more than a child, with no influence in his own kingdom.⁵ After the demise of the Bosonids, Berengar was able to take the crown openly as

E-mail: Robert.Houghton@winchester.ac.uk Postal address: Department of History, University of Winchester, Medecroft Building, Sparkford Road, Winchester SO22 4NH, United Kingdom

¹ The following abbreviations have been used in this article: MGH: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*; Schiaparelli, 'B2': L. Schiaparelli, ed., 'I diplomi di Berengario II', in *I diplomi di Ugo e di Lothario, di Berengario II e di Adalberto*. *Fonti per la Storia d'Italia* 38 (Rome: Tip. del Senato, 1924), 291–338, followed by pagination and diploma number; Schiaparelli, 'H': 'I diplomi di Ugo', in *I diplomi di Ugo e di Lothario, di Berengario II e di Adalberto*, ed. Schiaparelli, 3–247, followed by pagination and diploma number; Schiaparelli, 'Lo2': 'I diplomi di Lothario', in *I diplomi di Ugo e di Lothario, di Berengario II e di Adalberto*, ed. Schiaparelli, 251–88, followed by pagination and diploma number; SRG: *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*; SS: *Scriptores*.

The works of Liudprand are all cited from P. Chiesa, ed., *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera omnia: Antapodosis, Homelia paschalis, Historia Ottonis, Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana*. *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis* 156 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998).

E. Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italice negli ultimi anni del regno di Ugo e Lotario', *Studi Medievali* 4 (1963): 92–103 (96); V. Fumagalli, *Il regno italico* (Torino: UTET, 1986), 195–6.

² Fumagalli, *Il regno italico*, 195–6.

³ G. Fasoli, *I re d'Italia (888–962)* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1949), 159–61.

⁴ Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*, 159; S.F. Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli: Church State and Christian Society in Tenth Century Italy*, *Temi e Testi* 27 (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1979), 15–16; F. Bougard, 'Le royaume d'Italie (jusqu'aux Ottons), entre l'empire et les réalités locales', in *De la mer du Nord à la Méditerranée: Francia Media, une région au cœur de l'Europe (c. 840–c. 1050)*. *Actes du colloque international (Metz, Luxembourg, Trèves, 8–11 février 2006)*, ed. M. Gaillard. *Publications du CLUDEM* 25 (Luxembourg: CLUDEM, 2011), 487–510 (504); R. Balzaretto, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure: Representations of the Career of King Hugh of Italy (c.885–948)', *Early Medieval Europe* 24, no. 2 (2016): 185–208 (186); G. Vignodelli, 'The King and the Cathedral Canons. Hugh of Arles' Policies towards Local Aristocracies in the Kingdom of Italy (926–945)', in *Deutsch-Französisches Forschungsatelier 'Junge Mediävistik' IV – Provence*, ed. J. Nowak (forthcoming), 1–17 (2–3).

⁵ Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*, 165; Fumagalli, *Il regno italico*, 198, 285.

Berengar II, thwarted only by the intervention of Otto I of Germany in support of Adelaide, Lothar's widow and Otto's future wife.⁶

This account is problematic. It fits within the traditional, and frequently incorrect, portrayal of kingship in Italy between 888 and 962 as chaotic and weak.⁷ Central power supposedly collapsed after the demise of the Carolingians,⁸ and was only restored through Otto's interventions: in 951–2 when he married Adelaide and brought Italy into his sphere of influence with Berengar as a subordinate; and from 961 when he became emperor and displaced Berengar.⁹ This presentation has been challenged extensively in the last few decades. Bougard has highlighted the relative strength of the Italian judicial structure in this period and hence the strength of the political ideology on which these kings could draw.¹⁰ Airlie, MacLean and Santos Salazar have identified the conflict within post-Carolingian Italy (and elsewhere) as symptomatic of Carolingian rule, not of its demise.¹¹

⁶ Fumagalli, *Il regno italico*, 198.

⁷ E. Amann and A. Dumas, *L'église au pouvoir des laïques (888–1057)* (Paris: Bloud and Gay, 1940); Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*; C.G. Mor, *L'età feudale*. 2 vols. (Milan: F. Vallardi, 1952); G. Arnaldi, 'Berengario', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*. In progress (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960–), 9: 1–26; Fumagalli, *Il regno italico*.

⁸ K.F. Drew, 'The Carolingian Military Frontier in Italy', *Traditio* 20 (1964): 437–47 (439); L. Provero, 'Il sistema di potere carolingio e la sua rielaborazione nei comitati di Parma e Piacenza (secoli IX–XI)', in *Studi sull'Emilia occidentale nel medioevo: società e istituzioni*, ed. R. Greci. Itinerari medievali 4 (Bologna: CLUEB, 2001), 43–64 (43).

⁹ G. Barraclough, *The Crucible of Europe: The Ninth and Tenth Centuries in European History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 102–5.

¹⁰ F. Bougard, *La justice dans le royaume d'Italie: de la fin du VIIIe siècle au début du XIe siècle*. Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 291 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1995), 175–6.

¹¹ S. Airlie, 'Semper fideles? Loyauté envers les Carolingiens comme constituant de l'identité aristocratique', in *La royauté et les élites dans l'Europe carolingienne: (début IXe siècle aux environs de 920)*, ed. R. Le Jan. Histoire et littérature régionales 17 (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Centre d'histoire de l'Europe du Nord-Ouest, 1998), 129–43 (141); S. MacLean, "'After His Death a Great Tribulation Came to Italy ...'" Dynastic Politics and Aristocratic Factions After the Death of Louis II, c.870–c.890', in *Millennium – Jahrbuch*, vol. 4, eds. W. Brandes and others (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2007), 239–60 (251); I. Santos Salazar, 'Crisis? What Crisis? Political Articulation and Government in the March of Tuscany Through Placita and Diplomas from Guy of Spoleto to Berengar II', *Reti Medievali Journal* 17 (2016): 251–79 (273).

This has led to revisions of the reputations of the post-Carolingian kings of Italy through critical analyses of the narrative sources¹² and the charter record.¹³ Rosenwein rejects the traditional portrayal of Berengar I as a weak ruler and instead underlines the effectiveness of his incorporation of the immunity into existing structures of gift giving and the concept of kingship,¹⁴ and his development of a close knit relationship network within Italy based on his family ties as the basis for his rule.¹⁵ Bouchard,¹⁶ Wickham,¹⁷ Geary,¹⁸ Sergi,¹⁹ and Vignodelli²⁰ view Hugh as an effective and innovative ruler for his attempts to centralise rule in Pavia, concentrate key lands and public offices into the hands of his family, and break up the power of the marches in favour of numerous counts with direct access to the king.

The weakness and incompetence of the post-Carolingian kings of Italy was overstated in many surviving narrative sources. Most of the authors of these documents had reason to

¹² G. Gandino, *Il vocabolario politico e sociale di Liutprando di Cremona*. Nuovi studi storici 27 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1995); C. La Rocca, 'Liutprando da Cremona e il paradigma femminile di dissoluzione dei Carolingi', in *Agire da donna: modelli e pratiche di rappresentazione, secoli VI–X: atti del convegno, Padova, 18–19 febbraio 2005*, ed. C. La Rocca. Collection haut moyen âge 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 291–307; G. Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo: il Perpendiculum di Attone di Vercelli e la storia politica del regno italico*. Istituzioni e società 16 (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2011).

¹³ F. Bougard, 'Charles le Chauve, Bérenger, Hugues de Provence: action politique et production documentaire dans les diplômes à destination de l'Italie', in *Zwischen Pragmatik und Performanz: Dimensionen mittelalterlicher Schriftkultur*, eds. C. Dartmann and others. Utrecht studies in medieval literacy 18 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 57–83; F. Bougard, 'Du centre à la périphérie: le "ventre mou" du royaume d'Italie de la mort de Louis II à l'avènement d'Otton Ier', in *Urban Identities in Northern Italy (800–1100 ca.)*, eds. M.C. La Rocca and P. Majocchi. Seminari internazionali del Centro interuniversitario per la storia e l'archeologia dell'alto medioevo 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 57–83; Balzaretto, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure'; Santos Salazar, 'Crisis?'

¹⁴ B.H. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space: Power, Restraint, and Privileges of Immunity in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 137–55.

¹⁵ B.H. Rosenwein, 'Friends and Family, Politics and Privilege in the Kingship of Berengar I', in *Portraits of Medieval and Renaissance Living: Essays in Memory of David Herlihy*, eds. S.K. Cohn and S.A. Epstein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 91–106; Rosenwein, 'Friends and Family'.

¹⁶ C. Bouchard, 'The Bosonids: Or Rising to Power in the Late Carolingian Age', *French Historical Studies* 15, no. 3 (1988): 407–31 (219).

¹⁷ C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: A History of Europe from 400 to 1000* (London: Penguin, 2010), 439; C. Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy: Central Power and Local Society, 400–1000* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 177–83.

¹⁸ P.J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 135.

¹⁹ G. Sergi, 'The Kingdom of Italy', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 3: c.900–c.1024, ed. T. Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 346–71 (354).

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3 undermine the position of these monarchs, generally to legitimise the Ottonian rulers.²¹ Their
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5 rhetoric formed the basis for modern perspectives which have only been countered relatively
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7 recently. The post-Carolingian kings were not successful insofar as they did not rule as the
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9 Carolingians had or the Ottonians would.²² However, they introduced and adapted ideologies and
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11 methods of rulership to meet the changing realities of their times. The successes of the post-
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13 Carolingian kings must always be qualified, but their rulership was not as chaotic or disastrous as
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15 is often presumed.
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19 The period 945 to 950 must be reconsidered along these lines. Most modern accounts of
20
21 these years rely primarily or exclusively on Liutprand of Cremona's *Antapodosis*.²³ Liutprand
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23 provides a dramatic and generally coherent history of post-Carolingian Italy and depicts the
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25 kings of this period clearly: Hugh was scheming, but powerless at this point; Lothar was naïve
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27 and pious, but politically irrelevant; Berengar was conniving and the power behind the throne.
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38 ²⁰ G. Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide: la politica di consolidamento del potere regio di Ugo di Arles', in *Il patrimonio*
39 *delle regine: beni del fisco e politica regia fra IX e X secolo*, ed. T. Lazzari, special issue of *Reti Medievali Rivista*
40 13, no. 2 (2012): 247–94.

41 ²¹ Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 3–4; C. Villa, 'Lay and Ecclesiastical Culture', in *Italy in the Early Middle Ages: 476–*
42 *1000*, ed. C. La Rocca (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 189–204 (202); E. Manarini, '10th Century Italy
43 through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona: True Political Catastrophe or Just a Perception?',
44 in *Studies on Disasters, Catastrophes and the Ends of the World in Sources*, ed. J. Popielska-Grzybowska (Pułusk:
45 Pułusk Academy of Humanities, 2013), 195–200 (199–200); Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of
46 Failure', 190–1.

47 ²² Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure', 207.

48 ²³ Vignodelli, 'King and the Cathedral Canons', 2–3. The authoritative edition of Liutprand's work is Liutprand of
49 Cremona, 'Antapodosis', in *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera omnia*, Chiesa, 3–150. The bishop's work is also easily
50 accessible in: Liutprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', in *Die Werke Liutprands von Cremona*, ed. J. Becker.
51 *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi* 41 (Hanover:
52 Hahn, 1915), 1–158. Several translations have been produced in European languages including: Liutprand, *The*
53 *Embassy to Constantinople and Other Writings*, ed. J.J. Norwich, trans. F.A. Wright (London: Dent, 1993);
54 Liutprand, *The Complete Works of Liutprand of Cremona*, ed. P. Squatriti (Washington, DC: Catholic University of
55 America, 2007); Liutprand, *Liudprand de Crémone: oeuvres*, ed. F. Bougard. Sources d'histoire médiévale publiées
56 par l'Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes 41 (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2015); Liutprand and others, *De*
57 *Iohanne papa et Ottone imperatore: crimini, deposizione e morte di un pontefice maledetto*, ed. P. Chiesa (Florence:
58 Edizioni del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2018).
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3 However, despite extensive and important research into Liutprand's goals and rhetoric,²⁴ his
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5 account of this crucial half decade has rarely been considered with sufficient care.
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8 Other narrative sources for these years are typically ignored. Most medieval authors who
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10 mention the period do so only briefly, and typically only in the context of Adelaide and Otto, and
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12 their claims to the Italian throne. Many of these sources were composed by figures with little
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14 knowledge of Italy or were written long after the events they describe. None is as widely known
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16 or as vivid as the *Antapodosis*. However, there are several important knowledgeable
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18 contemporary authors, most notably Atto of Vercelli²⁵ and Flodoard of Reims,²⁶ whose accounts
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20 contradict Liutprand's version of events. These sources need to be considered in more depth.
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24 When other narrative sources have been considered, this is almost always within
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26 Liutprand's framework. Vignodelli's learned and thorough consideration of Atto of Vercelli's
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28 *Perpendiculum* sheds vital light on Atto's motivations and his place in the politics and ideologies
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36 ²⁴ See, for example, G. Arnaldi, 'Liudprando e la storiografia contemporanea nell'Italia centro-settentrionale', in *La*
37 *storiografia altomedievale: 10–16 aprile 1969*. Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, Settimane di studio 17. 2
38 vols. (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1969), 1: 497–519; J.N. Sutherland, 'The Idea of Revenge in Lombard
39 Society in the Eighth and Tenth Centuries: The Cases of Paul the Deacon and Liudprand of Cremona', *Speculum* 50,
40 no. 3 (1975): 391–410; J.N. Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona, Bishop, Diplomat, Historian: Studies of the Man*
41 *and his Age* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1988); P. Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German
42 Matrons: Liudprand of Cremona on Dynastic Legitimacy', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1995): 207–25;
43 Gandino, *Il vocabolario politico e sociale di Liutprando di Cremona*; R. Balzaretti, 'Liutprand of Cremona's Sense
44 of Humour', in *Humour, History and Politics in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G. Halsall
45 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 114–28; P. Buc, 'Noch einmal 919: Of the Ritualized Demise of
46 Kings and Political Rituals in General', in *Zeichen, Rituale, Werte: Internationales Kolloquium des*
47 *Sonderforschungsbereichs 496 an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster*, eds. G. Althoff and C. Witthöft.
48 *Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme* 3 (Münster: Rhema, 2004), 151–78 (159–61); La
49 Rocca, 'Liutprando da Cremona e il paradigma femminile di dissoluzione dei Carolingi'; C. Leyser, 'Episcopal
50 Office in the Italy of Liudprand of Cremona, c.890–c.970', *English Historical Review* 125 (2010): 795–817;
51 Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona'; A. Grabowski,
52 'Liudprand of Cremona's *papa monstrum*: The Image of Pope John XII in the *Historia Ottonis*', *Early Medieval*
53 *Europe* 23, no. 1 (2015): 67–92; Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure'.

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55 ²⁵ Atto of Vercelli, *Attonis qui fertur Polipticum quod appellatur Perpendiculum*, ed. G. Goetz. *Abhandlungen der*
56 *sachsichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig Philologisch-Historische Klasse* 37, no. 2 (Leipzig: B.G.
57 Teubner, 1922).

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59 ²⁶ Flodoard of Reims, 'Annales', in *Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Saxonici*, ed. G.H. Pertz. MGH, SS in folio 3
60 (Hanover: Hahn, 1839), 363–408.

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3 of the period,²⁷ but is nevertheless restricted by recourse to Liutprand's account and the narrative
4 it has spawned. Balzaretto highlights the surprising absence of the *Annales* of Flodoard of Reims
5 within studies of the post-Carolingian Italian kings despite the relevance of numerous sections of
6 this work.²⁸ He redresses this deficiency with regards to Hugh's reign, and draws in material
7 from other under-used sources, but is again constrained by the influence of Liutprand's work.
8 This research by Vignodelli, Balzaretto and others is of vital importance, but can and should be
9 taken further.

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19 The *Antapodosis* has also influenced the exploration of the charter sources. Berengar's
20 appearances in three of these documents as *summus consiliarius*²⁹ or *summus consors*³⁰ have
21 been taken as proof of his domination of the kingdom.³¹ The records of other figures in the later
22 Bosonid charters and those of Berengar's subsequent rule have been used to show their
23 culpability in the coup against Hugh and their allegiance to Berengar.³² These documents
24 certainly highlight the importance of Berengar in Italian politics at several key points during this
25 period, but investigations of these charters are often superficial and do not consider the
26 complexities of the relationship networks in which they existed.

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38 Some authors have presented an alternative view of Italy between 945 and 950. Bouchard
39 and Gandino provide positive views of Lothar's reign, but do not go into detail.³³ Fasoli and
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47 ²⁷ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*; G. Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy and Satire: Atto of Vercelli's *Polipticum quod*
48 *appellatur Perpendicularum*', *Early Medieval Europe* 24, no. 2 (2016): 209–35.

49 ²⁸ Balzaretto, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure', 191.

50 ²⁹ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83); Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1).

51 ³⁰ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 267–70 (no. 8).

52 ³¹ Mor, *L'età feudale*, 157; Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 15–16; Wickham, *Early Medieval Italy*, 179; Bougard, 'Le
53 royaume d'Italie', 504.

54 ³² Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*, 161; Mor, *L'età feudale*, 157; Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italiana'; R. Ricci, *La marca della*
55 *Liguria orientale e gli Obertenghi, 945–1056: una storia complessa e una storiografia problematica*. Istituzioni e
56 società 8 (Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2007), 36–9.

57 ³³ Bouchard, 'Bosonids', 420; Gandino, *Il vocabolario politico e sociale di Liutprando di Cremona*, 220.

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3 Keller envisage a struggle between Bosonids and Anscarids until and beyond Lothar's death.³⁴
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5 Vignodelli considers the domination of Lothar by two factions (one alliance centred on Berengar
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7 and one around Lothar's wife Adelaide)³⁵ and adds that Guido of Modena was an important
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9 variable between these groups, interacting with both at various points.³⁶ These are important
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11 steps away from Liutprand's simple account of the period but they do not go far enough. The
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13 reliance on the *Antapodosis* as the core source for Hugh's downfall and Lothar's rule is
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15 insufficient as Liutprand had strong motivations to present Hugh, Lothar and Berengar in a
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17 particular manner.³⁷ As this article will reiterate, much of Liutprand's account is uncorroborated
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19 and contradicted by several contemporary and subsequent writers. Furthermore, the charter
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21 evidence suggests a much more complex and changeable network of power than is usually
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23 presented.
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29 A re-evaluation of these sources allows the construction of a more nuanced understanding
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31 of the power structure of the kingdom of Italy in this period. This has important consequences
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33 for our understanding of Bosonid, Anscarid and Ottonian rule, and for the construction of the
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35 ideology of authority in the tenth century. To this end this article argues four core points. Firstly,
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37 Liutprand's personal and political goals led him to represent the history of Italy in this period in
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39 a specific and considered manner. As many authors have demonstrated,³⁸ the portrayals of Hugh
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41 and Berengar II were important elements of this narrative and formed cornerstones of
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48 ³⁴ Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*, 165–6; H. Keller, 'Zur Struktur der Königsherrschaft im Karolingischen und
49 Nachkarolingischen Italien: der "consiliarius regis" in den italienischen Königsdiplomen des 9. und 10.
50 Jahrhunderts', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 47 (1967): 123–223 (179–81).

51 ³⁵ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 223–9; Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy and Satire', 224.

52 ³⁶ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 226.

53 ³⁷ Sutherland, *Liutprand of Cremona*; Gandino, *Il vocabolario politico e sociale di Liutprando di Cremona*; La
54 Rocca, 'Liutprando da Cremona e il paradigma femminile di dissoluzione dei Carolingi'; Leyser, 'Episcopal Office'.

55 ³⁸ For example, Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons'; Gandino, *Il vocabolario politico e sociale di*
56 *Liutprando di Cremona*; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and Liutprand of
57 Cremona'; Balzaretto, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure'.

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3 Liutprand's rhetoric and professed ideology. This well-established argument should be expanded
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5 to include Liutprand's representation of Lothar as a pivotal element of his narrative strategy.
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8 Secondly, none of the other narrative sources for these years presents Berengar as the dominant
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10 figure within Italy. Liutprand's account stands alone and hence must be questioned. Thirdly, on
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12 this basis, therefore, a close reading of a *placitum* of 13 April 945³⁹ allows a reconsideration of
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14 the role of several key individuals in the fall of King Hugh and the political situation in Italy.
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16 This challenges the acceptance of Berengar as the controlling figure in Italy and suggests a more
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18 considered rebalancing of power. Finally, a broader reading of the charter record allows the
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20 partial reconstruction of the relationship networks of the kingdom of Italy in this period and
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22 demonstrates that the modern narratives built from the *Antapodosis* are insufficient. Berengar's
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24 control has been overemphasised, the rivalry for power has been misrepresented as bi-modal, and
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26 the importance and autonomy of other powerful individuals has been understated. In
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28 combination these arguments highlight the deficiencies of Liutprand's account and undermine
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30 the dominant account of this period. On the basis of a broader portfolio of narrative and charter
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32 sources, these points emphasise instead the complexities of the political structure in Italy in the
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34 940s.
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42 **Liutprand of Cremona and his *Antapodosis***

43
44 There is a substantial body of research around Liutprand of Cremona and his works.⁴⁰ Born in
45
46 Pavia around 920, Liutprand entered the court of King Hugh as a chorister before becoming a
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51 ³⁹ C. Manaresi, ed., *I placiti del "Regnum Italiae"*. Fonti per la Storia d'Italia 92, 96, 97. 3 vols. in 4 (Rome: Tip. del
52 Senato, 1955–60), 1: 551–7 (no. 144).

53 ⁴⁰ See, for example, Arnaldi, 'Liudprando e la storiografia contemporanea nell'Italia centro-settentrionale';
54 Sutherland, 'Idea of Revenge in Lombard Society'; Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*; Buc, 'Italian Hussies and
55 German Matrons'; Gandino, *Il vocabolario politico e sociale di Liutprando di Cremona*; Balzaretto, 'Liutprand of
56 Cremona's Sense of Humour'; La Rocca, 'Liutprando da Cremona e il paradigma femminile di dissoluzione dei
57 Carolingi'; Leyser, 'Episcopal Office'; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and
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3 deacon at Pavia.⁴¹ His first prominent political appearance was as an ambassador to
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5 Constantinople on Berengar's behalf in 949,⁴² but he fell from Berengar's favour shortly
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7 afterwards, probably due to the failure of the mission.⁴³ This led to his exile and arrival at the
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9 court of Otto I in the early 950s⁴⁴ where he ultimately enjoyed greater success: he obtained the
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11 bishopric of Cremona in the last two months of 961 and undertook diplomatic missions to the
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13 papal and Byzantine courts.
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17 Liutprand wrote the *Antapodosis* between 958 and 962 during his exile and around the
18
19 time of Otto's second intervention in Italy.⁴⁵ The work survived only to the north of the Alps and
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21 primarily in Germany,⁴⁶ which suggests that it was intended for and enjoyed an audience focused
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23 around the Ottonian court.⁴⁷ However, the piece was never completed and ends abruptly
24
25 following Liutprand's account of his mission to Constantinople in 949. It was followed by two
26
27 other works: the *Historia Ottonis*, a brief and incomplete piece dealing with Otto's rule in Italy;⁴⁸
28
29 and the *Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana* which recorded the events of Liutprand's
30
31 mission to Constantinople in 968.⁴⁹ Liutprand has been identified as the author of a fourth work:
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33 the *Homelia paschalis*.⁵⁰
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40 Liutprand of Cremona'; Grabowski, 'Liudprand of Cremona's *papa monstrum*'; Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success
41 and Narratives of Failure'.

42 ⁴¹ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, xiv; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and
43 Liutprand of Cremona', 195–7.

44 ⁴² Leyser, 'Episcopal Office', 816.

45 ⁴³ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, xiv, 5–6; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli
46 and Liutprand of Cremona', 195–7.

47 ⁴⁴ Leyser, 'Episcopal Office', 796.

48 ⁴⁵ Sutherland, 'Idea of Revenge in Lombard Society', 400; Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of
49 Failure', 202.

50 ⁴⁶ J. Becker, *Textgeschichte Liutprands von Cremona*. Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Sprache des
51 Mittelalters Bd. 3, Heft 2 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1908), 42–3.

52 ⁴⁷ Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 212.

53 ⁴⁸ Liudprand of Cremona, 'De Ottone rege (*Historia Ottonis*)', in *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera omnia*, ed. Chiesa,
54 167–83.

55 ⁴⁹ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Relatio de legatione Constantinopolitana', in *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera omnia*, ed.
56 Chiesa, 185–218.

57 ⁵⁰ Liudprand of Cremona, *Liudprandi Cremonensis Opera omnia*, ed. Chiesa, lxxxiii–xc.

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3 The *Antapodosis* presents a catastrophic view of Italy after the fall of the Carolingians.
4
5 While the extinction of Carolingian rule did not lead to the collapse of royal authority, it did lead
6
7 to the end of an ideology: the Carolingian monopoly on rule and all of the socio-political
8
9 structures built on this premise.⁵¹ This was a driving factor for many authors of post-Carolingian
10
11 Italy who presented a golden age before the darkness of their own time.⁵² Furthermore, the
12
13 surviving texts were generally written by authors who sought to emphasise the chaos of this
14
15 period – usually so their preferred royal saviour could emerge as the bringer of order.⁵³ These
16
17 works were designed not just to record or rewrite history, but to shape current events.⁵⁴
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19

20
21 Liutprand's personal and political motivations in writing the *Antapodosis* were
22
23 pronounced and thoroughly intertwined. This is implied through the title of the piece,
24
25 *ἀνταπόδοσις*, which implies recompense, both positive (repayment of support) and negative
26
27 (gaining revenge). Liutprand explicitly stated that he sought revenge on Berengar for the
28
29 perceived slights upon himself and his family:⁵⁵
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31

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33 So great are the darts of falsehood, so great the expense of robbery, so vehement
34
35 the impiety they [Berengar and Willa] have administered against myself, my
36
37 house, my relations and my household that neither speech may mention nor pen
38
39 may prevail to write. Let the page at hand be antapodosis, that is retribution, on
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46 ⁵¹ Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 3; C. West, *Reframing the Feudal Revolution: Political and Social Transformation*
47 *Between Marne and Moselle, c.800–c.1100*. Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought, 4th series, 90
48 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 167–70.

49 ⁵² Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 2; Santos Salazar, 'Crisis?', 273.

50 ⁵³ Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 3–4; Villa, 'Lay and Ecclesiastical Culture', 202; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through
51 the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona', 199–200; Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and
52 Narratives of Failure', 190–1.

53 ⁵⁴ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 69–73; T. Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. J.L. Nelson
54 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 99; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of
55 Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona', 199–200; Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure', 190–3.

56 ⁵⁵ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 11–12; Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 210; Vignodelli, 'King
57 and the Cathedral Canons', 3.
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account of my losses, I will lay bare their impious τὴν ἀσεβείαν [wickedness] to all men present and future.⁵⁶

This theme permeates the piece: Liutprand frequently condemns Berengar and Willa.⁵⁷ Most notably, Berengar is the only truly irredeemable tyrant in the *Antapodosis*: even Hugh, for all his impropriety, is shown exhibiting virtues on several occasions.⁵⁸

However, behind and alongside this openly vengeful and personal assault lay a desire for political advancement. Liutprand's ambition is reflected in his frequent emphasis on his own achievements and excuses for his failings. The final book of the *Antapodosis* is designed to demonstrate Liutprand's ability as a diplomat,⁵⁹ the *Historia* underlines Liutprand's importance in the mission to Rome⁶⁰ and the *Relatio* is an extended report of Liutprand's mission to the Byzantine court and explanation for its failure.⁶¹ Liutprand's success in this regard is demonstrated through his appointment to the bishopric of Cremona.⁶² This may have been a contributing factor to the abrupt end to the *Antapodosis*: Liutprand had achieved his goal in writing, and hence had no need to finish his work.⁶³

To achieve these goals, Liutprand sought to ingratiate himself at the court of Otto I⁶⁴ and hence designed his *Antapodosis* to further the political interests of the German king.⁶⁵ In

⁵⁶ 'Tanta enim mendat iorum iacula, tanta rapinarum dispendia, tanta impietatis molimina in me et domum meam, cognationem et familiam, gratis exercuere, quanta nec lingua proferre nec calamus praevallet scribere. Sit igitur eis praesens pagina ἀνταπόδοσις, antapódosis, hoc est retributio, dum pro calamitatibus meis τὴν ἀσεβείαν, asevían, id est inpietatem eorum, praesentibus futurisque mortalibus denudavero.' Liutprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 3, c. 1.

⁵⁷ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 33.

⁵⁸ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 35–6, 61–2.

⁵⁹ Liutprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 6.

⁶⁰ Liutprand of Cremona, 'Historia Ottonis', c. 7.

⁶¹ Liutprand of Cremona, 'Relatio'.

⁶² Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 3–4; Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 78; Balzaretto, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure', 190.

⁶³ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 78–9; Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 212.

⁶⁴ Leyser, 'Episcopal Office', 796.

⁶⁵ Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 211.

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3 particular, Liutprand sought to justify the legitimacy of Otto's claims to the Italian and imperial
4
5 thrones.⁶⁶ Liutprand therefore had a great interest in undermining Berengar's claim to authority
6
7 in order to strengthen Otto's position: he needed to provide unequivocal justification for Otto's
8
9 overthrow of Berengar, and sought to do this by presenting Berengar's rule as illegitimate.
10
11 Portraying Berengar as the ringleader of the coup against Hugh and hence usurper of the throne
12
13 served this purpose well.⁶⁷
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16
17 These goals strongly influenced Liutprand's representation of the kings and kingdom of
18
19 Italy. He established a model of good and bad kingship in the opening books of the *Antapodosis*
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21 by comparing the effective and just rule of Ottonian Germany with the moral and political
22
23 failings of the post-Carolingian kings of Italy.⁶⁸ He highlighted and exaggerated the chaos of
24
25 Italy in juxtaposition with the order of Otto's Germany.⁶⁹ Italian women in power, in contrast
26
27 with Ottonian women, were presented as promiscuous, allowing Liutprand to question the
28
29 legitimacy of their children – Otto's rivals in Italy – and downplay their Carolingian heritage.⁷⁰
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31 Liutprand contrasted the willingness of Italian kings to pay off or even ally with the Magyars and
32
33 Saracens with the Ottonian willingness to meet these 'pagan' opponents in battle.⁷¹ He
34
35 condemned the Italian clergy for simony and Nicholaitism, while praising the German kings for
36
37 driving out these practices.⁷² In combination, these elements allowed Liutprand to construct a
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39 strong justification for Ottonian intervention in the peninsula.
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50 ⁶⁶ Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 212; Vignodelli, 'King and the Cathedral Canons', 2–3.

51 ⁶⁷ Vignodelli, 'King and the Cathedral Canons', 3.

52 ⁶⁸ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bks. 1–4.

53 ⁶⁹ Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 211–13; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of
54 Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona', 199–200.

55 ⁷⁰ Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 214–23.

56 ⁷¹ Sutherland, 'Idea of Revenge in Lombard Society', 402; Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 213.

57 ⁷² Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 36–41; Grabowski, 'Liudprand of Cremona's *papa monstrum*'.

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3 Around this comparison, Liutprand developed a narrative of divine vengeance as the
4 driving force of history.⁷³ Berengar was the main target of this retribution: he had to be punished
5 for his disturbance of the divine order, and Otto was a divine tool to this end.⁷⁴ The final books
6 of the *Antapodosis* and the first part of the *Historia* demonstrated that Berengar was the
7 embodiment of each of the major failings of previous kings of Italy.⁷⁵ His rule was violent and
8 chaotic: ‘he raged rather than ruled.’⁷⁶ The women around him were obscene: his wife Willa was
9 accused of unchasteness (*incestus*) with a priest.⁷⁷ As the power behind Lothar’s throne,
10 Berengar paid tribute to the Magyars rather than defeating them in battle.⁷⁸ He oppressively
11 demanded payment to allow bishops to keep their offices⁷⁹ and imposed his impious allies in
12 episcopal seats.⁸⁰ Otto’s intervention was not only justified, but was morally imperative.

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15 Liutprand’s concept of revenge and retribution was extended against Hugh for both
16 personal and political reasons: Liutprand appears to have held a grudge on account of his
17 exclusion from Hugh’s circle,⁸¹ and undermining the legitimacy of Hugh’s rule also supported
18 Otto’s interests by feeding into Liutprand’s model of a chaotic and broken Italy in need of a
19 German saviour. Hence Liutprand was vocally critical of Hugh’s sexual impropriety⁸² and of the

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⁷³ Sutherland, ‘Idea of Revenge in Lombard Society’, 401; C. Wickham, ‘Lawyers’ Time: History and Memory in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century Italy’, in *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis*, eds. H. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (London: Hambledon, 1985), 58–60; Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 58–9.

⁷⁴ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 58–66.

⁷⁵ Liudprand of Cremona, ‘*Antapodosis*’, bks. 5–6.

⁷⁶ ‘Regnantibus, immo saevientibus’: Liudprand of Cremona, ‘*Historia Ottonis*’, c. 1.

⁷⁷ Liudprand of Cremona, ‘*Antapodosis*’, bk. 5, c. 32.

⁷⁸ Liudprand of Cremona, ‘*Antapodosis*’, bk. 5, c. 33.

⁷⁹ Liudprand of Cremona, ‘*Antapodosis*’, bk. 5, c. 30.

⁸⁰ Liudprand of Cremona, ‘*Antapodosis*’, bk. 5, c. 29.

⁸¹ Balzaretti, ‘Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure’, 192–3.

⁸² Balzaretti, ‘Liutprand of Cremona’s Sense of Humour’; R. Balzaretti, ‘Men and Sex in Tenth-Century Italy’, in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. D.M. Hadley (London: Longman, 1999), 143–59; Balzaretti, ‘Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure’; P. Skinner, *Women in Medieval Italian Society 500–1200* (Harlow: Longman, 2001).

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3 influence of women during his rule.⁸³ He decried Hugh's alliances with the Saracens,⁸⁴ the
4
5 frequent revolts of his magnates,⁸⁵ and his inability to subdue Rome.⁸⁶ Hugh's distribution of
6
7 church titles also came under attack.⁸⁷ Liutprand combined these varied strands as an effective
8
9 weapon to condemn Hugh and his kingship.⁸⁸
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12 Liutprand's presentation of Hugh and Berengar has been analysed thoroughly by modern
13
14 authors. This consideration of the bishop of Cremona's works has allowed the construction of
15
16 more nuanced reconsiderations of the rule of these two kings.⁸⁹ However, Liutprand's
17
18 description of Lothar has received substantially less attention. This is a significant shortcoming
19
20 as Liutprand used his description of Lothar as a potent contrast with the impious failings of Hugh
21
22 and Berengar and as a means to legitimise Otto's claims to Italy through Adelaide, Lothar's
23
24 widow.
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27
28 The Lothar of Liutprand's account stands in stark contrast from Hugh and Berengar.
29
30 Beyond brief nods to Lothar's birth,⁹⁰ elevation to joint kingship⁹¹ and marriage,⁹² Liutprand
31
32 provides a handful of accounts of Lothar's deeds. He records Lothar's first independent action as
33
34 innocently warning Berengar of Hugh's plan to imprison and blind the margrave, thus allowing
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36 Berengar to escape to Germany and ultimately leading to Hugh's downfall.⁹³ Liutprand excuses
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43 ⁸³ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 16–20.

44 ⁸⁴ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 5, c. 9, 16–17.

45 ⁸⁵ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 3, c. 39–41, 47; bk. 5, c. 6–8.

46 ⁸⁶ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 3, c. 44–6.

47 ⁸⁷ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 4, c. 6.

48 ⁸⁸ La Rocca, 'Liutprando da Cremona e il paradigma femminile di dissoluzione dei Carolingi'.

49 ⁸⁹ See, for example, Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide'; Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of
50 Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona'; Balzaretto, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure'; G. Vignodelli,
51 'La competizione per i beni fiscali: Ugo di Arles e le aristocrazie del regno italico (926–945)', in *Acquérir, prélever,*
52 *contrôler: les ressources en compétition (400–1100)*, eds. G. Bühner-Thierry, V. Loré, and R. Le Jan. Collection
53 haut moyen âge 25 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), 151–69.

54 ⁹⁰ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 3, c. 20.

55 ⁹¹ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 4, c. 2.

56 ⁹² Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 4, c. 13.

57 ⁹³ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 5, c. 10.

Lothar here, explaining that he sinned in childish levity and bitterly repented later.⁹⁴ Lothar is next presented appealing to the Italian magnates after Hugh's overthrow, leading to Lothar's proclamation as king on account of his piety and humility.⁹⁵ Liutprand emphasised that Berengar was now the true power behind the throne and that Hugh and Lothar ruled in name only.⁹⁶ In Lothar's final appearance, Liutprand has the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII recognise the political reality in Italy by writing to Berengar instead of Lothar and asking the margrave to remain faithful to the young king, whom Constantine held in high regard.⁹⁷ Liutprand is unequivocal: Lothar was a pious and good man, but was naïve and ineffective as king. Berengar held all power in the realm from 945 and was recognised as its de facto ruler by those within and outside the kingdom.

This portrayal of Lothar aligned well with Liutprand's broader narrative and rhetoric. Otto's claim to Italy lay in his marriage to Adelaide.⁹⁸ Adelaide's position as queen was reliant on her previous marriage to Lothar and hence to his legitimacy as ruler. Furthermore, criticism of Lothar could create conflict with Adelaide, especially as Lothar was survived by their daughter, Emma. Liutprand needed to present Lothar as a legitimate ruler: he could not be tainted by too strong an association with his father and needed to be presented as a foil to Berengar's impiety. However, Lothar could not be portrayed as too competent a king, lest he disrupt Liutprand's

⁹⁴ 'Imprecor itaque non Lothario, qui puericiae levitate peccavit idque post modum amare poenituit ...': Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 5, c. 10.

⁹⁵ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 5, c. 28.

⁹⁶ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 5, c. 30.

⁹⁷ Liudprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 6, c. 2.

⁹⁸ H.H. Anton, 'Bonifaz von Canossa, Markgraf von Tuszien, und die Italienpolitik der frühen Salier', *Historische Zeitschrift* 24, no. 3 (1972): 529–56 (531–3); H. Zimmermann, 'I signori di Canossa e l'impero (da Ottone I a Enrico III)', in *I poteri dei Canossa, da Reggio Emilia all'Europa: atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Reggio Emilia-Carpinetti, 29–31 ottobre 1992)*, ed. P. Golinelli (Bologna: Pàtron Editore, 1994), 413–19 (414); W. Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation im Mittelalter: diplomatische, kulturelle und politische Wechselwirkungen zwischen Italien und dem nordalpinen Reich (9.–11. Jahrhundert)*. MGH Schriften 52 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2003), 428.

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2
3 focus on Otto. A Lothar who was a capable ruler would also undermine Liutprand's narrative of
4 Italian chaos and the need for German intervention. By presenting Lothar as a good man but
5 weak king Liutprand preserved his narrative and his justification for Otto's invasion.
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10 Presenting Berengar as the dominant power in Italy from 945 provided new lines of
11 attack for Liutprand. All the negative events of Lothar's reign, such as the Magyar invasion,
12 were explained as Berengar's responsibility. Beyond this, the presentation of a court dominated
13 by Berengar allowed Liutprand to explain his own position in the circle of Otto's opponent and
14 highlight his achievements as a diplomat.⁹⁹ Liutprand was careful to deny knowledge of
15 Berengar's malice, underlining instead Berengar's reputation and apparent kindness and
16 generosity (*fama, humanitas, liberalitas*).¹⁰⁰ Liutprand emphasises that his diplomatic mission
17 was undertaken at the behest of the Byzantine emperor, who specifically approached Berengar,
18 not Lothar.¹⁰¹ Liutprand needed to excuse his connection with Otto's rival and this presentation
19 of Berengar as the effective and recognised ruler in Italy provided a ready explanation: by
20 supporting Berengar, Liutprand acted for the good of the kingdom, or at the very worst was
21 tricked (along with the rest of the Italian magnates) into believing that this was the case.
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38 Liutprand's accounts of these three kings were therefore carefully constructed products of
39 his personal and political goals. Liutprand showed Hugh and Berengar to be bad kings while
40 highlighting the worthy behaviour of Otto and his family. Lothar was portrayed as a good man
41 and the innocent victim of Berengar's machinations, allowing Liutprand to establish Lothar's
42 legitimacy and transfer it to Adelaide, and hence Otto, without conflicting with his overarching
43 narrative of the chaos of Italy and failure of its kings. The utility of this presentation to
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54 ⁹⁹ Buc, 'Italian Hussies and German Matrons', 208–10.

55 ¹⁰⁰ Liutprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 5, c. 30.

56 ¹⁰¹ Liutprand of Cremona, 'Antapodosis', bk. 6, c. 2.

Liutprand's narrative and rhetoric in combination with his propensity to misrepresent events for his own purposes demands a broader reconsideration of this period through the other sources.

The narrative sources

Liutprand's account runs counter to those of the other authors who describe this period. These events coincided with the re-emergence of a narrative literary tradition across the former Carolingian lands after a notable lack of such writings in the first half of the tenth century.¹⁰² They are mentioned by a substantial range of authors from across the former Carolingian world, and also from Byzantium. Most of these writers provide only brief or tangential accounts, but Atto of Vercelli and Flodoard of Reims provide important and contemporary contrasts to Liutprand's narrative while several other authors provide additional counterpoints.

The only other surviving account of this period from a contemporary Italian author is the *Perpendiculum* by Atto, bishop of Vercelli. Writing between 953 and 957,¹⁰³ hence between Otto's interventions in Italy and while Berengar remained at large, Atto presented his *Perpendiculum* as a moral warning against usurpation of the crown, which he argued would inevitably end in disaster for those who supported the usurper.¹⁰⁴ He wrote an abstract and anonymised explanation, but made implicit use of examples which were easily recognisable to his readers as commentary on the reigns of Hugh, Lothar and Berengar.¹⁰⁵ His work was

¹⁰² K. Leyser, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Gregorian Revolution and Beyond*, ed. T. Reuter (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), 192–4; M. Sot, 'L'historiographie latine dans l'Europe de l'An Mil', in *Hommes et sociétés dans l'Europe de l'An Mil*, eds. P. Bonnassie and P. Toubert (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2004), 389–405.

¹⁰³ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 62–3; Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy and Satire', 216; Vignodelli, 'La competizione per i beni fiscali', 152–3; Vignodelli, 'King and the Cathedral Canons', 3–4.

¹⁰⁴ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 21–41; Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy and Satire', 215–16.

¹⁰⁵ Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 49–80; Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 52–3.

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3 designed to persuade the magnates of Italy to refrain from inviting Otto I to return to the
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5 kingdom and remove Berengar.¹⁰⁶
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8 Atto sought to further his political position (discussed below) through his work seeking,
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10 like Liutprand, to use his account to shape events of his own time.¹⁰⁷ However, the
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12 *Perpendiculum* records a markedly different account from that in the *Antapodosis*. Hugh is
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14 presented as an illegal usurper, whose own overthrow was the inevitable consequence of his
15
16 seizure of power and his empowerment of new men – the *minores*.¹⁰⁸ Hugh was removed at the
17
18 hands of an alliance between these *minores* and the older magnates (*maiores*) who installed a
19
20 weak king in the form of Lothar in an attempt to extend their power.¹⁰⁹ However, the alliance
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22 between the greater and lesser magnates quickly broke down and chaos ensued.¹¹⁰ Berengar
23
24 succeeded to the throne legitimately after the death of Lothar, but only by convincing the
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26 magnates that he would be a weak king, unable to reverse their acquisition of power or stop their
27
28 ongoing dismemberment of royal authority.¹¹¹ When it emerged that Berengar was a powerful
29
30 king, his magnates invited Otto into the kingdom, leading to great devastation and incurring the
31
32 wrath of Berengar who remained at large.¹¹² In the *Perpendiculum*, Berengar was the legitimate
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34 king on his succession in 950 and had no explicit link to the coup of 945, while Otto was the
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36 illegal usurper.¹¹³
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48 ¹⁰⁶ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 63; Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy and Satire', 217; Vignodelli, 'La competizione
49 per i beni fiscali', 152–3.

50 ¹⁰⁷ Manarini, '10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona', 199–200;
51 Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure', 190–3.

52 ¹⁰⁸ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 48–50; Vignodelli, 'La competizione per i beni fiscali', 154.

53 ¹⁰⁹ Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 95; Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 55.

54 ¹¹⁰ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 52–3, 119.

55 ¹¹¹ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 55.

56 ¹¹² Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 57–60.

57 ¹¹³ Vignodelli, 'King and the Cathedral Canons', 3–4.
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3 As Vignodelli notes, Atto does not refer to Berengar between 945 and 950: for Atto,
4 Berengar was not the instigator of the *colpo di stato oligarchico* (the oligarchic *coup d'état*)
5
6 against Hugh, nor did Berengar act as the power behind Lothar's throne.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Hugh is
7
8 never mentioned after his deposition. Lothar ruled alone. This narrative shares Liutprand's
9
10 description of chaos in the period but differs significantly in its descriptions of the roles of Hugh,
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12 Lothar and Berengar. Hugh was removed completely, Lothar ruled alone but weakly and
13
14 Berengar was not the dominant figure described by Liutprand.
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19 Flodoard was a priest at the archbishop's cathedral in Reims from the early years of the
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21 tenth century until his death in 966.¹¹⁵ His outsider status allowed him to provide an important
22
23 perspective on Italian affairs.¹¹⁶ As Roberts has demonstrated, Flodoard was intimately
24
25 connected with the political struggles of his day, was acutely aware of the power of historical
26
27 accounts to influence current events and supported Otto in his other writing.¹¹⁷ However, unlike
28
29 Liutprand or Atto, Flodoard was not dependent on the rulers of Italy for his position. This
30
31 consideration must be balanced by his geographic distance from the events he described, but this
32
33 is tempered in turn by Flodoard's reputation as a historian¹¹⁸ and his contacts within Italy.¹¹⁹
34
35 Flodoard's *Annales* were composed year by year from 923 until his death.¹²⁰ Unlike Atto and
36
37 Liutprand who wrote their accounts in the subsequent decades, Flodoard's writing was truly
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39 contemporary to the events he described. He could not address the substantially different
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46 ¹¹⁴ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 50–1.

47 ¹¹⁵ E. Roberts, *Flodoard of Rheims and the Writing of History in the Tenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge
48 University Press, 2019).

49 ¹¹⁶ Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure', 197–200.

50 ¹¹⁷ Roberts, *Flodoard of Rheims*.

51 ¹¹⁸ M. Sot, *Un historien et son église au Xe siècle: Flodoard de Reims* (Paris: Fayard, 1993).

52 ¹¹⁹ Balzaretti, 'Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure', 198.

53 ¹²⁰ J. Glenn, *Politics and History in the Tenth-Century: The Work and World of Richer of Reims*. Cambridge studies
54 in medieval life and thought, 4th series, 60 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); S. Lecouteux, 'Le
55 contexte de rédaction des Annales de Flodoard de Reims (919–966): partie 1, une relecture critique du début des
56 Annales à la lumière de travaux récents', *Le Moyen Âge* 116, no. 1 (2010): 51.

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3 political reality of Italy in the 950s. Flodoard did not know the ultimate audience for his *Annales*,
4
5 nor did he know the outcome of the events he described.
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8 Through his *Annales* Flodoard provides a surprising amount of detail on the events of 945
9
10 to 950 in Italy. Some of this is compatible with Liutprand's account, but there are some
11
12 significant omissions and contradictions. Flodoard stated that Hugh was overthrown by his own
13
14 people and that Lothar was installed in his place.¹²¹ Like Atto, Flodoard gives no indication of
15
16 Berengar's involvement in this coup. However, Flodoard's account then diverges from Atto's as
17
18 he goes on to report Hugh's return to Italy in the following year.¹²² This moves closer to
19
20 Liutprand's narrative, but while Liutprand presents Hugh's return as a scheme on the part of
21
22 Berengar, Flodoard makes no such claim. Instead, Hugh's return closely mirrors the language
23
24 used to describe Lothar's election in the previous year ('in regnum receptus est' / 'in regnum
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26 recipitur').¹²³ In the clearest contrast between his account and those of both Liutprand and Atto,
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28 Flodoard goes on to imply that Hugh was more than a puppet king after his return, noting the
29
30 resolution in 946 of Hugh's long standing conflict with Alberic, patrician of Rome.¹²⁴
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32 Hugh is therefore portrayed as politically active and visible even after the coup. Finally,
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34 Berengar is only introduced on the death of Lothar.¹²⁵ Flodoard, like Atto, gives no indication of
35
36 the significance (or even existence) of Berengar during the rule of Hugh or Lothar.
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42 Flodoard's account therefore shares some similarities with those of both Atto and
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44 Liutprand, but diverges on other points. Atto's oligarchic coup takes place and Berengar is
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53 ¹²¹ Flodoard of Reims, 'Annales', 464.

54 ¹²² Flodoard of Reims, 'Annales', 465.

55 ¹²³ Flodoard of Reims, 'Annales', 464, 465.

56 ¹²⁴ Flodoard of Reims, 'Annales', 465.

57 ¹²⁵ Flodoard of Reims, 'Annales', 477.

conspicuous in his absence. Liutprand's return of Hugh is recorded, but there is again no mention of Berengar's involvement and Hugh is presented playing an active role in the kingdom.

The only narrative source which mentions Berengar prior to Lothar's death is Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De administrando imperio* (*Πρὸς τὸν ἴδιον υἱὸν Ρωμανόν*). The section of this diverse and wide-ranging work in which these two figures appear was written between 948 and 950, hence Constantine was just as much a contemporary to the events of Lothar's reign as Flodoard. Constantine acknowledges Lothar as king,¹²⁶ but earlier, when describing the recent history of Italy mentions Berengar incidentally as the grandson of Berengar I: 'And then Berengar [I], the grandfather of the current Berengar, ruled and, having entered Rome, he was crowned.'¹²⁷ That Berengar appeared at all is significant as it suggests that he was known to the Byzantine court and implies that he held a position of some prominence within Italy, but this is an imperfect fit with Liutprand's account. The bishop has Constantine concerned for the well-being of Lothar, but viewing Berengar as the real power in Italy. Constantine himself gives no indication that this was the case. Instead, Lothar is recognised as king and although Berengar's importance is implied, his actual role is not mentioned. *De administrando imperio* was explicitly intended as a book of diplomatic instruction for Constantine's son and successor Romanos:¹²⁸ if Berengar were indeed regarded as the power behind the throne, then his role would surely have been underlined more thoroughly.

The remaining sources which mention Italy in this period are further removed from the events they describe, but none of them provides support for Liutprand's account. Berengar

¹²⁶ Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, eds. G. Moravcsiktrans. R.J.H. Jenkins. Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae 1 (Dumbarton Oaks, DC: Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), 112 (c. 26).

¹²⁷ 'Καὶ τότε ἐκράτησεν Βεργιγγέριος, ὁ πάππος τοῦ νυνὶ Βεργιγγέρι, καὶ εἰσελθὼν ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐστέφθη': Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, 110 (c. 26).

¹²⁸ G.L. Huxley, 'The Scholarship of Constantine Porphyrogenitus', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature* 80C (1980): 29–40 (33, 37).

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3 appears in works by Widukund of Corvey,¹²⁹ the anonymous authors of both the ‘Older’¹³⁰ and
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5 ‘Later’¹³¹ *vita* of Mathilda (mother of Otto I), Hrotsvitha of Gandesheim,¹³² Odilo of Cluny,¹³³
6
7 Arnulf of Milan¹³⁴ and Regino of Prum,¹³⁵ but it is only in the wake of Lothar’s death that his
8
9 usurpation of the throne is mentioned. Several of these authors provide positive accounts of
10
11 Lothar which portray him as a competent and respected king. The ‘Older’ *vita* of Mathilda refers
12
13 to Lothar as ‘the renowned king of the Latins’ (*famosus rex Latinorum*).¹³⁶ The ‘Later’ *vita* has a
14
15 minor variation as ‘the exceptional prince of the Latins’ (*Latinorum princeps egregius*).¹³⁷ Odilio
16
17 presented Lothar’s death as a great trial for Adelaide leaving her ‘devoid of marital comfort’
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19 (*destituta maritali solacio*)¹³⁸ suggesting that he played more than a trivial role within the
20
21 kingdom. Arnulf of Milan goes furthest presenting Lothar as ‘very kind’ (*admodum leniore*),
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23 much more acceptable than his father and elected by the common consent of all, while Hugh was
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25 compelled to leave Italy.¹³⁹ Despite their brevity, these accounts demonstrate that Liutprand’s
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36 ¹²⁹ Widukind, *Widukindi monachi Corbeinsis Rerum gestarum Saxoniarum libri tres*, eds. P. Hirsch and H.E.
37 Lohmann. MGH, SRG in usum scholarum separatim editi 60 (Hanover: Hahn, 1935), 108 (bk. 3, c. 7).

38 ¹³⁰ ‘Vita Mathildis reginae antiquior’, in *Die Lebensbeschreibungen der Königin Mathilde*, ed. B. Schütte., MGH,
39 SRG, nova series 66 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1994), 107–42 (125–6, c. 7).

40 ¹³¹ ‘Vita Mathildis reginae posterior’, in *Die Lebensbeschreibungen der Königin Mathilde*, ed. Schütte, 143–202
41 (172–5, c. 15).

42 ¹³² Hrotsvitha, ‘Gesta Ottonis’, in *Hrotsvithae Opera*, ed. P. von Winterfeld. MGH, SRG, nova series 34 (Berlin:
43 Weidmann, 1902), 201–28 (218, ll. 481–6).

44 ¹³³ Odilo of Cluny, ‘Epitaphium Adelheide imperatricis’, in *Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini et Saxonici*,
45 ed. G.H. Pertz. MGH, SS in folio 4 (Hanover: Hahn, 1841), 633–45 (638–9, c. 3); see also Odilo of Cluny,
46 ‘Epitaphium Adelheidae Imperatricis’, in *Die Lebensbeschreibung der Kaiserin Adelheid von Abt Odilo von Cluny*.
47 Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband 20, Heft 2 (Graz: H. Böhlau,
48 1962), 27–45.

49 ¹³⁴ Arnulf, *Liber gestorum recentium*, ed. C. Zey. MGH, SRG in usum scholarum separatim editi 67 (Hanover:
50 Hahn, 1994), 124 (bk. 1, c. 5).

51 ¹³⁵ Regino of Prum, *Chronicon cum continuatione Treverensi*, ed. F. Kurze. MGH, SRG in usum scholarum separatim
52 editi 50 (Hanover: Hahn, 1890), 164–5.

53 ¹³⁶ Schütte, ed., ‘Vita Mathildis reginae antiquior’, 125 (c. 7).

54 ¹³⁷ Schütte, ed., ‘Vita Mathildis reginae posterior’, 173 (c. 15).

55 ¹³⁸ Odilo of Cluny, ‘Epitaphium Adelheide imperatricis’, in *Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Carolini et Saxonici*,
56 ed. Pertz, 638 (c. 2).

57 ¹³⁹ Arnulf, *Liber gestorum recentium*, 121 (bk. 1, c. 3).

narrative of Berengar's dominance and Bosonid weakness between 945 and 950 was not accepted by the authors of his time or those of following centuries.

Liutprand's account must therefore be questioned. In the other sources Berengar does not appear as the dominant figure in the revolt against Hugh or as the de facto ruler of Italy in the following five years. Instead, these authors present an oligarchic coup in favour of Hugh's son Lothar. Lothar may have been a weak king, as described by Liutprand and Atto, but he may have been an effective monarch as implied by Hrotsvitha, Odilo and Arnulf. Hugh's role is also open to debate: Flodoard's account suggests that Hugh retained at least some degree of autonomy while Atto and Arnulf suggest that he disappeared leaving the kingdom in Lothar's hands. This range of incompatible accounts combined with the ability of Liutprand, Atto and Flodoard to use, adapt and create history to achieve their own goals demands a more careful consideration of the events of 945–50. There are difficulties with each of the competing accounts which must be resolved through the examination of the charter record.

The *placitum* of 13 April 945

Berengar's return to the political networks of Italy is indicated in a *placitum* held in Lothar's presence by Lanfranc, count of the palace, on 13 April 945 in Pavia.¹⁴⁰ The proceedings confirmed the grant by Berengar on 11 April in the same year of the castle at Vilzacara near Modena to his *vassus* Riprand, the text of which is preserved in the 13 April document.¹⁴¹ The *placitum* was witnessed by six key secular landholders: Manfred of Parma, Aleram of Vercelli, Milo of Verona, Otbert of Genoa, Adalbert of Reggio and Arduin of Turin.

¹⁴⁰ Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 551–7 (no. 144).

¹⁴¹ Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 552–5 (no. 144).

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3 This document is often seen as marking the end of Hugh's practical control of Italy.¹⁴²
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5 Typically the witnesses to this court session are presented as supporters of the coup:¹⁴³ a
6
7 combination of the old aristocracy and new men raised to power by Hugh, interconnected
8
9 through marriage and family ties.¹⁴⁴ All of the magnates mentioned in this document had
10
11 received lands or titles from Hugh¹⁴⁵ which has been taken to indicate his betrayal by even his
12
13 closest circle. Within Italian historiography it has been presented as a *rivoluzione silenziosa*¹⁴⁶ or
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15 *rivoluzione pacifica*¹⁴⁷ ('silent' or 'peaceful revolution') which transferred power from Hugh to
16
17 Berengar who would shortly assume the title *summus consiliarius*.
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21 However, this analysis relies on the veracity of Liutprand's account. It requires the
22
23 assumption that Berengar was immediately able to take control of the systems of power within
24
25 Italy overcoming the connections Hugh and Lothar had developed with key figures over the
26
27 preceding decades. As demonstrated above, Liutprand's narrative needs to be treated more
28
29 critically. A close reading of the text of the *placitum* and a reconsideration of the political
30
31 networks of Italy in 945 demonstrate that this document can be interpreted very differently: as an
32
33 attempt to balance Berengar's return through the affirmation and reorganisation of the system of
34
35 inter-connected relationships with and among the lesser magnates which had been constructed
36
37 over the course of Hugh's reign and within which Lothar was already a participant.
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42 Assemblies such as this served an important role in symbolic communication within
43
44 Carolingian and post-Carolingian rulership. By holding court, in this case through the mediation
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49 ¹⁴² Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italyca', 96; Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 109–15; Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy
50 and Satire', 224.

51 ¹⁴³ Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*, 158; Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italyca', 97–8; Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 110–12;
52 Vignodelli, 'King and the Cathedral Canons', 6.

53 ¹⁴⁴ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 109–15; Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy and Satire', 224.

54 ¹⁴⁵ Ricci, *La marca della Liguria orientale e gli Obertenghi*, 36–7.

55 ¹⁴⁶ Ricci, *La marca della Liguria orientale e gli Obertenghi*, 36.

56 ¹⁴⁷ Mor, *L'età feudale*, 36.
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3 of a *missus*, the king reaffirmed his legitimacy as a source of authority and renewed or built his
4 connections with the political community.¹⁴⁸ The appearance of magnates in any capacity at
5 these events implicitly confirmed their control of public office but underlined the ultimate
6 authority of the king to bestow these offices and rights.¹⁴⁹ They suggested horizontal links
7 between magnates in attendance but also demonstrated vertical connections between the king and
8 these same magnates.¹⁵⁰ The production of these records demonstrated an active claim to
9 authority by the king, and an implicit recognition of this claim by all those who appeared in the
10 document.
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21 The dating clause of the document was an important element of this claim to power as the
22 regnal years of both Lothar and Hugh were cited.¹⁵¹ The inclusion of regnal years within dating
23 clauses was a common strategy to claim legitimacy of rule in Carolingian and post-Carolingian
24 Europe.¹⁵² By invoking rival kings in this manner, magnates could secure their positions in
25 emerging conflicts, as Rudolph of Burgundy did in 878 when he employed the regnal years of
26 Karlmann of Bavaria, Louis the Younger and Charles the Fat in a single charter.¹⁵³ Alternatively,
27 regnal dating clauses could be used to challenge royal legitimacy: the invocation of Carolingian
28 kings, often after these kings had died, in the dating clauses of Catalonian charters of the later
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45 ¹⁴⁸ Bougard, *La justice dans le royaume d'Italie*, 153; S. MacLean, 'Legislation and Politics in Late Carolingian
46 Italy: The Ravenna Constitutions', *Early Medieval Europe* 18, no. 4 (2010): 394–416 (398–9).

47 ¹⁴⁹ C. Wickham, 'Justice in the Kingdom of Italy in the Eleventh Century', in *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo (secoli*
48 *IX–XI): 11–17 aprile 1996*. Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 44. 2 vols. (Spoleto:
49 Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1997), 1: 179–250 (191–5).

50 ¹⁵⁰ J.L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London: Longman, 1992), 45–50.

51 ¹⁵¹ 'anno regni domnorum Hugoni et Lotharii filio eius gracia Dei reges Deo propicio domni Hugoni non decimo,
52 Lotharii vero quarto decimo': Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 552 (no. 144).

53 ¹⁵² D.M. Deliyannis, 'Year-Dates in the Early Middle Ages', in *Time in the Medieval World*, eds. C. Humphrey and
54 W.M. Ormrod (Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press, 2001), 5–22 (12–13); J.R. Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of*
55 *Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 235–7.

56 ¹⁵³ S. MacLean, 'The Carolingian Response to the Revolt of Boso, 879–887', *Early Medieval Europe* 10, no. 1
57 (2001): 21–48 (41).
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3 tenth century represented a rejection of Capetian authority.¹⁵⁴ The political utility of dating
4 clauses was widely employed and recognised, and in the case of the *placitum* of 945 this system
5 of dating was used to underline the permanence of Bosonid authority. Hugh was absent from this
6 *placitum*, but the dating clause represented a claim to his continued authority on the part of the
7 document's creators.
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15 The description of Berengar in the document is significant. In later charters Berengar
16 appeared intermittently as *summus consiliarius*¹⁵⁵ or *summus consors*.¹⁵⁶ These later references
17 have been taken to support Liutprand's account and as evidence of Berengar's special place in
18 the kingdom.¹⁵⁷ However, in this first appearance, he was simply referenced as 'margrave
19 Berengar, son of margrave Adelbert of noble memory'.¹⁵⁸ The absence of these superlative titles
20 is to be expected here as they rarely if ever appeared within Italian *placita* of this period and the
21 reference to Berengar comes from his own charter. However, their absence also undermines the
22 common claim that this document marked the point at which Berengar ascended to this pre-
23 eminent position. The recognition of Berengar in his family's march was still an important
24 concession and certainly demonstrates a legitimisation of his return, but it was a substantially more
25 restrained proclamation of his importance within the kingdom than is usually claimed.
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40 Berengar's role in the proceedings is also relevant. He is mentioned as the donor of the
41 lands in question, but he is not recorded as a petitioner, witness or signatory of the document, nor
42 does anyone represent him in these capacities. Berengar is not presented playing the driving role
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51 ¹⁵⁴ A.G. Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France*
52 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 132.

53 ¹⁵⁵ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83); Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1).

54 ¹⁵⁶ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 267–70 (no. 8).

55 ¹⁵⁷ Mor, *L'età feudale*, 157; Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italiana', 97; Bougard, 'Le royaume d'Italie', 504.

56 ¹⁵⁸ 'Berengarius marchio filius bone memorie Adelberti marchio': Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 552 (no. 144).
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3 in the *placitum*. He may have been influential in its outcome, but the document itself does not
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5 make this indication.
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8 The absence of key magnates from the document is a further indication that it was not a
9
10 declaration of victory for Berengar and his allies or a betrayal of the Bosonids. The counts who
11
12 witnessed the *placitum* were important individuals, and together represented a significant force
13
14 in Italy. However, despite Hugh's efforts to redistribute power, there remained a number of more
15
16 prominent figures in the kingdom. The document is notable in its omission of the bishops
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18 Manasses of Verona, Mantua and Trent, Boso of Piacenza and Guido of Modena. The absence of
19
20 the margraves Hubert of Tuscany and the recently re-installed Hucpoldings of Spoleto is also
21
22 telling. The document recognised the legitimacy of Berengar's claim to the march of Ivrea, but
23
24 this was not acknowledged in the presence of the most important men of the realm.
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28 Conversely, the document implicitly demanded Berengar's recognition of the rights and
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30 lands of those present. The participants acknowledged his ownership and right to distribute his
31
32 lands in Modena, but in accepting this recognition, Berengar in turn recognised the legitimacy of
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34 those who witnessed the document. The *placitum* linked Berengar's legal position with that of
35
36 the other participants: if he challenged their rights, he undermined his own claims.
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40 The locations of the power centres of several of the figures who appeared in the
41
42 document is important as they were well placed to balance Berengar. On his return, Berengar's
43
44 authority was centred on the march of Ivrea and what remained of his family's lands in Liguria,
45
46 Tuscany and Emilia. This was a substantially reduced power base. Following the death of Anscar
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48 and exile of Berengar, Hugh redistributed the lands and rights of Ivrea.¹⁵⁹ Many of the greatest
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50 beneficiaries of Berengar's downfall or Hugh's previous attempts to balance the power of the
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¹⁵⁹ Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*; Ricci, *La marca della Liguria orientale e gli Obertenghi*, 37–9.
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3 Anscarids in Ivrea appeared in the document.¹⁶⁰ Aleram, as *fideles* of the king, was empowered
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5 by Hugh through a charter of 933 which granted him the *curtes* Auriola.¹⁶¹ The site's location in
6
7 the county of Vercelli and history as a centre of rulership made the grant a clear statement of
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9 Hugh's authority to intervene in the territory of Anscar and represented the establishment of an
10
11 important balancing figure in the region.¹⁶² During the 930s Otbert received lands in Genoa, Luni
12
13 and Tortona. Parts of this area were formally under the jurisdiction of the Anscarid margraves of
14
15 Ivrea.¹⁶³ Arduin Glaber, son of the *fideles* Roger,¹⁶⁴ received Turin around 941, an important
16
17 centre at the centre of the Anscarid domain.¹⁶⁵ In combination, the presence of these three
18
19 individuals in the *placitum* of 945 underscored the redistribution of Berengar's authority within
20
21 the heart of his familial march and required his recognition of the new *status quo*.
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26 This redistribution of Anscarid authority and lands was mirrored in Emilia and several of
27
28 the figures who emerged as counters to Anscarid power in this region appeared in the *placitum*.
29
30 Manfred was elevated to count of Parma by Hugh by 931 as part of the division of the Emilian
31
32 titles of the Hucpoldings following the deposition of Boniface II.¹⁶⁶ However, Parma had
33
34 previously been a part of the Anscarid march of Ivrea:¹⁶⁷ many of the family's holdings,
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41 ¹⁶⁰ Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 551–7 (no. 144).

42 ¹⁶¹ Schiaparelli, 'H', 107–8 (no. 35).

43 ¹⁶² Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide'.

44 ¹⁶³ M. Nobili, 'Alcune considerazioni circa l'estensione, la distribuzione territoriale e il significato del patrimonio
45 degli Obertenghi (metà secolo X – inizio secolo XII)', in *Formazione e strutture dei ceti dominanti nel medioevo: marchesi, conti e visconti nel regno italico (secc. ix–xii)*, *Atti del primo convegno di Pisa, 10–11 maggio 1983*.
46 Nuovi studi storici 1 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1988), 71–82 (71–4); Ricci, *La marca della*
47 *Liguria orientale e gli Obertenghi*, 13–19.

48 ¹⁶⁴ G. Sergi, 'Anscari, Arduinici, Aleramici: elementi per una comparazione fra dinastie marchionali', in *Formazione e strutture dei ceti dominanti nel medioevo*, 11–28 (16–17).

49 ¹⁶⁵ G.H. Pertz, ed., *Chronicon Novaliciense*. MGH, SRG in usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae historicis
50 recusis (Hanover: Hahn, 1846), 63 (bk. 5, c. 1); see also C.M. Cipolla, ed., *Chronicon Novaliciense*. Fonti per la
51 Storia d'Italia 32 (Rome: Istituto storico italiano, 1901).

52 ¹⁶⁶ E. Manarini, *I due volti del potere: una parentela atipica di ufficiali e signori nel regno italico*. Collana del
53 Dipartimento di studi storici, Università di Torino 12 (Milan: Ledizioni, 2016), 65–6; Vignodelli, 'King and the
54 Cathedral Canons', 14.

55 ¹⁶⁷ Provero, 'Il sistema di potere carolingio', 48.
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3 including the key sites of Sospiro and Villanium, had been confiscated on the death of Anscar.¹⁶⁸
4
5 The emergence of Manfred and Adalbert of Reggio should be seen as part of Hugh's general
6
7 rebalancing of power in the region: they were set to act as counters to both the Hucpoldings and
8
9 the Anscarids. Milo of Verona was a less prominent beneficiary, but received possessions in
10
11 Ronco and Spoletino (both near Parma) through a charter of 13 August 941.¹⁶⁹ Berengar's
12
13 continued stake in the region is demonstrated in the *placitum* of 13 April: Vilzacara, the property
14
15 transferred to Riprand, was within the county of Modena. Again, the inclusion of these figures
16
17 (Manfred, Adalbert and Milo) in the document was an important declaration and formalisation of
18
19 the balance of power within areas in which Berengar's family was traditionally influential.
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23
24 Furthermore, a number of these magnates controlled key overland routes. Cristiani argues
25
26 that their control of strategic points on the borders of and across the kingdom¹⁷⁰ made them
27
28 essential to the rebellion against Hugh and hence key allies for Berengar.¹⁷¹ But these figures
29
30 were equally well placed to counter Berengar. Between them Otbert, Manfred and Adalbert
31
32 dominated all the Appenine passes between Modena and the Ligurian Sea. In a similar manner,
33
34 several of the magnates mentioned in the *placitum* controlled routes into Italy. Lanfranc and
35
36 Milo, with their power bases centred on Bergamo and Verona respectively, were well positioned
37
38 to dominate entry into Italy from Bavaria. Arduin, with his holdings in Piedmont, and Otbert,
39
40 with his growing power in Liguria, were likewise well placed to control access to Provence and,
41
42 by extension, Burgundy, France and Aquitaine. The inclusion of these figures was of strategic
43
44 importance: they could do a great deal to prevent interference by hostile external forces or to
45
46 allow the intervention of allies.
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53 ¹⁶⁸ Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide', 270–1.

54 ¹⁶⁹ Schiaparelli, 'H', 178–80 (no. 60).

55 ¹⁷⁰ Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italica', 100.

56 ¹⁷¹ Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italica', 103.
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3 The rhetoric of Liutprand and Atto suggests an insurmountable divide between Hugh and
4 his magnates, but this was not the case for many, if not all, of the figures mentioned in the
5
6 *placitum*. Most notably Lanfranc, count of Bergamo and count of the palace, was tied to Hugh
7
8 and Lothar in several ways. His half-sister Rotlinda was the bastard daughter of Hugh. His late
9
10 father Giselbert was count of the palace and prominent in the charter record.¹⁷² Lanfranc
11
12 appeared frequently in the Bosonid legal documents: as a petitioner in a charter of 12 May
13
14 935;¹⁷³ as a witness in a *placitum* on 18 September that year in the presence of Hugh and Lothar
15
16 in favour of the bishop of Parma and alongside key figures of the kingdom including Hugh's
17
18 bastard son Hubert, margrave of Tuscany;¹⁷⁴ and again as a petitioner to a charter on 29 March
19
20 945 in Pavia, less than a month before Berengar's reappearance in the charter record.¹⁷⁵ Cristiani
21
22 has argued that Lanfranc's elevation in 945 (he was recorded as count for the first time in
23
24 March,¹⁷⁶ and count of the palace in April)¹⁷⁷ was an indication of his allegiance to Berengar,¹⁷⁸
25
26 but this may be rejected as Lanfranc, despite an appearance as a petitioner in Lothar's charter of
27
28 20 August 949,¹⁷⁹ never again appeared in connection with Berengar. Lanfranc was visibly and
29
30 consistently tied to the Bosonid royal circle and his appearance at the *placitum* of 13 April 945 is
31
32 more likely a restatement of this relationship and confirmation of his recent promotion than an
33
34 indicator of his betrayal of Hugh in favour of Berengar.
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42 The connections between the other magnates mentioned in the document of 13 April 945
43
44 and the Bosonids is less readily apparent, but, as noted above, each of the witnesses to the
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48 ¹⁷² F. Menant, 'Les Giselbertins, comtes du comté de Bergame et comtes palatins', in *Formazione e strutture dei ceti*
49 *dominanti nel medioevo*, 115–86 (124).

50 ¹⁷³ Schiaparelli, 'H', 111–13 (no. 37).

51 ¹⁷⁴ Schiaparelli, 'H', 115–22 (no. 39).

52 ¹⁷⁵ Schiaparelli, 'H', 230–2 (no. 79).

53 ¹⁷⁶ Schiaparelli, 'H', 230–2 (no. 79).

54 ¹⁷⁷ Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 551–7 (no. 144).

55 ¹⁷⁸ Cristiani, 'Note sulla feudalità italiana', 102–3.

56 ¹⁷⁹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 280–1 (no. 13).

1
2
3 *placitum* received lands or rights from Hugh and Lothar. Several of these figures also appeared
4
5 in other capacities in royal documents prior to 945. Aleram appeared as a petitioner alongside
6
7 Lanfranc in the charter of 29 March 945.¹⁸⁰ Manfred appeared as a royal *missus* on 5 August
8
9 931.¹⁸¹ Around 945 his son Bernard married Hugh's bastard daughter Rotlinda.¹⁸² Arduin later
10
11 became a close supporter of Adelaide.¹⁸³ While these connections cannot be taken as
12
13 demonstrations of absolute fidelity to the Bosonids, they are indicative of functioning
14
15 relationships between the family and these counts.
16
17

18
19 Furthermore, there is no firm evidence that Berengar was connected to any of these
20
21 figures prior to 13 April 945. Before this point none of them appeared in documents alongside
22
23 Berengar nor did they have close family connections with the Anscarids. Several of these
24
25 individuals later developed links with Berengar through charters and marriages. Manfred of
26
27 Parma is the most obvious case: he appeared twice alongside Berengar in the remaining Bosonid
28
29 charters: on 27 May 945 as a petitioner alongside Berengar,¹⁸⁴ and again on 11 June 948 as the
30
31 recipient of a charter petitioned by Berengar.¹⁸⁵ However, for the most part, any connections
32
33 developed between the participants in the *placitum* of 945 and Berengar only emerged after
34
35 Berengar's accession to the throne and were often temporary or tenuous. Otbert appears as a
36
37 petitioner in Berengar's charters on 23 January 951¹⁸⁶ and again on 23 June 953.¹⁸⁷ However,
38
39 between 954 and 959 Otbert's relationship with Berengar collapsed completely and the count
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48 ¹⁸⁰ Schiaparelli, 'H', 230–2 (no. 79).

49 ¹⁸¹ Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 500–3 (no. 134).

50 ¹⁸² Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide', 270.

51 ¹⁸³ Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*, 169.

52 ¹⁸⁴ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1).

53 ¹⁸⁵ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 267–70 (no. 8); Provero, 'Il sistema di potere carolingio', 48.

54 ¹⁸⁶ Schiaparelli, 'B2', 294–6 (no. 2).

55 ¹⁸⁷ Schiaparelli, 'B2', 311–12 (no. 7); Nobili, 'Alcune considerazioni circa l'estensione, la distribuzione territoriale e
56 il significato del patrimonio degli Obertenghi', 71–2.

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2
3 was forced into exile in Germany.¹⁸⁸ Otbert regained his power and influence under the
4
5 Ottonians, presumably as a result of his opposition to Berengar,¹⁸⁹ appearing as count of the
6
7 palace on 27 September 962¹⁹⁰ and margrave on 9 August 964.¹⁹¹ Milo is absent from Berengar's
8
9 charters. He does appear in his own documents as margrave from 953,¹⁹² but it is unclear
10
11 whether this title was bestowed by Berengar or Otto. Aleram married Berengar's daughter, but
12
13 this is only attested in a charter from the final years of Berengar's reign.¹⁹³ These later
14
15 connections highlight the changing political landscape of Italy in the 950s rather than
16
17 longstanding links between Berengar and these individuals.
18
19

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21 The *placitum* of 13 April 945 should therefore be seen as an attempt to balance the power
22
23 structures in and around the Anscarid march. Through the document Lanfranc, on behalf of Hugh
24
25 and Lothar, recognised Berengar's return and acknowledged his rights. However, the document
26
27 also formalised the reduction of these rights and demanded Berengar's acknowledgement of the
28
29 authority of the figures mentioned in the charter. None of them had observable connections with
30
31 Berengar at this point, but all of them had prior links to the Bosonids. The document was a
32
33 reorganisation and confirmation of the network of power in the region and a reiteration of the
34
35 position of the Bosonids at its centre.
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42 **Italian relationship networks 945–50**

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44 While there are indications that Berengar occupied an important place in Italian politics during
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46 the five years following his return, there are several signs that he was not as prominent as is
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48
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50 ¹⁸⁸ Ricci, *La marca della Liguria orientale e gli Obertenghi*, 41–2.

51 ¹⁸⁹ Ricci, *La marca della Liguria orientale e gli Obertenghi*, 42–9.

52 ¹⁹⁰ Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 2, part 1: 19–24 (no. 148).

53 ¹⁹¹ Manaresi, ed., *I placiti*, 2, part 1: 44–7 (no. 153).

54 ¹⁹² E. Hlawitschka, *Franken, Alemannen, Bayern und Burgunder in Oberitalien (774–962)*. Forschungen zur
55 oberrheinischen Landesgeschichte 8 (Freiburg im Bresigau: E. Albert, 1960), 237–40.

56 ¹⁹³ Schiaparelli, 'B2', 334–6 (no. 15).

generally thought, that he was not consistently visible within the Italian relationship networks and that he was only one of a number of key figures competing for influence in Italy.

[Printer: please place Figure 1 near the following paragraph. Caption follows.]

Figure 1. Relationship links in the Italian royal charters May 945 to June 950. Connecting lines represent joint appearances in the same royal charter whether as recipient, petitioner or witness. The thickness of each line is dependent on the frequency of these appearances. Hugh and Lothar are excluded here as they appear in each of their charters and are hence connected to every figure on the chart. Bruno, bishop of Asti, is likewise excluded as he appears on every document in his capacity as chancellor. Source: Author, compiled from Schiaparelli, 'H', 238–47 (nos. 81–3); Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–88 (nos. 1–16).

Beyond the *placitum* of 945 Berengar only appears in four other surviving Bosonid charters of the 19 from this period.¹⁹⁴ This is roughly as frequently as Atto of Vercelli who appeared four times,¹⁹⁵ and Adelard, bishop of Reggio, who is mentioned three times.¹⁹⁶ To a certain extent this could be ascribed to accidents of preservation or to an active destruction of documents bearing Berengar's name in the wake of his defeat. The first of these issues is endemic to the study of this period and must be acknowledged but does not undermine the use and analysis of surviving documents. The second can be rejected for the most part with regards to these particular documents: while the legitimacy of charters issued by Berengar may have been thrown into doubt by his deposition, those produced under Lothar's aegis were not tainted

¹⁹⁴ Schiaparelli, 'H', 238–40 (no. 81), 242–7 (no. 83); Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1), 267–70 (no. 8).

¹⁹⁵ Schiaparelli, 'H', 238–40 (no. 81); Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 270–4 (no. 9), 276–8 (no. 11), 283–6 (no. 15).

¹⁹⁶ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 253–4 (no. 2), 258–60 (no. 5), 262–6 (no. 7).

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2
3 in this way, even where Berengar appeared as a petitioner or witness. The survival of so few
4 documents which mention Berengar is therefore significant. Royal diplomas were an important
5 indication of the prominence of individuals within political relationship networks,¹⁹⁷ and
6 Berengar's sporadic appearances suggest that he was not as central to the rule of the kingdom as
7 Liutprand suggests (Figure 1).
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15 Berengar's appearances as *summus consiliarius*¹⁹⁸ or *summus consors*¹⁹⁹ in three of these
16 charters is significant but the importance of this phrase should not be overstated. As Keller notes,
17 the phrase was in relatively frequent use throughout the century 850–950,²⁰⁰ and both Manasses
18 and Atto appeared with the equally superlative title *reverentissimi consilarii* in Lothar's charter
19 of 31 May 950.²⁰¹ The extension of the phrase to *summus regni consiliarius* is an innovation in
20 these documents, and may indicate further emphasis on Berengar's importance at the royal court,
21 but does not appear to be a substantive distinction. Berengar's identification in these terms was
22 significant, but he was only one of several individuals who appeared with such titles.
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34 The locations in which these documents were promulgated is also significant. None of
35 Berengar's appearances as *summus consiliarius* or *summus consors* took place in Pavia: the
36 charters were issued in Mantua,²⁰² Corana²⁰³ and Vignola.²⁰⁴ While the concept of a capital city
37 is anachronistic to this period, the significant majority of royal documents produced by the
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44 ¹⁹⁷ H. Bresslau, *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reiches unter Kaiser Konrad II.* 2 vols. in 3 (Berlin: Duncker and
45 Humblot, 1967), 2: 193–204; G. Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval*
46 *France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 47–54, 70–6; Rosenwein, 'Friends and Family', 106; B.H.
47 Rosenwein, 'The Family Politics of Berengar I, King of Italy (888–924)', *Speculum* 71, no. 2 (1996): 247–89 (251);
48 G. Koziol, *The Politics of Memory and Identity in Carolingian Royal Diplomas: The West Frankish Kingdom (840–*
49 *987)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 14–5, 60–1. For the historiography of *diplomata* and politics, see Koziol, *Politics of*
50 *Memory*, 17–41.

51 ¹⁹⁸ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83); Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1).

52 ¹⁹⁹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 267–70 (no. 8).

53 ²⁰⁰ Keller, 'Zur Struktur der Königsherrschaft', 123.

54 ²⁰¹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 283–6 (no. 15); Keller, 'Zur Struktur der Königsherrschaft', 179–81.

55 ²⁰² Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1).

56 ²⁰³ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83).

57 ²⁰⁴ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 267–70 (no. 8).

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3 Carolingian and post-Carolingian rulers of Italy were issued from the royal palace in Pavia.²⁰⁵
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5 Twelve of the 20 such documents surviving from the period between Berengar's return and
6
7 Lothar's death were produced in the city. It was the administrative centre and the ideological
8
9 focus of the kingdom. The Bosonids did address Berengar with these titles, but never at the
10
11 centre of their power. In doing so, they reduced his visibility and hence his prominence within
12
13 the relationship networks of the kingdom.
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16
17 Berengar can only be linked with a rather narrow range of figures in Bosonid Italy. As
18
19 indicated above, Manfred of Parma became closely tied to Berengar following the margrave's
20
21 return. Beyond Manfred, Berengar appears alongside Atto, bishop of Vercelli,²⁰⁶ Arderic,
22
23 archbishop of Milan,²⁰⁷ Alperto, abbot of San Giovanni in Domnarum in Pavia,²⁰⁸ and Peter,
24
25 bishop of Mantua.²⁰⁹ Of these four, the strength of Atto's connection to Berengar is questionable
26
27 (see below) while Arderic, Alperto and Peter appear in isolated single charters. The existence of
28
29 these connections suggests that Berengar exerted a strong influence in north-western Italy, but
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31 this limited range of links hardly demonstrates his supposed dominance over the Italian kingdom
32
33 and its magnates.
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38 Instead, the appearance of a number of other key figures in the Bosonid charters of this
39
40 period suggests a broad range of competing individuals and groups within Italy. In addition to
41
42 the cluster of magnates around Berengar, the political links described in the charters suggest the
43
44 existence of four other loose and overlapping factions around Atto of Vercelli, Manasses of
45
46 Milan, Guido of Modena and Queen Adelaide.
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51 ²⁰⁵ C. Brühl, *Fodrum, gistum, servitium regis: Studien zu den wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen des Königstums im*
52 *Frankenreich und in den fränkischen Nachfolgestaaten Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien vom 6. bis zur Mitte des*
53 *14. Jahrhunderts*. 2 vols. (Cologne: Böhlau, 1968), 1: 397–407.

54 ²⁰⁶ Schiaparelli, 'H', 238–40 (no. 81).

55 ²⁰⁷ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83).

56 ²⁰⁸ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83).

57 ²⁰⁹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1).

Atto is often portrayed as an ally of Berengar:²¹⁰ through his *Perpendiculum*, he was undeniably a critic of Ottonian intervention.²¹¹ But this is not the same as being a supporter of Berengar; indeed, Atto was also critical of Berengar's actions²¹² and the most likely motivation for the opaqueness of the *Perpendiculum* is that the bishop was afraid to openly criticise his new king.²¹³ In his letters we find him organising passive resistance against Berengar's demands for hostages from the bishops of Italy in 954,²¹⁴ and promising to intercede with Berengar on behalf of Waldo, bishop of Como, who had been involved in a rebellion.²¹⁵ Furthermore, Atto's connections to Berengar in the charter record are almost non-existent – their only link is in a document of 13 August 945 when Berengar petitioned a grant on Atto's behalf.²¹⁶ Certainly, this suggests some kind of relationship between the two in the immediate aftermath of Berengar's return,²¹⁷ but the complete absence of evidence of any subsequent connections strongly suggests that this link was tenuous or temporary.

Atto's link to Lothar is much more apparent.²¹⁸ He appeared in three of Lothar's charters without Berengar's presence²¹⁹ and, alongside Mannasses, archbishop of Milan, is referred to as a 'most revered counsellor' (*reverentissimi consilarii*).²²⁰ Through these charters, Atto intervened on behalf of Deodato, bishop of Parma,²²¹ John, bishop of Trieste,²²² and, in

²¹⁰ Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 16; Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 240; Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide', 287–8.

²¹¹ Vignodelli, 'Politics, Prophecy and Satire', 217.

²¹² Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 240.

²¹³ Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 19–20; Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, xviii.

²¹⁴ Atto of Vercelli, 'Epistolae', in *Attonis Vercellensis episcopi Opera omnia*, ed. J.-P. Migne. *Patrologiae cursus completus series Latina* 134 (Paris: Apud Garnier fratres, editores and J.-P. Migne successores, 1884), cols. 95–124 (cols. 120–4, no. 11).

²¹⁵ Atto of Vercelli, 'Epistolae', cols. 95–104 (no. 1); Wemple, *Atto of Vercelli*, 18.

²¹⁶ Schiaparelli, 'H', 238–40 (no. 81).

²¹⁷ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 240.

²¹⁸ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, xi.

²¹⁹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 270–4 (no. 9), 276–8 (no. 11), 283–6 (no. 15).

²²⁰ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 283–6 (no. 15).

²²¹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 270–4 (no. 9).

²²² Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 276–8 (no. 11).

1
2
3 conjunction with Manasses, Waldo, bishop of Como.²²³ None of these figures ever appeared
4
5 alongside Berengar in the charters. These links provided Atto with security for his position in
6
7 Vercelli and potential counters to his neighbour Berengar. Between 948 and 950, Atto
8
9 constructed a network of connections with key clergymen in the north of Italy independently of
10
11 Berengar.
12
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14
15 Manasses appeared in a pair of Lothar's charters: he is recorded with Adelaide²²⁴ and the
16
17 bishops Atto and Waldo.²²⁵ Manasses was Hugh's nephew and maintained considerable
18
19 influence through his control of the bishoprics of Mantua, Verona and Trent, even if this was
20
21 challenged after 945.²²⁶ His subsequent claim to the archbishopric of Milan demonstrated his
22
23 continued relevance in the late 940s. However, the connections between Manasses and Berengar
24
25 are sparse. They never appear together in the Bosonid documents and Manasses is completely
26
27 absent from Berengar's charters, only returning under Otto. The only tangible link between
28
29 Manasses and Berengar outside Liutprand's account is the claim by Rather of Verona in his letter
30
31 of 951 to Pope Agapit II that he was 'seized by Berengar at Manasses' instigation'²²⁷ to prevent
32
33 him returning to Verona as the city's bishop at Hugh's request after the coup. However, Rather
34
35 went on to imply that Manasses sought reconciliation with the Bosonids and was successful by
36
37 the time of Lothar's individual rule, reporting that his ongoing conflict with Manasses had ended
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39 when Lothar had intervened on his cousin's behalf: 'a messenger of the lord King Lothar arrived,
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50 ²²³ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 283–6 (no. 15).

51 ²²⁴ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 255–6 (no. 3).

52 ²²⁵ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 283–6 (no. 15).

53 ²²⁶ Mor, *L'età feudale*, 118–22, 140–1; G. Gardoni, 'Vescovi e città a Mantova dall'età carolingia al secolo XI', in
54 *Le origini della diocesi di Mantova e le sedi episcopali dell'Italia settentrionale, IV–XI secolo*, eds. G. Andenna,
55 G.P. Brogiolo and R. Salvarani. Antichità altoadriatiche 63 (Trieste: Editreg, 2006), 183–246 (202–7).

56 ²²⁷ 'comprehendit me Berengarius instinctu Manassis': Ratherius, *Die Briefe des Bischofs Rather von Verona*, ed. F.
57 Weigle. MGH, Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit 1 (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1949), 37 (no. 7).
58
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60

ordering me to withdraw from the city [Verona] so I might surrender the place to Manasses who was about to invade my seat.²²⁸

Furthermore, Berengar can be connected to several moves that challenged Manasses' position. Berengar's appearance as petitioner of the empowerment of Peter, bishop of Mantua, with rights in Mantua, Verona and Brescia in May 945 implied support of Peter's claim to the bishopric of Mantua and stood against Manasses' traditional control of the diocese.²²⁹ Further, the acquisition of these rights by Peter challenged Manasses' position in both Mantua and Verona and undermined the authority of the archbishop of Milan, a position Manasses desired, by empowering one of his suffragans. Likewise, Berengar's recognition of Arderic as archbishop of Milan in 947²³⁰ presented a challenge to Manasses' ambitions there. Manasses may have been linked to Berengar, but this was only temporary.

Guido, bishop of Modena, appeared in conjunction with Adelard, bishop of Reggio, in a pair of Lothar's charters²³¹ suggesting a rapport between the neighbouring bishops. Their influence may be extended to Parma, where Manfred was married to Guido's sister, and to Piacenza where Guido and Adelard petitioned a grant to the cathedral chapter.²³² It is probable that Guido was dominant within this group; he was certainly influential under Hugh, Lothar and Berengar,²³³ and he was the more senior of the two. Both bishops are generally portrayed as key to the uprising against Hugh and often as close supporters of Berengar.²³⁴ Guido certainly

²²⁸ 'affuit missus domini regis Lotharii praecipientis, ut urbe decedens darem locum Manasse a sedem meam invadendi': Ratherius, *Die Briefe des Bischofs Rather von Verona*, 40 (no. 7).

²²⁹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 251–2 (no. 1).

²³⁰ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83).

²³¹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 258–60 (no. 5), 262–6 (no. 7).

²³² Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 262–6 (no. 7).

²³³ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 251.

²³⁴ V. Fumagalli, 'Vescovi e conti nell'Emilia occidentale da Berengario I a Ottone I', *Studi Medievali*, 3rd series, 14, no. 1 (1973): 137–204 (165–6); Fumagalli, *Il regno italico*, 202; Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 225–6, 247–52; Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide', 87–8.

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3 became close to Berengar after 950, when he appeared repeatedly in Berengar's royal charters
4 and is found as arch-chancellor from 23 June 953,²³⁵ but there is no strong evidence that this
5 connection existed prior to Lothar's death: neither Guido nor Adelard appeared alongside
6 Berengar in any of the surviving Bosonid charters. Liutprand claims that Guido and Adelard
7 were rewarded for their support for Berengar against Hugh with the monastery of Nonantola and
8 bishopric of Reggio respectively, and this has shaped much of the understanding of their political
9 position under Lothar.²³⁶ However, while Guido is found as abbot of Nonantola around 959,²³⁷
10 this was more than 10 years after Berengar's return. In fact, counter to Liutprand's claims, the
11 *Catalogi abbatum Nonantulanorum* records that Godfrey, a bastard son of Hugh, was ordained
12 as abbot of Nonantola in 947.²³⁸ Guido's acquisition of Nonantola was not a recognition of his
13 support for Berengar in the mid 940s, but rather an indication of his influence in the late 950s.
14 Furthermore, as Adelard appeared as bishop for the first time in an episcopal document at the
15 end of 944,²³⁹ Berengar could not have been involved as he was still in exile in Germany. In fact,
16 his frequent association with Guido suggests that the bishop of Modena had more to do with
17 Adelard's promotion. Reggio is adjacent to Modena and Guido had developed personal and
18 ecclesiastical influence within both dioceses. Guido and Adelard represented a power block in
19 Emilia independent of Berengar.
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48 ²³⁵ Schiaparelli, 'B2', 311–12 (no. 7).

49 ²³⁶ Vignodelli, *Il filo a piombo*, 250–1.

50 ²³⁷ G. Tiraboschi, *Storia dell'augusta badia di San Silvestro di Nonantola*. 2 vols. (Modena: Presso la Società
51 tipografica, 1784–5), 2: 121 (no. 88); Fumagalli, 'Vescovi e conti nell'Emilia occidentale', 183; Fumagalli, *Il regno*
52 *italico*, 193–4.

53 ²³⁸ 'Catalogi abbatum Nonantulanorum', in *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI–IX*, eds. G.
54 Waitz and others. *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum* 1 (Hanover: Hahn, 1878), 570–5 (572).

55 ²³⁹ R. Pauler, *Das Regnum Italiae in ottonischer Zeit: Markgrafen, Grafen und Bischöfe als politische Kräfte*.
56 Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom, 54 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982), 60.
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3 Lothar's queen, Adelaide, may be added to these three key nodes. She was granted
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5 considerable lands on both sides of the Apennines through her dowry,²⁴⁰ and these were
6
7 extended through Lothar's charter of 31 March 950, which added territory in Bologna and
8
9 Modena.²⁴¹ Her family ties to the Burgundian royal house provided potential allies from outside
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11 the kingdom and it is evident that by the time of Lothar's death she had built connections with
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13 Arduin in Turin and Adalbert Atto of Canossa.²⁴²

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17 Beyond these clusters, a number of individuals can be connected to the Bosonid kings
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19 through charters between 945 and 950. The counts Aleram²⁴³ and Lanfranc²⁴⁴ who participated in
20
21 the *placitum* of 945 appeared in later Bosonid documents, as did Boso, bishop of Piacenza and
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23 Hugh's bastard son,²⁴⁵ Rudolf, bishop of Novara,²⁴⁶ and Ermengarda, abbess of Senatore in
24
25 Pavia and Hugh's sister.²⁴⁷ This range of charters suggests that Hugh and Lothar continued to act
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27 independently of Berengar throughout their rule. Berengar was important and could be
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29 influential, but he was not the dominant figure described by Liutprand.

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33 The Bosonid charters in this period also demonstrate a systematic programme of
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35 balancing power across Italy. Most documents involving Berengar were countered by charters
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37 issued to those independent of his influence. Any connections Berengar developed with Atto of
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39 Vercelli²⁴⁸ were countered by Lothar's later association with this bishop.²⁴⁹ Berengar's
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41 association with Peter of Mantua was balanced by Lothar's links to Guido of Modena and
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48 ²⁴⁰ Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide'.

49 ²⁴¹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 282–3 (no. 14).

50 ²⁴² Fumagalli, *Il regno italico*, 198; Vignodelli, 'Berta e Adelaide', 288.

51 ²⁴³ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 274–6 (no. 10).

52 ²⁴⁴ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 280–1 (no. 13).

53 ²⁴⁵ Schiaparelli, 'H', 241–2 (no. 82).

54 ²⁴⁶ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 286–8 (no. 16).

55 ²⁴⁷ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 256–8 (no. 4).

56 ²⁴⁸ Schiaparelli, 'H', 238–40 (no. 81).

57 ²⁴⁹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 270–4 (no. 9), 276–8 (no. 11), 283–6 (no. 15).

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3 Adelard of Reggio and through his support of Manasses. The 24 April 947 charter which
4 confirmed a donation to San Giovanni in Domnarum in Pavia, at the request of Berengar,²⁵⁰ was
5 followed on 23 September that year by a grant which extended the rights of Emengarda, the
6 abbess of San Senatore in the same city.²⁵¹ Most notably, Manfred's empowerment in Parma on
7 11 June 948 at the request of Berengar²⁵² was followed three days later by a grant to Deodato,
8 the new bishop of the city.²⁵³ Many of the Bosonid donations reduced the impact of any political
9 gains or alliances constructed by Berengar.
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22 Conclusion

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24 Instead of a political system dominated by Berengar, or a bifocal conflict between the Anscarids
25 and Bosonids with Adelaide as leader or figurehead, or even the presence of Guido as a
26 kingmaker, this analysis suggests a multi-directional contest for power between several
27 important individuals. Berengar was certainly one of these individuals, but his prominence has
28 been overstated. His visible influence is restricted to a relatively narrow area, focused in his
29 Ivrean heartland and extending occasionally into Emilia and Lombardy. Adelaide was also
30 important, but did not have the prominence she would gain as empress. Atto of Vercelli was
31 influential and developed a prominent position at Lothar's court independently of Berengar.
32 Manasses' interests sometimes overlapped with those of Adelaide, but he was very much an
33 independent factor within the kingdom. Guido of Modena exerted influence across Emilia and
34 beyond, but his connection to Berengar prior to Lothar's death has been overstated. At the same
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53 ²⁵⁰ Schiaparelli, 'H', 242–7 (no. 83).

54 ²⁵¹ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 256–8 (no. 4).

55 ²⁵² Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 267–70 (no. 8).

56 ²⁵³ Schiaparelli, 'Lo2', 270–4 (no. 9).

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2
3 time, Hugh and Lothar demonstrated continued influence through their interactions with these
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5 and other magnates, carefully balancing the power structures of Italy.
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8 This portrait is very distant from Liutprand's description in the *Antapodosis*. It is
9
10 important to note that Berengar's key allies as reported by Liutprand had little or no
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12 demonstrable connection to him between his return and acquisition of the *regnum*. Liutprand lists
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14 Berengar's supporters as Milo, count of Verona, Manasses, archbishop of Milan, Adelard, one of
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16 Manasses' clerics and future bishop of Reggio, and Guido, bishop of Modena.²⁵⁴ However, while
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18 many of these individuals can be connected to Berengar during his rule, none of them appears
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20 close to Berengar prior to 950.
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24 Liutprand had reason to criticise each of these individuals. Manasses was a member of
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26 Hugh's family, hence implicated in his bigamy and lustfulness, and a pluralist, holding as many
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28 as five episcopal positions simultaneously. Guido was likewise a pluralist by the time Liutprand
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30 wrote, holding both the bishopric of Modena and the monastery of Nonantola, while his service
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32 as Berengar's chancellor for most of the 950s meant he could be easily condemned in order to
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34 diminish Berengar's claims and strengthen those of Otto. Milo installed a relative, a child, in the
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36 see of Verona²⁵⁵ and may have been a supporter of Berengar in the 950s. Adelard is harder to
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38 place, but was connected to Guido and apparently obtained his bishopric simoniacally.
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40 Liutprand's presentation of these figures as supporters of Berengar is a stronger indication of
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42 their utility as targets for his rhetoric around 960 than of their political allegiances around 945.
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44 Liutprand misrepresented this situation to promote his own interests: securing Otto's claim to
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46 Italy, condemning the impious behaviour of the clergy of Italy and improving his own prospects.
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55 ²⁵⁴ Fumagalli, *Il regno italico*, 195–6.

56 ²⁵⁵ Pauler, *Das Regnum Italiae*, 92.

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3 Liutprand's simple account must therefore be rejected in favour of more nuanced
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5 narratives. However, the actual events of this period are harder to access. The existence of
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7 multiple nodes of power could easily correspond to Atto's depiction of conflict and anarchy
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9 following an oligarchic coup. Their presence is also compatible with Flodoard's account of
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11 functional if unremarkable rulership in these years or even to Lothar's career as an effective king
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13 as described by Hrotsvitha, Odilo and Arnulf. The development and balance of multiple nodes of
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15 power, if orchestrated or managed by the king, would be a sign of an active and successful
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17 system of rule and formed the basis of effective power structures across early medieval
18
19 Europe.²⁵⁶ The Bosonids may have built on the power distribution network constructed through
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21 Hugh's reign, maintaining links with the *novi homines* while balancing the competing interests of
22
23 the key figures of power.
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28 This analysis also opens to debate the relationships between Hugh, Lothar and Berengar.
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30 If we accept Lothar as a competent king, then his role in the rule of the kingdom after 945 is
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32 called into question. There was very little overlap between the individuals who appeared in
33
34 Lothar's charters and those produced while Hugh was alive. Most notably, Hubert, a bastard son
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36 of Hugh, was a regular participant in Hugh's charters, but no longer appears after the coup when
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38 he was stripped of most of his titles. Hubert was arguably the greatest threat to Lothar's position
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40 prior to 945: he controlled sizeable lands, held several key public offices, was an experienced
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42 and active political operator, and despite his illegitimacy was a potential successor to Hugh.
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44 Boso, the bishop of Piacenza and another illegitimate son of Hugh, also disappeared from the
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46 charter record after Hugh's death despite regular appearances before this point. Conversely,
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53 ²⁵⁶ Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, 42–3, 48–9, 69; I.N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms, 450–751* (London: Longman,
54 1994), 99–101; Rosenwein, 'Family Politics of Berengar I', 278; D. Barthélemy, 'The Year 1000 Without Abrupt or
55 Radical Transformation', in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, eds. B.H. Rosenwein and L.K. Little
56 (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998), 134–47.
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3 several figures, including Manasses, Guido and Atto, became significantly more visible under
4
5 Lothar. It is possible that Lothar took advantage of events to further his own interests,
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7 marginalising threats to his position while strengthening ties with potential allies.
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10 This re-evaluation on the basis of the broader narrative sources and charters highlights
11
12 the issues raised by several authors regarding the reliance on single texts when addressing this
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14 key period of Italian history.²⁵⁷ These documents supply otherwise unknown details, but must be
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16 viewed as attempts to influence events around their authors and read as such. The *Antapodosis*
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18 and the other narrative works from this period are invaluable sources, but they must be used
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20 more critically, especially in their discussion of the Italian political networks.
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29
30 providing advance access to their research. I am also indebted to Dr Eoghan Maloney for his
31
32 help and advice in the translation of *De administrando imperio*.
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38 **Notes on contributor**

39
40 **Robert Houghton** is a Senior Lecturer in Early Medieval History at the University of
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42 Winchester. He is a social and political historian specialising in relationship networks and urban
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44 history in Italy c.900–c.1150. He is currently working on the political networks of Cadalus of
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46 Parma and of Guibert of Ravenna during the Investiture Contest.
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54 ²⁵⁷ Sutherland, *Liudprand of Cremona*, 69–73; Reuter, *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, 99; Manarini,
55 ‘10th Century Italy through the Voices of Atto of Vercelli and Liutprand of Cremona’, 199–200; Balzaretti,
56 ‘Narratives of Success and Narratives of Failure’, 190–3.
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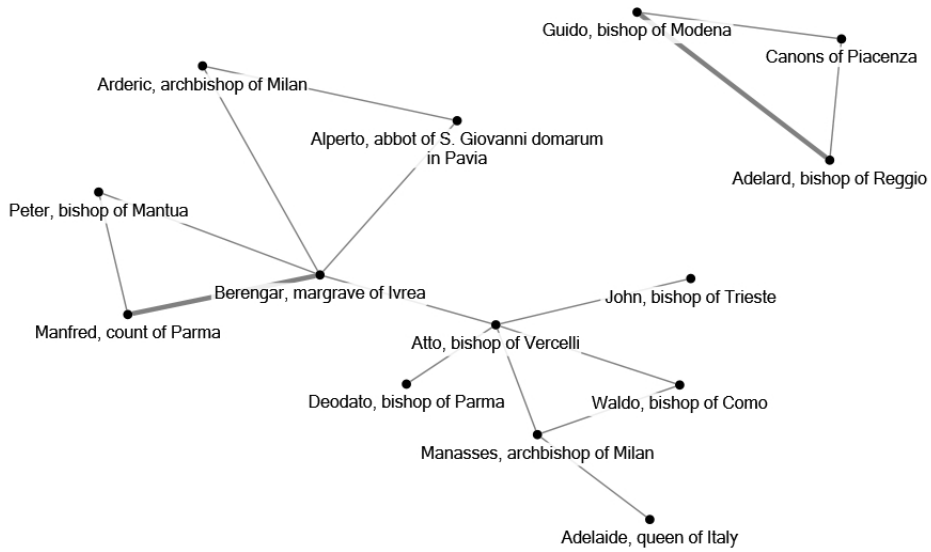


Figure 1. Caption is in main text file.